

Unregistered Food Premises Hygiene Management in Urban City Ampang Selangor

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/CJAST/2021/v40i2331484

Editor(s):

(1) Dr. Chien-Jen Wang, National University of Tainan, China.

Reviewers:

(1) Ripon Kumar Adhikary, Jashore University of Science and Technology, Bangladesh, Australian National University, Australia.

(2) Karen Breshears, University of Central Missouri, United States.

Complete Peer review History: <https://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/73390>

Short Research Article

Received 28 June 2021
Accepted 08 September 2021
Published 10 September 2021

ABSTRACT

Rapid development in Ampang, Selangor area has a impact on the environment. The increase in the number of immigrants from outside with food operators from neighbouring countries demands dynamic and quality food premise management. A total of 145 unregistered food premises were detected to operate without food hygiene monitoring by the Local Council and District Health Department in the study area. The quality of food presented to customers is plays an important role in curbing the spread of epidemics such as food poisoning, diarrhea, leptospirosis, salmonellosis and other foodborne illnesses. The analysis result of Pearson Coleration showed that all the variables between knowledge had a significant relationship with the attitude of the food operator ($p < 0.05$). The findings showed a significant relationship between knowledge and attitude ($r = 0.310$, $p < 0.05$). The results showed that the presence of unlicensed food premises would damage the scenery 71.9 percent and destroy the aesthetic value of the city 28.1 percent. The development speed should be in line with the hygiene of food premises, especially in the rapidly developing township.

Keywords: Food hygiene management; food operators; safety food.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid economic development in our country Malaysia has led to progress and prosperity for the people of this country. However, food premises that are contaminated, unregistered and without monitoring from the authorities will cause problems to the community, especially customers who eat at the premises [1]. Without realising it, many food premises are being operated without a business premise license from the authorities, thus causing various health risks to the community. Without a business license, food hygiene and safety monitoring are as well not implemented and the operators of these illegal food premises are exempt from philanthropic responsibilities [2]. Therefore, in facing all problems that are existed in this urban area, it is not only human factors that need to be addressed but also the shared environment and interdependence with each other that must be taken into account. The Local Government Act 1976 provides jurisdiction to local authorities to enact by-laws that can be applied in their administrative areas. 'Consistency' in each work procedure will capacitate more effective compliance when an action is taken against any violation of the existing laws on food premises operating without a business premises license from Ampang Jaya Municipal Council (AJMC 2016).

1.1 Literature Review

This study seeks to explain that hygiene management of food premises is very important with the existence of a role that can be played by the operator of the food premises themselves and those who are responsible for monitoring the level of cleanliness and efficient management of hygiene aspects of the food premises. Proper management of food premises in terms of premises licensing by the local authorities and hygiene practices among operators should be seen as a goal towards improving the food quality sold to the public. The hygiene problem of the surrounding area as a result of human activities will affect the aesthetic value of an area. Lack of hygiene management of food premises can invite various related problems such as food poisoning, non-compliant food premises hygiene, discharge of food waste into the city drainage system, crowded existing food premises that block traffics and pollute the aesthetic value of the city itself [3].

A comprehensive management model can help to coordinate the existing unregistered food

premises. The elements of safety and cleanliness in food preparation are very important in daily life but the question is, to what extent these elements are emphasised by food operators in food premises especially in unregistered food premises [4]. The community's tendency, especially in the city, to enjoy food outside is becoming more apparent as there are many operating facilities and premises that serve a variety of simple and fast food. Hygiene factors must be highly emphasised. However, customer evaluation of the food premises is not, particularly on hygiene factors. According to Namkung and Jang, [5]; Ryu et al. al [6], stated that the evaluation of a restaurant involves five factors, namely food quality, menu diversity, price, atmosphere and comfort. Customer satisfaction concerning service quality is a major factor in customer satisfaction [7]. Customer satisfaction is important to make a restaurant successful and it is based on four things, namely 24 percent environment, 30 percent food, 26 percent service and 21 percent price. According to Mohd Nizam et. al [8], the dining atmosphere is now an important issue for customers to choose a safe place to eat that is free from dirt that leads to food poisoning and in turn influences their selection of food types. A study conducted by Davis et al. [9], stated that the main causes of foodborne illness are poor work attitudes and practices as well as the presence of microorganisms inside and outside the body of food operators that are transferred to the food during the food preparation process. According to a study conducted by Maizun and Nyi [10] on 430 food operators in the Kota Bharu district showed that 48.4 percent of the total respondents have poor knowledge of food sanitation.

Most food operators have an ample amount of knowledge related to food safety, however, the results of several studies such as Mohd Nizam et. al [8], Norrakiah and Siow [11], there are still food operators who do not practice the knowledge they have learned in daily practice while handling food. One of the measures to identify pathogenic bacteria is by mandating food training courses for individuals carrying on food business activities [3]. 'The Food Training Courses' can help food operators study and practice good food practices. Hygiene management of food premises should be more emphasised even if the business premises are categorised as unregistered. This is because as an entrepreneur who runs a food business, the responsibility of maintaining the standard and

food quality sold still rests on their shoulders. The effect of negligence in managing the hygiene aspect due to unregistered business premises will damage the Local Authorities's (LA) quality service and the township reputation will also be impaired. The objective of this study is to study the knowledge, attitudes and practices of unregistered food premise operators on aspects of food hygiene and safety as well as to analyse the premise operator's comprehension of the mandatory requirements as a clean food operator for registration purposes. At the end of this study, it is hoped to create a comprehensive management model of a food business premise with a food premise system that is clean, structured and owns a legal business premise license in the township and a hygiene food premises can be made.

2. METHODS

The state of Selangor is a rapidly developing state in terms of the economy in Malaysia. The contribution of the industrial sector in the Selangor state has helped to increase the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Selangor state is divided into nine districts with 12 local authorities (LA). The Ampang Jaya Municipal Council area was selected as the study area. The rapidly developing urban areas from rural settlements, to urban villages and towns, have attracted many immigrants from outside to migrate to the Ampang Jaya Selangor area. Unregistered food premises such as illegal food premises without license are still a problem in this study area. The study area is located adjacent to the city of Kuala Lumpur which is the capital of Malaysia. The main factor in the selection of the study area is the rapid growth and high population density in this area. The total population in the entire Ampang Jaya Municipal Council AJMC area is estimated at 800,000 people in 2015 (UPEN 2015) and it covers 12.7 percent of the total population in the state of Selangor. Bumiputeras are about 56.5 percent while Chinese 30 percent, Indians 7 percent and the remaining 11.5 per cent other ethnics and non-citizens. Many immigrants are consisting of citizens of Myanmar, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India and others who have migrated to this area almost 10 years ago. This influx of foreigners affects socioeconomic and population factors especially in the suburbs.

This study has chosen convenience sampling or purposive sampling. Through this method, the selection of the study population is based on the

existence of unregistered food business premises in the Ampang Jaya Selangor area. The division of the study area covers the entire administrative area of the Ampang Jaya Municipal Council. Only unregistered food premises were selected to evaluate and observe the efficiency level of hygiene management of the food premises. The study population are traders who operate food premises without a business premises license (not registered with the local authority), customers, the public and local authority staff involved in the management of food premises in the Ampang Jaya area. Health enforcement members from the Health Offices of Gombak and Hulu Langat districts were also interviewed to get an overall view representing the study data. The sample population is 192 responses from 145 premises in the entire study area which includes local and foreign traders, especially from Indonesia which is increasing every day. The sampling was conducted on unlicensed food premise traders in the Ampang Jaya Municipal Council administrative area. Food operators were interviewed via questionnaires. They were comprised of cooks and operators of ready-made food premises who served food to the public. The interviews were conducted to get a comfortable space to answer questions related to the hygiene management of food premises that they are working on even without obtaining written permission (license) from the local council, namely MPAJ. Besides, questionnaires were also made to customers who ate at the food premises. In general, this study was conducted in two stages namely (i) data collection, and (ii) data analysis. Among the foci of the respondents found by the researcher are government officials involved in the hygiene management of food premises in the Ampang Municipal Council area. These included Health Officers, Environmental Health Officers, Health Supervisors, Public Health Assistants and Health Enforcers, while unplanned interviews consisted of parties related to hygiene management in the study area. Interviews were also conducted with officers involved in licensing and hygiene activities of food premises in the study area. They were asked to provide their opinions on the existence of these unlicensed food premises with various forms of questions and through their own experience in overcoming the issue of these unlicensed food premises.

The field survey method aims to gather qualitative information for a descriptive presentation. Field surveys were conducted by

the researchers to further strengthen this study, in particular survey and evaluation of aspects related to hygiene management of food premises, community quality of life-related to the level of food preparation in food premises, solid waste management by premise operators and collection by local authorities for disposal. This method can provide an evident picture of how to manage solid waste materials from unregistered premises in the study area.

Table 1. Percentage breakdown of population by ethnicity year 2018

Ethnicity	Percentage
Bumiputera	56.5%
Chinese	30.0%
Indian	7.0%
Others	6.5%
Non-Citizen	5.0%

Source: MPAJ Strategic Plan 2015-2020

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Sanitary Sondition of Unregistered Food Premises in Ampang Selangor

Food premise inspections conducted on each unit of unregistered food premises had identified frequent breaches of conditions. The location of the premises proved to be on-road reserves monopolised by foreign operators as employees. The semi-permanent premises built on the road reserves had been in place for over 10 years. The kitchen section for food preparation was built with cooking facilities such as gas stoves and electric power sources were sourced from Tenaga Nasional Berhad, TNB. There was a TNB meter which shows that these unregistered food premises had been approved to use registered electricity. The dirty and cluttered kitchen as a result of not being cleaned had attracted the presence of rats and cockroaches.

3.1.1 The sanitary condition of the food operator's clothing at unregistered food premises

The attire of a food operator reflects the cleanliness of the food premise itself. The results showed that food operators did not wear shoes but only slippers or open-toed sandals. These slippers are also widely used because simple and easy to wear. Respondents did not feel it was important to wear shoes. Almost every respondent involved in this study 78 percent,

were slippers when the interviews were conducted. As a result of poor monitoring by the local authority, the respondents seemed to ignore the compliance of putting on footwear in food premises as outlined under the Food Hygiene Regulations 2009, under the Food Act 1985.

3.2 Personal Hygiene of Food Operator

Food operators must wear clean clothing. Worn clothes should be changed daily. Wearing aprons is mandatory for every food operator according to Regulation 29, Food Hygiene Regulations 2009, under the Food Act 1983. Food operators in the study area consisted of different ethnics including foreigners from Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, and Pakistan. Most of them worked as helpers in these premises and they do not wear suitable clothing as food operators. They do not wear clean aprons when handling the food.

Figure shows the types of food operator premises which consist of single, terrace, semi-detached, village, shop/stall etc. The majority of food operators trade-in shop premises 50 (34.5%), followed by 43 (29.7%) single premises.

3.3 Premise Condition and Structure

The findings of the study indicate that the image of the food premises comprising of structures of obsolete wooden. A total of 74 (51%) premises are in average condition while 44 (30.3%) are in worn/bad condition and only 27 (18.6%) premises are in new/good condition.

The results of the study found that in the 3 sampling zones that have been taken into account in this study, the three zones namely Urban Zone, Semi-Urban Zone and Village Zone have a relatively soiled level of the premise hygiene management. The dirtiest zone is in the Urban Zone because, in addition to pollution in the aspect of food hygiene, the pollution of the aesthetic value of the township is very noticeable in this area. The source of water supply they obtain is connected from the main water pipe at the back of the premises. The tap water connection taken is from the premise tank that is boarded instead of directly sourced from the main pipe. This causes the source of water used for cooking and drinking on the premises to be unsafe. The use of rubber pipe also violates the Food Regulations 2009. Water used for cooking and drinking must be contributed from the main pipe as the reservoir water from the tank is

contaminated and its cleanliness is not guaranteed.

3.4 Suggestions for Improvement to Address the Problems of Unregistered Food Premises

Among the suggestions for improvement to address the problems of unregistered food premises in municipal areas are 94 (83.2%) indicate that local authorities need to issue licenses, 12 (10.6%) create more business sites and 7 (6.2%) others.

Table 2. Conditions of premise structure

Structure	Frequency	Percentage
New/Good	27	18.6
Average	74	51.0
Worn/Bad	44	30.3
Total	145	100.0

The results of this study are expected to improve the control of food business premises conducted by local authorities with community cooperation. Comprehensive involvement is compulsory to

facilitate each party playing their role. This effort should be seen as a social responsibility that should be implemented successfully. The management action of the unregistered food premises needs to be refined by taking note of the disturbing level of cleanliness.

3.5 Poor Management of Food Premises

The Ministry of Health is well informed of various media reports on the issue of unclean food premises. In this regard, the Ministry of Health conducts routine inspections on food premises. However, the inspection is carried out only on registered food premises. Food premises that do not comply with important elements of hygiene such as the sight of pests, unclean equipment and food handling practices will be ordered to close under Section 11, Food Act 1983 which food premise owners who fail to comply with the instruction of food premise closure may be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five (5) years or a fine or both. However, unregistered food premises remain idle despite public complaints and there is no action taken.

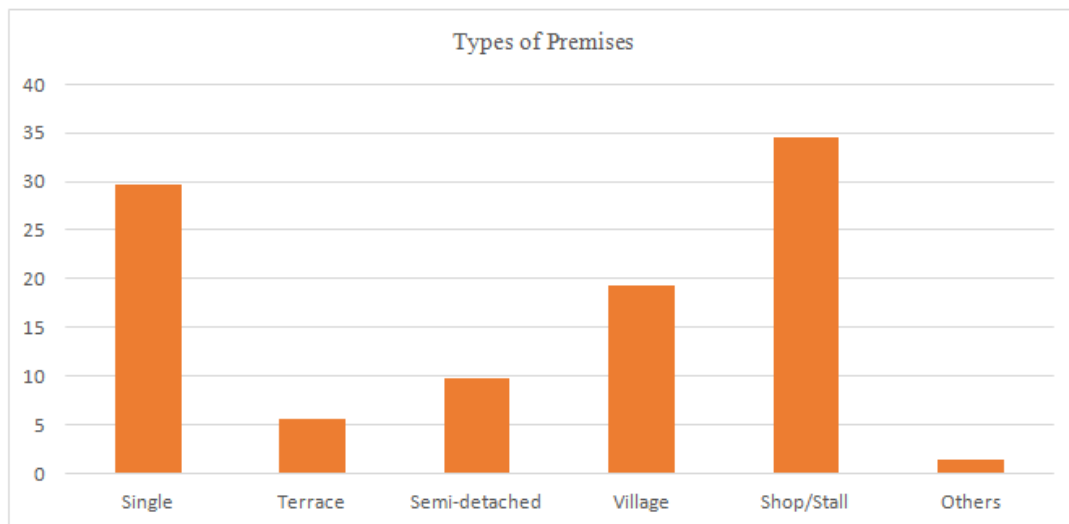


Fig. 1. Types of food premises

Table 3. Reasons for action taken on food premises

No.	Statement	Yes		No		TP	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
1	Disrupting traffic	4	12.5	23	71.9	5	15.6
2	Operating in dirty conditions	1	3.1	22	68.75	9	28.1
3	Operating business without a license			21	65.6	11	34.4
4	Public complaint	1	3.1	19	59.4	12	37.5

Source: Field research 2018

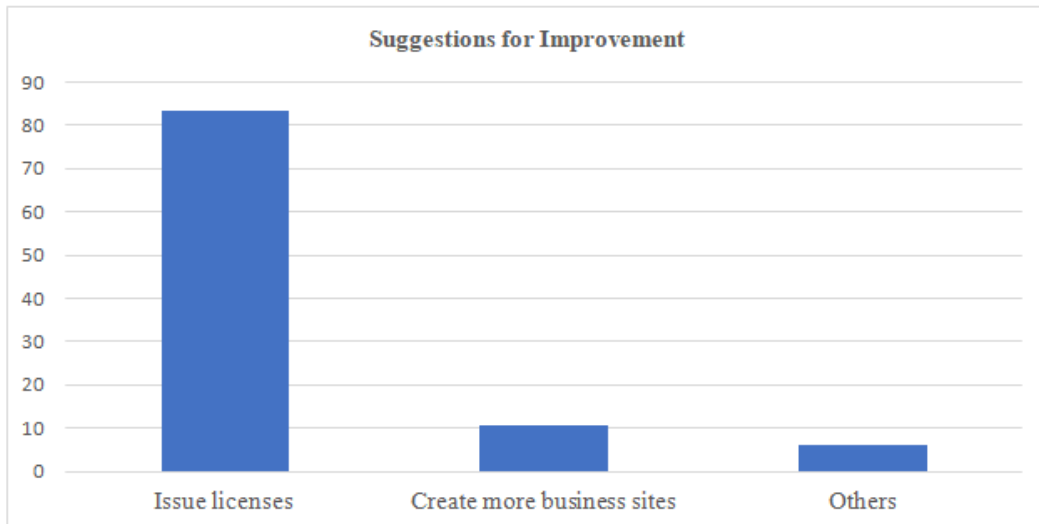


Fig. 2. Suggestions for food premise improvement



Picture 1. Poor hygiene management unregistered food premises in au2 keramat kuala lumpur

4. CONCLUSION

The respondents' feedback showed that the community's understanding concerning the problem of unregistered food premises was low. This study highlights that the hygiene management problem of unregistered food premises is closely related to community attitudes, licensing management by local authorities and the factor of returning customers who do not bother about food safety. Food premise entrepreneurs are also not spared from taking advantage of the poor and inefficient enforcement actions from the local authorities. Three main factors causing problems in the management of unregistered food premises in the Ampang Jaya area. The lack of hygiene monitoring operations by the township, the customers' attitudes who continue to providing

support by visiting the unlicensed premises, unknowing the existing laws of food hygiene control, as well as the issue of opportunistic food operators who seeking profit with no consideration of the aesthetic value of the township area, are the main causes of the unregistered food premise issues in the Ampang Jaya area. Customers' indifference to the cleanliness of the existing food premises has resulted in many owners and operators of unregistered food premises still gaining the customers' support in the study area.

The hygiene management of food premises in urban areas requires every agency and trader in playing a role in creating clean food premises and producing quality food in line with the rapid development in urban areas. The existence of unregistered and non-monitoring food premises

in town areas can be regulated by using a win-win situation approach between three parties, namely local authorities, traders and the community who act as the third party who will evaluate and provide feedback on the quality of food premise cleanliness they visited. Hygiene inspection of food premises is very important and able to increase the food operators' knowledge as they will be monitored by the Local Authority (LA), either the Municipal Council or the District Health Office (DHO). Knowledge must be taken into account to form a mindset that prioritises the value of food hygiene, especially in big cities such as Ampang and Kuala Lumpur.

4.1 Pragmatic Approach to Hygiene Management of Unregistered Food Premises in Ampang Selangor

A reorganisation of traders in unregistered food premises can be done by taking into account various factors. The main factor is the willingness of the local authority to provide a platform for discussion to the premise operators to conduct a conditional business. Bilateral discussions will allow the traders to convey their wishes directly and the Council also can impose desirable conditions for both parties to maintain the quality and standard of food sold to customers. This open discussion will benefit all three parties, namely local authorities, traders and customers. The function of each party involved should be refined in fulfilling social responsibilities, especially to the community life in urban areas, in particular big cities such as Ampang, Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. To address the existence of unregistered food premises, local authorities,

traders and the community need to complete their roles as shown in the following figure below.

- i) Local Authorities (L.A)
 - Providing technical assistance and consulting services.
 - Assisting in issuing temporary licenses.
 - Conducting regular hygiene monitoring.
 - Conducting ongoing health promotion.
- ii) Traders
 - Complying with the laws.
 - Maintaining food hygiene and safety.
 - Working transparently with local authorities towards realising a clean and sustainable township.
 - Producing quality, clean and safe food to eat.
- iii) Communities
 - Being attentive.
 - Assessing and reprimanding food quality.
 - Providing support solely for clean and licensed premises.

The proposed formula is as follows :

- i) Relocation to strategic locations
- ii) Temporary license for one year before moving
- iii) Permanent license followed by quality and quality improvements from time to time.

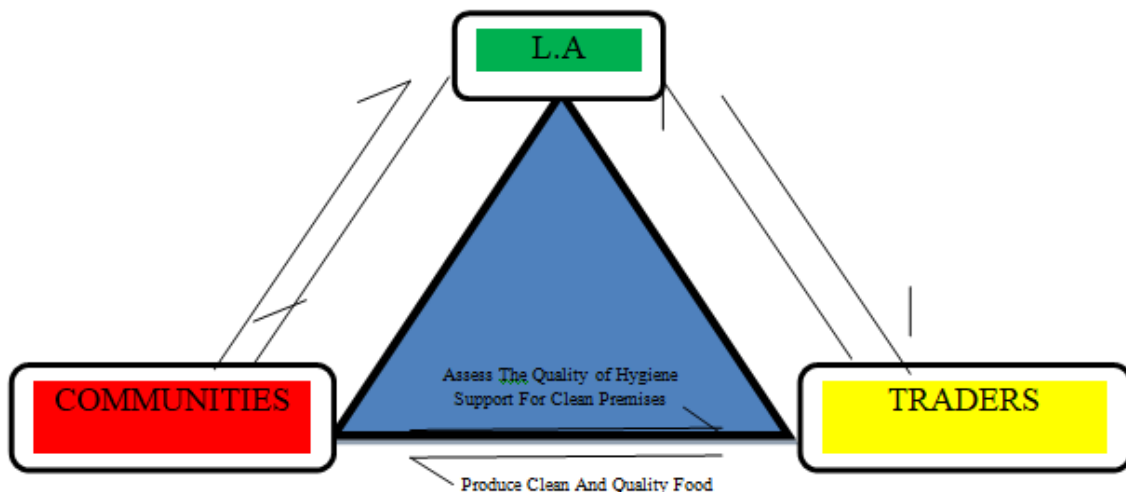


Fig. 3. Basic management model of unregistered food premises

Source: Researcher's Illustration 2018

To succeed the three formulas above, compliance with the hygiene aspect is the main key that needs to be worked on by the operators of these food premises. Traders need to equip themselves with three main requirements, which are :

- i) Company registration – SSM
- ii) Food Handling Training Certificate
- iii) Anti-Typhoid injection letter

Policy modifications at the level of the Local Authorities Licensing Committee for business premises should be the core of this formula if we want to see its effectiveness in the future. Aspects of regular inspections and monitoring must be arranged carefully so that the goal of registering all unregistered food premises can be realised for the well-being of city dwellers.

APPRECIATION

The author would like to thank the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, especially for Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zaini Sakawi and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mohd Yusof Hussain for the guidance and encouragement given in the production of this writing. Not forgetting the Ampang Jaya Municipal Council for their full cooperation in conducting the field studies in their administrative areas.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:

The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
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