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## **SOCIAL TRUST AND CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE DECISIONS OF FARM-BASED BIOFORTIFIED FOODS IN SELECTED DISTRICTS OF MALAWI**

To reverse malnutrition and enhance human capital development, countries continue to invest in programs that support scaling up nutrition-sensitive agriculture like biofortification of farm-based crops. Despite the stipulated benefits, the uptake of orange fresh sweet potato (OFSP) and quality protein maize (QPM) biofortified crops remains low in Africa. To contribute to the literature on improving the uptake of OFSP and QPM, this study assesses the associated effect of social or interpersonal trust on consumption and expenditure decisions. We use the Berg, Dickhaut, and McCabe, (BDM) investment game and choice experiment to elicit social trust and willingness to pay for OFSP and QPM, respectively. Using data from three selected districts in Malawi and different econometrics tools, we observe mixed effects of different categories of social trust. People who are more likely to trust other people within their circle (in-group) are less likely to uptake consumption of OFSP and QPM. On the contrary, having trust in strangers (out-group) could positively influence the decision to consume OFSP and the extent of consuming QPM, signifying the importance of out-group trust in breaking the consumption decision hurdle. Additionally, access to nutrition education, particularly on healthy cooking practices and receiving QPM significantly influences consumption decisions, the extent of consumption and willingness to pay for OFSP and QPM. We recommend enhanced government and public interventions in disseminating information on the benefits of and best practices in processing biofortified foods to influence change among rural households.

**Primary author:** TIONE, Sarah (LUANAR)

**Co-authors:** NG'ONG'OLA, Chimwemwe (LUANAR); KAPHAIKA, Chrispin (LUANAR); CHATENGA, Humprey (KuHES); CHIMSEU, Patrick (LUANAR); PHIRI, Ronald (Ministry of Gender)

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