

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**EXPLORING CONTRIBUTING
FACTORS AND PRACTICES TO
SUSTAINABILITY OF NASI
AMBENG IN MALAYSIA**

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ABSTRACT

The convergence of cultures, facilitated by processes of assimilation, acculturation, and intermarriage, has given rise to a distinct population referred to as the Javanese-Malay. Over time, this population has experienced notable evolutionary transformations within the Malaysian context, particularly evident in their culinary practices and other adaptations. Nasi Ambeng, as a culinary tradition, stands as a testament to the enduring heritage cherished by the descendants of this community. However, given the scarcity of research on traditional foods, specifically focusing on Nasi Ambeng in Malaysia, coupled with the declining of its practices among the young generation create an issue of sustainability regarding the Javanese – Malay traditional food. Thus, this study is to explore the current practices of Nasi Ambeng among the Javanese – Malay community. Adopting a qualitative methodology through ethnographic and netnographic approaches, including observations, this study focuses on the Javanese-Malay community residing in selected areas of Johor and Selangor as its samples. Using narrative analysis, some significant insights were obtained. Results manifestly indicate that although dealing with waves of modernization, Nasi Ambeng is still being practiced and in fact, transcending its conventional role in the feasts (kenduri) to familial consumption and in the realm of business settings. Another remarkable finding is that this popular Javanese-Malay traditional food sustains its heritage through intergenerational knowledge transfer, adoption, adaptations, and its demand in the food business. This study not only enriches the field of gastronomy studies and literature in Malaysia but provides insights for state tourism authorities, culinary heritage bodies, and ethnic representatives, serving as a foundation for the preservation of other ethnic traditional foods for future generations.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

This chapter laid the groundwork for the study by offering a detailed overview of the research context, underlying issues, and overall direction. It commenced with a discussion of the background of the study, providing a broader perspective on the topic and emphasizing the relevance of the research area. Following this, the problem statement was articulated, identifying the specific challenges and research gaps that the study aimed to address. Subsequently, the research objectives were defined, outlining the precise aims of the investigation, while the research questions were formulated to offer a focused line of inquiry. The scope of the study was then clearly delineated, detailing the parameters and limitations within which the research was conducted. The chapter concluded by highlighting the significance of the study, underscoring its potential contributions to both academic discourse and practical application. Finally, key terms were defined to ensure clarity and a shared understanding of crucial concepts throughout the study. Collectively, these sections formed a coherent structure that underscored the purpose, direction, and value of the research.

1.2 Research Background

Traditional foods are a way of life, a chronicle of history and cultural expression. There are few ways to illuminate the notion of “traditional food”. Conforming to Prakash, (2016), food that comprises fruits, vegetables, and products derived from animals, are customarily consumed in their original form or undergo few basic processes like cooking, drying and natural fermentation. Bertozzi (1998) remarked that traditional food constitutes the culture and implicit the individual synergy which belongs to the territory. In the meantime, Guerrero et al., (2009) shared the same notion whereby traditional food is “frequently consumed or associated with specific celebrations and/or seasons, normally transmitted from one generation to another”. Particular coteries have their own definite taste predilection in which the traditional foods are practiced. Since traditional foods are practiced, diverse groups of ethnic