What drives food choices? A segmentation study of European consumers across 27 countries

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Abstract

In order to effectively promote healthy and sustainable foods, it is essential to understand the motives that drive food purchases. This study identified consumer segments based on food choice motives. A cross-sectional survey was carried out with 24 713 European adults from 27 countries. A latent profile analysis revealed three segments. *Mainstream consumers* (51.6%) relied on price, convenience, locality and seasonality of foods. *Disengaged consumers* (25%) assigned relatively low importance to all motives, indicating low involvement in food decision-making, and scored extremely low on sustainability-related factors. *Conscious consumers* (23.5%) scored relatively high on all motives but attributed particularly higher importance to sustainability- and health-related factors. Segment membership was predicted by gender, education and perceived income sufficiency. Profiles also differed significantly in diet quality and use of food information sources. Findings provide implications for message strategies and channel selection when promoting healthy and sustainable food products.

Keywords: food, segmentation, motives, marketing