

Factors Associated with Food Hygiene Practices Among Street Food Vendors in Padawan, Sarawak

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ABSTRACT

The safety and quality of street foods are still questionable. Street food vendors are often poorly educated and untrained in food safety with lack of food safety knowledge and poor hygiene practice. This study aims to identify the factors associated with hygienic practice of food safety among the streets food vendors in Padawan district, Sarawak. This was a cross-sectional study conducted in Padawan, Sarawak. Data was collected by face to face interview using a validated structured questionnaire. The practice of food safety was observed using a structured observation checklist. Data entry and analysis was done by SPSS version 22.0. A p value <0.05 was considered as statistically significant. A total of 117 street food vendors were interviewed. The mean (SD) age was 41.0 (11.8) years. Three-fifths (62.9%) of the respondents had secondary level of education and higher. The mean (SD) duration of vending was 7.2 (6.7) years. Only 35.9% of the street food vendors received at least one training on food safety. Bivariate analysis revealed that religion, knowledge and attitude appeared to be statistically significant predictors of food safety and hygiene practice. However, multinomial regression analysis revealed that only religion appeared to be important predictor of food safety and hygiene practice (AOR = 14.730, 95% CI: 1.267, 171.228). Although this study failed to establish a statistical significant association between knowledge and attitude with the hygiene practice due to inadequate sample size, some relationship does seem to exist, suggesting that food safety knowledge is vital for all street food vendors to have the necessary skills to enable them to handle food hygienically and ensure food sold is safe for consumption.

Keywords: Food safety, food vendors, hygiene practices, Malaysia, Sarawak

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INTRODUCTION

Street food industries are vital for development of city and town in meeting the demand of food dwellers as well as contribute to the economics of the nation. The effect of urbanization has created increasing need of ready to eat food among the working people especially women with less time to prepare meals at home (Fellows & Hilmi, 2011). This industry has helped to provide a chance for self-employment and opportunity to develop personal business skill, become a major source or increase incomes of vendors particularly women and provide urban dwellers with inexpensive, varied and nutritious indigenous meals (Njaya, 2014; WHO, 2010).

Street food refers to ready-to-eat foods and beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors and hawkers especially in streets and other similar public places without further processing or preparation (WHO, 1996). They are cheaper, easily accessible, and often nutritious food for

urban and rural poor and at the same time contribute to tourism industry (WHO, 1996). There are many different kinds of street food vendors, including those at fixed kiosks and mobile stands, those who sell from vehicles (carts, bicycles, trucks, etc.) or from plastic or cloths set out on the street, and street hawkers (FAO, 2007). Street food are prepared in informal manner in different setting either in small-scale food factories or traditional workshops, home, market or in the street itself (WHO, 2010). They may be prepared either without any preparation, ready to eat food or food cooked on the site (WHO, 1996).

Street food vending plays a significant role in the economy of developed and developing countries, however, the safety and quality of the street foods are still questionable. The risk of food poisoning resulting from street vended food remains a threat in many parts of the world (FAO, 2009). The poor environmental condition in which the street foods are being prepared or