



# HEALTH COMMUNICATION STRATEGY TO SUPPORT EMPOWERMENT OF HOUSEWIVES IN INCREASING THE CONSUMPTION OF HEALTHY STAINLESS FOODS FOR FAMILY IN MAKASSAR CITY

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**Abstract.** Currently, the Indonesian people are experiencing a degradation in their choice of staple food variants, which means that there is a narrowing of choices for the Indonesian people's staple food for rice. This study aims to formulate a health communication strategy through empowering housewives in the city of Makassar to increase the consumption of healthy staple foods, especially from non-rice food ingredients. This research is a qualitative research. The informants are young housewives in Makassar City who were selected by purposive sampling. Primary data collection was carried out by in-depth interviews and observations by exploring the social context of the existence of rice as a staple food for the informants, which would then become the material for an effective communication model in order to promote non-rice food ingredients. Data analysis was carried out in four main stages, namely context search, problem diagnosis activities, evaluation, and formulation of strategies for policies related to health communication that have an impact on food security. The results showed that young housewives thought the main staple food was rice and objected to having to replace it with non-rice staple food. This is because there is a social construct that "hasn't eaten" if you haven't eaten rice. Young housewives know the dangers of consuming excessive rice, but there is no awareness from them to replace the staple food of rice with other staple foods.

**KEYWORDS:** Health Communication, Empowerment, Housewife, Healthy Staples

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Rice is the main staple food source for the people of Indonesia. Although for some places there are variations in rice consumption patterns, for example relatively high consumption in Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, the addition of corn as a staple food substitute for the Madurese and Sago for the people of Maluku and Papua, Indonesians have the assumption that they have not eaten if they have not eaten rice. Efforts to re-popularize local tubers have been carried out since the 1990s, but this type of food is not well known by the Indonesian people.

From a sociocultural point of view, consuming rice as the main source of carbohydrates has become a daily habit for Indonesian people. Along with the increase in population, the need for rice also increases, so there is an increase of more than 37% in rice consumption in 2020 from 2019, so a program to reduce rice consumption must be held and accompanied by an increase in local food consumption (Agribusiness, 2019). One of the problems that hindered was the legacy of the New Order government policy which prioritized the intensification and extensification of rice plants so that non-rice plant products with almost the same content and function became unpopular (Kompasiana, 2018).

Several research results also indicate a health threat by increasing consumption of rice as the main daily food menu in the long term, especially the risk of developing type 2 diabetes (Hartini et al, 2013; Zuniga et al, 2019). However, changing rice consumption patterns with equivalent staple foods is still difficult to do. The presence of satiety and low prices, as well as short-term health risks that are not visible make it difficult for individual preferences to consume rice to change. In addition, Rohman et al (2014) added that rice is easy to combine with any menu, it actually adds to the delicious taste and balances nutrition. Indonesian people's preferences for rice are also relatively influenced by the declaration of a balanced nutrition program by the Government of Indonesia several years ago.

Existing programs or campaigns do not seem to be able to change the perceptions and attitudes

of the Indonesian people. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research that aims to explore the social context of the existence of rice as a staple food in the community, especially among housewives in the city of Makassar, in order to develop strategic messages and effective persuasive communication models to strengthen public awareness of selection of staple foods for healthy non-rice food for his family.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research uses constructivism paradigm with qualitative method with phenomenological approach. This study attempts to describe the meaning of the experiences of housewives and their experiences of communication behavior. The informants consist of young housewives who live in Makassar City. The selection of informants was carried out by purposive sampling technique so that 10 informants were obtained. Collecting data through in-depth interviews and observations to explore the social context of the existence of rice as a staple food ingredient from informants, which will then be used as material for an effective communication model in order to promote non-rice food ingredients to reduce the risk of diseases that arise as a result of consuming rice as a source of food. staple food. The analysis was conducted using the framework method formulated by Ritchie and Spencer (2002) with four main stages, namely context search, problem diagnosis activities, evaluation, and formulation of strategies for policies related to health communication that have an impact on food security.

## **3. RESULT**

### **1. Social Construct of Rice as Main Carbohydrate Intake for Young Housewives in Makassar City**

Most of the informants showed a preference for eating rice as a daily eating habit. This is shown from their statement that mentions rice in the first answer on their knowledge of the question on the type of food containing known carbohydrates, followed by other foods such as potatoes, bread, corn, and tubers in the next answer. The identification of rice as the most familiar staple food that contains carbohydrates can also be seen from the examples of food menus, both cooked at home and purchased abroad, such as rice, rawon, fresh vegetables, fish and fried chicken. Informants know that rice contains carbohydrates that complement nutritious food in the concept of the Balanced Nutrition Guidelines.

Although it has been replaced with a new program released by the Indonesian Ministry of Health in 2014, the concept of a balanced nutritional diet has now been refined into the Guide to Balanced Nutrition (PGS), but the majority of informants identified balanced nutritious food with this concept. Furthermore, the informants stated that the concept of balanced nutrition consists of carbohydrates found in rice, protein in side dishes (such as tempeh, tofu, fish, or chicken), and vitamins found in vegetables and fruits. Informants also added milk as a complement to the concept of balanced nutrition.

The informants also stated that rice is the main food that must be included in the daily diet, "you haven't eaten if you haven't eaten rice". Rice is perceived as the main energy provider for the body, only rice is able to provide energy for their body. In addition, the majority of informants thought that they would feel weak if they did not eat rice. Based on this statement, it can be said that every day the informants who act as housewives provide rice as the main carbohydrate intake for their families. This habit of informants providing rice is caused by their assumption that the source of energy used for daily activities only comes from the rice they consume.

### **2. Construct of Awareness of the Importance of Nutritional Content Information and Consequences of Food Menu Management for Housewives in Makassar City**

Most of the informants realized the importance of information on the nutritional content of food. The informants considered that information on the nutritional content of food was used as a basis for consideration in determining the food menu for their family, especially if they cooked it themselves. Problems revealed in the field, housewives who became informants focused their attention on the nutritional content of carbohydrate complementary foods. Rice is considered natural to always be present in the cooking menu in the informant's family. The health and activities of family members will depend on the choice of food menu, not the choice of carbohydrate intake they have. Several informants also claimed that rice gave their family members enough energy to carry out their daily activities properly.

Information on nutritional content is important because the informants consider the food consumed will affect health. Food quality is an aspect that is considered by the informants, especially taste. The preference for rice as the main carbohydrate consumed at least twice a day is assumed to arise because rice is easy to mix and match with Indonesian dishes.

The data shows that although quality is the main choice for food management in the household, it is possible that quantity is also considered by the informants. One of the informants stated that if a large family comes, the focus on providing food is on the quantity, including increasing the portion of rice for each individual with the same portion of side dishes.

Most of the informants considered that white rice did not have a negative impact on health. Informants stated that white rice is a staple food which is the main source of carbohydrates and a mandatory menu to be consumed every day. Therefore, the informant assumed that rice would not bring harm (bad impact) to health if it was not consumed in excess. If rice is consumed in portions that suit the needs it will not have a negative effect on the health of the body.

Portions that are in accordance with this need indicate that food consumption is not excessive and in moderation. This can be attributed to the ideal diet. According to the informant, the ideal eating pattern refers to eating three times a day with the concept of four healthy five perfect. Therefore, the consumption of white rice three times a day is considered not excessive and according to needs. Informants thought that consuming white rice three times a day would not have a negative impact on health because it was considered to be in accordance with needs, sufficient, and not excessive.

However, the informants also thought that white rice would have a negative effect on health if consumed in excess. These negative effects include obesity and the body will get sick easily because too much sugar in the body can trigger disease. In addition, the informant also stated that regular consumption of white rice is also not good for diabetics because white rice contains glucose which can increase blood sugar levels. Therefore, the informant is of the opinion that the consumption of white rice is not recommended for diabetics and people who want to lose weight. However, consumption of white rice in reasonable portions and in moderation will not have a negative impact on health. The problem is, there is no data on whether the portion size is "enough" and not excessive in the minds of each informant.

The informant's statement regarding the adverse effects caused by excessive consumption of rice shows that housewives actually have basic knowledge regarding the dangers of consuming white rice. However, this danger is not interpreted as a danger that must be immediately anticipated by them. Therefore, it is necessary to have an effective communication model that aims to raise awareness and change the habitual behavior of housewives in setting rice as the staple food of the family in order to improve the quality of life of family members.

Based on the answers of the informants, most of the informants have known alternative non-rice staple foods that can replace white rice as carbohydrate intake. The informants mentioned that the alternative foods included corn, sweet potatoes/cassava (tubers), potatoes, bread, and oatmeals. But the informants have not practiced providing varied carbohydrates for their families because they are considered not used to doing so. Therefore, a persuasive communication model that can be done is to show that the non-rice staple food can be consumed as an alternative to carbohydrate intake which is no less delicious than white rice. This can be done because the quality (taste) of food is the main consideration for housewives in determining the food menu.

### **3. Strategic Concepts in an Effective Communication Model for the Provision of Healthy Staple Food for Housewives in Makassar**

From the results of the study, it was found that the staple food of rice or rice food menu is the main choice in the daily diet. This means that the main staple food of the Indonesian people is rice. From the results of the study, it was found that there is a social construction that has been embedded in the minds of the Indonesian people regarding this matter. For them "have not eaten" if they have not eaten rice. Because they think that other carbohydrates contained in staple foods other than rice are not able to provide energy. So they will always consume rice every day to meet these energy needs.

Based on the results of the study, it was found that almost all of the informants knew a healthy food menu, namely balanced nutrition. However, knowledge about the slogan of balanced nutrition is limited to healthy food consisting of rice, protein found in side dishes (such as tempeh, tofu, fish, or chicken), and vitamins found in vegetables and fruits. Whereas the slogan "balanced nutrition" actually consists of staple foods (carbohydrates), side dishes (meat, eggs, etc.), vegetables, fruit and milk (Ministry of Health, 2015). Staple foods are always the first part of a "balanced diet". The main problem here is that the informants identify white rice as the only staple food for daily consumption. Even though it is known that the staple food containing carbohydrates is not only found in white rice, but many other staple foods containing carbohydrates are similar or even better, such as tubers. Most of the informants

when asked a question about "balanced nutrition" would definitely mention "rice", not other staple foods.

In addition, from the results of the study, it was found that rice is the easiest staple food to obtain when compared to other staple foods. In addition, processed rice, namely rice for them, is most suitable if consumed along with side dishes. Rice when combined with processed fish, meat, vegetables or other types of preparation is very suitable for the tongue of the Indonesian people. This actually happened because of the social construction. Starting from the habits of the Indonesian people who use rice as a staple food. Then the habit becomes a culture that is very attached to the life of the Indonesian people. So that the culture has been passed down from generation to generation until now. This is in accordance with Lowenberg's concept that the behavior of choosing and determining the food to be consumed results in eating habits. Food habit is the habit of a group as a reflection of culture in setting standards of individual behavior related to food, so that the group has a food pattern

Consumption patterns and eating habits are influenced by many factors. From the results of the study, it can be concluded that the consumption patterns and eating habits of the informants are influenced by the natural environment and available food ingredients. The natural environment is very influential, especially since Indonesia is an agrarian country. So it is possible that the Indonesian people consume the staple food of rice. In addition, the factor of the availability of rice which is very easy to obtain is also the main consideration for informants to choose rice.

The nutritional content of food that is the choice of daily informants is quite important. The informants know that the content of healthy food consists of complete nutritional content such as carbohydrates, animal protein, vegetable protein, vitamins, minerals, and calcium. But the problem here is that the informants think that carbohydrates are only found in rice, especially white rice. The choice of the type of rice consisting of brown rice and black rice is rarely used as their consideration in choosing staple foods. This is because they are more concerned with the quality of taste. Food quality in terms of nutritional content is considered but taste quality is the main consideration.

The results of the study indicate that in general, the informants do not really know in depth that white rice consumed 3 times a day is harmful to health, especially if it is consumed in excess, it can cause type 2 diabetes. But even though in general the informants know about this, they seem to have no choice of the most suitable substitute for rice. So they don't really care about the risk of disease if they eat too much rice. For them the rice they consume is considered sufficient and not excessive.

Overall, based on the results of the study, it was concluded that young housewives consider rice to be the main and important staple food that must be included in a healthy diet. This can happen because of the ineffectiveness of various kinds of health communication programs that have been launched by the Ministry of Health, so that a strategic message and an effective communication model are needed.

Based on the data obtained, the proposed message construct in an effective communication model to increase awareness of healthy staple foods for housewives in Makassar can be formulated as follows :

- a. Efforts to increase awareness about the dangers of white rice through the delivery of information related to the dangers of consuming white rice on a regular basis can be experienced not only by diabetics.
- b. Efforts to strengthen knowledge related to staple food as a substitute for white rice through the delivery and confirmation of information about alternative food substitutes, including corn, sweet potatoes/cassava (tubers), potatoes, bread, and oatmeals that can be processed into food with quality (taste) that is not good. less delicious with white rice.
- c. Health communication that includes health promotion messages should use traditional approaches and nutrition science, for example by emphasizing how to prepare and serve traditional foods that can provide satisfaction, strength, and protect against chronic disease.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Rice is considered as the main carbohydrate intake and a source of energy for the body that must be included in the daily diet so that young housewives choose rice as a staple food for the family.

Basically housewives in Makassar City do not know in depth about the dangers of consuming excessive white rice and are not considered as a problem that needs to be anticipated immediately. Therefore, it is necessary to have an effective communication model that emphasizes the dangers

(negative effects) of consuming white rice on a regular basis and the existence of alternative non-rice staple foods that are healthier substitutes for white rice. This communication model was built from an effort to increase awareness about the dangers of white rice and an effort to strengthen knowledge related to alternative staple foods to replace white rice.

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