



***KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE ON HALAL FOOD AND ISLAMIC EATING
PRACTICES AMONG STUDENTS OF A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN
MALAYSIA***

MARIAM BINTI ABDUL LATIF

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By

MARIAM BINTI ABDUL LATIF

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

October 2018

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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October 2018

Chairman : Associate Professor Suhaimi Ab Rahman, PhD
Faculty : Halal Products Research Institute

The preservation of future generation and the protection of consumer welfare is a priority in view of the incremental negative behaviours existing in today's societies at large. This qualitative and quantitative research on Knowledge, Attitude and Practices on Halal Food and Islamic Eating Practices among Students of Universiti Malaysia Sabah focused on halal food consumed by the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. and his eating practices.

The study covered 414 respondents through a convenience sampling by using a questionnaire on level of knowledge, attitude and practices and the food dietary recall. The data was analyzed by using SPSS version 25. This study highlighted that families play a big role in educating their family members on halal food as the study found that family is the main reference for source of information on halal food products followed with the internet and lecturers. The same findings are found in the religious and race perspective. All faculties at UMS has high level of knowledge about the concept of Halal and Haram in halal food, followed with Islamic law on halal food and beverages. This is maybe due to courses on halal and haram foods being offered at various faculties in UMS. This study also showed that although the majority of respondents has high level of knowledge on halal food but the practices of respondents consuming the sunnah food is low. This happens because the fruits such as dates, pomegranates and figs are quite expensive and not easily accessible in the city of Kota Kinabalu. The study also found that the Muslim respondents have positive attitude towards halal food and eating practices whereby they will always choose halal and tayyib food whenever they want to eat and they will eat in a congregation (with friends or family) when they want to eat. The study also showed that although Muslim students have a high level of knowledge about halal food, but this is not interpreted and applied in their daily lives. The respondents have satisfactory level on Islamic eating practices such as washing hands before and after eating, saying "Bismillah" before eating and sharing food with friends, but not because it is encouraged by Islam, but because it has become a custom

or a part of their daily eating practices. This also happens because the Malaysian public is not familiar with eating food from Arab countries where it was a way of life for the Prophet s.a.w. This study also found that 94.7% of the respondents are in the ideal BMI category showing that respondents consumed the amount of energy as recommended. Results also showed that knowledge on Halal food was significantly correlated with attitude and practices of the UMS students showing positive linear correlations which confirms that better knowledge can lead to positive attitude and subsequently in good practices.

The research also recommended the Halal Nutrition guideline through the food pyramid whereby it is actually relevant and befitting the halal nutrition but the whole regime has to be without the haram elements which are blood, pork, carrion and liquor to provide proper nutrition guidelines for quality and better consumption of *halal* food for the future generation.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PENGETAHUAN DAN SIKAP MENGENAI MAKANAN HALAL DAN
AMALAN MAKAN DALAM ISLAM DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR DI
SEBUAH UNIVERSITI AWAM DI MALAYSIA**

Oleh

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Pemeliharaan generasi akan datang dan perlindungan kebajikan konsumer adalah satu prioriti, memandangkan pertambahan tingkah laku yang negatif wujud rata-rata dalam kalangan masyarakat kini. Penyelidikan kualitatif dan kuantitatif mengenai pemakanan halal ini menumpukan kepada makanan halal yang di makan oleh Rasulullah Nabi Muhammad s.a.w. dan cara ia makan yang mana boleh memberi kesan kepada mana-mana individu di bahagian minda, semangat, intelek dan fisiologi.

Kajian ini meliputi 414 responden melalui kertas soalan ke atas pengetahuan, sikap dan amalan dan juga ingatan diet makanan. Data di analisa dengan menggunakan SPSS versi 25. Kajian ini menunjukkan iaitu keluarga memainkan peranan yang besar dalam mendidik ahli keluarga mengenai makanan halal sebagai mana yang didapati dalam kajian ini keluarga adalah rujukan utama bagi maklumat mengenai produk makanan di ikuti dengan internet dan pensyarah. Dapatan yang sama didapati dari perspektif ugama dan bangsa. Semua fakulti mempunyai tahap pengetahuan yang tinggi mengenai konsep Halal dan Haram dalam makanan halal, di ikuti dengan perundangan Islam ke atas makanan dan minuman halal. Ini mungkin disebabkan oleh kursus halal dan haram ada di tawarkan di beberapa fakulti di UMS. Kajian ini juga menunjukkan walaupun majoriti responden mempunyai pengetahuan yang tinggi mengenai makanan halal tetapi amalan memakan makanan sunnah adalah rendah. Ini berlaku kerana buah-buahan seperti kurma, delima dan buah ara adalah mahal dan tidak mudah diakses di Bandar Kota Kinabalu. Kajian ini juga mendapati responden Muslim mempunyai sikap yang positif terhadap makanan halal dan amalan makan makanan halal dimana mereka akan selalu memilih makanan halal lagi tayyib apabila mereka mahu makan, mereka makan dalam Jemaah (dengan kawan dan keluarga) apabila mereka mahu makan dan makan apabila mereka lapar dan berhenti sebelum mereka kenyang. Kajian ini juga menunjukkan pelajar Muslim mempunyai tahap pengetahuan yang tinggi mengenai makanan halal, tetapi ia tidak di tafsirkan dan di gunakan dalam kehidupan harian. Responden mempunyai tahap yang tinggi mengenai amalan makan secara Islam seperti

membasuh tangan sebelum dan selepas makan, menyatakan “Bismillah” sebelum makan dan berkongsi makanan dengan kawan-kawan, tetapi bukan sebab ia digalakkan oleh Islam, tetapi kerana ia telah menjadi satu kebudayaan atau sebahagian dari amalan makan harian mereka. Walaupun ramai dari responden mempunyai tahap yang tinggi dalam memahami tentang makanan halal tetapi amalan makan makanan halal adalah rendah. Ini berlaku kerana orang awam Malaysia tidak biasa dengan memakan makanan dari Negara Arab di mana ia merupakan cara hidup Rasulullah s.a.w. Kajian ini juga mendapati 94.7% responden mempunyai kategori BMI yang ideal menunjukkan responden mengambil jumlah tenaga seperti yang dicadangkan. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa pengetahuan mengenai makanan halal adalah berkolerasi dengan ketara dengan sikap dan amalan dalam kalangan pelajar-pelajar UMS yang menunjukkan kolerasi linear yang positif yang mengesahkan lebih baik pengetahuan akan membawa kepada sikap yang positif dan seterusnya amalan yang baik.

Penyelidikan ini mengesyorkan garis panduan Pemakanan Halal melalui piramid makanan yang mana ia adalah relevan dan sesuai dengan pemakanan halal tetapi keseluruhan regim makanan tersebut hendaklah tanpa elemen-elemen haram iaitu darah, daging khinzir, bangkai dan arak, untuk menyediakan garis panduan pemakanan yang sesuai untuk cara makan makanan halal yang lebih baik dan berkualiti bagi generasi yang akan datang.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee are as follows:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MOH	Ministry of Health Malaysia
WHO	World Health Organization of the United Nations
BMI	Body Mass Index
NCD	Non-communicable disease
s.a.w.	Peace be upon him
Halal	Permissible, allowed
Haram	Forbidden, not allowed
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MDG	Malaysian Dietary Guidelines
SWT	“Glory to Him, the Exalted”

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Food is necessary for human survival as it supplies the basic energy and nutrients for all cells in the body for proper growth and body development. The life cycle of a human being begins with birth, growth, development, reproduction and eventually death. Sack, D. (2000) suggested that food is ephemeral in nature and it reflects human dependence on the divine, is transitory and yet essential. Fagan, P. (1996) further emphasized the basic element of religion as a pertinent aspect of many people's lives, especially to preserve the society in the United States. When food is related with religion, it reflects the culture and the unique identity of the person, in short summarizing the quote: "You are what you eat" (Kaplan, D. M. 2012). It is a fact that Muslims only consume halal food and the Jews only consume Kosher food (Grandin, T. et al, 1994). Geissler, C. et al (2011) pointed that food acts as a persistent reminder of what we trust and in contrary to ethical considerations, which operate primarily on an individual, ruling on religious food serves not only to improve the spiritual life of the individual person but also to maintain loyalty to a community of believers. But are these foods nutritious enough for a person to be healthy throughout his life? From the religious context, besides the wholesomeness of food, Islam gives emphasis on its halal status.

The research was initiated due to the increasing trend of persistent illnesses, such as cardiovascular illnesses, chronic respiratory illnesses, diabetes, cancer and stroke which are the principal causes of mortality in the world. Records from the World Health Organization in Figure 1 showed that in 2015 there were 56.4 million deaths throughout the world, 54% were caused by the top 10 causes (Figure 1). Ischaemic heart illness and stroke are the world's largest killers, making up in 2015, a total of 15 million deaths. These diseases have continued to be the main sources of mortality through out the world in the past 15 years.

Persistent obstructive pulmonary illness asserted 3.2 million lives, while lung cancer (trachea and bronchus cancers) lead to 1.7 million deaths in 2015. Death due to diabetes was 1.6 million people in 2015, up from less than 1 million in 2000. In 2015, deaths due to mental illness more than doubled between 2000 and 2015, making it the 7th leading source of global mortality.

In 2015, reduced respiratory diseases proceed to be the most fatal communicable illness, resulting in 3.2 million deaths through out the world. In the same year, the rate of death from diarrhoeal illnesses almost halved between 2000 and 2015, but still killed 1.4 million people. Likewise, tuberculosis killed less people during the same period, but remains among the top 10 causes with a death toll of 1.4 million. HIV/AIDS is not anymore among the world's top 10 sources of death, having caused 1.1 million people death in 2015 in comparison with 1.5 million in 2000.

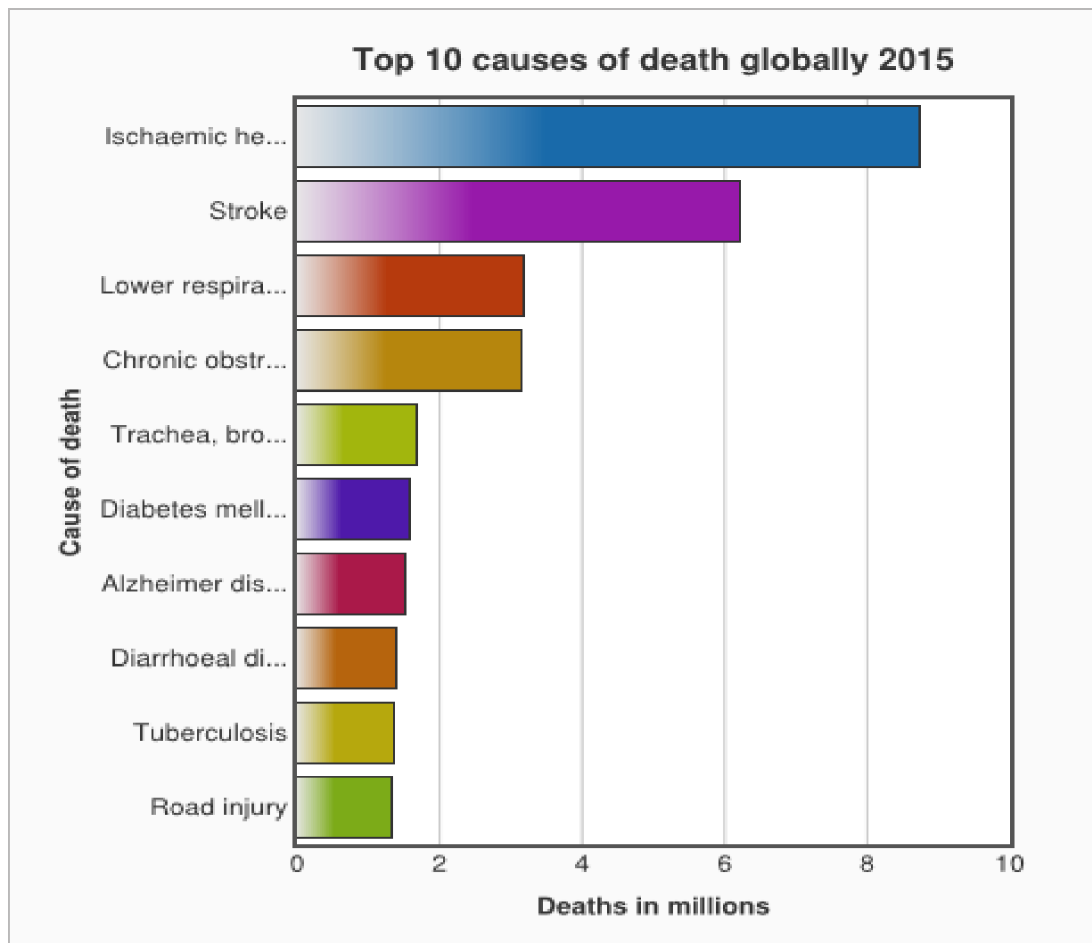


Figure 1: Top 10 Causes of Death Globally 2015 (Source: WHO, 2017)

Chronic diseases are largely preventable diseases involving the food eaten and nutrition, which is pertinent attributes in the development and continuity of fine health all along a person's life. Besides prescribing the proper medical therapy for those already affected, the proposal by primary prevention of the public health is considered to be the most productive, reasonable and able to be maintained to manage with the persistent epidemic of diseases throughout the world. The acceptance of a basic diet such as Halal diet to prevent chronic diseases would be highly welcomed to curb modern dietary patterns which are high risks affecting the types of diseases globally.

Parameters such as age, sex and genetic make-up cannot be modified; however, some of the attributes related with age and sex are modifiable. Such attributes comprised of behavioural components such as diet, physical laziness, use of tobacco and intake of liquor; biological components (e.g. hypertension, overweight, hyperinsulinaemia); and finally societal components, which comprised of a complex mixture of interactions in between socioeconomic, ethnic and other environmental parameters.

Food has been known for numerous years to play a crucial role as a threat element for persistent illnesses. What is clear at the world level is that many alterations have swept throughout the world since the second half of the twentieth century, influencing

considerable alterations in food, initially in industrial regions and more currently in developing countries. Traditional, mostly plant-based diets have been quickly restored by high-fat, energy-dense nourishments with a notable component of animal-based foods. But food, while critical to prevention, is just one threat element. Physical laziness, now is acknowledged as an increasingly notable factor of health, is a consequence of a continuous shift of lifestyle towards more inactive designs, in developing countries as much as in industrialized ones (WHO, 2008).

Islam is not just a way of life and a set of beliefs but it is a perfect religion with discipline and ethics in life. Islam provides ethical guidelines in life through the Qur'an and Sunnah. Various efforts were undertaken to revive the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW such as emulating the way of life of the Prophet, the Prophet personally, and the Sunnah of the Prophet in various dimensions (Shamsuddin *et al*, 2013). It is clear that efforts on reviving the practice of the Sunnah is great and among those emphasized by Islam is ethics on eating and drinking. Food is a medium to satisfy the physiological needs in maintaining the human life and health so that Muslims can continue executing their basic obligations, which is worship Allah SWT. In principle, all food is allowed for consumption by Muslims, unless there is evidence to prohibit it. The following translation of the Qur'an addressed this matter.

“Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed” (2:213).

Whoever proclaimed that certain foods is haram without Shariah reasons, they are included in the following verse:

“O you who have believed, do not prohibit the good things which Allah has made lawful to you and do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.” (5:87).

1.2 Problem Statement

The criminal rate in Malaysia is getting worse. Among the factors that contribute to this problem is the selection of the food itself. Although it was not the main contributor, but according to Mat Ishak (2013), halal food develops a better life, both personally and mentally. Good health can also be attained through the selection of halal and tayyib foods.

However, with the evidence that the Prophets's diet and eating practices are proven healthy and good, only a handful of the Muslim society follow this Sunnah. This is because some of them feels that some of the diet according to Islam cannot be proven scientifically (Ishak *et. al.*, 2013).

Further more, they are of the opinion that this diet looks weird, outdated and strange. In actual fact, the Prophet s.a.w. is the best example who should be followed by every Muslims (Ali dan Ahmad, 2014). As what being said by Allah s.w.t:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.” (33:21).

In view of the importance of halal food in preservation of future generation, there remain obstacles in obtaining in-depth information of halal food and Islamic eating practices. The problems faced in studying halal food are many, inter alia:

- Lack of reference or documentation on halal diet;
- Lack of research and reference on halal food and scientific evidence on its effects on consumer behaviour;
- The inadequate study on Islamic eating practices; and
- The lack of expertise on halal food and its implications on society.

1.3 Rational of the Study

A study should be done to identify the level of knowledge, attitude and practices on halal food and Islamic eating practices among students of Universiti Malaysia Sabah following to lack of such study. Traditionally, halal food has been instituted among the Muslims and there were very few diseases in the olden times. But over time, the changes in the way of life, whereby time is limiting, more people are eating outside, more processed food being introduced, more manufactured food being packaged, and diet has changed. And now we are witnessing more diseases which is why this study is being conducted. This study is very important to the society at large, particularly students as they are important asset for the future generation and at the same time they form ideas for the intellect and will be the future leaders. The findings can be used by various related sectors as reference for formation of policies and strategies to prevent diseases at large. As a whole, there is no comprehensive data yet related to knowledge, attitude and practices on halal food and Islamic eating practices among students of Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

1.4 Research Objectives

In general, this study is conducted to identify the knowledge, attitude and practices on halal food and Islamic eating practices among students of Universiti Malaysia Sabah, which is encouraged by the Quran and Sunnah.

The specific objectives are:

1. To evaluate the level of knowledge on halal food and Islamic eating practices among students from Universiti Malaysia Sabah;
2. To evaluate the level of attitude on halal food and Islamic eating practices among students from Universiti Malaysia Sabah;
3. To evaluate the level of practices on halal food and Islamic eating practices among students from Universiti Malaysia Sabah;
4. To determine the relationship between knowledge, attitude and practices on halal food and Islamic eating practices among students from Universiti Malaysia Sabah;

1.5 Outline of Chapters

This thesis comprises of five chapters. Chapter one presents the background of the study, problem statement, rationale of the study and research objectives.

Chapter two discusses the literature review encompassing the knowledge, attitude and practices, Muslim's obligation of consuming halal food and elaboration on the diet of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. or halal food specifically milk, meat, dates, honey, fruits and vegetables. This is followed with the Islamic eating practices which focuses on eating practices before, during and after a meal.

Chapter three addresses the methodology of the research being conducted among students from Universiti Malaysia Sabah. Chapter four highlights the results and discussion of the findings of the study. Chapter five is the concluding chapter which summarizes the overall findings from the research being conducted and some recommendation on the Halal Nutrition Guideline.

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