

Yogurt Consumption and Purchasing Reasons among Consumers in Kuching, Sarawak

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ABSTRACT

Yogurt provides the body with nutrients such as vitamin B, minerals and proteins. Despite the nutrition offered by yogurt, local studies in Malaysia reported that the consumption of yogurt still remains as one of the lowest amongst all dairy products in Malaysia. This study was conducted to determine the yogurt consumption and purchasing reasons among yogurt consumers in Kuching, Sarawak. It was a descriptive study based on online survey via Google form. Respondents were recruited from a list of customers of a yogurt supplier in Kuching via an advertisement through social media. Data was analysed using IBM SPSS (version 27). A total of 236 respondents participated in this study whereby the majority were females (71.2%) and most of respondents bought their yogurt from being informed by advertisement. A majority used yogurt at least once a month and most likely type of yoghurt used was the yoghurt drink (61.9%). The largest share of respondents indicated that the quality of product (93.7%), variation in flavour (83.9%), information in product's label (79.7%), price consideration (71.2%), quality (71.2%), ease of location (76.2%) and access of transportation (69.9%) markedly stimulated their consumption behaviour in finalising their yogurt purchasing reasons. Consumer's behaviour toward the yogurt purchasing decision were controlled specifically by its product factors, prices offered and accessibility of conditions. Implications of this study have contributed to future local research on population study in the Sarawak and may increase the awareness of yogurt's benefits among non-yogurt buyers to encourage greater consumption.

Keywords: dairy product, purchasing reasons, yogurt consumption

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INTRODUCTION

Yogurt is a food product made by bacterial fermentation of milk such as *Streptococcus thermophilus* and *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* (Fisberg & Machado, 2015). It is an agitated milk product, with a constituent similar to that of milk but more directed towards of vitamin B, mineral and proteins (Baspinar & Guldass, 2021). It also possesses patterns of amino acids of fine quality that decreases energy intake by inducing fullness and controls the blood glucose levels (El-Abbadi et al., 2014). Besides, yogurt contains a lot of calcium which is important for proper bone formation (Tremblay & Panahi, 2017). This leads to the maintenance of blood pressure (Baspinar & Guldass, 2021). It also provides a major source of protein which is essential for proper metabolism and appetite regulation of a consumer (Halton & Hu, 2004). Yogurt also contains probiotics that is good for gut health (Roberfroid, 2002). Due to its effects, yogurt boosts the immune system by increasing the production of immunoglobulin A (Khurana & Kanawjia, 2007). Moreover, because of its high vitamin B content, such as riboflavin and cobalamin which are essential in protecting an individual from cardiovascular diseases and some neural tube birth defects (Ryan-Harshman & Aldoori, 2008).

Despite the high nutrition factor of yogurt, a local study in Malaysia reported that consumption of yogurt still remains as one of the lowest amongst dairy products in Malaysia (Boniface & Umberger, 2012). According to the Malaysian Adult Nutrition Survey (Institute for Public Health, 2014), prevalence of consumption of yogurt remains low with 17.1%. Nevertheless, like any of the Asian countries, Malaysia has undergone industrialization, urbanization, globalization that lead to change of food consumption patterns where consumers would demand for higher quality food products through branding and labelling information. Past studies had found that gender, presence of children in the household, pricing of the products, income, education level, age have been found to significantly influence food consumption in Malaysia (Ong et al., 2014; Radam et al., 2010).