

UNIVERSITTEKNOLOGIMARA

**KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND
PRACTICES TOWARDS SAFE
FOOD HANDLING COMPLIANCE
AMONG FOOD HANDLERS IN
SCHOOL CANTEENS**

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses regarding the case of food poisoning in school canteen in which it roots from personal hygiene, practices of food handlers, the contact between raw foods and cooked food, safe storage and handling, employee training and more. The main objective of this study is to examine the factors of knowledge, attitude, and practices that influence food handling compliance among the food handlers in schools at Sungai Petani, Kuala Muda, Kedah. These factors are very important to be studied as they are considered as crucial aspects in preparing and presenting the food. In this study, the food handlers that work at school canteens are chosen as the samples because they are a group of workers that interact directly and deal with students at the schools. A multi-stage cluster stratified sampling approach is used. Questionnaire was administered in the form of close-ended question to measure the dependent variables of the study. Data were analysed with Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) of AMOS software. Demographic profiles of the respondents in the study were analysed accordingly. This study confirmed the examination of the hypothesized model using goodness of fit statistics. The sample size of food handlers in schools a Sungai Petani, Kuala Muda Kedah used is 310 food handlers for this study. Findings from SEM show that knowledge and attitude were found to be significant predictors towards food safety compliances. Knowledge was the highest contributing factor towards food safety compliances compared to attitude. However, practices were found as insignificant predictor to food safety compliances. This study had contributed to the body of knowledge by focusing on knowledge, attitude, practices that influence food handling compliance in school canteens.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS	ii
AUTHOR'S DECLARATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of Study	1
1.2 Food Poisoning	3
1.3 Problem Statement	6
1.4 Research Objectives	9
1.5 Research Question	9
1.6 Research Hypotheses	10
1.7 Operational Definition	10
1.7.1 Knowledge	10
1.7.2 Attitudes	10
1.7.3 Practices	11
1.7.4 Food Safety Compliance	11
1.7.5 Food Handlers	11
1.7.6 School Canteen	11
1.8 Limitation	12
1.9 Significance of Study	12
1.10 Chapter Summary	13
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW	14
2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 Knowledge	14

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Food is considered as a vital component in daily life for the human being. This is because having a good food will make one to be healthy and allow them to carry out various daily activities accordingly. Balanced and secured food intake and its hygiene can provide perfection in health. Food plays an important role as the source of energy for the students. Therefore, issues which are related to food hygiene in school canteens need to be taken seriously. In fact, it is a priority for the government to monitor the health of the students at school as reported by Nik Adibah et al., (2016). Food poisoning is defined as an illness caused by the consumption of food or water contaminated with improper and non-hygienic food handling. The symptoms of food poisoning usually begin within one to two days of consuming contaminated food, although they may start at any point between a few hours and several weeks later. The main symptoms include nausea, vomiting, and diarrhoea, stomach cramps, and weakness, loss of appetite, fever, muscle aches, and chills.

For the past few years, there were many food poisoning cases reported in several schools in Malaysia. For example, a school in Selangor was ordered to close when 49 students suffered from vomiting, stomach-ache and diarrhoea after having canteen food during recess. The next case is 17 pupils of Sekolah Kebangsaan Manjoi Dua, Perak (“17 students in Perak”, 2019) were allowed to go home after they suffered from food poisoning, believed to be caused from eating at the school canteen. Students can be easily affected by the foodborne diseases because of the fact that their immune system is weaker compared to adults. So, when they eat non-hygienic food, they are prone to suffer from food poisoning.

Due to that, contaminated-free food is important for them to perform well in their studies in school. This is due to students who are not aware of personal hygiene and lack of knowledge about unhealthy eating habits such as eating without washing hand by using proper techniques. The risk of foodborne diseases could be reduced