

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CONSUMPTION OF
FUNCTIONAL FOODS WITH PROBIOTIC PROPERTIES
AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN UiTM PUNCAK
ALAM, SELANGOR, MALAYSIA**

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In the name of ALLAH, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful

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ABSTRACT

Background: In recent years, the potential health advantages of consuming functional food especially those with probiotic properties have drawn a lot of attention. These foods can strengthen the immune system, promoting general wellbeing, and enhancing digestive health. But despite its benefits, different demographic groups, including college students, may have rather distinct consumption habits and factors influencing their intake. **Objective:** This study aims to determine knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding functional foods with probiotic properties, to identify the consumption factors and relationship between these variables and the sociodemographic data among undergraduate students in UiTM Puncak Alam, Selangor, Malaysia. **Methodology:** This study was conducted at Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Puncak Alam, Selangor, Malaysia using a cross-sectional study design with 377 undergraduate students who were selected by a convenience sampling served as the study's sample population. **Result:** There is no significant association between undergraduate students' level of knowledge, attitudes, and practice of functional foods with probiotic properties and the sociodemographic characteristics. However, there is a significant association in the relationship between food checklist items and consumption factors that influence undergraduate students to consume functional foods. Furthermore, there is a significant association in the relationship between undergraduate students' level of attitudes and the consumption factors of functional foods with probiotic properties and sociodemographic characteristics. **Conclusion:** This study shows how important knowledge, attitude, and practice are in influencing the consumption of functional foods that have probiotic qualities. These factors may also encourage undergraduate students to make healthier dietary choices, which would improve their general health.

Keywords: health, functional foods, probiotics, attitudes, students

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Food is no longer thought of as a nutritional component in modern society. The common belief is that a person's health is directly influenced by their diet. Because of alterations in lifestyle, such as poor nutrition and insufficient exercise, the epidemic of non-infectious diseases is now a major contributor to numerous health issues and even fatalities. As a result of the addition of a healthy ingredient, the removal of an ineffective, harmful ingredient, or both, functional food influences certain bodily functions and may offer additional health benefits or a cure for some diseases in addition to providing basic nutrition. Functional foods are processed foods with ingredients that can help the body perform better functions in addition to its primary nutritional needs (Tur & Bibiloni, 2015).

The term was first used in Japan in 1984, and there are many definitions of this term used throughout the world (Afina & Retnaningsih, 2018). The desire for a higher quality of life, longer lifespans, and rising healthcare costs has all contributed to an increase in demand for foods and beverages that promote health over the past few decades. Functional foods are “processed” foods that contain ingredients that, in addition to being nutrient-dense, have a positive influence on a variety of bodily functions. But rather than a clearly defined group of food items, the world are dealing with a concept, and there is no single definition that is agreed upon by everyone (Tur & Bibiloni, 2015).

As mentioned by Stanton *et al.*, (2011), due to Malaysia's decades-long rapid socioeconomic growth, different population segments are experiencing changes and health problems like diabetes, cancer, and heart disease as a result of modern living. The growing trend of Malaysians purchasing organic, nutraceutical, and functional foods can be attributed to their increased awareness (Lau *et al.*, 2012). Despite the fact that brands and products related to functional foods are growing daily, the lack of research in the field especially among adults highlights the significance of this research.