

Chapter 5

Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) of Polystyrene Food Packaging Usage Among Food Operators

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ABSTRACT

Polystyrene is commonly used on a daily basis for the packaging of takeaways as if people assume that it is safe. Although studies show the migration of styrene into food could cause adverse health impacts such as cancer, neurotoxicity, and hormone-related problems, less is known about public awareness of its risk. This chapter presents a study conducted to assess the level of knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) of polystyrene food packaging usage among food operators (i.e., hawkers, restaurants, and night market). Data were collected using self-administered to survey 115 food operators. Results show that the food operators have a moderate knowledge and attitude in polystyrene usage. Their practice in polystyrene usage is still poor. Food operators from restaurants had the highest level of KAP compared to hawker and night markets. The finding could provide some guides in developing interventions to educate food operators about food safety issues related to polystyrene.

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INTRODUCTION

A packed schedule and busy lifestyle had caused us to have lesser time spend to cook especially during weekdays; classes, work or when so much activity is to be completed in a day. Therefore, take-away is always the best option. Consumers could eat their food anywhere and everywhere that they want according to their preference. Food packaging material such as plastic is a medium mostly used to take away food in developing nations including Malaysia (Jayaraman et al., 2011). Plastic is still widely used among foodservice operators especially if they provide takeaway and delivery service. Food packaging had several functions where it protects food from being contaminated and spoiled, ease of transportation and provides a uniform measurement of contents. There are many types of favorite food packaging in Malaysia; for example, polystyrene, plastics, oil paper, paper box, etc.

Polystyrene food packaging is one of the products derived from monomer styrene and had side effects if being exposed.-This food packaging had been very popular, not only among food operators but also customers and the usage is prevalent nationally before it was banned in certain areas (Haqim, 2015; Soon, 2016). The authorities of federal territories such as Putrajaya, Kuala Lumpur and Labuan, as well as the state of Selangor, Pulau Pinang and Malacca, had recently forbidden the usage of polystyrene in their states (Ahmad, 2016). In almost all food operations, polystyrene could be found as a medium of packing food before it is banned in some states in Malaysia (Haqim, 2015). The purpose of this study is to assess food operators' level of knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) about polystyrene food packaging. The specific objectives are as follow:

- i. To evaluate the level of KAP among food operators
- ii. To determine the relationship between KAP
- iii. To compare the level of KAP between different types of food operations (i.e., hawker, restaurant and night market).

BACKGROUND

Polystyrene

Polystyrene is a common type of food packaging that food service operators regularly employ to package their take-out meals. This packaging is a transparent, rigid, and brittle addition polymer of styrene with a relatively low melting temperature. Styrene is a monomer that is utilised as a fundamental building block in the plastics industry and has been deemed safe for use in food packaging. Foaming produced

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