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The Challenges in Inheritance of Ketupat Palas Weaving as a Malay Heritage Festival Food Among the Millennials

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Abstract

Ketupat palas, a cherished Malay dish, consists of glutinous rice and coconut milk cooked to perfection. It is prepared using palas leaves, which are intricately woven into a triangular shape before cooking. This traditional dish is typically served during Malay festivals like Eidul Fitr and Eidul Adha, accompanied by an assortment of delicious rendang. The art of ketupat weaving, however, is no simple feat and must be passed down from generation to generation. For millennials, there appears to be a gap in transferring this knowledge and skill. This study aims to examine the challenges in preserving the ketupat weaving tradition among millennials in Malay culture. A survey of 150 respondents on social media revealed that many millennials either lack the weaving skills or are completely unaware of how to weave ketupat. Several factors contribute to this, such as the absence of knowledgeable mentors to teach the skill, even if there is interest in learning. Other obstacles include time constraints and the limited availability of expert weavers nearby. The findings of this study hold significance for Malay heritage food enthusiasts and relevant authorities, such as the Department of National Heritage. In order to ensure that the art of ketupat palas weaving is passed down among millennials, initiatives like campaigns, competitions, and demonstrations should be implemented.

Keywords: Ketupat Palas, Ketupat Palas Weaving, Malay Heritage Festival Food, Millennials, Challenges

Introduction

Food, typically derived from plants or animals, undergoes processing to become edible or potable. It contains essential nutrients such as carbohydrates, proteins, fats, minerals, and vitamins, which, when consumed and absorbed by the digestive system, sustain life, produce energy, and promote growth and health in the body (NCERT, 2022). Culture, at its most basic level, can be described as the symbols, norms, and values found in social organizations. Fields such as sociology, psychology, political sciences, anthropology, international business, and

cross-cultural studies contribute to the understanding of culture. Culture pertains to a group's way of life and encompasses a set of values, beliefs, and behaviors that are learned and shared within a specific society, fostering a sense of belonging and identity. The ability to comprehend different cultures is crucial when interacting with individuals from diverse countries and backgrounds (Lebron, 2013).

Literature Review

Ketupat Palas

Ketupat is a Malay heritage food that has been highlighted as an identity of the Malay community for a long time. Ketupat and Eid are synonymous in Malaysia, where it is served as the main traditional food or soul food on special days of the Malay community. Indeed, on Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, the surrounding Malay Archipelago countries celebrate ketupat as a symbolic special food. Ketupat is a traditional heritage dish in Malaysia, especially during Hari Raya, made of rice or glutinous rice ingredients wrapped in a woven casing made of coconut leaves or palas leaves.

In general, ketupat is associated with either coconut leaves or palas leaves. Ketupat nasi, which refers to rice or, in some places, glutinous rice cooked in woven coconut leaves, is a mandatory dish on Lebaran, as is ketupat palas, which refers to glutinous rice wrapped in palas leaves. There are many different types of ketupat, such as ketupat sotong, ketupat dakap, ketupat periuk kera, and others. Rice ketupat is made from woven coconut leaves and comes in a variety of shapes, similar to other types of ketupat such as satay ketupat, onion ketupat, lebaran ketupat, and so on. It's made with boiled rice in a variety of rhombus shapes. Apart from coconut leaf ketupat, palas leaf ketupat is also a popular Eid dish due to its delicious taste made from glutinous rice, as opposed to the rice or rice used to cook coconut leaf ketupat. This study focuses solely on ketupat made from leaves, such as palas leaves, which produce ketupat known as ketupat palas (Ramly et al., 2022).

Ketupat palas or ketupat glutinous is a ketupat that uses the leaves of the palas tree as a wrapper and the filling is glutinous, as opposed to coconut leaf ketupat, which uses rice. The shape, size, use of leaves to wrap, and type of rice distinguishes coconut leaf ketupat from rice ketupat. Coconut leaf ketupat or rice ketupat, woven in a rectangular shape, is one of the simplest and most popular, as is onion-shaped ketupat that uses coconut leaves, among other unique shapes. However, the ketupat palas is only three-sided (Ramly et al., 2022). Making ketupat palas is said to be similar to weaving ketupat leaves for rice ketupat. To get the fragrant aroma of wrapping ketupat palas, the glutinous rice must first be cooked half-cooked with coconut milk and pandan leaves, and then go through the second phase where the glutinous rice is wrapped in palas leaves and steamed (Ramly et al., 2022).

Ketupat palas can also be seen with ties and a neat ketupat palas wrap, referred to as a female ketupat, as opposed to a less neat ketupat, referred to as a male ketupat. At the end of Male's ketupat palas, there is more filling or glutinous rice. The female palas ketupat is smaller in size and does not have as much filling or glutinous rice at the wrap's end. The wraps, on the other hand, are made to be neat, tidy, and traditional. Naturally, steaming can be used to prepare ketupat palas (Ramly et al., 2022).

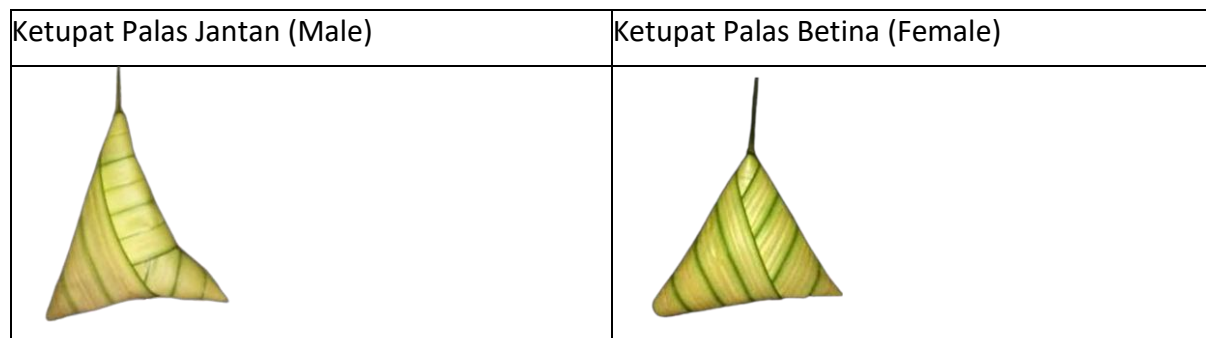


Figure 1: The differences between ketupat palas jantan (male) and ketupat palas betina (female)

Skill Inheritance

Malaysia boasts a wealth of cultural heritage, encompassing diverse and exotic foods and traditional skills. Heritage food is characterized by its unique appearance, texture, color, and taste, reflecting the specific preparation methods, regional ingredients, specialized tools, and expertise passed down through generations. Utilizing various ingredients, particularly natural ones, produces a wide range of visually and gastronomically distinct heritage foods. However, millennials often lack exposure to these foods, their preparation methods, ingredients, and tools. One contributing factor is the decline of heritage food-making skills, as millennials tend to prefer simple, quick, and easy-to-prepare dishes. Heritage food preparation demands meticulous attention to detail, persistence, and patience. For instance, making ketupat palas is time-consuming and requires mastery of various techniques, from steaming glutinous rice to wrapping or weaving the dish (Idris et al., 2022).

For Malaysians, heritage food serves as a crucial element symbolizing the identity and uniqueness of a culture and race. If today's youth recognize the distinctiveness and significance of each culture, traditional customs and practices will not vanish from the global stage. As the Malay saying goes, "mati anak, jangan mati adat." The decline of traditional skills, such as preparing ketupat palas, results from the lack of knowledge transfer from skilled to unskilled individuals. Preparing heritage food is complex and time-consuming, deterring many millennials from learning to make dishes like ketupat palas, wajik, rendang tok, and lemang. Consequently, they opt for convenience, purchasing food from stores or online platforms. This trend leaves the art of heritage food preparation primarily in the hands of the older generation. To prevent the loss of the ketupat palas-making heritage skill, stakeholders can organize skill classes and traditional food carnivals, teaching the art of weaving ketupat palas to both young and old, thereby reintroducing this skill to all generations (Idris et al., 2022).

Opportunity

Ketupat Palas, a traditional dish enjoyed during Eids, is often served with rendang or serunding, becoming a staple during festive celebrations. Its unique qualities make it crucial for millennials to learn the art of ketupat palas weaving to preserve Malay culinary traditions for future generations.

To acquire ketupat weaving skills, millennials must learn from older generations. Encouraging young people to develop a deeper understanding of their heritage requires their active interest in learning traditional food preparation (Md. Sharif et al., 2017). Parents and adults should expose children to ketupat palas weaving at an early age, fostering their involvement in

traditional food preparation. Although time-consuming, the Malay community must dedicate efforts to learn proper weaving techniques, ensuring the preservation of skills and knowledge.

Universities can also contribute to preserving ketupat palas weaving skills by offering learning opportunities to students. For instance, in 2019, Dr. Noriza Ishak, a heritage food expert from the Department of Culinary Arts and Gastronomy Management, demonstrated ketupat palas weaving at a Faculty Carnival at UiTM Selangor Branch (Ramly et al., 2022). Such initiatives pique millennials' interest in preparing traditional dishes like ketupat palas. Mastering the art of weaving ketupat requires persistence and regular practice, but it is achievable. Therefore, younger generations must recognize the importance of preserving ketupat palas weaving as an integral part of Malaysia's traditional cuisine.

Time Availability

Changes are inevitable in various aspects of life, encompassing humans, technology, and industries, including food. While some foods remain traditional, others undergo modifications in preparation methods, incorporating modern cooking utensils or altering cooking processes. One example is the transition from traditional to modern techniques for cooking lemang (Harress, 2017a). Traditional lemang requires thick and large bamboo sticks, which are prone to breakage during the 4 to 5-hour medium-fire cooking process. Choosing suitable firewood is crucial for ensuring optimal burning effects. Furthermore, cooking lemang demands constant attention to evenly cook the glutinous rice inside the bamboo stick. In contrast, modern lemang cooking techniques take less than 2 hours.

Similarly, ketupat palas preparation involves steaming glutinous rice with coconut milk, a process repeated thrice, taking half an hour for each round. Millennials often lack the patience for this lengthy cooking process. Despite the conveniences provided by technological advancements, young people's knowledge of heritage food preparation remains limited. Many cite being too busy to cook or attempt traditional dishes, opting instead to purchase them from restaurants, stalls, or night markets. According to Nursyamimi Omar, millennials lack the skills for preparing traditional dishes like ketupat palas, resulting in a reliance on purchasing them during Eid (Alias & Mahpar, 2015).

Millennials

Millennials, those born between the 1980s and 2000s, follow Generation X and are currently between 19 and 37 years old (Saulo, 2016). Many of them are still studying, living with their families, living independently, or married. As the first generation to be extensively connected to technology, their lifestyles, needs, and desires are heavily influenced by it. They rely on platforms like Google, Facebook, Pinterest, and YouTube to find recipes, research food products, and seek information, with their lifestyle choices significantly impacting their food preferences.

Tan Ai Ling's research on the motives for millennials' choices on traditional food and their level of consumption revealed insights into how health concerns, mood, familiarity, and ethical concerns influence their attitudes towards traditional food in Malaysia. The study found that these factors positively impact Malaysian millennials' attitudes toward traditional food (Ling, N.A.). However, Nor (2012) suggested that the young generation in Malaysia is increasingly neglecting traditional food practices due to the influence of information technology. While they

may be aware of traditional foods' existence, the preparation methods and skills might be unfamiliar to many millennials. Consequently, scholars emphasize the importance of preserving traditional food preparation techniques and skills and passing them on to the next generation. Such preservation is crucial because it represents cultural identity (Ling, N.A.).

Methodology

Research Design

Quantitative research is used to analyse the data for this study. Quantitative research can also help researchers to understand and analyse the result more exact as far as the social sciences is concerned and to fulfil the research of this study. This study aims to examine the relationship between independent and dependent variables and the data was collected through primary data via online survey questionnaires. This research also aims to identify the main factors that contribute to the limited knowledge and skills of ketupat palas weaving among millennials. The data has been collected from the selected sample, the millennials in every state of Malaysia. This study is expected to enhance the findings of research in Malay heritage cuisine, to be precise the study on ketupat weaving inheritance skills for future references.

Population and Sampling

In this study, the focus is on Malay millennials in Malaysia as the target population. A sample of 175 respondents from this population answered questionnaires for the research. According to Krejcie & Morgan (1970), a total of 336 respondents can be collected from a questionnaire survey, and the appropriate sample size based on their table is 175 respondents. Researchers distributed the questionnaire via social media to reach the intended population.

The study zeroes in on Malay millennials for three main reasons. Firstly, ketupat palas is a Malay heritage festival food, and the Malay population plays a crucial role in preserving and continuing this food tradition within their culture, as it symbolizes their pride and cultural identity. Secondly, millennials represent the largest demographic group in Malaysia. This generation consists of individuals starting tertiary education, forming families, and entering the workforce. As a result, their lifestyles and values at different life stages influence their desires and needs, which is reflected in their leisure activities, understanding of politics and current events, and approaches to cooking, as well as their snacking and shopping habits for food and beverages.

These factors make millennials the most promising demographic group for learning and passing down ketupat palas weaving skills. According to the Malaysia Statistical Department (2022), there are approximately 20 million millennials in Malaysia, accounting for more than fifty percent of the country's population.

Research Instrumentation

The survey was the main data collection resource. The questionnaire was sufficient for the challenges in inheritance of ketupat palas as a malay heritage festival food festival food amongst malay millennials using google forms. A good questionnaire must be properly constructed in order to achieve a good performance. Regardless of how poor the academic performance is, the questionnaire should not be biased to achieve the objective of this analysis. Likert scale was used to collect data from these lines as the scale is likely to provide a high-quality scale of reliability. The respondent had to score on 5 emphasis scales, starting with

Strongly disagree – 1, Disagree – 2, Neither disagree nor agree – 3, Agree – 4, Strongly disagree – 5. This questionnaire consists of four major sections A, B, C, D and E.

Data Collection Procedure

All branches of study, including the physical and social sciences, the humanities, business, and others, have a research component, including data collecting. Data collection is the act of acquiring and quantifying information on variables of interest in a systematic manner that allows one to answer specific research questions, test hypotheses, and assess results. The objective of collecting data in this study is to gather high-quality information that can be translated into a comprehensive data analysis and used to construct a persuasive and credible response to given issues. Also, data collecting is one of the most crucial steps in doing research. It is an arduous activity that requires careful preparation, hard effort, patience, endurance, and more to be completed properly. Data collection begins with the determination of the kind of data needed, followed by the random selection from that population and the use of a particular instrument to collect data from the sample.

In this study, the researcher has already chosen quantitative data with primary data to examine and gather data pertinent to the studied subject. Primary data, also known as first-hand experience data, is more credible, genuine, and objective than secondary data, which has not yet been published. Additionally, primary data validation is more accurate and less expensive. However, these fundamental data come from five different sources: experiments, surveys, questionnaires, and interviews. Some claim that primary data are restricted and difficult to get because of population scarcity or lack of response. Despite this, the researcher has opted to utilize survey sources with a self-completion survey through email and chat application for this study since it will be able to gather data from a broad population and evaluate models. In addition, surveys give a method for assessing a population's features, self-reported information, and hypotheses. (Kabir, 2016). In the meantime, the researcher has already compiled the questions list that needs to be asked. By using a Likert scale, it is simple to attract or contact respondents for the surveys.

Data Analysis

The IBM Statistical Package for Social Science 20.0 (SPSS) was used to analyse the information from the distributed questionnaire. SPSS addresses business and research issues through ad hoc analysis, hypothesis testing, geographic analysis, and predictive analytics. Various table formats and data processing methods are used in SPSS programming approaches. In this study, we used three methods of data analysis: descriptive statistics, simple linear regression, and correlation. The statistical method was answered using data analysis. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), all raw data collected will be evaluated using a software package such as Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. Cronbach's Alpha reliability tests are examples of preliminary tests. The regression analysis is the final step. All of the sections in chapter four will be explained in this section.

Reliability Coefficient

Cronbach's Alpha will be used to determine the reliability coefficient's data level. When Cronbach's Alpha is close to 1.0, it indicates that the items used are more accurate (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). A score of 0.8 is considered good, 0.7 is acceptable up to 0.60, and less than 0.6 is considered low (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

Frequencies Analysis

For data analysis, the researcher will use frequency analysis to evaluate the demographics of the respondents. The frequency analysis results allow you to assess the overall rigidity of your structure as well as the rigidity of local regions. Lower frequency oscillations can be used as input for seismic or wind load assessment and structure computation.

Pearson Correlation

Correlational analysis is a statistical technique employed to investigate the magnitude and significance of such relationships. In this study, correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between dependent variables and independent variables. With this analysis, we can see the relationship between the factors found in dependent and independent variables related to mental health problems.

Findings

This section summarises the findings of an online survey questionnaire data collection. Furthermore, the survey questionnaire employs a quantitative approach. The survey questionnaire was distributed over WhatsApp to college students enrolled in a hybrid semester using a number random generator. This chapter is broken down into four sections. The first section deals with the overall data collecting responder rate. Examine the respondent's profile, which is broken down into percentages and frequencies. The bias for independent and dependent variables is then determined using the reliability test.

The hypothesis of analysis, which requires several regressions, is then presented in the final step. The hypothesis of analysis is then applied in the last step when multiple regressions are performed. Furthermore, all of the data was examined by using SPSS Software Version 20. This chapter shows the findings and analysis of our research. In this chapter will be explain about the descriptive statistic, the demographic of the respondents, reliability coefficient analysis.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis is statistical method to measure the strength relationship between two variables, independent and dependent variables.

H1 There is a positive relationship between the inheritance skills in ketupat palas weaving and age.

H2 There is a relationship between the availability of opportunity to practice ketupat palas weaving and age.

H3 There is a relationship between availability of time to learn ketupat palas weaving and age.

Skills Inheritance Correlation Coefficient

H1: There is a positive relationship between the inheritance skills in ketupat palas weaving and age.

Based on the data shown using correlation analysis above, the result shown which is the correlation between inheritance skills significantly influence the age in ketupat palas weaving among millennials is $r = 0.166$. From the result, the r relationship has weakly positive

relationship between inheritance skills that influence the age in ketupat palas weaving among millennials.

Table 1
Correlation Coefficient for Skill Inheritance

		Age	mean_skills_inheritance
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	.166*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.029
	N	175	175
mean_skills_inheritance	Pearson Correlation	.166*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.029	
	N	175	175

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Opportunity Correlation Coefficient

H2: There is a relationship between the availability of opportunity to practice ketupat palas weaving and age.

Based on the data shown using correlation analysis above, the result shown which is the correlation between the availability of opportunity to practice significantly influence the age in weaving ketupat palas among millennials is $r = 0.139$. From the result, the r relationship has weakly positive relationship between the availability of opportunity that influence the age to practice in weaving ketupat palas among millennials.

Table 2
Correlation Coefficient for Opportunity

		Age	mean_opportunity
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	.139
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.067
	N	175	175
mean_opportunity	Pearson Correlation	.139	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.067	
	N	175	175

Time Availability Correlation Coefficient

H3: There is a relationship between availability of time to learn ketupat palas weaving and age.

Based on the data shown using correlation analysis above, the result shown which is the correlation between availability of time to learn significantly influence the age in weaving ketupat palas among millennials is $r = 0.051$. From the result, the r relationship has weakly positive relationship between the availability of time to learn that influence the age in ketupat palas.

Table 3
 Correlation Coefficient for Time Availability

		Age	mean_time_a vailability
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	.051
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.506
	N	175	175
mean_time_availability	Pearson Correlation	.051	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.506	
	N	175	175

Discussion and Recommendations

A brief survey was conducted through Google form involving 175 respondents consisting of 119 respondents (68 %) who were female and 56 respondents (32%) who were male. The results of this brief survey can be concluded that 80.6% of the 141 respondents are from the age group of 25 - 30 years, while 23 respondents (13.1%) are in the age range of 36 - 40 years, and the age range of 31 - 35 years with 11 respondents recorded the lowest percentage, (6.3%). As for the field of employment, referring to figure 2, 123 respondents (70.3%) are students, 43 respondents (24.6%) are employed, and 9 respondents (5.1%) are housewives.

The results of the study found that, all respondents knew about ketupat palas because ketupat palas is a hereditary heritage of the Malays from their ancestors. Although, ketupat palas is inherited from generation to generation, but most respondents only know knowledge in ketupat palas weaving but are not good at weaving ketupat palas. It confirmed through response data collected related to the statement "I have knowledge in ketupat palas weaving" with 30.86 percent (neutral) and it can be related to the statement, "I have been inherited/learned/practiced ketupat palas in weaving skills less than 5 years" with 41.71 percent (strongly disagree). According to a previous newspaper, Nursyamimi Omar, a ketupat palas seller for over 10 years commented majority of young generations are not skilled in weaving and preparing ketupat palas. It is proven when most people choose to book and buy ketupat palas every time the festival arrives. This indicates that the respondents' answers are similar to previous studies written by Shawaliah Hadir (Hadir, 2021).

Thus, the opinions or suggestions collected from the respondents through the questionnaire, there are three categories that can be classified as inheritances, where the millennials needs to be exposed and inherit the ketupat palas weaving. Second, institutions. Most of the respondents gave suggestions to promote and learn the skill of weaving ketupat palas by watching videos, attending workshops or campaigns and food festivals. In addition, respondents suggested making innovations in the food industry such as producing frozen ketupat palas and creating a machine to produce ketupat palas faster and more efficient.

Table 4

Relevant themes from the informants

No	Category	Explanation	Coding	Number Respondents	O%
1	Inheritances	The young generation need to be exposed and inherit ketupat palas weaving.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, 33, 35, 36, 37, 40, 42, 43, 44, 47, 50, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 63, 64, 67, 68, 69, 74, 75, 79, 81, 82, 86, 87, 91, 96, 98	52	52%
2	Institutions	Promote and learn the ketupat palas weaving skills e.g., videos workshop, food festivals and school.	13, 23, 26, 28, 30, 34, 41, 46, 48, 51, 59, 60, 61, 66, 71, 72, 76, 80, 83, 85, 89, 92, 93, 97, 99, 100	26	26%
3	Innovation	Make innovations in the food industry e.g. machines and frozen food	8, 32, 84	3	3%
4	Irrelevant	Not relevant with question	6, 29, 31, 38, 39, 45, 49, 52, 56, 62, 65, 70, 73, 77, 78, 88, 90, 94, 95,	19	19%

Conclusion

All the community needs to preserve the art of ketupat weaving especially when it has been gazetted as intangible culture by the National Heritage Department. In addition, campaigns and festivals of traditional food need to be widened to raise awareness and attract interest, especially among Millennials, to preserve the art of ketupat weaving that is less inherited by the younger generation. The scenario of life in the post-modern era in the current of technology and this borderless world where the young generation is less interested in seeking knowledge or learning about heritage food especially in weaving ketupat palas because they are more exposed to fast food, frozen, or convenience food. Therefore, it is very important to be inherited ketupat palas weaving skills in the future.

About the Author

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Nur Nabilah Binti Mohammad Shafii is a final year student in Bachelor of Science (Hons.) in Culinary Art Management of University Technology MARA (UiTM) Puncak Alam. She is very passion in culinary art and that have been a help her to understand better in her writing.

Alina Shuhaida Binti Ramly is the person responsible for supervising this writing and she is also a senior lecturer in culinary arts from MARA University of Technology (UiTM) Puncak Alam,

armed with her experience in the field of writing, she helped her students prepare their first articles and research. She is the main author for the study.

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