

**“LIVE BIG, EAT SMALL”! ADVERTISING FOR ENTOMOPHAGY BY KIDS’
AWARENESS RAISING: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON CHILDREN IN FRANCE
– AN EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Extended abstract:

Insects’ consumption, called “entomophagy” is a food practice advocated by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, to address a projected risk of food shortage by 2050. Far from being a recent phenomenon, entomophagy is a food habit that has a specific cultural character, common for 2.5 billion people in Southeast Asia, Central Africa, and parts of South America. Although, this consumption is still experiential and underdeveloped, since insects are negatively perceived by Western consumers and are categorized as «inedible» (Fischler, 1990). For many of them, this food practice is often associated with a primitive and disgusting behavior. Despite all its nutritional, economic and ecological benefits, the exploratory studies conducted on adult European consumers, reveal many obstacles for this type of consumption. However, we still lack information regarding younger consumers such as kids. Very few studies have explored the acceptability of this practice among children in the world. In this paper, we studied the acceptability of insect consumption among children by highlighting the psychological barriers and motivations for this consumption, in order to extract factors that can play an advertising role in promoting entomophagy.

We tried to understand children’s perception through a qualitative study conducted on 50 French children (29 girls and 21 boys) aged between 6 and 12. This age group has been targeted because food neophobia begins to decrease from the age of 5 years (Cashdan, 1994) what can help the learning of radically new food (Tuorila et al., 2001). Our study took place between November 2018 and September 2019, in Normandy (France). The aim of our study is to understand kids’ psychological barriers and motivations for insect consumption in order to highlight the discourse that the public authorities must emphasize in their persuasive communication for promoting this food practice to them. The results show that, disgust, attachment and fear are the main inhibitors blocking them from eating insects. Besides, the French culture is much embedded in the kid’s mind and makes appear important cultural and psychological barriers. Even if children spontaneously manifest negative feelings about eating insects, they declare themselves ready to try at least once as soon as they become aware that this mode of feeding can be positive for the protection of the planet. Some individual motivations such as discovery, challenge, fun and reward had also been expressed by children as encouraging reasons to insects ‘consumption. These motivations are relevant elements of marketing, on which, advertising actions could be concretized.

Whatever the nature of the motivation expressed by the children, it is likely that there is a significant difference between their statements and their real actions. Therefore, it is necessary to commit them in a real consumer experience. This can help them to overcome some misperceptions and thus lead them to introduce edible insects as a healthy, sustainable novel food.

Key words: *Advertising, Entomophagy, Edible insects, Perception, Children, Awareness, Motivations, psychological barriers.*

References are available on request