

ABSTRACT

The food poverty rate stands at 42 percent in Bungoma County; Kimilili Sub-County included. The available animal-based protein sources are insufficient, unsustainable and expensive for the unemployed poor locals. Commercializing the edible insects' particularly edible winged termite value chain has the potential of improving this situation. The termite value chain is transforming from subsistent to commercial. However, important information to support its commercialization is scanty. The general objective of this study was to contribute to enhanced commercialization of edible winged termite value chain as a way of diversifying food systems for improved livelihood. Specific objectives of the study were to; determine the consumers' perception of edible winged termites; consumers socioeconomic, institutional and edible winged termite characteristics significantly influencing its acceptance and quantity consumed and finally to evaluate the significant market price determinants of edible winged termites. The study followed an exploratory research design. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select 384 consumers who were interviewed using a pre-tested semi-structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis, Double Hurdle and Hedonic Pricing models. Results indicate that consumers perceived edible winged termites as food with important attributes, convenient, and culturally appropriate with explained variances of 56%, 5% and 5% respectively. Acceptance and quantity of edible winged termites consumed were influenced by: gender, education, children below 5 years, income, native, termite attributes and convenience in rural and urban households; members over 5 years and culture in the rural; and age in the urban. Consumers' participation in off-farm activities and location of residence had positive effects on market prices of raw, fried, sun-dried and blanched termites. This study concludes that: consumers perceived edible winged termites positively; perceived edible winged termite attributes is the major acceptance and quantity consumed determinant and residence is the major market price determinant for raw, fried, sun-dried, and blanched with positive coefficients of 0.55, 0.57, 0.56 and 0.45 respectively. This study recommends that edible insect commercialization can start with edible winged termites; formal education officials can be used to engender edible insects in to the food chain through the school feeding programmes; marketers should target consumers residing in urban areas and those participating in off-farm income generating activities for higher profits.