

Frozen Food as an Alternative to Fulfill Community Food During The Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of the shift in meeting food needs that occurred during the covid-29 pandemic through the theory of consumer behavior from an anthropological point of view. Various policies implemented in order to break the chain of the spread of COVID-19 have narrowed the space for people to move, especially activities to fulfill food needs. People who were initially oriented to food needs in the form of fresh food now have to find other alternatives that can help meet food needs that can minimize contact with other communities. One of the food innovations that is now starting to be in demand again to become an alternative food is frozen food. Based on data from ARPI, frozen food products recorded a 17% increase in demand compared to 2020. Initially frozen food innovation was intended to be a solution due to changes in consumption patterns of urban people who have busy work and find it difficult to find time to meet food needs in a conventional way, Currently, frozen food is starting to be in demand by the public again during the pandemic to become an alternative to fulfill food.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Food Fulfillment, Covid-19

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in many changes in various aspects of people's lives. In its development, society has experienced many adjustments in the face of the pandemic. Various policies implemented in order to break the chain of the spread of COVID-19 tend to narrow the community's space for movement, one of which is activities to fulfill food needs. People who were initially oriented to food needs in the form of fresh food now have to find other alternatives that can help fulfill food but without too much contact with the outside world.

One of the food innovations that is currently in great demand by the public in order to fulfill food needs is frozen food. Frozen food is a food product that has been packaged and stored frozen in the freezer so that it is ready to be cooked and consumed at a certain time (Anggraini, 2010). Initially, frozen food innovation was intended to be a solution due to changes in people's consumption patterns, especially big cities which have busy working days which have an impact on the limited time they have to take care of food needs such as cooking side dishes and

vegetables. Currently, frozen food is starting to be in demand by the public again during the pandemic. Based on data compiled from the Indonesian Refrigeration Chain Association (ARPI), frozen products or frozen food recorded a 17% increase in demand compared to 2020.

In addition to the distribution of Frozen Food through large producers, this distribution is also carried out by the restaurant and home-based business sector to MSMEs either through direct selling, through marketplace, reseller, or dropshipper. So basically the fulfillment of food by using frozen food is easier to do and there is less interaction involved in it. The phenomenon of the shift in meeting food needs that occurred during the covid-29 pandemic became an interesting topic that could be explored through food studies viewed from an anthropological point of view, so the group then chose this topic to be raised and discussed in future research.

2. Theoretical framework

In order to find better data and research results, conducting literacy on various studies relevant to the research topic is an important thing that needs to be done, therefore the researcher presents several previous research results that are quite relevant to the research phenomenon to be studied. Based on research conducted by Imam Santoso (2018) entitled "Product Friendship and Interest To Buy Frozen Food: Role of Product Knowledge, Packaging, And Social Environment" contains research results which state that the increasing dynamics of society has led to changes in lifestyle including shifts in The pattern of food consumption from using fresh food ingredients has partially shifted to frozen food products. Frozen food products are an alternative choice for households to meet their food needs. The results showed that product knowledge was not proven to have a significant effect on product familiarity. Product packaging and social environment are proven to have a significant effect on product familiarity.

In this case, both research conducted by previous researchers and research conducted by groups have similarities. As for the similarity in question, both of them are studying related changes in people's lifestyles. However, in this case, the difference between the two studies is related to the focus of the research. In previous studies, the focus of the study was related to the influence of product familiarity with consumer buying interest, while the focus of the study from the group was related to how the COVID-19 pandemic could then change the way people fulfill food in more detail.

Based on research conducted by Kuswara (2021) entitled "Frozen Food Should Be An Alternative At The Pandemic Covid-19" it is explained that one of the factors why consumers choose frozen food is also influenced by economic factors. frozen food products are considered cheaper and are the best option in meeting food needs during the covid 19 pandemic. The value of t count is greater than the value of t table, namely the value of the store atmosphere variable, namely $10.86 > 1.65$ and $6.29 > 1.65$, while simultaneously fcount is also greater than the table value, namely

7.51 > 3.08. The influence of store atmosphere shows a greater influence than the price of the product, which is 37.9%, while the variable price of the product has an effect of 12.9%. The influence of these two variables shows an effect of 53.4% and is a strong influence to influence consumer purchasing decisions.

Socio-cultural factors have an important role in influencing eating habits in society. This is in line with Koentjaraningrat's explanation where what is thought, known and felt becomes the point of view that a person will use in choosing food. In this case, eating habits are also influenced by the environment and the availability of food ingredients. This is in line with Madanjinah's explanation which reveals that there are several factors that influence food consumption, namely economic and price factors as well as socio-cultural and religious factors.

3. Method

3.1 Types of Research

The research method is basically a scientific way to obtain data with a specific purpose and use. Through research humans can use the results to understand, solve and anticipate problems. In this research, qualitative research is used. Qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior.

Qualitative research methods are often called naturalistic research methods because the research is carried out in natural conditions, also known as ethnographic methods. Qualitative research is carried out on natural objects that develop as they are, not manipulated by researchers and the presence of researchers does not really affect the dynamics of the object. According to Sukmadinata (2009:53-60), qualitative research is research that is used to describe and analyze phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and people individually or in groups.

This research was conducted by a research group by conducting research observations first, making a questionnaire about the consumption of frozen food during the pandemic, and then conducting virtual interviews with people who filled out questionnaires based on their level of interest in frozen food, to obtain information related to Frozen Food as an Alternative. Fulfillment of Community Food during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

3.2 Research Sites

According to Nasution (2003:43) said that the research location refers to the notion of social location which is characterized by the presence of three elements, namely actors, places and observation activities. The location of the research conducted by the researcher is the social media used by the informants such as whatsapp, instagram, and facebook. This research was conducted through virtual interviews with informants and researchers using interview guidelines as a research instrument. The location of this research is focused on one of the sub-districts in Medan City. This aims to make the research location a sample in describing how

the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on changes in food fulfillment patterns in Medan City

3.3 Determination of Informants

Determination of informants in this study was selected by purposive sampling method which is not determined by profession, age, strata, or even randomly, but is determined on the basis of certain goals. In (Sugiyono, 2009) it is explained that purposive sampling is a technique for determining informants with certain considerations. The informants in this study were Aidia rahmah, Amalia, and Siti Liza Khairani.

3.4 Data Collection Techniques

According to Sugiyono (2009:224) data collection techniques are the most strategic steps in research, because the main purpose of research is to obtain data. Sugiyono (2009:225) also explains that "in qualitative research data collection is carried out in natural settings (natural conditions), primary data sources and data collection techniques are mostly on observation, interviews and documentation.

3.4.1 Observation

According to Widoyoko (2014: 46) observation is a systematic observation and recording of the elements that appear in a symptom in the object of research. According to Riyanto (2010: 96) observation is a data collection method that uses direct and indirect observations. In this study, the researcher made direct observations by looking at the social media accounts of informants who usually often upload stories of frozen food that they consume.

3.4.2 Interview

According to Riyanto (2010:82) interview is a data collection method that requires direct communication between investigators and subjects or respondents. This interview was conducted virtually with people who like to consume frozen food, namely Aidia rahmah, Amalia, and Siti Liza Khairani. Where the informants provide responses to the questions posed by researchers.

3.4.3 Documentation

According to Arikunto (2006:158) is a method of investigating written documentation researchers such as books, magazines, documents, regulations, minutes of meetings, diaries and so on. In this study, the researcher documented the results of research interviews by taking screenshots of the evidence of the conversation between the researcher and the informant.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Frozen Food as Food Innovation

Food innovation is an effort made to create a new food product or improve existing food products with the aim of meeting people's food needs and increasing their selling value. This food innovation is increasingly being carried out, especially during the current pandemic, which requires people to be smart in thinking about

ways to survive. One of the food innovations that are very popular today by the community is frozen food.

Frozen food products are processed frozen food products that are durable and easy in processing and presentation techniques. Processed frozen food products, commonly called frozen food, are the result of food preservation technology by lowering the temperature to the freezing point in order to slow down the decay process. The existence of these frozen food products during the COVID-19 pandemic provides convenience for consumers who consume them. The types also vary from processed chicken, processed beef, snacks, potatoes, processed seafood, vegetables and others. So that these food products are the most sought after and in demand by the public, especially urban communities where there is a shift in habits or lifestyles that want to consume food products that are hygienic, ready to eat, time-saving, practical, easy to cook, and easy to obtain. In addition, during this pandemic, the movement of people who are limited to not mobilizing much and visiting places that are crowded is also the reason why this frozen food product is the choice for consumption (Amalia, Bahar, Suhartiningsih, & Soeyono, 2021).

4.2 Results and Discussion

Basically the lower middle class people tend to choose fresh food ingredients compared to the upper class people who are quite familiar with frozen food and consume it. In line with this, initially frozen food products were also only available in supermarkets and other locations that were only accessible to the upper class or at least to urban communities. In this case the researchers saw a change in the pattern of food choices and food availability in the community.

In its development, especially during the pandemic, the middle and lower classes are now starting to switch from fresh food to frozen food. This is considered to be a better choice considering the condition of the health protocol which limits the movement of the entire community. The level of outdoor activity is increasingly being narrowed in order to suppress the spread of COVID-19, so that as an alternative, people then look for food that can last for a long time, at least longer than fresh food. In addition, the existence of frozen food is increasingly visible when this product has started to be sold in many traditional market outlets to stalls around people's residences. This makes frozen food products more easily accessible and consumed by the public.

Based on the results of questionnaires filled out by 33 respondents, it was concluded that frozen food is one of the most popular food ingredients by families, especially teenagers who are around 19 years old at this time. They are much aware that during this pandemic period, one of the reasons for the shift in food from fresh to frozen food is ready-to-eat food that is frozen in the freezer to make it durable and long-lasting. The reason they gave was also the majority stated that frozen food was their choice during this pandemic because frozen food became practical food, more durable, no need to be reprocessed because it only had to be cooked, the price

was much cheaper than fresh food, and The shelf life of the product is relatively long so that it can be stored and eaten at any time.

The types of food preferred by the respondents were also very diverse. Starting from processed frozen chicken, processed meat such as meatballs, nuggets, sausages, dimsum, dumplings, chicken and others. There are also processed potatoes that are preserved and if you want to eat them, you just have to fry them. This type of processed material is currently also widely spread in the market or minimarket. These foods are easily available during this pandemic so they are the right choice for consumption.

Next, based on the results of interviews with several informants, the results obtained are according to the first informant, the factor why people choose to consume frozen food during this pandemic is because of the rules to reduce community movement and avoid crowds so that shopping for informants says it is done once a week and frozen food is wrong. one choice of food consumed because it is more practical and durable if stored in the freezer. The informant said that the frozen food choices that are widely consumed are types that are used as side dishes to eat and snacks such as chicken, nuggets, meatballs, batagor and sausages. This frozen food is a companion need, not the main need for informants and families during this pandemic.

Then, based on the second informant, according to him, the factor that became the reason people consumed frozen food during the pandemic was that it was more practical and durable to store considering there was an appeal to reduce movement outside so that frozen food was an option for consumption. Informants also want to reduce movement outside the home, usually buying frozen food ordered online. Another reason for informants switching from fresh food to frozen food is that it is more economical and cheaper. But that doesn't mean frozen food is the only main food ingredient, but that frozen food is in stock for supplies if suddenly the ingredients run out and also for snacks. And the types of frozen food that are most often consumed are sausages, nuggets, meatballs, potatoes and others.

And the last informant, the third informant, according to him, the reason for the increasing interest in frozen food during the pandemic is because this type of frozen food is more durable, so many people stock it at home. This is done to comply with regulations for prohibiting crowds and limiting people's movement during the pandemic. Informants also choose frozen food for snacks such as dimsum which is often stocked at home to be consumed when hungry. The reason is because dimsum which is sold and shaped into frozen food is more practical than pandas having to prepare ingredients and make them again. Other frozen food products that are often consumed by informants are meatballs, sausages, and nuggets. And frozen food is not the main food requirement for the informant's family, but only becomes a complementary food because even though they consume a lot of frozen food, the informants still often consume fresh food as the main staple food.

So from the results of the questionnaires and interviews, it can be concluded that the shift in the pattern of needs and lifestyles of the people of the city of Medan from fresh food to frozen food during this pandemic is due to the restrictions on people's movement that have been imposed and reduced to places where crowds are possible. In addition, frozen food is an option because it is practical, easy to find, durable if stored and relatively cheaper, which are the main reasons why people switch to frozen food. The various types are also the main attraction of frozen food in public consumption. Starting from processed meat ingredients such as meatballs, sausages, nuggets, and dim sum and others.

Initially, these processed food products were used as an alternative to fulfill food needs for people who are busy so they want practicality in fulfilling their food needs. However, during this pandemic, frozen food products are becoming a trend again in the community because their products are guaranteed to be durable for storage. The pandemic that limits people's movement in outdoor mobility is the main reason this product is sought after by the public.

Based on the results of questionnaires and interviews with informants, it is very clear that the main reason they believe this processed food product is an alternative to fulfill their food needs is the practicality and ease of obtaining this product compared to other products. Currently, many frozen food products are found and sold directly in stores or online, which are sold on online shopping platforms or other online shops.

Frozen food is also very popular because the product is durable if stored in the freezer at the appropriate temperature. This is very supportive during the pandemic where people are limited in their mobility outside the home, so buying frozen food as processed food reserves or savings is the right option. This frozen food can last up to several days compared to other types of fresh food as long as it doesn't pass the product's expiration date.

5. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in many changes in various aspects of people's lives. In its development, society has experienced many adjustments in the face of the pandemic. One of the food innovations that is currently in great demand by the public in order to fulfill food needs is frozen food from the questionnaire and interview results. enforced community and reduce to places that allow the occurrence of crowds. In addition, frozen food is an option because it is practical, easy to find, durable if stored and relatively cheaper, which are the main reasons why people switch to frozen food.

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