

Conditioned Bites: Observational Evaluative Conditioning and Attitudes Toward Insect-Based Foods

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“Observational Evaluative Conditioning proves effective in influencing preferences toward insect-based foods”

Introduction

- Insect-based foods** are an intriguing option to address concerns of conventional meat diets. Yet, Westerners' attitudes toward these foods are often negative (La Barbera et al., 2018).
- Pairing foods with positive stimuli through an **Observational Evaluative Conditioning** procedure (Kasran et al., 2023) turned out to be effective in instilling food preferences.

2x2 MIXED DESIGN

- BW factor: **regular** vs. **insect** cookies
- WIN factor: **liking** vs. **disliking** reaction

PROCEDURE

We presented **short video clips** where a model displays a **positive/negative reaction** after eating regular or insect cookies.

We measured automatic reactions, intentions of purchasing and consumption, and accounted for individual disgust levels.

Hypotheses

- Participants will show a **preference for the brand associated with liking** as compared to the brand associated with disliking;
- The preference for the brand associated with **liking will be stronger for regular cookies** than for cookies containing insect flour.

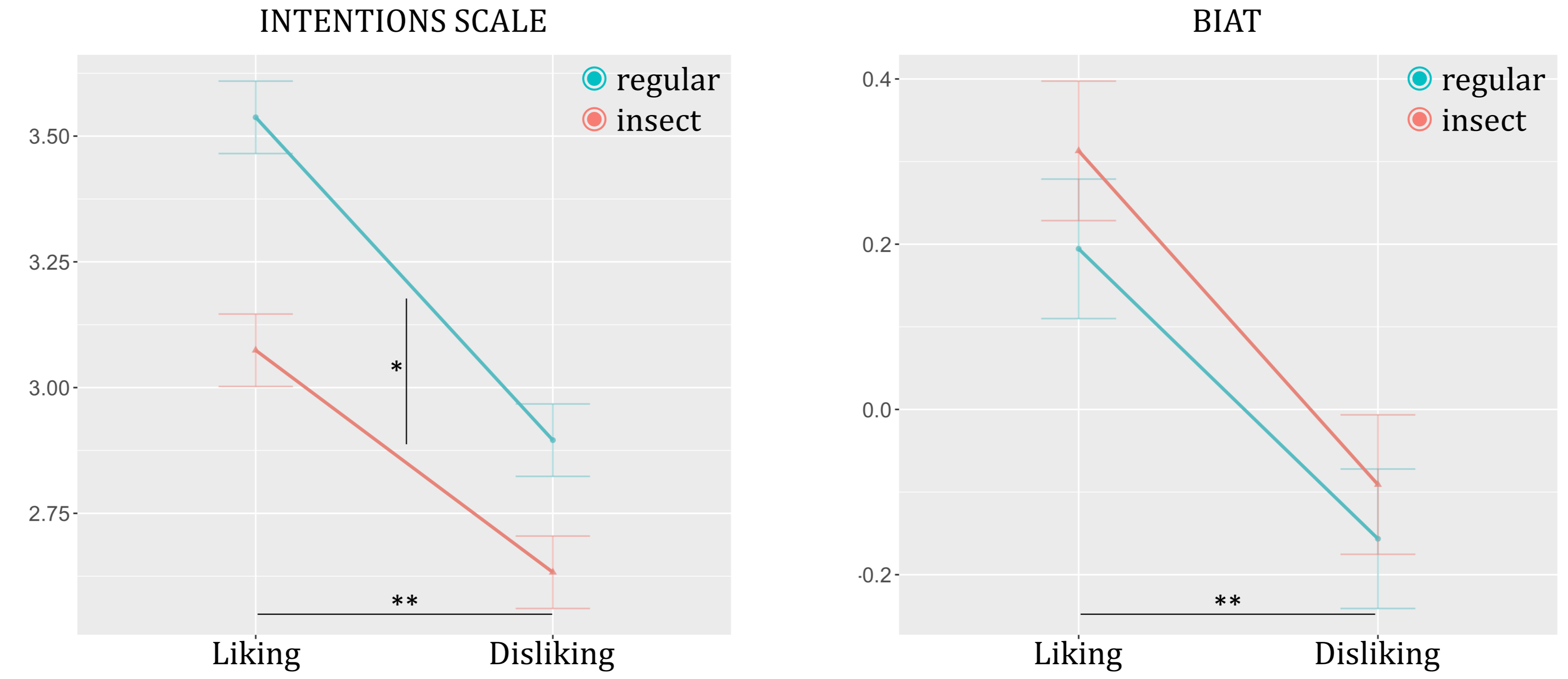
Methods & Materials

Participants 131 participants (80 females, 48 males, 3 non-binary; $M_{age} = 24.79, SD_{age} = 4.96$)

Measures

- Brief Implicit Association Test (BIAT)**
Sriram & Greenwald, 2009; $\alpha(\text{liking}) = .67, \alpha(\text{disliking}) = .64$
- Intention of purchasing and consumption**
Ad-hoc developed.; $\alpha(\text{liking}) = .85, \alpha(\text{disliking}) = .68$
- Entomophagy Attitude Questionnaire – Disgust scale (EAQ-D)**
La Barbera et al., 2020; $\alpha = .92$

Results



Condition: $F(1,129)=7.09, p=.008, \eta^2p=.046$

Reaction: $F(1, 129)=111.72, p<.001, \eta^2p=.097$

Condition*Reaction: $F(1,129)=3.79, p=.054; \eta^2p=.003$

Condition: $F(1, 129)=2.08, p=.151, \eta^2p=.008$

Reaction: $F(1, 129)=39.01, p<.001, \eta^2p=.124$

Condition*Reaction: $F(1,129)=0.19, p=.661, \eta^2p=.001;$

Conclusions

- We replicated results from Kasran et al., 2023, showing the effectiveness of the OEC procedure in creating a preference between two brands.
- We demonstrated the efficacy of the OEC procedure with stimuli that could elicit disgust (i.e., insect cookies).
- The manipulation results in **higher intentions** of purchasing and consumption toward the brand associated with the liking reaction and **stronger automatic preferences**.

WORK IN PROGRESS

- Comparison between regular and insect-containing cookies;
- Testing the OEC effects in a non-comparative setting (i.e., with a control condition).



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