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## **Growth Performance, Fillet Yield and Composition of *Clarias gariepinus* Fed Diets Containing Microalgae Protein Sources Replacing Fishmeal**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Growth performance, fillet yield and composition by *Clarias gariepinus* fed diets containing microalgae protein sources were investigated in an 84-day feeding trial. Spirulina and Chlorella, was used to replace fishmeal at 50 and 75% respectively producing four test diets. Control diet was without microalgae protein sources. Each dietary treatment was allotted to triplicates groups of fish in a completely randomized design. The results revealed that superior growth was recorded among the microalga fed groups when compared with control diets. Although fish fed CL75% had the highest value of weight gain which was significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) from the weight gain by other fish groups, the SP fed groups had higher values of protein retention and protein productive value than the CL fed groups. Significantly higher level of fillet proteins and reduced level of fillet lipid were observed among the fish fed microalgae protein sources than the fish fed control. Comparatively, SP fed groups had higher fillet protein and lipid than CL fed groups, while CL75% group had significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) highest fillet yield than other fish groups.*

**Keywords:** *Spirulina, Chlorella, fillet yield, *Clarias gariepinus*, waste yield*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Fish is made up of high-quality protein, essential minerals and vitamins. It is very rich in Omega-3 series of poly unsaturated fatty acid (Maqsood & Benjakul, 2010). Catfish is well relished by Africans especially Nigerians (Taufek et al., 2016). Its production is more than half of the total fish produced in Nigeria (FAO,

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2017) and various forms of it including its waste are now being retailed along the supply value chains in form of whole fish; filleted fish; minced fish, visceral mass and so on, either fresh or smoked (Ayeloja et al., 2017). Preparation of fish products or cut is dependent on carcass quality (Souza et al., 2015). Hence information on chemical quality of fish is very important in determining its nutritional profile which is relevant to consumer's acceptance and demand. Fillet yield and chemical composition is directly related to the type of food consumed by fish (Boran & Karaçam, 2011). Due to ever increasing growth in aquaculture in the recent time, there is dire need to find alternative to fishmeal which aquaculture relies on for sustainable growth and development in aquaculture industry because fishmeal supply is dwindling by days. A viable option is to look for alternative feed ingredients that will be of minimal competitive use and have good nutritional profiles comparable to fishmeal. Plant protein could have been a veritable alternative but for their lack of comparable nutrient density as fishmeal majorly lacking in some essential amino and fatty acids (Enyidi, 2017). Microalgae has been identified to be very rich in essential minerals, amino acids, fatty acids, carotenoid pigments and some vitamins like vitamin A, vitamin E and ascorbic (Ahlgren et al., 1992; Walker & Berlinsky, 2011). They have been successfully included as dietary components at different life stages of aquatic organisms with emphasis on replacement studies (Olvera Novoa et al., 1998; Badwy et al., 2008).

Kousoulaki et al. (2016) reported that dietary supplementation of micro algae increases dress-out percentage as well as improves fillet quality of Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar* L.). Similarly, Jafari *et al.* (2014) reported that inclusion of *Spirulina platensis* in rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) diet improved the fillet fatty acid profile. Micro algae such as *Spirulina* spp have been reported to enhance growth, reduce stress and improve carcass quality in many fish species (Mustafa et al., 1994; Mustafa et al., 1995; Mustafa et al., 1997). Although Raji et al. (2018) reported *Chlorella* and *Spirulina* to be a good antioxidant with high protein content capable of replacing fishmeal in catfish diet with growth, immune response (Raji et al., 2019) improvement and reduced stress condition recorded, paucity of information exists as far as our knowledge is concerned on the effect of dietary inclusion of *Spirulina* and *Chlorella* on the fillet quality and composition of African catfish, *Clarias gariepinus*, Thus this study investigates the fillet quality and composition of African catfish, *Clarias gariepinus* fed microalgae protein replacing fishmeal.

## MATERIALS AND METHOD

Five experimental diets were formulated; the control diet consists of fishmeal

and soybean as the major protein sources, Based on the nutrient profile of the feed ingredients, the fishmeal portion of the control diets was replaced by *Chlorella vulgaris* (CL) (Taiwan Chlorella Manufacturing Co., Taiwan) or *Spirulina platensis* (SP) (Earthrise Nutritional, CA, USA) powder at 50 and 75% respectively to make four test diets (Table 2). 300 Juveniles of *Clarias gariepinus* (42.07g) were procured from Balakong hatcheries Malaysia and conveyed in aerated plastic bags (filled with pond water and oxygen) to the University of Malaya, Fresh water aquatic laboratory located at the Institute of Biological Sciences in the Faculty of Sciences. They were acclimatized for two weeks weighed before they were randomly grouped into 5 different dietary groups in triplicates of 15 *C. gariepinus* (average weight  $42.07 \pm 0.3g$ ) The quality of water in all tanks was monitored according to the procedure described by (APHA, 1992).

**Table 1:** Gross composition (g/100g Dry Matter) of the experimental diets containing graded levels of Spirulina and Chlorella

Ingredient	Experimental Diet				
	Control	SP50%	SP75%	CL50%	CL75%
Fishmeal @ 66.32	21.11	10.55	5.28	10.55	5.28
Spirulina @ 60.7	0.00	11.53	17.30	0.00	0.00
Chlorella @ 59.32	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.80	17.70
Soybean @ 44.28	45.17	45.17	45.17	45.17	45.17
Corn meal @ 10.5	9.52	9.52	9.52	9.52	9.52
Vitamin Premix	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Mineral Premix	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Methionine	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Lysine	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Fish oil	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80
Binder	17.40	16.42	15.93	16.15	15.53
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
<b>Proximate composition (DM)</b>					
Moisture	8.42	8.31	8.26	8.19	8.08
Crude protein	35.28	35.34	35.36	35.39	35.22
Crude Lipid	3.71	3.50	3.40	3.83	3.90
Crude Fibre	3.15	3.12	3.10	3.16	3.17
Ash	5.61	4.66	4.18	6.12	6.38
NFE	43.84	45.07	45.70	43.30	43.25
Moisture	8.42	8.31	8.26	8.19	8.08
Crude protein	35.28	35.34	35.36	35.39	35.22
Crude Lipid	3.71	3.50	3.40	3.83	3.90
Crude Fibre	3.15	3.12	3.10	3.16	3.17
Ash	5.61	4.66	4.18	6.12	6.38
NFE	43.84	45.07	45.70	43.30	43.25

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### **Proximate Analysis of fish fillets**

The proximate composition of the experimental diets and ingredients were investigated according to the method reported by Association of Official Analytical Chemist (AOAC, 2005) as described in Raji *et al.* (2018) and Raji *et al.* (2019)

### **Growth Performance indices**

These were calculated as earlier reported in Raji *et al.* (2018) and Raji *et al.* (2019) as:

$$\text{Mean weight gains} = (W_f - W_i)/n$$

Where:  $W_f$ : final weight;  $W_i$ : initial weight; and n: number of fish.

$$\text{Specific growth rate} = (\log W_f - \log W_i) \times 100/t$$

Where: t = time.

$$\text{Feed conversion ratio (FCR)} = F_i/FW_g$$

Where:  $F_i$  = dry feed fed and  $FW_g$  = fish wet weight gain.

$$\text{Protein efficiency ratio (PER)} = MWG/MPI$$

Where: MWG = mean weight gain and MPI = mean protein fed.

$$\text{Survival rate} = F_n/I_n \times 100$$

Where  $F_n$  = final quantity of fish at the end of experiment and  $I_n$  = initial quantity of fish at the beginning of experiment.

$$\text{Protein Productive Value (PPV)} = FPE/FPB \times 100$$

Where FPE = total fish protein at the end and FPB = total fish protein at the beginning of feeding experiment.

$$\text{Condition (K) factor} = FW \times 100/L^3$$

Where W = the weight of fish (g) and L = standard length (cm) (Htun-Han, 1978).

$$\text{Hepatosomatic index} = (\text{Liver Weight (g)})/\text{Body weight (g)} \times 100$$

$$\% \text{Flesh Yield} = \text{Total weight} - \text{Waste yield}/\text{Total Weight} \times 100$$

$$\% \text{Waste Yield} = \text{Total weight} - \text{Flesh yield}/\text{total weight} \times 100$$

## **RESULTS**

### **Growth Performance**

The growth performance and nutrient utilization by *Clarias gariepinus* fed graded level of micro-algae protein sources is presented in Table 3. Superior growth was recorded among the microalga fed groups when compared with control diets. Fish fed CL75% had the highest value of weight gain which was significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) from the weight gain by other fish groups. However, weight gain by fish fed SP50 and CL50% were not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). Fish fed control diet had the least value of weight gain. Significant variations ( $p < 0.05$ ) in the

protein productive value and protein retention existed between microalgae fed groups and the control diet fed fish groups. The SP fed groups had higher values of protein retention and protein productive value than the CL fed groups

**Table 2:** Growth performance and nutrient utilization by *Clarias gariepinus* fed graded level of micro-algae protein sources

Parameter	Experimental Diet				
	Control	SP50	SP75	CL50	CL75
Initial Weight	42.11±0.32 <sup>a</sup>	42.06±0.04 <sup>a</sup>	42.05±0.28 <sup>a</sup>	42.07±0.07 <sup>a</sup>	42.03±0.04 <sup>a</sup>
Final Weight	381.89±0.10 <sup>d</sup>	387.16±0.16 <sup>c</sup>	391.01±0.01 <sup>b</sup>	387.26±0.04 <sup>c</sup>	394.08±0.06 <sup>a</sup>
Weight Gain	339.77±0.01 <sup>d</sup>	345.09±84 <sup>c</sup>	348.96±1.01 <sup>b</sup>	345.18±0.98 <sup>c</sup>	352.04±0.97 <sup>a</sup>
FCR	0.75±0.00 <sup>a</sup>	0.72±0.00 <sup>b</sup>	0.71±0.01 <sup>bc</sup>	0.72±0.00 <sup>b</sup>	0.71±0.01 <sup>c</sup>
SGR	2.62±0.00 <sup>a</sup>	2.64±0.02 <sup>a</sup>	2.65±0.03 <sup>a</sup>	2.64±0.03 <sup>a</sup>	2.66±0.03 <sup>a</sup>
PER	3.04±0.01 <sup>c</sup>	3.15±0.01 <sup>b</sup>	3.18±0.03 <sup>ab</sup>	3.15±0.00 <sup>b</sup>	3.21±0.05 <sup>a</sup>
PPV	23.47±0.23 <sup>d</sup>	26.15±0.01 <sup>a</sup>	26.00±0.05 <sup>b</sup>	25.44±0.05 <sup>c</sup>	25.34±0.05 <sup>c</sup>
K-Factor	1.46±0.02 <sup>b</sup>	1.55±0.05 <sup>ab</sup>	1.56±0.04 <sup>a</sup>	1.55±0.01 <sup>ab</sup>	1.61±0.05 <sup>a</sup>
HSI	1.43±0.01 <sup>c</sup>	1.59±0.02 <sup>b</sup>	1.58±0.02 <sup>b</sup>	1.59±0.02 <sup>b</sup>	1.70±0.09 <sup>a</sup>
Protein Retention	45.09±0.34 <sup>d</sup>	49.29±0.09 <sup>a</sup>	48.50±0.09 <sup>b</sup>	47.74±0.08 <sup>c</sup>	47.74±0.08 <sup>c</sup>

Values are means of three replicates per diet ± SE. Mean with different superscript in the same row are significant (p < 0.05)

### Fillet Composition and Yield

The fillet composition of *Clarias gariepinus* juveniles at the beginning and end of the experiment is as presented in Table 4. There was significant increase (p < 0.05) in protein at the end of the experiment. Microalgae fed groups had significantly higher (p < 0.05) fillet protein than the control diet fed groups. SP50% had the highest value of fillet protein. The fillet lipid significantly reduced (p < 0.05) at the end of the experiment. Among the dietary treatment groups, control diet fed groups had the highest fillet lipid which was significantly different (p < 0.05) from the fillet lipid of other fish groups. The lowest fillet lipid was recorded in the SP75% fed groups.

**Table 3:** Fillet composition *Clarias gariepinus* juveniles fed diets containing graded levels of microalgae protein sources

Nutrient	Initial	Experimental Diet				
		Control	SP50%	SP75%	CL50%	CL75%
Moisture	7.96±0.01 <sup>a</sup>	4.31±0.01 <sup>c</sup>	3.50±0.01 <sup>e</sup>	4.88±0.01 <sup>b</sup>	3.76±0.02 <sup>d</sup>	4.85±0.01 <sup>b</sup>
Protein	73.35±0.01 <sup>d</sup>	84.76±0.08 <sup>c</sup>	87.07±0.56 <sup>a</sup>	86.59±0.01 <sup>ab</sup>	86.29±0.07 <sup>b</sup>	86.15±0.07 <sup>b</sup>
Lipid	8.52±0.01 <sup>a</sup>	6.01±0.01 <sup>b</sup>	4.78±0.01 <sup>d</sup>	4.00±0.01 <sup>e</sup>	5.44±0.01 <sup>c</sup>	4.80±0.01 <sup>d</sup>
Ash	9.98±0.01 <sup>a</sup>	4.75±0.01 <sup>b</sup>	4.60±0.12 <sup>c</sup>	4.44±0.01 <sup>cd</sup>	4.48±0.02 <sup>cd</sup>	4.13±0.01 <sup>e</sup>
Fibre	0.19±0.01 <sup>a</sup>	0.17±0.02 <sup>a</sup>	0.05±0.01 <sup>cd</sup>	0.09±0.01 <sup>b</sup>	0.03±0.01 <sup>d</sup>	0.07±0.01 <sup>bc</sup>

Values are means of three replicates per diet ± SE. Mean with different superscript in the same row are significant (p < 0.05)

Table 5 presents the flesh and waste yield of *C. gariepinus* fed diets containing graded levels of microalgae protein sources. Significant variations ( $p < 0.05$ ) existed in the flesh yield of fish groups exposed to the different dietary treatments. The flesh yield of the microalgae fed groups were significantly higher ( $p < 0.05$ ) than that of the control fed group. Conversely, the waste yield of the control fed group was the highest.

**Table 4:** Flesh and waste yield of *C. gariepinus* fed diets containing graded levels of microalgae protein sources

Variable	Control	SP50%	SP75%	CL50%	CL75%
Flesh yield	281.20±2.51 <sup>d</sup>	290.59±1.71 <sup>c</sup>	293.84±2.73 <sup>b</sup>	290.63±0.61 <sup>c</sup>	296.39±0.31 <sup>a</sup>
Waste yield	100.69±0.58 <sup>a</sup>	96.57±0.73 <sup>d</sup>	97.17±0.20 <sup>c</sup>	96.62±0.20 <sup>d</sup>	97.69±0.04 <sup>b</sup>
% Head	22.94±0.02 <sup>a</sup>	21.73±0.06 <sup>b</sup>	21.51±0.06 <sup>c</sup>	21.73±0.03 <sup>b</sup>	21.34±0.02 <sup>d</sup>
% Visceral	4.01±0.19 <sup>a</sup>	3.86±0.02 <sup>a</sup>	3.98±0.08 <sup>a</sup>	3.88±0.07 <sup>a</sup>	4.07±0.01 <sup>a</sup>
%Flesh yield	73.05±0.03 <sup>c</sup>	74.41±0.06 <sup>b</sup>	74.51±0.05 <sup>ab</sup>	74.40±0.06 <sup>b</sup>	74.58±0.02 <sup>a</sup>
%Waste yield	26.95±0.06 <sup>a</sup>	25.59±0.05 <sup>b</sup>	25.49±0.06 <sup>bc</sup>	25.60±0.02 <sup>b</sup>	25.42±0.02 <sup>c</sup>

Results are mean values of 15 fish/treatments ± SE with three fish per tank. Mean values with different superscript are significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ )

## DISCUSSION

The present study assessed the effect partial inclusion of *S. platensis* and *C. vulgaris* on growth performance, fillet yield and composition of *Clarias gariepinus* juveniles. Superior growth was recorded among the microalga fed groups when compared with control diets with fish fed CL75% having the highest value of weight gain which was significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) from that of other fish groups. This may be due to the type of *Chlorella* (thin and broken cell wall) which makes it highly digestible and the processing method (spray- drying by pressure release) that conserved most of the nutrients within the algae may be responsible for the improved growth of the *Chlorella* Fed fish. Dietary *Chlorella* has also been reported to promote the activity of the digestive enzyme in the hepatopancreas leading to increasing diet utilisation and growth of gibel carp (Xu *et al.*, 2014) *Spirulina* is also linked with increased ability to absorb nutrients (Promya & Chitmanat, 2011) and high digestibility of *S. platensis* and *C. vulgaris* as observed by Raji (2018). Both algae have been found to stimulate the intestinal flora of fish thereby increasing the activity of digestive enzymes resulting in efficient diet utilization (James *et al.*, 2006; Dawood *et al.*, 2016; Khani *et al.*, 2017). Besides, the increase in the value of HSI in the algae fed-fishes could be because of high lipid and buildup of glycogen in the liver (Cazenave *et al.*, 2006).

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This shows the availability of a large amount of food at a favourable aquatic environment for growth for the fish fed supplemented diet. Fishes with higher HSI values are more energetic because HSI value is related to the performance and size of the liver. The increase in the value of the K factor, which increases significantly upon diet supplementation, also confirms the favourability of the environmental condition.

The SP fed groups had higher values of protein retention and protein productive value than the CL fed groups with significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) higher level of fillet proteins and reduced level of fillet lipid detected among the fish fed microalgae protein sources than the fish fed control. This corroborate the work of Kim *et al.* (2013). (James *et al.*, 2006) reported that Spirulina increases the breakdown of ingested feed constituents to extract more nutrients and stimulates the production of enzymes that transport fat for metabolism instead of storing them in the fish body through the stimulation of the intestinal flora of fish. Kim *et al.* (2002) also found that *Chlorella* powder at 2% and 4% had positive effect on lipid metabolism of juveniles of Olive flounder by reducing the whole-body fat. The flesh yield of the microalgae fed groups were significantly higher ( $p < 0.05$ ) than that of the control fed group. Conversely, the waste yield of the control fed group was the highest. This may be because of the superior weight gain observed in the algae treated group thereby increasing the relative amount of fillets. This is in agreement with Fagbenro (2017) who reported a positive correlation between size of fish, flesh and waste yield of *C.kingsleyae*, Kousoulaki *et al.* (2016) also observed an increase dressed-out percentage and fillet in Atlantic salmon with increasing Schizochytrium algae sp.

## CONCLUSION

Spirulina and Chlorella inclusion at 50-75% can successfully replace fishmeal in the diets of *C.gariepinus* juveniles without compromising growth rate fillet composition and yield. Both microalgae improved fillet proteins and quality, and reduced level of fillet lipid of the treated fishes.

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