



Analysis of Snack Behavior of Fourth Grade Elementary School Students: A Case Study

Lailatul Mukarromah¹, Florecyta Linares Supriyadi², Safira Nur Aulia³, Rita Yulianti⁴, Feni Aprilliyah⁵, Ahmad Sudi Pratikno⁶

^{1,2,3,4,5,6} Universitas Trunodjoyo Madura

Correspondence Email: 240611100136@student.trunojoyo.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the snacking behavior of fourth-grade students at Bangkalan Public Elementary School and the factors influencing it. This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. The research subjects were selected using purposive sampling technique. The research instruments used included observation sheets, interview guidelines, and documentation. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing techniques. The results showed that students' snacking behavior is relatively high because most students still frequently buy food and drinks within the school environment. Factors influencing students' snacking behavior include pocket money, peer influence, location of snacks, and health knowledge. Larger pocket money, peer influence, and easily accessible snack locations encourage students to snack more often, while health knowledge influences the choice of snacks consumed. Therefore, the role of parents and the school is needed in guiding students to choose healthy snacks and manage pocket money wisely.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The food safety of school children's snacks is still a public health problem in Indonesia. The Food and Drug Supervisory Agency (BPOM) in various results of the supervision of School Children's Snack Food (PJAS) shows that snack products are still found that do not meet food safety requirements, both because they contain harmful ingredients and due to low hygiene and sanitation standards. Based on the annual report of the Food and Drug Supervisory Agency (BPOM), [Lukito \(2020\)](#), of the 602 samples of School Children's Snack Food (PJAS) tested, 79.90% were Eligible (MS), while 20.10% were Unqualified (TMS). The incompatibility is caused by microbiological contamination (*Escherchia coli* and *Staphylococcus aureus*), the use of borax, harmful dyes, formalin, and artificial sweeteners that exceed the limit. In line with this, [WHO \(2026\)](#) emphasizes that schools need to create a healthy food environment through the provision of nutritious food and restrictions on foods and beverages high in sugar, salt, and fat, because the school environment plays an important role in shaping children's healthy food habits throughout their lives.

One of the habits that are commonly done by students, especially in elementary and secondary schools, is snacks. Food and beverages that are prepared at the point of sale or served as ready-to-eat dishes to be sold to the public are called snacks. The term "snack" also refers to food prepared from *catering*, or a place to eat. Various food and drinks that have been prepared and sold by sellers who are on the street or in crowded locations, are usually found on the side of the road and traded in various ways to look attractive. The food that school children buy gets special attention because these snacks are widely consumed by children and contain a lot of harmful ingredients ([Ismail et al., 2025](#)).

Various studies have examined the behavior of snacking in elementary school students. According to research [Salbila et al. \(2023\)](#), external and internal causes also affect students' snack behavior such as nutritional knowledge, classmates, nominal money given by their parents, habit of bringing food from home, and children's curiosity. This study shows that the low science and the magnitude of environmental influence, the tendency for unhealthy snack behavior is even higher. However, these studies still have limitations because most of them only identify the relationship between factors in shaping children's snacking behavior. Research [Ismail et al. \(2025\)](#) also shows that the habit of bringing provisions can affect students' snack behavior. Students who bring lunch tend to snack less often because their food needs have been met. However, at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Al-Huda, many students are not used to bringing food from home because the student's guardian often gives pocket money or does not have time to prepare food. In addition, students who have brought provisions still often snack because they are interested in the variety and appearance of snacks at school and feel that the provisions are not filling. In addition, the study [Rahyuni et al. \(2025\)](#) found that knowledge, attitudes, snack availability, and peers were significantly related to the choice of snacks for elementary school students. Although various studies have identified various factors that influence students' snacking behavior, most still focus on the relationship between variables using a quantitative approach. This research offers novelty through a qualitative case study approach that provides a deeper understanding of students' snack behavior based on real experiences and conditions in the school environment. Thus, this study aims to analyze the behavior of fourth-grade students of SDN Kamal 3 Bangkalan and describe the factors that affect their snacking behavior.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with the type of case study carried out at SDN Kamal 3 Bangkalan on even semester fourth grade students. The research informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques based on suitability with the research objectives. The informants consisted of 6 grade IV students who had snack habits in the school environment and 1 grade IV teacher who knew the behavior of students snacking while at school. The criteria for selecting student informants include students who are active in buying snacks in the school environment, willing to be informants, and able to provide relevant information related to snack habits. Meanwhile, the class teacher was chosen because he had understanding and experience in observing students' snack behavior.

Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation is used to observe students' snacking behavior directly, interviews are conducted with students and classroom teachers to obtain information about snacking habits and the factors that affect them, while documentation is used to complete research data in the form of photos, field notes, and other supporting documents. Data analysis refers to the Miles and Huberman model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The validity of the data was tested through source triangulation and triangulation techniques.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

3.1. Students' Eating Habits

Snacks are one of the activities of children when they are at school. Based on research conducted at SDN Kamal 3 Bangkalan, students buy snacks during break hours. Most of the students at the school buy snacks to be consumed during breaks or after learning activities are over. Snacks have now become a close part of children's lives, as children love the wide variety of food and drinks that are traded in the school area.



Figure 1. Students Buy Snacks During Break Hours

Students generally carry out various activities in the environment outside the home. So they often forget time to eat and choose to buy food and drinks outside of school. Children aged 6 to 12 years love snacks and sometimes refuse breakfast at home and ask for pocket money in return. This shows that the habit of snacking has become part of the daily life of elementary school children. The habit of snacking in school children is very high, snacking behavior has become a daily habit of children, especially when in the school environment. Students take advantage of break time to buy various snacks and drinks sold in the canteen or around the school. Even after class hours are over, there are still many students who buy snacks before

going home. The level of snack consumption among elementary school students is relatively high. This happens because snacks are easy to obtain, have a taste that children like, and are affordable. Therefore, schools and parents need to pay attention to the types of snacks that students consume to keep them healthy, clean, and safe to consume.

3.2 Friends

Based on the results of interviews conducted on May 2, 2026 with fourth grade students of SDN Kamal 3 Bangkalan, most students stated that they bought snacks at school because of an invitation from friends. Some students admitted that they participated in buying snacks when they saw their friends buying certain foods. This condition shows that peers have a considerable role in shaping students' snack behavior. At elementary school age, children tend to have a sense of acceptance in a friend group so that they easily follow the habits of their peers, including in terms of buying snacks at school.



Figure 2. Interviews with Four Grade Students

However, the results of the interviews also showed that students' snacking behavior was not entirely influenced by friends. Some students revealed that they already have their own desire to buy snacks because they feel hungry, are interested in the taste of food, or like the shape and appearance of the snacks sold. This means that the invitation of friends is only a supporting factor that strengthens students' desire for snacks. This shows that there is a relationship between external factors in the form of peer influence and internal factors in the form of children's personal interests and desires for snacks.

School-age children tend to imitate the behavior of friends in choosing food and snacks in order to adjust to their friend environment. In addition, interactions between friends at school can affect the frequency and type of snacks that students buy, especially when children often spend time together during break hours. In the study, it was explained that children are more interested in buying snacks when they are done together with friends than buying them themselves.

However, snack behavior is not only influenced by social factors, children's personal desires are also an important factor in determining the decision to buy snacks. Children who have an interest in the taste, color, aroma, and shape of snacks will be more easily encouraged to buy the food even without a friend's invitation. Thus, it can be concluded that the behavior of fourth-grade students of SDN Kamal 3 Bangkalan is influenced by two interrelated things, namely the influence of peers as an external factor and the student's personal desires as an internal factor.

3.3. Pocket Money

Based on the results of the study, the range of pocket money obtained by grade IV

students of SDN Kamal 3 ranges from Rp. 5,000 to Rp. 10,000 per day. The pocket money is used by students to buy snacks, drinks, toys, and other small necessities while at school. Based on the results of the interviews, there were students who spent all their pocket money on the same day, but there were also students who still left their pocket money to save or reuse the next day. The difference in the use of pocket money is influenced by consumption habits, the needs of each student, and the ability of students to manage the money given by their parents.

The average pocket money for grade IV students of SDN Kamal 3 Bangkalan is Rp. 5,700 per day. In addition, students' allowances are generally used to buy food, drinks, toys, pay class fees, and some are set aside for savings. The amount of pocket money is also related to the habits of students' snacks in the school environment. The larger the pocket money that students receive, the higher the tendency of students to buy snacks.

Based on these findings, it can be seen that pocket money has an influence on student consumption behavior in the school environment. Students who have more pocket money tend to buy snacks more often than students who have less pocket money. However, there are some students who have started to have the habit of setting aside their pocket money to be saved. This shows that some students have had simple financial management skills since elementary school age. Pocket money is not only used to meet the needs of students while in school, but can also be a means of learning in managing finances. Through giving pocket money, students can learn to live frugally, distinguish between needs and wants, and learn to be responsible for the use of their money. Therefore, parental and teacher guidance is needed so that students are able to use their pocket money wisely and not excessively in buying snacks at school.

3.4. Snack Locations in the School Environment

Based on the results of research conducted on fourth grade students of SDN Kamal 3, a very affordable snack location can make it easier for students to buy food and drinks. The location of the snacks is divided into 3 places, there are snacks sold behind the school, there are healthy canteens inside the school, and snacks sold outside the school. Snacks sold outside the school are not far from the location of the school, only around the outside of the school gate or fence. Based on the results of interviews with several grade IV students, students stated that they often buy snacks behind school or in the school canteen than outside the school, because according to the students, the place is closer and the food or drinks sold are more attractive. But there are also some students who sometimes buy food and drinks outside of school.



Figure 3. Location of Student Snacks in School

A strategic place also has an impact on the purchase choices that will be taken by consumers, location accessibility is the main factor that affects the purchase decision, and a safe and comfortable location has a very significant influence on determining consumers' purchasing choices in the canteen. Culinary places have proven to have a positive impact on consumers' decisions to buy, because the strategic location around them provides easy access and time efficiency.

3.5. Health Knowledge

Based on the results of research conducted at SDN Kamal 3 in grade IV, it is known that students' knowledge about health in snacking habits is quite good, as seen from a number of students who began to pay attention to the cleanliness and health of food before buying it. However, there are still students who buy food impulsively without considering its cleanliness and continue to eat snacks that seem less clean. The role of teachers is also important in providing information about healthy snack choices, such as choosing clean food, reducing spicy food consumption, and maintaining a good diet. In addition, students have understood the characteristics of healthy snacks, such as clean food, not too spicy, and using natural ingredients. However, some students still experience health problems after eating snacks at school, which shows that awareness and the implementation of healthy snacking habits still need to be improved.

Understanding nutrition affects students' attitudes in choosing snacks. Students who have an understanding of good nutrition are usually better able to choose healthy snacks that are safe to eat. On the other hand, students who lack nutritional understanding tend to choose snacks based on taste, price, and appearance without paying attention to the nutritional value and cleanliness of the product.

DISCUSSION

Snacks are one of the activities that students usually do at school, especially during breaks or after lessons end. Based on the results of research at SDN Kamal 3 Bangkalan, it shows that many students buy food and drinks from the canteen or around the school. According to [Ghufron et al. \(2020\)](#), it is difficult to separate the children from the snacks because they really like the wide variety of food and drinks available around the school. In addition, it [Arti & Suprianto \(2020\)](#) explains that children between the ages of 6 and 12 are very fond of buying snacks and often prefer to bring pocket money rather than breakfast from home.

The habit of snacking among school students is quite high. Sicilia revealed that buying snacks has become a daily habit for students while in school. They take advantage of the break time to buy snacks, snacks, or drinks sold in the canteen or around it. Research by Siti Hateriah also supports this, where it is stated that children in elementary school have a fairly high frequency of snack consumption because of its easy access, good taste, and affordable price. Therefore, it is important for schools and parents to pay attention to the choice of snacks that students consume to stay healthy and safe.

The results of the study also revealed that pocket money plays a role in students' snack consumption behavior. Grade IV students at SDN Kamal 3 receive a daily allowance ranging from Rp5,000 to Rp10,000, which they use to buy snacks and other small necessities. Research [Ulfa & Rohman \(2025\)](#) states that the average pocket money of elementary school students in East Java is IDR 5,700 per day. In addition, [Salbila et al. \(2023\)](#) which suggests that a strategic location can influence consumer purchasing decisions. Therefore, students' snacking behavior is influenced by snacking habits, the amount of pocket money, and the ease of access to snack

locations around the school.

In addition to pocket money, the location of the snacks also affects the snack habits of the students. Many of them prefer to buy snacks in the school canteen or in the backyard area of the school because of its close and easy access. This is in line with research [Banurea, S. A \(2022\)](#) and [Rahman & Musfiroh \(2025\)](#) which states that strategic locations can influence consumer purchasing decisions. Thus, students' snack behavior is influenced by snacking habits, pocket money, and ease of access to snack locations in the school environment.

Most students state that they buy snacks because they are influenced by friends or see other friends buying certain foods. This shows that peers have a great influence on students' snacking habits. At this young age, students tend to imitate the behavior of friends in order to be accepted into a group of friends [Banurea, S. A \(2022\)](#). However, there are also students who argue that they buy snacks based on personal desires, such as hunger or interest in the taste and appearance of existing snacks. This shows that snacking behavior is influenced by external factors such as peers as well as internal factors derived from individual student interests. The findings are in line with the opinion [Lindawati \(2019\)](#) and [Rahmiati \(2021\)](#) that interaction with friends can affect students' snacking habits at school.

On the other hand, knowledge about health can also affect students' habits in choosing snacks at school. The results of this study are in line with research [Ismail et al. \(2025\)](#) showing that students who have good knowledge about nutrition are more likely to choose healthy foods than those who pay more attention to taste, cost, and appearance. This is also supported by [Asmi \(2024\)](#) the fact that the lack of knowledge makes children choose food only based on taste without thinking about the possible risk of dangerous contamination.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research conducted at SDN Kamal 3 Bangkalan, it can be concluded that students' snack habits are influenced by several aspects, such as buying habits, the amount of pocket money, the habit of carrying provisions, the influence of peers, and the location of snack places around the school. Many students tend to buy snacks during breaks and after school because of the easy access, attractive appearance, and affordable prices.

The results of the study also indicate that the amount of pocket money affects students' snack behavior. Those who have more pocket money usually buy snacks more often than those who have limited pocket money. In addition, the existence of snacks that are close and easy to reach further encourages students to buy food and drinks around the school. Peers also act as a driving factor, considering that friends often invite and there is a routine of snacking together during breaks.

Thus, parents and schools should provide supervision and habituate students to have healthy snacking behavior. Students are also advised to get used to bringing provisions from home, manage pocket money well, and choose healthy and safe snacks for consumption. Through guidance from parents and teachers, it is hoped that students can develop more positive and healthy snacking habits in the school environment.

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