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# Students try ways to reduce living costs

**SHAH ALAM:** The world of cooking is only limited to the weaker sex! That was what Mohd Nashrin Abd Samad, 21, had thought since he was a small boy.

Sounds a bit conservative? Over the years, many among the men such as celebrity chefs like Chef Wan, Chef Zam and Chef Ismail managed to enter the world of culinary delights, both locally and abroad.

However, Mohd Nashrin who was born in Selayang, Selangor, refused to help his mother or sisters prepare meals for the family. However that was sometime back.

The scenario changed when the third of six siblings decided to pursue a degree course in electrical engineering education at Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) in Shah Alam.

When Mohd Nashrin started studying, he was forced to prepare meals in his kitchen due to the high cost of living in Klang Valley.

Despite obtaining a loan from the National High Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) to finance his studies, the need to pay various bills like water and electricity as well as house rental had forced Mohd Nashrin to become thrifty.

"Maybe those from rich families have no problems. But for students like me who come from middle-

income families, we have to be thrifty in case of emergencies.

"The house rental in Shah Alam is high. We pay RM1,700 to rent a house in Section 7. To lighten the burden, there are 13 of us sharing the house and this where I started to cook to reduce the cost of living," he said.

"According to Mohd Nashrin, he spends about RM20 a day on food, one can imagine how much he spends every month and year on food alone.

For this university student, the daily routine was attending lectures and tutorials during daytime. He keeps himself occupied in recreational activities and sports in the evenings.

At night, Mohd Nashrin spends one to two hours in the kitchen, whipping up meals for himself and his housemates. He is always keen on trying new recipes.

Mohd Nashrin said he bought groceries from the 1Malaysia Students' Shop or also known as 'SiswaSave' at the UiTM main campus in Shah Alam.

Established under the Koperasi Siswa UiTM Selangor Bhd (Kosiswa UiTM Selangor), SiswaSave is the first retail store operated by the cooperative and UiTM received RM80,000 from the Higher Education Ministry to run this shop.

SiswaSave offers groceries at

low prices to help students with their daily expenses.

"Even though SiswaSave does not sell fish, meat and vegetables but other products such as chilli sauce, sardines, sauce, milk and sugar offered here are cheaper than the price in the market.

"Buying the groceries has helped us to reduce our expenses by 10 per cent," said Mohd Nashrin.

Apart from UiTM, SiswaSave also operates in Universiti Islam Antarabangsa (UIAM), Universiti Utara Malaysia, Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka and Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia.

For UiTM student in Business marketing, Mohd Faiz Mazlishah, 23, he uses a smartphone as a way to reduce living costs in the Klang Valley.

Even though a smartphone is more expensive than the other type of cellular telephones, Mohd Faiz believes that by using a smartphone, one can reduce telephone bill by some 30 per cent as compared to that incurred when using the conventional handheld telephone.

"Smart telephone is equipped with the Internet facility like 'WhatsApp' that offers free telephone messaging and 'Viber' which allows for free calls among friends," he said.

Under Budget 2013 announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri

Najib Tun Razak, there is RM200 one-off rebate for the purchase under the Youth Communication Package.

For National Arts, Culture and Heritage Academy's (Aswara) student S. Sri Ganesh, the need to buy books is synonymous with a student's life.

Books related to his discipline of studies, Film and Video, are expensive said Sri Ganesh.

"To support my studies, I work part-time' in Aswara. Fortunately there is the 1Malaysia Book Voucher," said Sri Ganesh who is doing the diploma-level programme.

Some 1.3 million university students are expected to benefit from the RM325 million allocation under the 1Malaysia Book Voucher Scheme announced by Najib in Budget 2013.

For UiTM's Mohd Zahirul Hisyam, a student doing the Printing Technology diploma programme, 1Malaysia Student Discount Card has enabled him to purchase goods and services at discounted rates.

"Good to have the 1Malaysia Student Discount Card. It enables me to buy goods and services at discounted prices," he said.

The aforementioned government schemes have helped students particularly in the Klang Valley to reduce their living expenses. - Bernama