

Culinary Behavior of Generation Z in Bengkulu City

***Rina¹, Panji Suminar², Ika Pasca Himawati³**

^{1,2,3}Universitas Bengkulu, Kota Bengkulu, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: rinaritnawati0204@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines culinary behavior among Generation Z in Bengkulu City by analyzing its associations with price perception, taste, restaurant location, social factors, and healthy lifestyle orientation. Employing an associative quantitative design, data were collected from 384 respondents selected through purposive sampling. The analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression. The findings indicate positive associations between culinary behavior and the examined predictors, with restaurant location and social factors showing the strongest standardized contributions in the model. Price perception and taste also demonstrate meaningful associations, suggesting that economic evaluation and sensory satisfaction remain central considerations in culinary decision making. Healthy lifestyle orientation shows a smaller association; however, because the regression diagnostics indicate heteroscedasticity related to this predictor, statistical inferences for this variable should be interpreted cautiously. These results suggest that culinary consumption among the surveyed Generation Z respondents represents a socially embedded practice shaped by the interaction of practical, experiential, spatial, and social dimensions. The coexistence of fast food and traditional cuisine preferences further reflects the adaptive and hybrid nature of Generation Z consumption patterns in a mid-sized urban context. Because purposive sampling was used, the findings are not intended for probabilistic generalization to all Generation Z residents in Bengkulu City.

Keywords: *Culinary Behavior, Generation Z, Consumption Practices, Lifestyle, Bengkulu City*

A. Introduction

Generation Z is a cohort that has entered productive age and is increasingly involved in social and economic activities, including consumption practices. This generation includes individuals born between 1997 and 2012 and grew up in the post-reform era, marked by rapid digitalization and widespread access to technology and social media (Turmudi and Mulyasari Agustini 2025). As digital natives, Generation Z is accustomed to instant access to information, visual-based communication, and trend-driven lifestyles, all of which shape everyday practices, including food consumption patterns (Subowo 2021).

Social media plays a central role in shaping Generation Z's lifestyle preferences and orientations. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube function not only as spaces for interaction but also as social arenas where tastes, identities, and consumption norms are constructed and negotiated (Septa Intiar

and Dyan Tiana Putra 2025). In this context, culinary consumption is no longer limited to fulfilling biological needs; it has also become part of lifestyle expression, a medium for social interaction, and a form of self-representation in both public and digital spaces (Septa Intiar and Dyan Tiana Putra 2025).

Digital technology also shapes Generation Z's consumption orientation, which often prioritizes practicality, speed, and efficiency. This preference for digital services is reflected in food-related decisions, including the increasing use of app-based delivery services and digitally mediated recommendations (Rahmadhani 2025). As a result, culinary choices are increasingly influenced by platform dynamics, peer visibility, and rapid circulation of trends.

As a dynamic and selective generation, Generation Z exhibits culinary preferences shaped by multiple considerations, including taste, price, location, social media recommendations, and aesthetic experiences (Purnamasari and Saptadinata 2025). At the same time, awareness of healthy living may influence food choices, although a fast-paced lifestyle can also encourage frequent consumption of convenience foods and snacks. In general, Generation Z's consumption patterns are characterized by a search for innovation, an orientation toward practicality, attention to safety, and an interest in trying new things (Haryana et al. 2023).

Generation Z's consumption behavior reflects a shift from an orientation toward basic needs to consumption associated with lifestyle, experience, and the expression of social identity. Consumption choices are not determined solely by functional considerations; they are also shaped by the social environment, emerging trends, and preferences formed through everyday interactions. Therefore, food consumption cannot be understood purely as an individual activity, but rather as a social practice that reflects values, lifestyle orientations, and patterns of social relations among Generation Z (Suryaningrum et al. 2023). This is consistent with Erlanda's (2024) finding that Generation Z's consumption behavior is closely related to their social environment and everyday interactions.

Several studies indicate that Generation Z's food consumption preferences are influenced not only by taste and price but also by lifestyle orientation, experience seeking, and the influence of social environments and digital media. Generation Z tends to be attracted to foods that offer uniqueness, authenticity, and symbolic meaning, including traditional foods packaged in modern ways (Kristia, Kovács, and Erdey 2024; Nurhasanah et al. 2025). Quantitative research also suggests that Generation Z often chooses digital-based food services because they align with practical and highly mobile lifestyles; consequently, food consumption behaviors are increasingly shaped by technological dynamics and evolving social customs (Wulandari, Nurhayati, and Rahman 2024).

This lifestyle orientation is also reflected in the growing consumption of fast food among Generation Z. Fast food is often chosen for its convenience and

speed of preparation; however, it is generally high in calories, saturated fat, sugar, and salt and may negatively affect health if consumed excessively. Beyond its practical appeal, fast food has also become part of social activities and a marker of modern youth lifestyles (Prakoso, Junadi, and Rusadi 2025).

At the same time, traditional regional cuisines continue to hold an important place as part of local culinary heritage. In Bengkulu City, foods such as *pendap*, *lontong tunjang*, *lempuk durian*, and *bagar hiu* remain widely recognized and may attract Generation Z, particularly those seeking distinctive culinary experiences. The development of the culinary sector in Bengkulu City is also indicated by the increasing number of restaurants, eateries, and cafes, reaching approximately 470 units by 2024 (Darmawan 2025). This expansion has created a competitive environment in which modern culinary trends and local cuisines coexist.

Although many studies have examined Generation Z's consumption behavior, the studies reviewed for this article indicate that empirical attention remains uneven across local contexts. Quantitative work that examines determinants of Generation Z's culinary consumption behavior in mid-sized cities such as Bengkulu City remains limited. In addition, relationships among price, taste, restaurant location, social factors, and healthy lifestyle orientation are often examined separately rather than assessed simultaneously within one integrated empirical model. This leaves a gap in explaining which factors are most salient when these predictors are assessed simultaneously within one integrated model in Bengkulu City.

To address this gap, this study conceptualizes culinary consumption as a socially embedded practice. Drawing on Bourdieu's (1984) perspective, everyday consumption can be understood as shaped by dispositions and resources that operate in specific social contexts. In this article, the selected predictors are treated as measurable proxies for practical constraints and socially shaped preferences in culinary decision making, including perceived price, taste evaluation, spatial accessibility of restaurants, social influence, and health-oriented lifestyle considerations. Based on this framework, this study aims to analyze the culinary consumption behavior of Generation Z in Bengkulu City as a social practice and to examine quantitatively the influence of price, taste, restaurant location, social factors, and healthy lifestyle on that behavior.

B. Methods

This study employs an associative quantitative design to examine factors related to the culinary behavior of Generation Z in Bengkulu City. The analysis focuses on the relationships between price perception, taste, restaurant location, social factors, healthy lifestyle orientation, and culinary behavior.

The study population consisted of Generation Z individuals aged 13–28 residing in Bengkulu City, with a total population of 103,686 (BPS 2024). The age range of 13–28 was used to follow the cohort definition applied in this study. Nevertheless, this range includes subgroups with potentially different levels of autonomy and purchasing power. Therefore, the results are interpreted as reflecting overall tendencies within the surveyed cohort rather than as evidence of uniform behavior across all age subgroups.

A total of 384 respondents participated in this study. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table as a statistical adequacy reference (Krejcie and Morgan 1970). However, the study did not apply probability sampling. Instead, purposive sampling was employed to ensure alignment with the research objectives (Sugiyono 2022). Respondents were selected based on the following criteria: belonging to Generation Z, residing in Bengkulu City, actively using social media, and having experience eating outside the home at least once per week. Accordingly, the findings are not intended for probabilistic generalization but are limited to respondents who met the specified criteria.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The instrument measured six variables: price perception (X1), taste (X2), restaurant location (X3), social factors (X4), healthy lifestyle orientation (X5), and culinary behavior (Y). Each construct was measured using multiple Likert type items adapted from consumer behavior literature (Kotler and Armstrong 2023) and relevant empirical studies cited in this article. For each variable, item scores were aggregated into a composite score by averaging responses across items, so that higher scores indicate stronger agreement with the construct being measured. Price perception reflects evaluations of affordability, price quality compatibility, and cost considerations. Taste captures suitability to preference, menu diversity, and satisfaction. Restaurant location reflects accessibility, distance, and convenience. Social factors capture peer influence, family exposure, and social media influence. Healthy lifestyle orientation reflects attention to nutritional content and preference for healthier food options. Culinary behavior reflects frequency of eating out, food preferences, and the tendency to explore new dining venues.

Primary data were obtained through an online survey administered via Google Forms. The questionnaire was distributed through digital communication channels, including WhatsApp and social media platforms, to reach respondents effectively. Culinary behavior was measured using a Likert type composite score and analyzed as a continuous outcome to enable multiple linear regression. This analytic choice follows common practice in applied social research when composite scales are constructed from multiple items and meet the stated reliability threshold.

Data analysis was conducted in several stages, including instrument validity and reliability testing, classical assumption tests, and multiple linear regression analysis (Gozhali 2018). The results of measurement quality and regression diagnostics are summarized in Table 1. All measurement items met the stated validity and reliability thresholds. The regression diagnostics indicate normally distributed residuals and no multicollinearity among independent variables. However, the heteroscedasticity diagnostic reported in Table 1 indicates non-constant variance related to the healthy lifestyle predictor. Because heteroscedasticity can bias standard errors and statistical inference, results involving this coefficient are interpreted cautiously, and the discussion treats this association as indicative rather than definitive within the present specification. No corrective estimation procedure, such as heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors, is reported in this article; therefore, inference for this predictor is presented conservatively.

Table 1.
 Measurement Quality and Regression Diagnostics

Test/Variable	Indicator	Threshold	Result	Interpretation
Validity Test	Item-total correlation	$r > 0.361$	All items valid	Valid
Reliability Test	Cronbach's Alpha	$\alpha \geq 0.60$	Price = 0.678 Taste = 0.723 Location = 0.754 Social = 0.806 Healthy Lifestyle = 0.651 Culinary Behavior = 0.678	Reliable
Normality Test	Monte Carlo Sig.	Sig > 0.05	0.205	Normal residuals
Multicollinearity Test	VIF	VIF < 10	1.112 - 1.416	No multicollinearity
Heteroscedasticity Test	Sig. (Healthy Lifestyle)	Sig > 0.05	0.012	Heteroscedasticity detected

Source: Data Processing Results with SPSS 25

C. Results and Discussion

1. Results

This study involved 384 Generation Z respondents in Bengkulu City. The respondent profile is described using age, gender, employment status, eating-out frequency, and the most frequently used social media platform. The respondent characteristics are summarized in Table 2:

Table 2.
 Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	13-17 years	62	16.1
	18-22 years	256	66.7
	23-28 years	66	17.2
Gender	Male	118	31.0
	Female	266	69.0
Employment Status	Students	60	15.6
	college students	272	70.8
	Employed	49	12.8
	Others	3	0.8
Frequency of Eating Out	1-2 times	200	52.1
	3-4 times	169	44.0
	> 5 times	15	3.9
Social Media Platform Used	TikTok	254	66.1
	Instagram	111	28.9
	Facebook	9	2.3
	Others	10	2.6

Source: Data Processing Results with SPSS 25

The results show that the majority of respondents are aged 18-22 years (66.7%) and are predominantly female (69%). This aligns with previous research showing that younger respondents, particularly students, tend to be more active in trying new food options and following social media trends. The predominance of students (70.8%) also reinforces the study's focus on respondents in education-related stages, who typically have greater exposure to information about culinary and lifestyle trends.

The frequency of eating out, mostly 1-2 times a week (52.1%), indicates that Generation Z in Bengkulu City has begun to consider eating out as a flexible, modern consumption pattern, adapting to their lifestyle and budget. This activity is not just to fulfill biological needs, but also part of the social and entertainment experience. Furthermore, the most widely used social media platform is TikTok (66.1%), which plays a significant role in shaping culinary preferences, in line with findings in digital consumer behavior theory that states that exposure to visual content and online trends influences consumption decisions.

Table 3.
 Respondent Data Based on Preferred Food

Preferred food	Amount	Percentage
Fast food	161	41,9%
Traditional cuisine	146	38,0%
Both	77	20,1%
Total	384	100%

Source: Data Processing Results with SPSS 25

Based on respondents' food preference data, it can be seen that the majority of Generation Z in Bengkulu City prefer fast food over other types of food. This is evident from the 161 respondents (41.9%) who chose fast food as their favorite food. Furthermore, 146 respondents (38.0%) stated they preferred traditional cuisine, while 77 respondents (20.1%) preferred both fast food and traditional cuisine.

These results indicate that fast food remains the primary choice for Generation Z, likely influenced by convenience, affordability, and the influence of trends and social media. However, interest in traditional cuisine remains quite high, indicating that Generation Z has not completely abandoned regional specialties and still retains an interest in local cuisine.

Table 4.
 Cross Tabulation of Gender and Food Type

			Fast Food	Traditional	Both	Total
Gender	Male	Count	46	49	23	118
		% of Total	12.0%	12.8%	6.0%	30.7%
	Female	Count	115	97	54	266
		% of Total	29.9%	25.3%	14.1%	69.3%
	Total	Count	161	146	77	384
		% of Total	41.9%	38.0%	20.1%	100%

Source: Data Processing Results with SPSS 25

Based on the cross tabulation, the distribution of food preferences differs descriptively across gender categories in this sample. Because no inferential test is reported, the pattern is presented as descriptive evidence only. Among men, 46 (12.0%) preferred fast food, 49 (12.8%) preferred traditional foods, and 23 (6.0%) consumed both. Male respondents accounted for 118 (29.9%) of all respondents. Meanwhile, among women, 115 (29.9%) chose fast food, 97 (25.3%) preferred traditional foods, and 54 (14.1%) consumed both. Overall, female respondents accounted for 266 (69.3%) of the total.

In this sample, a larger proportion of female respondents falls into the 'both' categories compared with male respondents. This pattern suggests more varied reported preferences among female respondents, but it is interpreted descriptively because no inferential test is reported.

Table 5.
 Multiple Linear Regression Test Results

Coefficients^a						
	Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	T	Sig.
		Coefficients		Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5,333	2,127		2,507	0,013
	Food Price	0,260	0,110	0,108	2,363	0,019

Food Taste	0,397	0,128	0,144	3,099	0,002
Location of Restaurant	0,645	0,139	0,239	4,629	0,000
Social Factors	0,533	0,113	0,229	4,713	0,000
Healthy Lifestyle	0,205	0,098	0,097	2,095	0,037

Source: Data Processing Results with SPSS 25

Based on the multiple linear regression results, the predictors show positive coefficients. Restaurant location and social factors present the strongest standardized contributions. The coefficient for healthy lifestyle is positive, but given the heteroscedasticity indication reported in the diagnostics, its statistical inference should be treated cautiously. To determine the most dominant variable, this study refers to the Standardized Coefficients Beta (β) value because this value has been standardized and can fairly compare the strength between variables.

The Restaurant Location variable (X3) has the highest standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.239), followed by Social Factors (X4) (Beta = 0.229). This indicates that restaurant location has the strongest standardized contribution to culinary behavior within the regression model. Although Social Factors has a slightly higher t-value ($t = 4.713$) than Restaurant Location ($t = 4.629$), the standardized coefficients suggest that location contributes marginally more in relative terms when the predictors are compared on the same standardized scale. These results should be interpreted as model-based associations rather than causal effects.

Table 6.
F Test Results

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2142,569	5	428,514	30,545	.000 ^b
	Residual	5302,920	378	14,029		
	Total	7445,490	383			

Source: Data Processing Results with SPSS 25

The ANOVA results show that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 30.545$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the predictors are jointly associated with culinary behavior (Y) in this model.

Table 7.
Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.536 ^a	0,288	0,278	3,746

Source: Data Processing Results with SPSS 25

Based on the Model Summary table, the R^2 value is 0.288. This indicates that the combination of independent variables in this model is able to explain 28.8% of the variation in Generation Z culinary behavior in Bengkulu City. Meanwhile, the remaining variance may be associated with other factors not included in this model. These may include additional contextual, cultural, and digitally mediated influences on food choices that were not measured in the present survey.

2. Discussion

The findings indicate that culinary behavior among Generation Z in Bengkulu City is shaped by a combination of economic considerations, sensory evaluation, spatial accessibility, social influence, and health-oriented preferences. The respondent profile, dominated by young adults and students, suggests a consumption pattern situated within routines that are both practical and socially mediated. The descriptive results further show that fast food is the most frequently preferred category, yet interest in traditional cuisine remains substantial. This coexistence suggests that modern consumption patterns do not necessarily replace local culinary practices but instead operate alongside them within everyday food choices. This pattern aligns with studies showing that Generation Z's consumption practices often reflect hybridity, where modern lifestyle preferences coexist with culturally embedded food choices (Erlanda and Krisnadi 2024).

Price perception is positively associated with culinary behavior, a pattern that is consistent with the demographic composition of the sample. Respondents, particularly students, are likely to evaluate culinary choices within financial constraints, where affordability and perceived value become salient considerations. This interpretation is consistent with empirical findings that highlight the role of pricing considerations in consumer decision making in food and restaurant contexts (Paembong et al. 2025). In this context, price functions not merely as an economic variable but as a practical boundary that structures consumption possibilities. From the perspective of Bourdieu's theory of practice, economic capital shapes what is considered accessible, reasonable, and sustainable within a given consumption field (Bourdieu 1984). Price sensitivity therefore reflects not only budgetary limitation but also adaptive strategies that enable participation in contemporary culinary lifestyles.

Taste also shows a positive association with culinary behavior, indicating that sensory satisfaction remains a central dimension of food-related decision-making. However, taste cannot be understood solely as an individual sensory response. Within social practice frameworks, taste is socially shaped through habitus, reflecting accumulated dispositions, repeated exposure, and shared evaluative standards (Bourdieu 1984). Preferences for both fast food and traditional cuisine observed in the sample suggest that taste may operate

simultaneously as a marker of modern lifestyle participation and as an expression of cultural familiarity. Culinary enjoyment thus becomes intertwined with social meaning, identity formation, and everyday experience. Restaurant location emerges as the strongest predictor in standardized terms, suggesting that culinary behavior among Generation Z is strongly influenced by accessibility and spatial convenience. This finding aligns with prior research indicating that location plays a significant role in shaping purchasing decisions (Akbar, Imran, and Ngandoh 2023). Ease of access, proximity to routine activities, and perceived convenience appear to structure repeated dining practices. Beyond physical considerations, dining spaces may also function as environments for social interaction, leisure, and lifestyle expression. In this sense, location can be interpreted as part of the broader social context in which culinary consumption takes place, where practical mobility intersects with social routines.

Social factors are also strongly associated with culinary behavior, indicating that eating practices are closely embedded within peer relationships, family environments, and digitally mediated interactions. This pattern reinforces the interpretation of culinary consumption as a socially situated practice rather than a purely individual preference. Studies within Indonesian contexts have repeatedly highlighted the powerful influence of social environments and media exposure in shaping Generation Z consumption patterns (Regina 2024). Digital platforms are part of the media environment through which culinary trends and preferences circulate and become visible among peers. Research on culinary marketing further confirms that social media content significantly shapes attitudes and purchase intentions among Generation Z consumers (Benicta and Widyatmoko 2026). Within Bourdieu's framework, social capital provides relational resources that influence preferences, choices, and patterns of participation (Bourdieu 1984). Culinary decisions may therefore reflect processes of social alignment, collective orientation, and the pursuit of shared experiences.

Healthy lifestyle orientation shows the smallest association in the model. This relatively smaller association suggests that health orientation may be less salient than economic, sensory, spatial, and social considerations within the present model and sample (Chandra and Sarila 2025). Importantly, the diagnostics indicate heteroscedasticity related to this predictor, which can affect standard errors and statistical inference. Therefore, this result is interpreted as an indicative tendency rather than as a definitive estimate of the role of health orientation in shaping culinary behavior within the current specification.

Finally, the model explains 28.8 percent of the variance in culinary behavior, indicating that the predictors capture a meaningful portion of variability while leaving substantial variation attributable to other factors. Culinary behavior, particularly within younger populations, is likely shaped by a broader constellation of influences, including cultural norms, symbolic

considerations, digital trends, and contextual dynamics not directly measured in this study. Accordingly, the remaining variance may reflect additional contextual and digitally mediated influences on food choices that were not directly measured in this survey (Septa Intiar and Dyan Tiana Putra 2025). Consistent with the social practice perspective, these findings suggest that Generation Z culinary behavior reflects a flexible consumption orientation in which economic, experiential, spatial, and social dimensions interact within evolving urban and digital environments. Because the study uses a cross-sectional survey design, the analysis supports association claims rather than causal conclusions. The observed relationships may also reflect reciprocal influences among variables, for example when eating out practices and social exposure reinforce each other.

D. Conclusion

This study indicates that culinary behavior among the surveyed Generation Z respondents in Bengkulu City is associated with multiple interrelated factors, including price perception, taste evaluation, restaurant location, social factors, and healthy lifestyle orientation. Among these predictors, restaurant location and social factors show the strongest standardized contributions in the regression model, highlighting the importance of accessibility and socially mediated influences in shaping everyday culinary practices. Price perception and taste also demonstrate meaningful associations, suggesting that economic considerations and sensory evaluation remain central elements in culinary decision making within this cohort.

These findings support the interpretation of culinary consumption as a socially embedded practice rather than a purely individual or functional activity. Culinary choices among Generation Z appear to reflect the interaction of practical constraints, experiential preferences, spatial considerations, and social influences operating within routine daily activities. The coexistence of fast food and traditional cuisine preferences further suggests that contemporary consumption patterns do not necessarily displace local culinary practices, but instead coexist within adaptive and hybrid consumption orientations in a mid-sized urban context.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The use of purposive sampling restricts probabilistic generalization beyond respondents who met the study criteria. In addition, the regression diagnostics indicate heteroscedasticity related to the healthy lifestyle predictor, which may influence standard errors and statistical inference. Accordingly, conclusions regarding this variable should be interpreted cautiously. Future research may benefit from incorporating additional explanatory dimensions, including cultural, symbolic, and digitally mediated factors, as well as employing alternative analytical approaches to further refine understanding of Generation Z culinary behavior.

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