

## What Drives Food Choices of Consumers in Designated Countries in Africa and Europe?

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### Abstract

The food choice motives of target markets are important to consider when developing food products. In contrast to studies conducted involving consumers in countries in Europe, very little is published about what motivates consumers' food choices in different African countries. In many parts of the world, changes in the climate are affecting the production and supply of staple food crops e.g., wheat. Many food products contain wheat flour as an ingredient. With Ukraine and Russia at war, obtaining wheat grain is a challenge. Africa imports most of its wheat as the crop does not grow well in the African climate. However, there are other crops such as sorghum, teff, millet, cowpea and Bambara groundnuts which thrive in the sub-Saharan African climate. The crops are great candidates for use in the development of food products to ensure food security in Africa, but also for the associated economic benefits from export to Europe. The objective of the research was to determine the dispositions of consumers in different countries and continents (Africa and Europe) towards the use of the alternative crops for food ingredients and products,

An online survey was used to better understand what respondents in South Africa, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Finland, Norway and France considered as important when choosing their food. Each respondent rated 39 statements developed by Magano (in 2022) on a 7-point agreement scale. In addition, demographic information and information assessing dispositions towards product concepts based on ingredients from alternative crops were obtained.

The results highlight the similarities and differences in food choice motives to consider when developing and marketing products made with ingredients from alternative crops. It also provided first insights on the relationship between food choice motives and the interest of consumers towards trying and consuming product concepts such as a ready-to-eat puffed sorghum snack, highly nutritious cowpea pasta, wheat enriched with teff and faba bean-pasta, convenient pre-cooked Bambara groundnuts.

### PRESENTER BIOGRAPHY: HENRIETTE DE KOCK

Riëtte de Kock is professor of Consumer and Food Sciences at the University of Pretoria. Her research focuses on the optimization of the sensory properties of foods that contribute to the nutrition status and well-being of consumers in sub-Saharan Africa. This includes food product development to meet the demands of a growing, more urbanized African population, and the exploration of Africa's bio-diverse food sources to make products not only nutritionally adequate but also appealing and appetising. Riëtte is the chair of the Africa Network for Sensory Evaluation Research (ANSWER) and a past research chair of the European Sensory Network. She is President Elect of the South African Association for Food Science & Technology. In 2017, she received a South Africa national award as Distinguished Woman Scientist for outstanding contributions to research and innovation leading to socio-economic impact and woman empowerment.