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Challenges of Developing Countries in Complying Quality and Enhancing Standards in Food Industries

Suharni Rahmat^{a,*}, Chew Boon Cheong^b, Mohd Syaiful Rizal Bin Abd Hamid^c

^{a, b, c} Faculty of Management and Technopreneurship, Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka, Hang Tuah Jaya, 76100 Durian Tunggal, Melaka, Malaysia

Abstract

Food safety has been fervently discussed throughout the world. Priority for food safety addresses issues in enhancing food safety systems in terms of exporting countries, contribution to consumers' health and protection and advancement on food regulations and standards. Not all food industrial companies are able to follow demands highlighted by international bodies. Many developing countries lack the resources to participate in international trade because of the difficulties in complying with the requirements of the food safety standards. The underlying reasons for this are outdated laws, lack of knowledge in terms of limited coordination between organizations handling food safety issues, under-funding of national research institutes and lack of awareness for standards and quality. In moving towards the development of standards, consumer participation to demonstrate their concern over the quality and safety of food is correspondingly on the rise. In every aspect of food production, the company is required at each step in the food production chain to ensure food safety standards are not compromised and to show compliance with regulatory and customers' requirement. In an attempt to address the issue of compliance with international standards, this paper will set to discuss international food chain perspective including food quality assurance in production processes, hazard characteristics in the production and distribution of food and generic food quality and safety standards. The aim of this paper is to identify public and private food safety and quality standard internationally and implementation of food quality standards in three different regions. At the end of this paper, the researchers seek to highlight some significant findings on quality assurance in the food industry and its benefits to consumers globally.

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* Corresponding author. Tel.: +6-017- 885-2845.
E-mail address: suharnirahmat@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Food quality assurance critically had been imposed for food manufacturing to comply the standard in their production. Dietary changes in the global society, restriction on importing several foods from other countries, lack of consumer food knowledge are part of the contribution which affected the food consumption and food industries. These include getting varieties of food throughout the countries. Some of the food manufacturing, especially exporting countries is not alert in producing healthy and safe food. A food production firm may try to reduce production costs by mixing in low-quality materials, which may damage people's health. Due to the lack of knowledge and awareness, it is very difficult for consumers to distinguish between healthy food and unhealthy food.

Overloaded of information and exposure on other countries' food culture is one of the major causes in consumers' demand for healthy food. Blended ingredients between different cultures by not knowing the suitability to the people who consume it may contribute to unhealthy food.

As overloaded information and exposure on other countries' food culture, demand of healthy food from the consumers has increased. However, the increasing globalization of the food industry has become a cooperative concern and responsibility, because the food we eat have been grown and processed in several other countries (HDC Vibe, 2008). As for example, in Malaysia, cases of food borne disease are commonly cholera, typhoid fever, hepatitis A, and dysentery and food poisoning as a result from food contamination. Sharifa, Netty and Segaran (2013) reported that food poisoning cases in 2008 was 62.47 cases per 100,000 population and 36.17 in 2009. Due to the disease factor, EU countries are very concern in controlling high level protection of food safety standards to their consumers, especially the one which involves exporting fresh production (Lamuka, 2014). Besides, it will impact the company's sales, consumers' confidence and brand value and even national image (HDC Vibe).

In order to preserve processing food from being contaminated, standard has become powerful in controlling any food accessing to other countries. As the food may harm in any circumstances, Trienekens and Zuurbier (2008) has listed characteristics of some specific hazards that exist in the food production and distribution. Food production may harm in cross-contamination process as the food industries are mixed and cases may exist in the same resources for the production of different (inter-mediate) products. Recent evidence shown that food industrial activities resulted in exposure to toxic metals such as mercury and arsenic, which now present in entire food chain (Borchers et.al, 2010). Second, food quality assurance may be hard to achieve because of internationalization of food chains and networks, sourcing becomes more and more international as most food industries have many sources of raw materials and as there a recycling products and semi-finished products in food processing industries, it contributes to not meet food quality standards.

Besides strengthening the consumers judgments towards the products, Prema (2003) agreed with other scholars in terms of economics view, which is efficiency of production would be increased through standardization as it reduces imbalance information between buyers and sellers, and promotes product commutability and allowing for increased economies of scale and scope.

This paper will review the importance of implementing food safety standard, and dilemma on applying food safety standard among developing countries. It is important to discuss in this paper to harmonize the use of the implementation of food standard based on data from three regions comprises industrialized countries, emerging economy countries and least developed countries.

1.1. Importance of implementing food safety standard

The growth of the population worldwide and awareness of cleanliness of food production has risen and are forcing public and private sector to practice hygienic food production. This is where the food safety standard plays their roles in order for the food industrial to obey the rules. Consumers concern on the quality and safety of food occurs from the illness increment reported every year. World Health Organization (WHO, 2014) reported that more than 90% of human exposure is through food, mainly meat and dairy products, fish and shellfish. Moreover, studies conducted by Hartman (2005) showed that consumers concern for the safety food; especially in animal proteins are high. This study is in response towards the mad cow diseases, followed closely by seafood, poultry and other meat concerns.

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