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## Forecasting adults' inclination towards adopting healthy dietary habits: A case study from rural and urban Tanzania

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### Abstract

The “triple burden of malnutrition”, meaning the coexistence of undernutrition, overweight and obesity, and micronutrient deficiencies, is a growing challenge in sub-Saharan Africa. Nutrition transition refers to changes in lifestyle and dietary patterns driven by ongoing urbanisation, globalisation, and economic growth and is rapidly taking place in some developing countries such as Tanzania. Improving dietary intake habits is one essential objective in public health initiatives. Comprehending human perception and behaviour concerning these healthy dietary habits is crucial for designing appropriate policies aimed at fostering a healthier society, particularly in developing countries like Tanzania. The present study endeavours to forecast adults' inclination toward adopting healthy dietary habits by utilising the Health Belief Model, supplemented by the additive influences of health identity and knowledge, rooted in the ‘Identity Theory and the Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice’ (KAP) model. For the study, 567 adults were from an urban and rural cohort in Tanzania. Survey-based data collection was conducted in 2023 in two distinct places of residence, namely Ilala/Dar es Salaam (urban) and Pwani region (rural) Tanzania, to allow for a comparative analysis of the rural-urban divide. Structural equation modelling revealed that the extended Health Belief Model (HBM) elucidated 48% of the variability in adults' inclination toward healthy eating choices. Subsequently, the differences/similarities in place of residents and variables of HBM were investigated using the t-test. Results revealed that urban and rural residents significantly differ from each other regarding their knowledge, attitude, health value, cue to action, and intention toward healthy eating choices. The mean score of urban residents was higher than that of rural residents in all these variables. These findings hold the potential to guide educators and policymakers in developing persuasive communications that effectively influence individuals' intentions to adopt healthier eating habits.

**Keywords:** Dietary intake habits, food, HBM, perception and behaviour