

**AWARENESS OF LOCAL FOOD HANDLERS TOWARDS FOOD HYGIENE:
A STUDY ON LOCAL FOOD PREMISE IN UITM DUNGUN
AND SURROUNDING AREAS**

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**Submitted In Partial Fulfillment Of The Requirement
For The Bachelor of Science (Hons.) in Foodservice Management**

**FACULTY OF HOTEL & TOURISM MANAGEMENT
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December 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank be to Allah SWT for giving us the strength, blessing, perseverance and good health for the completion of this study. Alhamdulillah, we managed to complete this research project successfully after spending a lot of time striving for best outcome. As we are indebted to many people, we would like to express our gratitude to many parties.

At this opportunity, we would like to express our profound appreciation to every single one who is directly or indirectly involved in this project. Our highest gratitude first goes to the respective Supervisor, Mr. Tajulurus bin Mohammad for his intellectual guidance, consideration and encouragement.

Our heartfelt gratitude also goes out to the food handlers involved for their kind cooperation in making the survey a success by helping us giving valuable information for this study. We would also like to extend our heartiest thanks to our friends for their indirect helps in completing this project.

Lastly, we would like to dedicate this research project to our families. A countless grateful goes to our beloved parents for their prayers and supports from the beginning until the end. They have been supporting us a lot, especially in terms of financial to get this project done. Without all helps of the particular that mentioned above, this undergraduate project would not be possibly made. May Allah bless all of you. Thank you.

Nik Nur Halmemi binti Nik Mohd. Halmi

Nurul Izatul Akmal binti Abdul Rahman

ABSTRACT

The issue of lack of knowledge, attitude and practices among food handlers has become a dominant problem in the foodservice industry. Food safety is one the key public health concern because people eat their meals inside or outside home. The most important strategies to reduce the food borne diseases are by give adequate training to food handlers. Food handlers have a prime role in food businesses, and that is to guarantee that meals served are hygienic for consumption. Conscious or inadvertent contamination of such food places consumers at risk of suffer from foodborne illnesses. For this reason the study was carried out to document the food hygiene knowledge, attitudes and practices of food handlers, in UiTM Dungun and surrounding areas to evaluate the awareness of local food handlers towards hygiene. Food poisoning and other food borne diseases could occur through poor hygiene practices, especially in areas where food and drinks are served. Therefore, there is a need to look into the operations of food vendors to ascertain whether they are followed the proper hygiene practices. The study was descriptive cross-sectional in design with a simple random sampling technique applied in selecting 31 food handlers. Study specific structured questionnaires were used in the data collection. Data were processed into statistical package for social sciences version 23 for analysis. Results indicated that females comprising 51.6% dominated the food handler establishment compared to male 48.4%. Based on the results, among the three elements the majority of the respondents agreed that safe food handling is an important part of job responsibilities with the higher mean score ($M=4.58$, $SD=.502$) in the attitude in food hygiene. Meanwhile, the lowest mean score amongst the elements also the attitude in food hygiene which majority of them agreed that food handlers should be medically examined every six months with the lowest mean score ($M=1.65$, $SD=.755$).

Keywords: Awareness; Food Handlers; Food Hygiene; Food Premise; Dungun

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