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WHAT MOTIVATES CONSUMERS WHEN EATING LOCAL FOODS AT RESTAURANTS? A MEANS-END CHAIN ANALYSIS

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Abstract-The **3** aim of this study is to reveal the consumers' motivation when eating local foods at restaurants. The Means-End Chain (MEC) approach is used to generate Hierarchy Value Maps (HVM) that present the links between attributes, consequences, and values. The steps of means end chain approach start from laddering methods of administration, content analysis procedures and generating the HVM. Network analysis is employed to interpret the Hierarchy Value Maps (HVM). A total of 83 respondents were interviewed in Bandung city linking to MEC theory. Two main motives are identified when eating local foods at restaurants namely 'happiness' and 'fun and enjoyment of life'. These motives can be used for marketing strategy of local foods.

Keywords: consumer motivation, Indonesia, local food, means-end chain, restaurant

I. INTRODUCTION

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The Means End Chain (MEC) approach has been employed to reveal consumer motivation in the food decision making process in different kind of foods (Baker *et al.* 2004; Lind 2007; Barrena & Sánchez 2010; Kirchhoff *et al.* 2011). The Means-end chain approach assumes that consumers will choose a product to achieve a desired values served by product attributes with the subjective consequences [5]. The MEC analysis provides an integrative approach to reveal consumers' motivation why consumers buy or not to buy a specific product.

Local food system offers some benefits both for consumers and producers such as health benefits, food quality, empowering local communities and environmental benefits due to the shorter distance of food travels (Feenstra 1997). Indonesian consumers perceived locally grown produce as cheaper and good quality products than national or imported foods (Arsil *et al.*, 2014a). This is consistent with previous studies reporting that local foods were cheaper than other products and had better quality (Ostrom 2006; Seyfang 2004; Trobe 2001). The local food movement is strongly indicated in some developed countries like the United States and some European

countries. Although Arsil *et al.* (2014b) revealed the motives of Indonesian consumers particularly Javanese ethnic group- when purchasing local foods for daily eating, there is a limited study that examines what the motives behind eating local foods at restaurants. Therefore this study is aimed to examine the consumers' motivation when eating local foods at restaurants using MEC analysis.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Local food system

Local food movement have attracted consumers' attention since the early 80s. Feenstra (1997) reported that some consumers identified local food systems that considered ecological components, life quality and living environment. For consumers, the capacity to differentiate local foods from the widely used food products allows customers to specify the important attributes they prefer. Attributes provided by local foods such as food quality, consumer health and safety, enriching the local community, promoting social equity and waste minimization due to a short marketing system were positive attributes identified by consumers. Local food systems are also believed to be economic and viable alternatives in the food systems for both farmers and consumers with respect to sustainable food consumption (Feenstra 1997). The advantages of the local food system have attracted public-decision makers, research workers, profit and non-profit businessmen, producers and local communities to become involved in this system with its emerging market demands and its interesting phenomena.

B. Means-End Chain analysis

The concept of MEC connects the links between attributes (A), consequences (C) and values (V). The attributes can be referred as perceived characteristics of a product such as 'good taste' and 'expensive price'. Gutman (1982) explained that all consumers' actions have consequences that can be obtained after product-use or later time. The values can be defined as personal belief that might be influenced by social-cultural background (Rokeach 1973). Consumers can learn to connect between the product attributes, consequences and values when making purchasing decisions.

The MEC analysis consists of steps involving laddering interview, content analysis, generating and interpreting the Hierarchy Value Maps (HVM). Soft laddering method of administration is original and common laddering interview that is based on paper and pencil. This employs face-to-face and semi structured interview (Grunert and Grunert 1995). To elicit product distinctions, triadic sorting technique can be used by providing sets of three products. Respondents were then asked to choose the preferred product [5]. Content analysis is consisted of procedures to evaluate the communication messages. The content analysis involves a process of coding procedure of a complete interview recording (Trobe 2001). The coding were then categorised into attributes, consequences and values. Once the coding process has been completed, a Summary Implication Matrixes (SIM) is assigned. The SIM displays the number of frequency of direct and indirect relationships of A-C-V elements. Direct relationships are the connections among adjacent elements (Reynold and Gutman 1988) whereas indirect relationships are the links among elements when there is another element between them. A cut-off level is needed to construct the HVMs. Reynold and Gutman (1988) suggested that a cut-off level of 3 to 5 relations is recommended for approximately 50 respondents that represents two third of relationships between elements.

The links of A-C-V sequence is called a ladder. Some ladders will generate a chain or HVM representing the aggregate links of A-C-V (Reynold and Gutman 1988). In this study, network analysis particularly a concept of abstractness ratio and centrality index will employ to interpret the HVM (see Pieters (1995) for detail calculation of abstractness ratio and centrality index).

C. Eating at restaurant

According to Belk (1975), consumption situations could be an important factor that influenced buying behaviour. Arsil *et al.* (2014a) also considered product-use situation when developed the original concept of the MEC. The definition of product-use situation referred to Belk (1975, p.62) is “any situation that involves the use of commercially available products or services”. In general, consumption situations can be related to a time or space of consumption (Belk 1975). Although consumption

situations are often neglected by researchers, Hall and Lockshin (2000) who conducted an analysis of occasions into wine purchasing behaviour using MEC approach, suggested that situational consumptions should need to take into account when study consumer behaviour. In this study, we examine the location of eating namely at restaurants towards local food purchasing decisions.

III. METHODS

A. Sampling procedure

Bandung city is the third largest city in Indonesia and the capital of West Java province. It is located approximately 140 kilometers south east of Jakarta. Although many ethnic groups are living in this city, the dominant ethnic group is Sundanese descent who are talking in Bahasa Indonesia and Sundanese language. A total of 83 respondents from Bandung city were selected by using screening questions. They must be from Sundanese descents, eating local food at restaurants at least on the week of interview. The definition of restaurant refers to oxford dictionaries (on-line version) is “a place where people pay to sit and eat meals that are cooked and served on the premises”. The respondents should also be a food decider in the family. The respondents were selected by using multistage random sampling. Two districts were selected to represent Bandung city. For every district selected, two villages were selected randomly. Finally, respondents of two neighborhoods were selected accidentally.

The interviews conducted at the respondents’ home and lasted around 30 to 45 minutes. The respondents were dominated by females, completed senior high school and age ranging between 30 -<40 years old (Table 1).

Table 1. Socio-demographic consumers of Bandung city.

Characteristics	(%)
Gender	
Female	91.8
Male	8.2
Age (years)	
< 30	14.1
30 - <40	40
40 - <50	29.4
50 - <60	11.8
60 - <70	4.7
Education	

9	Primary School	17.6
	Junior High School	15.3
	Senior High School	46.2
	Collage/University	24.7
	Post graduate	1.2

B. MEC procedures employed

Soft laddering method of administration were used in the laddering interview using triadic sorting by providing pictures of local, national and imported foods. Respondents then asked what foods they prefer to consume when eating at restaurants. Distinction will generated based on the attributes identified by respondents between three sets of food products. A standard of laddering question, “Why is this element important for you?” was asked to generate a ladder. Network analysis approach was used in order to interpret the HVMs.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 143 ladders were used in this study from the laddering interviews. A total of the 38 active content codes consisted of 15 attributes, 14 consequences and 9 values produced from content analysis procedures. To construct the HVM, the concept of abstractness ratio (AR) and centrality index (CI) were used in this study. The AR index can be used to indicate which element serves as an attribute or a value. The higher the AR index means that the element serves as the value. In contrast, the element serves as the attribute when it has a lower AR value. In addition, the centrality index is employed to explain the central role of an element within the hierarchy. The higher CI value confirms that the element plays an important role over other elements. Table 2 presents the AR and CI of the main attributes, consequences and values of eating local foods at restaurants for respondents from Bandung city. A cut-off level of 4 was chosen to generate the HVM (Figure 1) that represents 57.1 per cent active links at or above the cut-off level over the total of active links.

1 Table 2. The Abstractness Ratio (AR) and Centrality Index (CI) of eating local foods at restaurants for Bandung city.

Eating local foods at restaurants

Codes	AR	CI
Attributes		
Inexpensive	0.04	0.06
Healthy foods	0.07	0.03
Enjoyable food	0.08	0.06
Trust the food	0.12	0.03
Food quality	0.14	0.03
Can afford	0.19	0.02
Easy for cooking	1.20	0.02
Good taste	0.22	0.05
Support local communities	0.33	0.02
Consequences		
Controlling budget	0.37	0.04
Save money	0.43	0.08
Good health	0.47	0.09
Money for other things	0.63	0.06
Save time and energy	0.65	0.02
Time for other things	0.65	0.04
Earn money	0.73	0.03
Values		
Better family relationship	0.80	0.03
Life satisfaction	0.95	0.03
Fun and enjoyment of life	0.97	0.07
Happy	0.99	0.1

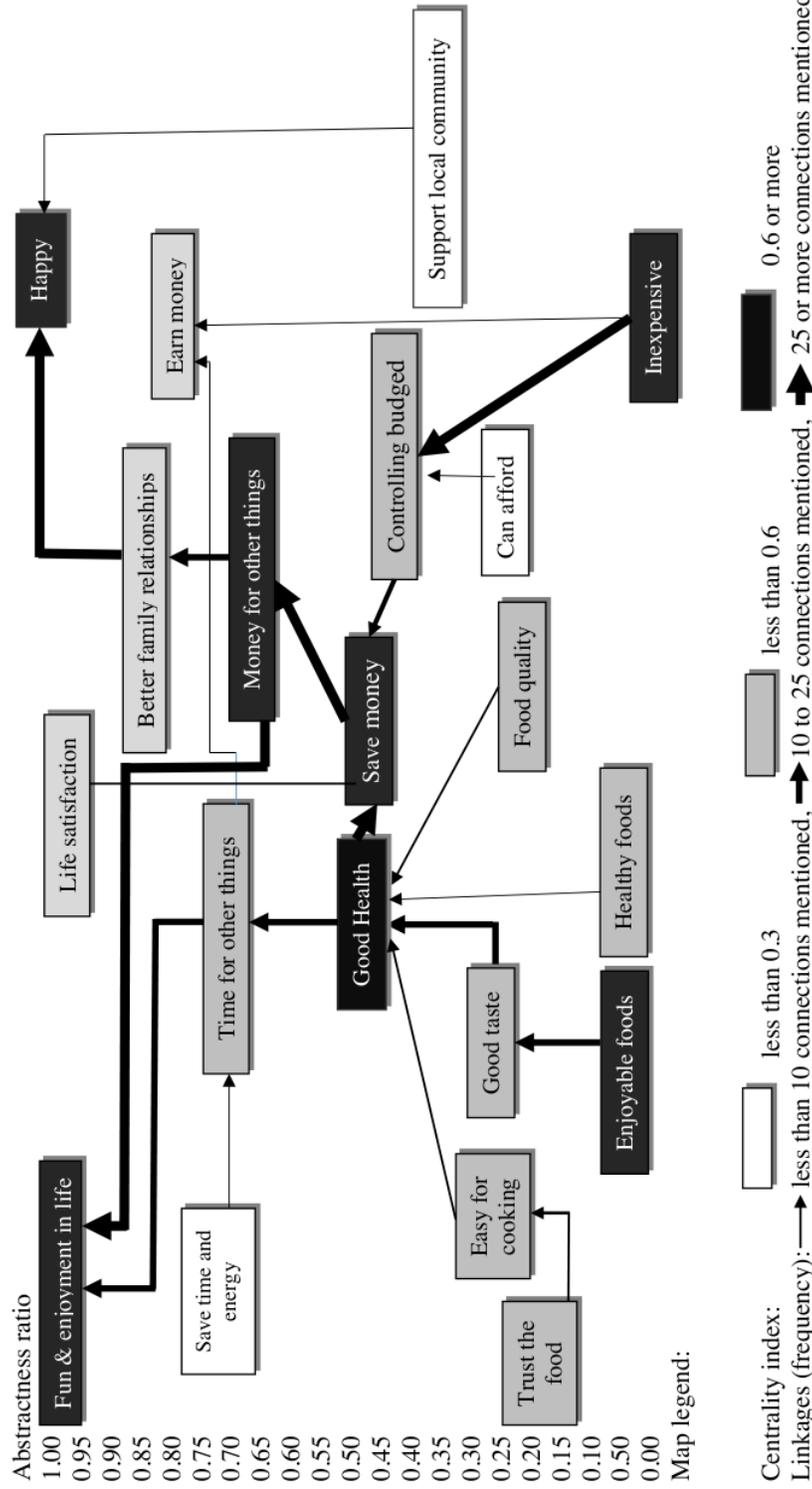


Figure 1: The HVM of eating local foods at restaurants for Bandung people at cut-off level of 4.

The results of this study can be summarized below.

- The laddering interview of eating local foods at restaurants for Bandung people produces 7 attributes, 7 consequences and 4 values. Based on the conception of centrality index, the attributes of 'inexpensive' and 'enjoyable foods' have of greater importance than other attributes. 'Good health', 'save money' and 'money for other things' are also important consequences compared to others. The values of 'fun & enjoyment of life' and 'happiness' are the central value in this hierarchy.
- There are five main hierarchies identified in this study with two major themes:
 1. Happiness
 - Inexpensive→ controlling budget→ save money→ money for other things→ better family relationship→ happy
 - Enjoyable foods→ good taste→ good health→ save money→ money for other things→ better family relationship→ happiness
 2. Fun and enjoyment of life
 - Inexpensive→ controlling budget→ save money→ money for other things→ fun and enjoyment of life
 - Enjoyable foods→ good taste→ good health→ save money→ money for other things→ fun & enjoyment of life
 - Enjoyable foods→ good taste→ good health→ time for other things→ fun & enjoyment of life
- The two major themes 'happiness' and 'fun and enjoyment of life' identified within the HVM can be used as the central messages for marketing strategy to promote local foods at restaurants.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The use of ¹³ means-end chain provides a better understanding of the consumers' motives. Two major themes with regards to the motives of Bandung consumers when eating local foods at restaurants are identified namely 'happiness' and 'fun and enjoyment of life'.

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