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Title : INTEGRATION AND ADAPTATION OF FOODWAYS TOWARD COMMON ACCEPTABLE FOOD AND FOOD IDENTITY FORMATION

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This study attempt to measure the extent to which integration through food knowledge, food media and food for social events of the Malays, Chinese and Indian foods influenced the adaptation of foodways (preparation and consumption) toward establishment of the common acceptable food and Malaysian food identity formation. This study is structured through a self-administered survey with the individual Malays, Chinese and Indian chefs / cooks who are currently working in the medium / large food catering operations / services and had experienced of preparing and consuming the three Malaysian major ethnic cuisines. Fifty medium / large food catering operations / services located at the Klang Valley cities namely Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, Kajang, Petaling Jaya, Shah Alam, and Klang have been chosen for data collection. A total of 402 responses were obtained from the survey processes with 392 were usable. The data collected was analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) software program AMOS 22.0. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were executed to validate the scales. Four main dimensions of the overall measurement model were produced and tested

in agreement with a rigorous refinement process for the models. The results generated from the structural modeling evidenced that the three dimensions of integration attributes and the formation of food identity is significantly related. Furthermore, the presence of adaptation of foodways capable of modifying the strength of the relationship between integration attributes and common acceptable food. In other word, adaptation of foodways through preparation and consumption explicitly mediate on the relationship between integration attributes and common acceptable food. It is interesting to note that common acceptable food is also having the mediating effect on the relationship between adaptation of foodways and food identity formation. Through these findings, it can be deduced that adaptation of foodways through preparation and consumption of other ethnic cuisine not only help to develop a common acceptable food among the major ethnic (Malay, Chinese and Indian) but, gradually shape the formation of national food identity.