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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### AN ANALYSIS UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICE OF HALAL HYGIENE IN FOOD HANDLING AMONG THE HOUSEWIVES

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#### Abstract

Food preparation is a daily activity that is always done. Preparing food at home is said to have benefits such as guaranteed hygiene, savings on spending, and strengthening family relationships. Food preparation is usually done by housewives. The question is, is the method of preparing food at home really guaranteed to be clean? Therefore, the primary goal of this study is to examine how housewives understand and implement halal hygiene in their food preparation. This study uses a quantitative approach to disseminate questionnaires to the community. The sample is chosen in a random way, encompassing individuals with diverse educational backgrounds. The collected data is analysed using statistical techniques, such as descriptive analysis. The study produced results. This type of study is crucial as it raises awareness among housewives about the importance of halal hygiene in food preparation. The results of this study can serve as a guide for housewives as they prepare food for their families. This study has the potential to increase knowledge in social science by listing halal hygiene guidelines for preparing food at home.

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#### Introduction:-

Islam emphasizes the importance of living a clean life. There are 24 verses stated in the Quran that refer to cleanliness (taharah). In the context of hadith literature, the primary subject of discourse pertains to hadiths concerning taharah, as exemplified in the first chapter of Sahih Muslim. The second chapter of Sahih al-Bukhari. Cleanliness holds significant importance in Islam as it serves as the prerequisite for the primary act of devotion, which is prayer. A person's prayer will be deemed unacceptable if it fails to adhere to the cleanliness and purity standards prescribed by Islam. The focused of cleanliness encompasses to two aspects: personal hygiene and environmental sanitation.

Maintaining personal and environmental hygiene is essential not just in the context of prayer but also in relation to food and nutrition. In this context, Allah s.w.t. has stated in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 168:

*“O mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and wholesome on earth, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Verily, he is to you an open enemy.”*

This verse clearly shows that Islam was early in implementing the practice of hygiene and clean eating. A Muslim should first take care of hygiene and be able to be the best example to other communities. Islam attaches great

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importance to hygiene because it is the foundation of the strength of faith. Therefore, Muslims should get used to applying halal hygiene in daily life and be able to show that Islam is the best religion in the eyes of the world.

The verse stated above also explains that Allah Almighty asks all humans to eat food that is halalantayyiban. Halal is a word that was derived from an Arabic word that means allowed and permitted by Islamic law and fatwa. It is also known as lawful and permissible (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia, 2020). Tayyib means "clean" and "pure" in Arabic; thus, the concept of tayyib in relation to food pertains to a process that ensures optimal cleanliness (clean) and minimal contamination (pure), while excluding potentially toxic, Najis (ritually unclean), and Khabith (impure) components. The treatment of the halalan subject will ascertain whether it is considered tayyiban or not (Alzeer et al., 2018).

### **Cleanliness Is an Integral Component of Tayyib**

Several interpretations exist concerning Tayyib. The relevant interpretation applicable to the contemporary food sector is clean, safe, and quality. The justification for interpreting tayyib as clean, safe, and of high quality is because "clean" refers to being free of any impurities. While "safe" from pollution, not detrimental, and "quality" from external, internal, and content viewpoints. This aligns with the present operational environment and al-Sharbini's perspective, which defines tayyib as that which is clean, non-harmful, and advantageous to mankind (Mohd Farhan, 2019, al-Sharbini, 1997).

Clean is an aspect of the definition of Tayyib. The Quran used the term ta-ha-ra to denote cleanliness. In Surah Al-Taubah, verse 108, Allah states:

*Do not 'O Prophet' ever pray in it. Certainly, a mosque founded on righteousness from the first day is more worthy of your prayers. In it are men who love to be purified.1 And Allah loves those who purify themselves.*

This verse explained that there were men who love cleanliness. Allah favours those who value hygiene. The verse itself shows the mosque as a clean and pure location. Consequently, everybody who enters a mosque must ensure they are pure and clean as well. They must be free from external influences, specifically from big and small hadas. They must also guarantee that their minor and large impurities do not come into direct contact with themselves or their garments. Moreover, the requisite cleanliness pertains to interior purity; it is essential to foster within oneself the qualities of sincerity, honesty, purity of heart, and humility. Allah profoundly appreciates people who purify themselves, both externally and internally.

The lesson related to food emphasizes the importance of cleanliness (taharah) for food producers and practitioners. The cleanliness of individuals entering the mosque is significant as it influences the mosque's purity; similarly, the hygiene of food preparers is crucial as it impacts the quality of the food provided. Furthermore, the mosque's cleanliness is remarkable. Is it permitted to pray in a mosque that is both unclean and polluted, considering its significance as a place of worship? Certainly not. Likewise, in food production, the location of production significantly influences the process. The objective is to guarantee the safety of all consumed food. The significance of food security is highlighted here. Food security and nutrition are very closely linked to create a good cycle in society. Unsafe foods can create harmful surroundings such as disease and malnutrition especially affecting infants, children, and the elderly. Therefore, the right method of preparing food is very important because it is the catalyst for the success of an individual.

### **Halal Hygiene Management System in Food Manufacturing**

The incidence of food-borne illnesses during the preparation, handling, and storage of food is strongly correlated with the adoption of bad hygiene practices at home (Malak Annan et al., 2024). There are too many disadvantages and consequences to health when consuming unsafe foods such as foods that contain bacteria, viruses, parasites, or harmful chemicals. This can cause more than 200 dangerous diseases from diarrhea to cancer and it can affect those who regularly consume unclean and unsafe food (Elbehiry, 2023; WHO, 2022).

Therefore, the highest world hygiene management system in food manufacturing is Food Safety Management Systems (FSSC 2000) alongside with ISO 22003-1:2022. Meanwhile in Malaysia, the Ministry of Health regulate the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP), Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and *Makanan Sehat Tanggungjawab Industri* (MESTI) certification according to the size of business (Halim et al., 2024). In general, all

food handlers in Malaysia should have anti-typhoid vaccine and attending Food Handle Course that have been introduced since 1985.

### **The Food Handling in House**

Nowadays, self-food preparation become a new trend which greatly influence by content creator such as the social media's award winner named Khairulaming and Abdul Qayyum (New Straits Times, 2024). In addition, the pandemic-induced changes in consumer eating habits leading people dining out less and cooking more at home (Anton et al., 2024). Not only that, preparing meals at home also reduce household monthly expenses and avoid food wastage.

### **Why Food Handling at Home is Important**

Handling food safely is crucial because unsafe practices can lead to foodborne illnesses. The World Health Organization (WHO) says that poor hygiene during food preparation can cause harmful bacteria, like Salmonella and E. coli, to spread (WHO, 2019). While food safety is often discussed for restaurants and food outlets, research shows that home kitchens are equally important for food safety (Medeiros et al., 2001). People who handle food at home, without formal training, are more likely to make mistakes.

### **Common Food Handling Problems**

One common problem is cross-contamination. This happens when bacteria from raw foods, like meat, spread to ready-to-eat foods through tools, cutting boards, or hands (Jeong & Kim, 2020). Many people don't realize the risks of using the same tools for different foods without cleaning them properly. Another issue is temperature control. Keeping food at the right temperature when storing and cooking is important to stop bacteria from growing. However, many home cooks don't use thermometers to check if their food is cooked safely. Lastly, research shows that people often don't wash their hands properly during food preparation (Fischer et al., 2007). Good handwashing is essential to avoid spreading harmful germs.

As early 2024, Ministry of Health introduce the Home-Based Food certification for any commercialization of home-based food for sale to public (Khairatun, 2024). Therefore, this study surveys the understanding of Halal hygiene among housewives in Kampung Sendayan Baru, Perak and their implementation for food preparation.

### **Materials and Methods:-**

This study adopts a qualitative approach aimed at understanding the level of awareness and practice of halal hygiene in food handling among housewives in Kampung Sendayan Baru.

Sampling was conducted using purposive sampling, where 32 housewives were intentionally selected because they were considered relevant to the study topic. Data was collected through a questionnaire combining both open-ended and closed-ended questions to gain a deeper understanding of their hygiene practices and comprehension of the halal concept.

Data analysis was carried out using SPSS, focusing on descriptive statistics such as frequency and mean. The quantitative analysis supports the qualitative findings, offering a more comprehensive view of the housewives' understanding and practices regarding halal hygiene.

### **Results and Discussion:-**

This study involved 32 participants, who were housewives from Kampung Sendayan Baru and ranged in age. However, the most crucial aspect of this study is that all participants are full-time residents and citizens of Malaysia. Non-citizens are not found in Kampung Sendayan Baru. Therefore, the respondents who participated in this study represent the perspectives of the Malaysian-citizen community. The demographic information of the respondents, including ages, citizenship, and profession, is presented in Table 1. The survey results show that the majority of respondents are housewives between the ages of 31 and 40 (31.3%), with 46.9% of them working. Table 1 displays the demographic breakdown of approximately 32 participants.

**Table 1:-** Demographic Information.

Demographic information		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	21-30	7	21.9
	31-40	10	31.3
	41-50	7	21.9
	51 and above	8	25
Citizenship	Citizen	32	100
Profession	Working	15	46.9
	Self-employed	7	21.9
	Non-working	10	31.3

**Table 2:-** Community comprehension regarding halal hygiene.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I understand the important of food safety	32	1	1	1	0
I concerned about personal hygiene and environmental hygiene (halal hygiene)	32	1	1	1	0
I often handling food at home	32	1	2	1.09	0.3
I always prioritize personal hygiene at home	32	1	1	1	0
I always take care of personal hygiene and environmental hygiene before, during and after handling food at home	32	1	1	1	0
I often keep the environment clean at home	32	1	2	1.06	0.25

### Community Comprehension Regarding Halal Hygiene

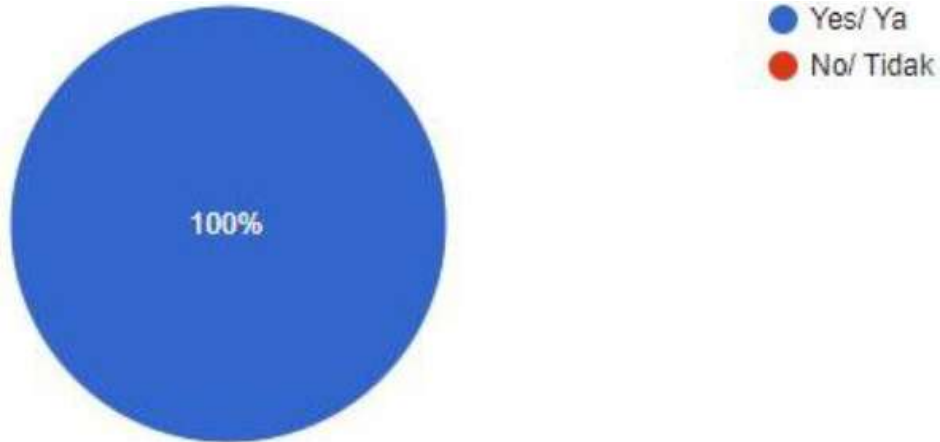
Table 2 shows how the community, especially housewives, understands halal hygiene. There are six questions posed. The results presented in Table 2 indicate that four of the items in the table yielded identical results. The four items that obtained the same results were the first, second, fourth, and fifth items. The item is about understanding the importance of food safety ( $M = 1$ ,  $SD = 0$ ). The next item is concerned about personal and environmental hygiene ( $M = 1$ ,  $SD = 0$ ). The next item is about prioritising personal hygiene at home ( $M = 1$ ,  $SD = 0$ ), which is followed by frequently keeping the environment clean at home ( $M = 1$ ,  $SD = 0$ ). The third item pertains to the habit of handling food at home in daily life ( $M = 1.09$ ,  $SD = 0.3$ ). The last one is the fifth item, which is frequently keeping the environment clean at home ( $M = 1.06$ ,  $SD = 0.25$ ).

Based on the above findings, it appears that the respondents have a thorough understanding of food safety and halal hygiene. They exhibit a positive acceptance and attitude towards maintaining hygiene and food safety at home. As stated in the findings, the majority of respondents regularly maintain the cleanliness of their environment. Similarly, researchers received good findings from respondents regarding personal hygiene, providing clear evidence that they are concerned with overall hygiene.

**Analysis of concern about Halal Hygienic**

This section comprises enquiries concerning the general comprehension of Halal Hygiene among households in Kampung Sendayan Baru, Perak, Malaysia. The respondents were enquired about their general comprehension of halal hygiene through a questionnaire, and the responses were documented and analysed in the figure below.

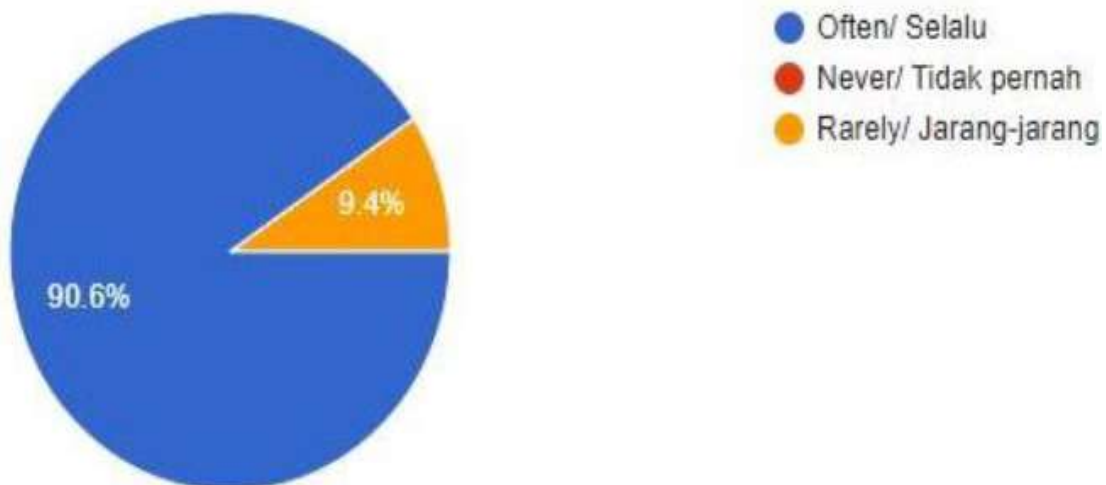
**Diagram 3.1.1:-** Analysis of concern about Halal Hygienic.



**Analysis of Handling Food at Home**

The graph below illustrates that the majority of respondents, specifically housewives in Kampung Sendayan Baru, consistently prepare food at home. As many as 90.6% of respondents indicated that they always handle food at home. This implies that researchers can assess their methods as food handlers in accordance with the study, as food manufacturing frequently takes place in their residences. Nevertheless, an excess of 9.4% of respondents reported that they rarely handle food at home. One of the reasons is that age-related factors restrict the activities they can engage in.

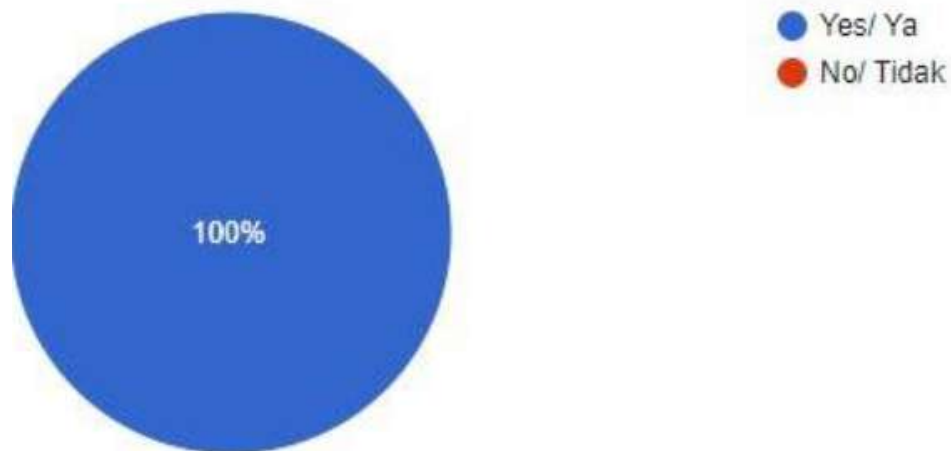
**Diagram 3.1.2:-** Analysis of Handling Food At Home.



### Analysis of Prioritize Personal Hygiene At Home

Diagram 7.1.3 shows the analysis of housewives in Kampung Sendayan Baru prioritizing personal hygiene at home. Based on the findings obtained by the researcher, as many as 100% of the respondents who gave their answers were indeed prioritizing personal hygiene at home.

**Diagram 3.1.3:-**Analysis of Prioritize Personal Hygiene At Home.



### Analysis of hygiene practices throughout handling food at home among housewives

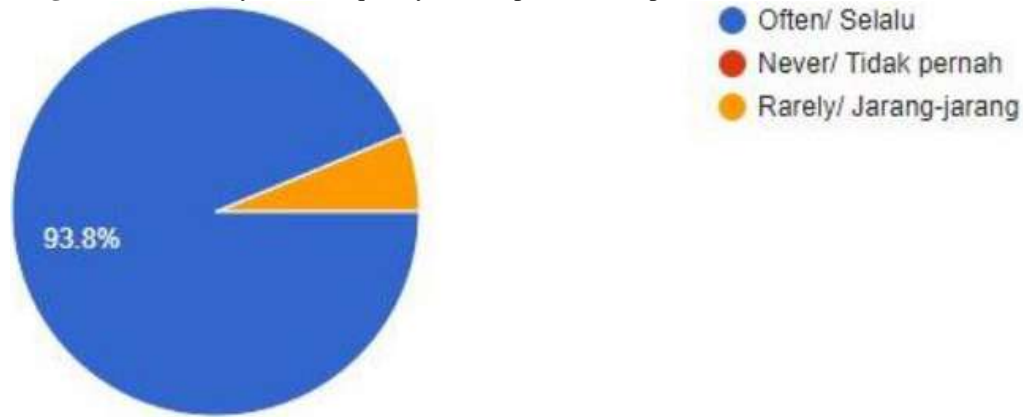
Diagram 3.1.4 shows the analysis of housewives in Kampung Sendayan Baru who often performs hygiene practices throughout handling food in their daily life. The research findings indicate that all respondents consistently uphold hygienic practices in the lives of housewives. They uphold cleanliness protocols during food handling, recognizing that home food preparation is superior and assuredly cleaner than bought from stores options. Consequently, they must verify that this is indeed the situation. Consequently, they diligently adhere to sanitary protocols throughout food preparation.

**Diagram 3.1.4:-**Analysis of hygiene practices throughout handling food at home among housewives.



### Analysis of Frequency the Respondent Keep the Environment Clean At Home

Diagram 7.1.5 shows the analysis of housewives in Kampung Sendayan Baru who maintain a clean environment around their home. According to the research findings, 93.8% of respondents indicate their commitment to cleanliness in the lives of housewives. 6.2% of individuals infrequently uphold a tidy environment in their vicinity. Housewives engaged in household cleaning understand its significance. A filthy household environment attracts pests including rats, cockroaches, and flies. Moreover, it will disrupt the places within the residence, particularly those designated for food preparation.

**Diagram 3.1.5:-**Analysis of Frequency the Respondent Keep the Environment Clean At Home.**Analysis of Technical Understandings Related To Halal Hygiene Practice.**

Discussion pertaining to the analysis of technical understandings concerning halal hygiene practices, as illustrated in Table 3 below. A questionnaire has been distributed to housewives residing in Kampung Sendayan Baru, Padang Rengas, Perak. The response shown exceptional dedication and addressed the inquiries in section C.

**Table 3:-**Analysis of Technical Understandings Related To Halal Hygiene Practice.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I know the effects if food safety was neglected	32	1	3	2.78	0.55
I did not do things that are not allowed during food handling	32	1	5	1.44	0.98
I am aware of food safety and use the knowledge of halal hygiene well	32	1	3	1.22	0.49
I have a good view of environmental hygiene around me	32	1	3	1.31	1.54

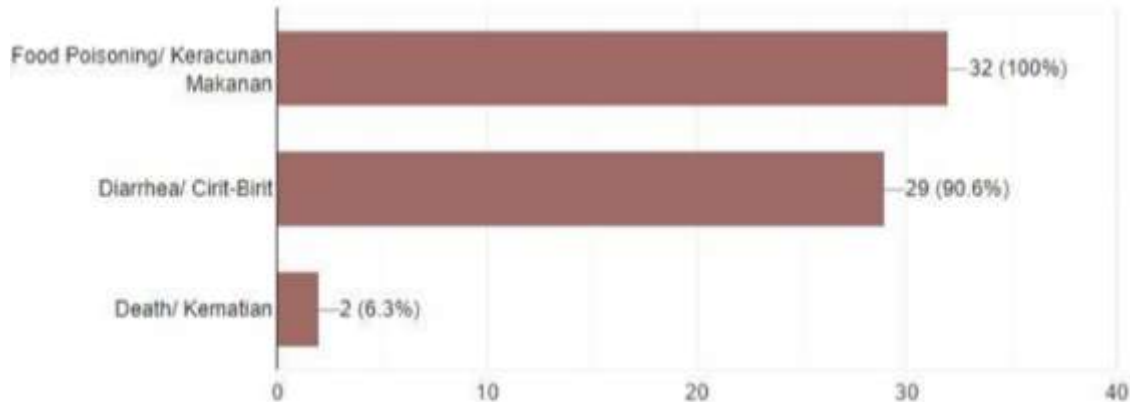
According to Table 3, the subsequent individuals are the respondents for Section C. The data indicates that respondents aware of the consequences of food safety negligence achieved the highest score in this area ( $M = 2.78$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ). Followed by practice items respondents did not perform things that are not authorized during food handling ( $M = 1.44$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ). Subsequently, respondents had favorable perception of the environmental hygiene in their vicinity ( $M = 1.31$ ,  $SD = 1.54$ ). Subsequently, respondents demonstrated awareness of food safety and effectively utilized their knowledge of halal hygiene ( $M = 1.22$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ).

The data indicate that respondents have effectively implemented halal hygiene procedures in their homes. Housewives in Kampung Sendayan Baru abstain from prohibited procedures during food processing, according to the goods analysed by the researcher. Moreover, they know the effects on themselves and their family when they disrespect food safety and cleanliness. This demonstrates favourable outcomes among housewives in Kampung Sendayan Baru regarding their technical understanding of halal hygiene practices.

#### Analysis of knowledge about food safety among housewives

Graph 3.2.1 shows the Analysis of knowledge about food safety among housewives in Kampung Sendayan Baru. As represented in the figure, all respondents absolutely indicated that food poisoning is a consequence of neglecting food safety. Subsequently, 90.6% of respondents indicated that diarrhea would ensue from neglecting food safety. The final aspect is the mortality consequences resulting from the lack of food safety, which stands at 6.3%.

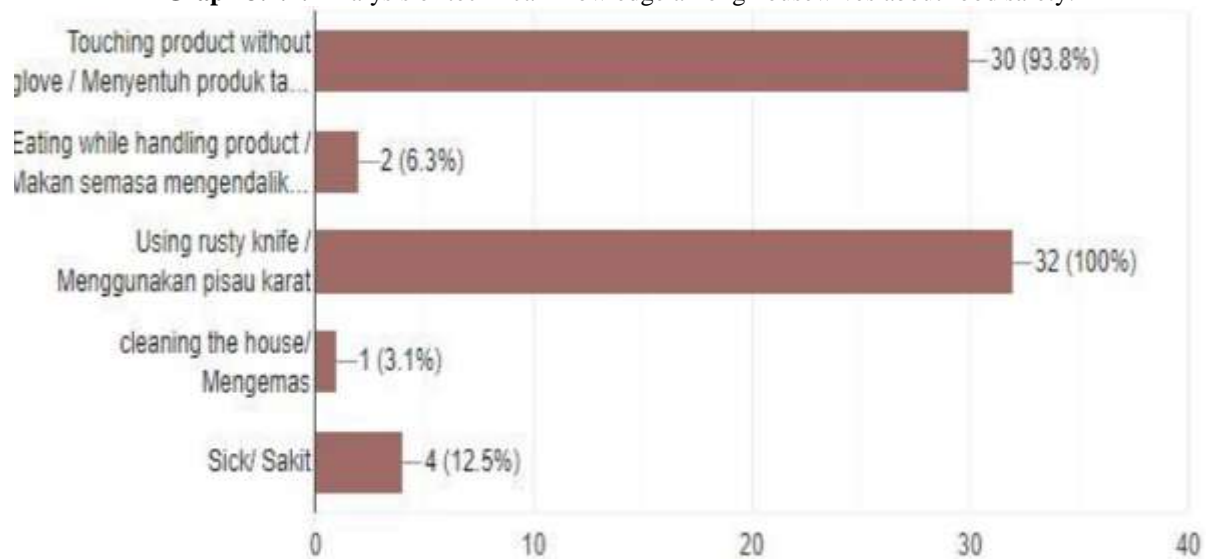
**Graph 3.2.1:-**Knowledge about food safety among housewives.



#### Analysis of technical knowledge among housewives about food safety

Graph 3.2.2 shows the analysis of knowledge about food safety among housewives in Kampung Sendayan Baru. The data indicates that all respondents unanimously agreed that using a rusty knife is banned while handling food. The results indicated that 93.8% of respondents considered the act of handling food without gloves as unacceptable. The third response selected by the participants indicated that 12.5% were unable to manage meals when they became ill. For the minority answer chosen by the respondents as the thing that is prohibited to perform when handling food is eating and cleaning the house which is both 6.3% and 3.1%.

**Graph 3.2.2:-**Analysis of technical knowledge among housewives about food safety.

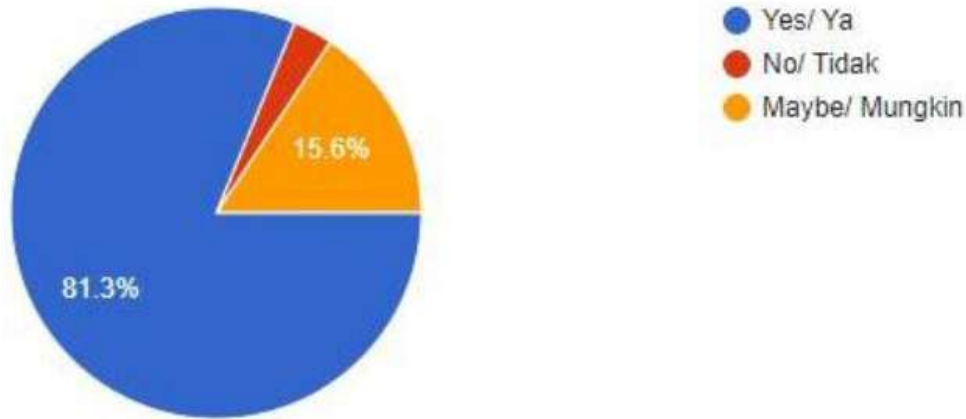




### Analysis the awareness gained about food hygiene

Diagram 3.2.3 shows the analysis of the awareness gained about food hygiene among housewives in Kampung Sendayan Baru. The research findings indicate that 81.3% of the respondent's demonstrated awareness of food hygiene. Subsequently, around 15.6% of respondents indicated that they may have developed an understanding of food hygiene. An excess of 3.1% remains uninformed about food hygiene.

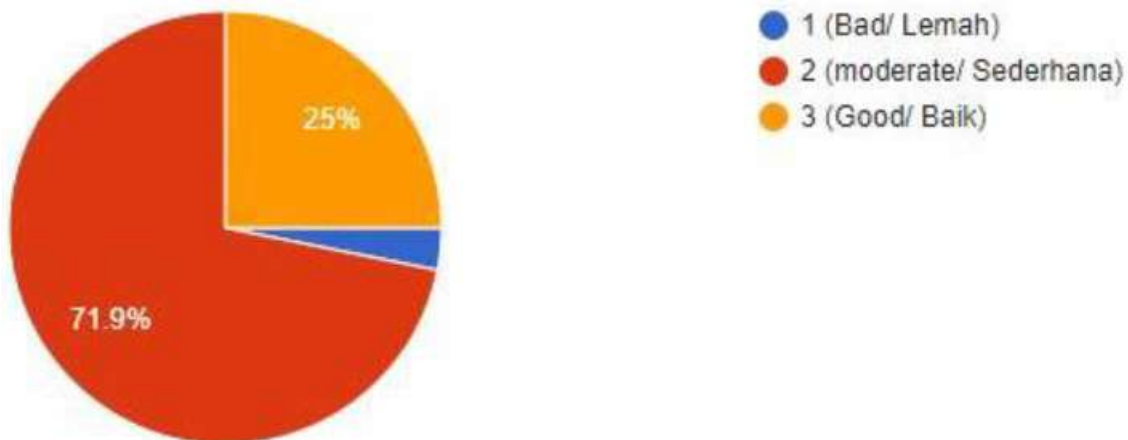
**Diagram 3.2.3:-** Analysis the awareness gained about food hygiene.



### Analysis from housewives' point of view about level hygiene around them

Diagram 7.2.4 shows the analysis from housewives' point of view about level hygiene around them. According to the researcher's findings, 71.9% of respondents indicated that their perception of the surrounding hygiene level is basically moderate. The second-highest percentage, comprising 25% of respondents, indicated that their perception of the surrounding hygiene is both good and satisfactory. Nevertheless, a minority, namely 3.1%, articulated their perspectives on the prevailing sanitary conditions in their vicinity, indicating a poor status.

**Diagram 3.2.4:-** Analysis from housewives' point of view about level hygiene around them.



According to the results of the survey and the preceding conversation, the housewives in Kampung Sendayan Baru demonstrated a high level of awareness and understanding regarding halal food safety and hygiene. They guarantee that both the food preparation area and the surrounding surroundings of their home are clean and safe. They are highly worried with hygiene during food preparation, since they believe that the outcomes are significantly affected by the methods, location, and environment in which the food is prepared. If cleanliness is maintained, the prepared meal is safe for consumption.

### Conclusion:-

This research found that housewives in Kampung Sendayan Baru, Perak have a high level of awareness and practice of halal hygiene in handling food at home. They were understand the concept of *taharah* (cleanliness) as an

important aspect in daily life, in line with Islamic teachings that prioritize cleanliness in all aspect. Based on the data, it stated that 100% of respondents prioritize personal hygiene, environment and equipment when preparing food. However, there some technical issue occurred, such as the use of gloves and food handling food when they are sick. By that, the importance of this study is the role of housewives as the main guardians of food hygiene within the family and community. In rural areas, where food safety controls are more limited compared to urban areas, high hygiene practices at the home level can reduce the risk of foodborne diseases, improve health standards, and reflect a positive image of Islam that values cleanliness. In addition, this study opens up space to increase public understanding of the concepts of halal and tayyib, which not only affect food safety but also the general health level of the Muslim community. For future studies, it is recommended to study in Urban Areas. This is because, examine halal hygiene practices among urban housewives who may face additional challenges such as limited space and time constraints, as well as higher risk of contamination in dense environments (Lee & Kim, 2009). Expanding this research to urban contexts may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Islamic food hygiene principles are applied across different environments.

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