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Di Balik Sepiring Sengsu: Studi Etnografi Konsumen di Surakarta
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INTISARI

Sengsu, kuliner berbahan daging anjing yang diolah menyerupai tongseng, telah lama menjadi bagian dari lanskap kuliner Kota Surakarta. Popularitasnya semakin meluas sejak masa kepemimpinan Gibran Rakabuming Raka sebagai Wali Kota Solo, ketika berbagai media mengekspos kuliner ekstrem ini sebagai fenomena sosial yang menarik perhatian publik. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis alasan konsumen memilih sengsu, mengkaji manfaat fisik maupun sosial yang dirasakan, serta memahami bagaimana praktik konsumsi sengsu bertahan di tengah larangan agama dan isu kesehatan.

Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode etnografi. Data dikumpulkan pada Desember 2025 di Warung Rica-Rica Sekarpace, Kecamatan Jebres, Kota Surakarta, melalui observasi dan wawancara mendalam terhadap sepuluh informan konsumen berdasarkan kriteria pengalaman dan keterlibatan langsung mereka, satu informan penjual, serta studi dokumentasi berupa berita, laporan media, dan kajian akademik relevan. Analisis dilakukan secara tematik induktif dengan menempatkan pengalaman dan sudut pandang konsumen sebagai pusat interpretasi.

Temuan menunjukkan motivasi konsumsi sengsu merupakan persilangan antara pengalaman tubuh, kondisi ekonomi, latar belakang agama, dan identitas sosial. Tujuh dari sepuluh informan mengonsumsi sengsu untuk keperluan pengobatan, meliputi penyakit kulit, penurunan kolesterol, pemulihan luka dan patah tulang, serta peningkatan stamina. Tiga informan lainnya didorong oleh citarasa yang khas. Hampir seluruh informan merasakan sensasi panas setelah konsumsi, yang dimaknai sebagai tanda daging anjing bekerja di dalam tubuh. Kesembuhan yang dirasakan bersifat kultural dan didukung oleh mekanisme sugesti yang diaktifkan secara sadar sebelum konsumsi berlangsung. Selain manfaat fisik, konsumsi sengsu menghasilkan manfaat sosial berupa jaringan relasi antarindividu dan kesadaran kolektif melestarikan kuliner lokal sebagai identitas kota. Konsumen Muslim menegosiasikan larangan agama melalui justifikasi berbasis pengalaman tubuh, sementara konsumen perempuan cenderung mengonsumsi secara privat sebagai strategi pengelolaan identitas di ruang publik.

Kata kunci: kuliner, panas, pengobatan, sengsu, sugesti, Surakarta

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ABSTRACT

Sengsu, a culinary dish made from dog meat prepared in a style similar to tongseng, has long been part of the culinary landscape of Surakarta. Its popularity grew wider during the leadership of Gibran Rakabuming Raka as Mayor of Solo, when various media outlets exposed this extreme cuisine as a social phenomenon that attracted public attention. This study aims to analyze the reasons consumers choose sengsu, examine the physical and social benefits they perceive, and understand how the practice of sengsu consumption persists amid religious prohibition and health concerns.

This study employs a qualitative approach using ethnographic methods. Data were collected in December 2025 at Warung Rica-Rica Sekarpace, Jebres District, Surakarta, through observation and in-depth interviews with ten consumer informants selected based on criteria of direct experience and involvement, one seller informant, and documentary study including news articles, media reports, and relevant academic literature. Analysis was conducted inductively using thematic analysis, placing consumer experiences and perspectives at the center of interpretation.

Findings indicate that the motivation for sengsu consumption is an intersection of bodily experience, economic conditions, religious background, and social identity. Seven out of ten informants consumed sengsu for medicinal purposes, including skin diseases, cholesterol reduction, wound and bone fracture recovery, and stamina enhancement. The remaining three informants were motivated by its distinctive flavor. Nearly all informants experienced a sensation of heat after consumption, interpreted as a sign of the dog meat working within the body. The healing experienced is cultural in nature and supported by a suggestive mechanism consciously activated prior to consumption. Beyond physical benefits, sengsu consumption produces social benefits in the form of interpersonal networks and a collective awareness of preserving local cuisine as the city's identity. Muslim consumers negotiate religious prohibition through justifications grounded in bodily experience, while female consumers tend to consume privately as a strategy for managing identity in public spaces.

Keywords: culinary, heat, medicine, sengsu, suggestion, Surakarta