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Eating healthy to impress: How conspicuous consumption, perceived self-control motivation, and descriptive normative influence determine functional food choices

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1 **Eating healthy to impress: how conspicuous consumption, perceived self-control**
2 **motivation, and descriptive normative influence determine functional food choices**

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17
18 **Abstract**

19 Functional foods are promoted as products that provide specific health benefits beyond basic
20 nutrition. While a number of studies show that the motivation behind the purchase of such
21 products is oriented towards health concerns, we argue that consumers' choice of functional
22 food can also be driven by less health-related hedonic or social motives, such as a tendency
23 for indulgence vs. self-control or the motivation to impress and show off. This proposition
24 has not been systematically and empirically tested before. Hence, the aim of the present study
25 is to reveal the relationship between conspicuous consumption, perceived self-control
26 motivation, susceptibility to descriptive normative influence and the consumption of
27 functional foods. Our results (N = 900) suggest that conspicuous consumption and
28 susceptibility to descriptive normative influence are positively associated with functional
29 food distinctiveness evaluation while perceived self-control motivation is negatively
30 associated with such evaluation. Moreover, results further revealed the indirect effects of
31 susceptibility to descriptive normative influence, conspicuous consumption and perceived
32 self-control motivation on self-reported purchase rates of functional foods via the functional
33 food distinctiveness evaluation. The findings support the relevance of social and hedonic
34 motives for policy makers and marketers in the functional foods industry for marketing and
35 health promotion.

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37 **Keywords**

38 *Functional food, Consumer behavior, Conspicuous consumption, Perceived self-control*
39 *motivation, Descriptive normative influence*

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