

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Research questions and research objectives

- Research questions:
 - What is the prevalence of malnutrition among children aged 6 to 17 months in provinces: Lao Cai, Hung Yen, Phu Yen, Ben Tre, and DaNang?
 - What are the associations of community's characteristics and nutritional status in children aged 6 to 17 months in provinces: Lao Cai, Hung Yen, Phu Yen, Ben Tre, and DaNang?

- Research objectives:
 1. To estimate the prevalence of malnutrition among children aged 6 to 17 months in provinces: Lao Cai, Hung Yen, Phu Yen, Ben Tre, and DaNang,
 2. To describe the child's, the family's and the caregiver's characteristics for children from 6 to 17 months in 5 provinces: Lao Cai, Hung Yen, Phu Yen, Ben Tre, and DaNang,
 3. To describe community's characteristics in 5 provinces: Lao Cai, Hung Yen, Phu Yen, Ben Tre, and DaNang,
 4. To determine the associations of community's characteristics and nutritional status in children from 6 to 17 months when controlling for the effects of child's own, family's, caregiver's characteristics in 5 provinces: Lao Cai, Hung Yen, Phu Yen, Ben Tre, and DaNang.

2.2 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework underlying this study (Figure 1) is adapted from the United Nations Children's Fund's framework for the Causes of Child Malnutrition¹ and the subsequent Extended Model of Care by Engle, et al.[16].

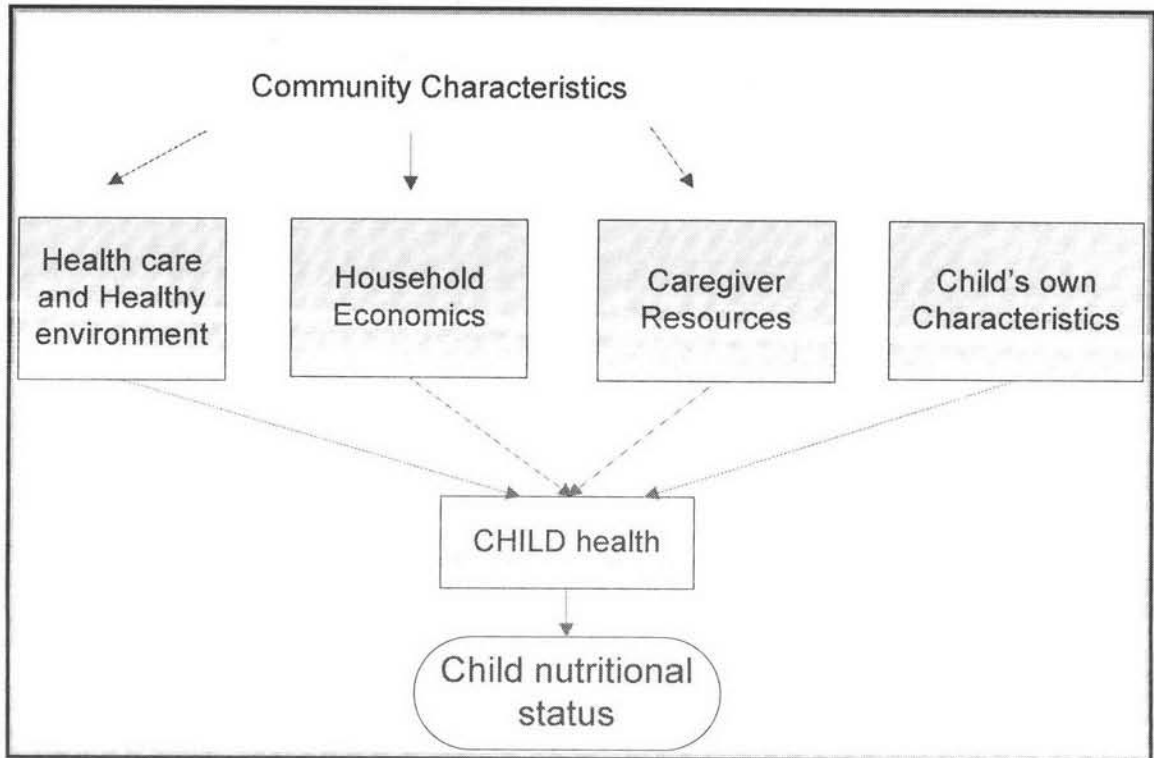


Figure 1. Conceptual framework on factors of child nutritional status

2.3 Keywords

Child, malnutrition, community factors, and Vietnam.

2.4 Research hypothesis

- The prevalence of malnutrition in children 6 to 17 months of age is different in 5 provinces: Lao Cai, Hung Yen, Phu Yen, Ben Tre, and DaNang.
- Besides child's, family's, caregiver's characteristics, the community's characteristics also have strong associations with nutritional status in children aged 6 to 17 months in provinces: Lao Cai, Hung Yen, Phu Yen, Ben Tre, and DaNang

2.5 Operational definitions

Malnutrition

Malnutrition is associated with both under-nutrition and over-nutrition. This research uses this term to refer to cases of under-nutrition. In children, malnutrition is synonymous with growth failure – malnourished children are shorter and lighter than they should be for their age [1].

There are three anthropometric indices weight-for-age (WA), height-for-age (HA) and weight-for-height (WH). The anthropometric indices are low if less than -2 SD of the reference population (National Center for Health Statistics) [44].

Low WH is considered an indicator of wasting (i.e., "thinness"). Low HA is considered an indicator of stunting (i.e., "shortness"). The third index, WA, is primarily a composite of WH and HA, and fails to distinguish tall, thin children from short, well-proportioned children.

Caregiver

Throughout this study, the term "caregiver" is used to refer to the primary caregiver. It is usually the mother of the child. In Vietnamese culture, mothers are the primary providers of food, as well as the primary caregivers for children. It is usually mothers who shop, prepare, and distribute the food for family meals, and mothers who provide the basic nurturing and care activities for children, such as feeding, cleaning, dressing, attending to illnesses, and keeping a watchful eye on the children's activities. However, if the child has separated from the mother for 1 year or the mother is not the biological mother, the main caregiver has been defined as the person who lives in the household and spends the most time for taking care of the child

Community

In this research, a community is a commune. A commune, in Vietnam, has a local government, commune health centre, primary school, post office and a market.