

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**DETERMINANTS OF ORAL
HEALTH PRACTICE AMONG
ADOLESCENCE IN SCHOOL
INCREMENTAL PROGRAMS**

MAIYAZURAH BINTI ABDUL AZIZ

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ABSTRACT

Schools throughout the world play a role in the realization of public health goals. Obviously, the young needs to be instilled with oral health practices for a healthy life. Prior studies have merely addressed the effects of knowledge, attitude, credibility of oral health information and the school health environment, on the oral health practice, particularly among the school adolescences. Hence, this research delves into the influence of potential factors that determines the adolescences' oral health practice within the context of school incremental programs. The study objectives were 1) to assess the knowledge, attitude, credibility of information, school health environment, and oral health practice; 2) to explore the association between knowledge, attitude, credibility of information and school health environment towards oral health practices; among school adolescences. This cross-sectional study was conducted in the Hulu Langat District of Selangor, Malaysia from June to July 2020. A total of 581 form four students of randomly selected governmental secondary schools participated in the study. A structured questionnaire containing five domains namely oral health practice, knowledge, attitude, credibility of information and school health environment adapted measurements were used for the study. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to assess the influence of each domain towards outcome in the study. Overall, all domains present high mean score range between 3.622 - 4.293. Among all domains in the study, attitude presented the highest mean at 4.293(SD 0.422) whereby, school health environment had the lowest mean at 3.622(SD 0.734). Multiple linear regression analysis indicates significant positive linear association between each domain and the oral health practice except knowledge. In conclusion, school incremental program provided in schools play a significant role in educating school adolescence on oral health practice.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Oral health practice is imperative in maintaining a healthy life, hence needs to be instilled at a young age. Lawrence (2001) stated that “schools throughout the world contribute to the achievement of public health goals in conjunction with their educational commitments”. Oral health promotion activities should begin early in schools in order to effectively inculcate the importance of oral health literacy within the society (Jurgensen & Petersen, 2013). Providing a conducive environment by means of sufficient knowledge and information, moral support, and guidance are critical to the realization of oral care behavior (Murat & Watt, 2006; Petersen et al., 2015; Smyth et al., 2007).

Prior research in oral health among adolescents has been directed largely towards quality of life (e.g., Baker et al., 2010; Carr et al., 2001; Sisco & Broder, 2011). The effects of oral health programs on specific outcomes, such as oral health practice, has received very little research emphasis particularly in developing countries (Sheiham & Watt, 2000). Although past studies in that area enrich our understanding about the importance of maintaining oral health, a large portion of the studies emphasize the general aspect of quality of life (Baker et al., 2010). Fleary et al. (2018) suggested that future research in adolescent health literacy and behavior needs to delve into a more comprehensive research approach with designs using conceptual frameworks with appropriate definitions and measurements.

To better understand the impact on oral health practice, the research area has generated growing attention in the last few years. For example, there has been much effort in school-based intervention programs using various techniques such as use of ‘significant others’ in oral health education delivery (Petersen et al., 2015) and oral health education using light induced fluorescence technology (Khudanov et al., 2018) to enhance oral health knowledge and practice among school children. In addition to the various intervention methods, changes in lifestyle due to urbanization and modernization among adolescent schoolchildren imparts a more challenging climate towards oral health education and practice. Researchers should therefore investigate