

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISONS ON  
KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE IN PUBLIC  
SCHOOL CANTEEN AND  
EVALUATION ON SCHOOL CANTEEN  
MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES:  
A CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY**

**NADIA LIANA MOHD KARIM**

Thesis submitted in fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
**Master of Science**

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## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

Name of student : Nadia Liana Mohd Karim

Student I.D. No. : 2007149557

Programme : Master of Science

Faculty : Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management

Title : Demographic Comparisons on Knowledge and Practice  
in Public School Canteen and Evaluation on School  
Canteen Management Guidelines: A Cross-Sectional  
Survey

Signature of Student :  .....

Date : May 2014

## ABSTRACT

School canteens are more than just a system of supplying foods for children, instead they have a special role to play in education, health and well-being of students and the communities they serve. The objective of this research is to explore and document the practices and knowledge, and type of foodservice system as the recognized factors of food poisoning in public primary school canteens in Malaysia. In order to decrease the incidence of foodborne disease, research on food handlers' behavior and its connection with food safety culture and food safety management systems should be made. A total sample of 161 food handlers from 2 urban cities; Johor Bahru and Kota Bharu, in Malaysia were studied. The states represented developed and less developed areas in Malaysia. Data were collected using both questionnaire and observation. The research revealed that the practice and knowledge of Malaysian food handlers do not go hand in hand. Though the food safety practices of respondents were found to be good and within the ministry's guidelines, they fail to score satisfactorily to show adequate food safety knowledge. Besides, it was also found that all school canteens were consistently using conventional foodservice system. The subsystems were found systematically performed. This is proposed to be the key to the recurring food poisoning outbreak in schools – the lack of food safety knowledge among food handlers alongside the usage of foodservice system that involve extensive food processing and handling. Throughout the study, respondents tend to answer collectively, choosing the answer where most of them thought were correct rather than answering it based on their own individual knowledge. Other than that, in term of race and religion diversity are limited in this study. The results showed that the School Canteen Management Guidelines should be emphasized more among the food handlers. It is suggested that there should be actions taken by authority and/or canteen superior to help food handlers consistently keep abreast with food safety knowledge. The actions could include more regular food safety classes and distribution of comprehensive circulars. This is also applicable to other foodservice premises; commercial and non-commercial.

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