

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE RELATION BETWEEN NUTRITION
KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, AND PRACTICES,
AND BODY MASS INDEX STATUS AMONG
YOUNG ADULTS AGED 18 IN SUNGAI BULOH
VOCATIONAL COLLEGE**

NUR FARAHAH BINTI ABDUL GHAPAR

Bachelor (Hons) of Dietetics

Faculty of Health Sciences

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ABSTRACT

The double burden of malnutrition has become a global pandemic that is highly related to poor dietary habits. Nutrition knowledge, attitude, and practice are tools that help in understanding the impact of foods on health. This study was conducted to investigate and observe the relationship between nutrition knowledge, attitude and practices (NKAP) and body mass index (BMI) status among young adults aged 18 at Sungai Buloh Vocational College. A cross-sectional study was carried out involving 191 students selected through convenience sampling. Data on nutrition knowledge, attitude and practices were collected using a validated questionnaire, while body mass index was measured using standard anthropometric methods. Findings from this study revealed that 49.7% of respondents had a normal body mass index, while others were underweight (18.8%), overweight (16.8%) and obese (14.7%). The level of good nutrition knowledge was 91.1%, positive nutrition attitude was 96.3% and good nutrition practice was 75.4%, with total mean scores of 7.3 ± 1.64 , 33.59 ± 5.23 , and 9.74 ± 1.84 respectively. A significant correlation was observed between nutrition attitude and practice ($p < 0.05$). The Mann-Whitney U test revealed that there was no significant association between nutrition knowledge, attitude, and practice and body mass index ($p=0.173$, $p=0.826$, $p=0.595$, respectively). These findings suggest the need for holistic strategies involving nutrition education, institutional support, and policy interventions to improve health outcomes among vocational students.

Keywords: *nutrition knowledge, nutrition attitude, nutrition practices, body mass index, young adults, vocational college*

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Research Background

Nutrition plays a vital role in improving health and enhancing human development. However, due to the rapid global transition, people can easily access food. Tan et al. (2021) stated that various applications and systems have been developed, especially during COVID-19, when stay-at-home orders were preferred. Nowadays, there are various food delivery services available, such as Foodpanda and Grabfood, which are convenient, especially for busy people to receive their food right at their doorstep. Tan et al. (2021) also addressed that despite the convenience, it may also affect dietary habits, food purchasing behaviour, and food choice motives, which can lead to negative dietary habits associated with abnormal body mass index status, such as overweight and obesity. This has become a concerning issue, particularly among young adults, as a study by Buettner et al. (2023) discovered that increased frequency of food delivery applications may provide accessibility to unhealthy food choices, raising concerns about obesity and chronic diseases.

Overweight and obesity are the most common concerns related to poor dietary habits. The WHO (2024) reported that over 890 million adults were living with obesity in 2022. Additionally, about 2.5 billion adults aged 18 and over were overweight. The WHO (2024) also pointed out that the increasing trend of overweight can be observed when compared to 1990. Moreover, there were also regional differences in the prevalence of overweight, as 31% was recorded in the WHO South-East Asia region. A study among young adults from Kenya, South Africa, and the United Kingdom by Dlamini et al. (2023) discovered that obesity-related attitudes are highly correlated with better nutrition knowledge. In the study, those with better nutrition knowledge disagreed with the statement that “there is no reason to be worried about obesity.” Another study by Jezewska-Zychowicz & Plichta (2022) pointed out that a reduced rate of unhealthy eating was linked to increased nutrition knowledge among Polish