

ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF FOOD HANDLERS KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, PRACTICES AND PERCEPTION CONCERNING SELECTED FOOD SAFETY ISSUES AT FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT IN SAVANNA-LA-MAR..

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Food safety is to be of great concern today. It is because our evolving food chain has created new safety problems that didn't exist years ago. While these changes have been developing, the food service industry has been growing in size. Surveys show a continuing trend for consumers to eat more and more away from home.

All of these changes have increased the chances for contamination and abuse of the foods. These changes and new directions affecting the food service industry underscore the need for a vigorous programme to combat new and existing emerging microbiological problems in the sanitary management of food service.

To satisfy the study, a total of three hundred-(300) questionnaires were administered with an effective rate of return of two hundred and twenty eight (228) or 76%. Six key informants representing universities, public sector, private sector, and interest groups concerned with food safety issues were interviewed.

The study revealed that the majority of employees in the food-service establishments were young females, most of whom had at least secondary level education.

The analysis showed that the great majority of food handlers had a valid food handlers health certificate. An overwhelming majority ninety-four percent was very concerned about food safety. Ninety-five percent of the respondents said they would not go to work if they had an illness. However, only fifty-eight per cent understood the term food-borne illness.

Most respondents were not knowledgeable about the correct time-temperature control in food preparation and service. The respondents showed positive attitude towards food safety issue.

Relationships that were significant were:

1. Concern about food safety and length of stay ($p=.026$)
2. Food Handlers Permit by Age Group ($p = .000$)
3. Food Handlers Permit by Gender ($p = .035$)
4. Food suspected to contribute to food borne illnesses. ($p = .000$)
5. Knowledge of the proper practices in food preparation & age group ($p = .0006$)