

**ATTITUDES AND SUBJECTIVE NORMS TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA
INFLUENCERS WITH BEHAVIOURAL INTENT ON FOOD CHOICES AMONG
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES, UNIVERSITI
SAINS MALAYSIA (USM), HEALTH CAMPUS, KUBANG KERIAN, KELANTAN**

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SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

2024

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By

SYAFINI BINTI BAKRI

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Bachelor of Health Science (Honours) (Dietetics)

July 2024

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “Attitudes and Subjective Norms Towards Social Media Influencers with Behavioural Intent on Food Choices Among Undergraduate Students in School of Health Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Kubang Kerian, Kelantan” is the bona fide record of research work done by Ms. Syafini Binti Bakri during the period from October 2023 to August 2024 under my supervision. I have read this dissertation and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation to be submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Bachelor of Health Science (Honours) (Dietetics).

Main supervisor,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shariza', with a horizontal line underneath it.

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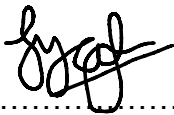
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Date: 1 July 2024

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated and duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at Universiti Sains Malaysia or other institutions. I grant Universiti Sains Malaysia the right to use the dissertation for teaching, research, and promotional purposes.



.....
Syafini Binti Bakri

Date: 1 July 2024

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

JEPeM	Ethical approval from Ethic Committee
NHMS	National Health & Morbidity Survey
PPSK	School of Health Sciences
SIMs	Social Media Influencers
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
USM	Universiti Sains Malaysia
USMKK	Universiti Sains Malaysia Kubang Kerian, Kelantan

**SIKAP DAN NORMA SUBJEKTIF TERHADAP PEMPENGARUH MEDIA SOSIAL
DENGAN NIAT TINGKAH LAKU TERHADAP PILIHAN MAKANAN DALAM
KALANGAN PELAJAR SARJANA MUDA DI PUSAT PENGAJIAN SAINS
KESIHATAN, UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA (USM), KAMPUS KESIHATAN,
KUBANG KERIAN, KELANTAN**

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menyelidik pengaruh “social media influencers (SMIs)” terhadap pilihan pemakanan pelajar sarjana muda Sains Kesihatan di Kampus Kesihatan USM. Kajian ini mengkaji hubungan antara sikap pelajar, norma subjektif terhadap SMIs, dan niat tingkah laku mereka berkaitan dengan pilihan pemakanan. Menggunakan analisis korelasi dan regresi, kajian melibatkan 90 responden. Majoriti responden adalah wanita (77.8%), berumur 21-23 tahun (76.7%), dan Melayu (80%). Terdapat korelasi positif antara sikap dan niat tingkah laku, tetapi tiada hubungan signifikan ditemui melalui regresi ($\beta = 0.056$, $p = 0.504$). Norma subjektif menunjukkan hubungan signifikan dengan niat tingkah laku ($\beta = 0.680$, $p < 0.001$), menandakan tekanan sosial lebih mempengaruhi pilihan pemakanan berbanding sikap peribadi. Kekuatan kajian termasuk sampel fokus dan instrumen yang sah, dengan cadangan untuk penyelidikan masa depan melibatkan sampel lebih luas dan reka bentuk longitudinal.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of social media influencers (SMIs) on the dietary choices of undergraduate Health Sciences students at USM Health Campus. It examines the relationship between students' attitudes, subjective norms towards SMIs, and their behavioral intent regarding food choices. Using correlation and regression analyses, 90 respondents participated in the study. The majority of respondents were female (77.8%), aged 21-23 (76.7%), and Malay (80%). While a positive correlation was found between attitude and behavioral intent, regression analysis showed no significant relationship ($\beta = 0.056$, $p = 0.504$). Subjective norms demonstrated a significant relationship with behavioral intent ($\beta = 0.680$, $p < 0.001$), indicating social pressure plays a greater role in dietary choices than personal attitudes. The study's strengths include a focused sample and validated instruments, with future recommendations suggesting a broader sample and longitudinal design.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

In recent years, it has been undeniable that the younger generation, particularly university students, possess individual social media profiles and actively engage with influencers across various social media platforms (Shahid, 2023). According to a survey by Datareportal (2021), about 4.2 billion individuals, accounting for 53% of the global population, engage with social media platforms. The report highlights a year- on-year growth rate of 13%. Additionally, the global average duration dedicated to social media usage amounts to 2.25 hours. Digital Information World (2021) also stated that, individuals within the age range of 16 to 24 exhibit the highest level of engagement with social media platforms. According to the analysis published by Statista (2023), the data reveals that as of January 2023, approximately 78.5 percent of the population in Malaysia were actively engaged in using social media platforms.

Individuals with a large following and influence on various social media platforms, known as social media influencers (SMIs), have become important players in shaping the preferences and behaviours of their followers, particularly among the younger demographic (Abidin, 2016). SMIs are theoretically the owners of the internet (McCorquodale, 2019), as they control the direction, the type of content people watch, the items people buy, and, to some extent, the thoughts people have. To put it another way, influencers appear to have a significant impact on the lifestyles of their devoted

followers. Therefore, there is a reason why people tend to trust the opinions of influencers to the extent that they do so.

According to the National Health & Morbidity Survey (NHMS); Adolescent Health Survey (2022), it was observed that around one in every three Malaysian adolescents fell into the categories of being either overweight or obese. Notably, there were concerns surrounding unhealthy dietary behaviours. The NHMS 2022 findings showed that a striking four out of five adolescents did not incorporate enough fruits and vegetables into their diets. This nutritional deficiency can have adverse consequences for their overall growth, development, and immune system, rendering Malaysian teenagers more vulnerable to illnesses and diseases (NHMS, 2022).

Malaysian university students are increasingly likely to have bad diets and eating habits. The study conducted by Radzi et al. (2019) provides evidence for this, as its findings indicated that the prevalence of obesity among university students in Malaysia is above the national norm, which raises concerns. People who engage in good eating behaviour while studying at university are more likely to engage in such behaviour later in life. On the contrary, students who did not practice healthy eating throughout their university years are more likely to continue doing so after graduation (Sanusi, 2020).

Eating habits are primarily established during childhood and adolescence, with personal choices (shaped by sensory perceptions), upbringing (influenced by parental guidance), and later, the impact of peers and societal influences. One of the major shifts

in the lives of young people is the moment they leave home and embark on their university studies. This critical juncture introduces novel stimuli that can lead to the development of distinct lifestyle preferences. According to Granheim et al.'s (2020), social media has evolved into a platform of communication where anybody may post knowledge about nutrition, regardless of whether they are a qualified dietitian or nutritionist or not. Additionally, SMIs hold a significant sway over the lifestyle choices of young adults since they are considered the primary users on popular social networking platforms like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube (Nandagiri, 2018).

Hence, this present study will investigate the attitudes and subjective norms towards SMIs with behavioural intent on food choices among undergraduate student in the School of Health Sciences, USMCK in accordance with the Theory of Reasoned Action (attitudes and subjective norm).

1.2 Problem Statement and Study Rationale

SMIs have become increasingly influential in shaping public opinions and behaviours, including dietary choices (Audrezet et al., 2020). These influencers frequently promote unhealthy foods and beverages, which may lead to increased consumption of high-sugar, high-fat, and high-salt products, potentially contributing to obesity and other noncommunicable diseases (Smit et al., 2020a). Scholarly investigations have examined the effects of SMIs on children's eating habits (Shahid, 2023); however, their influence on the dietary preferences of university students has received less attention (Smit et al., 2020b).

According to a Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) study, 98.8% of participants followed and subscribed to SMIs on multiple platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter. The same study also found that, despite 97.6% of the students believing they were making healthy food choices, the subjective norms surrounding SMIs in their lives were influencing their eating habits (Ahmad & Bruno, 2021a).

The intention of the study is to investigate students' attitudes and subjective norms towards SMIs among undergraduate students in the School of Health Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Health Campus, Kubang Kerian, Kelantan. Social media influencers are individuals who have established a reputation for themselves using social media platforms. As of now, minimal research has been conducted to study the connection between students' attitudes and subjective norms towards SMIs.

In this study, undergraduate students at the School of Health Sciences will be selected as the respondents. The significance of this study is underscored by the fact that undergraduate students are mostly above 18 years old, and according to Datareportal (2023), Malaysia's population between the ages of 18 and 24 represents the second-highest percentage of internet users. Additionally, Pew research (2022) data showed a clear connection between age and the probability of following influencers or content creators on social media. In the 18-29 age group, 72% of users follow influencers, and this percentage decreases as age increases. Moreover, the transitional

era in the lives of undergraduate students, particularly as they approach young adulthood and probable career opportunities, is essential for the establishment of habits and lifestyle choices.

Given the increasing influence of SMIs and their potential impact on students' dietary choices, it is critical to investigate the relationship between SMIs and dietary choices among undergraduate students in the School of Health Sciences. This study can help identify factors that influence healthy eating habits and develop strategies to encourage students to make healthier dietary choices.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What role do social media influencers play in shaping dietary choices among undergraduate Health Sciences students in USMKK?
2. Do attitudes towards social media influencers have a significant relationship with behavioural intent on dietary choices among undergraduate Health Sciences students in USMKK?
3. Do subjective norms towards social media influencers have a significant relationship with behavioural intent on dietary choices among undergraduate Health Sciences students in USMKK?

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 General Objective

To assess the attitudes, and subjective norms towards social media influencers with behavioural intent on dietary choices among undergraduate Health Sciences students in USMKK.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. To investigate the role of social media influencers and dietary choices among undergraduate Health Sciences students in USMKK.
2. To investigate whether there is a significant relationship between the attitudes towards social media influencers with behavioural intent on dietary choices among undergraduate Health Sciences students in USMKK.
3. To investigate whether there is a significant relationship between the subjective norms towards social media influencers with behavioural intent on dietary choices among undergraduate Health Sciences students in USMKK.

1.5 Research Hypothesis

1.5.1 Hypothesis I

Null Hypothesis (**H₀**):

There is no significant relationship between the attitudes towards social media influencers with behavioural intent on dietary choices among undergraduate Health Sciences students in USMKK.

Alternative Hypothesis (**HA**):

There is a significant relationship between the attitudes towards social media influencers with behavioural intent on dietary choices among undergraduate Health Sciences students in USMKK.

1.5.2 Hypothesis II

Null Hypothesis (**H0**):

There is no significant relationship between the subjective norms towards the social media influencers with behavioural intent on dietary choices among undergraduate Health Sciences students in USMKK.

Alternative Hypothesis (**HA**):

There is a significant relationship between the subjective norms towards the social media influencers with behavioural intent on dietary choices among undergraduate Health Sciences students in USMKK.

1.6 Theory and Conceptual Framework

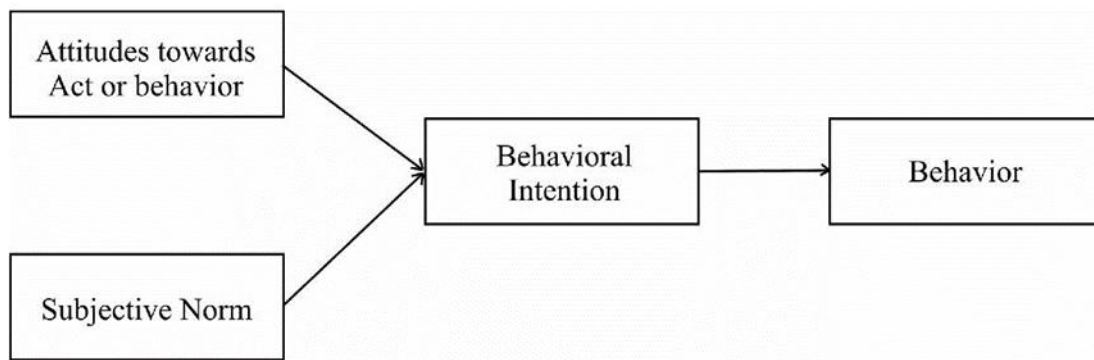


Figure 1: Theory of Reasoned Action, Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen (1967)

According to figure 1, Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was developed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1967. It implies that an individual's actions are influenced by their intention to carry out the action (Skewes & Gonzalez, 2013). According to the TRA, an individual's attitude towards a behaviour and their perception of social pressure to do that behaviour are the two most important aspects that influence their intention to perform that behaviour (How Communication Works, 2021). Hence, the TRA is an effective technique for predicting and comprehending how attitudes and subjective norms influence dietary and other health-related behaviours.

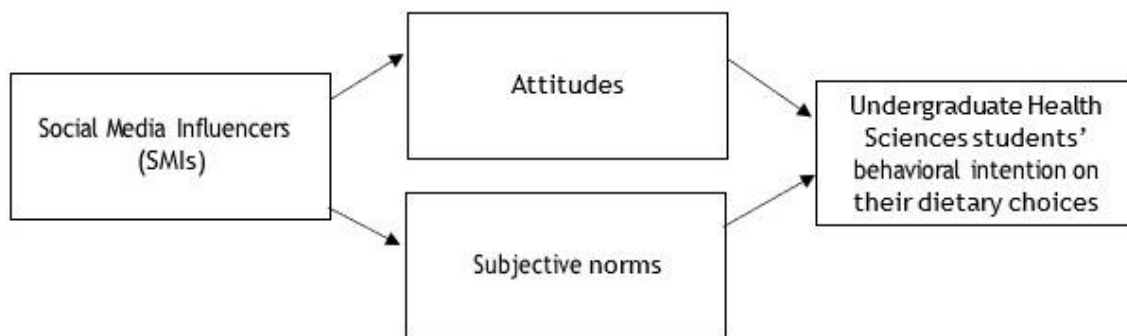


Figure 2: Conceptual framework of the study.

In this study, conceptual framework investigated several key variables within the framework of the TRA to shed light on the dynamics of dietary choices among undergraduate students in the School of Health Sciences, USM, Health Campus, Kubang Kerian, Kelantan. Attitudes toward Social Media Influencers reflect students' evaluations, either positive or negative, of the influence that SMIs have on their dietary choices, in line with the TRA's claim that attitudes determine behaviour (figure 1).

Besides, subjective norms refer to the way students perceive the social pressure to follow dietary choices promoted by SMIs. This aligns with the TRA's focus on the influence of subjective norms on behavioural intention. Behavioural Intent, in this context, refers to the intents of students to make dietary choices that are impacted by SMIs. This is an important factor in the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) for predicting actual behaviour.

Therefore, this study intends to provide significant insights into the complex relationships that influence the food choices of undergraduate students in the School of Health Sciences by examining these interconnected aspects using the TRA framework.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Undergraduate Students' Use of Social Media

According to Durmaz, Keser & Tunçer (2023), the widespread use of social media among university students implied that it has a powerful influence on young adults, affecting many aspects of their lives, including their eating habits. More than 70% of university students reported seeing nutrition-related topics in their news feeds on a regular basis, listening to the "food swap" podcast, and watching YouTube videos like "What I Eat in a Day" posted by "influencers" who might or might not understand what they are promoting (Patrick, 2023). Another study found that social media use is increasingly widespread and has been associated with increases in disordered eating among nutrition and dietetics students (Law & Jevons, 2023)

Another survey, conducted by Subair (2019), revealed that most undergraduate students use social media on a regular basis, with an average daily usage of 2-3 hours. WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook are the most popular social media sites among undergraduate students (Eusuf Zai et al., 2020). Moreover, undergraduate students' use of social media has been linked to both positive and negative results (Digital et al., 2016). Among the many benefits of social media is the ease with which one may stay connected with loved ones, explore current events, and discover new interests. In educational settings, social media can facilitate communication and collaboration among students and provide easy access to course resources (Mushtaq & Benraghda, 2018).

Nevertheless, an overabundance of social media usage might likewise yield adverse outcomes for undergraduates. Research has demonstrated that the use of social media can result in diminished academic achievement, sleep disturbances, and social unease (Chen & Xiao, 2022). Social media platforms can also serve as a medium for cyberbullying and other adverse encounters (Abaido, 2020).

2.2 Attitudes Towards Social Media Influencers

According to Gilmour (2020), the attitudes of young consumers towards food and their eating habits are greatly influenced by SMIs. Research indicates that food choices are influenced by both extra personal variables such as parenting and peer pressure as well as intrapersonal elements such as convenience, taste preferences, and health consciousness when it comes to young consumers.

Additionally, influencers on social media can affect young consumers' attitudes towards food and dietary practices in both positive and negative ways. Positively, they can support other trends, like plant-based diets and healthy eating. But they can also encourage bad eating habits, which can contribute to an obesogenic atmosphere (Gilmour, Gill & Loudon, 2020). Another study conducted by Azkiah (2023) revealed that customer sentiments exert a favourable and substantial impact on purchase intent. As the positive attitude of customers towards SMIs increases, so does their willingness to purchase the marketed product.

2.3 Subjective Norms towards Social Media Influencers

Subjective norms, derived from the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) play a crucial role in comprehending individuals' behaviour and attitudes toward SMIs. The establishment of these subjective standards is significantly impacted by social comparison theory (Fesringer, 1954). Users actively participate in the process of comparing their tastes and behaviours with those of their peers, which in turn influences their subjective norms regarding SMIs (Fesringer, 1954). Trust and credibility play a crucial role in shaping subjective norms. Studies indicate that consumers are more inclined to embrace norms linked to influencers they consider reliable and trustworthy (Hudson & Thal, 2013) This highlights the significance of influencers developing genuineness, proficiency, and dependability to generate trust among their followers.

Moreover, social identity theory, as proposed by Tajfel and Turner (2019), significantly influences the formation of subjective norms about SMIs. Users frequently associate themselves with certain influencers or online communities, so contributing to the formation of collective norms among these organisations (Tajfel & Turner, 2019). The potency of social identity amplifies the persuasive influence of subjective norms on individual conduct, cultivating a feeling of affiliation and compliance inside online communities (Tajfel & Turner, 2019). In addition, the Theory of Planned Behaviour highlights the significance of perceived behavioural control, as emphasised by Ajzen (1991). Regarding SMIs, users' beliefs of their capacity to interact with influencer content and make well-informed choices impact the development and adherence to subjective norms.

2.4 Social Media, Dietary Behaviour and Food Choice

The studies conducted by Higgs (2015) and Chandon (2018) investigated the impact of social media exposure on individuals' food preferences and consumption patterns. Higgs (2015) highlighted the significance of visual cues and society's norms in influencing eating habits, whereas Chandon (2018) explored the influence of peer pressure on food selection, underscoring the potency of social media in generating novel food trends.

Furthermore, in the study by Smith, Hames & Joiner (2013), examined the effects of online social evaluations and comparisons on body dissatisfaction and bulimic symptoms. The results demonstrated that engaging in unhealthy Facebook usage was a strong predictor of subsequent increases in bulimic symptoms and episodes of over-eating.

A study conducted by Riggsbee et al. (2016), has demonstrated that social media can influence the dietary behaviour and food preferences of college students. Individuals who actively sought health-related information on social media platforms were more inclined to consume a greater quantity of fruits and vegetables compared to those who sought such information less frequently on social media. The follow-up study conducted by (Al Ali et al., 2021), sought to evaluate the influence of university students' utilisation of social media on their food patterns and physical exercise. A study revealed

that 57.7% of the students acknowledged that social media influenced their dietary habits and physical activity (Al Ali et al., 2021).

Hence, undergraduate students should be aware of the potential adverse impacts of social media on their food habits. It is advisable for individuals to restrict their consumption of social media food content and prioritise the adoption of good eating habits.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Design

This cross-sectional study was intended to explore students' attitudes and subjective norms towards SMIs among undergraduate students in the School of Health Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Health Campus, Kubang Kerian, Kelantan. Prior to data collection, official ethics approval was obtained from the Ethical Approval from Ethics Committee (JEPeM). Data was collected using a set of online questionnaires. The study involved a sample of undergraduate students in the School of Health Sciences, with participants selected, data collected, and the collected data analyzed accordingly.

3.2 Study Area

This study was conducted online for undergraduate students in the School of Health Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) Health Campus, Kubang Kerian, Kelantan. The data was collected by distributing a poster along with the link to the online questionnaire (Google Form) among eligible students in Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) Health Campus. This location was chosen because the students on the campus come from different backgrounds. It was a good place for conducting research as well as convenient and time-saving for data collection.

3.3 Study Population

This study was carried out among undergraduate students in USM Health Campus that fulfilled the participant's inclusion and exclusion criteria, which included students from School of Health Sciences (PPSK). The participants ranged from the first year to final year students. All participants were required to participate in the study willingly and were provided with an informed consent form before participating in the study. The goal, purpose and benefits of the study were explained thoroughly to the participants before conducting the study.

3.4 Research Subject Criteria

3.4.1 Inclusion Criteria

1. Undergraduate students of the Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) Health Campus for the academic session of 2023/2024.
2. Individual aged range 18 – 29 years old
3. Enrolled for School of Health Sciences.
4. Able to understand the English language.
5. Voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.

3.4.2 Exclusion Criteria

1. Diploma student
2. Having been advised by health care professionals to practice dietary control because of their health condition (eg: diabetes, hypertension).
3. Incomplete response of questionnaires

3.5 Sample Size Calculations

The sample size for this study was calculated based on power analysis to obtain a suitable sample size. The power analysis was conducted using G*Power software to determine the minimum sample size needed. The G*Power software was set up for a correlation (point biserial model) statistical test to perform a priori power analysis. Correlation coefficients are a quantitative measurement in statistics that assess both the direction and strength of a given tendency varying together (Jim, 2018). In the input parameters, the tails were set to two. The α (level of significance) was kept at 0.05, the power ($1 - \beta$) was set at 0.80, and the effect size was kept at 0.3.

The effect size quantifies the magnitude of the association and can also suggest a minimal difference that is clinically significant. The rationale for selecting an effect size, or correlation coefficient, of 0.3 was supported by the recommendations outlined in Cohen (2013). According to these guidelines, a correlation coefficient ranging from 0.1 to 0.3 is classified as a small effect, 0.3 to 0.5 as a moderate effect, and anything over 0.5 as a large effect.

Hence, opting for an anticipated effect size of 0.3 in a correlation study was considered a moderate effect, which is a widely accepted and reasonable decision in numerous research investigations. Using these settings, the power analysis indicated that a total sample size of 82 was needed for this study, excluding the dropout rate.

Through analysis, 90 participants were needed in this study, including a 10% dropout rate.

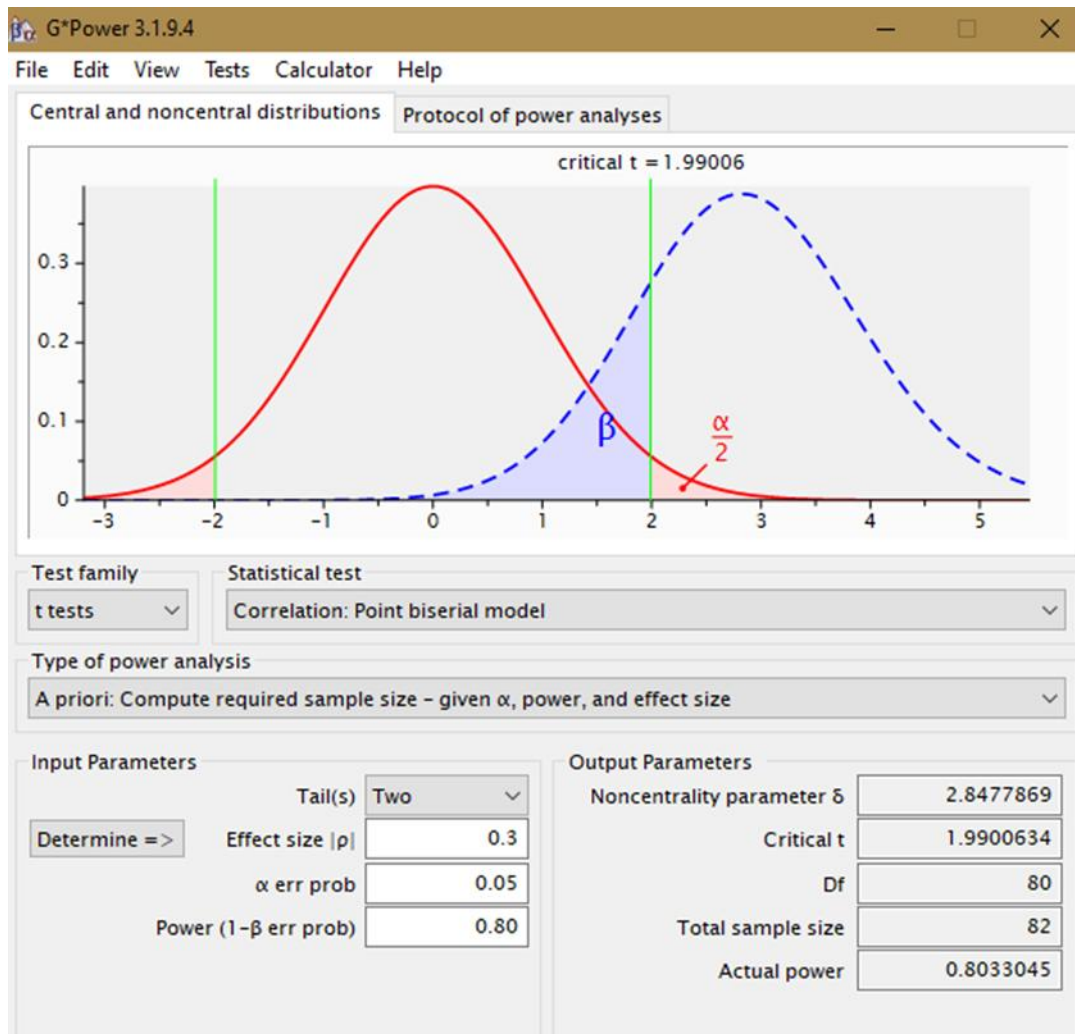


Figure 3: Sample size calculation.

3.6 Sampling Method and Subject Recruitment

In this study, a convenience sampling method was used for the selection of subjects among undergraduate students from the School of Health Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) Health Campus, Kubang Kerian, Kelantan, to investigate students' attitudes and subjective norms towards social media influencers (SMIs). The convenience sampling method is a type of non-probability sampling in which the

subjects included for the purpose of the study met certain criteria, such as being available at a given time, willing to participate, and having easy accessibility (Zoltán, 2019).

This type of sampling method was used in this study as the researcher could easily reach the respondents in a convenient way through online platforms such as WhatsApp groups. An online questionnaire in Google Form was used, as it was easy for the researcher to reach the respondents. The batch leader distributed the poster along with the link to the online questionnaire to all students from the School of Health Sciences each year through their WhatsApp batch group. Respondents who fulfilled the exclusion and inclusion criteria and volunteered to participate became the subjects of this study.

3.7 Research Tool and Instrument for Data Collection

A set of questionnaires from a previous study (Ahmad & Bruno, 2021b) was used in this study. The questionnaires were validated and consisted of modified and adapted questions from the Theory of Reasoned Action, as well as questions provided by Skylie Galea's (2020) research on Social Media Influencers' Impact on Purchase Decision.

The questionnaires consisted of four parts, which were Sections A, B, C, and D. Section A consisted of the socio-demographic details of the participants. Section B measured Social Media Influencers and Dietary Choices, and Section C measured participants' relationships between attitudes and subjective norms towards students' behavioural intent on their dietary choices. The last section measured the behavioural

intent of students towards their dietary choices. All parts were answered by the participants. The time taken to complete the questionnaire was expected to be around 15 minutes.

Section A: Demographic Data

The demographic data for the questionnaire were gender, age, ethnicity, and year of study. The online questionnaire in this study was an anonymous survey, as the researcher did not require participants' personal information, such as name, matric number, and phone number, due to their privacy and confidentiality.

Section B: Social Media Influencers and Dietary Choices

This section aimed to obtain information regarding participants' engagement with SMIs and their opinions regarding healthy dietary choices. It consisted of three questions, and a closed-ended question was applied, which required the participant to answer, 'yes' or 'no'.

Section C:

Part I: Measurement Items for the Relationship Between Attitudes Towards Students' Behavioural Intent on Their Dietary Choices

Part II: Measurement Items for the Relationship Between Subjective Norms Towards Students' Behavioural Intent on Their Dietary Choices

This section aimed to investigate whether attitudes and subjective norms on SMIs had a significant relationship towards the behavioural intent of students. The attitudes section

had six questions, and the subjective norms section had five questions. The five-point Likert Scale ranging from “strongly agree” to ‘strongly disagree’ was applied.

Section D: Measurement Items for the Behavioural Intent of Students

This section aimed to investigate the behavioural intent of students on their dietary choices based on the Theory of Reasoned Action. The five-point Likert Scale ranging from “strongly agree” to ‘strongly disagree’ was applied.

3.8 Operational Definition

Social Media Influencers (SMIs):

SMIs are individuals who have established credibility within a specific industry and boast a substantial following on various social media platforms. Renowned for their knowledge and expertise in a particular field, they possess the authority to influence the purchasing decisions of others (Werner, 2024).

Attitude:

Within the realm of psychology, an attitude denotes a learned predisposition to assess things in a specific manner. It encompasses a combination of emotions, beliefs, and behaviours directed towards a particular object, person, entity, or occurrence. Attitudes often evolved from experiences or upbringings and wield considerable influence over behaviour, shaping how individuals respond in diverse situations. The primary components of attitude encompass cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects, encapsulating thoughts, emotions, and actions (Perlovsky, 2013).

Subjective Norm:

Subjective norms encompass the belief that a significant individual or group will endorse and support a specific behaviour. This concept involves the perception of social pressure, either encouraging or discouraging behaviour, and holds the potential to impact an individual's attitudes and subsequent behaviours (Ham, Jeger & Ivković, 2015).

Behavioural Intent:

Behavioural intent pertains to the motivational elements that impact a certain behaviour and the level of determination to carry out that behaviour. It is a fundamental idea that plays a crucial role in comprehending behavioural activity and serves as the foundation for the Theory of Reasoned activity (TRA) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). Behavioural intent is a measure of a person's level of intention to engage in a particular behaviour (Elisabeth, 2023). It plays a crucial role in predicting and comprehending actual behavioural acts (Elisabeth, 2023).

3.9 Data Collection Method

The participants of this study were undergraduate students registered in the School of Health Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) Health Campus, Kubang Kerian, Kelantan, who fulfilled the participants' criteria. The researcher received the total number of students from the administration office of Health Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Kubang Kerian. After obtaining official approval from the Ethical Approval

from Ethics Committee (JEPeM) of USM, the researcher reached out to the batch leader for each year in the School of Health Sciences program through the administration office of Health Sciences (PPSK), USM.

The researcher kindly requested the batch leader to distribute the poster along with the link to the online questionnaire (Google Form) among their batch members through WhatsApp groups. Participants received the poster and could access the questionnaire through the provided Google Form link. Participants were encouraged to voluntarily participate in this study based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria listed on the poster. This poster offered a concise explanation of the research purpose, exclusion criteria, and inclusion criteria, aiding participants in understanding the research before deciding to participate. Access to the questionnaire was available through the provided Google Form link.

The template in the Google Form included details on the research summary, objectives, informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality. Participants were informed that their responses were solely for academic research, ensuring anonymous identities. Strict confidentiality was assured, with data used only for the study's purpose.

Participants had to tick "agree" on the Participants Consent Form, signifying voluntary participation after reviewing the information. Non-agreement or failure to meet the inclusion criteria resulted in exclusion. Eligible participants proceeded to the 15-

minute questionnaire via Google Form. Data collected were analyzed for thesis writing upon submission.

For specific data grouping, SMI's were categorized into lifestyle influencers, examining potential associations with participants' food choices within these distinct subgroups.

3.10 Study Flowchart

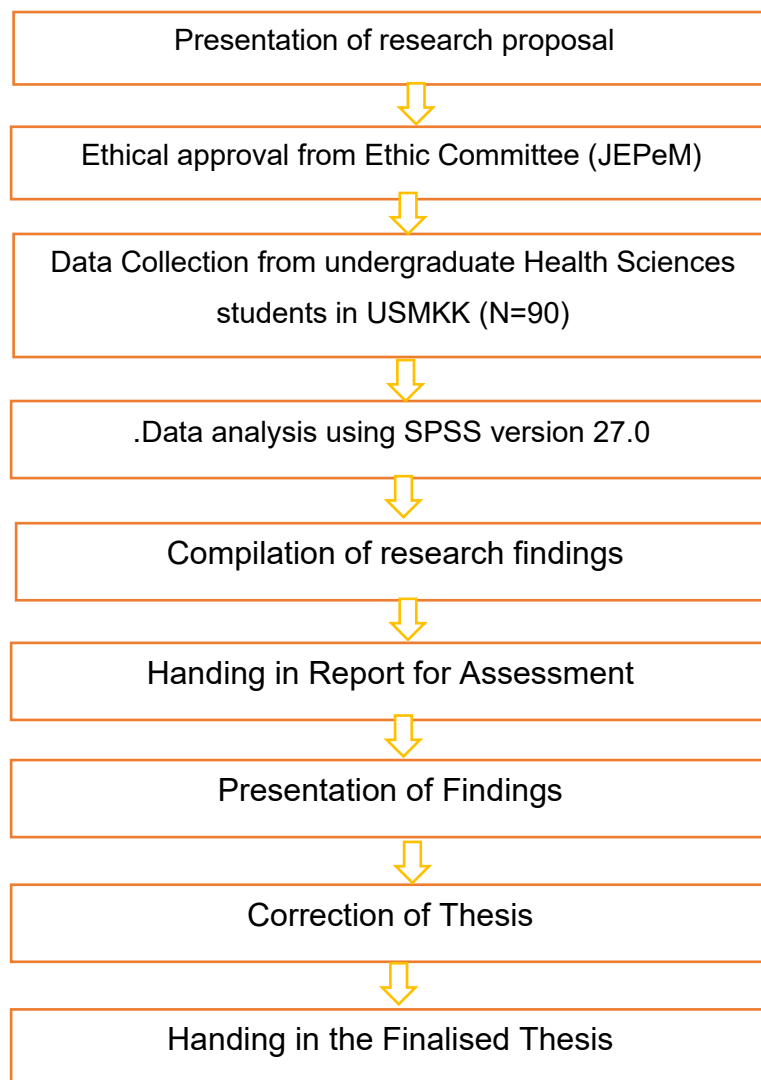


Figure 4: Study flowchart.