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## Motives underlying the consumption of healthy foods in urban and peri-urban areas of tanzania: the food choice questionnaire

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### Abstract

Constructing resilient food systems that promote the consumption of safe and high-quality diets at the community level needs, among other factors, the generation of sustainable demand for healthy foods. A subtle understanding of the context-specific motives driving consumers' dietary decisions is critical for informing components of the food system that shape food choices. This study employed the Food Choice Questionnaire (FCQ) to examine consumer motivations for fruit and vegetable consumption, as proxies for healthy food choices. Cross-sectional data were collected from 567 consumers in Tanzania's Ilala and Mkuranga districts, respectively, representing urban and peri-urban contexts. Descriptive statistics and stepwise regression analysis were used to identify key motivational predictors of healthy food consumption. Findings reveal that consumers consider the sensory appeal of food, such as aroma, appearance, and taste, as the most important factor when choosing food. In contrast, familiarity with food emerges as the least important. Other important motives include food price and convenience, particularly concerning food preparation and availability. Notable differences were observed between urban and peri-urban consumers: urban consumers prioritised convenience, naturalness, sensory appeal, and price, while peri-urban consumers placed significantly greater emphasis on health considerations. Stepwise regression identified that motives related to body weight control ( $\beta = 0.05$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), convenience ( $\beta = 0.03$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and health ( $\beta = 0.05$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) significantly predict the consumption of fruits and vegetables. These results underscore the necessity of integrating consumer preferences into strategies aimed at fostering sustainable demand for healthy foods. Although food safety and quality remain essential, demand-side considerations such as convenience and weight management motivations play a crucial role in shaping healthier dietary behaviours.

**Keywords:** Food choice questionnaire, food systems, healthy diets, Tanzania