

'URF AND ITS INFLUENCE IN DETERMINING ISLAMIC LEGAL RULINGS ON FOOD RELATED ISSUES IN MALAYSIA

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By

ZULAIPA BINTI RUZULAN

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

January 2015

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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January 2015

Chair: Suhaimi Ab Rahman, PhD

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There is a positive development in the *halal* food industry due to increasing market demand, as well as the advance of science and technology. This however, results in Shariah issues where the need arises for the clarification of Islamic legal rulings through ijtihadic process, for the reason that clear legal rulings in the Quran and Sunnah are limited. At this point, 'urf is seen as one of the best sources to answer the arisen issues. Thus, the main objective of this study is to understand the concept of 'urf and its influence in determining the legal status of food-related issues in Malaysia. In order to achieve this objective, a qualitative research method has been adopted where document analysis as well as in-depth interview were used. For documents analysis, the Holy Quran, hadith, classical manuals, contemporary literatures on Islamic law, government officials' documents, journal articles and other reliable websites were sought as they provide a range of rich data on the concept of 'urf and its position in Malaysia, particularly vis-à-vis halal food related issues. Furthermore, in-depth interview was carried out, with over 15 key informants ranging from authoritative personnel and academicians selected to examine the influence of 'urf in determining the legal rulings on food-related issues. The study has shown that the concept of 'urf could be understood as a reality occurring during the particular time, where not only entails the changing of traditions that are accepted among general Muslim society, but also includes scientific facts that are recognized during the time. Moreover, the perception towards the characteristics of al-tayyibāt is not only limited to the 'urf al-Arab, but is also actually based on 'urf at a particular place; inclusive of the scientific 'urf. The study also found that 'urf does influence in the decision of the fugahā' in dispensing legal rulings in foodrelated issues in Malaysia either on the state or federal level. This is proven through the study of 'urf ijtimā'ī and 'urf 'ilmī. As far as 'urf ijtimā'ī is concerned, all key informants have agreed on its authoritativeness and otherwise, while almost half of informants agree on the authoritativeness of 'urf 'ilmī. The remainder disagrees due to differentiation between 'urf, and science, and technology. Moreover, the study also further identified that both types of 'urf have influenced the fugahā' in determining the legal rulings on food related issues where if there is valid evidence from the scientific community, the 'urf 'ilmī prevail. However, if the scientific evidence is found to still be in a stage of theoretical probability or there is no scientific evidence, 'urf ijtimā'ī therefore influences the conclusion of legal rulings. It is hoped that this study will benefit both policy makers as well as food practitioners especially when it comes to issues of legal rulings in the food industry. It is also suggested that experts in food are included in fatwa committee meetings so as to assist the $fuqah\bar{a}$ ' in deducing legal rulings that conform to reality.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

'URF DAN PENGARUHNYA DALAM PENENTUAN HUKUM BERKAITAN ISU-ISU MAKANAN DI MALAYSIA

Oleh

ZULAIPA BINTI RUZULAN

Januari 2015

Pengerusi: Suhaimi Ab. Rahman, PhD Fakulti: Institut Penyelidikan Produk Halal

Industri makanan halal berkembang secara positif rentetan dari permintaan pasaran dan juga perkembangan sains dan teknologi. Namun, perkembangan ini telah melahirkan isu-isu Syariah yang memerlukan penjelasan hukum-hakam perundangan Islam menerusi proses ijtihad. Ini kerana hukum-hakam tersebut amat terhad dalam nas-nas al-Quran dan Sunnah. Dalam konteks ini, 'urf dilihat sebagai salah satu sumber terbaik untuk menjawab persoalan tersebut. Oleh itu, objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk memahami konsep 'urf dan pengaruhnya dalam menentukan status hukum terhadap isuisu berkaitan makanan di Malaysia. Untuk mencapai objektif ini, kaedah penyelidikan secara kualitatif telah diguna pakai dengan mengaplikasi penganalisaian dokumen dan temubual mendalam. Untuk kaedah analisa dokumen, Quran, Sunnah, kitab-kitab warisan, karya-karya moden perundangan Islam, dokumen-dokumen rasmi kerajaan, penulisan jurnal dan juga laman-laman web yang boleh dipercayai telah dirujuk kerana sumber ini menyediakan data-data yang bernilai mengenai konsep kedudukannya dalam perundangan di Malaysia terutama berkaitan isu-isu makanan halal. Manakala untuk kaedah temubual, seramai 15 orang informan utama yang terdiri dari pembuat polisi dan ahli akademik telah dipilih untuk menilai peranan 'urf dalam menentukan hukum-hakam berkaitan isu-isu makanan tersebut. Kajian telah mendapati bahawa konsep 'urf boleh difahami secara realiti semasa yang berkaitan dengan tradisi masyarakat dan fakta-fakta saintifik semasa yang diiktiraf. Di samping itu, persepsi terhadap ciri-ciri al-tayyibāt tidak terhad hanya kepada 'urf Arab sahaja, malah ia merangkumi 'urf setempat dan juga 'urf saintifik semasa. Kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa 'urf telah mempengaruhi fugahā' di Malaysia dalam proses pengeluaran hukum berkaitan isu-isu makanan samada di peringkat negeri ataupun negara. Hal ini terbukti menerusi kajian terhadap 'urf ijtimā 'ī dan 'urf 'ilmī. Semua informan bersetuju bahawa 'urf ijtimā'ī mempunyai autoriti dan sebaliknya sebahagian besar dari informan bersetuju bahawa 'urf 'ilmī mempunyai autoriti, manakala selebihnya tidak bersetuju bahawa 'urf 'ilmī berautoriti kerana mereka membezakan antara 'urf 'ilmī dan sains dan teknologi. Kajian juga mendapati bahawa kedua-dua jenis 'urf tersebut mempengaruhi

fuqahā' dalam menentukan hukum-hakam berkaitan dengan isu makanan. Dalam konteks ini, sekiranya wujud bukti saintifik, maka 'urf 'ilmī akan didahulukan. Namun, sekiranya bukti saintifik masih lagi di peringkat kebarangkalian atau tiada bukti langsung, maka 'urf ijtimā 'ī akan didahulukan dalam proses menentukan hukum. Kajian ini diharapkan mampu menyumbang kedua-dua pihak, samada pembuat polisi atau pengamal dalam industri makanan. Kajian juga mencadangkan agar pakar pemakanan dilibatkan sama dalam mesyuarat jawatankuasa fatwa bagi membantu fuqahā' untuk mengeluarkan hukum yang lebih realistik.



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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 7 January 2015 to conduct the final examination of Zulaipa binti Ruzulan on her thesis entitled "'*Urf* and its Influence in Determining Islamic Legal Rulings on Food Related Issues in Malaysia" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U. (A) 106] 15 March 1998. The committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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Signature:	Signature:
Name of Chairman of Supervisory Committee:	Name of Member of Supervisory Committee:
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DFU Department of Figh & Usul

FIS Faculty of Islamic Studies

FSL Faculty of Shariah and Law

JAKIM Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia

SWT Subḥānahu wa Taʻālā

IBFIM Islamic Banking and Finance Institute Malaysia

IIiBF Islamic Banking and Finance Institute

IIUM International Islamic University Malaysia

ILIM Institut Latihan Islam Malaysia

IRKHS Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences

MKI Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Hal Ehwal Ugama Islam Malaysia

PBUH Peace Be Upon Him

UKM National University of Malaysia

UM Malaya University

UPM Universiti Putra Malaysia

USIM Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

b	=	ب		Z	=	ز	f	=	ف
t	=	ت		s	=	س	q	=	ق
th	=	ث		sh	=	ů	k	=	ك
j	=	ح		Ş	=	ص	1	=	J
ķ	=	7		d		ض	m	4	P
kh	=	خ	Ì	ţ	<u>'/= </u>	ط	n	=	ن
d	= 100	7		Ż	=	4	h	F	٥
dh	=	ذ	<	c	=	٤	w	4	و
r	=	ر		gh	=	غ	у	=	ي

Short: $a = \hat{ }; \qquad i = \emptyset; \qquad u = \hat{ }$

Long: $\bar{a} = 1$; $\bar{i} = \varphi$; $\bar{u} = \varphi$

Diphthong: ay = 1; aw = 1

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the overview of the present study. As such, the chapter covers the following sections: background of study, statement of problem, research questions, research objectives, significance of study, scope and limitations of study, and research methodology.

1.2 Background of Study

With the steady growth of the global *halal* market, it is estimated that the *halal* industry is possibly one of the fastest growing sectors (Noriah & Hamzah, 2013). Consequently, this has provided many business opportunities. This positive development can be identified in many areas which include toiletries, pharmaceuticals, banking services, tourism as well as food and beverages. At this point, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (former Malaysian Prime Minister) has emphasized that the growth of the Muslim population worldwide, which is expected to increase to three billion, as well as the increasing consumer awareness towards *halal* products are significant key factors and catalysts for the development of the *halal* industry (Bernama, 4 April 2013). As a consequence, this attracts the positive development of *halal* products to fulfill the demands of the market.

Moreover, the Pew Research Center has revealed that the Muslim populations have in fact been regarded as the second world largest population, one step behind the Christian world population, and moreover this population grows substantially year on year. It was reported that the Muslims population represents 23% of the total people of the worldwide where it covers about 1.6 billion out of 6.8 billion people living on the earth in the year of 2009 (The Pew Forum, 2009; 2012). In view of that, the Muslims population will admittedly grow about twice in size, consequently covering more than a quarter of the population of the world (Greene, 2011). With this positive information, it is estimated that the prospects for the *halal* industry will remain stable, increase exponentially, and moreover develop accordingly due to the ever increasing demand.

While the industry is undeniably progressively developing, there are also arising issues that concern the Shariah status of the products. This is due to the development of new products by means of the utilization of modern science and technology. In relation to this matter, Mohammad Aizat, Mohd Anuar & Suhaimi et al. (2012) opine that the rapid development of science and technology is the main cause for the unclearness of the Shariah status of products. They have stressed that the operation of the food industry always keeps changing, particularly the processing methods where the industry does not depend merely on the conventional method but also incorporates synthetic or artificial ingredients due to the development of science and technology.

On another point, the issue of Shariah status of the products could emerge specifically for products imported from the non-Muslim countries. According to Nurulhidayah, Yaakob, Mohammad Aizat et al. (2011), this has led to the inquiry of

whether the products are really *halal* as could contain prohibited ingredients which are not compatible with Shariah requirements. Thus, the contemporary issue of the *halalness* of the products does not rely on the end products, but encompasses the entire process of *halal* products.

As far as the development of the *halal* food industry is concerned, the observance of Islamic dietary law is very important. This is for the reason that Islam has regarded food as among the important needs for human being; as it strengthens the body physically and spiritually. Therefore, Muslim followers are encouraged to be very particular in terms of consuming food since taking food is part of worship ('*ibādah*). In fact, it is obligatory for the Muslims to observe a healthy dietary intake as it is actually an order from Allah SWT (Fauziah, 2013). As Allah SWT says in the Quran, "O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth (that is) lawful and pure" (Al-Baqarah (2): 168). Thus, it is important to not merely eating food for sustaining the needs of the body, rather; religion's observance on food intake is also very essential as to ensure the Muslims' actions are acceptable by Allah SWT.

Due to that reason, since the discussion of food is so limited in the Quran and Sunnah, the role of *ijtihād* (method of Islamic legal deduction) is very important in clarifying the Shariah status of the product. This is because the rulings of food related issues through *ijtihadic* process can ascertain that Islamic law can be developed in line with changing lifestyles as well as serve as guidance for the betterment of this life (Mohd Anuar & Mohammad Aizat, 2012). As a matter of fact, this is due to the main objective (*maqāṣid al-Shariah*) of the Islamic rulings revealed to mankind, which is to preserve the human needs or *maṣlaḥah* (public welfare) and achieve happiness in the now and hereafter (Muhammad Akram, 2006). Therefore, with the opportunity given to the *fuqahā* (Islamic jurists) to tackle the new rise of food issues through *ijtihād*, it depicts that Islamic law is not stagnant. However, it accepts the changes and considers people's interest when deriving Islamic legal rulings (sing: *ḥukm*, pl: *aḥkām*).

As a matter of fact, this is purposely undertaken to avoid any difficulty faced by Muslim believers specifically, and other believers like food producers generally. The unresolved issue arose while previous issues emerge concerning food related issues, which are settled by using proper Islamic law methodologies (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). Of course, this is inherent within the reality occurring within Malaysia.

Henceforth, in order to determine the rulings of food related issues that are not clearly stated in the texts (sing; nass, pl; nusus) of the Quran and Sunnah (traditions of Prophet Muhammad), $fuqah\bar{a}$ can adopt $ijtih\bar{a}d$ to resolve the issue. One of the sources of Islamic law used by $fuqah\bar{a}$ in deducing legal rulings is 'urf. With this intention, 'urf plays an important role as a source or supporting instrument for determining the relevance of food legal rulings in Malaysia.

Moreover, 'urf is regarded as among the preferred secondary sources to deal with the arising issues due to its unique characteristics that are compatible with the life of the people where the legal ruling is intended with. As what has been done by the classical fuqahā' previously applied to 'urf when they would like to deduce legal ruling (Ahmad Sufyan, 2002). Thus, with the consideration of the Quran and Sunnah, previous fatwa and current reality ('urf) today in halal food industry are very good

combination in assuring that the food legal rulings derived are relevant with current circumstances.

In short, the determination of legal rulings based on 'urf for unfamiliar cases particularly related to food are very important in ensuring that the Muslim's food consumption practices are in line with Shariah requirements while acquiring the blessing (barākah) from Allah SWT. Moreover, it also can contribute to the Muslims' satisfaction in terms of taking food among Muslim community in Malaysia if they are made known clearly on the status of food legal rulings.

1.3 Statement of Problem

The concept of legal ruling which is based on the speculative evidence (dalīl zannī) provides flexibility in responding to the arising issues. Thus, it shows that there is a significant space in Islamic law for the fuqahā' in determining the status of foods' legal rulings in the grey area. Considering 'urf in the process of deducing legal rulings, for instance, is among the best methods for fuqahā' to deal with food related issues in the present day. This is due to the fact that 'urf can reflect with the changing of time, places and circumstances in order to conform to human needs (Abu Sunnah, 2004; Al-Zarqā, 1998). Thus, having fulfilled the needs of the people it shows that Shariah is very flexible for all mankind, at all times and situations.

However, there are different opinions among the $fuqah\bar{a}$ on the usage of 'urf in determining legal rulings on food related issues. According to Mohd Anuar (2006), a number of $fuqah\bar{a}$ believe that only 'urf al-'Arab has authority for determining legal rulings which are not clearly stated in the Quran and Sunnah. However, based on the socio-cultural status quo, including the food culture of the Arabians, there exists a vast difference between the suggested status quo as opposed to other Asian countries, including Malaysia. In brief, it is important for the $fuqah\bar{a}$ ' to reevaluate their opinion due to differences in geographical locations, as well as food practices.

Moreover, the development of science and technology, particularly in the *halal* food processing sector has altered and replaced the conventional 'urf by means of adopting recent technological practices. According to Mohammad Aizat, Mahmood Zuhdi, Mohd Anuar et al. (2011), the development of science and technology and the evolution of socio-cultural norms and conditions have changed much in the realm of food where the changes have increased the quality of food as opposed to the past. Some changes in food preparation and the usage of modern basic ingredients include the introduction of processed foods which contain shortening, emulsifiers, additives, preservatives and taste enhancers, effectively shows that the issue of food today is more complex compared to the past (Consumer Association of Penang, 2006; Mohammad Jauhar, 2006). This could raise Shariah issues in the food industries because there is no clear evidence in the Quran and Sunnah regarding to these matters, and while the classical fuqahā 'also do not discuss it in depth.

The using of coloring in the food products which derived from the insects like carmine for instance becomes an issue among the $fuqah\bar{a}$ because generally the coloring is considered as hidden ingredient and in fact insect is regarded as impure (najs) according to Shāfi'ī School (Mohammad, 2009). Indeed, all these need a

practical Shariah parameter in order to address the issues and thus, 'urf is seemed to be among the suitable choices in dealing with the issues.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore 'urf and its influence in determining the legal rulings on food related issues in Malaysia whereby several food related issues will be examined. This is to show the important role of 'urf plays in deriving legal rulings on food related issues in Malaysia. Since the research on this particular topic is limited, it gives a golden opportunity for the researcher to conduct detail analysis on this issue.

1.4 Research Questions

- 1. What is the concept of 'urf under the Islamic law?
- 2. What is the position of 'urf under the Islamic legal system in Malaysia?
- 3. To what extent does 'urf influence the fuqahā' in determining legal rulings on food related issues in Malaysia?

1.5 Research Objectives

- 1. To analyze the concept of 'urf from the Islamic point of view.
- 2. To identify the position of 'urf under the Islamic legal system in Malaysia.
- 3. To analyze the influence of 'urf in deducing legal rulings on food related issues in Malaysia.

1.6 Significance of Study

The study should be able to demonstrate the influence of 'urf as one of the sources in Islamic law in determining the relevancy of legal rulings in food related issues in Malaysia. For this reason, this study can contribute knowledge for the people in three groups as follows.

1.6.1 Contribution to the Academician and Researcher

This study will provide future reference for academicians and researchers to conduct research on the understanding of legal rulings related to food issues in Malaysia. Moreover, this study may also serve as an exemplary guidance for foreign researchers in establishing the concept of 'urf based on understanding the present reality of the halal food industry status quo.

1.6.2 Contribution to the Body of Knowledge

This study is also significant in the development of the concept of 'urf. Furthermore, this study may also expand the knowledge on 'urf not only in the purview of Islamic law, but may also contribute to the development of knowledge in sociology. This is because the relevancy of legal rulings based on 'urf is integrating between elements of legal rulings with human needs where 'urf is considered as part of study of the society.

1.6.3 Contribution to the Policy Makers

This study attempts to benefit policy makers in determining the legal rulings in food related issues effectively. The study could facilitate beneficial ideas to the religious body with the choice for them in understanding the framework of food legal rulings on the basis of contemporary context especially based on 'urf. In brief, the general pictures of the study can assist them to consider 'urf as one of the relevant instruments in solving food related issues as well as to construct the relevant food legal rulings which in line with the development of science and technology.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of Study

This study would focus on the concept of 'urf in Islamic law and its influence in deducing legal rulings on food related issues. Thus, this study aims to analyze the extent to which 'urf may be regarded as an important source in the Islamic legal system in Malaysia. Furthermore, the study would examine the influence of 'urf among the fuqahā' in the process of determining food legal rulings in Malaysia. In this manner, by analyzing the process of deducing food legal rulings based on 'urf, it can therefore be understood that the process of determining food legal rulings is objectively taking into consideration towards fulfilling the needs of Muslim community in Malaysia.

Moreover, this study focuses on examining several food related issues that are raised in Malaysia such as the issues of handling methods of animal slaughtering, the status of the *halalness* of the land animal and the *Newater*. Therefore, several fatwas related to food issues are reviewed in analyzing the influence of 'urf in deducing an Islamic legal ruling. Last but not least, this study also will be a general study from the Islamic point of view; therefore it will not tend to focus on any particular schools of thought.

1.8 Research Methodology

This section discusses the research methodology. The study adopts qualitative research methodology. This is for the reason that the study will explore and describe the concept of 'urf' and its influence in determining food legal rulings, particularly in the halal food sector in Malaysia. Thus, two methods of data collection were chosen i.e. documents and field research, whereby document analysis was used for the first method and in-depth interview was applied for the latter method. Indeed, the adoption of more than one method in a qualitative study will assist in providing insightful complimentary data, rather than merely duplicating the data that may be difficult to collect if relying only on the single method per se (Darbyshire, MacDougall & Wendy, 2005).

Based on the available data via documents and also in depth interview information, this study can therefore be of assistance in understanding the influence 'urf plays in determining legal rulings related to food issues. At this point, the establishment of 'urf could be thoroughly understood.

1.8.1 Types of Data Collection

Data collection aims to gather good information which involves a series of interrelated activities to answer the established research questions (Creswell, 2007, p. 110). Similarly, so as to ensure that the objectives of the study are answered correctly, henceforth the systematic process of data collection must be thoroughly identified. Since this study is an Islamic law based research, the collection of data in turn involves two types of data which are primary and secondary data.

For the primary data, it refers to data that is considered first hand evidence, emerging from original material that could provide raw evidence for this study (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006, p.142). Thus, the Quran and Sunnah are recognized as outstanding references in this study whereby according to Nyazee (2000), these two references can serve as the basis and guidance for many cases because both contain the relevant laws at all times and circumstances. As Allah SWT says, "If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger" (Al-Nisā' (4):59). In view of this, it cannot be denied that all explanations from the Prophet PBUH either from the Quran and Sunnah are regarded as the divine revelations where the *fugahā*' in all generations unanimously agree that the two sources are the most authoritative sources in Islamic law. In addressing the source of the Quran, the study employed the translation of the Holy Quran by Abdullah Yusof Ali (2007) in order to standardize the used translation of the text as well as the exegesis (tafsīr) books like Tafsīr al-Quran al- 'azīm. For the Sunnah, the Hadith of Kutub Sittah (The Six Books) such as Şahīh Bukhārī, Şahīh Muslim and Sunan Abu Dawūd are referred in this study. Moreover, in terms of the sources of classical manuals, the books most relevant to Islamic law, particularly on matters of 'urf such as the al-Mustasfa, al-Muwāfaqāt, al-Risālah as well as the most credible manuals from school of thoughts such as al-Majmu' were referred to in this study. Aside from this, contemporary literatures issued by government officials such as the Muzakarah paperwork presented in the National Fatwa Committee of Malaysia and its meeting minutes, sīghah fatwas and in-depth interviews in which the topic of the study are directly discussed are regarded as primary data for this study.

For the secondary data, the data is in essence analyzed by a third party and made available for reference (Kothari, 2004, p.111). Therefore, for this study, some of the data obtained from other types of contemporary books on Islamic law and its methodology, proceedings and seminar articles, journal articles and others materials which were deemed fit for use in this present study are all used accordingly.

1.8.2 Location

The data from documents and in-depth interview was collected from several areas in Peninsular Malaysia, as this study focuses on 'urf which is related to food issues in Malaysia. According to the Department of Statistics (2011), about 63.1% of the Malay populations predominantly live in Peninsular Malaysia. Therefore, the selection of the location that was based on the most occupied Muslim population may avoid any bias in the interpretation of the meaning of 'urf itself. Moreover, the majority of individuals involved in the decision making of fatwas are from this locality. Therefore, the locations are determined by the place where the key informants are located.

In detail, location of data collection is mostly dependent on the types of data collection. For the data collection based on documents comprising books, articles, paperwork and other types of documents, data was retrieved from available libraries in the area of Klang Valley such as Sultan Abdul Samad Library at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), National University of Malaysia (UKM), International Islamic University Malaysia Library (IIUM), Knowledge Management Centre of Islamic Banking and Finance Institute Malaysia (IBFIM), Main Library of Malaya University (UM) and its subsidiary, Za'ba Memorial Library (UM) as well as the library of *Institut Latihan Islam Malaysia* (ILIM).

Official documents that are unavailable in the public library such as the compilations of *Muzakarah* paperwork, and minutes of meetings related to food issues were retrieved from the Fatwa Management Department of Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM). Since the documents are private and confidential, a formal letter for approval to retrieve the documents was sent to the department (Appendix 1). Having clarified this, the process of collecting data at the department took approximately about two weeks, whereby it was based on the on and off attendance.

The locations of the in-depth interview sessions were conducted in scattered places which were reliant on the key informants' location. The specified location is as follows:

Locations	Number of Informants
1. University of Malaya	2
2. Islamic Science University of Malaysia	4
3. National University of Malaysia	1
4. International Islamic University Malaysia	2
5. Majlis Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan	1
6. Mufti's office of Kelantan	2
7. Mufti's office of Pahang	1
8. Mufti's office of Terengganu	1
9. Mufti's office of Negeri Sembilan	1
Total	15

Table 1.1 Numbers of Locations According to Informants for In-Depth Interview

1.8.3 Sampling and Key Informant Selection

For an in-depth interview, 15 experts of $fuqah\bar{a}$ in related backgrounds were chosen to be the participants in this study. The selection of the key informants was determined with several considerations such as authoritative power, and considered knowledgeable as well as experienced in Islamic legal deduction matters. By having said this, all of these factors are of influence in acquiring suitable data for the study.

In addition, this study applied purposive sampling strategies where this strategy is regarded as a key driver in the qualitative research (Creswell, 2007, p.126). Therefore, when the samples are meticulously organized through the strategy, there is a high possibility of acquiring beneficial information from the key informants (Patton, 1990, p.182). Under this strategy as well, accurate data may be obtained due

to the samples of the key informants which had been determined were suitable since the samples came from experienced individuals who possessed the capability to share the information related to the present study.

The number of key informants was not fixed. However, it was based on a saturation point, whereby no new information could have possibly been accessed. This view was supported by Carolyn and Palena (2006, p.6) whereby they advocated that enough sample sizes of in-depth interview could be reached if the data gathered made a conclusion according to the same stories, themes, issues and topics which had been discussed in the interview sessions with the key informants.

In light of this, time constraints, as well as the validity and reliability were among the most important considerations for this study. This view has been supported by Bailey (2007, p. 64) where he asserted that the researcher cannot be over confident towards the numbers of samples that have been determined because the appropriate sample size is dependent on what was being sampled, analysis of the documents and so on. Under those circumstances, the volume number of the identified key informants is flexible in this study relative to the objectives of the study. Perhaps the sample corrects owing to their views and opinions on the topic may contribute to the factual data.

During the data collection, this study also applied a snowball or chain sampling technique. This sampling technique is purposely used to identify other key informants from existing key informants. As a matter of fact, the key informants who have been interviewed from this strategy hold rich information with regards to the present study (Miles & Huberman, 1994 as cited in Creswell, 2007, p.119; Patton, 1990, p. 182). This is because the introducer for the process of chosen key informants by means of this strategy is from previous key informants which are of vast experience in the topic of the study.

1.8.3.1 Characteristics of Selected Key Informants

The 15 key informants were selected based on the purpose of the study. At this point, the selection of the key informants can be divided into two categories namely policy makers and academician. These two categories were regarded as *fuqahā* with the requisite capability to deduce Islamic legal rulings and were able to participate indirectly in the process of deducing legal rulings. The first category is termed as authority *de jury* where 7 key informants were selected mainly from the members of the National Fatwa Committee and also the members of the State Fatwa Committee because they indulge directly with the process of determination of legal rulings in Malaysia. The second category is knowledge authority whereby 8 key informants from the academic line were selected owing to their knowledge in Islamic law such as possessing a lot of experiences in teaching and knowledge of Islamic law, engaging with the Islamic studies particularly on 'urf and also knowledgeable in halal food related issues.

The most important consideration in this criteria selection was to ensure the data that was obtained will answer the research questions. One matter could be reached here was that several academicians here play dual roles in which they also serve as part of policy makers in fatwa's institutional bodies in Malaysia. Having said this, this may strengthen the data collected from them.

1.8.4 Research Instrumentation

Since this study is qualitative in nature, the researcher herself was the instrument for the study (Siegle, n.d.). Henceforth, the researcher has interpreted the meanings from the data that has been gathered.

1.8.5 Method of Data Collection

In order to carry out the scientific study, the study applied two methodologies of collecting data, namely document analysis and in-depth interview.

1.8.5.1 Document Analysis

Document analysis is a method frequently used in a qualitative research. According to the Department of Health and Human Services (2009), document analysis means a way of collecting data by reviewing existing documents either in printed or electronic material. The documents contain recorded texts and images which require a systematic effort in examining and interpreting the documents in order to gain understanding as well as develop empirical knowledge (Glenn, 2009).

In terms of the nature of document analysis, there are several types of documents which include written materials and other documents from organizational, clinical, or programs records; reports official and publications; memoranda and correspondence; artistic works, personal diaries, letters, and photographs; and written responses to open-ended surveys as well as data consist of excerpts from documents captured in a way that records and preserves context (The Nature of Qualitative Research Inquiry, n.d.). These documents are found in libraries, historical society offices, organisational or institutional files and also newspaper archives (Glenn, 2009).

The method of documents analysis is suitable in this study in order to acquire empirical data. This is because the data may assist in providing background information of the theory of Islamic legal rulings. This subsequently builds the relationship between Islamic law prescriptions and 'urf mechanisms in order to derive legal rulings on food related matters.

Furthermore, this method is very valuable in understanding the subject matter of the study. This is because, through reviewing past documents, it helps in generating ideas to formulate questions for in depth interviews (Glenn, 2009). In view of this, Mahmood Zuhdi (2011) further asserted that in determining information which could be related to the problem of the present study, library and documentation methods could be used. Furthermore, existing sources of the Islamic law especially on 'urf and also the previous discussion regarding halal and haram food which were written either in classical or contemporary books were also consulted. Therefore, the ideas generated from this method were used to describe and interpret the extent to which 'urf could influence the determining of food legal rulings. In fact, the most important factor regarding this method is that the benchmark of 'urf in food related issues could be produced, whereby it is basically suitable as a proper guidance mechanism in determining food legal rulings in Malaysia especially for new cases.

1.8.5.2 In-depth Interview

In-depth interview reflects the process of conducting a formal meeting for the purpose of getting ideas or opinions in detail (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2005). In this context, the method was actually chosen for the present study as it could provide adequate input. Since it is a live and interpersonal interview session, it is an opportunity for key informants to express valuable information that leads to insightful results (Wright, 1996).

As a matter of fact, the interview was initiated in early March 2013 until March 2014 in which the lapse between one session and another relied on the availability of key informant. Other than this, the space was given in allowing for the process of analyzing the remaining data, restructuring the questions for the interview purposes in more precise terms and allowing for the writing of the preliminary draft thesis.

Thereupon, so as to ensure that the data collected from the study is more fruitful and contributes to the insightful result, semi-structured interview sessions were adopted. In fact, the administration of a level of flexibility in the study can be maintained with this appropriated structure (Bailey, 2007, p.100).

a. Interviewing Process

The process of identifying the selected key informants was significant to the study in order to acquire synergy, meaningful ideas and opinions which could answer the objective of the study. This subsequently influenced the determinant of the status of 'urf on food related issues; namely whether the 'urf is accepted or not from an Islamic point of view and whether deduced legal rulings were conformed to the customary practices of the Muslim population in Malaysia particularly.

Besides this, in-depth interviews sought to achieve a higher degree of responses from the key informants. Thus, provocation was used in order to acquire insightful information and at the same time made the session more interesting. Therefore, a lot of additional information was gained either explicitly or impliedly from nonverbal communications that is voice intonation as well as body language during the interview sessions. Furthermore, the flexibility of the method was able to assist in modifying the questions as necessary in order to get more data to meet the objective of the researcher (Crowther & Lancaster, 2009, p. 147; Ridzwana, 2011). Meanwhile, it is noted that this can ensure the key informants are fully comprehensive of the questions and also help in clarifying doubts towards the issues in the present study (Sekaran, 1984, p.143). In fact, the main idea for conducting the interview was to gain insightful results in order to enhance the understanding of the influence of 'urf in determining the halalness of foods and its derivatives based on the context of Malaysia.

Initially, the key informants were contacted via telephone or emails in order to set the time to be interviewed (Appendix 2). Once the interview session was set up based on the mutual agreement with the key informants to participate in the study, henceforth letters via emails namely cover letter, consent form and set of questionnaires were sent to specific key informants (Appendix 3). The letter described the purpose of the interview, guidelines for the interview and question sheets as information for key informants. Following this, face-to-face interviews will

be carried out once the key informants agreed to participate in the interview session in which it was subject to the agreed time.

Furthermore, the interview sessions were usually carried out in the key informant's room. This location was chosen because it could provide convenience to the key informants and was away from the public view. Consequently, this could hinder any disturbances that would lead to missing of important data in the process of data collection. Indeed, one unnecessary distraction was faced during the interview sessions whereby key informant set up another meeting with other clients during the exact time the interview was conducted. However, the problem was managed properly whereby important and attractive questions were used and it was clearly delivered to the key informant. This strategy was used in order to acquire a higher degree of responses from the key informants. Therefore, the level of disturbance was able to be minimized as low as needed.

In these circumstances, the interview initially started with a brief explanation on the purpose of the present study. Bailey (2007, p. 105) has asserted that beginning with an overview of the purpose of study can put the key informants at ease. Following this, the key informants were informed that the conversation would be recorded for study purposes. Although the medium of interview was conducted in English; the key informants were able to answer the questions in the Malay language if they wished.

b. Transcribing Interviews

In order to transcribe the data collected, the audio-tape record was played and listened, from the smartphone and laptop in order to get the sense or idea of the whole discussions and moreover comprehend the important segments of the conversation from the tape. To ensure that data was safe from unnecessary damage, the audio was saved in the laptop and also in the virtual memory application that is *Dropbox* application.

Following this, the data from in-depth interviews was transcribed verbatim where the conversations were typed out on paper first, and then transferred to Microsoft word. This was to ensure the flow of conversations were in order. It is significant to note that the absolute quality of the data was actually obtained from extensive interview notes written during the interview conducted and also after the interview concluded (Patton, 1987, p.139). With all considerations during the transcribing process, it took actually approximately four hours per interview session for the writing on paper rather than the actual interview session, which took merely one and a half hours to finish. This occurred as the tape needed to be worked back and forth in the sections of tape, alongside note-taking during the interviews so as to ensure that the keywords were captured (Patton, 1987, p.138). Therefore, much time was allocated in ensuring the data that was obtained was accurate.

The actual name of the key informants however would not be revealed in this study in order to maintain the confidentiality of the data. At this point, they will generally be referred to as "key informants" referring to the senior officer or fatwa committee for policy makers that they are, as well as academicians for experts.

1.8.6 Data Analysis

Two methods of data analysis were chosen in which the methods were used together at the same time in the progress of data collection. The methods used were content analysis and constant comparative techniques. Henceforth, the details of the analysis are as follows.

1.8.6.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis technique is a specific research tool that focuses on the actual content of texts. The texts broadly indicate books, articles, government official's documents, minutes of meetings, interviews sheets that were written either in hardcopy or electronic form and any other materials used in this present study. In this method, words from the texts were quantified, classified into categories or themes, following which they were analyzed in order to find the relationship among meanings inherent within their context. Then, categories or themes were compared, followed by a final inference on messages within the texts which were made.

1.8.6.2 Constant Comparison Analysis

This technique involves comparing one piece of data with other data in order to examine the relationship between which data is similar or different among the codes (Sally, 2000). Therefore, for this study, it was time to examine the views and evidences of the contemporary and traditional $fuqah\bar{a}$ on the issue of determination of food legal rulings and other polemics related to this topic as recorded in their respective writings. Moreover, the researcher's opinions towards the information retrieved from the collected data were highlighted as a standpoint $(tarj\bar{\imath}h)$ in the process of analyzing data.

1.8.7 Triangulation

According to Silverman (2011, p.369), triangulation means combining multiple theories, methods, empirical materials and observers in order to produce similar conclusions in which it is believed that the validity of the data can be established. For this study, document analysis and in-depth interview methods were combined whereby different kinds of the data collection from both methods were corroborated one another. At this point, Glenn (2009) has asserted that with the combination of at least two sources, the method can therefore breed credibility to the study due to the confluent evidence achieved through the two methods.

Moreover, Bailey (2007, p.185) has suggested several strategies for enhancing the validity towards the data, such as member checking, peer debriefing and expert review. Although these strategies may be true, Silverman (2011, p.369) has argued on the Bailey's opinion because triangulation in qualitative research is judged by using multiple methods and so long as the data collected is corresponded with one another and drew the same conclusions, the findings in the present study are valid and reliable.

For this reason, this disagreement was being harmonized whereby the validity of the data collection relied on the how the data reached the conclusions. If the data could not be validated by comparing with one other method, in that case, peer debriefing

and expert review is selected. In this context, the report in this study is verdict for the reason that there were more than one method were carried out in the present study contributing to legitimate conclusions.

1.9 Summary

The chapter discussed the overview of the present study where 'urf is among the preferred sources to deal with the ever increasing issues in the halal food industry. This is because the characteristics of 'urf can correspond with the changing of time, place and circumstances. Therefore, the methodology employed for this study has shown that it can assist in revealing the position of 'urf and its influence on dispensing legal rulings in food related matters in Malaysia. In a nutshell, this can contribute to the betterment of the process deducing Islamic legal rulings particularly in dealing with the food related issues in Malaysia.

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