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“Global food security and food safety:
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Insects for Food! Factors Influencing Consumer Acceptance and Quantity Consumed of Edible Winged Termites

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Abstract

Developing countries are faced with increased population growth and urbanisation resulting in high demand for food, especially animal based protein. The dilemma is how to meet the rising demand for animal based protein in the face of climate change. Utilisation of edible insects as food offers a possible sustainable solution to meet the rising protein demand besides its high nutritive value. Edible winged termites (EWT) consumption and commercialization is gaining popularity among consumers in western Kenya. Despite EWT having economic, nutritional and environmental benefits, information on factors influencing its acceptance and demand is scanty among rural and urban consumers. The aim of this study was to assess consumers' socioeconomic, institutional and EWT characteristics influencing its acceptance and quantity consumed. Multistage sampling procedure was used to sample 384 rural and urban consumers in Western Kenya. Data was collected through face to face interviews using pre-tested semi-structured questionnaire by well-trained enumerators. Data was analysed using factor analysis and Craggit model. Consumer's perception of EWT was categorised into three: EWT attributes, convenience and culture. Acceptance and demand of EWT was influenced by gender, education, higher number of children below 5 years, income, household being a native of western Kenya and EWT attributes among rural and urban consumer. We recommend more education on use of edible insects as food, with much emphasis on its benefits and desirable attributes. This can be done through established cultural centres and 'food clinics' to create awareness among consumers to enhance the commercialization of EWT value chain. Further, there is need to in cooperate entomophagy in formal education curricula to promote the transfer of knowledge to future generations.

Keywords: Consumer acceptance, craggit model, demand, edible winged termites, factor analysis