

Simulation of Society in Developing Countries Indonesia: Interpretation Study of Student Consumers of Starbucks Coffee in Medan City

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ABSTRACT

Consumptive actions are inseparable in the life of contemporary society, even in their daily activities. Among Medan students, they make consumptive actions a necessity of life, for them everything can be done with consumptive actions. This research aims to find out the formation of consumptive actions on the basis of simulations that are present in the middle. The method in this research is qualitative research with a descriptive analysis approach. Data collection techniques were carried out using interviews, observation and documentation. Informants in this study were divided into main, additional and key informants, with a total of 8 informants. The results of this study explain that consumptive actions in simulation are actions that have complex and diverse causes and effects. The existing causality is divided into several aspects based on social space, media, social logic of consumption and signs. All aspects are full of simulation, so the basis and results of each aspect return to the simulation. Consumptive actions of students make simulations continuously produced, and reproduced, so not a few consumptive students change the conception of the form of Starbucks with a form of social differentiation that is far from the basic signs of a coffee shop, reality mixed with simulation which is then blurred.



INTRODUCTION

Consumptive actions can be a necessity of society's life, and it is not impossible to happen with the current conditions; even if reviewed more deeply, consumptive actions have been inherent in people's lives. According to Baudrillard, consumptive is a systematic act of manipulating signs, and to become an object of consumption, the object must contain or even become a sign (Featherstone, 2008). Through consumptive actions, the use value of the object has shifted so that the value of the sign replaces it. Consumptive society makes the object far from the use value, or even the value of the sign is the usefulness of the object; consumptive also, in this case, is understood as a rational thing. Consumptive actions form a system of differentiation, which forms differences in society based on social status, symbols and prestige, depending on what objects a person can produce signs with. The dichotomy of the meaning of consumption and consumptive is made explicit by the presence of the sign of consumptive acts.

Indonesian society is now getting closer to consumptive actions; this is evident through research by The Conference Board Global Consumer Confidence Survey in collaboration with Nielsen, where Indonesia is ranked as the third most optimistic consumer country in the world (Tempo, 2019). Linearly, this is present with the existence of coffee shops, cafes, and malls that are relatively easy to find in various regions, including Medan City. Moreover, Medan is one of the cities that accommodates the presence of consumptive activity places, and the increasing number of consumptive activity places will contribute to the level of consumption that has the potential to increase as well. This is evidenced by the presence of Starbucks Coffee, which is increasing the number of outlets in Medan City, especially since Starbucks Coffee is one of the coffee outlets that will be kept from the value of signs and consumptive actions (Samoggia & Riedel, 2018).

The whole of this reality will further expand the space of consumptive actions that are full of sign values, especially since one of the realities behind this is the presence of intellectual groups, namely students as one of the active consumer groups. In the perception of consumers, their consumptive actions are rational, but on the other hand, consumptive actions are far from rational. The presence of intellectual groups as consumers is then a problem for the rationality of today's society, where this problem is relevant for further research (Buttle & Maklan, 2019).

In the intellectual development of the study of consumptive actions, Baudrillard introduced the term simulation as a term to term the sign that dominates reality; the basis is that the reality that should be the source of the sign actually undergoes a blending process so that in the middle of the simulation, the sign is present as one of the sources that exist besides reality. The extreme level of simulation is when the sign solidly becomes the source of the sign that will be produced. Simulation in the midst of consumptive actions is the basis of this research, which is present as one of the fillers of the lack of

research on simulation in the midst of consumptive. Based on previous research, even the perspectives of consumptive and simulation are not present together as an analytical perspective of research; usually, even the perspective of consumptive analysis is present with the empty presence of simulation, and vice versa when the simulation is present as an analytical perspective of research. In the end, the presence of simulation and signs in the midst of consumptive actions emphasises the purpose of this research.

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

Consumer Society

For Baudrillard, consumer society is a society that has unconsciously made consumption the centre of life activities with a strong desire for material (consumptive), always wanting to shop, for example, especially based on signs. According to him, the contemporary consumption system (consumptive action) is not based on the last level of needs and enjoyment but on the rules of signs (objects/signs) and distinction (Baudrillard, 2018). Through consumptive actions, signs continue to produce and even experience rapid development. In this consumptive society, the sign has become the basis, purpose, and reason for the formation of people's consumptive actions. Dominantly, the sign is something that has power over the dimensions of consumptive actions. For Baudrillard, consumer society is a society that has unconsciously made consumption the centre of life activities with a strong desire for material (consumptive), always wanting to shop, for example, specifically based on signs.

Consumption can be interpreted in mythological stories as a form of human being who has many needs and leads to objects that make humans satisfied while humans themselves are never satisfied. Material things become an inevitable culture as an object (Astuti, 2013). Consumption is not linear or straight-line according to the conception of consumption in general, which is based on use value, utility, and fulfilment of needs. The term consumption used by Baudrillard is his analysis of contemporary society, especially in the West, because what is consumed by contemporary society is no longer the use of material objects but what signs are contained in the object. Therefore, the level of excessive consumption to the pattern of consumption habits, if there is no sign in the middle, is not included in the meaning of consumption (consumptive) based on Baudrillard's perception of the level of excessive consumption that is present only as a desire.

Social Logic of Consumption

According to Baudrillard, the social logic of consumption is based on the ideology of establishment (*bien-tre*), differentiation, growth, and the conception of safety. The development of capitalist industrialisation products in society is a collectively agreed democracy. The social logic of consumption reflects a condition of ordering contemporary society through belief in products that can

support social status; here, society is constructed through shared consumption knowledge. This social logic of consumption can then form social differentiation on the basis of signs; this logic is a rational logic for a consumptive society but has the potential to be questioned more deeply regarding its validity.

Socio-historically, it comes with the fact that the myth of happiness is a myth that is accepted and incarnated in modern society, namely the myth of equal rights; all political and sociological violence has been burdened since the Industrial Revolution and the revolutions of the 19th century (Baudrillard, 2018). The foundation of Compassionate Capitalism is formed through the moral aspect, which is portrayed through deep feelings of sympathy for the suffering of others, as well as the desire to alleviate that suffering (Rich, 1995). Liberalisation infiltrates a mental virus called the predator virus, which is an internal drive to prey on anything for the sake of the system's survival (Baudrillard, 1994).

Without the existence of a material object marker, the social logic of consumption will only be a simulation of rationality; when rationality does not have a real concrete form in the rationality space, rationality is irrational, especially since rationality is a significant thing in modern society and an indicator of modern society. The logic is irrational, and the logic is pseudo-logic because there are no facts in the sign.

Hyperreality

The beginning of the era of hyperreality, according to Baudrillard, is characterised by the disappearance of the signifier and the metaphysics of representation, the collapse of ideology and the bankruptcy of reality itself, which is taken over by the duplication of the world of nostalgia and fantasy, or "(reality) becomes a substitute reality for reality, the fetish of the lost object is no longer the object of representation, but the ecstasy of its own denial and ritual annihilation" (Baudrillard, 1983). The boundaries of the originality of the object have now been denied by the hyperreality so that the hyperreality can become the original. The initial process of this is the blending of representation between the pseudo and the original; the presence of simulation is indicated through the absolute presence of the pseudo to replace the originality of representation (Cempaka & Haryatmoko, 2018).

Hyperreality is the effect, state, or experience of materiality and or space that results from the process. The beginning of the era of hyperreality, according to Baudrillard, is characterised by the disappearance of the signifier and the metaphysics of representation, the collapse of ideology and the bankruptcy of reality itself, which is taken over by the duplication of the world of nostalgia and fantasy, or "(reality) becomes the reality of reality's substitute, the fetish of the lost object is no longer the object of representation, but the stage of denial and ritual annihilation itself" (Baudrillard, 1983). A situation that is formed as if it is as real as reality is something that is called the term hyperreality. A

situation that seems real then becomes a reality so that the unreality is a reality.

Hyperreality is also a pre-simulacra phase that is not perfect and complete; after hyperreality appears and develops massively and to the extreme, the next phase is simulacra with its extreme unreality. There are two definitions of hyperreality (Christanti et al., 2021). First, hyperreality can be defined as a state or condition of being hyperreal. Second, in the view of semiotics and philosophy, hyperreality is the inability of consciousness to distinguish reality from fantasy, especially in technologically advanced postmodern cultures (Wiktionary, 2019; Pradoko, 2021). In contemporary reality, there have been various kinds of simulations in all sectors of society, filled with various inventions of reality. Various kinds of simulated things have become a reality, and this is really real or proven. A new reality will replace the current reality in the next development; even the new reality will surpass the previous reality.

METHODOLOGY

Based on the research method the research used a qualitative research method with a descriptive research approach and field research. The descriptive analysis approach is used with the aim of describing a phenomenon in research into perception as a form of explanation of existing phenomena (Bungin, 2007). At the same time, the field approach is aimed at obtaining information in the form of data on the simulation of Starbucks consumers, which is the research object of this study.

The research instruments used were observation and interviews. Interviews were conducted as an effort to obtain research information materials and interview questions in this study regarding consumptive actions, consumptive rationality, sign value, hyperreality, social logic of consumption, and the role of students. The interview is a dialogue with a specific purpose. The dialogue is conducted by two parties, namely the interviewer (interviewer) who asks questions and the interviewee (interviewee) who provides answers to the questions (Moleong, 1996). Meanwhile, observation is carried out on things that include behaviour, activities, goals, space, time, and others.

This research uses triangulation techniques (interviews, observations, and documentation). Triangulation in this research is used to obtain different data from the same source to conclude with the various techniques used. In data analysis techniques, this research uses qualitative data analysis as a form of emphasis on analysis to conclude the phenomenon being observed in this study. This qualitative data analysis technique has three stages, by the stages of analysis, namely data reduction, data presentation, and data verification (Onwuegbuzie & Weinbaum, 2016).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The basis of consumptive action is the value of signs and the value of symbols, and these two things are present amid Starbucks Coffee's consumptive students. The symbol values that exist are the feeling that Starbucks is different from others, upper socio-economic status in general, Starbucks is like a film (special consumers), and Starbucks consumers are cool and expensive. Symbol value (Baudrillard, 2019) is a value given by a subject to an object in relation to another subject (i.e., between the giver and receiver of a value). This symbol value is then interpreted by consumptive students and then represented based on actions so that the value of the sign is present at the centre. Baudrillard (Piliang, 1998) explains that there are three stages of value in the development of society, namely the natural stage (use value), the commodity stage (exchange value) and the structural stage (sign value).

Based on sign value, the things contained in sign value are the belief that Starbucks is different from others even though the coffee is not superior, social status becomes orientation, through Starbucks activities become productive and special, lifestyle, consuming gets prestige and others. The ideology promoted by Starbucks creates a condition of consumer society, namely a society that makes consumption an ideology, how the value and meaning of life, self-actualisation and existence are obtained through the act of consumption (Piliang, 2011).

The social logic of consumption, amid Starbucks' consumptive students, turns out that there is a standardization of lifestyle, which is indirectly the result of various ideas and views that are believed so that the standardization can be formed. Through this standardization, a person can be considered to exist or not. This standardization refers to social status, which is what is meant as an establishment in terms of the ideological and social logic of consumption. This standardization then makes Starbucks consumptive students oriented towards consumptive actions and believe that this action is a rational thing with the basis of mythology. In addition to this standardization, consumptive students do not explicitly explain the views of the establishment that are included in their actions (Majeed et al., 2022). However, based on their activities, Starbucks is still believed to be a form of establishment for the upper economic class; Starbucks is still believed to have superior quality in all aspects, so it remains the dominant option. Starbucks is used as a place to do special activities.

Hyperreality has a full correlation with the entire previous chart, which is full of shifts in reality and originality. Consumptive students do blending and shifting of signifiers that should be signifiers. The blending and shifting are the conditions of Starbucks that can create conditions such as its room in the middle of a crowd, more comfort as well as fantasizing; Starbucks makes consumers' lives as in the film, Starbucks is a hedonistic lifestyle, to the fact that taste is not too important because the existence and view of Starbucks has surpassed the taste. Apart from this, one aspect that can accommodate the activities of the consumptive actions of students at Starbucks is social media. They

usually use social media as a tool to show their consumptive actions, so they unconsciously produce hyperreality to their audience, which has the potential to internalize the value of signs, the social logic of consumption, and hyperreality by the audience.

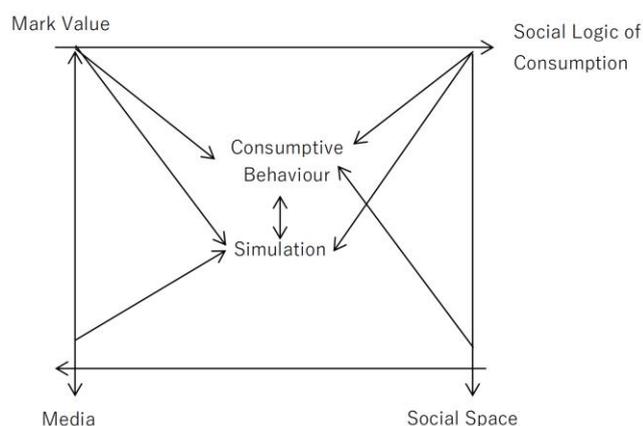


Figure 1. Consumptive Society Formation Process Matrix

Source: Author's Processing

Starting with symbol value is the initial process of the birth of consumptive actions from students who are Starbucks consumers, where through this, there is internalisation and interpretation of Starbucks based on what people see, watch, understand, hear and feel through the existing social space. The results of internalisation and interpretation of symbol value are then presented, which then through the results of these two things are represented and then realised; the results of internalisation and interpretation and representation are the basis for the presence of sign value. In the midst of consumptive students, the symbol value, which is a marker, comes with the general form of Starbucks' socio-economic status; this actually contradicts the basic marker of Starbucks as a coffee place.

Basically, the basis of simulation is when reality as a source or reference has been replaced, blended and removed from its role as a source. The process of blending signifiers is an indicator of hyperreality, while the process of replacing and removing signifiers is an indicator of simulacra. The reality of Starbucks' consumptive students who have been indicated by simulation through the blending and removal of Starbucks' signifier as a coffee place is proof that simulation is truly present in their midst. Due to the absence of signifiers, simulation, in this case, is a process of producing objects as pure signifiers, that is, signifiers that are duplicates of themselves or duplicates of fictional, illusory, hallucinatory or nostalgic signifiers (Piliang, 2012).

The result of the symbol value as a marker that has been blended and eliminated will produce a sign value as a conception of the meaning of ideas and actions. When the sign value becomes a rational thing so that it is believed as well as an ideology as an indicator of the presence of the social logic of consumption, starting with the marker on the basis of socio-economic status towards

Starbucks, this correlates with the establishment referred to in the social logic of consumption. The role of the value of signs and the social logic of consumption is the creation of conditions for simulation from hyperreality to simulacra, which will potentially be present in the midst of Starbucks's consumptive students. The simulation found in the midst of consumptive students is dominantly present as hyperreality because there is still awareness and rationality over the results and benefits of their consumptive actions, as well as the continued presence of orientation towards the sign of socio-economic status.

The consumptive actions of students at Starbucks are also accommodated by social media, where through the act of exposure, signs and simulations will continue to be produced and reproduced by it.

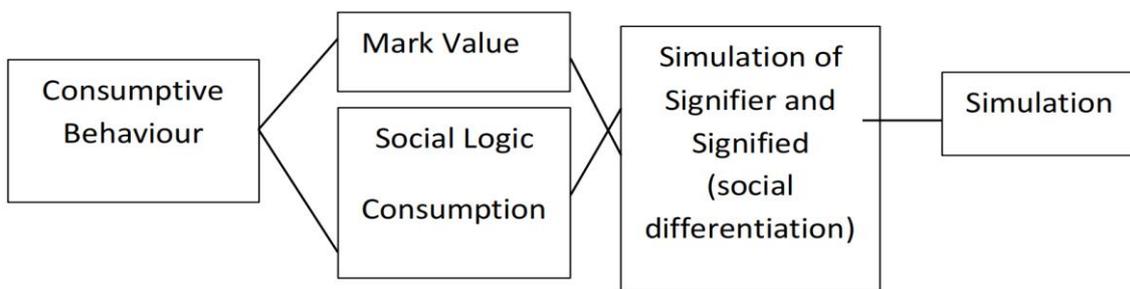


Figure 2. Simulated Production Variables

Source: Author's Processing

From all the things that exist, it can be concluded that consumptive actions are based on the value of signs and the social logic of consumption where the marker has blended and lost in the middle consumptive actions based on the value of this sign, which then produces simulation. However, if consumptive actions continue to be carried out by consumptive students, simulation becomes the source of the presence of consumptive actions themselves. Meanwhile, according to Yasraf Amir Piling, simulation is the process of creating real forms through models that have no origin or reference to reality, thus enabling humans to make the supernatural, illusory, fantastical, and imaginary appear real (Piliang, 2012).

Table 1. Starbucks Coffee Simulation

No.	Bookmark	Coffee Shop	Starbucks Coffee
1.	Consumer	Universal	Economic Class (Differentiation)
2.	Material Object	Coffee	Price (Differentiation)
3.	Space	Public Space	Private Space (Differentiation)
4.	Use Value	Functional Coffee and Socialisation	Happiness, Pleasure, Mark of Excellence (Differentiation)

Source: Author's Processing

Simulation with the level of ekrem (simulacra) is also present with the removal of markers on the form of Starbucks as a coffee place; the form of Starbucks as a coffee place, in this case, is

eliminated and even far different from the meaning of a conventional coffee place. Moreover, Starbucks, in the midst of consumptive students, will only be able to be equal to coffee outlets in general in some circles of society. The marker of the present form is Starbucks, which has an upper socio-economic status. The act of consumptive consumption in one and variants of the Starbucks menu is no longer talking about the usefulness, taste, and others of these activities. However, the act of consumptive consumption at Starbucks has become an act of enjoyment and happiness that is different from quality, usefulness, and others. The form of Starbucks Coffee no longer characterises how the taste, quality, and usefulness of Starbucks products, but the happiness and enjoyment in Starbucks contained in the perception of consumptive students.

Through consumptive society (Starbucks consumptive students), it turns out that some modern people are unable to reflect the rationality of their actions as well as modern society. Consumptive students of Starbucks are solidly loaded with consumptive meaning, sign value, social logic of consumption, and hyperreality, which ultimately creates a simulation. The reality of consumptive students really correlates with Jean-Paul Baudrillard's ideas.

Amidst the reality of consumptive students, signifiers have been blended and eliminated by him so that simulation is truly present. This consumptive action has been systematised without being aware of it by the consumptive students themselves, starting with consumptive actions on the basis of sign value and social logic of consumption that have been blended and removed from the marker. The conception of meaning (sign value) appears through the marker (symbol value), which is used as shared knowledge (social logic of consumption) where the conception of meaning has been developed specifically so that it becomes a belief for consumptive students, which in turn will create a realised simulation if consumptive actions continue to be repeated then simulation can be the basis for the formation of consumptive actions as well.

On the other hand, they even consciously enjoy and allow the simulation to be present; this is one of the results of capital's construction of the market, through which consumptive actions become the key to the sustainability of capital as well as the means of production or capital.

CONCLUSIONS

Nowadays, the material object of commodities is no longer focused on the effectiveness and functionality of the object but is based on happiness. Happiness has become a necessity, where there is almost no dichotomy between happiness and the function of the object, so the happiness of the object is the function of the object. Through the previous functional signifier, the simulation is present as a sign without a signifier and with the reality of the functional object, which is then blurred with happiness. Especially the consumptive act at Starbucks Coffee, which has now been encompassed by

simulation. The happiness of consumptive actions and material objects of Starbucks Coffee commodities is formed because there are sign values, social logics of consumption, and simulations that exist amid students as consumers.

This reality is also increasingly complex, where the value of signs has various forms, as well as the social logic of consumption and simulation. The form of sign value that exists is happiness and welfare based on social differentiation. Social differentiation has a specific form of lifestyle and upper socio-economic status, which is loaded with happiness and well-being. The sign value of Starbucks Coffee amid consumptive students is present through the process of production and reproduction, on a reference through mass media (advertisements and promotions), social media, films and reality at Starbucks Coffee. All of these things are spectacles, where the value of signs is present based on what consumptive students watch. The spectacle is not based on the reality of life; the spectacle is an image, so it does not ideally construct the sign value that is perceived by the reality of Starbucks; this is the presence of simulation with the blending of a reality.

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