

Attitudes To Rabbit Meat And Problems Associated With It's Consumption In Sokoto Metropolis

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ABSTRACT

A survey was carried out to assess consumer attitude to rabbit meat consumption and problems associated with it. A Multistage sampling was used to obtain information from 200 respondents. Data were obtained using a semi structured questionnaire. Respondents indicated a liking for rabbit meat believing that it is healthy and tastes good. Unavailability was cited as the most important factor hindering rabbit meat consumption. Respondents liked rabbit meat and declared it palatable, yet they do not prefer it to other meat types probably because of their familiarity with other meat types which are readily available in the market and stores than rabbit meat. Rabbit meat may possibly be preferred if it were to be made readily available like other meat types. Cut up portions of rabbit carcass is preferred to whole. Greater proportions (41.81%) of the respondents prefer rabbit meat fried but only 0.43% want it processed into meat floss. Ready to eat products should be made available in stores and market places

KEYWORDS: Attitude, Rabbit meat, Availability, Consumption

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I. INTRODUCTION

Animal protein supply and consumption is low in Nigeria especially among the low income and non-wage earners (Iyange & Orewa, 2009). The average estimated crude protein requirement of an adult Nigerian is between 65 and 85g per person daily, 35g of which should come from animal source (Adetunji & Adepoju, 2011). Atsu, 2002, put the average consumption of animal protein at 4.5g/head/day as against the 35g/head/day. This therefore, calls for increase in livestock production to meet the demand of the populace. Meat is globally accepted, generally delicious and highly desirable by humans for both its nutrients content and taste. Meat consumption in different countries, families and individuals varies socially, economically, religiously and culturally (Ojewola & Onwuka, 2001). Some people find it difficult to eat food without meat while others desire it but cannot eat daily. Meat contains essential nutrients and can provide a variety of micronutrients that are difficult to obtain in sufficient quantities from plants. These nutrients include; vitamin A, vitamin B-12, riboflavin, calcium and zinc which are readily available in meat (Murphy & Allen, 2003). Although meat is necessary for human development, it contains some unfavorable compounds like cholesterol, fat and sodium which could be detrimental to human health. This has made some people unwilling to consume red meat in large quantities particularly beef because of the belief that it contains these substances. According to Thomas, Erlinger, Lawrence, & Appel, (2003) and Pan, Sun, & Bernstein, 2011, red meat has the potential to increase the risk of coronary heart disease because it contains high proportion of saturated fat. Rabbit meat however has been reported (Owen & Amakiri, 2010) to be a healthy alternative to beef, poultry and pork. Despite the advantages of rabbits, its production and consumption was rated sixth after beef, mutton, chevon, fish and game (Onifade, A., Obuvan, & Fabanikanda, 1999). It is felt that an understanding of attitudes in respect of rabbit meat will help in promoting its consumption and change consumer attitude towards rabbit meat products.

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

Study area

The study was carried out in Sokoto metropolis. The state is located between latitudes 12 and 13 58' N and longitudes 4 8' and 6 54' E with maximum temperature of 41⁰C and minimum of 13⁰C in April and January respectively. The major livestock in the state includes cattle, sheep, goats and poultry (Mamman, Oyenbanji, & Peter, 2000). There are many retail outlets for fresh and processed meats

Sampling

A multistage sampling procedure was employed to obtain the information on 200 respondents. In the first stage, all the local Government Areas within sokoto metropolis were involved. In the second stage, 25 areas were purposively selected with a probability proportionate to a measure of size of each local government area. In the third stage, 8 respondents each were conveniently selected from all selected areas for the interview. (Table 1)

Table 1: Sampling Procedure

Stage	1st Stage (LGA)	2nd Stage (Location)	3rd Stage (Respondents)
	Sokoto North	7 Areas	56
	Sokoto South	7 Areas	56
	Wamakko	6 Areas	48
	Dangeshuni	3 Areas	24
	Kware	2 Areas	16
Technique	Purposive	Proportionate	Convenient
Total	5	25	200

Consumer Survey

The study purposively covered the entire sokoto metropolis, consisting of SokotoNorth, SokotoSouth, Wamakko, Dange-Shuni and Kware. The areas were selected proportionate to the local government’s contribution of areas to the Metropolis. Eight Respondents were conveniently selected and interviewed from each of the selected areas as indicated in table 1 above. A total of 200 respondents were interviewed with the aid of a semi structured questionnaire and a check list to obtain their attitude for rabbit meat.

Attitudinal data was collected with the aid of a 5-point Likertscale (5, strongly agree – 1, strongly disagree) to obtain attitudes of respondents to each attitudinal statement about rabbit meat, the LikertDifferentialwas used. The Likert differential showed whether attitude was positive or negative and was obtained by subtracting the Likert response from the Likertmean. The Likert mean was obtained by summing the five points of the likert scale and dividing by 5, thus: $1+2+3+4+5= 15/5 = 3$.

Data on factors militating against rabbit consumption and how to promote consumption was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Attitude to Rabbit Meat

Respondents indicated a liking for rabbit meat, believing that it is healthy and taste good. They did not believe that rabbit carcass has an unattractive appearance and did not believe that rabbit meat is more palatable than other meat types. Respondents however, believed that rabbit carcasses are better presented fresh than dried, jointed than whole and skinned than singed.

Table 2: Attitudinal Responses to Rabbit Meat

Attitudinal statement	Likert mean	Likert differential
I like rabbit meat	4.37	1.37
Rabbit meat tastes good	4.1	1.11
I prefer rabbit meat to all meat types	2.79	-0.21
Rabbit meat is more palatable than other meat types	3.02	0.02
Consumption of rabbit meat is healthy	3.85	0.85
Rabbit carcass looks unattractive	2.43	-0.57
I hate rabbit meat	2.05	-0.95
Rabbit carcasses are better presented fresh than dried	3.76	0.76
Rabbit carcasses are better presented jointed than whole	3.81	0.81
Rabbit carcasses are better presented skinned than singed	3.70	0.70
I hate rabbit meat	2.05	-0.95

That respondents like rabbit meat and declared it to taste good and palatable may be attributed to its excellent organoleptic properties of tenderness, juiciness and flavour as reported by (Zotte, et al., 2014). Tenderness, juiciness and flavour are the main quality attributes for consumer's choice of meat (Grunert, 1997). This may also be because of the nutritious nature of meat (Nistor, Bampidis, Pacala, Pantea, & Prundeanu, 2013). This is also in agreement with the findings of GFK, (2003) who compared meat from 15 commercial species of animals; rabbit meat was placed among the finest. This may be because of the meats lowest intensity of colour, odour and flavour. The negative likert differential of the statement ‘I hate rabbit meat’ indicates that respondents hate rabbit meat which shows that majority of the respondents like rabbit meat as indicated by the positive likert differential.

Although the respondents in the study area liked rabbit meat and declared it palatable, yet they do not prefer it to other meat types. This is probably because of their familiarity with other meats which are readily available in the market and stores than rabbit meat. This is similar to what GFK, (2003) observed that even though some Hungarians are willing to game meat, the meat was not readily available. Only hunters and their families eat game meat frequently, but most of the people are not familiar with it. So if rabbit meat were to be made readily available like other meat types, it may possibly would have been preferred.

Factors militating against rabbit meat consumption

Tradition is one of the problems hindering consumption of rabbit meat. Others are unawareness and unattractiveness, but majority of the respondents said the meat is expensive and unavailable. Some said difficulty in processing it, availability of other meats, yet others said they don't know. See table below.

Perceived problems of rabbit meat consumption according to respondents

Problems	Frequency	Percentage
Traditions	7	3.50
Unawareness of rabbit meat	11	5.50
Unattractive	20	10.00
High cost (expensive)	35	17.50
Unavailability	54	27.00
Poor attitude	34	17.00
Availability of other meat	1	0.50
Difficulty in processing	1	0.50
I don't know	23	11.50
No problem	14	7.00
Total	200	100

That tradition forbids consumption of rabbit meat is contrary to the findings of Dairo, Abih, &Oluwatusin, (2012), in Ekiti state that no respondent stated any special reasons either traditional or cultural against the consumption of rabbit meat. The report of Abu, Onifade, Abanikannda, &Obiyan, (2008) also said there is no known taboo against the consumption of rabbit meat in Nigeria. This is probably why only a small portion of the respondents reported as a militating factor against rabbit meat consumption.

Unawareness is one of the constraints to rabbit meat consumption in the study area. This is probably linked to the unpopularity of rabbit meat in the communities within the study area. This agrees with the findings of Suradi, (2008) and Dairo, Abih, &Oluwatusin, (2012) that unpopularity of rabbit is responsible for poor consumption of its meat. The unattractiveness as a major constraint for consumption may be linked with the notion that rabbit carcasses resemble that of a cat or human as reported by Sonandi, Masika, &VanAverberke, (1996).

Another identified problem militating against rabbit meat consumption is high cost and unavailability. Unavailability of any product can lead to high prices of that product which will consequently hinder its consumption. Tsegay, (2012) found that variation in meat consumption could be due to availability and cost. The more available a product is, the cheaper it will be.

Poor attitude to rabbit meat entails not having any special reason for not liking rabbit meat but just felt they hate it. Dairo, Abih, &Oluwatusin, (2012) in a similar study found opposite of this result. Some of the respondents in Ekiti state preferred rabbit meat to all meat types without even knowing reasons for that. Another constraint to rabbit meat consumption in the study area as observed by the respondents is availability of other meat types. This may be associated with the abundance of variety of meats like beef, mutton, chevon and poultry meat among others, which according to Agaie, Magaji, &Sofanda, (1997) account for about 52% of the meat consumed in the area. This gives the consumer an opportunity to choose the kind of meat to consume. This result is complemented by findings of Tsegay (2012), that the variation in meat consumption could be due to availability. That the meat is difficult to process agreed with the findings of Dalle (2002), that among European consumers, rabbit meat is time consuming and requires special cooking skills.

Promotion of rabbit meat consumption

Respondents within the study area suggested that if more awareness will be created to the public about the nutritional and health attributes of rabbit meat, it's consumption may increase, while some of the respondents said making it available like other conventional meats will boost its consumption. Others still suggested that the carcass presentation should be made more attractive while others said the meat should be made cheaper. However, 9% of the respondents had no idea on how rabbit meat consumption can be promoted. See table below

Table 3: Perceptions of respondents on ways of promoting rabbit meat consumption

Perceptions	Frequency	Percentage
Create awareness	35	15.91
Availability	103	46.82
Make it attractive	39	17.73
Make it cheap	22	10
No idea	21	9.55
Total	220*	100.00

Multiple responses*

Majority of the respondents believe that making rabbit meat available will promote consumption. Lack of adequate consumption can be associated with unavailability because no one consumes what is not visible. This result is supported by the findings of Suradi (2008), that non availability of rabbit accounted for poor consumption of its meat. A similar case reported on duck consumption by Otecu, Igene, & Yessuf, (2006) that non-availability of duck meat is one of the constraints to its consumption in south-western Nigeria.

Respondents also think that if the general public will be enlightened about the nutritional and health benefits of rabbit meat, its consumption will increase. This may be true considering the fact that the main parameters of meat are health and nutritional related properties (Richardson-Harman, et al., 2000). Also, Jacoby, Johar, & Morrin, (1998) in a similar study reported that provision of improved information at the grassroots will increase consumption of rabbit meat.

IV. CONCLUSION

Respondents in the study area declared likeness for rabbit meat that it tastes good and it's healthy. They believe that carcasses are better presented fresh and in parts and see unavailability of rabbit meat as a major constraint to its consumption. Consequently, they believe its consumption can be promoted by making it available.

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