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Understanding local food consumers and their motivations: A case study in Padang city

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Abstract-Local food system are alternative food systems that can encourage sustainable food production and consumption. The objective of this study is to explore consumers' various motivations when eating local foods at restaurants using the Means-End Chain analysis. The identified motives can be used for advertising strategies to encourage people to consume more local foods. Means-End Chain (MEC) theory has been employed to link the attributes, consequences and values that are represented in a tree-like diagram called Hierarchy in this study were 91 local food consumers in Padang City. Three main hierarchies are identified within the HVM namely 'inexpensive', good healths' and 'taste matters'. These motives can be used for marketing strategies of local foods and applied in any programs to foster the sustainable food system.

Keyword: alternative marketing, sustainable food system, Minangkabau ethnic group, local food, mean-end-chain, restaurant.

I. INTRODUCTION

Local food system (LFS) is an alternative to the global food system that is considered more sustainable for food production and consumption. Local food system consists of many aspects of food production and consumption, including the aspects of production, processing, packaging and distribution from farmers to consumers. Local food system is different from food system in general in that in the former the local foods are produced and sold near the consumers [1]. The local food system is believed to be more economic, which make it a viable alternative food system for both farmers and consumers. It has an ecological sound production and enhances social equity due to its short distribution system [2]. According to [1], local food system can reduce environmental effect due to short transportation system. The advantages which can be achieved from this system are less packaging materials and gas emission. LFS also encourages farmers to promote environmentally-friendly production system, such as organic farming, and to

protect local agricultural landscape and its biodiversity [2]. In terms of economic sustainability, local food system can reduce the dependencies on external market forces and create employment opportunities for local people. As food supplies are commonly provided by local farmers in Indonesia, this system can increase the food security.

The Indonesian Government has promoted local food system to solve the basic problems of consumption, such as low food consumption and low variety of foods to consume. The president Decree no.22 of year 2009 is a significant policy to urge Indonesian people to diversify their food consumption using local foods [17]. In order to encourage Indonesia people to consume more local foods, it is necessary to understand how consumers behave and what motivate them to purchase and consume local foods.

A means-end chain approach is a qualitative approach that has been employed widely in marketing research to understand why people buy or not to buy particular food [3]. This method has been used to re-link the relationships among attributes of a product to consequences due to consuming or using the particular product and service as well as value that consumers want to be achieved. It is assumed that consumers will choose a product to achieve the highest desired values [4]. This study aims to explore consumers true motives when eating local foods at restaurants for a Minangkabau ethnic group who live in Padang City.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Local food system

The conceptualization of what 'local' means differ greatly among consumers (for example [5]-[7]). Reference [8]. Stated that the simple rule of thumb for the meaning of local was that:

'the salad on your bowl doesn't come from a farm thousand of miles away, or from another country (p.1)'.

According to [9] who reported a study of consumers' perceptions of local food in Indonesia, it is mentioned by respondents that the term 'local' is

strongly associated with the place where the foods are produced and sold. Foods produced and sold within a village to a regency area are accepted as local food by Indonesian consumers. This is consistent with the definition developed by [2] that:

"local food system are rooted in particular place, aim to be economically viable for farmers and consumers, use ecologically sound production and distribution practices and enhance social equity and democracy for all members of the community (p.28)".

As the local system relies on small farmers and short distribution system, it is expected to have less negative impacts, such as air pollution from the distribution and industries, degrading biodiversity and waste of packaging [10].

B. Means-End Chain analysis

The means-end chain approach has been employed to uncover the underlying attributes, consequences and values that drive consumers to choose a particular product. This method employs a laddering interviewing technique - a face-to-face and in-depth interview - using a basic question "Why this is important for you". The means-end chain approach is based on a theory that consumers can relate between attributes of products and services (A) to consequences (C) that may emerge as product benefits or risk. The consequences can be categorised into functional and psychosocial consequences [3]. The tangible benefits or risks achieved from consuming or using a product or service are the functional consequence, whereas the psychosocial consequences are emotional benefits from experiencing with the products [11]. Reference [12] defined values (V) as the state of mind that consumers are trying to fulfil. The illustration of the means-end chain approach can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1. The means-end chain approach.

The means-end chain analysis involves four steps in the data analysis process: 1) laddering interview, 2) content analysis procedure, 3) generating and 4) interpreting Hierarchy Value Maps (HVMs) [3]. Content analysis is a coding process of a complete interview advanced by [14]. The next step is to generate the implication matrix that displays the frequency of both direct and indirect relationships between A-C-V. Direct relationship is the implicative associations between adjacent elements whereas indirect relationships are the relations of two elements when there is another element between them [11]. A Hierarchy Value Map is created based on Abstractness Ratio (AR) and Centrality Index

(CI). on Abstractness Ratio (AR) and Centrality Index (CI). Abstractness ratio ranges from 0 to 1. The higher the abstractness ratio of an element means that the element serves as a value. The centrality index represents the role of each element within the HVM. The higher centrality index describes that the element is often mentioned by respondents and is central in the HVM [15]. To construct the HVM, a cut-off level is needed. The rule of thumb to choose a cut-off level is that 3 to 5 cut-off levels are suggested for approximately 50 respondents. Reference [15] suggested that two third of links over all links within the HVM can be used to choose an appropriate cut-off level.

C. Minangkabau ethnic group

Padang City is the largest city in the west coastal region of Sumatra Island; it is also the capital city of West Sumatra province. The people of Padang City mostly belong to the Minangkabau ethnic group (90%). The Minangkabau people often migrate and spread across Indonesia and even to foreign countries. They have a wide variety of professional occupations and are well known to be a well-educated group of people. Padang food is popular among Indonesian people and is commonly served in restaurants in many parts in Indonesia and even overseas. The basic ingredients of food for the Minangese are rice, fish, beef and chicken meat [16]. The food is characterised by spiciness, mainly using herbs like ginger, galangal, turmeric and chillies. It is also a crucial component of both traditional ceremonies and daily living.

III. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Respondents were selected using multistage random sampling. Three sub-districts were selected purposively, which include West Padang, East Padang and Kototangah sub-districts. Two villages were then chosen randomly from each sub district. Next, respondents of two neighborhoods were chosen randomly. The respondents should be food deciders at the households and eat local food at restaurants at least one in a year. This sampling frame and respondents of this study are part of a larger survey conducted by [17]. In this study, a restaurant is defined as "a place where people pay to sit and eat meals that are cooked and served on the premises" (Oxford dictionary online). Ninety one respondents were interviewed using laddering technique. The interviews were then transcribed and coded following the content analysis procedure [14]. An implication matrix was created to calculate the frequency of direct and indirect relationships between elements. A hierarchy value map was then constructed by calculating the abstractness value (AR) and centrality index (CI). The detailed calculation of AR and CI can be seen in Table 2.

Table 1 present the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents in Padang City.

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents in Padang City.

Characteristics	(%)
Gender	
Female	90.1
Age (years)	
< 30	15.4
30 - <50	57.1
50 - <70	24.2
≥70	3.3
Education	
Primary School	13.2
Junior High School	12.1
Senior High School	38.4
College/University	36.3
Occupation	
Housewife	42.3
Trader	27.7
Civil servant	6.7
Private employee	13.3
Student	6.7
Pensioner	3.3

Most of the respondents are dominated by female staying at home as housewives. They are between 30 to 50 years old and have completed senior high school and university degree.

over the total of active links at or above the cut-off level.

Table 2. The Indexes of Abstractness Ratio (AR) and Centrality Index (CI) of Local Foods Consumption at Restaurants in Padang City.

Content Codes	AR	CI
Enjoyable food	0	0.03
Familiar product	0	0.02
Food quality	0	0.04
Healthy food	0	0.03
Inexpensive	0	0.06
Match with taste	0.06	0.05
Prosperous family/area/nation	0.36	0.01
Controlling budget	0.42	0.03
Save time and energy	0.43	0.02
Good health	0.45	0.07
Family eats a lot	0.46	0.07
Save money	0.54	0.08
Social interaction	0.6	0.05
Money for other things	0.66	0.04
Self respect	0.67	0.01
Life satisfaction	0.94	0.04
Happy	0.99	0.2
Health is the most valuable thing in life	1	0.01

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Laddering technique was employed in this study that produced 183 ladders. The results of the abstractness ratio (AR) and centrality index (CI) are presented in Table 2. These indexes were used to construct the HVM. The master codes used in this study followed the study conducted by [17]. The laddering interviews produce 5 attributes with zero abstractness values. These are 'familiar product', 'enjoyable food', 'inexpensive', 'healthy food', and 'food quality'. Among attributes, 'inexpensive' element has the highest centrality index (0.06) that shows this element is the central attributes for respondents in making local food decision. Ten consequences are identified from the HVM with the abstractness ratio ranging from 0.36 to 0.67. the highest centrality index of the consequences is 'save money' (0.08) and 'good health' (0.07) and 'family eats a lot' (0.07) follow. Among three values, 'life satisfaction' is the most important values for respondents (CI=0.04). The cut-off level of 5 was selected to construct the HVM (Figure 1) that represents 63.7 per cent active links

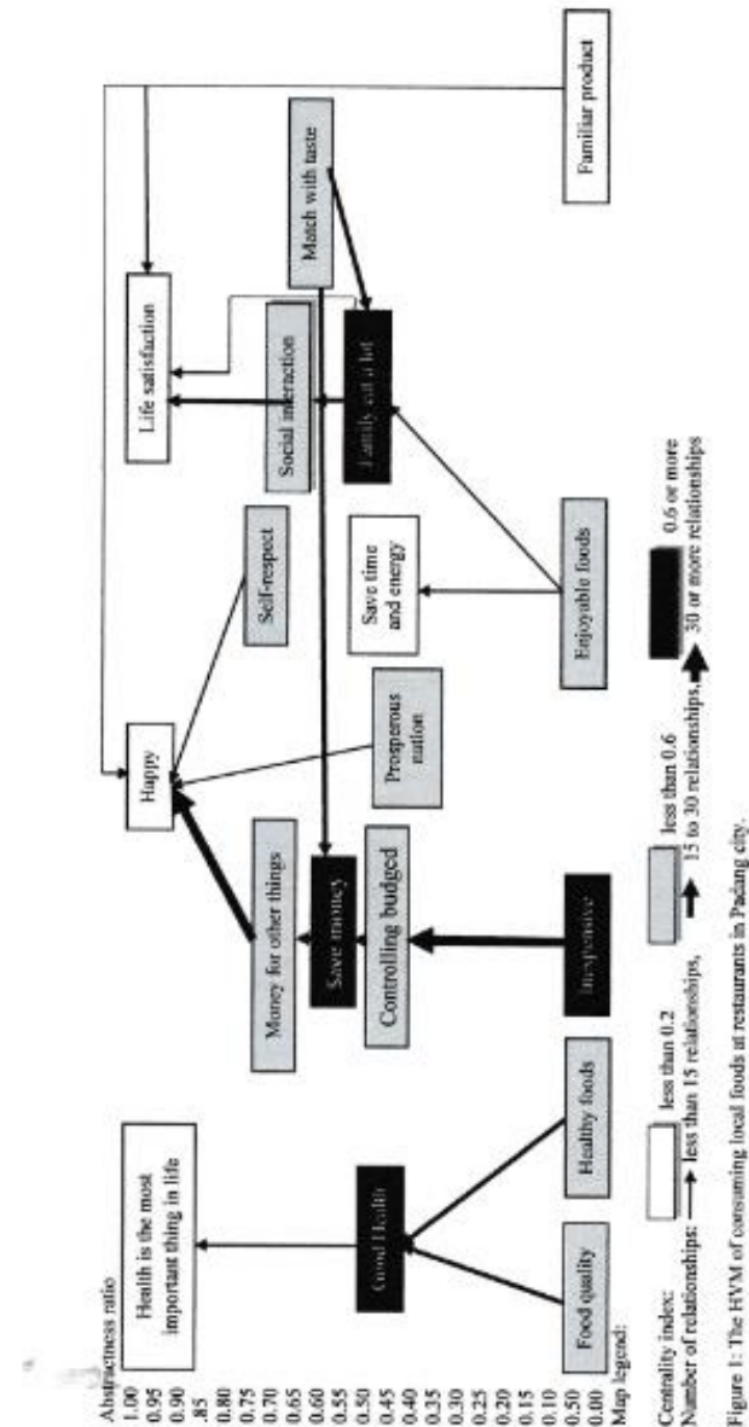


Figure 1: The HVM of consuming local foods at restaurants in Pading city.

The main hierarchies are then identified from the HVM based on the centrality index and the frequency of links mentioned by respondents. Three main themes are identified when eating local foods at restaurants for Padang people namely: 'inexpensive', 'taste matters' and 'good health' as summarised below:

1. Inexpensive
Inexpensive controlling → budgeted save money → money for other things → happy
2. Good health
 - a. Food quality → good health → health is the most important thing in life
 - b. Healthy food → good health → health is the most important thing in life
3. Taste matters
 - a. Match with taste → family eats a lot → social interaction → life satisfaction
 - b. Match with taste → save money → money for other things → happy

It is clearly that consumers consider 'price', 'food quality', 'healthy food' and 'match with taste' when choosing local foods at restaurants. Local foods are considered inexpensive by consumers, so that they can control their money and pay bills or other needs. This can lead to happiness. The second motivation to buy local foods are that they are healthy and good in quality. Therefore respondents can be healthy. For consumers, health is the most important thing in life. The last motivation is that local foods match with respondents' taste. As they eat at restaurant to treat colleagues, friends and family or to celebrate a special events such as birthday party, graduation celebration, so that 'match with taste' is an important consideration, so that family can eat a lot. By eating with friends and family, respondents expect to have a good social interaction that leads to life satisfaction. 'Match with taste' motivation also relates to saving money, so that money can use for other things. This also bring to happiness. These themes can be used as advertising strategy when promoting local food at restaurants.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The means-end chain approach is a powerful approach to reveal the motives behind purchasing local foods. The three identified motives namely 'inexpensive', 'good health' and 'taste matters' can be used as advertising messages to promote local food.

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