FREQUENCY OF CULTURED CATFISH CONSUMPTION AND REASONS IN WUKARI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, TARABA STATE NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
The study investigated the frequency of cultured catfish consumption and reasons in Wukari Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to select five wards within Wukari township in the Local Government Area, and forty respondents (40) from each of the five selected wards to give a total sample size of two hundred (200). Structured questionnaire and scheduled interview were used to obtain data from the respondents. Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used for data analysis at P<0.05. Results indicated that majority (56.5%) of the respondents were male, 53.5% were single, 38% were between the ages of 25-30 years, house hold size of 5 and above were 52%, tertiary education attained was 46.0% while 71.5% have been on their jobs 1-10 years and 14% earned ₦50,000 and above. Only 26.5% consumed cultured catfish monthly, 24.5% consumed weekly and 28.5% rarely consume cultured Catfish while tastes 78.0% and flavour 54.0% were major reasons for consumption. Significant association existed between the socio-economic characteristics (year on the job p<0.05) and reasons for consumption of cultured catfish. The study recommended that awareness and health talk on health benefits of farmed catfish be emphasized to all categories of the inhabitants of the study area.
Keywords: Catfish, Culture, Consumption, Organoleptic, Socio-economics

INTRODUCTION

The growing demand for healthy and nutritious diets, driven by a fast-growing population, a rise in incomes, and the increasing appreciation for nutrition-benefits of fish consumption, calls for accelerated aquatic food system transformation and resilience (FAO, 2022; Rossignoli *et al.,* 2023). The protein value of fish is considerably higher than any other food substance because of high content of essential amino acid in it (Krabbenhoft *et al.,* 2019). Fish protein contains twenty-two of the essential amino acids needed for proper growth and development of the body in a well-balanced ratio (Asogwa and Asogwa, 2019). Efforts to boost animal production and bridge the gap between supply and demand are particularly directed at fish production which is traditionally regarded as a cheap source of protein (Adeosun *et al.,* 2024). Many populations can benefit from fish as a low-cost, readily available addition to their diet; avoidance of fish altogether reduces nutritional opportunities from fish, a problematic potential outcome (Oken *et al.,*2012). The alarming sources of health and nutrition crisis can find answers in fish consumption, out of a large number of health benefits of eating fish, its contribution as a fabulous source of high-quality proteins is remarkable and is to be noted (Ogunremi *et al,.*2023). Fish consumption advisories or guidelines are designed to provide citizens with information on fish from inland waters that are lower in chemical contamination and are, therefore, safe meal choices relative to those that are from marine water and high in contamination, thus improving conscious consumption behaviors (Krabbenhoft *et al.,*2019). In areas where poverty is high especially rural areas, the ability to alter one's consumption practices may be limited thus awareness on the conscious consumption of marine fish toward those farmed and low in contaminants can be challenging. Thus, the aim of the study was to investigate the frequency of cat fish consumption and reasons in Wukari Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria. Specific objectives are to: (i) examine the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents (ii) investigate the frequency of fish consumption among the respondents (iii) ascertain the reasons associated with cultured cat fish consumption in the study area.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Wukari Local Government Area is located in the Southern Zone of Taraba State and lies on the co-ordinates 7.9303º N, 9.8125º E covering an area of 4,308Km² with a total population size of 241,546 based on the 2006 census. The vegetation of the area is savannah and has two climatic seasons wet (April-October) and the dry season (November-March), it is the Traditional Headquarters of the Jukun and Wukari town houses the Aku Uka, the Supreme Leader of the Jukun People. The major economic activity in the Local Government is Farming. (Andrew *et al.,*2017). Simple random sampling technique was used to select five wards in Wukari Local Government Area, and forty respondents from each of the five wards to give a total sample size of two hundred (200). Structured questionnaire and scheduled interview were used to obtain data from the respondents. Descriptive (Frequency counts, percentages and chart) and Inferential (Chi square) were used for data analysis at P<0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Table 1 indicated that majority (56.5%) of the respondents were male, 53.5% were single, 38% were between the ages of 25-30 years, this indicated dominance of youth which if properly harnessed could result in productive potentials. About 54 % were single, this could imply that their consumption rate will be low as they do not have much people to feed. House hold size of 5 and above were 52%, normally all things being equal it is expected that large house hold size should consume more. Tertiary education of 46.0% indicated that the respondents are knowledgeable to take decision on the best protein source to take. Generally, high level of education among the respondents by extension could also affect their behavioural attitude towards acceptance and consumption of farmed Catfish. Only 46% were self-employed, 71.5% have been on their jobs 1-10 years and 14% earned ₦50,000 and above.

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of Fish Farmers

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	113	56.5
	Female	67	45.5
Marital status	Single	107	53.5
	Married	93	46.5
Age (Years)	< 30	77	38.5
	31-40	58	29.0
	41-50	52	26.0
	>50	13	6.5
Educational level	Informal education	32	16.0
	Primary school certificate	25	12.5
	Secondary school cert.	51	25.3
	Tertiary	92	46.0
House hold size	1-4	96	48.0
	>5	104	52.0
Occupation	Civil servant	41	20.5
	Self employed	92	46.0
	Business	67	33.5
Job duration (Years)	1-10	143	71.5
	11-20	51	25.5
	> 20	6	3.0
Monthly income	< ₦20,000	78	39.0
	₦21,000-₦00,000	56	28.0
	₦31,000-₦39,000	22	11.0
	₦40,000-₦49,000	16	8.0
	Above ₦50,000	28	14.0

Source: Field survey, 2022

Frequency of cultured Catfish Consumption

Cultured Catfish consumption frequency among respondents in the study area showed that 28.5% rarely consumed cultured catfish, 26.5% consumed monthly, 24.5% consumed weekly, and 20.5%. consumed fortnightly as showed in Figure1. Frequency of cultured catfish consumption could be attributed to income. The study area has abundance of livestock especially beef from cattle which could be attributed to low frequency rate of cultured catfish consumption. Also, there are very few fish farms in the study area and the neighboring communities coupled with the presence of lower River Benue where fish are caught from the wild and much cheaper than those cultured, hence some catfish consumers patronize catfish caught from the wild which are cheaper.

Reasons for consumption of cultured Catfish

The reasons for consumption of Catfish as perceived by the respondents includes tastes 78.0%, flavour 54.0% and availability 23.5% however, 10.5% consumed cultured Catfish because there is no alternative respectively. Terrill and Patrick (2016) in a similar study reported that Catfish consumption frequency and reasons among respondents were due to taste, availability.

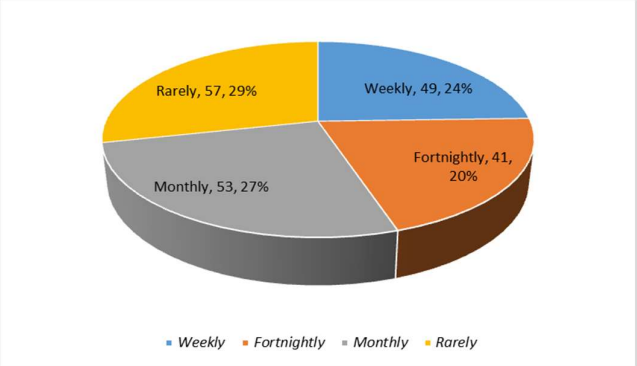

Figure 1: Frequency of cultured Catfish Consumption

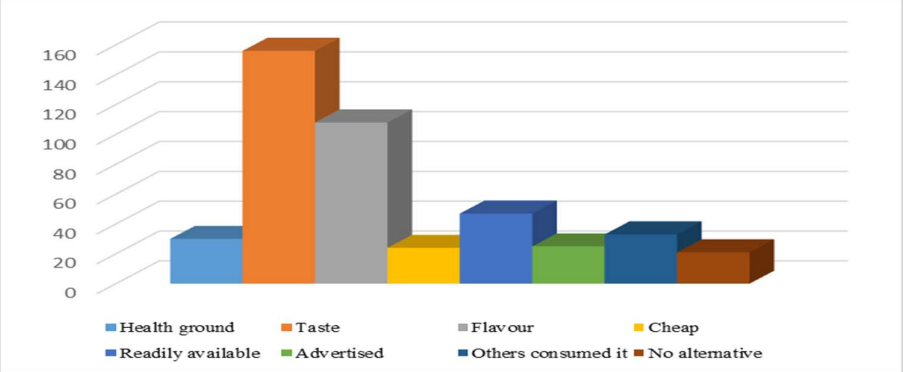

Figure 2: Reasons for consumption of cultured Catfish

Table 2 Association between the Socio-economic characteristics and Catfish consumption frequency and reasons

Demographic	Chi-square	Contingency value	Correlation co-efficient	p value	Remarks
Sex	3.406	.129	.130	.065	Not Sig.
Marital status	0.262	.036	.036	.609	Not Sig.
Age	6.719	.180	.045	.242	Not Sig
Family size	0.974	.070	.070	.324	Not Sig
Educational qualification	2.409	.109	-.103	.492	Not Sig
Primary occupation	0.710	.059	-.026	.701	Not Sig
Years on the job	9.811	.216	-.192	.044*	Sig
Income per month	8.156	.198	-.125	.148	Not Sig

*= significant at 0.05% level.

Association between socio-economic characteristics, cultured Catfish consumption frequency and reasons among the respondents

Table 2 showed that there is a significant association between Socio-economic characteristics (years on the job) cultured Catfish consumption and reasons in the study. Hence, the number of years spent on job influenced cultured Catfish consumption frequency and reasons among the respondents. This showed that the longer the respondents stayed on their jobs, all things been equal the more the income and the higher the purchasing power of the respondents on culture Catfish consumption. There is no significant association between the Socio-economic characteristics and Catfish consumption frequency and reasons.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study revealed that most of the respondents were male, single self-employed and have stayed on their job for average of ten years. Some of the respondents rarely consume cultured catfish while some consumers do it on monthly basis. Reasons for consumption of cultured catfish among the respondents was because of taste and flavour. The study recommended that sensitization on health benefits of cultured Catfish should be intensified among the residents which will increase its level of consumption.

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