Changes in the Culinary Purchasing Behavior via Digital due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Coronavirus (COVID-19), which spreads almost all over the world including Indonesia, is of great concern to the global public. In preventing the spread of virus, the government appealed to the public to work, study, worship, and even to process food process from home. The Public is required to provide their own food and drinks. People are also advised not to leave the house or eat at the restaurant. This pattern was applied by the public for approximately three months until finally felt bored. The use of an online application offering home culinary product delivery was finally glimpsed as a means of diverting food menus that are routinely tested at home by trying the foods and drinks offered. The purpose of study is to explore changes in purchasing behavior before and during the Covid-19 pandemic. This descriptive qualitative study used a purposive sampling method with respondents aged 12-60 years living in Soloraya area. Data collection was done by distributing questionnaires and secondary data. Implication of the results of study is that there are differences in face-to-face purchases appearing categories based on food type and distance. In purchasing behavior, consumers carry out the processes of (1) need recognition (2) research of information (3) selective and (4) purchase. The differentiating process during a pandemic is related to the frequency of purchases higher than that before the pandemic and consumers purchasing culinary product more selectively using digital system in terms of hygienic food processes, packaging products, and health delivery protocols.

Keywords: behavior, purchase, culinary, digital, covid-19
1. INTRODUCTION

At the end of December 2019, a virus called COVID-19 appeared. Early in Wuhan, China, COVID-19 was called a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) [1]. The original coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was SARS-CoV2 and became the cause of a fatal disease of great global public health concern [2]. World old meters data on Sunday (19/4/2020) morning mentions that the number of Covid-19 cases globally reached 2,324,731 cases [3].

The dissemination process is considered quite fast, even though the government has taken several steps to prevent it from spreading. Government regulations are implemented by requiring people to work from home, learn from home, and worship at home. This regulation has also been implemented by local governments in Soloraya. In food processing activities, people are required to provide their own food and drinks. People are advised not to leave the house just to eat at the restaurant. But over time, people feel bored. This can be caused by someone's lack of skill in processing food. Seeing this, online applications have begun to emerge to offer home delivery with the application of physical distancing which is continuously being conveyed to hold back the pace of corona virus transmission.

Grab development was launched in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia around 2012 ago and has been in seven other countries accompanying people who need assistance with various technologies offered [4]. Not inferior to applications made by a domestic citizen, there is Gojek. Gojek started to be launched in 2010. In 2015, Gojek developed rapidly after launching an application with three services: Go-Ride, GoSend, and GoMart, and other varying services. [5].

The food delivery message application is deemed sufficient to help the community provide food and beverages. People only need to upload the application then register themselves. The process of ordering food is simple, by selecting the restaurant and menu available. Then, wait for the driver to deliver the ordered food or drink to its destination. Payments are made in cash or electronic money. The electronic money used in Go-Jek is GO Pay and Grab in the form of OVO. Each application makes it easy for people to top up their electronic money via ATMs, M-banking, and even directly through the driver. The choice of using GO-PAY and OVO is influenced by many factors, to identify factors that will contribute to user decisions, especially for applications that do not have to be paid[6].

The public is getting smarter in carrying out various transactions that have a sufficiently good impact on their interests. Various promotions and conveniences provided by each application are a reference for always using. This desire currently needs to be implemented to support the government in preventing the transmission of COVID 19. It is possible that the deadly COVID-19 infection could move through cash money [7]. The use of cashless or non-cash is an alternative to physical distancing.

One study on virtual stores [8] found that shopping for food with fresh product delivery services such as Amazon Fresh is under development, for perishable products is required because FaV quality cannot be assessed by consumers when virtual stores are used. This study examined the impact of physical stores, non-immersive virtual stores, and immersive virtual store environments on consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior towards fruits and vegetables (FaV). The study found that consumers' perceptions on FaV in non-immersive and immersive (VS) virtual stores were similar to those on physical stores. In contrast, consumers purchase more FaV in non-immersive and immersive VS compared to physical stores. The findings also indicated that consumers tend to rely more on extrinsic cues (e.g., FaV price) in deep VS when evaluating offered FaVs and less about intrinsic cues (e.g., the appearance of FaV) that they use in physical stores.

Based on previous studies, in this study, the researchers want to know the factors that influence the behavior change during culinary transactions by people from various walks of life through online applications before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Consumer Purchasing Behavior

Consumer behavior [9] is the on that processes individuals, groups, or organizations in the act of choosing, using, disposing of products, services, experiences, or ideas for customer satisfaction. This view on consumer behavior is broader than the traditional view focusing more narrowly on the buyer and the direct antecedents and consequences of the buying process.

The consumer purchasing process, according to [10], goes through several processes: the process of need recognition, seeking information from both media and non-media (worth of mouth), and selective by making a selection by considering elements of need, motivation for use and socio-cultural factors. After the steps above are done, consumers are sure to make a purchase.

Consumer behavior can vary, according to [11], one of which adds commercial features to social media. The first thing we can see is that the behavior of consumers in responding to trading activities in the context of buying tends to build relationships with each other through social interactions and exchanges of social support influence their buying decision behavior SNS. The second, consumers add social media features in the form of e-commerce.

Through e-commerce sales, consumers also get various benefits. An example is the advantage of obtaining valuable product-related information for purchasing decisions, especially for online purchases. In the online application [11], consumers voluntarily contribute information related to products and their personal shopping experiences in the online application. Consumers are formed to be actively involved in disseminating commercial-related information and creating various profitable business values. Social commerce thus provides a social media-based approach to changing business practices and services. Companies can
present their products and engage customers on social media platforms with the aim of promoting a product, branding, sales, and other business values.

2.2 Purchase by Digital

The buying process has changed with technology. Today consumers can buy with the delivery service application or e-money facility so that it provides efficiency and security because it does not use cash. E-money or electronic money is a means of making transactions. Electronic money is divided into two: money in cards (card chips) and in electronics such as cellphones or said to be e-wallets [12].

The advantages and benefits of e-money compared with cash, as explained in the study [13], are among others: (1) transactions are faster and more convenient, especially for transactions of small value (micropayment), there are no calculation errors and do not require change; (2) Efficient time to complete a transaction with e-money can be done far; and (3) Electronic value can be topped up to the e-money card through various means provided by the issuer.

The results of studies conducted described the understanding of e-money adoption behavior by describing perceived benefits as a factor influencing the intention to reuse electronic money in Indonesia. It also contributes to managerial practice, in which there is a difference in intention to reuse electronic money between adopters and non-adopters due to a lack of product information [14]. A previous study [15] can provide an idea that respondents using the delivery message application are more efficient in their activities, more flexible, this application helps consumers find the nearest place to eat, find out prices and menus without having to come directly to the place to eat.

The number of purchase transactions by Jakarta residents through the use of food delivery services in 2017 on the Gofood application, as an example of a martabak merchandise, reached 3 million transactions per year. Ayam Geprek reached 2 million transactions. The results of transaction show that public interest in big cities has begun to switch to using the delivery service application as a medium for economic transactions. The reasons for using the application to use Go Food are time efficiency, long distances, go out lazily for work reasons. Seeing this, the use of applications can be seen as fulfilling the lifestyle of its consumers [16].

2.3 Culinary Distinctions in Indonesia

Indonesia has a variety of food products produced in various regions. The mention of Indonesian regional culinary product names is specific because it is often compared with international foods such as pasta, pizza, steak, and hamburgers, although the numbers are more numerous and more varying when compared with popular international foods.

Traditional food [17] or local food is one of the identities of a community group that is easy to find and easy to identify. Each region in Indonesia has a culinary wealth that characterizes or identifies the area. One [18] region that has a unique culinary wealth is the Soloraya region. The Soloraya region, consisting of Surakarta, Sukoharjo, Wonogiri, Karanganyar, Sragen and Boyolali, has its own charm, especially for culinary lovers. The delicious taste and attractive presentation makes a distinction in the place where the culinary product originates. The culinary mapping refers to the variety of culinary conditions that have particularities. Another culinary product [19] that is on the rise in Indonesia is ready-to-eat culinary one or fast food. Fast food is provided by restaurants that provide instant food (fast food) and are generally franchise restaurants or branches of global brands with western menus that have been adapted to local tastes. The rise of ready-to-eat culinary product is due to the variety of menus, atmosphere and quality of restaurant services that make this culinary experience a shift in the minds of consumers to become 'comfort food'.

3. METHODS

The study took place the Soloraya region for 4 months with an assumption that it is not certain when the Covid 19 pandemic will end. This qualitative descriptive study used a questionnaire distribution technique via google form to people aged 12 - 60 years. Respondents in this age range are considered to have rationality in making purchasing decision. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. The data taken was primary data, based on the questionnaires distributed. To analyze the data, it is necessary to have a respondent profile, survey data including: residential address, age, gender, income, and use of the delivery service application before and after the Covid-19 pandemic which is then tabulated and analyzed descriptively. Secondary data were obtained from articles and news from mass media.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Culinary Purchasing Behavior before the Covid-19 Pandemic

Purchasing behavior is generally carried out by visiting stores, viewing, and sorting the desired items. This is also done when making culinary purchases. In culinary purchases, consumers go directly to the seller of the food product they are looking for, pick it up to eat on the spot or take away and pay for it at the cashier. This is as explained by Anisa Agustin, one of the respondents from Sukoharjo Regency who stated that "in culinary purchasing transactions before the pandemic, she preferred to eat at food product vendors."

Ayu Dyah Utami, from Karanganyar Regency, said the same thing, who often bought in person and face to face. Another respondent, Devi Nur Indah Sari from Surakarta, said that before pandemic the transactions were carried out in two ways: going directly to the restaurant and sometimes using grab (online application).
The menu selection in the purchasing process before the pandemic carried out by the respondents can be grouped into three types: (1) side dishes such as processed chicken, beef and vegetables, (2) fast food menus such as pizza and donuts, and (3) dessert menu such as donuts, martabak, salads, and soft drinks. The menu selection before the pandemic was varying. Ongki Yunati Dewi, a respondent from Sragen said "menu selection is based on the ease with which it is easy to find the nearest restaurant". Anisa Agustin Probowati from Sukoharjo argued that good food is the basis for culinary purchases by eating at restaurants. Ratih Wijayanti from Surakarta also has reasons for choosing to eat on the spot because it is cheap, delicious and has fast service. This argument supports one of the research results [20] finding that food quality and location decisions are made based on two main considerations for restaurants in this emerging market. Payment method used in face-to-face transactions is cash or e-money such as OVO, Dana, shoppepay and Gopay.

Food transactions through applications in pre-pandemic period became a second choice for respondents. From the respondent's data, the delivery service applications that can be used in the Soloraya area are Go Food, Grab food, and delivery services provided by restaurants. The selection of transactions via delivery messages from respondent data is very rare. Respondents see the delivery message application only used when conditions do not allow for face-to-face (offline) purchases. As stated by Asna Putri that the use of the application "shortens time because it can be used for other things without the need to come to the place to eat and the food has arrived." Ratih Wijayanti also conveyed that the application "lots of discounts is practical because without returns, no need to worry when the wallet is left behind and hygienic because you don't need to hold money.

Respondents have various considerations in using delivery service applications, for example, long delivery, cold fast food and high prices. This was conveyed by Kurniawan, a respondent from Boyolali that the duration of use for a week is uncertain because of the length of delivery and the increased price The length of the delivery process makes Sri Purmaningsih only use the application twice a week because the food is cold and the packaging is difficult to enjoy directly. Another reason for Ayu dyah utami is "not ready at any time ... when it is urgent and an empty balance is needed and must be topped up first." In the research data tabulation, the average respondent spent IDR 20,000-50,000 for one transaction.

4.2 Culinary Purchase Behavior during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The coronavirus outbreak that has hit almost all countries including Indonesia has an impact on all aspects of life. One of them is the aspect of making transactions. At the beginning of March 2020 the pandemic began to spread in various major cities in Indonesia. People are also encouraged to work, go to school and worship from home. This also has an impact on culinary purchases. In the beginning of a pandemic, People, like it or not like, have to provide their own food at home to meet their daily needs. People are worried about coming directly to the restaurant to buy food.

For three months, people have to live their life from home, making them saturated with their daily food. Saturation of the type of food eaten is overcome by one of them conducting culinary transactions through delivery service applications such as Go-food and grab-food. Asna Putri, one of the respondents said that she wanted a new menu besides cooking at home when asked about the use of a delivery service application during a pandemic. Ayu dyah utami also conveyed that the reasons are the need and the fear of leaving the house in using the application. In contrast to Ratih Wijayanti, who has a reason for using the delivery service application with the consideration that “she prefers food mixed not using bare hands and tends to be less crowded with visitors.” She uses online applications to interact less. In the delivery process, several respondents asked the driver to put food at the door. The reasons stated were (1) to maintain distance, (2) to avoid direct contact with the delivery person, and (3) to provide a sense of security. Some respondents are still accepted directly on the grounds of politeness.

From the data tabulation, the types of food ordered by respondents experienced changes, namely only dessert food and fast food. Tias Tri Astari mentioned this food choice is varying and chosen based on desire. Asna Putri also conveyed the reason of a momentary desire and depending on the mood. The frequency of purchases in one week has increased to 4-5 times a week, on average. The average nominal value of money used in transactions has not changed.

4.3 Changes in Consumer Purchasing Culinary Behavior

The Soloraya region is a hinterland area known as the "SUBOSUKAWONOSRATEN" area (Surakarta, Boyolali, Sukoharjo, Karanganyar, Wonogiri, Sragen, dan Klaten). In this region, there are various and distinctive culinary choices from main dishes, snacks to desserts. From traditional food to fast food is also available. Seeing this, the culinary purchase process is unique compared to the process of purchasing other items. Consumer purchasing behavior related to culinary through various considerations with the process including (1) Need of recognition, (2) search of information, (3) selectiveness, and (4) purchase.

Need of recognition [10]. Need of recognition is a starting point for consumer purchasing behavior based on the knowledge, purchase and consumption experience they get personally or through experiences in their environment. Need recognition is needed when consumers feel the difference between what they feel to be the ideal versus the actual situation. Need recognition [21]. Need recognition based on individual experience memories arises from motivation, knowledge, consumer resources, personality
values and lifestyle. Need recognition based on environmental influences can be caused by factors of culture, social class, personal influences, family, and situation. The recognition of the need will be increasingly considered in the presence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

When need recognition occurs, consumers start to look for information and solutions to meet their unmet needs. Techniques used by consumers to sort through internal memory (personal experience) or external experience. In this second stage, consumers will seek for related information [22]: a) Affordable prices; b) Distinctive taste; c) Trademarks; d) Product packaging; e) Quality of food; f) Price-appropriate portions; g) Authentic location; h) Typical physical building facilities. The information search process will be applied differently by consumers during the Covid-19 pandemic. During a pandemic, as quoted from website ayosemarang.com [23], the local government has implemented rules for culinary business actors, namely from eating on the spot and being asked to only serve take away consumers.

The surrounding environmental conditions with the Covid-19 pandemic made Zulfa Diana, one of the respondents, feel that self-cooking is safer than before the pandemic. Culinary transactions have also changed from face-to-face (offline) to online via a delivery service application. Delivery service or online payment has actually been used by consumers before the pandemic. Ratih Wijayanti, one of the respondents, explained that during the pandemic, the culinary transaction process was carried out by ordering online and then being delivered. The reasons include discount, practicality, non-returnable and hygiene. Consumer inevitably prefers delivery service platforms as a shopping medium because they can shop comfortably in their own homes and in their own spare time. Delivery service providers in the food industry, according to research [24], as a step for food industry sellers to avoid saturated markets and to remain competitive.

Table 1. Purchase Behavior before Pandemic

The emergence of local regulations for culinary business actors makes consumers need to think repeatedly of conducting culinary transactions. Consumers then collect information through the experiences of other people around them or news in the media, especially on social media. Reported by the article in kontan.co.id [25], delivery services increased rapidly in the era of Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB). However, consumers are still anxious in determining the culinary transaction process. Consumers then look for information by paying attention to several things: (1) the food processing process (2) the outermost packaging of the product, the outermost packaging having direct contact with the delivery man, and (3) the process of interaction between the delivery man and the consumer.

Ratih Wijayanti, one of the respondents, "prefers food mixed not using empty hands and tends to be less crowded with visitors. Online applications are used to avoid frequent interactions."

In the process of food delivery, the driver man applies the health protocol by placing the food ordered at the door. Reported by a business article.tempo.co [26], Go Food service providers have improved the Health protocol for man drivers, including: (1) providing instant text message services in the application, (2) transacting with non-cash payments such as go-pay and pay letters and (3) driver man is regularly checked for body temperature and his vehicle is routinely sanitized. The Grab food application implements contactless delivery services. Through this service, consumers can send special requests to the driver man via chat to place orders at the door of the house, fence, or another point area. Grab food also applies a protocol for driver man to put food at a safe distance of 2 meters when taken directly. Payment is also recommended using an envelope for cash payments.

Table 2. Purchase Behavior during a pandemic

The application of health protocols in culinary transactions during a pandemic indicates a form of selective consumers. Selective is a process coming from the basis of customer involvement. Selective includes [27] motivational aspects (emotional and cognitive) and behavioral aspects of human drivers’ involvement with consumers. Consumers certainly want to feel safe and not experience anxiety about contracting Covid-19.

Unlike in the pre-pandemic period, consumers were more selective [28] by comparing information about; advertising of a particular brand, expectations of a preexisting brand and memories of a good purchase impression of a previous product.

5. CONCLUSION

Consumer behavior in making culinary purchases during the Covid-19 Pandemic did not change significantly. Consumers have been using e-money and delivery service applications such as GoFood and Grab Food before the pandemic. The frequency of use of e-money and delivery services is very limited because consumers prefer to eat at restaurants or take away.

During a pandemic, the frequency of consumers using e-money and delivery services is higher. This is due to the existence of interaction restrictions (physical distancing) and the local regulations prohibiting the culinary entrepreneurs from provide eating facilities in restaurants. This regulation forces consumers to order delivery services and use e-money more selectively for (1) the food production process, (2) food packaging, and (3) health delivery protocols.
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