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## Analyzing food safety culture elements in foodservice operations

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The food safety program's breakdown is often reported due to poor food safety culture, in which the foodservice sector is frequently identified as a typical setting of foodborne outbreaks occurrence. Given the significance of the tourism industry and the increasing importance of food safety culture, this study explores the elements of food safety culture in micro and small restaurants in tourist spots. This study also assesses risk factors out-of-compliance among food handlers. A qualitative approach was used to conduct the study through observation and interviews with restaurant managers and food handlers. The interview included key questions on participants' perceptions regarding food safety culture in their workplace. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select the research informants. A total of 20 informants from 10 restaurants participated in the interview sessions. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, translated into English, and analyzed using Atlas.ti to identify themes and patterns in the data. The observation data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel to find the total number and percentage of restaurants out-of-compliance for each risk factor. Altogether nine themes emerged based on elements of food safety culture within micro and small restaurants: 1) risk perception and awareness, 2) communication, 3) food safety management system, style, and process, 4) accountability, 5) leadership and employees' commitment, 6) internal environmental factors, 7) self-commitment, 8) work pressure, and 9) teamwork. The observation results showed that the two most commonly occurring risk factors out-of-compliance in the studied restaurants are poor personal hygiene and improper holding time and temperature. The findings provide insight into this under-studied context's food safety culture to help better planning on training strategies and interventions to improve food safety practices.

**Keywords:** Food safety culture, Food handler, Food safety, Risk factor, Tourism.

### Biography:

Aifaa Binti Roslan was born on 14th May 1995 in Ipoh, Perak. She attended Universiti Putra Malaysia from 2015 to 2019 and graduated with a B.Sc. in Food Service and Management. She is currently a Master's student working with Dr. Ungku Fatimah Ungku Zainal Abidin at Universiti Putra Malaysia in Selangor, Malaysia. Her research at UPM focuses on exploring the elements of food safety culture in foodservice sector and developing the assessment tool for improving food safety performance in Malaysia.