

Awareness of Food Handlers on Food Packaging Safety during Business in Taman Puterajaya Telipok Ria, Kota Kinabalu.

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Abstract: This study entitled "Awareness of Food Handlers on Food Packaging Safety During Business in Taman Puterajaya Telipok Ria, Kota Kinabalu" aims to examine food packaging safety practices and the level of food packaging safety awareness among food handlers in Taman Puterajaya Telipok Ria, Kota Kinabalu. The population of this study consists of food handlers who run businesses and the number of respondents is 43 people. This study uses a quantitative approach that uses a questionnaire instrument to obtain research data and information. Study data were analyzed using Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 to obtain the mean value, standard deviation, and level of correlation interpretation. The results show that the level of awareness of food handlers in food packaging safety practices and the level of food packaging safety awareness among the community is very high. In addition, this study also shows that the awareness of food handlers in maintaining the safety of food provided is at a high level. This shows that these food handlers have a high awareness of maintaining the safety of food packaging provided before the food is delivered to customers.

Keywords: Food Handlers, Food Packaging, Safety Packaging

1. Introduction

Food is a necessity of life for human beings which human beings need to grow, work, and carry out daily life. Our body also needs food to allow it to function. The Food Act (1983) is an act to protect the public against the dangers in terms of health and fraud in the preparation, sale, and consumption of food. Food safety has become one of the ten threats to global health in 2019 (Oluwaseun et al, 2019). With this act, consumers who use the services of stalls or restaurants can make a service complaint if they do not comply with the rules. Thus, food contamination can be avoided if food handlers focus on the hygiene of food provided and the cleanliness of the place of business (Mukhari & Ibrahim, 2019).

Epidemiological research has indicated that the majority of reported foodborne illness outbreaks originate in food service establishments, and case-control studies have shown that

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eating meals outside the home is a risk factor for obtaining a foodborne illness (Oluwaseun et al, 2019). Previously, Bakar (2003) also mentioned that a traveler states that people who like to eat dirty food are usually rude, hard, and difficult to accept the truth. Humans need to eat food that is clean and free from impurities. Not only that, the income of a family will also affect the type of food choices of family members. Affordable families can afford to buy fresh and quality food. In addition, some people will choose food for the sake of their health. This is because some foods will cause them to be attacked by diseases such as excess fat and cholesterol content in the body which causes a person to get heart disease. In addition, lifestyle, especially unhealthy dietary patterns, represents a major trigger in the development of cardiovascular diseases and their associated risk factors (e.g., hypercholesterolemia, hypertension, and type 2 diabetes mellitus) (Bechthold et. al., 2019).

The concept of packaging has existed since humans started doing business. After the industrial era in Europe around the 1970s, packaging has existed to be an important field of trade, and this aims to ensure the safety aspects of processing a material or product (Glovannetti, 1995). The packaging made should give a clear picture of the product to be marketed. The packaging of a good product can attract consumers to buy. Therefore, the packaging of graphic elements should be emphasized in terms of color, illustration, typography, and design (Fawizah, 2006). Not only that, but good packaging must also be environmentally friendly with a 3R concept. 3R which means reduce is to reduce the amount of waste, reuse is a material that can be reused, and recycle is a material that can be recycled (Fawizah, 2006). However, there is still great uncertainty about the potential and possible advantages of bio-based plastics compared to conventional plastics and several misconceptions exist. According to Mendes and Pedersen (2021), to reduce the generation of plastic waste, the EU Commission set an ambitious goal of 55 % of plastic packaging recirculation in 2025, and all plastics are recyclable (or reusable) in 2030, following a Circular Economy approach. This puts pressure on increased recycling and reuse of plastic packaging for food, as this represents the largest fraction of all plastic packaging. Briefly, packaging can be defined as the activity of designing and producing a product container and it is a process or operation of wrapping, packaging, or inserting food products into a unit of shape or container (Jessie, 2014).

2. Methodology

The purpose of this study was to obtain information on the level of awareness of food handlers on the safety of food packaging during business around the Taman Puterajaya Telipok Ria Kota Kinabalu.

2.1 Research Design

The study design used for this study is a descriptive study using a quantitative approach that used a survey questionnaire. This study uses a form of questionnaire to obtain information related to the title of the study. Cresswell (2005) and Majid (1990) state that descriptive research is research that aims to explain the methods to obtain information happening they also stated that each study requires formal digestion results to obtain a comprehensive picture so that the formulation or conclusion of the question covers all aspects. research. All data obtained through descriptive studies can be used as a basis for decision-making.

In this study, a questionnaire instrument will be used as a tool to collect data on perceptions, factors, and awareness of food handlers on the practice of maintaining food packaging safety around the area of Taman Puterajaya Telipok Ria. Ghaffar, (1999) stated that the questionnaire instrument is suitable for effective measurement to know the tendencies, attitudes, perceptions, and so on. Questionnaires are the easiest and fastest method to obtain research information (Majid, 1990).

2.2 Research Procedure

This study was to examine the level of awareness of food handlers on the application of aspects of food hygiene and safety in the handling of food packaging by take-home in the district of Kota Kinabalu. The population of this study is aimed at food operators who provide food services to customers in the vicinity of Taman Puterajaya, Telipok Ria Kota Kinabalu and the sample of this research is among food operators who have their own premise buildings and business licenses only which is selected using the purposive sampling technique. The researcher distributes the questionnaire to the respondents after contacting them personally. The respondents were given ample time to answer the questionnaire.

2.3 Research Instrument

In this study, the instrument that will be used is a questionnaire. This questionnaire was submitted to the respondents to obtain the required information. This questionnaire was developed based on the objectives of the study. The items in this questionnaire are divided into three parts, namely part A, part B, and part C. The instrument of this study is adapted from a previous study that studies on the hygiene and safety of food traders in the Batu Pahat area.

Part A contains five items of information on the respondents' data, namely age, gender, race, employment sector, and period of business. This section aims to find out about the background of the respondents. Part B contains research questions related to the awareness of food handlers on the practice of maintaining the safety of food packaging materials. Next, the use of clean and safe packaging materials for the food that needs to be packaged. Part C contains food packaging safety awareness among food handlers in Taman Puterajaya, Telipok Ria, Kota Kinabalu.

3. Results and Discussion

This section reports the results of the data analysis and the findings of the study starting with the demographic data. Demographic analysis calculates percentages and frequencies. The first and second research questions were analyzed descriptively using mean score, standard deviation, and level while the research questions were analyzed inferentially using Pearson correlation. Data were obtained using a Likert scale with readings of one strongly disagree, second disagree, third disagree, fourth agree and fifth strongly agree. The interpretation of this mean score is categorized into five parts namely very low, low, medium, high, and very high.

Table 1: Mean Score

Score Min	Interpretation
1.00 – 1.80	Very low
1.81 – 2.60	Low
2.61 – 3.40	Medium
3.41 – 4.20	High
4.21 – 5.00	Very high

3.1 Analysis of safety practices of the use of food packaging among food handlers in Taman Puterajaya Telipok Ria Kota Kinabalu.

Table 2 shows the items that have been filled in by the respondents in part B which is the safety practices of the use of food packaging among food handlers in Taman Puterajaya Telipok Ria Kota Kinabalu. There are 16 items classified in order namely eco-friendly packaging, compliance with packaging standards, hygiene, and food packaging safety. These items were analyzed in the form of mean and standard deviation. Based on Table 2, the overall mean level of food packaging safety practices among food handlers is 4.31.

	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Stage
B1	I use a more suitable wrapper like a paper bag.	4.30	0.51	Very high
B2	I use environmentally friendly packaging materials.	4.37	0.48	Very high
B3	I understand that eco-friendly food container wrappers are packers that have an impact on environmental sustainability.	4.33	0.57	Very high
B4	I ensure that the use of better packaging methods or techniques is in order and systematic.	4.27	0.45	Very high
B5	I followed the food handling procedure of the food packaging material correctly according to the established guidelines.	4.33	0.47	Very high
B6	The food packaging, I use is neat from any impurities.	4.44	0.50	Very high
B7	I never used the same packaging material when the food was not sold out the previous day.	4.33	0.47	Very high
B8	I cover the cooked food so that it is less exposed to the environment.	4.33	0.47	Very high
B9	I make sure the packaged food looks good and is not smothered by insects before it's delivered to customers.	4.30	0.46	Very high
B10	I make sure that the delivered food does not have an unpleasant odour with the use of packaging materials.	4.30	1.47	Very high
B11	I will make sure that the cooked food does not wait a long time before it is packaged and delivered to the customer.	4.26	0.49	Very high
B12	I'm using good equipment. .	4.30	0.46	Very high
B13	I use the equipment that washed with detergent before the food packaging process is done.	4.21	0.41	Very high
B14	I understand polytherine material takes a long period to decompose.	4.30	0.46	Very high
B15	I understand the use of polytherine in human life has an impact on the environment.	4.28	0.45	Very high
B16	I know the use of polytherine is a mutagen that can cause genetic changes and damage the human reproductive system.	4.28	0.45	Very high
	Total average mean		4.31	Very high

Table 2: Analysis of Safety the use food packaging among food handlers

This is interpreted as the level of safety practices in the use of food packaging among food handlers is very high. Respondents agreed that the food packaging they used was neat from any impurities by recording the highest mean score of 4.44. This indicates that these food handlers are very concerned about the food safety factors they handle. This can be seen because the mean score on this question is the highest. These food handlers are aware of the need to ensure that the safety level of packaging is always maintained in addition to ensuring that the food handled is not contaminated and dirty. In addition, operators are also concerned about the level of safety practices in the use of food packaging among food handlers by ensuring that they follow the procedures for handling food packaging materials

correctly according to the guidelines set, which is a mean score of 4.33. Not only that, but the respondents also emphasized covering the food that has been cooked so that it is less exposed to the environment with a mean score of 4.33 as well.

The results of the analysis made to identify the safety practices of food packaging among food handlers in Taman Puterajaya, Telipok Ria KK showed that the total mean was 4.31 percent, which shows that the mean is very high. Safety factors, as is well known, are something that should be emphasized by food handlers. The low level of hygiene and safety of the use of food packaging in food preparation or food packaging is something that should not be taken lightly. This is because the low level of safety of the use of packaging can indirectly cause contamination of food and cause disease in general. According to Roger and Angela (2007); these foodborne illnesses are largely caused by unsafe and unhygienic food handling practices while handling food. Oluwaseun et. al (2019) recently found that foodborne illness risk factors have indicated that most outbreaks associated with food service establishments can be attributed to food workers' improper food preparation practices and observation studies have revealed that food workers frequently engage in unsafe food preparation practices.

In addition, food handlers play an important role in practicing this practice in the food preparation process. This is important to ensure that all equipment and utensils used are in good condition and free from germ breeding (Sulaiman, 2016). Not only that, clean and safe food handling is very important to prevent food poisoning. Safe food can be assured by the cleanliness of the operator and the food premises (Eksan, 2014). Through high awareness in handling food, food handlers are aware of their responsibility to ensure that the food provided is safe and does not affect customers.

The results of the study found that the respondents agreed that the food packaging used was neat from any impurities and got the highest mean score of 4.44 with a standard deviation of 0.50. This indicates the meaning in a very high-level condition. This situation clearly shows that these food handlers are very concerned about the level of safety of the use of food packaging in food handling activities carried out. This is because, through this awareness, respondents are aware that, safety from the beginning of food preparation to the end of food preparation is to include all levels of hygiene that need to be emphasized throughout the food preparation activities carried out. This will indirectly have a detrimental effect on the food cooked due to the contamination of the food handling area. The attitude of ensuring the level of hygiene in food handling from the beginning of the business to the end of the online business can indirectly prevent food from any unwanted contamination (Zaini, 2019).

The findings of this study also found that respondents also agreed to use different packaging materials when the food was not sold out the day before. On this factor, the mean score was 4.33 and the standard deviation was 0.47. This shows that these food handlers take care to ensure that they do not use the same packaging throughout the course of food handling. According to Senin and Eksan (2012), the consumption of contaminated food or beverages is a cause of food poisoning and food-borne diseases such as vomiting, diarrhea, fever, and so on.

3.2 Analysis of the level of Food Packaging Safety Awareness among Food Handlers in Taman Puterajaya, Telipok Ria Kota Kinabalu.

This section is divided into 8 items and these items are analyzed in the form of mean and standard deviation. The mean overall level of food packaging safety awareness among food handlers is 4.26. This is interpreted that the level of food packaging safety awareness is very high. Respondents agreed to ensure that the use of paper bag packaging materials is practiced in daily life with the highest mean score of 4.32. This shows that these food handlers are very concerned about food safety in the food packaging that they handle. This can be seen because the mean score on this question is the highest. In addition, food handlers are also aware of the need to reprimand other food handlers who use polystyrene containers with a mean score of 4.26. Not only that, but the respondents also emphasized trying to control the production of polystyrene by limiting the purchase of polystyrene materials with a mean

score of 4.27. Furthermore, these food handlers attach great importance to food packaging safety awareness in handling food to customers so that the food provided is not exposed to any pests. This is because if the handled food is exposed to pests, it can indirectly cause poisoning and harm to the customer.

The results of the analysis made to identify the level of food packaging safety awareness among food handlers in Taman Puterajaya, Telipok Ria KK, showed a total mean of 4.26, this shows the mean is at a very high level. A total score of 4.32 with a standard deviation of 0.47 respondents agreed to ensure the use of paper bag packaging materials is practiced in daily life. This indicates that the mean level obtained from the results of the questionnaire is very high. Respondents stated that they ensure that the food provided does not impact the environment. This is agreed by Mendes and Pedersen (2021) because the eco-friendly food packaging market will increase, with a shift in consumer preference towards materials that are recyclable and “eco-friendly. Moreover, the quality of food hygiene is a variety of terms that must be adhered to, but the quality of food is based on the views of the consumer himself. If the consumer assumes that the business conducted does not have food safety features, then the consumer will no longer buy the food sold by the food handlers.

Not only that, but the practice of knowledge in ensuring food safety among hawkers in Malaysia also needs to be improved through incentive schemes by the government, namely incentives in the form of distribution of food safety regulations at food preparation places, mandatory in terms of issuing business licenses and through standardizing food safety policies in all states (Pang and Toh, 2008). Furthermore, Wan Hanafi et. al (2021) suggested four additional food safety qualities for Malaysian food truck owners, including food cost, food availability, food quality and safety, and hazard and risk should be practiced to preserve and promote human health, food truck operators. Food quality has improved, with the emphasis on food safety being one of the hallmarks of quality food. The role that can be taken by the authorities is to encourage the food industry to develop a comprehensive food management system to improve food safety, reshape food inspection systems, and strive to improve information delivery to consumers to gain consumer trust in food quality (Wan Hanafi et. al (2021). According to a 2019 study from the Ministry of Health, 21% of food poisoning cases in Malaysia were caused by other sources such as food trucks, restaurants, and night markets, omitting schools, institutions, and private residences (Wan Hanafi et. al. 2021). Additionally, the ministry emphasised that it is critical to take significant measures to ensure food safety and hygiene (New Straits Times, 2019).

In addition, the results of the study show that food handlers seek to control polystyrene production by limiting purchases from polystyrene materials. This is also one of the awareness emphasized by the respondents. The mean score is at a high level of 4.28 with a standard deviation of 0.45. Respondents are aware of the awareness in ensuring that the packaging used is always safe to use. This refers to the collection of the second-highest mean score in the study conducted.

This safe packaging means that the material used to pack the food is safe and uncontaminated. Through the awareness of the level of safety of this food preparation, traders place great emphasis on the packaging used. Furthermore, nowadays, various types of safer packaging are easily available in the market according to the wishes of the operator, so the issue of safety in the use of this packaging should not be a problem. Compared to a bygone era, operators only used newspapers and polystyrene as packaging for food sold. The newspaper used for this packaging has carbon ink that can have health effects on its users (Hamzah, 2003).

3.3 Relationship between food packaging safety practices and food packaging safety awareness among food handlers in Taman Puterajaya Telipok Ria, Kota Kinabalu.

The third research question is to identify the relationship between food packaging safety practices on food safety awareness among food handlers in Taman Puterajaya Telipok Ria Kota Kinabalu.To

obtain answers to this question, part B which is items B1 to B16, and part C which is C1 to C8 were analyzed to identify the relationship between food packaging safety practices on food packaging safety awareness among food handlers in Taman Puterajaya Telipok Ria Kota Kinabalu.

Table 3: Analysis of relationship correlation Pearson

Indicators	
Correlation value (r)	Relationship stage
0.00 – 0.19	Very low
0.20 – 0.39	Low
0.40 – 0.59	Medium
0.60 – 0.79	High
0.80 – 1.00	Very high

Table 4 shows the findings of the relationship between food packaging safety practices and the level of food packaging safety awareness among food handlers in Taman Puterajaya Telipok Ria Kota Kinabalu. Based on Table 4, the results of Pearson correlation analysis show that there is a significant relationship between food packaging safety practices with the level of food packaging safety awareness among food handlers is at a strong level ($r = 0.774$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, H_a accepted: there is a significant relationship between food packaging safety practices with the level of food packaging safety awareness among food handlers in Taman Puterajaya Telipok Ria Kota Kinabalu. This positive relationship indicates that food packaging safety awareness does influence the level of food packaging safety practices.

Table 4: Correlation Value

Variable	Correlation value (r)	Significant stage ($p < 0.05$)	Relationship Stage
Food packaging safety practices	0.774**	0.000	High
Level of food packaging safety awareness	0.774**	0.000	High

The relationship between food packaging safety practices and the level of food packaging safety awareness among food handlers in Taman Puterajaya, Telipok Ria Kota Kinabalu. There was a strong significant relationship between food packaging safety practices with the level of food packaging safety awareness among food handlers ($r = 0.774$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, H_a is accepted. This shows that the experience related to food packaging safety practices affects the level of food packaging safety awareness among food handlers.

According to Salleh (2019), the safety practices of the use of food packaging and the level of food packaging safety awareness should be considered by stakeholders in further improving policies related to safety in food premises in an area. Not only that, but local authorities also need the cooperation of all parties to achieve this goal. Stakeholders should constantly review and update all measures, procedures, and methods carried out from time to time. The level of food hygiene and safety will be able to be improved with the cooperation and commitment of all agencies that have been entrusted as well as support from the community (Ridzuan, 2020).

4. Conclusion

From the analysis of the study findings and discussion, the objectives of the study have been achieved. The study showed that food handlers have a high awareness of food packaging safety practices and the level of food packaging safety awareness among food handlers in Taman Puterajaya Telipok Ria, Kota Kinabalu. As per the information, the respondents are aware that the food provided

should be in a clean condition from the beginning to the end of food preparation. They are convinced that the safety of food packaging in the preparation of the food should be applied from the beginning to the end of the preparation of the food. In addition, this study identifies the attitude that ensuring that hands are always washed before preparing food is very important in food preparation, especially during the outbreak of COVID-19 that hit our country. The attitude of always practicing hand washing before doing any of these activities should be practiced among traders as well as food handlers as well as the community. This attitude should not only be practiced during the outbreak of COVID-19, but also after the end of the outbreak.

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