

Recipes as Tools of Document Analysis to Comprehend the Characteristics of Traditional Food

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ABSTRACT

There is a lack of information about the Malaysian consumption interest of Bajau food in comparison with other Malaysian cuisines. The unavailability of data on authentic Bajau food is limited and is unknown to the public. Even if there is data available, most are not done scientifically. Bajau food's complexity is not confined to just the array of unique and delicious dishes, but it is also a rich embodiment of the culture, traditions, and practices of the Bajau community. Thus, there is a need to use the ethnography case study to understand the Bajau food culture. An ethnography case study is when the researcher employs the ethnography method in a case study and focuses on building an argument about culture, group, or community. In ethnography, a researcher learns about the participants from the inside. Data collection such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and observation is employed to answer the research questions. Scientific documents on Bajau food are scarce; the analysis of their traditional recipes is crucial as it will contribute to new knowledge. This study highlights three main characteristics of the Bajau community: (i) the attribute of Bajau food, (ii) the practice of Bajau food, and (iii) the culture of Bajau people. Findings such as these are essential to the Bajau community and the public as this finding introduces the ethnic group to society. Aside from pictures, interview transcripts, and videos, documents such as recipes are crucial to be collected during the actual fieldwork. These collected recipes are traditional recipes used and practised by the families and passed among the generation of Bajau. It must be sorted and analysed so that assumptions can be confirmed about Bajau food. These recipes usually consist of the recipe for breakfast items to the main meal. Once this collection of recipes is gathered, the researcher will read thoroughly and familiarize herself with the data. The recipes are grouped according to the type of food or meals. The recipes are recorded into a Microsoft Excel table according to the coding unit. The data is then summarised in a table by the frequency it appears in the recipes. A total of 102 recipes were accumulated during the data collection period. Through document analysis, criteria of the checklist were then developed using Microsoft Excel. The objective is to classify the characteristic of Bajau food by the experts and the Bajau community. From the recipes, twelve attributes were chosen as the checklist criteria. The attribute is the number of ingredients used, the primary ingredient used, essential ingredients, flavour builder, style of cooking, cooking technique and its flexibility, explicit instruction shared, level of difficulty (simple to complicated), preparation and cooking time, cooking equipment, type of meal and number of times the recipe is repeated.

Keywords: ethnography case study, document analysis, traditional recipe, Bajau food, criteria.