

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**EXPLORING THE NUTRITIONAL KNOWLEDGE ON FOOD  
LABELS AND THE FOOD CHOICES AMONG YOUNG ADULTS  
IN SELANGOR**

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**July 2025**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

First and foremost, Alhamdulillah, I would like to express deep gratitude to you and gratefulness to Allah S.W.T. for his love, mercy, and blessings throughout my journey in completing this research.

With sincerest gratitude, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Emmy Hainida Binti Khairul Ikram, for all the guidance, advice, constructive comments, suggestions, and never-ending encouragement given throughout this roller coaster journey of completing this thesis. Her expertise, patience, and commitment anytime and anywhere not only made me hold on and grow but also precious and irreplaceable.

Besides, I would like to send deep appreciation and thanks to my fellow friends who have always been there for me and have been a support system through ups and downs from the beginning of this journey until today. A sincere thank you to everyone who was directly or indirectly involved throughout this journey. Also, for my beloved parents and family, I believe that your endless support and prayer always accompany me from afar.

Finally, profound gratitude and appreciation to myself for persevering and deciding to complete this journey. Dear self, remember to always humble yourself, be good to others, and do not stop learning and growing.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|                                                                               |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>AUTHOR’S DECLARATION .....</b>                                             | <b>ii</b>   |
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....</b>                                                  | <b>iii</b>  |
| <b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>                                                 | <b>iv</b>   |
| <b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>                                                   | <b>vi</b>   |
| <b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>                                                  | <b>vii</b>  |
| <b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....</b>                                             | <b>viii</b> |
| <b>ABSTRACT .....</b>                                                         | <b>xi</b>   |
| <b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....</b>                                        | <b>1</b>    |
| 1.1 Research Background.....                                                  | 1           |
| 1.2 Problem Statement.....                                                    | 3           |
| 1.3 Research Question .....                                                   | 4           |
| 1.4 Objectives .....                                                          | 4           |
| 1.5 Hypothesis .....                                                          | 5           |
| 1.6 Assumptions .....                                                         | 6           |
| 1.7 Significance of Study.....                                                | 6           |
| <b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>                                   | <b>8</b>    |
| 2.1 Food and nutrition labels .....                                           | 8           |
| 2.2 Understanding food and nutrition labels .....                             | 11          |
| 2.3 Importance of nutrition and food labels .....                             | 13          |
| 2.4 Factors that influence nutrition label use and food choice .....          | 15          |
| 2.5 The correlation between nutritional labels and healthy food choices ..... | 17          |
| <b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY .....</b>                                       | <b>21</b>   |
| 3.1 Research Design .....                                                     | 21          |
| 3.2 Settings .....                                                            | 21          |
| 3.3 Population & Sampling .....                                               | 22          |
| 3.3.1. Sample Size.....                                                       | 22          |

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** A food or nutrition label is a printed panel on a food package or container that provides nutritional information and details about product components to assist consumers in making informed purchasing decisions, protect customers, and promote fairness in the food sector. Food labels provide details on food packaging that enable people to make informed decisions about what they consume and also serve as a crucial marketing tool for the food industry, serving as a form of communication between producers, sellers, and consumers. **Aim:** The research aimed to investigate the nutritional knowledge on food labels and the food choices among young adults in Selangor. **Methods:** In this quantitative method, convenience sampling technique where 156 young adults aged 19 to 29 years old from each district in Selangor willingly participate and fill in online questionnaires consisting of four sections consist of sociodemographic information, level of nutritional knowledge, and the use of food and nutrition labels, food choice determinants, and understanding and interpretation of the Healthier Choice Logo (HCL) that has been distributed through various platforms. **Results:** The findings reported that there is a significant correlation between nutrition knowledge level and certain sociodemographic factors, such as gender ( $p=0.039$ ) and level of study ( $p=0.002$ ). A significant association between understanding and interpretation of HCL has also been identified through Spearman's correlation ( $p<0.001$ ). **Conclusion:** To summarize, this research provides recent information on basic nutrition knowledge, factors influencing food choices, frequency of using food labels, and understanding and interpretation of nutrition labels among young adults in Selangor, which can help to identify gaps and improve Malaysian nutritional status and well-being.

# **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Research Background**

In line with the passage of time and the revolutions and innovations that occur, today's community is exposed to various types of food that come in different forms. Therefore, the diversity of food and beverage products in Malaysia should definitely be considered a good thing because everyone has many choices to make. However, everything that is consumed will certainly have an impact on each individual, especially in terms of health. Nutrition labeling is a mandatory tool for every packaged food in Malaysia since 2003 (Fatimah et al., 2019). This initiative was introduced to help people identify and make healthier food choices. Based on a study conducted by Fatimah et al. in 2019, the World Health Organizations (WHO) had endorsed the non-communicable disease (NCDs) action plan for 2013 until 2020 at the 66th World Health Assembly in May 2013 to call for nutrition labeling for all pre-packaged goods.

The implementation of nutrition labels helps the community to make comparisons in terms of calorie intake, fat, especially saturated fat, sugar content, macronutrients, and other micronutrients. This is because nutrition labeling is also a strategy implemented to address the issue of obesity among Malaysians and plays an essential role, as recommended by the WHO for the world. According to previous study, the use of nutrition labeling contributes to a reduction in calorie intake by 4%, total fat by 10.6%, and sodium by 8.9%, and an increase in fiber intake by 13.5% (Liao & Yang, 2023). As a result, the risk of disease can be reduced, and the life expectancy of the community can be increased.

The term "nutritional label" refers to any descriptive tag, brand, mark, or image written, printed, stenciled, stamped, embossed, or imprinted that shows or describes