

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The obtained information from interviewing informants living in Kaliwungu on food taboo for pregnant women revealed the fact that the food taboo believed by the present generation is something inherited from the older one. All informants could not provide any information on when the food taboo begins when they were asked about it. People who are believed in taboo are usually certain that they will get harm if they violate the taboo. This study involved twelve informants, those are four pregnant women, one husband of a pregnant woman, two traditional birth attendants, one mother-in-law of a pregnant woman, one mother of a pregnant woman, two village elders, and one father in-law of a pregnant woman. Informants' characteristics can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Informant Characteristic

No	Characteristic	Categories	Percentages (N=12)
1	<i>Age (Years)</i>	25-35	(34)
		36-40	(0)
		41-50	(25)
		51-60	(16)
		61-70	(25)

2	<i>Role in family</i>	elder	(16)
		traditional birth attendant	(16)
		Mother-in-law	(8)
		Father-in-law	(8)
		mother	(8)
		pregnant women	(36)
		pregnant women's husband	(8)
4	Occupation	Farming	(16)
		factory workers	(25)
		Housewife	(16)
		government employees	(27)
		honorary employees	(8)
		Retired civil servants	(8)

The informants interviewed were 12 people: 34% of informants are 25-35 years of age old, 25% is 41-50 years of age, 16% is 51-60 years of age, and 25% is 61-70 of age. It means that the interviewees were mostly those from young to early-middle age people. These age categories are allegedly not too familiar with traditional beliefs anymore. In terms of roles in the family, the informants were 16% village elders, 16% traditional birth attendants, 8% father-in-law, 8% mother-in-law, 8% mother, 8% husband, 36% pregnant women. Therefore, the researcher had a quite wide range of familial relationship. The informants also come from various fields; they are 16% farmers, 25% factory workers, 16% housewives, 27% civil servants, 8% honorary employees and retired civil servants 8%.

The researcher was happy with the results of the interviews because they deliver information needed by the researcher to write about food taboos for pregnant women. Table 4.2 lists food taboos shared by informants.

Table 2. Food Taboo during pregnancy

No	Food Type	Reason	Percentages (N=12)
1	Pineapple	It causes miscarriage	40
2	Durian	It causes miscarriage	40
3	Sea fish	It causes the baby to smell bad like sea fish	40

4	Ice	Make the baby's size overweight.	40
5	Jackfruit	It causes the stomach to get inflamed	30
6	Longan(dimcarpus longan)	It causes the stomach to get inflamed	30
7	Sugar cane	It causes mother get bleeding a lot when childbirth	25
8	Sugar	It causes mother get bleeding a lot when childbirth	25
9	Cat fish	Make babies' face or head seems like cat fish.	25
10	Eggs	Make babies move a lot in the womb	20
11	Eggplant	It causes baby's bones soft	17
12	Twins banana	It causes the babies to become conjoined twins	17

In discussing the food taboos in details, the researcher divides the discussion into several food taboos based on the findings. The first one discussed is fruit, the second one is fish, the third one is vegetable, the fourth one is sugar cane, the fifth one is egg, and the last one is ice. As seen in table 4.2., the most tabooed food for pregnant women is in the fruit group where pineapple, durian, jackfruit, longan, and sugarcane are mentioned.

4.1 Fruit

There are several fruit mentioned by the respondents which are considered taboo to consume by pregnant women. The most mentioned fruit are pineapple and durian which were mentioned by 40% of the respondents. On pineapple, the second traditional birth attendant (TBA2) said that pineapple may infect the mother's stomach; it makes the stomach feel 'hot' as it gets inflamed. As a result, the baby may die:

ibu seng nembe ngandut mboten angsal dahar nanas ... amargi menawi didahar padaran saged benter lan jabang bayi mboten kiyat. [pregnant women shouldn't eat pineapple because when they eat that , the stomach will be sore and the baby can't take it] (TBA2, interviewed on 8 June 2018).

On pineapple, the first pregnant women (PW1) had more or less the same answer with the first traditional birth attendant (TBA2):

....wanita hamil tidak boleh makan nanas dan durian karena nanas dan durian bersifat panas dan akan menyebabkan keguguran [pregnant women shouldn't eat

pineapple and durian because pineapple and durian are “hot” which make a women have miscarriage] (PW1, interviewed on 8 June 2018).

This informant, PW1, also mentions pineapple as a tabooed food for pregnant mothers. In her information, she added durian as taboo. The informant said that pineapple and durian must not be consumed by pregnant woman because, similar to the answer of the first traditional attendant (TBA1), the mother’s stomach can get inflamed if she eats the fruit.

Those two informants share similar opinion that pineapple, and also durian must not be consumed by pregnant women because it is ‘hot’, so they can harm the fetus in the mother's womb. This finding fits with a research done by Sholihah & Sartika (2014) which revealed that durian (and jackfruit) is food tabooed to be consumed by pregnant women in Tengger because they contain alcohol that may harm the fetus. Additionally, pineapple has sweet smell which can stimulate nausea.

The third and fourth fruit mentioned were jackfruit and longan which were mentioned by 30% of the informants. An informant who was a mother-in-law of a pregnant woman (MIL) said;

... mantu kulo engkang nembe ngandut kulo wanti-wanti supados mboten dahar nangka lan kelengkeng amargi kalih buah menuko menawi di dahar saged ndadosaken keguguran”[I warn my daughter-in-law who was pregnant not to eat jackfruit and longan because they cause miscarriage]. (MIL, interviewed on 8 June 2018).

This woman informed the researcher that she warned her daughter-in-law not to consume jackfruit and longan because she did not want her daughter-in-law to have miscarriage. The fact that she warned her daughter-in-law means that she believes in the food taboo.

On jackfruit and longan, the elder (E) recalled what she learned from the traditional birth attendant who helped her deliver her baby,

....cerita mbah dukun yang dulu membantu waktu saya melahirkan anak saya mengatakan kalau wanita hamil dilarang makan klengkeng dan nangka karena selain baunya yang menyebabkan mual juga dapat menyebabkan keguguran”[the TBA who helped me deliver my baby said that a pregnant woman shouldn’t eat longan and jackfruit because the smell can make someone nauseous and cause miscarriage]. (E, interviewed on 8 June 2018).

The elder’s opinion is similar to the mother-in-law’s opinion in the way that both believe jackfruit and longan are harmful for pregnant women. Only when they talked about the reason the pregnant women should not take those fruit, they reveal different reasons. The mother-in-law only mentioned miscarriage, while the elder mentioned miscarriage and nausea.

Jackfruit as tabooed food is also mentioned in the study of Narashima, Ravish, & Ranganath (2016) which presented 37.5% of pregnant women at Bangalore Medical College & Research Institute (BMCRI) Bangalore said that jackfruit was tabooed. That jackfruit is not recommended to be consumed by pregnant women has actually had scientific basis. The health institute disclosed the fact that jackfruit and

longan have high alcohol content which may inflame the mother's stomach and cause miscarriage if the mother consumes it continually.

The fifth fruit is twin banana which was mentioned by 17 %, of the informants. An informant who was the father-in-law (FIL) of a pregnant woman stated that twin banana is taboo for pregnant women. In the interview, FIL said,

....wanita hamil tidak boleh makan pisang dempet karena nanti bayi yang dilahirkan bisa kembar siam” [pregnant women shouldn't eat twin banana because the baby delivered will become conjoined twin] (FIL, interviewed on 8 June 2018).

In addition to pregnant women who were tabooed from eating twin banana, the husband of a pregnant woman must not consume twin banana as well for the same reason.

The belief on the bad effect of twin banana defined in the above interview is misleading. From the medical point of view Ermiami, Kartika, & Lamangga (2017) present the fact that eating twin banana will not make a mother deliver a conjoined twin. They explain further that the conjoined twin is caused by the flaw during the process of impregnation.

4.2. Fish

Several fish is mentioned by the informants as taboo to be consumed by pregnant women. The most mentioned fish which is considered taboo is sea fish. It is

stated by 40% of the informants. One informant who is the husband (H) of a pregnant woman shared that,

.....ibu saya dulu berpesan kalau istri saya nanti hamil jangan boleh makan ikan laut karena nanti darah waktu melahirkan berbau amis, bayi dan ari-arinya juga berbau amis. [My mother told me that if my wife in the future gets pregnant, she shouldn't eat sea fish because (if she eats sea fish) the blood discharged during the delivery will smell bad; the baby and its placenta will also smell bad] (FIL, interviewed on 8 June 2018).

H's description proves local belief regarding food that can be taken or cannot be taken during pregnancy. H's mother is the one who passes the belief. However, H told the researcher that his wife did not obey the restriction because she learned from a health worker and the social media that that sea fish contains high protein which is good for the growth of baby. H said that he believed in his wife's decision more than he believed in his mother's restriction so he let his wife consume sea fish during her pregnancy. One small note on this particular interview is the role of social media to disseminate information. The researcher thinks that a different study should be done to find out how big the society trust social media on information concerning health.

Research on the taboo of eating sea fish is found in the study by Gadegbeku, Wayo, Badu, Nukpe, & Atukwei (2013). The study discovered that Ghana people considered sea fish as taboo. Although in this study the restriction affects both woman and man, still it shows the existence of food taboo. This taboo about sea fish we can also found in (Meyer-Rochow, Food taboos: their origins and purposes,

2009). Similar finding is also found among Kiriwina (Trobriand) Islanders, who banned pregnant women from eating sea fish. They believe that fishes that lead a cryptic life or like to attach themselves to corals are not to be eaten by a pregnant woman because this might cause her to have a complicated birth.

The second fish mentioned is cat fish that is mentioned by 25% of the informants. According to the belief in Kaliwungu village community, the catfish which has a large flat head is taboo to be eaten by pregnant women. The pregnant mother 2 (PW2) said,

.....ibu saya itu wanti wanti mas kalau saya hamil jangan makan ikan lele karena kepala bayi nanti akan menyerupai ikan lele. Sebenarnya saya sudah tidak percaya pendapat demikian karena kalau saya periksa ke puskesmas diberitahu kalau ikan banyak mengandung protein dan baik untuk pertumbuhan janin...[my mother warned me not to eat catfish when I got pregnant because it would cause the baby's head to resemble a catfish's. Actually I don't believe in that opinion anymore because when I checked my pregnancy in the Public Health Centre, I was told that fish contains a lot of protein and good for my baby growth.] (PW2, interviewed on 8 June 2018).

PW2 shared that a belief that consuming catfish while pregnant will enlarge the conceived baby's head and will complicate the birth. Similar taboo on consuming catfish was also found in the study done in Pekalongan city by Harnany (2006). In her

study, Harnany showed that the food taboo affected the level of nutrition of pregnant women.

However, similar to H's wife who did not believe in the taboo of consuming sea fish, PW2 stated that she did not believe in the taboo of consuming catfish anymore. She put her trust on the health information shared by the authority in Public Health Centre, a modern age health institution. Later in the interview, PW2 also said that she had information from the village midwife about the benefits of consuming catfish, which is to help the growth of infant's muscle tissue.

4.3. Vegetables

There are some vegetables that are considered taboo to be consumed by pregnant women mentioned by the informants. 17% of the informants mentioned eggplant. Another village elder (E2) shared,

...ibu hamil yang makan terong dapat menyebabkan tulang bayi menjadi lemas dan pertumbuhannya terhambat. Ini saya alami waktu saya melahirkan anak saya pertama karena banyak makan terong anak saya tumbuh menjadi anak yang lemesan” [pregnant women who eat eggplant will make the baby's bones become soft and (the baby will experience) slow growth. It happened to me when I delivered my first baby. Because I ate too much eggplant, my baby was easy to feel weak]. (E2, interviewed on 8 June 2018).

E2 said that pregnant women were not allowed to eating eggplant if they did not want to give birth to a baby who has soft bones like an eggplant. In the interview, she emphasized her personal experience of having a weak child who got tired easily because she consumed a lot of eggplants when she was pregnant. E2 never attempted to check her child to a health worker to find out the exact cause of her baby's fatigue, she just concluded that it happened because she consumed too many eggplants.

Harnany's study on Pekalongan people also found respondents who believed that pregnant women were tabooed to consume eggplants. Her study revealed that when pregnant women consume eggplant, the babies who are born will shrink over time even though the baby was delivered normal (Harnany, 2006). Harnany explains that the taboo disadvantages pregnant women because eggplant actually has nutritional values of many minerals and vitamins that are good for health and growth of pregnant women.

4.4. Eggs

That egg is a tabooed food is mentioned by the pregnant mother, PW2:

.....ibu saya itu wanti wanti mas kalau saya hamil jangan makan telur karena bayi dalam kandungan akan menggelinding seperti telur dan menyebabkan ibu gelisah serta merasakan gatal gatal , sebenarnya saya sudah tidak percaya pendapat demikian karena kalau saya periksa ke puskesmas diberitahu kalau telur banyak mengandung protein dan baik untuk pertumbuhan janin...". [my mother warned me that when I got pregnant I

must not eat eggs because the baby in the womb will move constantly like eggs, and make the mother anxious and feel itchy. Actually I don't believe in it anymore because when I come to Public Health Center, I was told that eggs contains a lot of protein which is good for baby growth.] (PW2, interviewed on 8 June 2018).

PW2 shared a belief she heard from her mother that consuming egg will make the baby restless. It is possible that an oval shape of the egg gives an idea that it cannot stand upright but keep on rolling. Thus, consuming the egg will make the baby in the womb roll around and make the mother unable to rest properly. However, PW2 stated that she did not believe in it because she trusted the information from the health center. PW2 is a typical young person who does not believe in food taboo anymore because she trusts modern health institution more.

Eggs are also feared to cause ulcers in pregnant women. In his research, Zepro (2015) found that Ethiopian people believed in the taboo of eggs. They believe that when pregnant women consume eggs, the babies will be born with a lot of fat in their heads. This belief is not very good for pregnant women because egg has nutritional value for the formation of muscle tissue, vitamin A for eye, and phosphor for bone formation.

4.5. Sugar Cane

Sugar cane that tastes very sweet turns out to be tabooed food for pregnant women as mentioned by 25 % of the informants. E2 said that

....ibu hamil jangan terlalu banyak makan tebu karena dapat menyebabkan uwat kidang yaitu pendarahan yang sangat menyakitkan diwaktu akan melahirkan....” [Pregnant women must not eat too much sugarcane because it will make “uwat kidang”, a very painful bleeding during giving birth] (E2, interviewed on 8 June 2018).

E2 in the interview shared her own belief that pregnant women must not take too much sugarcane because it is dangerous for the women. On sugar cane, other informant, PW2 said that,

... tebu yang manis dan mengandung banyak gula tidak baik untuk ibu hamil karena akan menyebabkan pendarahan yang banyak waktu bayi mau keluar dan juga bayinya kulitnya akan berbulu seperti batang tanaman tebu... [Sweet sugar cane which contains a lot of sugar is not good for pregnant women because it will cause bleeding when the baby is about to be delivered and the baby’s skin will be hairy like a sugar cane.] (E2, interviewed on 8 June 2018).

In the interview above, PW2 shared that the community where she lives believes that sugar cane contains a lot of sugar which is dangerous for the pregnant women. This belief contrasts to the medical view mentioned by Ermiami, Kartika, & Lamangga (2017) that sugar cane is a kind of drink that is very effective to refresh the body because its sugar content is 20% sugar water, equal to 25 kcal. It is very helpful to increase energy for the body. So, actually sugarcane is highly recommended for pregnant women and good for the baby in the womb because pregnant women need high calories intake. It becomes interesting to find why this food is considered taboo.

4.6. Ice

The belief that ice must not be consumed by pregnant women was mentioned by 40% of the informants in Kaliwungu. The informants said that if pregnant women drink iced water, the baby inside the womb will be overweight although once the baby is delivered, the weight will become normal. The belief is represented by the second traditional birth attendant (TBA2),

.....ibu hamil itu jangan terlalu banyak minum air es karena dapat menyebabkan bayi besar di dalam kandungan tetapi setelah lahir menjadi kecil (mempes)... [Pregnant women must not drink too much ice because it makes the baby grow bigger in the womb. But when the baby comes out, the baby's size will get smaller size] (TBA2, interviewed on 8 June 2018)

The interview revealed that consuming ice is considered taboo for pregnant women. If the women break the taboo, the baby will become fat so that it will complicate the birth. It may take C-section, caesarian surgery, to give birth to the baby.

Other informant, the fourth pregnant woman (PW4) who works as a teacher learned that ice is taboo to consume from her father-in-law. However, she performed the taboo solely to respect her father-in-law.

.....ibu mertua saya selalu memperingatkan untuk tidak banyak minum air es, larangan itu hanya saya lakukan kalau di rumah saja mas. Tapi kalau di kerjaan saya tetap minum es, di rumah saya tidak minum air es semata-mata untuk menghormati mertua saya atas pendapatnya. [my mother in law warned me not to drink too much ice. I only avoid drinking ice when I am in the

house. But at work, I still drink ice. I did not drink iced water at home just to respect my father-in-law's opinion.]. (PW4, interviewed on 8 June 2018)

However, the later interview showed that PW4 does not believe in it anymore. One interviewee said that she did not drink ice when she was with her parents, to show that she respected the elders' beliefs. The belief is the assumption that when drinking ice water, the body temperature will heat up dramatically, thus. It will be dangerous for the baby in the womb (1994). This is why ice water is also taboo in Tengger society (Sholihah & Sartika, 2014). Tengger pregnant women are really abstained from ice water in their pregnancies. Due to having a higher level of education, PW4 argued that actually the body turned hot not because of consuming ice water, but because of the hormonal changes during a woman's pregnancy.

Food that should be eaten and should not be eaten always presents in the life of Javanese society. Foster & Anderson (2006) explain that eating habit is the most important factor that influences food taboo. All food is capable of showing their roles in each region. There are food taboos and food suggestions. Food which they like do not necessarily should be eaten, vice versa which food they do not like should not be eaten.

From the interviews, some people do not trust food taboos anymore because most of them are modern women who have used various knowledge about good food for pregnant women either from social media, coworkers, and health workers. However, some try to respect what their parents believed about food taboo. The above statement explains that many of today's pregnant women do not believe in the

myths of pregnancy from their environment. They just listen to their parents when the parents warned them about food taboo. The bond that exists between the child and the parent is very strong, but different when pregnant women do not obey the wishes desired by their parents, this situations where will affect their mindset to behave well when they made with their parent. WHO says that there is a relationships between individual and their environment depend on the relationship between the individual, the family environment, limited environment and public environment (Notoatmodjo, 2013). This relationship is known as *ewuh* where people feel hesitant to do something when there are older people near them especially when they want to eat something. Pregnant women show that they respect their elders when they were around. Parents assume if pregnant women behave inappropriately, they will get bad luck. Meanwhile, although the pregnant women may not believe in the taboo anymore, they try to act accordingly to maintain harmony in the environment, especially parents whom they respect.

