

DIETARY CONSUMPTION BEHAVIORS AMONG POOR HOUSEHOLDS IN MAROS REGENCY

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BACKGROUND: Household food consumption behavior is a critical determinant of nutritional status and population health. In low-income families, limited purchasing power often leads to inadequate dietary quality and diversity, which heightens the risk of chronic energy deficiency, anemia, and childhood stunting, with long-term consequences for productivity and well-being. This study aimed (1) to determine the effect of nutrition knowledge on healthy-living motivation and lifestyle among poor households in Maros Regency; (2) to examine the effect of socioeconomic status on healthy-living motivation and lifestyle; (3) to assess the combined effects of nutrition knowledge and socioeconomic status on dietary consumption behaviors; and (4) to evaluate the effects of healthy-living motivation and lifestyle on dietary consumption behaviors.

METHOD: An ex-post facto, quantitative survey design was employed. The model specified exogenous variables socioeconomic status (X1) and nutrition knowledge (X2); an additional exogenous/mediating variable, healthy-living motivation (X3); an intermediate (mediating) variable, lifestyle (X4); and the endogenous outcome, dietary consumption behavior (X5). The study was conducted in Tukamasea, Mattoangin, Minasa Baji, and Alatengae villages, Bantimurung Sub-district, Maros Regency, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The primary locus was poor households in these four villages. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, specifically Path Analysis. The sample comprised 200 households.

RESULTS: The findings indicate: (1) socioeconomic status exerts both direct and indirect effects on dietary consumption behaviors; (2) nutrition knowledge has a direct effect on dietary consumption behaviors and an indirect effect through lifestyle; (3) healthy-living motivation has a direct effect on dietary consumption behaviors and an indirect effect via lifestyle; and (4) lifestyle itself has a significant effect on dietary consumption behaviors.

CONCLUSION: Dietary behaviors among low-income households are shaped by structural and psychosocial factors: socioeconomic status exerts direct and indirect effects; nutrition knowledge and healthy-living motivation each have direct effects and additional indirect effects through lifestyle; and lifestyle itself significantly predicts diet quality. These findings underscore the need for integrated interventions that alleviate socioeconomic constraints while enhancing knowledge, motivation, and supportive lifestyle practices to achieve sustainable improvements in dietary consumption.

KEYWORDS: nutrition; behavior; poor households; Maros Regency; Indonesia