

Pulut Kuning in Malay Society: The Beliefs and Practices Then and Now

Shuhirdy Mat Noor¹, Nurul Aisyah Zakaria¹, Nik Mohd Shahril¹, Hamizad Abd Hadi² & Mohd Salehuddin Mohd Zahari²

¹ Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, University Technology MARA, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

² Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, University Technology MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

Correspondence: Mohd Salehuddin Mohd Zahari, Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, University Technology MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia. E-mail: salehuddinm@salam.uitm.edu.my

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Abstract

Traditional foods are proven to be part of the ethnic, society and country's heritage. To the Malays, Pulut Kuning is one of the traditional foods that are often prepared, practiced and associated with symbolism, custom and ritual for special occasions. The impact of modernization through various dimensions like education and lifestyles however are believed to have an impact to the beliefs and practices of Pulut Kuning in Malay feasts. This study qualitatively explains the impact of modernization (education, lifestyles) to the beliefs of Pulut Kuning as symbolism, ritual, custom and their level practices among the young generations. The understanding and the increasing knowledge on the Islamic teaching plays a major role in reducing the practices or the uses of Pulut Kuning in the superstitious and occult activities. Modernization through education and lifestyle on the other hand do not totally pushed away the norm or the beliefs and the practices of Pulut Kuning as symbol of gratitude's, appreciation, thankful in Malay occasions and it is still relevant despite slightly lessening the practices among the young generation.

Keywords: symbolism, custom, ritual, Pulut Kuning, modernization and practices

1. Introduction

Food is often believes rich with symbolism because of it centrality of life and act as custom or tradition in the culture of one society. Food is essentially ways in defining a culture's ethnic identity (Whitt, 2011). It is not only reflects and expresses personal identity in life but also mirrors cultural identity, create boundaries and differences between cultures. Food serves to signify the belief systems, religious and practices rules and complex ideologies of a particular person or character, or that of an entire community or culture that may not be explained explicitly in a text. Scholars argue food is ever present not only in daily life and consumption but being much prevalent during occasions including ethnic social and religious feasts (Rappoport, 2003; DiPiazza, 2004 & Moran, 2007). Food is often associated with either religious or cultural ceremonial and special occasions. Society used food for some ritual ceremonies that represent the important ingredients or known as sacred meal that symbolize believe for the sake of God and religious beliefs (Moran, 2007). Specific foods represent meaning to specific groups, societies or even nations. In most occasions, social meetings and gatherings, food is not just act as its primary function of satisfying hunger and thirst but it goes beyond that (Drummond & Brefere, 2001).

Food has long been integral in Malays culture practices and tradition including religious and social feasts like Hari raya, wedding, kenduri arwah, bercukur (shaving the infant hair) and traditional ritual activities. Quah (2008) posited food connected with meanings, expressions and recognized as the integrative force, enhances solidarity and alliances between individuals and kin groups. Not only that, food becomes a bonding mechanism for the family members, among communities and the most remarkable features of all the festivals and undeniable it present is virtually belief as part of blessing or *berkat* in Malay society. In short, besides performing as important features in the feasts, food symbolized cultural practices, ritual, traditions and customs in Malay society.

In line with above notion, Pulut Kuning is one of the examples of food commonly associated with ritual, traditions and customs. Wijaya (2011) argue that Pulut Kuning has long becoming a symbol or custom in Malay

traditional ceremonies. Made from glutinous rice which is soaked in the water with a little turmeric and cooked using steaming method with coconut milk this food specialty often act as centerpiece for engagement, marriage and circumcision ceremonies. Pulut Kuning frequently act as a symbol of thankful of achievement as well as token of appreciation for the guests for attending the ceremonies and the respectful among neighborhoods and communities for cooperation received. Malays in the olden days also used Pulut kuning as an offering, superstitious activities, traditional medication and occult as they beliefs can cure illness, life protection of well-being. Same goes to wajik, ayam golek and many others and not to exaggerate that many traditional Malay feasts are dull without the present of these foods. These foods in fact have long been a customary in Malay feasts.

Despite the above notion, scholars argue that modernization through the advancement of knowledge, education and lifestyles to have perpetually altered some of the communities, societies or ethnics culture practices (Chandamrong, 1999). Kasyap (2004) and Moon (2009) noted that modernization epitomizes advancement and the evolution. It is a process when societies innovates and modify or adjust the old practices, patterns, techniques and resources to suit current situation (Moon, 2009). Modernization is believed to have modified or altered the matrimonial or wedding practices not only in certain aspects of the events but also to preparation and consumption of it food. This statement leads to few questions. Do the beliefs of Pulut kuning act as symbolism, custom and the practice of it in ritual activities are still occurring among the Malays society in this modern era? In addition, to what extent modernization through education and advance lifestyles influence the beliefs of Pulut kuning as custom, ritual, symbolism and it practices? This is actually is unknown and to date there is no evident or research undertaken to support this notion. Therefore, some empirical evidences on this issue needs to be obtained and the present study aims to reveal the answer.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Food as Ritual Activities, Customs and Symbolism

Bar-on, (2000) simplified food marks the social differences, boundaries, bonds and contradictions among society. Food and its preparation and consumption (foodways) not only determine the social differentiation but also portraying the identity (Conner & Armitage, 2002) and some elements of food preparation and consumption are the visible symbols or badges of identity and identity expressed through these elements are pushed to the front by peoples who believe their culture need to be preserved (Rearick, 2009). With regard to symbol, it is more than just a gesture or sign but the act of human being or all individual member of one society or social group (Wallace & Wolf, 1999) and Crotty and Germov (2004) demystified food symbolize and mark the class structure of individual or society as different classes of society used food as a symbolic way to differentiate themselves through appreciation of etiquette and aesthetic factors. For instance, the wealthy group could afford to host feasts and banquets lavishly than the poor.

Food and food behaviors offers the possibility of being read as symbolic in meaning, thereby allowing for an alternative approach with which to understand culture, communication and identity (Counihan and Esterik, 2008). They further noted food not only reflects and expresses personal identity in life and in literature it also mirrors cultural identity and can create boundaries and differences between cultures. Other scholars contended that food bridge the worlds of expression, custom and production in society (Welch & Scarry, 1995; Gutierrez, 1999; Freeman, 2002; Cusak, 2003; Gold, 2007; Williams-Forsen, 2007; Quah, 2008). Myth and legend in a culture frequently deal with food and without doubt, behind the cuisines of any culture lays an entire set of cultural meaning (Dougherty, 2002). Different peoples who live in different countries have different customs for eating food and the way of serving it. Food permits a person to perform a specific identity simply by buying, preparing, cooking, and eating (Rearick, 2009). Food is seen not only offers a group nutritionally but symbolically in defining customs, norms, or beliefs of a society (DiPiazza, 2004). Food is quintessential symbol of identity through words “we are what we eat” culturally as well as individually (Lewis, 2006). Rearick (2009) posited that because of its centrality in people lives, food becomes a perfect vehicle for ritual, and food rituals become central to most religions; food taboos mark off one sector denomination from another.

2.2 Food and Religion

Religion is seen as most powerful, deeply felt and influential forces in human society and living. Religion in fact, is a broad-ranging concept and there are many ways in which it can shape life both in behavior and in worldview (Nicholas, 2008). Religion has shaped people’s relationship with each other, influencing family, community, economic, political practices and life (Nicholas, 2008). Others believed that religion practices are vital parts of each individual’s lives which it reflect and influence people’s action while at the same time it helps them interpret their experiences.

There is no denying the fact that religion plays a big part in food consumption, whereas each religion is believes

of having their own uniqueness and identity of food practices which portray a society's system of beliefs and ideals (Moran, 2007; Trepanier, 2008). Bar-on (2000) stressed that the function of food particularly in religion believes and practices is considered as an integral part of many societies. For instances, Muslims, Hindus, Orthodox Jews, and Mormons having strict dietary regulations owing to their religious beliefs while others like Protestants are less strict about food, but yet encourages their followers to begin their meals with a prayer which symbolize thanks and gratitude. Scholars conveyed that there is numerous ways food can intersect with religion, but common believed it either overlap in two broad categories. There are including religious practices that involve food and religious value given to particular foodstuffs (Nicolas, 2008). Furthermore, for most religious, common believed that certain food items are often reserved and prepared for particular ceremonies and special occasions (Bar-on, 2000).

2.3 Food in Religious Festivals and Rituals

Foods in the feasts or celebrations symbolize values and bring important meaning for specific religions, cultures and ethnicity (Murphy, 2000). Food and dishes served during festivity, weddings and other occasions often reflect the host ethnicity, locality and religion despite the preparation and presentation of meals or cuisines are varied depending on communities/ethnic and occasions (Vo, 2006). Some ethnics have structured their foodways in handling certain occasions with their religion such as Hindus, Buddhist and Jews. Hindus prepared Laddu for their festival of light. The Laddu symbolize gratitude to god for their happiness, knowledge, peace and wealth whereas Buddhist prepared cut vegetables and spices or known as Pibimbap for their ritual during Buddha's Birthday. For Hanukkah or light festivals, Jewish prepare latkes or known as potato pancake. Shing (2007) expressed that foodways in any feast also carried social messages. English commonly made fruit puddings and cakes only at Christmas, and goose is rarely eaten at any other time; pancakes are made on Shrove Tuesday with great ceremony while Americans used to eat turkey at Thanksgiving and rare cook the whole bird except at family ceremonial.

In Malaysia, Malays consume varieties of traditional foods like ketupat (rice or glutinous rice wrapped in leaves), leman (glutinous rice cooked in bamboo tubes), serunding (desiccated meat or chicken or fish fried with chilli) during Aidil fitr (Anon, 1995). Chinese ethnic commonly having nian gao (sticky rice pudding cake), fish vegetables, oyster, abalone, fish balls (*yu-wan*) and meat balls (*jou-wan*), duck or chicken are (Lee, 1986). As for the Indian community, a wide varieties of spicy foods are being served like chicken *tandoori*, prawn *sambal*, fish head curry, *thosai*, *chapatti*, *idlis*, and *naans* in celebrating Deepavali which also known as light festival (Zahari & Jalis, 2009). The special food serves to mark the special occasion and bringing its significance. In short, food commemorates the events and gives meaning to social and religious activities which often seen as a cultural reflection, mirroring what is significant to a particular group (Moran, 2007; Nicolas, 2008).

2.4 Food and Modernization

Food like living things are sensitive or involves changes or alteration (Martinez, 1998) and modernization through industrialization, urbanization, education and modern lifestyle is found to have a major impact on it and strongly link to social change (Cwierka, 2000). Some behavioral shifts are occurring in the preparation and consumption of food or foodways including the traditional food and this largely associated with modernization. Modernization in fact not only affects on daily food practices but also in traditional events, celebration as well as ceremony especially the wedding (Gillett, 1997).

Modernization is also a structural change that involves technology development and adoption representing materials (Inkeles & Smith, 1974). The production, processing, distribution of food were extensively shaped by modernization (Sobal et al. 1998; Sobal, 1999). Jussaume (2001) deduced that the modernization of food production, distribution as well as consumption is encouraged by business and policy makers. Consequently, this scenario has influenced the changes and manipulated the development of regional and global food production systems which not only a means for improving nutritional well-being but promoting the economic growth via expanding consumer demand. Rogers (2005) investigated the matter within the topic of equipments replacement under continuous technological change and identified two types of technological advancement which are discontinuous and continuous technological changes. The discontinuous technological change represented by jumps in improvement with each new vintage arrival and the continuous technological change is represented by incremental improvement with each release of the same vintage. Riley (2005) looked the reflection on the changes that have taken place in the area of food and beverage which he claimed as one of the most complex activities within the area of hospitality. Technological advances, particularly in the kitchen and the invasion of modern business techniques such as branding and business process engineering have brought new activities in food and beverage production.

According to Li, Yin & Saito (2004) few the traditional foods practices are on the verge of being lost but improvements of it through modernization benefit food industries, especially in the poor regions and suggested more of them need some improvements with existence of the modern world. However, they were talking it from healthy eating habits perspectives. Bermudez & Tucker (2004) mentioned food-related practices of older peoples of any ethnic groups provide challenges including the increased in requirements for important nutrients. This is because physiological changes associated with aging and pathological effects of some chronic conditions. They pointed out that eating practices are ruled not only by physiological demands, food availability and choices but also by cultural norms, knowledge and information, and access to food, which is often determined by economic conditions.

From consumer perspective, Wright, Nancarrow and Kwok (2001) classified consumers according to their tastes in food and drinks. They argued that consumers' tastes in food sometimes betraying their social origins as they draw more intention and embraced or preferred taste of other food products and claimed those changes are caused by modernization and globalization. White and Kokotsaki (2004) studied on the personal values and the changing patterns of consumption on the Indian food among the English and the Indian descendent in the United Kingdom. There were big influences of culture which establishes how people use food and how does it affects their food intakes. There is a tremendously increment in preferences of English toward Indian food and little modification has been made on the original recipes of Indian foods to suit with European tastes and the foodways that relates to the preparation and consumption as well as the appearance and taste of the food are slightly changing due modernization in term of cooking and serving equipment.

2.5 Pulut Kuning

Pulut Kuning or yellow steamed glutinous rice is an important feature as it symbolized cultural practices, ritual, traditions and customs in the Malay society (Wijaya, 2011). Pulut Kuning in fact is one of the Malay special dishes for feasts. Long since become high culture value in Malay community, Pulut Kuning is a food made from rice and processed into rice or sticky rice. This so called special dish is usually served during special occasions and ceremonies such as weddings, majlis berkhatan (circumcision) majlis khatam Qur'an (completing reciting the whole quran among young kids), majlis cukur jambul (shaving a infant hair) or engagement ceremony.

According to Wijaya (2011) the symbolic of serving Pulut Kuning on those occasions is to show respect and gratitude to the guests or thankful on the achievement obtained as well as token of appreciation for attending the ceremonies and the respectful among neighborhoods and communities for cooperation received on those occasions. Besides that, giving Pulut Kuning to neighbors is not necessarily but it is more to symbolize a social bond or strengthening the relationship among society. He further argue that Pulut Kuning is also ever present and used as an offering for superstitious activities, traditional medication and occult as many Malays beliefs it can cure illness, life protection and well- being. In fact, in traditional medication ceremony performed by the shaman or bomoh, pulut kuning was long been listed as requested ingredients in addition to other requirements such as eggs, lime juice and so on.

Various opinions given on the yellow colored of pulut kuning. In the Malay history, the yellow is the color of royalty or King Color. Yellow therefore can be seen as honorable color which normally other civilization would rarely choosing yellow as their color for clothes, accessories and house wares. As for that, it is honor of giving and making pulut kuning for a particular festivals and ceremonies among Malay society.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sampling and Instrument

Based on the topic and informants, qualitative approach was applied for information gathering. The rationale of choosing this approach is owing to the intention of this study which to understand, recognizing the phenomena or unveil the matters relating to common behavior rather than describing the individual behavior through arithmetic or statistical analysis. The sample populations were among the selected Malay senior citizen or generations with the age above 75 years old. This age group of peoples to be knowledgeable and well experienced on the subject matters thus able to provide relevant information on a particular subject. As this study would also provide a fundamental basis for other potential studies in the future and owing to the rarity of such studies undertaken in Malaysia, using one or two contextual settings for data collection is considered sufficient and acceptable.

Rural area in states of Perak and urban area of Penang were chosen as contextual setting for data collection with the intention to see the pattern of practices in different life styles and social status. Four districts (Permatang Pauh, Nibong Tebal in Pulau Pinang, Gerik and Kuala Kangsar in Perak) were selected. The four districts in

these two states were chosen due to the easy excess of getting the require information and researcher having relatives in these four districts. To ensure the appropriateness of the sample, consisting of participants who best represent or have knowledge of the research topics and providing rich information purposive sampling was used. Semi-structured interview questions were developed to with a pre-determined set of questions in a consistent order to ensure the uniformity of information collected. The questions were designed in an interactive way to clearly bring out and develop a relaxing, friendly atmosphere to gain high quality information through the interview.

3.2 Procedure of Data Collection

Before the actual interviews, 20 informants with the age of 75 years old were first indentified through relatives and the head of Malay community in each district. All respective informants were subsequently contacted via telephone to obtain permission and willingness to participate in the research study. The purpose of the interview was explained and informed that participation was voluntary and all the information provided strictly confidential and that their names would not be revealed. The dates, times and venues for the interviews to be conducted were then arranged based on the convenience and wishes of the individuals which required flexibility on the part of the researchers.

The interviews were conducted by the researchers within two weeks. Each individual was first asked for permission to tape-record the interview and the researchers were allowed to do so by all of them. In each interview, a predetermined set of semi-structured questions based on the objectives of the study was posed to the informants. The researchers ensured that leading questions were not asked which could lead the informants to answer in a certain way and provide a greater chance of biased answers. The probes were used to explore the answers in more depth. As most of the informants were less able to converse and express themselves in English therefore Bahasa Malaysia was throughout the interview session. Each interview session lasted between forty minutes to one hour on average. Overall, researchers were fully satisfied with commitment and cooperation given by the informants during the interview session. The information obtained was then translated into English.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Informant Profiles

Twenty informants' participated in the interviewed were among the Malays senior citizen with the range age at 70 years old and above. These informants have been classified according to their place of origin, gender, age and previous experiences in preparation of Malay traditional food especially Pulut Kuning. All of them had many years' experiences in preparing Pulut Kuning for Malay celebrations and ceremonies. The informant's names however were not disclosed to ensure confidentiality, develop trust between researchers and informants. Their profiles were simplified and presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Informant's profiles

Informant	Gender	Age	Experiences
Informant 1	Female	72	25 years
Informant 2	Female	76	20 years
Informant 3	Female	75	35 years
Informant 4	Female	70	20 years
Informant 5	Female	72	43 years
Informant 6	Female	72	30 years
Informant 7	Male	71	35 years
Informant 8	Female	72	25 years
Informant 9	Female	70	40 years
Informant 10	Female	75	20 years
Informant 11	Female	78	25 years
Informant 12	Female	76	20 years
Informant 13	Female	75	25 years
Informant 14	Female	77	20 years

Informant 15	Female	75	33 years
Informant 16	Female	75	30 years
Informant 17	Male	74	35 years
Informant 18	Female	76	25 years
Informant 19	Female	77	30 years
Informant 20	Female	78	40 years

4.2 Role of Pulut Kuning in the Malay Customs

On the role of Pulut Kuning in Malay custom, informants admitted Pulut Kuning has long been practiced in Malay culture and custom and always be part in special occasions. Pulut Kuning is served in special occasions and events, like wedding ceremony, celebration for newborns baby, shaving infant hair, religious and festive events. Malay society believes having Pulut Kuning on special ceremonies and festivals is a must as it acts as a token of appreciation for the events. Table 1 showing few answers obtained.

Informant Answers

Informant 1 *“Pulut Kuning is not a kind of foods commonly see in our daily activities. It has long been existed in our Malay culture and widely prepared for celebrations and festive and special occasion like wedding, religious, the newborn babies and social ceremonies”*

Informant 3 *“Apart from Malay wedding, Pulut Kuning often used for other ceremonies like berkhatam al Quran, circumcision and shaving hair of newborn baby’s. In fact pulut kuning become a custom, norm and synonym with Malay society.”*

Informant 8 *“Pulut Kuning is no doubt one of the of special food commonly associated with ritual, traditions and customs in the Malay society. It is proven with it apparent in many Malay social and religious special occasions. In short, this food has long been important in Malay custom.*

4.3 Pulut Kuning as Symbolism

The second questions tracked the Pulut kuning as a symbolism. Similar viewed were given by the informants during the interviewed session. Being traditionally prepared and present in many ceremonies of Malay society, Pulut Kuning strongly believed symbolized the prosperity, appreciation, thankfulness, social bonding, relationship, gratitude, honored, joyful and happiness. In fact, in the old days, Pulut Kuning was expensive and the yellow color portraying and symbolized the status, power and majesty that stand it uniqueness as Malaysian traditional food. Some the verbatim answered were as follows.

Informant Answers

Informant 4 *“Pulut Kuning plays as an integral part in Malay culture. It is a symbolism of prosperity. In the old days, Pulut Kuning is only prepared by the royal and rich family and yellow color symbolizes the status, power and majesty. Not to forget it also portrays union and social bounding among the community.*

Informant 6 *“Special occasions like wedding, religious and social ceremonies used Pulut Kuning as a token of appreciation from host to their respective guests. Pulut Kuning was wrapped up in banana and gave as token”*

Informant 12 *“I remembered during childhood, my siblings and I enjoyed the Pulut Kuning during our circumcision. We shared this special food with other kids who encouraged and console us during the ceremony. Well, we become close to each other...that’s the best moment and Pulut Kuning to me signifies the heartfelt blessings.”*

Informant 7 *“Basically, Pulut Kuning or Nasi Kuning is a meals provided as a connection of gratitude. It is a special dish that symbolizes the spirit of the Malay community as it is often served in ceremonies involving happiness, healings and gratitude’s. It is kind of bizarre with the absence of the food for such occasions”*

4.4 Pulut Kuning in Ritual Practices

On ritual practices, almost all informants posited that Pulut Kuning is often used by Malay on such practices especially among the older generations. In the olden days, Malays strongly believed in the ghost spirits therefore

having dependency on the shaman (bomoh, dukun or pawang) to rectify their problems. Pulut Kuning is one of the valuable ritual ingredients that involved in spiritual activities and used by shaman for medications and as a medium of communication with ghost spirit. Pulut Kuning with combination of other ritual foods like bertih (popped rice), eggs, roasted chicken and others were prepared to feed the ghost spirit in helping the spiritualist attaining something in favor. Besides that, Pulut Kuning is prepared after ones recovering or healing from the black magic diseases.

Informant Answers

- Informant 18* *“Yes, Pulut Kuning one of the important foods for ritual practices in Malay society. In olden days, when a child sick, parents believed that the sickness is being caused by an evil spirit therefore seeking advice from the bomoh or shaman. My parents were asked to prepare Pulut Kuning, bertih and some salt as the requirement before ritual meditation can be performed and discard the evil spirit. What can I say at those times Pulut Kuning works as the metaphor of spirituality in Malay society”*
- Informant 11* *“Pulut Kuning was often prepared for spiritual healings and this yellow rice closely associated with the element of spirit. Most of the shamans and healers preferred to use this food product in their ritual medication*
- Informant 13* *“I did not really know as to why Pulut Kuning was required by the Shaman (spiritualist) every time when dealing with the ghost spirit. I guess this food act as communicator agent. Other food like roasted chicken and hard-boiled egg just like an accompaniments ”*
- Informant 4* *In the old Malay movie pulut kuning was present in the scenes when shaman or bomoh performed a meditation. Some interpreted it as medium of communication or reward for the spooky things to cure diseases, gambling or cursing the enemies”.*

4.5 The Effects of Modern Education and Lifestyles to the Belief of Pulut Kuning as Symbolism, Ritual and Custom

In respond to the question, majority of informants believed despite modern education and lifestyle that somewhat educate and increase the community thoughts Pulut Kuning is still perceived relevant as important custom to the Malay feasts either in the rural or urban area. In other words, modernization through education and modern lifestyles did not overshadowed the Pulut Kuning as Malay culture heritage, tradition and symbol of joy and happiness among society and bring meaning for some special occasions. Modern education and lifestyles however have given significant impact to the belief of Pulut Kuning in ritual activities. Education through knowledge and understanding of Islamic teaching permit society to differentiate the legal and illegal activities to the religious norm in turn gradually tainted or faded their beliefs. In addition, education and modern lifestyles seeking the Malays for proper healthcare through hospital and medical center compared to shaman or traditional medication practices except on few isolated cases.

Informant Answers

- Informant 5* *“Well...although people acquired higher educational level, they still believed Pulut Kuning symbolized the appreciation, gratitude as it only served during special occasion”*
- Informant 15* *“I am a bit surprised despite living in the modern lifestyles Pulut Kuning still present in many Malay social and religious activities. I thought it is only popular in the rural area but my assumption totally vague. Urban Malay communities still intact with this traditional dish. I guess Pulut Kuning is already synonym with Malay custom.*
- Informant 17* *“I cannot deny the fact that during my childhood the society was really ignorant and Pulut Kuning was always available for ritual activities besides other food stuff like roasted chicken, eggs and so on. I believed modern education and religious understanding has changed the scenario.*
- Informant 3* *“ Modern life and advance life does not mean we have to change our custom. To me something good we have to believe and something bad and not parallel with the religious teaching we have to avoid. I have seen nothing wrong and in fact good that Malay community still think that Pulut Kuning bring meaning for special occasions like shaving infant hair, wedding and others except for ritual activities. We notice that now Malays are more incline toward Islamic teaching therefore the believed of Pulut kuning associated with the superstitious, taboos and occult activities are getting faded.*

4.6 The Impacts Modern Education and Lifestyle toward the Practices of Pulut Kuning

In tracking the informants' opinion on the impact of modernization through education and lifestyle towards the practices of Pulut Kuning, result unveiled despite modernization the practice of this heritage food in special Malay feasts are still relevant. Pulut Kuning is still act as token of gratitude and happiness in celebrating occasions. The practices however slightly reduce among the young compared to older generation. Too busy working, less time and involvement in the Malay feasts cause the causation. Although Pulut Kuning presents in certain occasion's modern angel food like cup cakes, fruits and other food goodies are also tokens of appreciation using by the young generation. Despite this, all informants were having identical interpretations that living in modern era with modern education and better understanding in religious doctrine significantly reduced the use of Pulut Kuning and the practice of it in ritual activities among the young generation. Informants strongly believed understanding of Islamic teaching by far moderates the positive thinking to the modern young Malay community.

Informant Answers

Informant 9 Although modern education and lifestyle has taken some norms in our life, I have seen Pulut Kuning is still relevant with it present in many occasions. However, the knowledge on how to prepare, the use of this heritage food I mean the practice of it should continuously be passed down to the young generation”

Informant 6 I have noticed although relevant the practicing of Pulut Kuning in certain Malay occasion is slightly decreasing. Young generation in particular beside Pulut Kuning tend to use fanciers well decorated cake and other goodies as alternatives. Some young generation claimed using Pulut Kuning is an old fashioned. Despite this, I also believed that too busy working, less time and involvement in the Malay feasts cause the causation.

Informant 20 Hmm... older generation believe Pulut Kuning is one of the important elements in ritual activities...but in this era and I personally do not believe of such Pulut Kuning in awful ritual activities. I believed education and understanding of Islamic teaching and value lessening the beliefs and practice of using Pulut Kuning ritual activities like the old generation.

5. The Implications and Conclusion

It is proven from this study that modernization through education and lifestyles have given huge impact to the beliefs of Pulut Kuning in ritual practices. The understanding or the increasing knowledge on the Islamic teaching reduced the practices and the uses of Pulut Kuning in superstitious and occult activities. Ritual practices particularly in the form offering for medication, to charm or to harm other peoples are totally against the Islamic teaching and Malay society therefore should totally ease and knowledge or information on this unbeneficial practices shall be not be transmitted to the younger generation.

In contrasts, that modernization through education and lifestyles do not totally pushed away the norm, beliefs and the practices of Pulut Kuning as symbolism and custom in certain Malay feasts. Pulut Kuning is still symbolized the gratitude's, appreciation, thankful and attached with the image of the Malay feasts. In other words, Pulut Kuning together with other modern food is significantly relevant either in the rural or urban Malay society. With this good indication, the old generation in particular can play their role in preserving the practicing this Malay traditional food hence continually pass down this tradition to the young generation.

One of the interesting ways to preserve is through the involvement of young generation in the preparation of this special Malay traditional food during special celebration or events. The older generation should encourage the young generation to be part or participate in preparation process thus the transformation of knowledge could continuously be done. The young generation in fact should be given space to experience and learn in a proper way through the elder generation. Cooking competition is also a way to attract the interest of the younger generation towards learning and preserving the Malay traditional food including Pulut Kuning. This competition could be organized by associations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), shopping complexes, government agencies and others.

The formation of the Ministry of Culture, Information and Communication is one of the initiatives undertaken by the government and besides enhancing communication the intention is also to preserve Malaysia's ethnic cultures, including the Malay traditional foods. Owing to the important of these matters, efforts are undertaken by the Ministry in urging the older and young generation to preserve cultural traditions not excepting the traditional foods despite continual waves of modernization. The Ministry through it sub-divisions are currently active in disseminating information on the importance of preserving each ethnic groups' cultures, foods and arts.

Such action would at least encourage the young generations to understand how their older generations practice the traditions. In addition, the compilation of recipe books can be as a source of reference for future generation to facilitate the transfer of knowledge on Pulut Kuning and many others Malay traditional cuisines. As a conclusion, although the advancement of food are unavoidable owing to the advancement of the global, many elements and the authenticity of it can still be preserved through the transfer of knowledge and efforts from all levels of the individuals, community or society and the government are required.

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