

SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS ON THE TRADITION OF CONSUMING SWEET FOOD DISHES DURING EVENTS IN CENTRAL JAVA WITH THE INCIDENCE OF DIABETES MELLITUS**Fitri Nur Fadhillah**

Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia

Email: fitrifadhillaqs@gmail.com

Abstract

The high number of diabetes mellitus sufferers in Indonesia is a serious concern because of the very high risk of other diseases and even death. One aspect that needs to be considered is the behavior of consuming sweet foods which is still an inseparable part of Central Javanese cultural traditions. This research aims to analyze socio-cultural factors regarding the tradition of consuming sweet dishes during the Tedhak siten event in Central Java with the incidence of diabetes mellitus. This research uses a literature review research method with library study data collection techniques. The data that has been collected is then analyzed in three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. The research results show that socio-cultural factors, such as the tradition of sweet foods at events in Central Java, have a complex relationship with the incidence of diabetes mellitus. Even though this tradition has important cultural values in Central Javanese society, consuming sweet foods excessively or too often can increase the risk of developing diabetes mellitus. So it is important for people to pay attention to their food choices in order to avoid and reduce the high risk of developing diabetes mellitus, even though this tradition has strong cultural values

Keywords: Socio-cultural factors, Tradition of sweet consumption, Diabetes mellitus

INTRODUCTION

Health awareness is the most important aspect in human life, health cannot be separated from human life because it is the most vital state in carrying out various activities. Without good health, humans will experience obstacles and deterioration in physical condition that can interfere with their quality of life. Health is a dynamic state of balance, influenced by various factors such as genetics, environment, and daily lifestyle. These factors include eating, drinking, sexual activity, work, rest, and even emotional management. Awareness of the importance of maintaining health is key to maintaining this balance and preventing various health problems that can interfere with quality of life (Subekti, Mulyadi, Mulyana, & Priana, 2021). One of the obstacles in achieving good health is the presence of non-communicable diseases.

How to cite:	Fitri Nur Fadhillah (2024) Socio-Cultural Factors on the Tradition of Consuming Sweet Food Dishes during Events in Central Java with the Incidence of Diabetes Mellitus, (06) 04, https://doi.org/10.36418/syntax-idea.v3i6.1227
E-ISSN:	2684-883X
Published by:	Ridwan Institute

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) or often referred to as degenerative diseases are still a health problem that steals attention. These diseases are not caused by microorganisms and are not transmitted from person to person, but are rather influenced by certain manageable risk factors. One of the non-communicable diseases that is still worrying is diabetes mellitus. According to data from the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) shows that the prevalence of diabetes mellitus continues to increase from year to year. In 2017, about 8.8% of the population aged 20-79 years was diagnosed with diabetes mellitus. This figure increased dramatically to 24.0% in 2021. In fact, projections show that the figure will continue to increase until it reaches 24.7% in 2045 (Dungga & Indiarti, 2024).

Still according to IDF data, Indonesia is ranked fifth country with the highest number of diabetics in the world. In 2021, it is estimated that there are around 19.5 million people suffering from diabetes in Indonesia, and this figure is predicted to continue to increase to around 28.6 million by 2045. So that the importance of handling diabetes mellitus is the main focus of the Indonesian Ministry of Health, considering the broad impact of this condition. Diabetes mellitus is likened to the "mother" of all diseases, because it can cause various other complications. Like a mother who gives birth to many children, diabetes mellitus has the potential to "give birth" to various other diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, and kidney problems (Santoso, 2024).

Dr. Eva Susanti, Director of Non-communicable Disease Prevention and Control at the Indonesian Ministry of Health, emphasized the importance of controlling diabetes mellitus. If not well controlled, diabetes can increase the risk of developing various other diseases, which not only aggravate the individual's health problems, but also increase the burden of medical costs. Diabetes mellitus, which is often referred to as diabetes, is indeed included in the category of dangerous diseases that can cause death in sufferers. Diabetes mellitus is a chronic disease that usually has to be faced for life by the sufferer (Prasetyo, Daniati, & Sucipto, 2021). The existence of serious risks associated with diabetes mellitus emphasizes the importance of taking preventive measures, especially in terms of avoiding serious complications that can arise due to the condition. One important aspect of diabetes mellitus prevention is to pay attention to consumption behavior.

Healthy consumption behavior has an important role in the prevention and management of diabetes mellitus. This includes a balanced diet as well as a reduction in consumption of sugary foods. Results of analysis conducted by Wahidah & Rahayu, (2022) highlights the relationship between several variables and the incidence of diabetes mellitus in the young adult population in Indonesia. Variables identified as having an association with the incidence of diabetes mellitus include total cholesterol levels, LDL (Low-Density Lipoprotein) levels, smoking status, smoking intensity, and consumption of sugary drinks. This analysis concluded that consumption of sugary drinks is the most dominant factor in the incidence of diabetes mellitus in the young adult age group in Indonesia. From these findings, it can be concluded that reducing

consumption of sugary drinks can be an important strategy in efforts to prevent diabetes mellitus, especially in vulnerable populations such as young adults.

However, despite the increasing awareness of the importance of maintaining health, there are still areas where the tradition of sweet food consumption is still closely linked to maintaining local socio-culture. For example, in Central Java, there is a habit of consuming sweet foods in various events, which are believed to be part of a rich cultural heritage. According to Prof. Dr. Bani Sudardi, a Professor of Cultural Sciences at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Sebelas Maret University (UNS) Surakarta, this tradition is dominant among the people of Central Java who are related to the palace. Central Javanese people who are close to the palace tend to like dishes with a sweet taste, this is influenced by the philosophy that sweetness is a symbol of enjoyment for the Javanese people of the palace. In addition, sweet taste has also been part of the inheritance for generations since the Majapahit era (Rahman, 2023).

One of the traditional rituals that is still firmly held in Central Javanese culture is Tedhak Siten, which is related to the event of birth. Tedhak Siten is usually performed when the child reaches the age of seven months in the Javanese calendar, which coincides with eight months in the Gregorian calendar. The goal is to ask God so that the child grows up to be an honest individual, obedient to worship, fond of learning, generous, and diligent in working. The implementation of Tedhak Siten involves several processions, and in its final stage, the mothers and children present are given dishes to eat and blessings to take home (Wulandari, 2022). One of the types of dishes provided at Tedhak Siten is a variety of market snacks, which often have a sweet taste. This is intended to reflect the reality that in life, children will interact with various kinds of people who have different characteristics. The hope is that children can learn to socialize well in society. However, keep in mind that the tendency of Central Javanese people to consume sweet dishes such as market snacks can increase the risk of developing diabetes mellitus.

Previous research by Veridiana & Nurjana, (2019) which examined the relationship between consumption behavior and physical activity with diabetes mellitus in Indonesia, the results showed that the behavior of consuming processed foods, such as biscuits, and physical activity affects the risk of developing diabetes mellitus (DM) in Indonesia. People who often consume biscuits have a 1,198 times higher risk of developing DM compared to those who do not consume them. In addition, physical activity is also a major risk factor for DM. People who did light and moderate physical activity had a risk of 3,198 and 1,933 times higher respectively compared to those who did heavy physical activity. To reduce the prevalence of DM in Indonesia, it is necessary to increase public awareness about the importance of physical activity, especially for those with light activity, as well as increase understanding of foods that can increase the risk of DM.

Another study by Afridah, Nadatien, & Firdausi, (2014) which analyzed behavioral factors on the prevalence of diabetes mellitus in Indonesia, the results showed that consumption of \geq risk foods 1 time a day higher than

the national figure did not show the prevalence of diabetes with diagnosis above the national figure, but the proportion of consumption of salty and fatty foods below the national figure showed an increase in the prevalence of diabetes mellitus with symptoms above the national figure. Provinces with less physical activity and sedentary behavior of more than 6 hours also showed an increase in the prevalence of diabetes although it was still largely below the national prevalence rate. Diabetes mellitus is growing rapidly in Indonesia so there needs to be support from various parties to educate, encourage participation and strengthen early detection which aims to increase public awareness of the symptoms of diabetes mellitus as an effort to prevent and control diabetes mellitus from an early age. Behavioral improvements need to continue to be made to suppress the development of diabetes mellitus through social and cultural engineering

The novelty of this study lies from the perspective of socio-cultural factors related to the consumption of sweet food dishes during events in Central Java and its relationship with the incidence of diabetes mellitus. The implication of this study is to increase knowledge about the risk of diabetes mellitus and the dangers of excessive sugar consumption, as well as to assist the government and health workers in formulating diabetes mellitus prevention policies and programs. The data and information obtained from this study are expected to make a valuable contribution to research on diabetes mellitus and its risk factors, and can be used to design more effective preventive interventions. So the purpose of this study is to analyze socio-cultural factors on the tradition of consuming sweet dishes during events in Central Java with the incidence of diabetes mellitus.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research adopts the literature review research method, which is an approach that collects, evaluates, and synthesizes relevant literature that already exists in a particular field or research topic. This method involves a thorough analysis of a collection of previously published journal articles, books, conference papers, and other sources related to the research topic under study (Randolph, 2019). The data collection technique used is a literature study. This technique involves searching, collecting, and evaluating relevant literature from various available sources (Alok & Mishra, 2017). The collected data is then analyzed through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. The data reduction stage involves selecting relevant and significant information from the literature that has been collected. Furthermore, the data is presented in a systematic and organized manner to facilitate further analysis. Finally, conclusions are drawn based on the synthesis of data that has been thoroughly analyzed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socio-culture refers to the aspects of social and cultural life of a society. It involves everything related to the way of life, values, norms, customs, traditions, institutions, and social interactions that take place within a community group. This social aspect includes a variety of things, such as value systems, belief systems,

languages, religions, customs, art, music, dance, traditional clothing, architecture, typical food and drink, traditional games, and gender roles and family structure. Socio-culture includes not only the dimensions of personal life, but also the interactions and relationships between individuals and groups in society. This includes social norms that govern behavior, kinship relationships, education systems, political systems, economic systems, and other social organizations that form the social order in a society (Gustiar & US, 2023).

Culture cannot be separated from human life. In fact, society cannot possibly be out of touch with cultural outcomes. Every society sees how they use culture and sometimes even destroys it. Society is people who live together, who produce culture, there is no society without culture and vice versa there is no culture without society as a container and supporter. Mutual respect and respect will grow if between human beings uphold culture as a means of connecting life, as a means of communication with each other, and as a characteristic of a group of people. Culture plays an important role in human life and becomes a tool of socialization with others and ultimately becomes a characteristic of a human group (fitriyah Rahmah, 2023).

The characteristics of people in an area are indeed influenced by customs and culture in the area (Jayanti, Loita, & Safaat, 2018). According to Koentjaraningrat (1990: 203), there are seven elements of culture that are universal. The seven are (1) language; (2) knowledge systems; (3) social organizations; (4) living equipment and technology systems; (5) livelihood systems; (6) Religious system; and (7) art (Mawaddah, 2021).

In Central Java, the tradition of consuming sweet food dishes during events has deep roots in local culture. Sweet food dishes are often considered a symbol of good luck, harmony, and hospitality in Javanese culture. In addition, sweet foods are also often associated with moments of happiness and pleasure. Therefore, in many events in Central Java, such as weddings, births, or religious celebrations, sweet food dishes become an important part of the menu. Sweet foods such as market snacks, traditional cakes, or sugary drinks such as wedang ginger or bajigur are often served to guests as a sign of honor and appreciation. The consumption of sweet food dishes is also considered a way to enliven the atmosphere and strengthen social bonds between hosts and guests, as well as between family members and relatives.

In many cultures, sweets are often associated with happiness, cheerfulness, and fun, and thus become an integral part of social events and rituals. This tradition can be reflected in the desire to pamper guests with sweet dishes as a sign of warm hospitality and welcome. In addition, the consumption of sweet foods can also have certain symbolic meanings, such as in wedding ceremonies or religious celebrations, where sweet dishes can symbolize luck, blessings, or success in life. Therefore, socio-cultural factors, including cultural values, social norms, and hereditary traditions, play an important role in influencing the consumption preferences of sweet foods during special occasions.

Not only has a symbolic meaning, but the tradition of consuming sweet food dishes is also related to social values and customs that have been passed down in Central Java. The preparation of sweet food dishes often involves a long and detailed process, which shows the sense of care and subtlety of heart of the host. In addition, sweet foods are often considered a form of wealth and prosperity, so serving them to guests is a way to show the social status and economic success of the host. The tradition of consuming sweet food dishes is not just about taste, but also an important part of Central Java's rich and complex cultural identity.

However, it is important to combine cultural traditions with a balanced diet to maintain public health. Consumption of risky foods can lead to an increased risk of diabetes mellitus (Wahidah & Rahayu, 2022). Diabetes Mellitus is a metabolic disorder caused by the pancreas cannot work to produce insulin or the body is less effective in utilizing insulin. Characterized by high blood sugar levels due to damage to insulin secretion or lack of insulin receptor numbers so that glucose is difficult to enter cells (Fitriani, Wurjanto, Kusariana, & Yuliawati, 2022).

Diabetes mellitus describes a group of metabolic diseases, whose common finding is elevated blood glucose levels, known as hyperglycemia. Severe hyperglycemia can give rise to symptoms such as polyuria, polydipsia, polyphagia, unexplained weight loss, fatigue and decreased performance, visual impairment and prone to ketoacidosis or non-ketoacidosis infections. Chronic hyperglycemia also causes impaired insulin secretion and/or work and is associated with long-term damage and functional impairment of various tissues and organs (Widiasari, Wijaya, & Suputra, 2021).

Other risk factors that can be modified are dietary factors, smoking habits, obesity, hypertension, stress, physical activity, alcohol and others. There is a link between obesity and blood glucose levels where BMI > 23 can cause an increase in blood glucose (Tandra, 2017). The behavior of consumption of sweet foods and drinks is one of the factors that influence the incidence of obesity as a phase of prediabetes, in addition to sedentary activity.

Coupled with the development of the sweet food and beverage industry, and its ease of access affects the problem of obesity. The more often you consume sweet foods and fast food, the greater the risk of diabetes mellitus. Adolescents also have a less healthy lifestyle and less physical activity causing them to be prone to weight gain and prediabetes. Along with the development of technology, it is now easier for people, especially teenagers, to do many things without having to move much. The existence of mobile phones and the internet as well as the ease of ordering food and drinks online has led to an increase in sedentary behavior which has an impact on increasing the risk of obesity, prediabetes, and metabolic diseases such as diabetes mellitus (Asriati, 2023)

Thus socio-cultural factors, such as the tradition of sweet foods during events in Central Java, can have a complex relationship with the incidence of diabetes mellitus. Although these traditions reflect important cultural values in Central Javanese society, excessive or too frequent consumption of sweet foods can increase the risk of developing diabetes mellitus. Sugary foods that are high in sugar can cause a drastic

increase in blood sugar levels, which can ultimately lead to insulin resistance and contribute to the development of type 2 diabetes mellitus. Therefore, although this tradition has a strong cultural value, it is important for people to keep a close eye on food choices and maintain a balance in diet to prevent the risk of diabetes mellitus and other health problems. Efforts to educate the public about the importance of a balanced diet and reduce excessive sugar consumption can help reduce the negative impact of the tradition of sweet food consumption on public health.

CONCLUSSION

The risk of diabetes mellitus requires more attention, especially in terms of lifestyle factors, including people's consumption patterns. Societies that are still very culturally binding, such as the Central Javanese tradition of Tedhak siten in the consumption of sweet dishes, can be a complex factor in the incidence of diabetes mellitus. Although this tradition reflects important cultural values in Central Javanese society, excessive or too frequent consumption of sweet foods can increase the risk of developing diabetes mellitus. Sugary foods that are high in sugar can cause a drastic increase in blood sugar levels, which can ultimately lead to insulin resistance and contribute to the development of type 2 diabetes mellitus. Therefore, although this Thedak siten tradition, has a strong cultural value, it is important for people to keep a close eye on food choices and maintain a balance in diet to prevent the risk of diabetes mellitus and other health problems. This confirms the need for awareness of the health impacts of traditional sweet food consumption and the importance of setting a balanced diet for optimal health.

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