Survey of meat preference within the working class of Oyo state, Nigeria: a case-study of Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo

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Abstract

The study considered the meat preference within the working class of Oyo state using Emmanuel Alayande College of Education as a case study. The survey covered the three campuses of the College namely, Erelu, Isokun and Lanlate. A total of 50 structured questionnaires were administered in each of the three campuses, making 150 in all. Random sampling of the respondents was carried out covering both the senior and the junior staff. The result obtained shows a general preference for beef (31.33%), bush meat (24.66%), chevon (15.33%), chicken (13.33%), pork (10%) and mutton (5.33%) in reducing order of importance. Also, in terms of meat texture, 55.33% and 35.33% of the respondents preferred medium and soft meat respectively. The respondents also preferred fish (60.67%) to meat (39.33%) as their animal protein source. Frying (50%) was the preferred processing method, followed by boiling (36.66%) and smoking (13.33%). The meat cuts of preference to the respondents are thigh (37.33%), offals (18%), and, cow leg and skin (16.66%). However, majority (62%) of the respondents in the College surveyed had no knowledge of cholesterol.

Key words: Meat preference, working class, Oyo state

Introduction

Meat is the flesh obtained from the carcase of animals such as cattle, goat, sheep, poultry, pig and used as food. Meat is a good source of animal protein and as such, a meal is not considered complete without meat, in some societies (Harris, 1985). The choice of livestock raised should be determined by consumer preference and consumption pattern. It has been observed that many factors affect the consumption of meat by individuals. These factors include price, income, taste and preferences (Rimal, 2002). Also, religious sentiments play an important role in the consumption of certain meat such as beef and pork. For instance, religious injunctions tend to forbid the consumption of pork by muslims as well as beef by Hindus (Raju and Suryanarayana, 2005). Also, culture, traditions, customs and taboos are also factors influencing meat preference and consumption.

Besides the factors mentioned above, there is an increasing concern that animal fat and cholesterol consumption may be associated with high incidence of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular diseases and certain types of cancer (NRC, 1989). The risk increases have been attributed to the saturated fat or cholesterol content of meats and other animal products (Risch, 2003; Vimalachandran et al., 2004). Du and Sun, 2005 also noted that meat quality is an important factor to be considered in a highly competitive market.

In a study that analysed the meat preference of rural people in India, Raju and Suryanarayana (2005) revealed that the rural Indians prefer chicken to mutton and fish due to its taste. Okubanjo (1986) evaluated meat preference and

consumption pattern of a highly sophisticated segment of an urban population in south-western Nigeria. The survey showed a general preference for beef among all age groups of the respondents followed, in decreasing order of magnitude, by poultry, goat meat, bush meat, pork and lamb. This was a contrast to the report of Rimal (2002) who observed that Americans consume less red meat such as beef and more of non-red meat such as poultry due to the high retail price of red meat relative to non-red meat. It has also been observed that consumers express some preference for some parts of the carcase of an animal such as offals, legs and thigh. Okubanjo (1986) observed that high priced meat from the thigh is regularly purchased amongst the sampled population. However, Jeremiah (1981) observed that preferences for meat and consumption pattern do change with time, geographical location and age of consumers.

The objective of this study was to determine the meat preference of the working class of Oyo state taking Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo as a case-study. Variables considered include, demographic data of respondents, meat preference and knowledge of cholesterol.

Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo which is considered an elitist community within Oyo state. The College has three campuses namely, Erelu, Isokun and Lanlate. Data collection was conducted based on these three campus divisions. Random sampling of the staff was carried out in the survey areas. A total of 50 structured

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Item	Variable	No	%
Religion	Christianity	94	62.66
	Islam	49	32.67
	Traditionalist	7	4.67
Occupational status	Junior staff	76	50.67
	Senior staff	74	49.33
Age	20 - 39	117	78.00
	40 – 59	25	16.66
	60 above	8	5.34

questionnaires were administered in each of the zones, making a total of 150 questionnaires in all. Contact administration of questionnaires was carried out and all administered questionnaires were recovered. Data collection covered vital aspects of the staff such as their demographic characteristics (age, rank status, religion), meat preference (meat type, meat texture, meat cut, protein source and processing), reasons for meat preference, and, their knowledge of cholesterol. The data collected were processed and subjected to descriptive analysis using percentage

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The result shows that majority of the respondents (62.66%) are Christians. Muslims occupied the second position in term of frequency (32.67%) followed by traditionalists (4.67%). Both the junior and the senior staff almost had equal representation amongst the respondents as the junior staff were made of 50.67% of the respondents while senior staff had 49.33%. Majority (78%) of the respondents were within the age bracket of 20 39 years. This showed that majority of the respondents are in their active years of meat consumption.

Table 2 shows the general preference for meat by the respondents (meat type, texture, source of protein, processing and meat cut). The preference for meat type was in the following decreasing order: beef

Table 2: Meat Preference

Item	variable	No	%
Meat type	Beef	47	31.33
	Bush meat	37	24.66
	Chevon	23	15.33
	Chicken	20	13.33
	Pork	15	10.00
	Mutton	8	5.33
Meat texture	Tough	14	9.33
	Medium	83	55.33
	Soft	53	35.33
Protein source	Meat	59	39.33
	Fish	91	60.67
Processing	Boiled	55	36.66
	Fried	75	50.00
	Smoked	20	13.33
Meat cut	Shoulder	12	8.00
	Thigh	56	37.33
	Loin	5	3.33
	Flank	10	6.66
	Offals	27	18.00
	Ribs	15	10.00
	Cow leg and skin	25	16.66

Table 3: Reasons for meat preference

Item	Variable	No	%
Meat type	Availability	57	38.00
	Palatability	93	62.00
Meat texture	Tooth problem	69	46.00
	Easy chewing	81	54.00
Protein source	Soft texture	59	39.33
	Absence of Cholesterol	25	16.66
	Good taste	48	32.00
	Age	18	12.00

(31.33%), bush meat (24.66%), chevon (15.33%), chicken (13.33%), pork (12%) and mutton (5.33%). The preference for beef was in line with report by Okubanjo, 1986 and this can be attributed to the fact that beef is readily available in the market for buyers. Bush meat is regarded as a specialty meat by the people of Oyo State, although the preference may not be in congruence with consumption as the availability of bush meat is seasonal. Chevon is also regarded as a delicacy in Oyo state, hence its preference over pork. The apathy for pork may partly be due to religious factor as Muslims regard the consumption to be against their religious injunction. Also, the preference for lean meat may tend to drive people away from pork consumption as much of the pork found in our markets contains much fat.

Also from table 2 majority of the respondents preferred medium textured meat (55.33%), followed by soft textured (35.34%) and tough meat (9.33%). Chewability was the major reason given for this choice by the respondents. This result is contrary to the age-long belief in South-Western Nigeria to which Oyo State belongs that tough meat is best as it stays longer in the mouth. Also, people with teeth problem tend to prefer fish to meat. The choice of protein source by the respondents was also considered in Table 2. The table indicated that majority (60.67%) of the respondents preferred fish to meat as the source of their animal protein. The result was due to the soft texture of fish relative to meat as reflected in table 3. This preference for fish is good as the consumption of fish does not come with the fear of cholesterol. It has also been observed that fish is relatively cheaper and easier to obtain than meat in Oyo State.

Table 2 also shows the respondents preference for different processing methods for the meat types. It was observed that frying was the preferred processing method (50%). However, smoking (13.33%) was the least preferred method. Concerning preference for meat cuts, the table shows that thigh meat (37.33%) is the preferred meat cut followed by offals (18%) and cow leg and skin (16.66%).

Table 4: Knowledge of cholesterol

Item	Variable	No	%
Cholesterol	Yes	102	68
	No	48	32

Table 3 shows the summary of all reasons adduced by the respondents for their meat preferences. Concerning meat type, palatability (70%) was the main reason adduced for the preference. Easy chewing (54%) was the general reason for the preference for meat texture. However, the softness of meat texture was the main reason given by the respondents for their preference for fish as their animal protein source.

Table 4 shows the knowledge of cholesterol of the respondents. This was done to ascertain the level of awareness of the havoc cholesterol can cause to the consumers amongst the respondents. The table reflected the ignorance of the respondents in the College surveyed concerning the importance of cholesterol as many of them (68%) had no knowledge of cholesterol. The ignorance of the people may be due to the fact that Africans generally consume less than the recommended daily allowance of meat. The result also revealed that more efforts are to be made in enlightening the populace on the dangers posed by uncontrolled consumption of high cholesterol diets. However, their ignorance did not inform their preference for meat in terms of protein source, in any negative manner.

Conclusion

The study showed a general preference for beef, bush meat and chevon, in a decreasing order of preference, amongst the staff members of the three campuses surveyed. Also, there was a general preference for medium textured meat in the College. The preferred animal protein source for the respondents was fish. However, there is need for more awareness on the dangers inherent in the consumption of high cholesterol foods amongst the workers of Oyo state as many of them are ignorant of this. This may help them manage their eating habit in a more health-friendly manner.

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