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Article

Promoting Entomophagy in the School Setting: An Analysis of the Acceptability of Insect Consumption at a Basic Education Center for Youth and Adults

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Abstract
Entomophagy has been identified as a promising alternative for promoting food security and sustainability, although its acceptance is still limited by cultural factors and a lack of public awareness. In this context, this study aimed to analyze the knowledge, perceptions, and acceptability of entomophagy among students in Youth and Adult Education. This was an exploratory study, conducted with 25 students, aged 15 to 53, representing the entire group of participants in the educational activity carried out at the institution. The research consisted of administering questionnaires before and after an educational intervention, which included a lecture and the screening of audiovisual material on the topic. The initial revealed that 80% of the participants were unfamiliar with the term "entomophagy." After the intervention, a positive change was observed in the participants' perceptions; 85% of them stated that they understood its meaning, indicating an expansion of their knowledge on the topic. Acceptability was higher for processed insect-based products, such as resultsflours and derivatives , compared to consumption of insects in their natural form; furthermore, greater resistance was observed among women. In addition, 52% of participants considered the possibility of incorporating insects into their diet, while 53% recognized their potential to contribute to mitigating challenges related to global food security. The results suggest that educational interventions in the school setting help demystify entomophagy and increase its acceptance as a food alternative, although the findings should be interpreted in light of the exploratory nature of the study and the small sample size.
Keywords: education; sustainability; foodsalternative ; insectsedible .

Resumo
A entomofagia tem sido apontada como uma alternativa promissora para a promoção segurança alimentar e da sustentabilidade, embora sua aceitação ainda seja limitada por fatores culturais e pelo desconhecimento da população. Nesse contexto, este estudo teve como objetivo analisar o conhecimento, a percepção e a aceitabilidade da entomofagia entre estudantes da Educação de Jovens e Adultos. Trata-se de um estudo exploratório, realizado com 25 estudantes, entre 15 e 53 anos, correspondente ao universo de participantes da atividade educativa desenvolvida na instituição. A pesquisa consistiu na aplicação de questionários antes e após uma

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intervenção educativa, composta por palestra e exibição de material audiovisual sobre o tema. Os resultados iniciais revelaram que 80% dos participantes desconheciam o termo entomofagia. Após a intervenção, observou-se uma mudança positiva na percepção dos participantes, dos quais, 85% afirmaram compreender seu significado, indicando a ampliação do conhecimento sobre o tema. A aceitabilidade foi maior para produtos processados a base de insetos, como farinhas e derivados, em comparação ao consumo da forma in natura, além de observada maior resistência entre as mulheres. Além disso, 52% dos participantes consideraram a possibilidade de incorporar insetos à sua dieta, enquanto 53% reconheceram seu potencial para contribuir com a mitigação dos desafios relacionados à segurança alimentar global. Os resultados sugerem que intervenções educativas no ambiente escolar favorecem a desmistificação da entomofagia e ampliam sua aceitação como alternativa alimentar, embora os achados devam ser interpretados considerando o caráter exploratório do estudo e o reduzido tamanho da amostra.
Palavras-chave: educação; sustentabilidade; alimentos alternativos; insetos comestíveis.

Introduction

Entomophagy, defined as the consumption of insects by humans, is an ancient practice observed among various groups, primarily in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, where it is part of traditional dietary habits and supplements the diet of more than two billion people (Van Huis et al.. 2013; & Fischer, 2022; Gonçalves et al. 2022) . However, their acceptance varies across cultures, and only recently has the topic begun to attract greater interest from the media, the scientific community, the food industry, and regulatory agencies (Doi et al..2021) .

Currently, more than 1,900 insect species are used as food for humans, predominantly from the orders Coleoptera , Hymenoptera , and Lepidoptera . In general, these organisms have high nutritional , notable for their high content valueof proteins , essential amino acids , fats, vitamins, and minerals, and are directly compared to conventional sources of protein animal (Carvalho et al. 2020; Orkusz, 2021)In addition to its nutritional quality, insect production offers significant environmental advantages, such as lower water demand, less land use, and lower greenhouse gas emissions compared to conventional meat production (Ojha et al.2020) . As a result, entomophagy is increasingly viewed as a promising strategy to contribute to global food security, balancing the growing demand for food with the need to reduce the environmental impacts of agricultural production (Bessa et al. 2020; Van Huis, 2020).

However, although promising, the incorporation of insects into the human diet still faces resistance, especially in Western societies, where cultural factors, dietary habits, and negative perceptions of these organisms limit their acceptance (Brun et al. 2022; Xavier et al. 2023). In Brazil, this resistance is reinforced by the high cultural value placed on meat as the primary source of protein and by the widespread availability of conventional foods, factors that reduce the willingness to consume insects (Costa et al. 2021; Rodrigues et al. 2021).

Studies on the acceptability of entomophagy have been conducted by various researchers worldwide, but they remain scarce in the Brazilian context. The available research indicates low public awareness of the topic or food neophobia associated with negative perceptions regarding the safety of insect consumption (; Egidio &; Silva, 2022; ;2022 & ; Cadena, 2022) , while sociocultural aspects and educational level directly influence the population's willingness to try this type of food (; Miranda et al.2023; 2019) .

In this context, school education plays a strategic role in promoting the nutritional and environmental benefits of entomophagy, helping to reduce prejudices and foster more positive perceptions regarding the consumption of insects. Studies conducted in Brazil demonstrate that educational interventions promote significant changes in public perception regarding this topic, highlighting the school environment as a prime setting for discussing sustainable food alternatives (Vieira, 2016; Korb, 2019). Similarly, La Barbera et al. (2018) emphasize that acceptance of entomophagy tends to occur gradually, facilitated by the availability of processed insect-based products and by the expansion of the debate in educational and social settings.

Although studies exist on perceptions of entomophagy among different segments of the population, research focused on Youth and Adult Education (EJA)—a population consisting predominantly of adult consumers who can act as information multipliers within their family and social contexts—remains scarce. Given this context, the objective of this study was to analyze the conceptions and acceptability of entomophagy among AYE students, as well as to evaluate the effect of an educational intervention on participants' perceptions regarding the consumption of insects as a sustainable food alternative.

Materials and Methods

This is an exploratory study with a quantitative approach, conducted at the Center for Basic Education for Youth and Adults (CEEBJA) in the municipality of Dois Vizinhos, Paraná , Brazil. participated 25 students

enrolled in high school within the Youth and Adult Education program , aged between 15 and 53, in the study; of these, 52% were female and 48% were male. The sample consisted of all students present at the educational activity who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.

Data collection was conducted in two stages using structured questionnaires adapted from Vieira (2016). Initially, participants answered a pre-questionnaire consisting of multiple-choice questions designed to characterize the sample and assess prior knowledge about entomophagy, perceptions of insects, experiences related to their consumption, and the acceptability of using insects in the human diet (Table 1).

Table 1: Pre-questionnaire administered to students in the Young Adult Education program at on the topic of "entomophagy."

1 - How old are you?
2 – Gender:
3 – When you hear about or see an insect, what comes to mind?
a) ( ) I feel disgust.
b) ( ) That insects are dirty animals that spread disease.
c) ( ) You think the insect poses no danger at all.
d) ( ) Insects are pests and only cause problems.
e) ( ) Insects are beneficial, especially to nature.
f) ( ) Another idea. What is it? _____
4- Name any five insects:
5- Why did you list the insects above?
a) ( ) Because they contribute to our food supply.
b) ( ) Because they have no importance whatsoever.
c) ( ) They pose a danger to humans.
d) ( ) They can help pollinate plants.
e) ( ) Because I don't like any of them.
f) ( ) Because they're the ones I know best, and I like them.
g) ( ) Because they harm other animals.
h) ( ) Because I'm afraid of them.
6- Are you familiar with the term "entomophagy"?
a) ( ) Yes.
b) ( ) No.
c) ( ) Sort of.
d) ( ) I've never heard of it.
e) ( ) I've heard of it, but I don't know what it means.
Describe the meaning:_____
7- Have you ever eaten insects in any form:
a) ( ) Yes, unintentionally and by accident.
b) ( ) Yes, because I thought it would be interesting to try something different.
c) ( ) Never, because I don't have the courage to eat insects.
d) ( ) No, but I'm interested in trying them.
e) ( ) No, because I'm disgusted by insects.
f) ( ) Yes, because they can be consumed indirectly in other foods, such as flour, beans, fruits , etc.
g) ( ) I will never eat insects.
8- Do you think insects could be used as food?
a) ( ) Yes, because they are sources of protein.
b) ( ) Yes, because they're easy to raise and are rich in nutrients.
c) ( ) No, because they cannot be eaten.
d) ( ) No, they are highly harmful to health.
e) ( ) Yes, insect flour can be produced.
f) ( ) Yes, they can be mixed with other foods.
g) ( ) Yes, because there are already insect-based recipes.
h) ( ) No, because they are very poisonous and dangerous.
9 - If someone offered you some kind of insect, would you eat it?
a) ( ) Yes, because I like to try new things.
b) ( ) No, because insects aren't meant to be eaten.
c) ( ) I'd try one to see what it tastes like.
d) ( ) I'd eat it just because insects are rich in nutrients.
e) ( ) I wouldn't eat it because I think it's unhygienic.
f) ( ) Other answers. Which ones? _____

Source: Vieira, 2016 .

After administering the questionnaire, an educational intervention conducted consisting of was a lecture lasting approximately 30 minutes, addressing conceptual, nutritional, environmental, and cultural aspects of entomophagy. At the end of the lecture, showna roughly 10-minute news segment was , produced by the

television program *Globo Rural*, titled *"Researchers Develop Insects for Human Consumption"* (Vieira, 2017), with the aim of supplementing the information presented and stimulating discussion among the participants.

At the end of the educational session, —also adapted a post-questionnairefrom Vieira (2016), —It consisted of was administered. multiple-choice questions designed to assess participants' understanding of the concept of entomophagy, the aspects considered most relevant during the activity, willingness to incorporate insects into their diet, perceptions regarding their contribution to food security, and the intention to purchase insects or insect-based products (Table 2).

Table 2: Post-questionnaire administered to students in the Young Adult Education program on the topic of "entomophagy."

1 - Did you learn anything about entomophagy and what it means?
a) ( ) Yes, but I still don't know what it means.
b) ( ) No, because I found the subject confusing.
c) ( ) I liked the lecture, but I didn't learn anything relevant.
d) ( ) Yes, I really liked the lecture and learned some new things.
e) ( ) I didn't learn anything relevant, but at least I know what entomophagy means.
f) ( ) Other options. Which one? _____
Describe the meaning of Entomophagy:_____.

2 - What caught your attention the most during the lecture on entomophagy?
a) ( ) The importance of insects as an alternative food source.
b) ( ) Eating insects is good for your health.
c) ( ) That insects are high in protein.
d) ( ) That insects are pollinators.
e) ( ) That we can create recipes using insects.
f) ( ) Nothing caught my attention, because I don't like insects.
g) ( ) Other options. Which ones? _____

3 - Would you add insects to your diet?
a) ( ) Yes.
b) ( ) No.
c) ( ) Maybe.
d) ( ) I'll never eat insects because I find them disgusting.
e) ( ) I don't think I'll ever eat insects in my life.
f) ( ) None of the above.

4 - Do you think insects can help solve the world's food problem?
a) ( ) Yes, because they are a source of renewable resources.
b) ( ) Yes, because they are rich in protein and easy to produce.
c) ( ) No, because there are other food sources.
d) ( ) No, because there will never be a food shortage.
e) ( ) None of the above.
f) ( ) Other options. Which ones? _____

5 - If you went to the supermarket and found fresh insects or insect flour listed as a main ingredient in a food product, would you buy it to eat?

Source: Vieira, 2016.

The data obtained from the questionnaires were organized into spreadsheets and subjected to descriptive analysis using Excel software, expressed as percentages and presented in the form of graphs . Additionally, a descriptive comparative analysiswas conducted between the genders, considering the acceptability of including insects in the diet and the intention to purchase insects or insect-based products.

Results and Discussion

Knowledge and Perceptions Regarding Entomophagy

Among the students invited to participate in the activity, none refused to take part in the study. When asked about their first impression upon seeing an insect , 77% of the participants associated these organisms with positive aspects , highlighting their importance to nature and the absence of risks to humans. In contrast, 23% highlighted some negative aspect, such as disgust , disease transmission and the occurrence of pests.

The predominance of positive perceptions suggests that participants recognize the ecological importance of insects, especially their contribution to environmental balance. However, the persistence of negative perceptions related to disease transmission and feelings of revulsion may be associated with aesthetic and psychological factors, as well as the influence of the media(Verneau et al. 2016, Roder & Ferrarezi Junior, 2025) . Furthermore, conventional dietary beliefs contribute to reinforcing resistance to entomophagy, since acceptance of new foods tends to increase as they become better known to the general public (; et al., 2024) .

When were asked participants they listedto name any 5 insects, 122 organisms, the most common of which were the cockroach (16%), followed by the ant and the house mosquito (10 % each), the mosquito (9 %), and the fly (8 %). were also mentioned Other insects less frequently, such as bees, caterpillars, beetles, crickets, butterflies, moths, bedbugs, dragonflies, lice, fleas, ladybugs, praying mantises, and fireflies, which together accounted for 37% of the responses. In addition, were mentionedinvertebrates that do not belong to the class Insecta—such as spiders, scorpions, and centipedes —, as well as some vertebrates, such as mice and geckos, indicating difficulties in the taxonomic identification of these organisms.

The predominance of common insects in urban environments likely reflects the participants' more frequent contact with these organisms. A similar result was observed by Sousa-Lopes & Alves da Silva (2020), who recorded a high frequency of mentions of ants and cockroaches among elementary school students in the state of Minas Gerais. Similarly, Carvalho et al. (2022) found that animals belonging to other zoological groups, such as bats and lizards, are also frequently classified as insects. These results corroborate the findings of Hermogenes et al. (2016), who highlight the breadth of the ethnozoological category "insect," which is constructed based on popular perception and does not always correspond to biological classification criteria, being influenced by individual experiences, sociocultural context, and the ways in which people interact with these organisms. These misinterpretations can also be understood as a reflection of scientific illiteracy, which hinders the understanding of basic concepts in zoology and the classification of organisms (Qian & Yamada, 2020; Sogari et al., 2022).

The reasons given for the choice of insects revealed a balance between positive and negative perceptions (Figure 1). Among the favorable responses, 24% of participants highlighted the importance of insects for plant pollination, 16% cited the ones they like or know best, and 8% recognized their contribution to food, totaling 48% of the responses. In contrast, a set predominated of negative perceptions (53%), distributed among participants who stated that they did not like insects (21%), considered them dangerous to humans (16%), unimportant (11%), or associated with fear (5%).

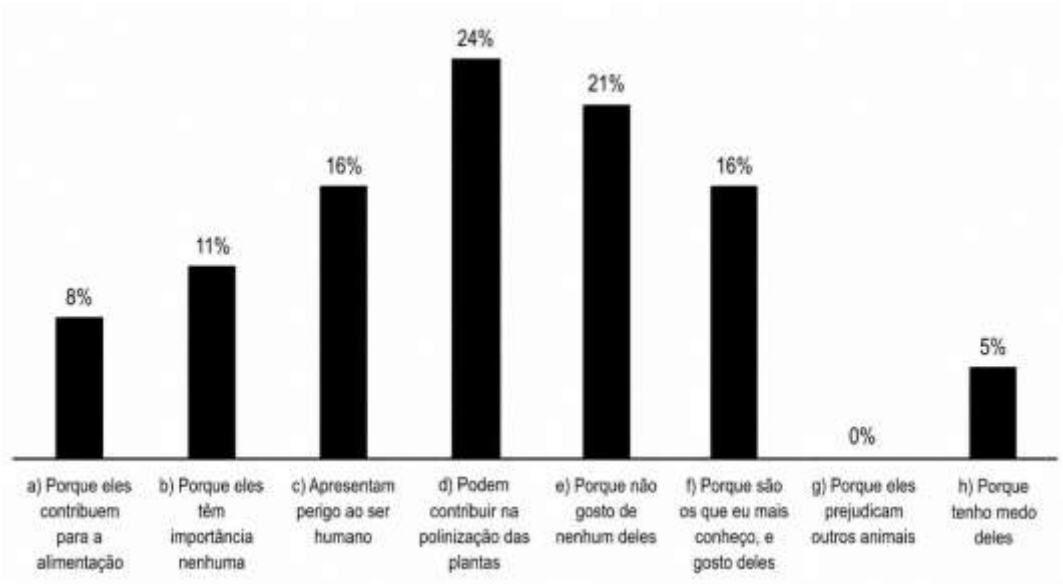


Figure 1. Participants' responses (in %) regarding mentions of insects and what they are associated with. Source: Authors, 2023.

These results show that, although participants recognize some ecosystem services provided by insects, perceptions associated with fear, revulsion, and harmfulness still predominate. According to Hickman et al. (2016), insects perform essential functions in ecosystems, including plant pollination, biological pest control, , and their role in food chains. However, daily exposure to species considered pests or disease vectors tends to reinforce negative , especially in urban environments (perceptionsMontenegro et al. 2014). Amaral and Medeiros (2015) highlight that these perceptions often take precedence over recognition of the ecological benefits of these organisms , while Lima et al. (2017) observed a similar pattern amongstudents 8th- and 9th-grade middle school in the municipality of Jequié, Bahia, who listed terms that evoke feelings considered negative. These findings reinforce the importance of educational initiatives aimed at expanding knowledge about the biological diversity and ecological functions of insects, thereby creating more favorable conditions for understanding entomophagy as a sustainable food alternative.

When asked about the term "entomophagy," it was found that 80% of the students were unaware of its meaning, while 16% claimed to have a superficial understanding and 4% stated that they had heard the term before, although they didknow how to define it No participant reported not .correctly understanding its meaning. A similar result was observed by Vieira (2016), also in the municipality of Dois Vizinhos (PR), where 87.3% of participants reported being unfamiliar with the term, 9.5% stated they knew it without understanding its meaning, and only 3.2% stated they knew it.

The high level of unfamiliarity observed in this study highlights that although more than 120 countries and thousands of ethnic groups include insects in their diets (Govorushko, 2019), this practice has been progressively abandoned in most Western societies, where factorscultural have come to define which foods are considered socially acceptable (Cantalapiedra et al. . 2023). In this context, the so-called " of the diet" has contributed to reducing the population's familiarity with insects as a food resource, reinforcing negative perceptions and limiting their acceptance westernization(Costa Neto & Cheung, 2019 ; Morris et al., 2023).

When asked about previous experiences with eating insects, 65% of the participants stated that they had eaten them, mainly by accident already or indirectly, as part of conventional foods, without realizing it. On the other hand, 26% reported never having consumed insects due to disgust or a lack of courage, while 10% stated they had never ingested them, but expressed interest in trying them. No participant stated having consumed intentionally solely to insectstry a different . food

These results demonstrate that, although voluntary insect consumption is uncommon, inadvertent ingestion is part of the population's dietary routine. Brazilian legislation permits certain limits for insect fragments in various processed foods (Brazil, 2014), indicating that indirect consumption can occur without the consumer being aware of it.

In this context , resistance to the intentional consumption of insects appears to be more closely related to cultural factors than to exposure to these organisms per se. Studies indicate that curiosity, concernenvironmental , interest in new gastronomic experiences, and knowledge about the nutritional value of insects promote their acceptance, especially when presented in processed forms, such as flours, protein , and other ingredients incorporated into foods bars(Mancini et al. . 2019; Ojha et al. . 2020 ; Woolf et al. 2019).

Acceptability of insect consumption

Regarding perceptions of the use of insects in food, 80% of the responses were favorable, indicating that these organisms constitute important an source of protein and can be used in the production of flour or incorporated into other foods . On the other hand, 20% of the participants claimed that insects should notbe associated with food, as they are harmful to health or poisonous (Figure 2).

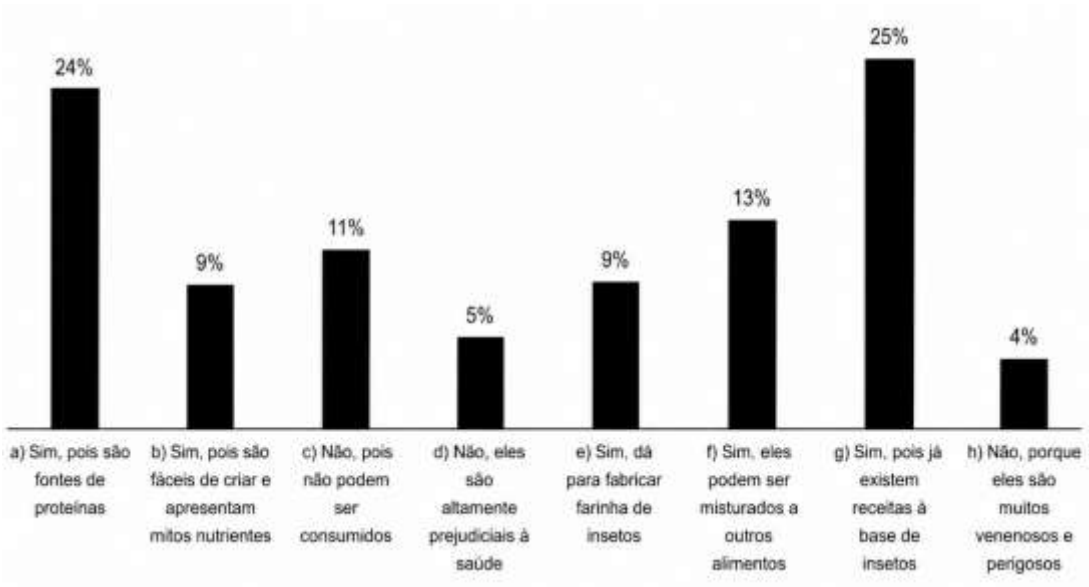


Figure 2. Participants' responses (in %) regarding the use of insects in human food. Source: Authors, 2023

Despite the initial lack of knowledge about entomophagy, most of the participants recognized the nutritional potential of insects and accepted their use as a food ingredient. This apparent contrast suggests that resistance to consumption is more closely related to cultural factors and food neophobia than to a lack of

knowledge about their benefits, corroborating studies that indicate the appearance of foods and expectations regarding taste are determining factors in rejection (Sogari et al. 2019a, Sogari et al. 2019b).

In this context, scientific outreach and nutrition education initiatives are essential to demystify the topic and increase the likelihood of adoption. Strategies such as lectures, social media , and educational campaigns are viable tools for disseminating knowledge and increasing acceptance of this resource (Batat & Peter, 2020; Mwiinga et al . 2022), especially when they highlight its benefitsnutritional (Orkusz et al . 2020).

When asked about the possibility of eating insects if they were offered them, 32% would try them to see what they taste like. Another 11% reported that they would eat them because they recognize their nutritional value or because they enjoy new culinary experiences. In contrast, 18% said they would not eat them because they associate the practice with poor hygiene or because they do not consider insects to be food. In addition, some respondents expressed rejection motivated by disgust or stated they would only consume insects in extreme situations survival (Figure 3).

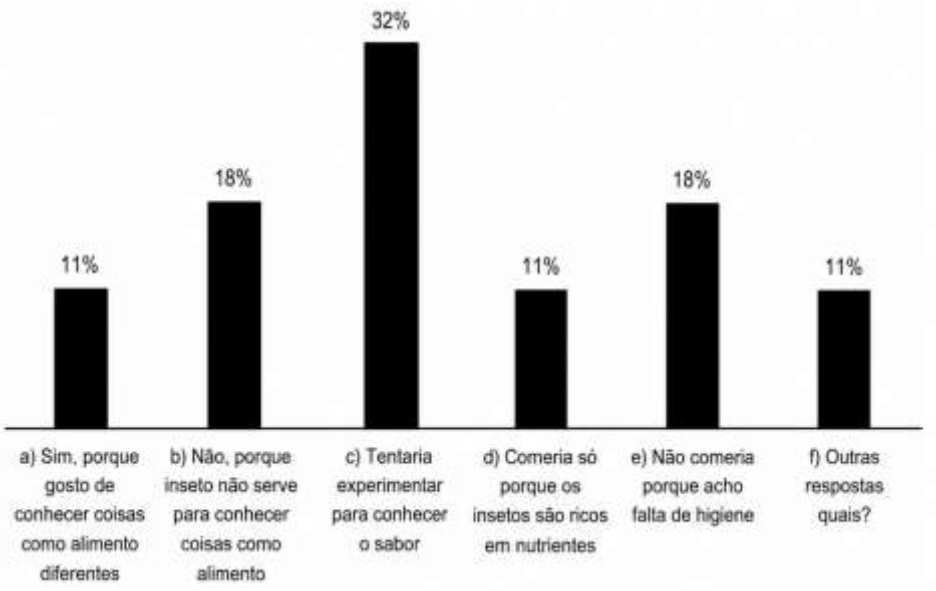


Figure 3. Participants' responses (in %) regarding the consumption of insects if they were offered them. Source: Authors, 2023

The results suggest that curiosity about new foods represents an important factor for demystifying and the acceptance of entomophagy. Although some participants still resist, the predominance of responses favorable to experimentation demonstrates that rejection is not absolute and can be reduced as familiarity with the topic increases (Chow et al . 2021; Lorini et al . 2021).

Effect of the Educational Intervention

Following the presentation of the lecture and the screening of audiovisual material, a significant change was observed in participants' perceptions regarding entomophagy, as this type of activity creates a space for debate and the exchange of ideas that facilitates interactive learning between the speaker and the audience (Tuma, 2021). When again askedabout entomophagy, 85% stated that they understood its meaning and reported having gained new knowledge during the activity.

Similarwere results reported by Vieira (2016), who received positive feedback from participants following a lecture on the subject. The combination of oral presentation and audiovisual resources likely facilitated the assimilation of information, making the processlearning more dynamic. In the context of Youth and Adult Education, this strategy takes on additional importance, as students bring diverse life experiences to the classroom and can share this knowledge within their family, professional, and social contexts, reinforcing the school's role as a space for discussion about sustainable food alternatives.

When asked to identify the aspects that most caught their attention during the intervention, 26% of participants highlighted the importance of insects as a food alternative and a source of protein. The presentation of recipes made with insects was mentioned by 23 %, while 13% emphasized their benefitshealth and 6% highlighted the role of these organisms as pollinators . However, despite the intervention, a small proportion (6 %) stated that none the information presented sparked their interestof, as they do not like insects.

The emphasis placed on nutritional potential and culinary uses demonstrates that the intervention helped broaden participants' understanding of the practical applications of entomophagy. According to Illa and Yuguero (2022), the combination of high nutritional value and lower environmental impact is one of the main arguments for promoting the acceptance of insects as food. Similarly, Videbaek and Grunert (2020) point out that publicizing culinary preparations made with ingredientsinsect-derived reduces the perception of strangeness and promotes acceptance among consumers who are unfamiliar with this type of food.

When asked about the possibility of incorporating insects into their diet, 52% of participants said yes, 36% said maybe, 8% responded negatively, and 4% said they would never eat insects. These results underscore the potential for acceptance of this food when awareness and education campaigns are properly conducted. Previous studies show that, even despite limited knowledge about entomophagy, many people are likely to incorporate insects into their diet (Martins et al . 2022; Stone et al . 2023).

Food Safety and Purchase Intention

When asked about the potential of insects to contribute to securityglobal food , 53% of participants agreed that these organisms are a viable alternative because they are rich in protein and easy to produce, while 30% highlighted their renewable nature. In contrast, 10% believed that there are other alternatives food capable of meeting this demand, and 7% did not agree with any of the options presented (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Responses (in %) from participants who believe that insects can help solve the world's food problem. Source: Authors, 2023

In his study, Vieira (2016) observed that 95.4% of respondents agreed regarding the contribution of insects to human nutrition. According to House (2016), the main motivation for changing dietary habits is related to environmental issues, associated with the numerous impacts facing the environment.

Regarding the possibility of purchasing insects or products made from these organisms, 52% stated that they would consider it, 28% responded negatively, 8% indicated that they purchase themmight , another 8% expressed a preference for products made with insect meal, and 4% did not know how to respond (Figure 5).

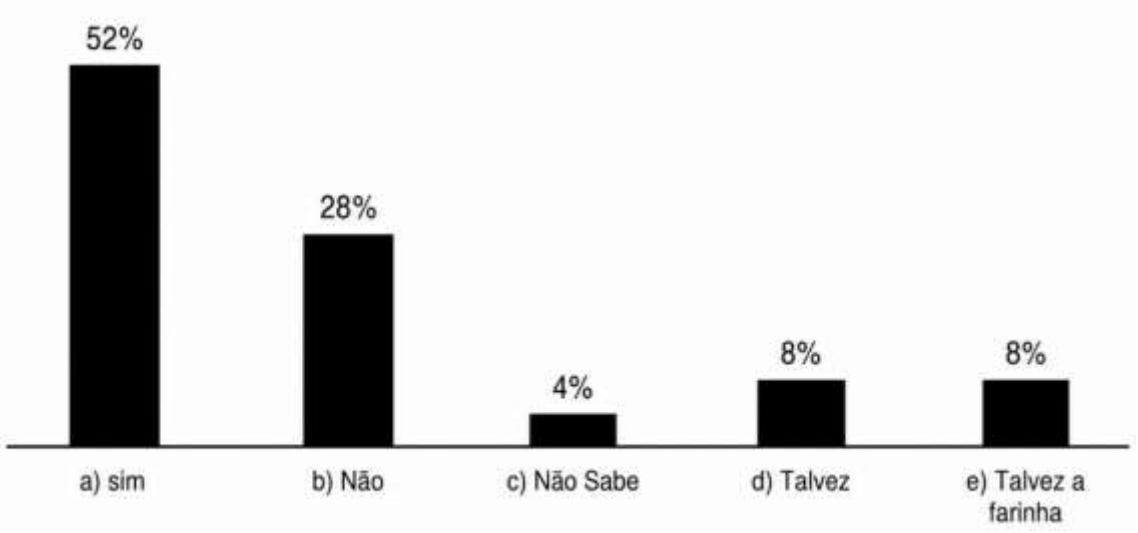


Figure 5. Responses (in %) from participants regarding the possibility of purchasing fresh insects or insect meal for consumption. Source: Authors, 2023

The results indicate that acceptance tends to be higher when insects are presented in a processed form, especially as an ingredient incorporated into other foods. This pattern is described in the literature and reflects a strategy capable of reducing the rejection caused by the appearance of whole insects. Megido et al. (2016) highlight that the gradual introduction of insect-derived ingredients, such as insect flours and protein powders, represents an alternative for increasing their acceptance. Similarly, individuals who place a high value on meat as their primary protein source tend to be more resistant to entomophagy, while consumers who are more receptive to alternative proteins show a greater willingness to try these products (Kane & Dermiki 2021; Giotis & Drichoutis 2021; Ordoñez López et al. 2023).

Comparison Between Men and Women

A comparative analysis between the sexes revealed greater acceptance of entomophagy among men, both in terms of willingness to incorporate insects into their diet (Figure 6A) and in terms of intention to purchase insects or products made from them (Figure 6B).

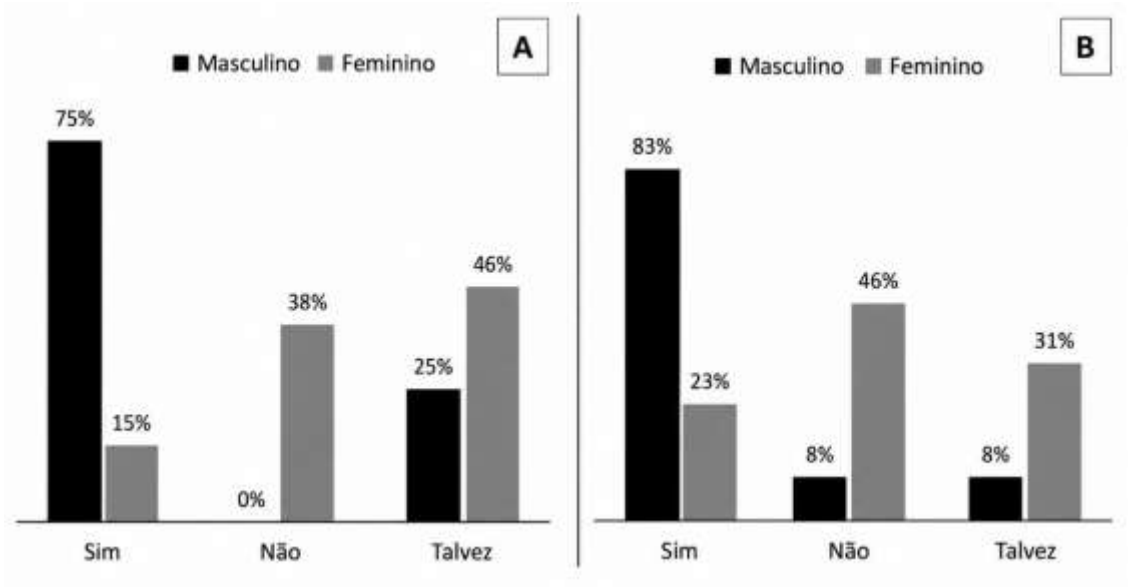


Figure 6. A) Acceptability of entomophagy (in %) among men and women. B) Likelihood of purchasing (in %) insects or insect-based products among men and women. Source: Authors, 2023

The higher acceptance observed among men corroborates previous studies that identify gender as one of the factors associated with the willingness to consume insects (Schardong et al. 2019, Verbeke 2015, Woolf et

al. 2019). In contrast, women tend to be more sensitive to the visual appearance of foods made with insects, a characteristic often linked to greater resistance to entomophagy (Megido et al. 2016).

Overall, the results obtained are consistent with national and international studies in demonstrating that the acceptance of entomophagy is a gradual process, influenced by cultural factors, prior knowledge, and the way food is presented. Thus, rather than merely promoting information about the nutritional and environmental benefits of insects, educational interventions can help reduce prejudices and increase individuals' willingness to consider alternative food sources, reinforcing the role of education in fostering more sustainable dietary practices.

Conclusion

The results show that entomophagy is little known among students in Youth and Adult Education and is often associated with negative perceptions influenced by cultural factors and limited public awareness of the topic.

There is greater acceptance of products made with insect flour and other derivatives compared to the consumption of whole insects, as well as greater resistance among women regarding the incorporation of these foods into their diet and their intention to purchase them.

The educational intervention fostered a positive shift in participants' perceptions, expanding their knowledge of entomophagy and promoting greater openness to insect consumption. These findings underscore the potential of educational initiatives in school settings to stimulate reflection on sustainable food alternatives and help reduce prejudices associated with insect consumption. However, as this was an exploratory study conducted with a small, convenience sample, the results should not be generalized; further research with different populations and more robust study designs is recommended to deepen the understanding of the factors influencing the acceptance of entomophagy.

Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence: Artificial intelligence tools were used for linguistic review of the manuscript and to enhance the quality of the figures. Their use was limited to the presentation of the work, without interfering with the research design, analysis, or interpretation of the data. The authors fully reviewed and validated the content, assuming full responsibility for the manuscript.

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