

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**HIDDEN HUNGER: UNRAVELING THE IMPACT OF HOUSEHOLD
FOOD INSECURITY IN BANDAR PUNCAK ALAM ON EARLY
ADOLESCENTS' LIVES - EXPLORING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE,
DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS.**

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Bachelor (Hons) of Dietetics

July 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, *Alhamdulillah*, all praises to Allah, the Almighty, for his showers of blessings throughout my research process, completing from the beginning until the end.

I would like to express my immense gratitude to my research supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Siti Sabariah Buhari for her invaluable guidance, patience and constant support throughout the course of my study. Her vast knowledge and wealth of experience have been of immeasurable help to me in my academic work chiefly in my research process.

I want to extend my deepest appreciation to my family members, my siblings, Farrah and Amirul and especially my parents, who have provided me with unwavering supports, love, prayers and constant motivation ever since I embarked on academic journey up to this particular stage of creating and compiling this thesis document. Without them, this would not have been successful.

Special thanks to my colleagues and friends, especially my research partner, Amiza, and my close friend, Liyana, for their constant efforts of being my supporters throughout this journey.

Last but not least, an honourable mention of myself. Beyond achieving an academic goal, this journey has been about personal growth, resilience and perseverance. To the late nights and early mornings, to the endless cups of coffee and the fleeting moments of doubt, ultimately seeing the project through completion — thank you Hannah, thank you for pushing through.

ABSTRACT

Background/Objective: A poor socioeconomic background contributes to household food insecurity that leads to poor academic performance in early adolescents with an association with their demographic characteristics. This cross-sectional study aimed to examine the household food insecurity status among early adolescents in Bandar Puncak Alam, Selangor, Malaysia, and its association with academic performance, demographic, and socioeconomic characteristics. **Subjects/Methods:** This study involves three primary schools in Bandar Puncak Alam and a total of 337 participants from Standard 5 and 6 were randomly selected and invited to participate in the study. Information on household food insecurity, demographic, and socioeconomic characteristics will be collected by using self-administered questionnaires that were completed by parents or students' caretakers. The academic performance of students will be evaluated by using the UASA (Ujian Akhir Sesi Akademik) or FEAS results of students which will be collected from school administrative records. The data will be analyzed by using the SPSS. The Chi-square test, Fisher's exact test, and Spearman's Rho test will be used to obtain the objectives of this study. **Conclusion:** The outcome of this study showed that most of the students were Malays and Muslims, with a more significant number of female respondents. Besides, there existed more parents who had pursued higher education, inferring that in general, parents were quite literate. Nonetheless, the rate of food insecurity among the adolescents was significant, 62.9% indicating an urban issue for instance in Bandar Puncak Alam. Higher parental education levels and home owning had good impact on adolescent's academic performance while food insecurity was associated with lower academic performance, though this connection could not be proven statistically. Food security was significantly correlated with mother's education and household income, and better food security was related to a higher level of education as well as an increased family household income. On the other hand, it is important to note that as the size of households increases so does the intensity of food insecurity.

Keywords: Food insecurity, Academic performance, Education, Household income, Adolescents, Puncak Alam

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Adolescence is the period of life between childhood and adulthood, lasting from the ages of 10 to 19. This stage of human development is critical for laying the basis for long-term health. Adolescents grow rapidly in many areas, including physical, cognitive, and psychological development. This influences their emotions, thoughts, choices, and interactions with the outside world (WHO, 2016). Three phases are commonly used to categorize adolescence: early, middle, and late. Early adolescence, defined as the years between 10 and 14 years of age, is a time of significant physical, cognitive, and social development. Despite this, researchers believe that this is one of the most overlooked stages of life (Blum et al., 2014).

Children's academic performance influences their future educational achievement and health, and it has emerged as a public health problem. (Florence et al., 2008). "Education is an essential human virtue, a necessity of society, the basis of the good life, and a sign of freedom. Education is important for the integration of separate entities" (Bhardwaj & Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, 2016). The academic performance of school-age children is influenced by a multitude of variables. For instance, a low household income and financial difficulties have an impact on academic performance. Several studies show a negative relationship between academic performance and low household income. Academic performance and socioeconomic characteristics are significantly correlated (Imran et al., 2013).

Issues related to food security are now acknowledged as global public policy concerns. This is because of their multifaceted nature, which represents the complex relationships between and among the individual, family, national, and global levels and