

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**FRUIT AND VEGETABLE INTAKE IN ASSOCIATION
WITH SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND
PSYCHOSOCIAL DETERMINANTS AMONG ADULTS IN
MALAYSIA**

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ABSTRACT

Background: The rising number of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) among Malaysians emphasized cautious measures, especially in dietary patterns, to maintain public health at an optimal level. This includes adequate daily intake of fruit and vegetables, which may directly or indirectly affect a balanced dietary intake. **Aims:** This study aims to assess the association of the sociodemographic and psychosocial factors that may affect the consumption of fruit and vegetables. Thus, this study helps to pinpoint the factors that may influence nutritional practices for designing suitable interventions for public health. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted online, and 275 participants were obtained. The consumption of fruits and vegetables was obtained through a semi-food frequency questionnaire (FFQ). Data on sociodemographics, knowledge, attitude, practices (KAP), and barriers toward fruit and vegetable intake were gathered. All statistical analyses were carried out using SPSS. **Results:** The fruit and vegetable intake prevalence shows an adequate amount among participants, with 1.79 ± 0.75 . Those with adequate intake of fruits show a significant association with household income ($p=0.013$). Adequate fruit and vegetable (FV) intake also shows a significant association with practice, barriers to FV intake, and a significant association between knowledge and vegetable intake. **Conclusion:** The findings suggested more comprehensive interventions for overcoming the psychosocial determinants influencing the intake to ensure an increased FV consumption for individuals with inadequate daily intake.

Keywords: fruit, vegetable, sociodemographic, psychosocial determinants

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

To achieve a healthy lifestyle, one must practice living healthily by exercising and eating a balanced and healthy diet. People can obtain all the necessary nutrients through a balanced diet as per recommendations. For instance, nutrients like carbohydrates, protein, and fat are composed of 50 – 65%, 10 – 20%, and 25 – 35% of the daily calorie intake, respectively (Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2017). Apart from that, fruit and vegetables are also important nutrients and are required daily in our diet, which consists of an abundance of vital components such as fibers, vitamins, minerals, and bio-components. Besides, they are low in calories, sodium, and fat when taken correctly (Devine et al., 1998). The World Health Organization (WHO) stated that 400g of fruit and vegetables should be taken by each person daily, which is approximately five servings per day with two servings of fruits and three servings of vegetables, respectively, with an exception for potatoes and starchy tubers (Nurul Izzah et al., 2012). Despite the various benefits that the consumption of fruit and vegetables has shown, the prevalence of fruit and vegetable intake is still a concern among the population in Malaysia.

Various reasons could be depicted as to why the prevalence of fruit and vegetables is still a concern among the population and the related aspects that may be related to fruit and vegetable consumption. Some previous studies have assessed the association of sociodemographic factors and psychosocial determinants with fruit and vegetable intake in determining the low prevalence of its consumption. However, the lack of evidence to confirm these associations may not strengthen the reasons for the observed prevalence. On top of that, the rising cases of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in Malaysia, which may have a relation to fruit and vegetable intake, could be perceived