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## BEAKUR, A HALAL, HEALTHY CANDY FOR CHILDREN

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### ABSTRACT

Referring to the interpretation of the Child Act (2001), a child is defined as a person under the age of eighteen. Children are a national asset and the lifeline for the country's future development, hence it is crucial for children to grow up healthy both physically and mentally. It is with considerable concern that we acknowledge the data acquired through the Malaysia Child Statistics 2023 published by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) shows an increase in the number of children under five years old in this country suffering from severe nutritional deficiencies by 0.3 percent in 2022 compared to 2021. Among the factors contributing to this increase is the practice of unhealthy eating among children. Children prefer to eat sweets such as candies. Most candies on the market contain preservatives and high sugar content. Therefore, a food product innovation named Bearkur was created as an initiative to replace the candies found in the market. This product is made from halal and high-quality ingredients such as dates, honey, and bovine gelatin. Bearkur comes in an attractive form that can capture children's interest in choosing healthy gummy candies and expose them to sunnah foods.

**Keywords:** sunnah foods; health; children; dates; honey; gummy.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Children that are facing health issues such as obesity, cardiovascular diseases, and malnutrition need to consume healthy food that is packed with nutrients and yet, most of them prefer to eat processed and junk foods rather than a diet rich in nutrients. This is because the primary reason to avoid eating healthy food such as vegetables is due to their bitter taste. Moreover, there is less incorporation of the sunnah of Prophet Muhammad SAW into the daily lives of children. This will lead to the possibility that as they grow older, they may become less aware of or forget about the sunnah of Prophet Muhammad SAW. Other than that, the appearance of healthy food is not appealing to children. For instance, most vegetables and fruits have shapes that are not interesting which results in children not wanting to consume foods that are good for their health. Lastly, there are gummy candies in the market that contain non-halal ingredients such as pig bone. Almost 95% of the gelatine that is available in the market is made from animals that are prohibited for Muslims to consume (Mohd Zin, et al., 2021).

The first objective of Bearkur is to help children become healthier as the consumption of unhealthy food is reduced and avoided by children. Next, Bearkur also wants to expose children to the Sunnah practice of Prophet Muhammad SAW as well as incorporate them into their daily lives so that it will not be forgotten in the future. Furthermore, the production of this product

aims to produce a nutritious product that has an attractive appearance and can capture the hearts of anyone who eats it, especially children. Lastly, Bearkur was created to add to Muslim-made products that are believed to be halal.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This study used a library research methodology to obtain relevant information and data. We use relevant published materials, such as articles, books, and websites, to gather accurate information about the benefits of the ingredients used in this innovative product. In addition, this study also used simple surveys to gather feedback on this innovative product. We randomly selected respondents to taste these gummies and asked them to fill out a Google Form feedback form. A total of 21 respondents were involved, consisting of students from the Centre of Foundation Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Selangor, Kampus Dengkil. The implementation took place on March 27, 2024.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Children generally have a greater interest in sweet foods compared to other types. Therefore, they prefer eating sweet fruits over bitter-tasting vegetables. Hence, the Bearkur product, which is a bear-shaped gummy candy, is made from dates to attract children's interest in eating dates. Dates contain various nutrients such as fibre, vitamins, and minerals (A. Ayad, et al., 2020). Among the minerals found in dates are iron, potassium, and calcium (Naureen, et al., 2022). Dates also contain antioxidants that can prevent chronic diseases such as cardiovascular diseases (Al Farsi & Yong Lee, 2008). Dates are also among the good sunnah foods to practice regardless of age. Therefore, it is appropriate to introduce dates to children from a young age so that they can be practiced into adulthood. In addition, Bearkur also contains honey which acts as a natural sweetener. Honey has many benefits, including helping in cognitive development (Tumiran, et al., 2020). Moreover, Bearkur is made from bovine gelatin. Bovine gelatin is collagen derived from cows that contain protein and amino acids that are good for health (Mohd Zin, et al., 2021). Therefore, the Bearkur product is believed to be halal because it uses bovine gelatin compared to the doubtful gelatin available in the market.

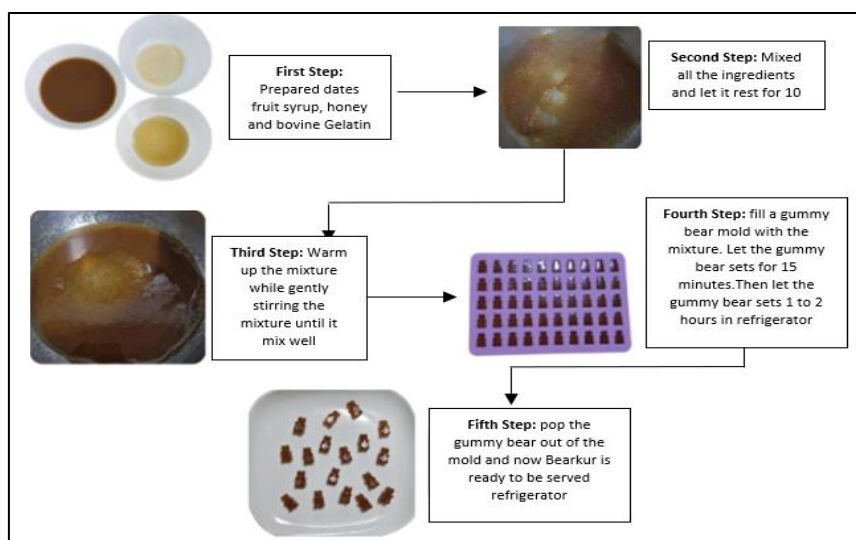
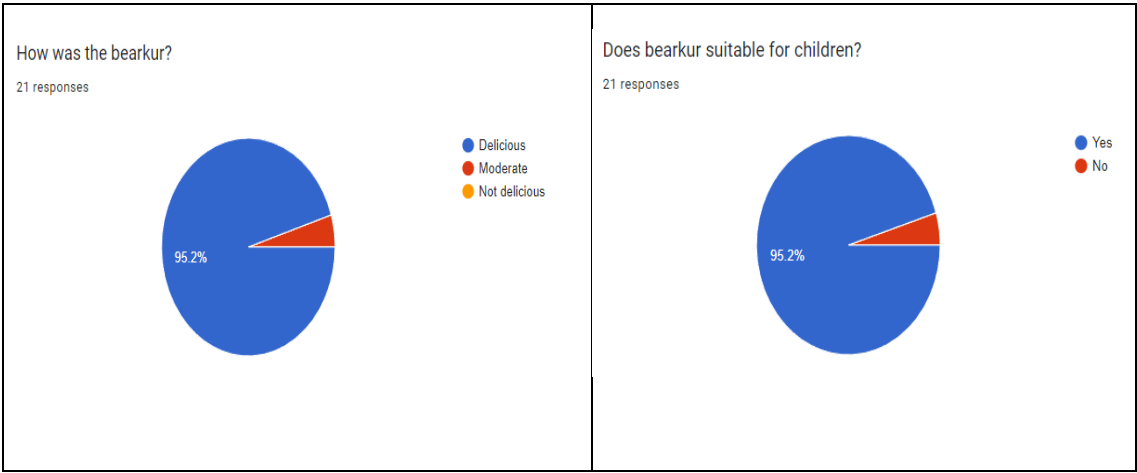


Figure 1. The production steps of Bearkur

Figure 1 shows the production steps for Bearkur. The first step is to steam the date fruits to soften them. Then, mix the date syrup (60 ml), honey (42 g), and bovine gelatine (14 g), and let it bloom for 10 minutes. Next, warm up the mixture by gently stirring it until it is well combined. After that, fill a gummy bear mold with the mixture and let the gummy bear set for 15 minutes. Then, set the gummy bear in the refrigerator for 1 to 2 hours. Lastly, pop the gummy bear out of the mold and now Bearkur is ready to be served.

A simple Google Form survey with 21 respondents revealed that 95.2% thought the product was delicious and agreed that it was suitable for children to eat.



**Figure 2.** Respondent’s feedback on Bearkur.

**4. CONCLUSION**

BEARKUR has a good potential to be marketed as it is categorized as part of the essential food needed for human survival. This product is made from combinations of dates and honey which are nutritious and rich with nutrients and good for children’s mental and physical health development. The community prefers to consume this product because of their awareness of practicing a healthy lifestyle, making them choose healthy food products as a part of their dietary routines. Muslim consumers prefer to consume this product to obtain good rewards from Allah s.w.t due to their practicing prophetic dietary ethics. In addition, Muslims are also required to choose good and nutritious food to maintain body health. This product is unique compared to normal gummy products in the market where this product is a combination of dates and honey. Moreover, this product has a soft and chewy texture, appealing taste, and is shaped as cute patterns that appeal to children’s appetites. BEARKUR is innovated as a healthy food product, especially for children. This product comprises sunnah foods such as dates and honey which are good for children’s physical and mental development. Besides, parents don’t have to worry about whether the product is halal because we use bovine gelatin made from cows, buffalo, and oxen's skin, bones, and connective tissue. In addition, children also are exposed to prophetic dietary practices through this product. Hence, all parties should ensure the children are thriving as they will be responsible for community development in the future. For improvement in the future, this product will be produced in a variety of shapes, flavours, and colours to attract the interest of children in eating it.

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