

**ROLE OF TRADITIONAL FOOD KNOWLEDGE (TFK) IN MALAY COMMUNITY  
TOWARDS FESTIVE CUISINE SUSTAINABILITY**



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## **1. Letter of Report Submission**

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## **5. Report**

### **5.1 Proposed Executive Summary**

Traditional food knowledge (TFK) refers to the cultural tradition of sharing food provisioning skills, techniques and cultural beliefs from generation to generation. Traditional food knowledge can be a means of asserting cultural identity, particularly for specific cultural groups; transmitting this knowledge may contribute to personal skills that relate to food security and personal nutrition and enhanced community capacity. Traditional food knowledge (TFK) is a concept to acknowledge the importance of the relationship between traditional food cultures and healthy communities. Although TFK relates to all stages of food provisioning, particular attention are focused to cultural education, where TFK are suppose to be transmitted to the new generations. This transmission will not continue if both the process of de-skilling in a modern commoditized food system and societal fragmentation facilitate consumption of convenience food commodities over localized production and provisioning.

Traditional food is found to have a unanimously positive general image across Europe. In Malaysia, there are similar development happened but cannot be proved due limited publication that highlight the issues on traditional food knowledge (TFK) and heritage. To date, no research has been conducted in Malaysia on Traditional Food Knowledge (TFK) especially in Malay food. Traditional foods have ever evolved and always are part of any culture of races. Preserving the traditional food knowledge is crucial and it contributes to cultural identities which are supposed to be heritage for the next generations. Unfortunately, research on traditional food knowledge (TFK) is limited. Many factors have influenced the fact that traditional Malay food knowledge are not been well preserve and heritage, but there are very few studies to document this work. The purpose of the study is to explore the transmission of traditional Malay foods practices through generations.

### 5.3 Introduction

Preserving food practices including the traditional ones are crucially important for every ethnic group in this world. Many scholars urged on the essentials of preserving the techniques of preparation and skill of traditional food by transmitting them to the next generation (Kwik, 2008; Yohannes, 2009). Passing down traditional food knowledge from generations to other generation significantly prolong the shelf life of the ethnic food identity and cultural heritage (Albayrak and Gunes, 2010). The United Nations through the International Workshop on Traditional Knowledge emphasized that traditional food knowledge should continuously practices for future generation as it relate to profound spiritual and identity (United Nations, 2007). In this sense, traditional food knowledge or TFK refers to the cultural tradition of sharing the food provisioning skills, techniques and food cultural beliefs from generation to generation. Traditional food knowledge can be a means of asserting cultural identity, particularly for minority cultural groups; transmitting this knowledge may contribute to personal skills that relate to food security and personal nutrition and enhanced community capacity. Furthermore, this knowledge can connect cultural diasporas and fortify cultural identity for post- generations.

Some ethnics are reported not only facing the deskilling issues related to domestic cooking skills but starting to lost the traditional food culture owing to weakening of old generation of passing down the traditional cooking knowledge to the young generations (Stringer, 2010; Bowen & Devine, 2010). Chenhall (2011) noted that transition of traditional food practices are less taking among the young generation primarily owing to the increased availability of processed, pre-prepared and convenience foods within the retail and foodservice environments. Consequently, the fundamental shifts occurs within entire cultures (developing and developed countries), resulting in negative implications for traditional food practices. In line with this notion, there is some concern that traditional practices may be forgotten by modern practitioners and young generations (Pieniak, Verbeke, Vanhonacker, Guerrero, & Hersleth, 2009) and a decline in cooking and food preparation skills start to appear in the popular and published literatures (Chenhall, 2011).

In Malaysia, preserving TFK or traditional food knowledge has received greater concern among the older generation, Malaysian Cultural Association and The Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture and others government agencies. This is evident when the former Minister of Culture, Arts and Heritage, Dato' Seri Utama Dr. Rais bin Yatim urged Malaysian citizen to preserve their food heritage delicacies by passing down the knowledge and skill and practices to next generation. He said that:

*"Being a multi-cultural society, Malaysia is a land of many colourful festivals and celebrations. During the festivals, every ethnic prepare their own traditional food to serve to the guest. As we can see, a lot of changes occurred in our food culture therefore it is important for everybody to sustain our traditional food especially to the young people. The older generation should pass their knowledge and the young need to learn from their old family members how to prepare the traditional food. If not, we will lose our food culture. Malaysian government especially my ministry gives a greater concern on this issue."* (KEKKWA, 2008)