

Fixing the Bug in Insect Consumption

Friday, 13 September 2024 12:10 (20 minutes)

There is increasing acknowledgement that the environmental impact of the current global food supply system is unsustainable. Entomophagy—the consumption of insects as food—is gaining attention as a viable, sustainable food alternative. Yet, despite shifting positive attitudes towards entomophagy and supportive regulatory guidelines, few Westerners integrate insect-based food into their diet (i.e., there is an attitude-behavior gap) – a major reason being that insect-based food elicits strong negative emotions. Two studies assess strategies for emotion regulation and, consequently, the increased trial and consumption of insect-based food. Study 1 demonstrates that distraction (but not reappraisal) enhances people’s willingness to sample insect-based food. Study 2 shows that humor—an operationalization of the distraction strategy—reduces negative emotional responses to communications about consuming insect-based food. Our findings offer valuable insights into how to facilitate people’s adoption of insect-based food.

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Session Classification: Symposium: What can Emotions contribute to Sustainable Behavior?

Track Classification: Environmental Psychology