

# Review of: "Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on Food Consumption Preferences"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

## Review of manuscript by Patricia et al (2023)

Title: Assessing the impact of COVID 19 on food consumption preferences

I applaud your attempt at doing research that will improve the lives of the people of Uganda. After reading your manuscript it was clear to me that you had two distinct areas that you were trying to do research on.

Firstly you were trying to find out what people were eating before COVID-19 and after COVID-19 restrictions and economic impacts thereof.

Secondly you were trying to assess how food security was impacted and how agricultural processes or the food system could be improved to ensure that all Ugandans will be provided with sufficient food to be food secure.

Unfortunately, it looks like your research planning was not thorough enough to really understand what you should investigate to get answers to your questions. Regarding the question of food preferences, one should also ask the question of do we need to know what people like to eat (preference) or what people should eat to be healthy? Another question that could be asked is what food is more expensive and what can people afford during difficult economic times. I found the research methods lacking in various aspects. Firstly you do not ask what people earn, or how much money they have to buy food. Surely this was affected by COVID-19 and loss of jobs. Therefore, I find that a lot of the conclusions that are made regarding why people ate more, less or the same during COVID-19 pandemic is not valid if we do not take into consideration how much money they had to buy food in the first place.

Furthermore the conclusions that are made regarding agricultural processes are, I feel, completely unsubstantiated due to a lack of research methodology. The questions that need to be asked of farmers, government, suppliers of food produce and markets were not asked. Which meant that you made conclusions about agricultural processes that were only substantiated by the 70 participants that have nothing to do with agriculture and who do not have the professional know how of how food is produced or how to ensure food security in a country. Additionally, you do not define 'modernized agriculture' and what the agricultural processes are like at the moment.

Lastly regarding food intake, there are so many validated tools that measure food intake, I will mention a few; 24 hour food intake, quantified food frequency questionnaire and unquantified food frequency questionnaire as well as hundreds of research papers that cover this topic that you could have referred to, to determine which food intake questionnaires

could be used. Instead your questionnaires were unvalidated and used subjective questions that are very difficult to replicate. Ask yourself, what is 'a lot of food' to you may not be 'a lot of food' to someone else. Immediately you can then see that the validity of your conclusions can be questioned and as such your research is then left with many question marks.

The authors need to familiarise themselves with the typical flow of a research paper. The results section should not be in the methods section and should be clearly set apart from the statistics section. Additionally the sample size should be based on a sample size calculation and thought should be put into how many people you need from different areas in the municipality or district to give you the best possible reliability of reaching people from various economic levels, including those who are impoverished to those who are well off.

Lastly when writing up the results one should highlight only those aspects that are of interest, then refer to the table or figure, and not rewrite the entire table or figure.

Please make sure that you plan your objectives and aims with the utmost care and write a proposal where the methodology is well thought through, using recent research that is similar to your research and choose tools that have been validated to base your questionnaires on.

We do not have to reinvent the wheel.