ABSTRACT

The continuously increasing demand for meat in urban areas such as Semarang City often cannot be fully met by domestic supply, making imported commodities a policy instrument to maintain market stability. Amid the high penetration of imported meat, retail traders in traditional markets play a crucial role in bridging the supply chain between distributors and end consumers. This study aims to examine and understand the behavior of traditional market retail traders in Semarang City in responding to the dynamics of imported meat demand as distribution partners.

This study utilizes a qualitative research design with an exploratory approach to gain an in-depth understanding of social phenomena and traders' adaptation strategies. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with retail traders in Semarang City's traditional markets, combined with non-participatory observation. The data analysis process applied an interactive model consisting of simultaneous stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results indicate a strong preference segmentation, where household consumers tend to reject imported meat due to the perceived physical quality of frozen meat, preferring local fresh meat instead. Conversely, imported meat serves as a highly vital substitute commodity for the business consumer segment, such as catering businesses and meatball vendors, to cover the shortage of local meat availability. In response to market dynamics, retail traders implement selling price adjustment strategies that heavily rely on the flexibility of daily communication with distributors.

Trading decisions and stock management are also strongly influenced by the drive to maintain business consumer loyalty amidst price fluctuations. This research contributes to the literature on marketing management and supply chains by highlighting that the rationality of traditional traders is heavily supported by social capital and long-term relationships.

Keywords: Retailer Behavior, Imported Meat, Supply Chain, Traditional Market, Marketing Management