



Maternal Food Literacy in Reducing Household Food Waste in Bandung City

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ABSTRACTS

Bandung City is one of the most significant contributors to household food waste. One contributing factor is the level of food literacy among homemakers. This study aims to determine the level of food literacy among homemakers in Bandung City to reduce food waste. The research employed a descriptive quantitative approach with a questionnaire instrument. A total of 110 respondents were selected using Slovin's formula ($d = 0.1$) with the quota sampling technique. Data were analyzed by assigning a score of 1 for a correct answer and 0 for an incorrect answer; the average scores were then calculated and classified into three categories: poor ($\leq 55\%$), fair (56–74%), and good ($\geq 75\%$). The results revealed that overall food literacy among homemakers was categorized as good, with an average score of 74%. More specifically, food planning (72%) and food selection and storage (71%) fell into the fair category, while food preparation (77%) and consumption habits (78%) were in the good category. These results indicate that although food literacy is generally good, some aspects can still be improved, especially in planning, selecting, and storing food. This can be achieved by providing information media, such as e-modules and educational videos, to help homemakers enhance their food literacy related to household food waste reduction.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The role of homemakers as the primary managers of household affairs has long been embedded in Indonesian society. Traditionally, men are regarded as the primary breadwinners, while women are responsible for domestic affairs (Fitria et al., 2022). Patriarchal culture, especially in Javanese society, assigns women three primary roles: macak (adornment), masak (cooking), and manak (childbearing) (Fitria et al., 2022). This role is reinforced by Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974, which emphasizes the wife's obligation to manage household affairs.

One important aspect of household management is food management, or foodwork. Foodwork is a term that encompasses physical, mental, and social activities related to food, ranging from planning and selecting food ingredients to processing, storing, and consumption habits (Bove & Sobal, 2006; Van Geffen et al., 2019; Swamilaksita et al., 2024). In practice, household food management greatly determines the amount of food waste generated. Household food waste refers to food prepared or brought into the home that is not consumed (Grandhi & Singh, 2015). This includes spoiled food that is not utilized, as well as leftovers that are not reused (Tonini et al., 2023).

Effective food management requires food literacy, namely the ability to obtain information, knowledge, and skills to manage food wisely (ikou & Aavakare, 2021; Adaryani et al., 2025). The higher the level of food literacy, the lower the tendency to waste food (Rachman et al., 2025; McManus et al., 2025). Food literacy related to food waste behavior consists of four pillars: food management planning, selection and storage of food ingredients, preparation and processing of food, and family consumption habits (Nomura & Feuer, 2021). Knowledge serves as the primary foundation for shaping skills and creativity in food management (Lubis et al., 2024; Qornaeni et al., 2024).

Food waste in Indonesia is a critical issue. Data from the National Waste Management Information System (SIPSN, 2023) shows that Indonesia produces approximately 42 million tons of waste annually, with the household sector accounting for 53.79%. West Java is recorded as the province with the highest waste generation, and Bandung City is one of the main contributors, with 1,609.77 tons of waste per day, of which 42.51% (684.03 tons) is food waste. Most food waste (66.8%) originates from households, with organic content reaching about 58% (Puspita & Ainun, 2023). However, research specifically addressing food literacy among homemakers in Bandung City to reduce food waste remains very limited.

Previous studies reinforce the importance of food literacy and food management skills in reducing household food waste (Qornaeni et al., 2024; Lisciani et al., 2024; Laila et al., 2024; Aulia & Martha, 2025). However, most of these studies have geographical, methodological, or population limitations that do not represent the conditions of homemakers in Bandung City. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining food literacy among homemakers in Bandung City and its role in reducing food waste production. The results are expected to serve as the basis for developing effective strategies to improve food literacy for household food waste control.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition of Household Food Waste

Food waste refers to food discarded at the consumption stage of the food supply chain, whether in households, restaurants, or retail. This differs from food loss, which refers to food discarded before reaching the consumption stage, such as during production, post-harvest and storage, processing and packaging, distribution, and marketing (UNEP, 2024).

In the household context, food waste includes food prepared at home or brought into the home that is not consumed (Grandhi & Singh, 2015). Such unconsumed food includes spoiled or stale food that is not utilized, as well as leftovers that are not reused (Tonini et al., 2023). Household food waste occurs at every stage of food management, ranging from purchasing ingredients and storage to preparation and consumption (Ananda et al., 2021).

2.2. Types of Food Waste

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2024) classifies food waste into two categories: edible and inedible. Edible food waste refers to food parts that are suitable for consumption but are discarded for various reasons. Contributing factors include cooking in excess, not consuming leftovers, discarding food due to changes in appearance or odor, even when it is still safe to eat, and misinterpretation of expiration labels (Adaryani et al., 2025). Examples of edible food waste include rice, side dishes, vegetables, bread, processed products, and packaged foods that are still edible but discarded before being finished.

In contrast, inedible food waste consists of parts that are generally not intended for consumption, such as chicken bones, fish spines, eggshells, fruit seeds, and peanut shells. These parts still have potential alternative uses, such as animal feed or compost material. The majority of household food waste in Indonesia falls into the inedible category (Lestari et al., 2025).

To date, there is no global standard that strictly distinguishes between edible and inedible food waste. Habits, preferences, and cultural norms of a given region strongly influence this classification. For instance, in Indonesia, chicken feet (ceker) are commonly consumed, so only the bones are considered inedible. In contrast, in many European countries, the entire chicken foot is categorized as inedible food waste. This study focuses explicitly on examining edible food waste at the household level.

2.3. Causes of Household Food Waste

Household food waste occurs at various stages, from purchasing, storing, preparing, and consuming food (Ananda et al., 2021). Contributing factors include:

1. Demographics and socio-demographics, such as number of family members, income level, gender, age, and education, that influence food management behavior (González-Santana et al., 2022; Kusumawardani et al., 2023).
2. Psychological and perceptual factors, such as attitudes towards food approaching its expiry date and feelings of regret after throwing away food, influence food waste behavior (Zhang et al., 2020; Hatab et al., 2022).
3. Food Management Skills, for example, not making a shopping list, impulsive buying, and cooking more than needed (Lestari et al., 2025)
4. Food Literacy, including understanding proper storage and interpretation of expiration labels (Gojard et al., 2021).

2.4. Food Literacy

Food literacy refers to an individual's competence in managing daily food-related activities, encompassing interconnected knowledge, skills, and behaviors in planning, selecting, preparing, and consuming food to meet bodily needs (Vidgen & Gallegos, 2014; Lisciani et al., 2024). Knowledge in food literacy is divided into critical knowledge, the ability to seek, understand, analyze, and evaluate information related to food, and functional knowledge, which refers to practical skills for making decisions about food management (Truman et al., 2017).

Food literacy plays an important role in controlling portion sizes, preventing overconsumption, and reducing household food waste (Laila et al., 2024; Rachman et al., 2025; McManus et al., 2025). The higher the level of food literacy, the lower the tendency to discard food, as individuals can make wise decisions at every stage of food management (Qornaeni et al., 2024; Adaryani et al., 2025).

2.5. The Main Pillars of Food Literacy

Household food literacy comprises four main interrelated pillars: food management and planning, food selection and storage, food preparation and processing, and consumption habits and food waste handling (Vidgen & Gallegos, 2014; Nomura & Feuer, 2021).

1. Food Management Planning

Includes checking food stocks, menu planning, and creating shopping lists. Stock checking helps avoid overbuying and optimizes ingredient usage, while menu planning and shopping lists encourage controlled shopping and reduce food waste (Ananda et al., 2021; Qornaeni et al., 2024).

2. Food Selection and Storage

Refers to the ability to select the right food ingredients based on quality, freshness, and expiration dates, as well as applying proper storage techniques to maintain quality and shelf life. Applying the FIFO principle and understanding expiration date labels are key to reducing waste (Yulia, 2023; Lisciani et al., 2024).

3. Food Preparation and Processing

Includes skills in correctly processing ingredients to reduce waste, such as utilizing all parts of ingredients, cooking according to portion size, and applying proper cooking techniques to maintain quality and nutritional value (Vidgen & Gallegos, 2014; Swamilaksita et al., 2024).

4. Consumption Habits and Food Waste Management

Related to dietary patterns and the management of food waste at home. Wise consumption habits and the recycling of food waste for reuse significantly reduce food waste (Hatab et al., 2022; Muresan et al., 2022).

By understanding food literacy, homemakers can reduce household food waste, in line with the finding that the higher a person's food literacy, the lower their tendency to throw away food (Rachman et al., 2025; McManus et al., 2025).

2.6. The Role of Homemakers in Household Food Waste

The role of homemakers as managers of domestic affairs has long been embedded in Indonesian society's social perspective. A housewife is a woman responsible for managing household affairs and tasks (Faqihudin, 2019). This division of roles is shaped by cultural norms, religion, and prevailing national laws (Fitria et al., 2022). One of the primary duties within this role is preparing and serving food for the family. Effective food management has been recognized as one of the most powerful strategies to reduce household food waste (Swamilaksita et al., 2024). Household food management includes planning, selecting food ingredients, processing and storing, and consuming food wisely (Swamilaksita et al., 2024; Van Geffen et al., 2019). In household food management, homemakers need to possess strong food literacy, as it reflects their knowledge of food and its impacts (Qornaeni et al., 2024).

3. METHODS

3.1. Research Methodology

This study is a descriptive, quantitative research employing a cross-sectional design, in which data were collected once to examine homemakers' understanding of food literacy in reducing food waste in Bandung City. The indicators of food literacy include food management planning, selection of food ingredients, processing and storage, and wise food consumption.

The population consists of homemakers residing in Bandung City who actively manage household food, totaling 966,456 households (BPS Bandung City, 2023). The sample was obtained through quota sampling based on the following criteria: homemakers actively managing family food and residing in Bandung City.

The number of respondents was calculated using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, resulting in 100 respondents. To anticipate potential errors after data collection, an additional 10% of respondents were included, bringing the total to 110.

3.2. Data Collection Instruments and Techniques

The research instrument consists of two parts. The first part is demographic data, which includes name, highest educational attainment, occupation, monthly household income, food expenditure, domicile (district), and number of family members. The collection of domicile data accounts for Bandung City's geographical distribution, ensuring that the research results reflect the diversity of social, economic, and food management practices in the area.

The second part is an objective test designed to measure homemakers' knowledge, as a foundation for food literacy in reducing food waste. This test is based on four pillars of food management: planning, food selection and storage, food processing, and consumption habits. Each pillar consists of multiple-choice questions. The questions were developed from a literature review, empirically validated, and further validated by a panel of experts. The instrument was distributed using Google Forms, with the link shared among homemakers and PKK community groups in Bandung City. Before completing the questionnaire, respondents were asked to provide informed consent; if they declined, they did not proceed. Respondent anonymity was maintained, with no personal identity data included in the answer sheets.

3.3. Data Processing and Analysis Procedures

Data from the online and offline questionnaires were imported into SPSS v.27, with each respondent assigned a unique code. The food literacy variables were then input according to the code. Data were cleaned by removing incomplete responses or duplicate answer patterns. Each correct answer was coded as one, and each incorrect answer as 0, then summed to create a total food literacy score. This score was converted to a percentage of the maximum score for comparison between respondents. The use of percentages facilitates comparisons between respondents and indicators, enabling precise interpretation of food literacy through summary tables.

3.4. Determination of Criteria for Level of Understanding & Interpretation of Results

Percentage scores were used to determine respondents' level of understanding, based on the criteria proposed by Arikunto (2013): poor ($\leq 55\%$), sufficient (56–74%), and good ($\geq 75\%$). The categorical results are presented in tables, while the interpretation discusses the proportion of respondents per category and their implications for strategies to improve family

food literacy. The main emphasis is on converting scores to percentages, grouping categories, and utilizing findings to design educational interventions.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Respondent Overview

This study involved 110 homemakers in Bandung City. Respondents were spread across 27 of 30 sub-districts, with the highest distribution in Sukajadi Sub-district (12%). Based on Hurlock's age distribution (in Paputungan, 2023), the majority of respondents were young adults (22–40 years, 45%), who are in the productive age range, followed by middle adults (41–59 years, 43%). The most recent education level was mostly D4/S1 (40%), followed by D1/D2/D3 and high school/equivalent (each 25%). Most households had 4–6 members (53%) with income >Rp4,500,000 per month (67%). Monthly food expenditure was mostly between Rp595,000 and Rp4,500,000 (69%).

4.2. Food Literacy Level of Homemakers in Bandung City

Homemakers' food literacy was analyzed based on four indicators: food management planning, food selection and storage, food preparation and processing, and food consumption habits. The results are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Food Literacy Level of Homemakers in Bandung City

Indicator	Average Score (%)	Category
Food Management Planning	72	Moderate
Food Selection and Storage	71	Moderate
Food Preparation and Processing	77	Good
Eating Consumption Habits	78	Good
Total	74	Moderate

In general, the average food literacy of homemakers in Bandung City is 74%, which falls within the sufficient category. This indicates that mothers' understanding of various aspects of food management can still be improved, particularly in two indicators that fall within the sufficient category: food management planning and food selection and storage.

4.2.1. Food Literacy Level of Homemakers in Bandung City

Overall, homemakers already possess a good understanding of food planning and management. Their comprehension regarding checking food stock is relatively strong. However, limitations remain in meal planning and in preparing shopping lists. This indicates the need to enhance knowledge so that homemakers can plan menus based on available ingredients and shop more organized, according to household needs.

Such knowledge is crucial because proper planning helps maximize the use of existing food ingredients and prevents waste. Menu preparation that considers ingredients approaching expiration dates and utilizes a single ingredient for multiple dishes is also essential to avoid food waste (Luthfi & Elvandari, 2024; Renfors, 2024). In addition, understanding how to prepare a shopping list is essential to prevent excessive purchasing. Consumers who do not prepare shopping lists tend to engage in impulsive buying (Herlina & Widyaningrum, 2022; Mertaningrum et al., 2023).

4.2.2. Food Selection and Storage

Overall, homemakers demonstrate a reasonably adequate understanding of food selection and storage. Nevertheless, there are still areas that require improvement, such as knowledge of proper procedures for storing animal-based products and vegetables in the refrigerator.

This knowledge is essential to maintaining ingredient quality from purchase through storage at home. For example, understanding the appropriate storage temperature for fresh meat or methods to keep vegetables fresh can significantly help reduce spoilage before cooking (Jaelani et al., 2014; Gunanda et al., 2021; Lilipaly et al., 2023). Improper food storage contributes substantially to household food waste (Rahman & Rahman, 2023; Etim et al., 2025). Therefore, enhancing food literacy in this regard will support more efficient ingredient management and extend the shelf life of food at home.

4.2.3. Food Preparation and Processing

This indicator falls into the “good” category, indicating that homemakers generally have a solid understanding of the stages involved in food preparation and processing. One important aspect is the ability to process food so the family can fully consume it. Such knowledge helps reduce waste, as food that is poorly prepared or does not match family preferences is often discarded. A lack of cooking skills can lead to suboptimal management of food ingredients (Laila et al., 2024).

In addition, homemakers already demonstrate an adequate understanding of how to handle ingredients that are beginning to wilt, reflecting a flexible and creative attitude in using items that are still usable. This ability contributes to efficiency in food processing and helps reduce household waste (Oláh et al., 2022; Gerda et al., 2023). Their understanding of storing pre-cut vegetables also shows that homemakers possess basic skills in managing leftover ingredients so they can still be used (Yulia, 2023).

Homemakers’ knowledge of cooking techniques, such as tenderizing meat, is also considered good. Understanding the appropriate cooking temperature and time is crucial to producing dishes that are well-liked by the family and preventing food from being discarded due to undesirable texture (Yulia, 2023). With mastery of these skills, household food processing practices can be carried out more efficiently and directly contribute to reducing food waste.

4.2.4. Eating Habits

This indicator falls into the “good” category. It shows that homemakers already possess a pretty good understanding of wise eating habits, such as finishing the food they take, encouraging family members to be disciplined in eating, and instilling a sense of responsibility toward food from an early age. This knowledge is important for mothers to foster responsible consumption habits within the family as a fundamental step in reducing household food waste.

However, in the sub-indicator on handling leftovers, some aspects are still categorized as “adequate,” particularly regarding the storage of cooked food intended for consumption the following day. This knowledge is crucial to ensure that food can be stored safely and remain suitable for consumption, thereby preventing waste. Strategies such as storing leftovers in airtight containers, freezing, or reprocessing them into new dishes have proven effective in reducing food waste (Muresan et al., 2022; Yulia, 2023; Lisciani et al., 2024). Enhancing this understanding will strengthen sustainable consumption practices and support more efficient household food management.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the level of food literacy among homemakers in Bandung City still needs improvement, particularly in aspects categorized as “adequate.” Improving food literacy is essential to equip homemakers with sufficient knowledge to manage, select, store, and consume food wisely. This is expected to support

more efficient household food management and contribute to the sustainable reduction of food waste.

5. CONCLUSION

This study shows that, in general, the food literacy of homemakers in Bandung City falls into the “adequate” category, with two indicators—food management planning and food selection and storage—still requiring improvement so that homemakers can routinely plan menus, prepare shopping lists with discipline, and understand proper principles of food storage; meanwhile, the other two indicators, food preparation and processing as well as eating habits, are categorized as “good,” as homemakers generally understand how to process food so it is fully consumed and instill the habit of finishing meals among family members, although some aspects still need enhancement such as utilizing ingredients that begin to wilt and storing cooked food to prevent waste; overall, the knowledge of homemakers in Bandung City regarding food management to reduce household food waste shows a positive tendency, yet strengthening food literacy, particularly in planning and storage, remains necessary to ensure more efficient household food management and sustainable minimization of food waste.

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