

KNOWLEDGE ON TEOCHEW ETHNIC CUISINE AND IT'S FOODWAYS

Pengetahuan Tentang Makanan Etnik Teochew

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Abstract

Malaysia is a unique and distinctive country with multiracial people consisting of Malay, Indian, Chinese, and other indigenous sub ethnics groups. As a multiracial country, Malaysia's intriguing cultures and history are demonstrated through its cuisine. A cuisine is a style of cooking characterized by distinctive ingredients, methods and dishes, and usually connected with an original and specific culture or geographic region for instance Teochew Cuisine. The arrival of Chinese immigrants mainly of the Teochew, Hainan, Hakka, Hokkien, and Cantonese descendants was brought by the British to Malaya before the Independence Day. Immigrants brought the food they grew up with to their new countries and in many cases passed these traditions down to their children. Therefore, this research was conducted in identifying Teochew Cuisine and their foodways by qualitative technique which involves of five informers age ranged from 58 to 81 years old from Teochew ethnic located in Selangor, Malaysia. Due to urbanization, globalization and glocalization, Teochew cuisine are facing challenges to maintain yet sustain their ethnic cuisine and its foodways. Thus, the overall findings revealed that the informers still prepare their traditional cuisine by using their traditional foodways even they immigrated to Malaysia since late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Keywords: Teochew Ethnic's Cuisine, Cuisine, Foodways

Abstrak

Malaysia adalah negara yang unik dengan rakyat berbilang kaum yang terdiri daripada kumpulan etnik Melayu, India, Cina, dan lain-lain. Sebagai negara berbilang kaum, budaya dan sejarah Malaysia yang berwarna-warni ditunjukkan melalui makanan. Makanan pula adalah gaya memasak yang dicirikan oleh ramuan, teknik, dan hidangan yang khas, dan biasanya dikaitkan dengan budaya atau wilayah geografi tertentu misalnya Teochew Cuisine. Kemasukan pendatang Cina terutamanya keturunan Teochew, Hainan, Hakka, Hokkien, dan Kantonis dibawa oleh penjajah Inggeris ke Tanah Melayu sebelum Hari Kemerdekaan. Bukan itu sahaja, mereka juga membawa makanan dan cara penyediaannya semasa mereka dibesarkan ke negara baru. Mereka juga menurunkan dan menyebarkan tradisi ini kepada anak-anak mereka. Oleh itu, kajian ini dijalankan untuk mengenalpasti dengan lebih dekat mengenai makanan tradisi etnik Teochew dan teknik penyediaan makanan dengan menggunakan kaedah kualitatif yang terdiri daripada lima informer berumur antara 58 hingga 81 tahun dari etnik Teochew yang terletak di Selangor. Oleh kerana factor urbanisasi, globalisasi dan glocalisasi, etnik Teochew menghadapi cabaran untuk mempertahankan makanan, cara penyediaan, ramuan serta peralatan tradisi dari nenek moyang mereka. Oleh itu, secara keseluruhan keputusan menunjukkan bahawa semua pemberi maklumat masih menghasilkan masakan tradisional mereka dengan menggunakan jalan makanan

tradisional mereka walaupun mereka telah berhijrah ke Malaysia sejak akhir abad ke-19 dan awal abad ke-20.

Kata Kunci: Masakan Etnik Teochew, Masakan, Cara Masakan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a blessed country with multiracial people consisting of Malay, Indian, Chinese, Nyonya and other indigenous sub ethnics groups. The Malaysian Chinese, also known as Chinese Malaysians are Malaysian citizens of Han Chinese ethnicity. They form the second largest ethnic group after the Malay majority constituting 23% of the Malaysian population. Most of them are descendants of Southern Chinese immigrants who arrived in Malaysia between the early 19th century and the mid-20th century. The ethnic subgroups of Chinese people in Malaysia include the Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka, , Hainan, Foochow, Kwongsai and Teochew.

1.1 Teochew Ethnic

Teochew come from Chaoshan 潮汕 which is a coastal region located in southeast Guangzhou province at the border with Fujian province (Foo, 2019). As a multiracial country, Malaysia's vibrant and unusual cultures and history are demonstrated through its cuisine. A cuisine is a style of cooking characterized by distinctive ingredients, techniques and dishes, and usually associated with a specific culture or geographic region. Cuisine is also specific set of cooking traditions and practices, often associated with a specific culture. It is often named after the region or place where its underlying culture is present. A cuisine is primarily influenced by the ingredients that are available locally or through trade. Regional food preparation traditions, customs and ingredients often combine to create dishes unique to a particular region (Albala, 2011).

1.2 Teochew Cuisine

According to Chang (1977), Teochew cuisine, also known as Chiuchow cuisine, Chaozhou cuisine or Chaoshan cuisine, originated from the Chaoshan region in the eastern part of China's Guangdong Province, which includes the cities of Chaozhou, Shantou and Jieyang. Teochew cuisine bears more similarities to that of Fujian cuisine, particularly Southern Min cuisine, due to the similarity of Chaoshan's and Fujian's culture, language, and their geographic proximity to each other. Therefore, the cuisine were originated from the Teochews includes include Ho Chien (Oyster Omelette), Braised Duck, Popiah, Bak Kut Teh, Bak Chor Mee, and the list goes on. Alternatively, a popular Teochew dessert includes Yam or Taro paste (Foo, 2019). However, Teochew cuisine is also influenced by Cantonese cuisine in its style and technique which is also known as foodways.

1.3 Foodways

By definition, foodways is the eating habits and culinary practices of a people, region, or historical period (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1999). Fundamentally, foodways is a combination of two words that are 'food' and 'ways' that refers to the way how food is prepared, served and consumed by human. Meaning that, foodways focusing on the method or technique of cooking, the raw ingredient used, the equipment used and including the eating technique. According to Powell (2007) theorize foodways is represent the identity of aethnicity, gender, locale, occupation, and religion. While Koc and Welsh (2002) stated that foodways are a key component of culture and sense of identity. According to Camp (2009), foodways is a

combination and intersection of food and culture while Counihan and Esterik (2008) recognized and contended that foodways are far beyond an exploration of cooking and consumption. In fact, foodways represent the daily life and culture. The term "foodways" refers to the connection between food-related behavior and patterns of membership in cultural community, group, and society. In its most general usage, "foodways" refers to the systems of knowledge and expression related to food that vary with culture. In this sense, Rearick (2009) emphasized that different peoples from a different location with different cultures would execute dissimilar food preparation and consumption pattern, which reveal the characteristic of their culture and social class. Notwithstanding of innumerable clarifications, the most suitable terms in order to describe foodways are the preparation and consumption of food characterized by individuals and society. Moreover, foodways not only refer to food and cooking, but to all food-related behaviors, concepts and beliefs shared by a particular group of people and give significance visualization towards their identity. (Di Giovine and Brulotte, 2014; Bortolotto and Ubertazzi, 2018).

2.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Immigrants brought the food they grew up with to their new countries and in many cases passed these traditions down to their children. Despite of it, many people became disconnected from their novel culture and food culture because of war and conflict. Besides, it was impossible in some areas to obtain acquainted ingredients and items that conventional traditional cuisine based on family recipes to be created. With the multitude of Chinese dishes available in restaurants and food courts today, it's hard to pinpoint the origins of each dish. As a result, many communities produced what has become known as micro-cuisine. This is a method of using local ingredients in acquainted recipes that called for different traditional ingredients. In many cases, regional cuisines are dependent on what can be grown within a specific area (Di Giovine and Brulotte, 2014; Bortolotto and Ubertazzi, 2018). Moreover, it is vital for an ethnic to practice their traditional food foodways in a new place or location in order to preserving their food authenticity which reflect their ethnic's identity. Therefore, this study aims to identifying the availability of Teochew's ethnic cuisine and investigating Teochew's ethnic foodways together with the publication of Teochew Cuisine Cookbook.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study intends to explore the Teochew cuisine foodways among older generation of Teochew ethnic using the qualitative method to gather all necessary information. The rationale of conducting qualitative study is because the information gathered provides an understanding of the process and the reasons for such behavior's rather than just determined by means of statistical procedures. The qualitative approach more subjective in nature and involve examining and reflecting on perception to gain an understanding of the social and human activities, that this research dealt with the elders' engagement of perceptions and ideas in the practice of Teochew cuisine. The informant selection for this study was five older generation of Teochew ethnic age from 56 to 81 years old. All the information analysed using thematic analysis. A set of open ended interview questions developed to guide the informants to share their knowledge and experience in related to the Teochew cuisine.

4.0 FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Table 1: Informant's Profile

Informer's Profile	Age	Occupation	Origin
Informer 1	56	Business	Selangor
Informer 2	61	Business	Selangor
Informer 3	58	Business	Selangor
Informer 4	59	Business	Selangor
Informer 5	81	Housewife	Selangor

4.1 *The knowledge of Teochew ethnic and its cuisine*

Informer's Profile	Answer
Informer 1	The word Teochew or Chaozhou is used to refer to the Chaozhou people. These Teochew people come from Guangdong Province. They can be found in Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia.
Informer 2	The Teochew people are Han citizens who live their lives in Chaozhou. They use the Chaozhou language to communicate. They can be found in China, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia.
Informer 3	The title 'Teochew nang' refers to the Teochew people. They come from Guangdong Province, China. They can usually be found in Hong Kong and Singapore. The Chaozhou people left their country of origin and settled in Singapore in the 19th century due to poor conditions and this is also the reason why we can find most of the Teochew people living in Singapore.
Informer 4	Teochew people come from China, Guangdong, Chaozhou
Informer 5	The word 'Teochew' in Chinese means Chaozhou. They came from Guangdong, China and later migrated to Malaysia. The language spoken by the Chaozhou people is called the Teochew language. This language has similarities with Cantonese.

4.2 *The knowledge of Teochew ethnic cuisine*

Informer's Profile	Answer
Informer 1	Teochew's signature dish is Teochew -style Steamed Fish. These dishes usually have fish, sour plums, sour vegetables, ginger, tomatoes, soy sauce and mushrooms. The steaming time is on the size of the fish used..

Informer 2	Teochew cuisine has a unique type of cuisine called, ‘orh nee’. ‘Orh nee’ is a type of sweet known to many Teochew people. These sweets are made from yams, pumpkin, ginkgo beans, sugar, coconut milk and lard.
Informer 3	I think ‘braised’ duck is Teochew’s signature dish. There are two types of ways to cook this ‘braised’ duck, namely the Hokkien way and the Teochew way. I prefer the Teochew way because this way is sweeter than the Hokkien way which feels salty. This dish takes a few hours to cook. In the old days, cooks used a large pan to "braise" duck but now we only need a "pressure cooker"
Informer 4	Teochew -style steamed fish is a special Teochew dish.
Informer 5	This Teochew -style steamed fish is a very famous dish. This dish can be found at every Teochew gradual restaurant. The fish will be steamed with sour plums, sour vegetables, ginger and tomatoes. Teochew people like to eat this dish with white rice

4.3 *The knowledge on common ingredient used of Teochew’s ethnic cuisine*

Informer’s Profile	Answer
Informer 1	Commonly used ingredients are soy sauce, lard and cooking wine
Informer 2	Half is not the same. Chinese cuisine is actually quite similar only the difference is the use of by-products in the cuisine. Lard, soy sauce, salt, sugar
Informer 3	None. Cantonese cuisine uses exotic ingredients such as rice paddy frog meat or snake meat. Lard, soy sauce, cooking wine and fish sauce
Informer 4	Porridge cooked in the style of Teochew or called ‘mue’. Teochew people often eat this dish with fermented tofu. This ‘Mue’ became famous because the economy in the past was very bad. Therefore, the people at that time could only continue living by eating ‘mue’. They will boil the rice in water until the rice expands to be large. Not at all. Cantonese cuisine uses exotic ingredients such as the meat of rice paddy frogs, snakes or snails.
Informer 5	No. Cantonese cuisine is more of a soup type. Soy sauce, cooking wine, lard.

4.4 *The knowledge on common equipment/utensil used of Teochew’s ethnic cuisine*

Informer’s Profile	Answer
Informer 1	This Teochew dish emphasizes the freshness of the ingredients. Pans, bamboo steamers, spatulas for pans, strainers, clay pots and chopsticks
Informer 2	Bamboo steamer, strainer, long and short chopsticks, pan, pan spatula and ladle
Informer 3	Chopsticks, pan, pan spatula, bamboo steamer and strainer
Informer 4	Strainer, long chopsticks, bamboo steamer, skillet, pan spatula and ladle

Informer 5	Bamboo steamer, clay pot, pan, cleaver knife, strainer and ladle
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4.5 *The knowledge on common cooking method/technique used of Teochew's ethnic cuisine*

Informer's Profile	Answer
Informer 1	How to cook traditional Teochew. This is because our ancestors understood more about the proper way of cooking but this way of cooking has been increasingly forgotten through generation to generation.
Informer 2	Teochew dishes use more natural flavors to make the dishes more delicious instead of using seasonings. Teochew cuisine uses many methods of boiling and steaming. Chef Teochew will also prepare a type of soup called "premium soup" for use in their cooking. However, I am not sure how to prepare the soup.
Informer 3	Teochew cuisine prefers steaming and boiling.
Informer 4	This Teochew dish is more seafood and does not use a lot of oil.
Informer 5	This Teochew dish emphasizes the natural taste of fresh ingredients rather than seasonings.

According to Wu, David Y. H, Cheung, Sidney C.H Honolulu on 2002, Teochew cuisine is well known for its seafood and vegetarian dishes. Its use of flavouring is much less heavy-handed than most other Chinese cuisine and depends much on the freshness and quality of the ingredients for taste and flavour. As a delicate cuisine, oil is not often used in large quantities and there is a relatively heavy emphasis on poaching, steaming and braising, as well as Chinese method of stir-frying. Therefore, the older generation of Teochew ethnic still practicing their traditional foodways specifically the equipment, cooking method and raw ingredient which are available in Malaysia.

4.6 *The hardship in practicing Teochew's ethnic cuisine*

Informer's Profile	Answer
Informer 1	I was actually fascinated by the way my grandmother cooked and from there she taught me various ways as well as knowledge about Teochew cooking. Even though he has died, I will remember all the sciences he taught for a lifetime.
Informer 2	Using traditional ways to cook Teochew dishes. Not all of these traditional ways 'pass down' from generation to generation perfectly. So the traditional way I know may not be perfect.
Informer 3	Holding chopsticks the right way in my childhood. If I hold wrong, my dad will knock my head off.
Informer 4	Usually is a seasoning. Too much of this seasoning will ruin the natural taste of the dish
Informer 5	'timing' to cook a Teochew dish

4.7 *The factors encouraging or discouraging traditional Teochew's ethnic cuisine.*

Informer's Profile	Answer
Informer 1	Teach the history and cuisine of Teochew to children during childhood so that they will not forget about it.
Informer 2	My father is a cook in a restaurant. He had taught me all the ways to cook Teochew that he knew and I also followed in his footsteps. But due to an unexpected accident, I was unable to cook for a lifetime.
Informer 3	I don't cook so I have no particular reason.
Informer 4	I was very interested in cooking when I was a child and my mother taught me how to cook Teochew dishes. Since then, I will cook if I have free time.
Informer 5	My mother. When I was young, my mother would often cook Teochew food for me. After my mother's death, I would cook Teochew cuisine to my family like her.

The majority of informants said their parents taught them how to cook at home. Some even say they get cooking instruction from their grandmother. As such, they are able to cook Teochew cuisine at home to be served to their children and grandchildren. However, there are also those who do not cook because they are not interested in cooking. This is also due to the fact that there are restaurants that serve other Chinese dishes which is more convenience with hectic and busy lifestyles. Therefore, they are not interested in cooking.

4.8 *The suggestion/recommendation to preserve Teochew's ethnic cuisine*

Informer's Profile	Answer
Informer 1	Teach the history and cuisine of Teochew to children during childhood so that they will not forget about it.
Informer 2	By gradually opening Teochew restaurants and teaching Teochew how to cook to teenagers.
Informer 3	Teach children about the history of Teochew.
Informer 4	By teaching children about the Teochew tradition.
Informer 5	Teach children how to cook, cook with them together.

The majority of informers said it was crucial to tell about the history and traditional food of the Teochew ethnic group to their children so that the younger generation of Teochew would recognize and know about these matters. The 81 -year -old (Informer 5) also said the need to cook together with grandchildren is to avoid the extinction of the Teochew ethnic culinary tradition.

5.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the existence of the identical raw materials as the original location of an ethnicity, the inheritance and sharing of knowledge and cooking methods, the existence of cooking utensils, busy and hectic lifestyles especially working mothers, the existence of Chinese restaurants outside the home, the existence of food restaurants of various races , as well as the existence of fast food restaurants such as McDonald's, Pizza Hut and others contribute to the preservation or extinction of traditional foods for all races and ethnicities in Malaysia. Hence, parents who are the closest group to their children who are the younger generation should carry out the role and responsibility to ensure that traditional food and its foodways are always preserved and not decrease by time. In addition, related organization which are directly related to traditional food such as the National Heritage Department, Badan Warisan Negara (BWN) and researchers in the field of culinary and food service also need to takings proactive steps such as holding forums on heritage food, creating National Heritage Food Day, holding cooking competitions, publishing history books on heritage food of each race in Malaysia. This is crucial and vital to ensure the sustainability of traditional foods not only for the Teochew ethnic group, but also for the 80 races and ethnicities that are in Malaysia, the blessed land but on top of that to prevent the extinction of traditional ethnic cuisine and its foodways.

6.0 REFERENCE

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APPENDICES





'WOK SHOVEL'



CHINESE SCOOP
STRAINER



LADLE



STEAMING BASKETS



CUTTING BOARD



SIGNATURE DISH: TEOCHEW STEAMED FISH



STAPLE DISH: TEOCHEW PORRIDGE



COMMON DISH: TEOCHEW STIR FRY NOODLE



FESTIVE DISH: KUAN CHING



DESSERT DISH: YAM PASTE