



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS
OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVEL AMONG FORM FOUR STUDENTS IN
SELANGOR, MALAYSIA***

LEONG IN TYNG

FPSK(m) 2019 55



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AMONG FORM FOUR STUDENTS IN SELANGOR, MALAYSIA**

By

LEONG IN TYNG

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of
Master of Science**

July 2018

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

**SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS
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LEONG IN TYNG

July 2018

Chair : Associate Professor Nor Afiah binti Mohd Zulkefli, PhD
Faculty : Medicine and Health Sciences

Adolescents reduce their physical activity level as they aged. Socio-demographic and psychological factors are the important factors that closely related to physical activity level. The objective of this study was to determine the socio-demographic and psychological factors that associated with physical activity among Form Four students in Selangor. A total of 1158 Form Four students (aged 16.1 ± 0.2 years old) were selected via clustered random sampling method. All consented Form Four students from randomly selected schools in Selangor participated in this cross-sectional study. A validated and reliable self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection on socio-demographic factors, sedentary activities, psychological factors and anthropometry measurement. The outcome of this study was level of physical activity which was collected using International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ). The physical activity level of the participants was 47.4%, 39.4% and 13.2% respectively for high, moderate and low physical activity. Socio-demographic factors that had significant association between physical activity level were gender ($\chi^2 = 48.442$, $p < 0.001$), ethnicity ($\chi^2 = 6.932$, $p = 0.031$), number of siblings ($\chi^2 = 6.335$, $p = 0.042$), household size ($\chi^2 = 6.432$, $p = 0.040$), father's education level ($\chi^2 = 15.002$, $p = 0.001$) and mother's education level ($\chi^2 = 7.259$, $p = 0.027$). Sedentary activities were not significantly associated with physical activity except reading ($\chi^2 = 9.041$, $p = 0.011$) and revision ($\chi^2 = 11.058$, $p = 0.004$). Psychological factors that had significant association with physical activity level were introjected regulation ($F(2, 1155) = 10.720$, $p < 0.001$), identified regulation ($F(2, 1155) = 22.976$, $p < 0.001$), intrinsic regulation of motivation ($\chi^2 = 52.805$, $p < 0.001$), social physique anxiety ($F(2, 1155) = 3.934$, $p = 0.020$), stress ($F(2, 1155) = 14.628$, $p < 0.001$), self-esteem ($\chi^2 = 17.927$, $p < 0.001$) and physical activity level self-efficacy ($F(2, 1155) = 43.570$, $p < 0.001$). No significant association was found between anthropometry measurement and physical activity level. Multinomial logistic regression analysis on the predicting factors for active physical activity among the students showed that intrinsic regulation of motivation, number of siblings, father's education level, time spent on tuition, revision and reading and physical activity self-efficacy were significant in explaining

high physical activity whereas only physical activity self-efficacy was found to be significant in explaining moderate physical activity. This study suggests that intrinsic regulation and physical activity self-efficacy should be taken into consideration when promoting physical activity intervention among adolescents.

Keywords: psychological factors, sedentary activities, physical activity, adolescents



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Sarjana Sains

**FAKTOR PENENTU SOSIAL DEMOGRAFI DAN PSIKOLOGI
KE ATAS TAHAP AKTIVITI FIZIKAL DALAM KALANGAN
PELAJAR TINGKATAN EMPAT DI SELANGOR, MALAYSIA**

Oleh

LEONG IN TYNG

Julai 2018

Pengerusi : Profesor Madya Nor Afiah binti Mohd Zulkefli, PhD
Fakulti : Perubatan dan Sains Kesihatan

Tahap aktiviti fizikal didapati berkurangan dalam kalangan remaja apabila usia remaja meningkat. Faktor sosial-demografi dan psikologi merupakan faktor-faktor yang penting dan berkait rapat dengan tahap aktiviti fizikal. Justeru itu, objektif kajian ini adalah untuk menentukan faktor sosial-demografi dan psikologi yang berhubung kait dengan tahap aktiviti fizikal dalam kalangan pelajar Tingkatan Empat di Selangor dan seterusnya menentukan faktor ramalan bagi penglibatan aktif dalam aktiviti fizikal. Seramai 1158 pelajar Tingkatan Empat (berumur 16.1 ± 0.2 tahun) telah terpilih melalui kaedah persampelan kluster. Semua pelajar Tingkatan Empat dari sekolah yang dipilih secara rawak telah menyertai kajian keratan rentas ini setelah mendapat kebenaran penyertaan. Kajian ini menggunakan borang soal selidik yang telah diuji dengan kebolehpercayaan dan kesahan bagi mengumpul data tentang faktor sosiodemografi, aktiviti sedentari, faktor psikologi dan pengukuran antropometri. Tahap aktiviti fizikal sebagai hasil kajian ini telah dikumpul melalui *International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ)*. Peserta dalam kajian ini memaparkan 47.4% dalam kategori tahap aktiviti fizikal tinggi 39.4% dalam kategori tahap aktiviti sederhana dan 13.2% dalam kategori tahap aktiviti fizikal rendah. Faktor sosiodemografi yang signifikan terhadap tahap aktiviti fizikal ialah jantina ($\chi^2 = 48.442$, $p < 0.001$), etnik ($\chi^2 = 6.932$, $p = 0.031$), bilangan adik-beradik ($\chi^2 = 6.335$, $p = 0.042$), saiz isi rumah ($\chi^2 = 6.432$, $p = 0.040$), tahap pendidikan bapa ($\chi^2 = 15.002$, $p = 0.001$) dan tahap pendidikan ibu ($\chi^2 = 7.259$, $p = 0.027$). Aktiviti sedentari dalam kajian ini tidak mempunyai hubungan signifikan dengan tahap aktiviti fizikal kecuali membaca ($\chi^2 = 9.041$, $p = 0.011$) dan membuat ulang kaji ($\chi^2 = 11.058$, $p = 0.004$). Faktor psikologi yang menunjukkan hubungan signifikan dengan tahap aktiviti fizikal ialah *introjected regulation* ($F(2, 1155) = 10.720$, $p < 0.001$), *identified regulation* ($F(2, 1155) = 22.976$, $p < 0.001$), *intrinsic regulation* bagi motivasi ($\chi^2 = 52.805$, $p < 0.001$), kebimbangan terhadap fizikal dalam sosial ($F(2, 1155) = 3.934$, $p = 0.020$), tekanan ($F(2, 1155) = 14.628$, $p < 0.001$), harga diri ($\chi^2 = 17.927$, $p < 0.001$) dan keyakinan diri dalam aktiviti fizikal ($F(2, 1155) = 43.570$, $p < 0.001$). Tiada hubungan signifikan didapati antara saiz antropometri dan tahap aktiviti fizikal. Analisis regresi logistik multinomia menunjukkan faktor ramalan yang signifikan bagi tahap aktiviti

fizikal tinggi ialah *intrinsic regulation* bagi motivasi, bilangan adik-beradik, tahap pendidikan bapa, masa yang diluangkan bagi tuisyen, membuat ulang kaji dan membaca serta keyakinan diri dalam aktiviti fizikal manakala faktor ramalan bagi tahap aktiviti fizikal sederhana ialah keyakinan diri terhadap aktiviti fizikal sahaja. Hasil kajian ini mencadangkan bahawa *intrinsic regulation* dan keyakinan diri dalam aktiviti fizikal harus dipertimbangkan bagi intervensi untuk menggalakkan aktiviti fizikal dalam kalangan remaja.

Kata kunci: faktor psikologi, aktiviti sedentari, aktiviti fizikal, remaja



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisory committee, chairperson Associate Professor Dr Nor Afiah binti Mohd Zulkefli and committee member, Dr Salmiah Md Said for their assistance, guidance and encouragement throughout my journey on pursuing the degree. I am grateful for their stimulating and constructive suggestions as well as friendly advice along the journey.

In addition, I would also express my special thanks to the staffs and officers from Department of Community Health of Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences for their assistance in accessing the facilities and lending the equipment for the research. I am also thankful to the officers from the School of Graduate Studies for their assistance and organising courses which are useful for the study. Moreover, I am grateful for receiving the Universiti Putra Malaysia grant (Geran Putra Inisiatif Putra Siswazah) for this study.

I would also further my gratitude to the school principals and teachers who are helpful, cooperative and supportive during my data collection. My sincere appreciation goes to the parents and students who are willing to participate in the research study. Last but not least, I am grateful for my friends and coursemates who had supported and encouraged me during the study. I appreciate and feel grateful to my family for their support and encouragement whenever I faced difficulties and challenges in this tough journey.

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

Nor Afiah binti Mohd Zulkefli, PhD

Associate Professor
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Salmiah Md Said, PhD

Senior Lecturer (Medical)
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

ROBIAH BINTI YUNUS, PhD

Professor and Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date:

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Name and Matric No.: Leong In Tyng (GS36112)

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Signature : _____
Name of Chairman of : Nor Afiah Binti Mohd Zulkefli
Supervisory Committee

Signature : _____
Name of member of : Salmiah Md Said
Supervisory Committee

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASQ	Adolescent Stress Questionnaires
BAI	Beck Anxiety Inventory
BDI	Beck Depression Inventory
BMI	Body Mass Index
CDI	Children Depression Inventory
CES-DC	Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression Scale for Children
CSEP	Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology
GPAQ	Global Physical Activity Questionnaire
IPAQ	International Physical Activity Questionnaire
IPAQ-A	International Physical Activity Questionnaire for Adolescents
LTPA	Leisure Time Physical Activity
MVPA	Moderate-Vigorous Physical Activity
PAL	Physical Activity Level
PAQ-C	Physical Activity Questionnaire for Older Children
PASE	Physical Activity Self-Efficacy
PHQ-A	Physical Health Questionnaire for Adolescents
PHQ-9	Nine-item-Patients Health Questionnaire
PSS	Perceived Stress Scale
RAI	Relative Autonomy Index
RCMAS	Revised Children Manifest Anxiety Scale
RSES	Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale
SCARED	Screen for Children Anxiety Related Emotional Disorder
SPAS	Social Physique Anxiety Scale

STAI	State-Trait Anxiety Inventory
USDHHS	United States Department of Health and Human Services
VPA	Vigorous Physical Activity
WHO	World Health Organization



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Rapid urbanization leads to reduction of healthy lifestyle practice within the population. The environment of excessive usage of motorized vehicles, poor air quality and limited public spaces challenge the practice of being physically active in urbanized cities (WHO, 2010c). This indirectly shape sedentary lifestyle. In addition to that, urban life encourage frequent consumption of energy-dense food (WHO, 2010c) with less nutritional benefits such as fast food, junk food and processed food that containing high level of salt, sugar and fat which have replaced non-processed natural food.

Physical activity is the crucial key component to maintain health. The equilibrium between energy consumption (food intake) and energy expenditure (physical activity) is fundamental to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke, diabetes, hypertension and various types of cancer (WHO, 2018). Weight control is related insufficient physical activity which subsequently would affect health. At global level, insufficient physical activity and sedentary lifestyle are found as the fourth leading cause of mortality (WHO, 2010a).

In view of that, World Health Organization (WHO) (2018) had recommended that children aged 5-17 years old should have at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily. The accumulation of 60 minutes on doing physical activity bring health benefits. However, children and adolescents who are of highly physically active age group decrease their physical activity level (Wilson, 2008). A report by WHO (2018) revealed that 81% of school-going adolescents from worldwide did not achieve the recommended level of physical activity daily. While South-East Asia region had the lowest prevalence (74%) of insufficient of physical activity, yet the prevalence is still high.

Data from Malaysia revealed that less than 35% of Malaysian male and female students met the guidelines of WHO on an accumulation 60 minute of physical activity per day (Wilson, 2008). Malaysian adolescents had low prevalence of physically active (0% to 20%) (Dan, Mohd Nasir & Zalilah, 2011; Hashim, Golok & Ali, 2011). Although health-promoting activities and health education are constantly held in community and schools, the level of physical activity reported were low and moderate among adolescents (Dan et al., 2011; Farah Wahida, Mohd Nasir & Hazizi, 2011; Hashim et al., 2011).

There were many studies conducted to identify the factors that influence the participation in physical activity among adolescents. The common identified factors were environmental factors in terms of the availability and accessibility to equipment and facilities (Abd-Latif, Mohd Nor, Omar-Fauzee, Ahmad & Karim, 2011), social support system with respect to family and peers supports (Park & Kim, 2008), socio-demographic factors, sedentary activities preference (Wilson, 2008) and psychosocial factors (Aniza & Fairuz, 2009; Dan et al., 2011; Hashim et al., 2011). Of all the factors, socio-demographic and psychological factors were important aspects to influence physical activity level among adolescents.

Long term engagement in physical activity is fundamental to maintain good general health and prevention of chronic diseases (WHO, 2018). Perseverance is the key component for continuous effort to engage in physical activity. The persistency and constant adherence to engage in physical activity much depends on individual's psychological aspects. Psychological factors may positively and negatively affect the level of physical activity (Dan et al., 2011; Hashim et al., 2011). As a consequence, psychological factors would be an important aspect to look into. It is crucial to identify the psychological factors affect the participation of physical activity in order to instil active lifestyle for adolescents' general health benefits in their future life.

In spite of emergent study findings on the factors that affect the physical activity level within the population of adolescents, the prevalence of physical activity among adolescents remain low and moderate (Dan et al., 2011; Hashim et al., 2011). The studies searched with Google Scholar, Science Direct, Sport Discuss, Springer Link, with the keywords of "physical activity", "adolescents", "students", "psychological", "psychology" were found deficient in Malaysia. Furthermore, the studies were mostly studied on younger adolescents but not on older adolescents aged 16 years old above.

Psychological aspects may change when adolescents aged and in their higher secondary school. As to effectively promote health among adolescents to be physically active in their future life, the study on identify the psychological factors that affect physical activity level is indeed important. Attention to be given to older adolescents who are of more self-aware of their behaviours particularly health behaviour is important. This would subsequently influence on their future health. Therefore, present study was proposed to determine the psychological factors and physical activity level among Form four secondary school students in Selangor. The psychological factors in this present study were motivation, depression, anxiety, stress, self-esteem and self-efficacy.

1.2 Problem Statement

Malaysian population practiced less healthy lifestyle along with rapid development and urbanization. It was reported that more than half (56.5%) of the Malaysian population were inactive (Cheah & Poh, 2014). Worst still, adults were more active than adolescents though there was 57.2% active adolescents (aged 16-19 years old) (Institute for Public Health, 2011). In view of the fact that adolescents are at their

active age, they are expected to be more physically active and with a lower prevalence of physical inactivity. It is crucial to look into the physical activity level in adolescents' population.

Furthermore, a report by Wilson (2008) revealed that less than half of the adolescent athletes did not achieve recommended level of an accumulation of 60 min moderate-to-vigorous activities daily. Adolescent athletes who had sports training should be more active than other adolescents of their ages. Yet, there was 35% of them did not achieve the recommended level of level of physical activity. This has been a worrying issue on adolescents who were generally less active than athletes.

In addition to that, a low prevalence of active lifestyle was found in various local studies. There was only 22.8% of Malaysian adolescents (aged 13-17 years old) were active in overall physical activity (Active Healthy Kids Malaysia, 2016). Insufficient physical activity was reported in some studies findings on low level of physical activity (Aniza and Fairuz, 2009). The reported high level of physical activity (ranged from 0% to 20%) was much lower than moderate level (ranged from 25.3% to 61.5%) and low level of physical activity (ranged from 20.8% to 74.7%) (Aniza & Fairuz, 2009; Dan et al., 2011; Farah Wahida et al., 2011; Law, Mohd Nasir & Hazizi, 2014).

Since physical inactivity is the fourth leading cause of mortality worldwide (WHO, 2010b), insufficient physical activity is a major contributor to non-communicable diseases and other health problems (Sharif et al., 2016). The globally upsurge of physical inactivity in relation to non-communicable diseases (WHO, 2010b) has been an alarming issue to healthcare providers. With regards to physical activity decreased as children and adolescents aged (Lee, Loprinzi & Trost, 2010), the prevalence of active adolescents (37.3% physically active) was lower in comparison to children (57.0%) (Institute for Public Health, 2018).

Unceasingly effort in health promotion programmes to inculcate healthy lifestyle were held in communities and schools (Institute for Public Health, 2017). However, health promotion efforts seemingly limited effectiveness in encouraging active lifestyle. Physically active students dropped from 22.7% (Institute for Public Health, 2012) to 19.8% (Institute for Public Health, 2017) in the National Health and Morbidity Survey. Hence, it is crucial to find the factors affect physical activity level among adolescents.

There were many studies looking into the factors related to physical activity level among adolescents. However, environmental factors (Abd-Latif et al., 2011), interpersonal factors (Park & Kim, 2008) and intrapersonal factors (Aniza & Fairuz, 2009; Hidayati, Hattahakit & Isramalai, 2012) were the common factors that found influence physical activity level among adolescents. Psychological factors that influence physical activity level of children and adolescents are gaining the concern of researchers (Sallis, Prochaska & Taylor, 2000). Nevertheless, there was deficient studies of psychological factors on physical activity level in Malaysia after using the search engine of Google Scholars, Science Direct, Sport Discuss, Springer Link, by

using the keywords of “physical activity”, “adolescents”, “students”, “psychological”, “psychology”.

In addition to that, majority of local studies on physical activity were on younger adolescents aged 13-15 years old (Dan et al., 2011; Hashim et al., 2011, Law et al., 2014) but deficient on older adolescents (16-19 years old) (Aniza & Fairuz, 2009). The necessity to increase studies on older adolescents particularly on psychological factors that is essential to encourage active physical activity level. Thus, this study was done to look into the psychological factors that affect physical activity level among Form Four students in Selangor.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Adolescents are future adults. However, physical activity level reduced as adolescents aged (Lee et al., 2010). Majority (55%) of Malaysian students were physically inactive (Institute for Public Health, 2018). It is essential for adolescents to stay physically active and healthy as they can lead our country to a better tomorrow. The fundamental to identify the factors that affect their physical activity level on shaping their future health is extremely important and require research attention. This study is significant to identify the factors that affect physical activity level despite augment the database on physical activity patterns among Malaysian adolescents.

In addition to expansion of local literature, the findings is crucial to enrich and contribute to the development of policy to improve health promotion and health policy in the country. The reduction of physical activity in older adolescents directs the research to identify the relating factors for the reduction of physical activity in adolescents. This enhance the body of knowledge in the field and fill up the research gap on psychological factors that may effectively influence adolescents to be more active. Tackling the psychological factors can reduce the risk of non-communicable diseases which benefits adolescents' future health.

Through the identification of factors influence physical activity, the obligation of psychological factors are important to encourage adolescents to be physically active. The understanding of psychological factors, may aid in modify current health programme and to develop a much comprehensive health policy. The powerful inner will of able to stay physically active rooted from psychology would be more persuasive to adolescents. This may be constructive to implement more effective health programmes on adolescents for their future health (Institute for Public Health, 2017).

Moreover, the changes in physical activity level usually found among older adolescents when they grow up. The unhealthy behaviours may slowly developed into habit and carried into their young adulthood. This may progressively develop chronic diseases in their adulthood. Through targeting the Form Four students, they may revert the unhealthy behaviour or may inculcate good health habits which possibly guide them to take up the healthy behaviour which then carry on in their adulthood life later.

In the effort to uplift physically active behaviour among adolescents, Ministry of Education of Malaysia had introduced a school programme of 1 *Murid* 1 *Sukan* (1 Student 1 Sport) in the year of 2011. This programme was conceptualized to start at school level through two strategies of “Sports for All” and “Sports for Excellence” (Ministry of Education, 2011). Students are compulsory to take up at least one sport under the programme of 1 Students 1 Sport in line with the National Sports Policy to cultivate sports culture in the community (Ministry of Education, 2011).

This programme is anticipating all students benefited from the involvement in sports, particularly for those who are less active via strategies of “Sports for All”. School students may revert the physical inactivity and hence followed by a reduction in the risk that may relate to the development of non-communicable diseases. On the contrary, students showed higher and excellent sports performance, their talents and potentials are polished to a higher level through the strategies of “Sports for Excellence” (Ministry of Education, 2011). The fostering of sporting culture among students to become active and to inculcate healthy lifestyle in community would be important to strive towards sporting excellence by successive to create a sporting environment (Ministry of Education, 2011).

Present study findings may take as reference by school authorities, community leaders and researchers in planning health promotion programmes. They may consider the desires, needs and interests of the targeted group in the effort to reduce the prevalence of physical inactivity. This would be beneficial for future health programme intervention and implementation by taking psychological factors into consideration.

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective of present study is to determine the socio-demographic and psychological factors of physical activity level among Form Four students in Selangor.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the present study are:

- i. to determine the physical activity level among respondents.
- ii. to determine the socio-demographic, sedentary behaviours and body mass index (BMI) characteristics among respondents.
- iii. to determine the psychological factors (motivation, level of depression, level of anxiety, social physique anxiety, stress, level of self-esteem and physical activity self-efficacy) among respondents.
- iv. to determine the association between physical activity level and socio-demographic factors among respondents.
- v. to determine the association between physical activity level and sedentary behaviour level among respondents.

- vi. to determine the association between physical activity level and psychological factors (motivation, level of depression, level of anxiety, social physique anxiety, stress, level of self-esteem, physical activity self-efficacy) among respondents.
- vii. to determine the association between physical activity level and level of body mass index among respondents.
- viii. to determine the predictors of active physical activity among respondents.

1.5 Hypothesis

The hypothesis for this study are:

- i. There is significant association between physical activity level and socio-demographic among Form Four students in Selangor.
- ii. There is significant association between physical activity level and sedentary behaviours among Form Four students in Selangor.
- iii. There is significant difference between physical activity level and psychological factors (motivation, level of depression, level of anxiety, social physique anxiety, stress, level of self-esteem and physical activity self-efficacy) among Form Four students in Selangor.
- iv. There is significant association between the physical activity level and level of body mass index among Form Four students in Selangor.

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BIODATA OF STUDENT

Leong In Tyng is a student graduated from Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) with the degree of Bachelor of Health Sciences in Exercise and Sport Science in 2012. She is a dedicated student with great interest in the field of research. Her interest drives her to pursue Master degree in Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). She completes her Master of Science in Community Health in 2018.



LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

- Leong, I.T., Nor Afiah, M.Z. & Salmiah, M.S. (2017, October). Physical activity self-efficacy and physical activity level among form four students in Selangor. In H.A. Hashim & C.K. Chen, *11th International Sports Science Conference 2017*, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Kelantan, Malaysia.
- Leong, I.T., Nor Afiah, M.Z. & Salmiah, M.S. (2018, July). Self esteem and physical activity level among Form Four students. In Malaysian Journal of Public Health Medicine. *9th National Public Health Conference 2018, Translating Health Policies into Effective Action*, Malaysian Public Health Physicians' Association. 18(Suppl 2), 66-67.
- Leong, I.T., Nor Afiah, M.Z. & Salmiah, M.S. (2019). Do psychological factors and sedentary activities influence physical activity level? Findings from Malaysian adolescents. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 1-10. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1628079>



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