

Poster session 2 and refreshments

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Which emotions are in cheese? - a study linking psychological aspects with sensory perception

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Abstract

Food preferences play a major role in food choices and consequent dietary habits. It is known that foods are associated to emotions and positive emotions are frequently associated to preference and intake, whereas negative emotions result in rejection. However, one food item is associated to certain emotions by some persons and to different emotions by others.

Another factor known to influence food preferences is sensory perception. Also, in this case, variations among individuals exist in the way they perceive the sensory characteristics of a food. Taste, aroma and texture sensitivity can be a factor influencing sensory ratings and consequently preferences.

Based on the thought that different factors affect food preferences, why not to study them together?

We did perform a study aimed at evaluating: 1) how emotions, individuals' psychological characteristics, food sensory evaluation and taste sensitivity affect the hedonic value and preference of foods; 2) and how these several aspects are inter-related.

Cheese is a product with marked characteristics, with a variety of products with different sensory characteristics. This is a type of product that dichotomize individuals: some love it and some hate it. Moreover, for the same individual, one type of cheese can be associated with pleasure and another type totally rejected. For these reasons, cheese was the product choose for this study.

231 individuals participated in this study. Five different types of cheese were given and, for each of them, each person was asked to point the intensity with which each emotion was perceived, and with which each sensory parameter. Moreover, for each cheese, individuals rated hedonics. Besides this, individuals were subjected to taste sensitivity tests and answered two questionnaires: 1) one for food nomophobia; 2) another for psychological profile.

The results from this study will be presented and detailed discussed.

Keywords

psychology, emotions, sensory evaluation, taste, food preferences