From Plate to Self-Perception: Unravelling the Interplay Between Food Security and Self-Esteem Among Malaysian University Students

Authors : Amiraa Ali Mansor, Haslinda Abdullah, Angela Chan Nguk Fong, Norhaida Hanim Binti Ahmad Tajudin, Asnarulkhadi Abu Samah

Abstract : Obesity has risen sharply over the past three decades, posing a grave public health concern globally. In Malaysia, it has also emerged as a significant health threat. While the second Sustainable Development Goal, "Zero Hunger", aims to ensure equitable access to nutritious food for all, a key challenge lies in addressing food insecurity. Food insecurity not only pertains to the quantity but also the quality of food, with both dimensions playing a pivotal role in health outcomes. To date, much of the research on food security has focused on household levels. There remains a research gap concerning university students, a population transitioning to independence from parental support and grappling with limited resources. This study seeks to bridge this gap by extending the Food Security Theory to incorporate the psychological dimension of self-esteem. Using a quantitative approach, data was collected from 452 public university students in Malaysia through a cross-sectional research design and a multi-stage cluster sampling technique. The anticipated findings will provide novel insights by linking food security with self-esteem. Such insights have implications for healthcare policy and the framing of preventive strategies against obesity. It is hoped that this research will not only contribute to the academic discourse on Food Security Theory but also serve as a foundation for refining national health policies and programs aimed at fostering a healthier lifestyle.
Keywords : obesity, food security, body image, self-esteem
Conference Title : ICHPS 2024 : International Conference on Health Psychology and Stress
Conference Location : Istanbul, Türkiye
Conference Dates : April 25-26, 2024