

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The city of Surabaya, as one of the largest cities in Indonesia, has a wealth of culture and cuisine that cannot be overlooked. Surabaya is not only a center of trade and economy in East Java, but also home to a variety of specialties that have their own history and stories. When it comes to cuisine, specialties often become the identity of a region. Food is a cultural realm in everyday life that has been greatly influenced by globalization. Food connects humans, and perhaps all living creatures, through the common need for it (Utami, 2018:41). Each dish not only offers flavor, but also carries cultural values, history, and philosophy inherent in the local community. Amidst the tide of globalization and the development of the culinary industry, traditional foods often undergo modifications that can diminish the original essence of the dish. This is a challenge for communities, especially the younger generation, in recognizing and appreciating the specialties of their region.

Surabaya has many dishes that are often referred to as “specialties,” but not all widely known dishes are actually native to Surabaya. It can be said that “it is a typical food because it has been around for a long time in the city of Surabaya, even if it is used as intangible cultural heritage under Law No. 5 of 2017 on the Promotion of Culture, which is typical of Surabaya” (Interview with Mr. Ikhsan, 2024). Some of the cuisines commonly found in this city are actually adaptations from other regions or have been modified to suit local tastes. This causes confusion, especially among tourists and locals who want to explore the authenticity of Surabaya's cuisine. Foods such as “soto ayam,” “rawon,” or “pecel,” which are often identified as typical Surabaya foods, are actually also found in other regions with different flavors and compositions.

When it comes to Surabaya's signature dishes, there are many to choose from. However, this design only features six types of signature dishes, including rujak cingur, pecel semanggi, tahu tek, lontong balap, and sate. Sate is divided into two types: sate kelapa and sate karak. “Actually, there are more than six, but they are not as popular as the six mentioned above, so only people in certain areas of Surabaya know about them, such as sate karak” (Interview with Mr. Ikhsan, 2024). This condition poses a challenge in preserving and introducing authentic Surabaya cuisine to the public.

According to a questionnaire conducted by the author, 59.2% of respondents were native Surabaya residents, while 40.8% were not. 48.9% of the 100 respondents stated that they truly knew what Surabaya's signature dishes were. However, when asked what Surabaya's signature dishes are, 70.5% of respondents answered "rawon," which is not a signature dish of Surabaya. Therefore, it is important to provide clear education about which dishes are truly signature dishes of Surabaya and which are adaptations or even cuisines from other regions that are popular in Surabaya.

Lifestyle changes have also influenced people's consumption patterns regarding Surabaya's signature dishes. The younger generation, who tend to prioritize practicality and speed in food consumption, often prefer ready-to-eat foods that are easily accessible, compared to traditional foods that take longer to prepare and cook. This has caused Surabaya's signature dishes to be increasingly marginalized from the list of daily food choices, especially among the younger generation. "Many young people are no longer familiar with or fond of Indonesian cuisine. Many of them prefer foreign foods," said Winarlin, K. S.S. (October 2015). This may be due to the increasingly limited access to traditional foods amid the rise of modern restaurants and international franchises. Many traditional eateries are being displaced by the presence of international cuisine, which is more popular among the younger generation. This situation threatens the continued existence of Surabaya's traditional cuisine as part of the local cultural heritage.

In the context of tourism, the phenomenon of "culinary tourism" is becoming an increasingly popular trend among tourists, both domestic and international. Many tourists visit Surabaya with the aim of exploring its cuisine, but often they do not obtain accurate and comprehensive information about foods that truly originate from Surabaya. The lack of complete and easily accessible culinary information is also an obstacle for tourists who want to enjoy authentic Surabaya cuisine. This phenomenon has raised awareness of the importance of documenting and introducing Surabaya's unique cuisine more widely and deeply. The design of an illustrated book on Surabaya's unique cuisine, aimed at the local community, is expected to be one of the solutions to overcome this problem.

As a metropolitan city, Surabaya also has diverse regional characteristics. Each part of the city, whether north, east, south, or west, has its own culinary specialties. Each area in Surabaya offers different dishes, influenced by the social, cultural, and economic backgrounds of the local community. By dividing Surabaya into geographical areas and including the specialties of each area, this book will provide a more complete picture of

the culinary diversity in this city. The division of these areas aims to provide a more comprehensive picture of Surabaya's culinary wealth and make it easier for tourists to navigate the places that serve these specialties. This division will also help readers, especially tourists, to more easily explore the unique cuisine in every corner of Surabaya according to the locations they visit.

The need for a medium that can map and explain in detail the authentic cuisine of Surabaya is very relevant, both for locals, tourists, and culinary enthusiasts. An illustrated book can be an effective educational medium for introducing Surabaya's signature dishes, presenting comprehensive information about them, complete with attractive visuals and informative narratives. In addition to being an educational medium, this book is also expected to serve as a reference for tourists who come to Surabaya with the aim of enjoying its culinary delights. Through captivating visuals, this book can attract readers from various backgrounds, including those who are not yet familiar with Surabaya. When it comes to books, there are already many books on the theme of food from various regions, but there are no illustrated books that only feature Surabaya's signature dishes. This is what drives us to make illustrated books a relevant medium.

In the context of designing this illustrated book, the main challenge was to convey information in a clear yet artistic manner, so that readers could easily understand and be interested in learning more about Surabaya's culinary specialties. With the rise of culinary tourism and public interest in local foods, this illustrated book is also expected to play a role in preserving Surabaya's culinary culture. This book not only educates, but also celebrates the richness of local cuisine and contributes to preserving Surabaya's unique foods amid the onslaught of global cuisine.

The goal of this illustrated book design project is to contribute to introducing, preserving, and educating the public about Surabaya's unique foods. Through this book, it is hoped that readers will appreciate and love local cuisine more and have a clear guide in exploring the delicacies of Surabaya. In addition, it can increase public awareness of the importance of preserving local cultural heritage through food, as well as giving greater appreciation to the culinary diversity that exists in Surabaya.

1.2 Problem Identification

Based on the background of the problem above, the following problems can be identified:

- A. Lack of understanding among the local community. According to a questionnaire conducted on 100 respondents, 70.5% did not fully understand which foods are truly typical of Surabaya.
- B. The discovery of foods circulating in Surabaya that are not originally from the city but are often considered typical Surabaya foods, such as Rawon, Soto, and Pecel.
- C. The absence of an illustrated book showing the locations of typical Surabaya foods with barcodes that lead directly to their locations.

1.3 Problem Formulation

How can we design an illustrated book that educates Surabaya residents about Surabaya's specialty foods by presenting information about these foods through a visual approach that is attractive and easy for the target audience to understand?

1.4 Problem Boundaries

- A. The focus of this illustrated book is solely on six traditional foods unique to the city of Surabaya, namely rujak cingur, tahu tek, lontong balap, semanggi, sate kelapa, and sate karak. It will explain a little about the origins of these foods and include a culinary map featuring the six foods.
- B. The target audience for this book is local residents who are interested in traditional foods and the culture of Surabaya.

1.5 Design Objectives

- A. To create an illustrated book that can serve as a primary source of information and reference regarding foods unique to Surabaya.
- B. To introduce, preserve, and educate the public about foods that are truly unique to Surabaya and distinguish them from foods from other regions.
- C. To provide a better understanding of the variety of Surabaya's signature dishes from each of the five locations based on their geographical location (North, East, South, West).
- D. To present food information through an attractive and informative visual approach, thereby increasing readers' interest in exploring Surabaya's signature dishes.

1.6 Design Benefits

- A. **For Surabaya Residents:** This book is expected to broaden the knowledge of local residents about their city's authentic food heritage and strengthen their pride in Surabaya's unique cuisine.
- B. **For Tourists:** This book can serve as a comprehensive culinary guide, helping tourists find authentic food that truly originates from Surabaya.
- C. **For Education:** This book serves as an educational medium that combines historical, traditional, and culinary cultural information, providing a deeper understanding of the relationship between food and local identity.
- D. **For the Culinary Industry:** This book can be a source of inspiration for culinary industry players to preserve the authenticity and uniqueness of Surabaya's signature dishes, as well as encourage innovation that remains rooted in local traditions.

1.7 Conceptual Framework



Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework
(Source: Personal Documents, 2024)