

ESSENTIAL FACTORS IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS OF BECOMING VEGETARIANS

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Abstract

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Vegetarian lifestyle begins to grow and becomes a new trend in the society because of their awareness of healthy life that is affected from their food consumed in daily life. Being a vegetarian is an individual choice of life, which she/he has a different way of life and usually lives in families and communities whom unfamiliar with its vegetarian concepts. Therefore, the vegetarians are often considered as “strangers” by people live surround their environment because they have different food habits. This study aims to discuss about internalization process of individuals in adopting life values which affected their decision of becoming vegetarians. The study uses social construction theory as a ground theory, which focusing on the process of internalization among its three other processes. This research uses qualitative method which explores data from in-depth interview. The result is the informants have strong motives, emotions, beliefs, habits, and willingness inside their mind to be vegetarians, whilst the role of the significant others and reference groups do not affect the decision of becoming vegetarians.

Keywords:

Internalization Process, Vegetarian, Lifestyle

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INTRODUCTION

Vegetarian is a terminology aimed to people who only choose to eat vegetable-food processed and do not consume any foods derived from living things such as meat, poultry, fish, and processed products. The word comes from the Latin "Vegetus" which has meaning of whole, healthy, fresh, alive. There is an adverse perception occurred between society who considers meat as a nourishment in the daily diet and its nutrients contained are needed by human body; whilst vegetarians are contrary to the values that develop in society in related to meat consumption, where vegetarians perceive that meat is something not good, especially in which the process of producing meat or animal products follows some stages that are painful and harmful to animals. Vegetarians believe the concept that animals are living beings which also have the right to live, hence they also can feel torment and pain. Being a vegetarian is certainly far from effortless course since she/he must carefully select every food to be consumed. On the other hand, a lot of vegetarians are living in an environment that does not fully support to their food-pattern behavior and this condition urging them to be adaptive to be able to commit as vegetarians.

Nowadays, vegetarian lifestyle has developed and became an appeal habit in Indonesia. Each one has different motivations and reasons to become a vegetarian. Being a vegetarian itself, is a lifestyle, that one spends money, time, and energy to afford it, and furthermore it does not imply into any particular religions. Usually, the main reason for becoming a vegetarian is preserving health body and mind, but sometimes this lifestyle evokes few problems into interpersonal relationship in daily activities. Individuals need to be determined for their beliefs and principles to be fully committed as vegetarians and eventually achieving their goals in living the vegetarian lifestyle. There are several communities established to assist the vegetarians for having their activities together, such as community gathering and sharing any information related to their lifestyle. The communities are being the vegetarians' support systems to positively encourage and motivate them in grappling on their existence and living well in the middle of misleading assumption of vegetarian.

This study aimed to determine the process of internalization of vegetarians which focusing on the aspects of affective, cognitive, and conative side of the individual; the influence of family and friends; the influence of reference groups; and the influence of social-judgmental; all of which shape the vegetarians' way of thinking and determine their self-concept and actions in the society. In other words, the study focused only on the internalization process transpired in vegetarians that corroborates them shifting into vegetarian consumption pattern.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the book of "Social interpretation of Reality: A Treatise on The Sociology of Knowledge" (1990) wrote about the theory of social construction, and it is certainly cannot be separated from the theoretical building that proposed by Peter L. Berger dan Thomas Luckmann. Related to the theory, according to Bungin (2019) in the book of "Sociology of Communication" (2008), social reality is a social construction created by individuals. An individual is a free human being who has a relationship between one human being and another. The individual becomes the determinant in a social realm which is constructed by his/her own will. The individual is not a figure of social victim, but rather as a creative machine of production and reproduction in constructing his social realm. Theory of social construction assumes that the human who lives in certain social contexts simultaneously performing the interaction process with the environment. In the theory, Berger further explains that human life process undergoes within three simultaneous moments, those are externalization, objectification, and internalization.

Social construction is a process of meaning organized by everyone towards the environment and aspects outside of himself, that is the subjective meaning of objective reality inside cognition of person in daily activities. Berger stated that a social reality is not something that its presence

depends on each person. Berger and Luckmann also explained from sociology point of view that the most important thing is the reality of everyday life, which is every reality being experienced or faced by individuals in their daily lives (Mutaafi & Handoyo, 2015).

Berger and Luckmann stated that civil institution is created and maintained or changed throughout human action and interaction. Although society and social institutions looked objectively obvious, but everything is built in subjective definitions passing through the process of interaction. Objectivity could only occur within repeated affirmations given by others who have equal subjective definition. At the highest level of generality, human creates the world in a universal symbolic meaning, that is, his outlook of life, which gives legitimacy and regulates social forms and gives meaning into any areas of his life. If social theories do not impart the important of the reciprocal relationships or dialectics among those three moments will contribute to the theoretical stagnation. Dialectics runs simultaneously, means there is a process of pulling out (externalization) so as it seems residing outside (objective), and followed by a process of pulling back inside (internalization), thus something that seems outside deceptively inside itself or subjective reality.

Pertaining to internalization, every person has been experienced internalization since the day of birth hitherto. It is obtained via communication interaction that taken place in form of socialization and education. In process of internalization, cultural values are also cultivated into oneself to create human understanding towards the values and transformed them into personality. One definition of internalization is defined as the unification of values inside a person, or in the psychology language is an adjustment of beliefs, values, attitudes, practices, and standard rules inside oneself. This definition implies that the understanding of the value obtained must be operable and has implications toward attitudes. The internalization has a permanent attribute individually (Mulyana, 2020). It is concluded that internalization is a cultivation process of values into one person's soul, thereby those will be reflected in the attitudes and overt behaviors in everyday life (converging on the personality). Internalized values are those which congruent with the norms and rules applied.

In process of internalization, cultural values are also cultivated into oneself to create human understanding towards the values and transformed them into personality. Some definitions of internalization as follows:

1. Internalization is defined as the incorporation or unification of attitudes, standards of behavior, opinions, and so on inside the personality (Chaplin, 2005, dalam Trisno, 2019).
2. Internalization is defined as the unification of values inside a person, or in the psychology language is an adjustment of beliefs, values, attitudes, practices, and standard rules inside oneself. This definition implies that the understanding of the value obtained must be operable and has implications toward attitudes. The internalization has a permanent attribute individually. (Mulyana, 2020).
3. The process of internalization is an individually lifetime process, started from the moment of born until death. A person continues learning to process different feelings, desires, passions, and emotions which will shape his personality (Koentjaraningrat, 2011, dalam Humannira, 2016).

Referred to the definitions above, it is concluded that internalization is a cultivation process of values into one person's soul, thereby those will be reflected in the attitudes and overt behaviors in everyday life (converging on the personality). Internalized values are those which congruent with the norms and rules applied. The process of internalization is an appreciation process that takes place a whole life, and basically is not only experienced in the family, but also can be acquired from social environment (Richard & Turner, 2017).

Another influencers in internalization process come from various public figures, such as officials, teachers, religious leaders, celebrity, etc. A person will absorb some things from them

and convert it into personality and culture. Personality itself means a persistent behavior style that distinctively recognizable in everyone, whereas character is a manner that involves aspects of knowledge, feelings, and actions.

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According To W. I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki in Rakhmat (2019: 36), states that the motive sociogenesis is one's desire to gain new experiences, the desire for a response, the desire for recognition, and the desire for security. Another significant factor is the emotions which indicates some wavers inside organism accompanied by symptoms of consciousness, behavior, and physiological processes. Emotion does not always mean negative. Coleman and Hummen (Rachmat, 20012: 40) mentions four functions of emotion, they are the energy generators, carriers of information, messenger in interpersonal communication, as well as a source of information about one-person successful.

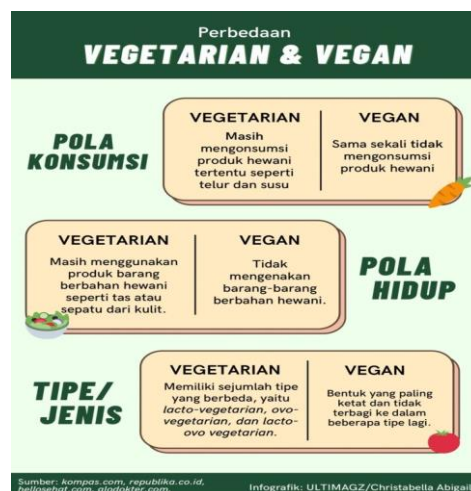
Self-development depends on communication interaction with each other's, especially a small number of significant others. George Herbert Mead in Rakhmat (2019:100) mentioned them as important others, as children, parents, brothers, sisters, and others who live in the same house with us. Mead also inferred that self-development consists of two stages called the game stage and the competition stage. Game stage is an elementary developmental role-taking that allows children to see themselves from the perspective of significant others. This stage is characterized by authenticity spontaneity in a person's behavior. Oneself developed by the roles and attitudes of specific people with whom people interact intimately and intensively. Match stage comes from the process of taking the role and attitude of others in general, specifically the society in general. At this stage, when a person enters a community, a person becomes the real object. That way, that person can play as many roles as possible and sees himself from the different perspectives of other people. There are groups that emotionally bind us and influence our self-concept called a reference group. People will direct their behavior and adapt themselves to the characteristics of their group.

Belief has nothing to do with supernatural things, but rather a faith that something is right or wrong based on evidence, suggestions of authority, experience, or intuition. Beliefs can be rational or irrational. It gives perspective to humans in perceiving reality, providing the basis for decision-making and determines the attitude to its objects. Differently, habit is a persistent human behavior progressing automatically unplanned. It is the result of prevalent that takes place at the same time or as a typical response repeatedly many times. Each person has different habits in responding some specific stimulus and it can provide prediction on person's behavior pattern. Willingness is closely related to action. It defines as an action required to achieve the goal. Strong will can push people to sacrifice other values, which do not correspond to the achievement of goals. It is influenced based on knowledge and intelligence about ways to achieve goals.

Vegetarian is a terminology aimed to people who only choose to eat vegetable-food processed and do not consume any foods derived from living things such as meat, poultry, fish,

and processed products. The word comes from the Latin “Vegetus” which has meaning of whole, healthy, fresh, alive. It is formally used for the first time by Joseph Brotherton and others, at Northwood Villa, Kent, England. According to Bangun A. P. in the book of “ *Mengenai Lebih Dekat Vegetarian, Pola Hidup Sehat Berpantang Daging* ” (2003:1, dalam Aryanti, 2018), Vegetarian has two definitions, as a noun and as an adjective. Vegetarian as a noun means people who abstain from eating meat and only eat vegetables and other plant-based foods, while Vegetarian as an adjective means not containing meat or the habit of meat **abstinence**. Referred to Nurheti Yuliarti in the book “ *Pilih Vegetarian atau Nonvegetarian? Plus Minus Pilihan Anda dari Segi Kesehatan* ” (2008:1, dalam Sari, 2018), stated that vegetarianism is a tradition in which its adherents do not consume animal products and their derivatives. They circumscribe the limits themselves to eating only plant-based products, although there are some traditions of vegetarians who still consume few animal-based foodstuff.

Figure 1. The Differences between Vegetarian and Vegan



RESEARCH DESIGN

This research used qualitative methods that aimed to explain the phenomenon with profound data collection (Kriyantono, 2020). Qualitative research does not prioritize population size and its sampling is very limited. If the data obtained already depth and necessary to explain the phenomenon studied, then the researcher does not need to look for other sampling. Qualitative research methods emphasize the in-depth (quality) of data, not the amount (quantity) of data. Research topic based on the phenomenon that occurs in society regarding lifestyle changes of individuals who tend to experience attitudes alteration to become vegetarians due to number of reasons. Profound analysis is deliberately needed in analyzing vegetarian trends, thereby qualitative methods option with exploratory techniques aids in broadly exploring the attributions and things that effect on the occurrence of something.

The primary data in this study were obtained from in-depth interviews with the informants involved who have been living as vegetarians for more than one year, aged over 18 years-old, male and or female. The informants' selections were based of some criterias above to get a clear description of internalization process of the vegetarian values into individuals that forge them to change their habits and become the vegetarian actors. Informants in this study were three persons, and they have different religious backgrounds, as well as related factors that inspired them in taking decision for living a vegetarian lifestyle. In addition, the three informants perform different vegetarian lifestyles and have dissimilar understanding of vegetarianism. Another reason is about the twists and turns of life experience happened behind their decision to

live as vegetarians. From this consideration, it is expected that informants can provide detailed descriptions of knowledges, views, assessments, and insights in their present days as Vegetarians.

The three informants in this study are two men, called “Victor” (First Informant) and “Jhonny” (Second Informant), whose living vegetarian lifestyles with different reasons and meanings but have same religious status as Buddhists. While third informant is called “Rani”, a Moslem woman and has become a vegetarian since her teenage age. She was elected as an informant in a specific reason since her religion background does not quite familiar with the vegetarian lifestyle, therefore this study discloses profound data collection. The first two informants are Buddhist men, and active in religious activities at the Buddhist non-profit organizations and have become vegetarian for more than a year.

Figure 2. Top 20 Vegetarian Friendly Countries



Source: www.liputan6.com

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Role of Sociogenesis Factors

Sociogenesis motives occurred at the time of First Informant decided to adopt vegetarianism values. It started from curiosity when he saw his friend who took and ate vegetarian foods and alongside with it, there was also a motive of love, a need to achieve an identity, and a need for value and meaning of life by the time he chose living a vegetarian lifestyle. The First Informant confirmed about benefits which he greatly achieved of becoming a Vegetarian, such as he become wiser in his behavior because he believed that vegetarianism is one of the acts of love which he could show to his surroundings.

The Second Informant decided to become a Vegetarian at a moment when he heard a Dharma about vegetarianism and he felt some feelings about the topic was right, thus it would be good if he became a vegetarian. From Second Informants experiences appeared that his decision of becoming Vegetarians is mostly influenced by a motive of wanting to organize, a motive of competition, a motive of self-esteem and a need to achieve identity, as well as a motive of finding

a meaning of life. The decision of him becoming a vegetarian aroused because of his motivation to be a better person than previously and wanted to set as an example to those people around him.

Unlikely with the Third Informant, she became a vegetarian because she showed a love motive inside herself towards animals and that made her could not bear to see and make animals tortured. She also stated in the interview that she is an animal lover and has no intention at all to eat animals, because previous reasons mentioned earlier. According to each statement made by three informants, it is acknowledged that the sociogenesis factors that motivate each informant are different, but those factors has encouraged them to choose a life path as vegetarians. The perceived motives played a considerable role in their internalization process, and it correspond with W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki stated (Rakhmat, 2019:36) that the sociogenesis motive is the desire to acquire new experiences, and it is indeed perceived by all three informants.

Role of Emotion Factors

The First Informant felt emotions aroused inside him first time of becoming a Vegetarian was merely a feeling of wanting to spread love to all living things, including animals. He also believed that if human could value animals, then we could appreciate each other more. By spreading love to all parties, First Informant had a feeling that the action is better for himself or those around him. In this case, those emotions that felt by First Informants acted as a energy generator, a messenger in intrapersonal communication and a source of information about others success.

The Second Informant felt emotions that appeared inside him when he became a role model for those around him, therefore he had a feeling of obligation to set a good example to people who started vegetarian activities. Here, Second Informant perceived emotions as a energy generator, a messenger in intrapersonal communication, and a source of information about others success. All those emotions became his strong foundation to become a better person as well as a role model for those people around him. While for the Third Informant confirmed that the emotion she felt was at the time when she saw her farmed animals slaughtered during the feast day which made her felt uncomfortable that she could no longer bear to see the animal slaughter to be consumed by humans and ever since the moment, she stopped eating meat because of his affection for animals. The emotions felt by the Third Informant were energy generator, and emotion as a messenger in interpersonal communication.

As mentioned above, the role of emotions felt by each informant played as an important role in shaping their faith into vegetarians. Emotions as interpreted by Coleman and Hummen in Rakhmat (2012:40) have four functions as energy generators, information carriers, messengers in interpersonal communication, and sources of information about one's success. In this case, each informant felt different emotions in encouraging them to live a vegetarian lifestyle.

Role of Belief Factors

The First Informant assured that his belief of vegetarianism was a good act received through his religion and the organization he participated. He also felt more stable on managing his emotions and grateful for things he has. He believed that the vegetarian lifestyle helped her being better and appreciative person.

The Second Informant also had beliefs based on his religious doctrines that appealed to its congregants into the vegetarianism life. Moreover, he implied that the act of a vegetarian is a good behavior to maintain physical healthiness. The Third Informant as an animal lover believed that every animal killed underwent a torture and painful process, in which made her very uncomfortable to consume its meat because of her mercy on it.

The beliefs felt by all informants played a significant role in shaping them into vegetarians based on their information and beliefs. Belief as written in Rakhmat (2019:40) is related to what

is right or wrong on the basis of evidence or experience and can form a basic perception and determine attitudes. It has shown by three informants that their beliefs perform and develop them of becoming vegetarians.

Role of Desire and Habits

First informant assured that he had a strong desire to become a vegetarian despite of his family's lack of support on his decision. Although his friend also often mocked up on him, but he did not change the desire to become a vegetarian. There are also no differences with the Second and Third Informants who experienced vegetarian actions on their own accord even though many people around them did not support their choice., especially for the Third Informant was resisted by her family and forced to eat meat, but it did not change and affect her will to be a Vegetarian.

Desire and habits inside the informants were instrumentally shaping them into vegetarians, in which they only focused on a purpose of their actions as vegetarians even though there are a lack of support from some people. Their choice as vegetarians emerged of stimulus inside themselves that urged them to get and live what they believe. In this case, the First Informant did it because he wanted to be a better and contentedness person, and Second Informant hold a hope to be a better person than before for those people around him, while Third Informant had a hope to animal would no longer need to be tortured in a butchery process.

Role of Significant Others

The role of significant ones as influence in the decision process of becoming a vegetarian was not experienced by First Informant. His family did not particularly agree with him becoming a vegetarian. Apparently, some friends had their support on him, but it did not become a significant thing to encourage him to become a vegetarian. His decision to become a vegetarian was purely driven by himself.

Second Informant also did not really feel the role of his significant others, both from family and close friends. So did the Third Informant, for which she gained no support at all from her surroundings. The family was completely rejected and disapproved of her actions as a vegetarian. But however, both Second and Third Informant remained vegetarians in circumstances due to their own free will.

Thus, it concluded that the presence and support of significant others around the informants, such as families and friends, does not have important roles in shaping them into vegetarians. Each informant felt the desire of becoming a vegetarian shown up within himself, it did not appeal because of inducement or compulsion of the significant others. On the contrary, their families and friends tend to show passive behavior, respond negatively, and refuse to support any activities related to vegetarianism.

Role of Reference Groups

The role of the reference group was strongly perceived by the First Informant because his vegetarian desire emerged when he participated in a non-profit organization activity, where he acquired a lot of information and benefits about vegetarianism that encouraged him to become one of its actors with hope of becoming a better person.

The Second Informant also earned a lot of knowledge about vegetarianism while actively participating in religious activities at the Vihara which motivated him to be a better person and ruled an example for those people around him. While the Third Informant did not feel the role of the reference group in the process of becoming a vegetarian, it was simply because she did not join any related organization.

All three informants also did not feel afraid and worry about the judgmental opinion from their surroundings, especially families and friends. They chose and lived vegetarian lifestyle because of their own desires and decision, also they preferred not to consider how people around them showed the disapproval on the actions. Their determination in the end invents them to be vegetarians without concerning a lot of judgment from their surroundings.

CONCLUSIONS

According to data analysis and interpretation described, it can be inferred that all informants in this research were departed from their own desire and will for living as Vegetarians. It shows of trust and willingness are mostly influencing the informants, causing various forms of positive emotions that confirmed their desire to be vegetarians. Another factor that changed and confirmed the informants' desire came from the reference group where First and Second Informants participated. The reference group manifested in the informants' mindset pertaining to the concept of vegetarianism. It is also confirmed the informant's self-willingness to live as Vegetarians.

The belief and strong willingness became their strength to facing rejections came from those significant others, they were families and friends. Although frequently they received unpleasant attitudes shown from their surrounding environment, but the role of the reference group where they join as members of an organization, helped relieve the First and Second informants' emotional burden to remain firm and stable as Vegetarians.

Sociogenesis motives gave some effects into all Informants self as he felt wiser in acting behavior. This is because he believed that vegetarianism was one of the acts of love that he could show to his surroundings, while second informant showed from his decision influenced by a motive of wanting to organize, a motive of competition, a motive of self-esteem and the need to achieve identity, as well as a motive of the finding a meaning of life. In the sociogenic role acquired by each informant is showed with different motives, but the motives have encouraged them to choose to become a vegetarian. The motives that were felt to be quite instrumental in the formation of their internalization process in their decision to become a vegetarian, one of which was the sociogenic motive to gain new experiences, and it was felt by the three informants.

Emotional felt by the informants was a feeling of spreading love to all parties, which motivates them to show affections to those around them. In this case, emotion became their energy generators, messengers in intrapersonal communication and sources of information about one's success. The role of emotions felt by each informant played a significant role in shaping and affirming each informant to be a vegetarian. Informants also held into their belief which played a major role in the formation of their motives as vegetarians, most of which were derived from religious teachings and organizations supports that vegetarianism is a good action. The informants also had a strong will in encouraging and affirming themselves to become vegetarians. Although they faced challenges and rejection, all informants had a purpose in his actions as a vegetarian even without getting any support from anyone. Their choice as a vegetarian raised from inside and changed into their faith to get and live what they believe.

The role and support from significant roles, such as a family, was less received by the informants. Their decision to become a vegetarian was purely taken by the informants. so it can be argued that significant others do not play a role in shaping person into a vegetarian. Each informant felt the desire to become a vegetarian more because of himself, not because of the encouragement or coercion of those closest to them. Those significant persons were quite passive and rejected their participation as vegetarians in society. While the role of reference groups for some informants played a major role in the decision-making process.

The study concluded that the vegetarian behavior pattern is an act that can be performed by any person from any religions or beliefs, without any specific rules on its conduct. The society

should be opened to the insights and knowledges of vegetarianism for better understanding and supporting a favorable environment and facilities for vegetarians.

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