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The Importance of Knowledge Transmission and its Relation towards the Malay Traditional Food Practice Continuity

Mohd Shazali Md. Sharif^{a*}, Mohd Salehuddin Mohd Zahari^a, Norazmir Md Nor^b,
Rosmaliza Muhammad^a

^aFaculty of Hotel & Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 42300 Puncak Alam, Malaysia

^bFaculty of Health Sciences, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 42300 Puncak Alam, Malaysia

Abstract

This study is to justify the importance of Malay traditional food knowledge transmission towards young generation practice and gain further understanding of the methods of transfer of Malay traditional food knowledge. Ethnographic methods were used in this study by means of observation and photographing techniques of four sets of respondents consist of mothers and daughters. The result shows that most of the older generation and young generation concern about preserving the Malay traditional food. In conclusion, knowledge transmission from the mother to the daughter is essential to preserve Malay traditional food knowledge.

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Keywords: Food knowledge; knowledge transmission; Malay ethnic; Malay traditional food

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +60-13-2499309; fax: +603-3258-4868.

E-mail address: shazali@salam.uitm.edu.my

1. Introduction

Every ethnic group in this world has diverse native, and each of them has their cultural practices, beliefs and social norms. Each native possess to have their individuality as being expressive identity and integral component of cultural and tradition, especially in the unique treasures of food. According to Stringer (2009), food can be seen as a middle of cultural identity that belongs to the particular society or ethnic and some elements of food preparation and consumption. Thus, traditional food is seemed look as a symbol of heritage, trademark, and culture. Nowadays, it is important to preserved food practice of each ethnic group. In Malaysia, Malay modern society especially in the young generation has gradually ignored the Malay traditional food practice due to social transition and unlimited information technology. For instances, the young generation is too exposed to pre-prepared, packaged and convenience foods, in which the impacts from that can lessen their interest in adopting the knowledge and practices traditional cooking from their mother. Nevertheless, the issue of preserving traditional food can be encouraged and protected by the young generation as long as the knowledge of transmission of food traditional food practice occurs between the older generation and the younger generation (Md. Nor et al., 2012).

2. Methodology

In this study, the method that has been applied was an observation and ethnographic technique. It is involved the process of taking pictures particularly on the actual preparation procedure of the Malay festive celebration that is Eid al-Adha. According to (Merriam, 2009), ethnography is a social science research method and the ethnographers often work in multidisciplinary teams. It relies heavily on up-close, personal experience and possible participation and not just observation. The reason this method is choosing because the ethnography has it roots planted in the fields of anthropology and sociology. In addition, events that are captures are documented in the natural setting and valuable for the discovery of the non-verbal behavior and communication such as emotions and facial expressions.

Using Perak, Penang and Negeri Sembilan as an appropriate setting, four set of samples population took places. The sample population for this research was specifically focused on women with two generations that are involved older generation and younger generation in four families. This is due to the transmission process of Malay traditional food that was usually happening between the mothers and daughters. This study involved the sample of selected group of the older generation with age range from 50 to 60 years old women while the group of younger generation with the age range between 20 -22 years old. The observation and captures the picture was carried out to both generations to gain insight into sample's experiences related to Malay traditional food knowledge transmission and the effect on practices. Instead that, researchers had recognized that it is difficult to get the desired information throughout the entire in each group with the time constraints and busy with other work for preparation of Eid al-Adha celebration. As said by Hair, Money, Samouel and Page (2008), to gain the whole population normally will be time limited and costly.

There is no exclusion in transferring the traditional food knowledge in term of preparation, method and skill in ensuring the continuity of food culture included Malay traditional food. According to Peniak (2009), traditional food is usually passed down from one generation to another generation in which the food preparation exactly according to traditional manner with no exploitation included in terms of taste and ingredients aspects. In this study, the information was collected through observation and took pictures in which the mother attributes transferred knowledge to the daughter by shown the ingredients, preparation, methods of cooking, cooking skill, and equipment. It is only involved some of the famous Malay dishes during Hari Raya like rendang, ketupat nasi, ketupat pulut and few others. The processes of preparation is normally started one day before the Hari Raya in with the mother will ask their daughter to help them together to go to the wet market to buy ingredients. It is motivating to note that some daughter will naturally aware and learn the understanding about the transferring of cooking knowledge in which included ingredients, preparation, methods and skills of cooking. The processes of transmission of Malay traditional food knowledge started at the early age of 12 to 18 years old and some of them had voluntarily helped their mother in the kitchen due to the felt of responsible to their mother. The modes of transferring the Malay traditional food knowledge included observation, oral communication and hands from mother to their daughter. These methods of a learning process are more effective and significant in preserving traditional food to make sure the continuity of the

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