



# Support and Practice of Smoke-Free Eating Places in Sarawak, Malaysia: A Structural Path Analysis

Md Mizanur Rahman <sup>1,\*</sup>, Mohd Taha Arif<sup>2</sup> and Abdul Rahim Abdullah<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Community Medicine and Public Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>Department of Community Medicine and Public Health, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia

\*Corresponding author: Department of Community Medicine and Public Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, P. O. Box 94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia. Email: rmmizanur@unimas.my

Received 2021 November 26; Revised 2022 May 21; Accepted 2022 May 25.

## Abstract

**Background:** Smoke-free eating places are effective in reducing exposure to secondhand smoke (SHS). Eateries should comply with implementing smoke-free eating-places under the Control of Tobacco Products Regulations 2018 in all open-air eating-places to reduce tobacco consumption to achieve the plan of having Malaysia free of tobacco by 2045.

**Objectives:** To determine the impact of perceived knowledge on tobacco control law and SHS and attitude to support and practice smoke-free eating-places.

**Methods:** A total of 620 respondents participated in this cross-sectional study. The eating-places were selected randomly from 5 administrative divisions of Sarawak. Data on perceived tobacco control law, knowledge of the effects of SHS on health and environment, attitude and support towards smoke-free eating-places, and current smoke-free eating-places were collected by face-to-face interview using a structured questionnaire. A partial least squares model was developed to examine the impact of knowledge, attitude, and support towards the smoke-free eating-places with the current practice of smoke-free eating-places. WarpPLS version 7.0 was used to examine the structural path and to test the hypothesis.

**Results:** The structural path analysis revealed that perceived knowledge of tobacco control law had no impact on practicing smoke-free eating-places ( $P > 0.05$ ). However, the knowledge of the health and environmental effects of SHS had direct and indirect effects on attitude and support for smoke-free eating-places ( $P < 0.001$ ). In addition, attitude towards smoke-free eating-places had a significant mediating effect on practicing smoke-free eating-places ( $P < 0.001$ ). Besides that, supporting smoke-free eating-places had a significant direct impact on the practice of smoke-free eating-places ( $P < 0.001$ ).

**Conclusions:** Legislation and implementation of smoke-free eating-places along with the antismoking program and education efforts could support the cessation of tobacco use in all public places, including all eateries.

**Keywords:** Smoke-Free, Eating-Places, Support, Practice, Sarawak, Malaysia

## 1. Background

Tobacco-free restaurant in Malaysia was implemented after the Control of Tobacco Product Regulation amendment on 24 December 2018. The new amendment in this legislation is amended in regulation two by substituting the definition of “air-conditioned eating place” with a new definition. The new meaning for “eating place” means “any premises, whether inside or outside building, where food is prepared, served or sold and included any room or area on a ship or train, or any area on the vehicle, or any area within a radius of three meters from any table or chair which is placed on preparing, serving or selling food” (1). The other amendments of regulation 11 is substituting the paragraph (d) “in any eating place or the air-conditioned shop” (1). These regulations came into effect on 1 January

2019.

In Sarawak, the implementation of smoke-free restaurants started on 1 March 2019. The State Local Government and Housing Minister informed that the Sarawak Cabinet decided to enforce this regulation on Thursday, 24 January 2019, for the health of the public. The Minister reported that the State Cabinet also agreed that the first six months from 1 March would be an educational enforcement period. The federal government’s smoking ban at all restaurants and food outlets in Peninsular Malaysia came into effect on 1 January (2). Similar to the federal law, offenders found smoking at banned places in Sarawak can be fined up to RM10,000 or jailed for a maximum of two years. Eatery owners who fail to display “No smoking” signs can be fined up to RM3,000 or jailed up to 6 months (1). The