



Contribution ID: 46

Type: **not specified**

Gendered Patterns in Nutritious Food Consumption: Household Dynamics, Food Affordability, and Adaptive Strategies

This study explores gendered patterns in nutritious food consumption, with a particular focus on household dynamics, food affordability, and adaptive strategies in Tanzania. Motivated by the persistent gender disparities in access to nutritious food, the research examines how decision-making, budgeting, and perceptions of food prices differ between male- and female-headed households. Data were collected from 300 households across three regions in Tanzania, through surveys, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews. The findings reveal that female-headed households face greater barriers to accessing nutritious foods, primarily due to income disparities and limited resources. Economic constraints exacerbate food insecurity, with price perceptions influencing food choices. While both male- and female-headed households reported shifting towards cheaper, less nutritious alternatives in response to rising food prices, female-headed households were more likely to experience negative impacts on dietary diversity. The study highlights the need for gender-sensitive nutrition policies that address economic and social barriers, promote equitable food access, and support women's central role in household food security. This aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) and Goal 5 (Gender Equality), highlighting the importance of equitable access to nutritious food for all households.

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Session Classification: Gendered Patterns in Nutritious Food Consumption: Household Dynamics, Food Affordability, and Adaptive Strategies (FR)

Track Classification: Mid-Review Track: second papers.: Economics Papers : Mid-Review