

# **Traditional Food Among the Kadazan-dusun Of East Malaysia: Cultural Identity Preservation, Commercialization and Nutrient Information**

## **ABSTRACT**

This research aimed to study the commercialisation of traditional food as a medium of cultural identity preservation among Sabah ethnic groups in the era of industrial revolution 4.0. Additionally, this paper sought to analyse the nutrient composition of Kadazan-Dusun traditional food, namely tuhau and bambangan. In more specified terms, this research attempted to study the signification of traditional food as a symbol of cultural identity; to examine the impact of commercialisation in influencing the authenticity of traditional food as well as a platform for cultural identity preservation; to identify the level and method of traditional food commercialisation; and to analyse the nutrient composition of traditional food (the original versus modified preparation versions) among the Kadazan-Dusun ethnic. Both qualitative as well as quantitative data were gathered through participant observation, interviews, and questionnaire survey and lab experiment. Respondents and informants consisted of Kadazan-Dusun traditional food retailers and consumers residing in the Southwest Coast, North West Coast and upper inland regions of Sabah. The findings show that commercialization and modernization do influence the authenticity of traditional food but do not diminish the ethnic cultural identity. The commercialization level of traditional food is varied in nature depending on the location or the zone. Social media and Internet accessibility have been identified as significant contributing factors toward changes in the marketing approach. Other contributing factors include time and budget constraints as well as business location. The traditional method of consumption resulted in better post prandial blood glucose response compared to the modified version. The rice meal with traditional pickled bambina and cooked bambangan, respectively differed in nutrient composition, but were comparable in their effect on blood glucose levels after consumption. The results of this study offer sociocultural, socioeconomic as well as health implication towards the Kadazan-Dusun communities as well as the society in general