

# **Nourishing Confidence: The Nexus of Food Security on University Students' Self-esteem and Academic Performance**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In the contemporary food delivery era, marked by unprecedented convenience and accessibility, food security is important for students as it ensures they have consistent access to nourishing meals, which not only supports their physical well-being but also helps in maintaining good health and concentration in their academic pursuits. On the other hand, self-esteem is equally vital among students as it influences their confidence, motivation, and overall mental health. A healthy self-esteem encourages them to engage actively in their studies and navigate the challenges of university's life with a sense of self-worth. This study set out to identifying and understanding the effect of food security on the self-esteem among students in the universities. Employing a quantitative approach, this study involved the distribution of a survey to 533 students across five prominent universities in Malaysia. The data were evaluated using correlation and regression analysis. There is a significant effect of food security towards self-esteem among the students. The findings underscore those students who struggled with food insecurity, particularly with overweight body mass, experiencing positive self-esteem. As we navigate the evolving landscape of the easy food accessibility, this study serves as a timely reminder of the importance of nourishing both body and self-esteem in the academic journey, including to promote holistic well-being among the students.

**Keywords:** body mass; food accessibility; food insecurity; self-worth; undergraduate students