



## Consumer Awareness and Acceptance of Edible Insects in Marawi City, Philippines: Potentials for Food Security

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### Abstract

In the Philippines, entomophagy or the consumption of insects is not well accepted. However, in other parts of the world, insects are routinely eaten, being a great source of protein. In fact, experts are exploring ways to incorporate entomophagy in the global food system to replace common animal protein sources. In line with this global trend, entomophagy was promoted in Mindanao State University (MSU) in Marawi City, Philippines through Insect Eating Festivals (IEF) to educate students on utilizing insects as a food source. This study assessed entomophagy in terms of participants' perceptions, consumption of insect-laden foods, and change in awareness before and after IEF. Data from 90 participants was gathered using a structured questionnaire and analyzed with SPSS. The study revealed that IEF participants consumed predominately cassava cake with Chinese grasshopper (*Oxya chinensis*) toppings (37%), followed by horseradish *pulvoron* with rice and corn weevils (*Sitophilus oryzae* and *S. zeamais*) (22%), and horseradish *turon* with earwigs and ants (undetermined spp.) (21%). Increase in the participants' awareness level after IEF on insect edibility and as key food for nutrition suggests that IEF is an effective platform for educating people about the potentials of entomophagy. These initial findings point toward the possibility of using entomophagy to manage pest populations during outbreaks, provide alternative source for animal and fish feeds, and address problems in malnutrition due to low protein intake. However, these potentials need further multidisciplinary studies to address food safety issues and explore openness of potential consumers to integrate entomophagy in their diets.