

Gendered Perceptions of Pork Consumption in Uganda: A Qualitative Analysis

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Source: <https://peoplemeetandfoodtheyeat.com/2018/07/17/ugandan-fried-pork-with-all-the-trimmings/>

Key messages

- Both men and women consume pork because of health reasons.
- Male and female choice of pork retail outlets is attributed to the hygiene of the premises and the attendants.
- Communities perceive female consumers who eat pork from pork retail outlets as demonstrating loneliness and prostitution.
- The presence of unaccompanied women at pork retail outlets signifies irresponsibility.
- Female pork consumers perceive men who patronize pork joints as irresponsible and running away from their traditional responsibilities as family breadwinners.

Background

- Globally, pork is the most consumed meat due to its rich nutritional value (protein, iron, zinc, potassium, magnesium, vitamins).
- Consuming pork is important for the health of both men and women. However, worldwide, women eat less pork than men and this is not different in Uganda.
- The reasons why pork consumption is gendered are largely unknown, and the aim of this was to explore possible reasons.
- Research questions were to
 - identify attributes of pork retail outlets that male and female pork consumers consider when purchasing pork,
 - examine gendered perceptions of pork consumption, and
 - analyse other factors affecting consumption of pork by women and men in Kampala District.

Methods

- Pork consumer study was in Kampala (people from different socio-cultural backgrounds)
- Semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 116 pork consumers (64 male and 52 female respondents)
- 6 focus group discussions with consumers (3 men, 3 women only)
- 9 semi-structured key informant interviews with pork retail owners/managers
- Content analysis was performed on the transcripts of these interviews and discussed using Nvivo software.

Results

- Men and women had a perception that eating pork improves the immune system, especially among people living with HIV/AIDS.
- Men consume pork because it tastes good, relieves hangover, and is social (get together to discuss business and everyday life issues).
- Women consume pork because it tastes good and is tender meat.
- For both men and women the hygiene (cleanliness) of the pork retail outlet environment as well as that of the waiters and waitresses was the most important attribute for choosing pork retail outlet.
- Female respondents also looked for other attributes of retailers including proximity of the pork retail outlet to their homes, security (open and free of attack and harassment), good customer care (friendliness, respect and speed of services) and quality of pork (well dried pork).
- On the other hand, male respondents looked for retail outlet that have a relaxed setting that allow privacy, sell pork on credit, offer low prices, and that use accurate weighing scales.

Conclusions

- Our study revealed variations between men and women pork consumption behavior.
- It gave insights into consumer decision making processes, which are significant for the innovation and diversification in the Uganda pork sector and for public health policy decisions related to meat consumption in general and pork consumption in particular.
- Subsequently, to avoid gender differences of pork consumption, there is need to sensitize people about social-cultural beliefs/attitudes that prohibit women from eating pork so that men, women and children are allowed to freely consume pork.
- Health campaigns on pork consumption should be gendered in order to increase the intake of pork amongst women, men and children.

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