

## PROFILE OF VEGETABLE CONSUMERS IN ITAPETININGA REGION - SP

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**ABSTRACT:** This study aimed to raise data about the profile vegetable consumers Itapetininga region through questionnaires and thus characterize vegetable consumption patterns in this city. Individual interviews were conducted totaling 100 respondents. The research instrument was a questionnaire with closed questions, addressing the following: gender; age; family income; education; vegetables that usually consume; frequency of use; and number of residents in the residence. The data were analyzed in percentages, making it possible to study the influence of some socio-economic factors on food consumption. It was observed that most respondents consumed both raw and cooked vegetables, more than 3 times a week. It was also found that, as the level of education and household income increases, there is also an increase in vegetable consumption. Lettuce, tomato and onion are the most daily consumed vegetables by respondents, followed by potatoes, broccoli, carrots, cabbage and peppers. The main reason that increases the consumption of vegetables is related to health and nutrition, and the reason that reduces or hinders the consumption of such food relates to the preparation as the main factor.

**Key-words:** Minimal processing. Value. Healthy eating.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

According to ANVISA (1978) "vegetable is a herbaceous plant from which one or more parts are used as food in its natural form." Popularly, vegetables can be divided into three types: greens, vegetables and condiments. Vegetables are essential food for a balanced diet, because they are important sources of vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, fiber and other substances such as beta-carotene which contribute indisputably to human health (FILGUEIRA, 2003).

According to Martins (2010), 80% of production of Brazilian vegetable is intended for domestic market, and the average consumption is about 27 kg per year (IBGE, 2012). According to Moraes (2012), potato, tomato and onion lead consumer preference, however

the most traded vegetables are carrots, pumpkin, cabbage, lettuce, chayote, sweet potatoes and green pepper.

Vegetable consumers are becoming increasingly demanding in terms of quality and nutritional aspects, looking for fresh products in reliable places, with comfort and flexible hours (SEBRAE, 2013). However, it is notable the increased consumption of fastfood, especially among young people. These consumers seek products that have longer shelf life, as well as food with enhanced flavor, being common to both, lots of fat and sodium. This system is guided by food demand and practicality; fun and transgression; industrial production (preparation assembly line), modernity and speed (VARGAS, 2011).

In general, consumers are looking for new things, including in the food area, and this contributes to the growth of various segments, among them there are the minimally processed, frozen and organic non-traditional vegetables (MELO; VILELA, 2007).

Given the above, this research aimed to raise a vegetable consumer profile in Itapetininga region, in order to verify a market opportunity.

## **2 METODOLOGY**

The survey was conducted in the municipality of Itapetininga, located in the state of São Paulo, being the 3rd largest city in the state in square meters. It has a strongly focused on agriculture economy, accounting for most of the agricultural GDP of the state of São Paulo.

The work has been based on a review of articles and resolutions that exist on the subject, seeking to justify the importance of the consumption of healthy food like vegetables.

Later a structured questionnaire was applied to 100 people, in order to determine the frequency and diversity of vegetable consumption in Itapetininga region.

## **3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

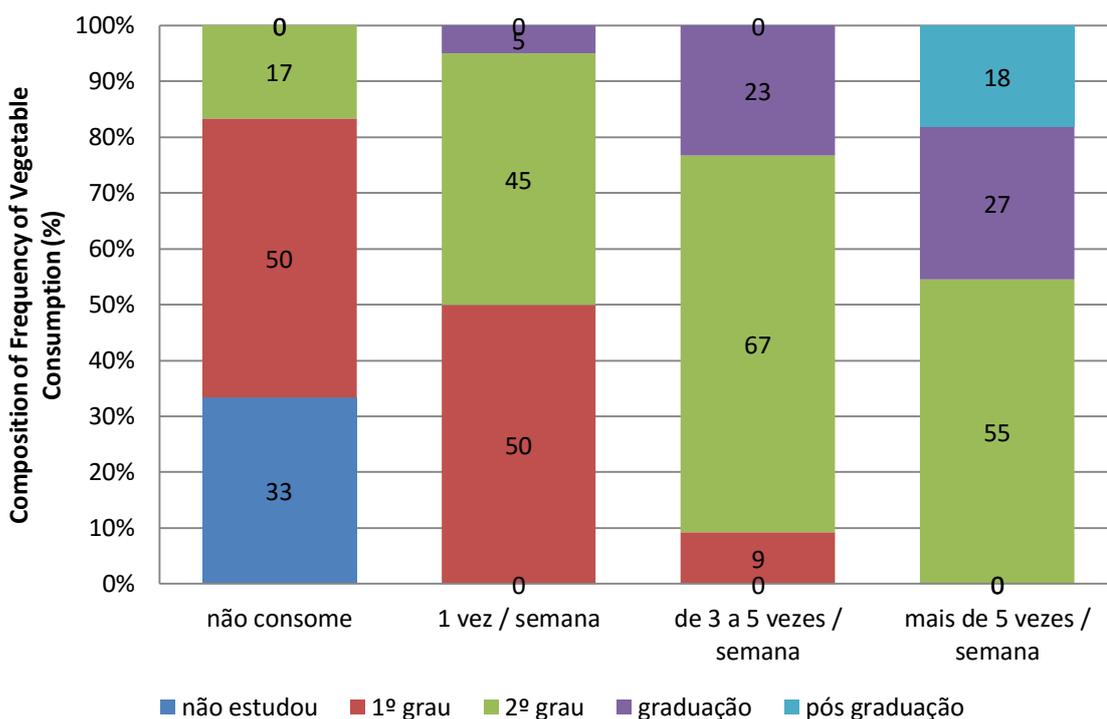
The results of the questionnaires were obtained in Itapetininga and region, 90% in Itapetininga and the remaining 10% were obtained in the cities of Angatuba, Capão Bonito, Apiaí, São Miguel Arcanjo and Alambari. Of the respondents, 63% were women, mostly aged between 16 and 45 years old.

Regarding the frequency in vegetable consumption, 43% of respondents said they consume 3 to 5 times a week and only 11% consume more than 5 times a week. However

46% of respondents said they consume vegetables or eat only one time in a week. According to data presented by Novaes et al (2006), the increase in vegetable consumption is positively correlated with the level of education.

In Figure 1 you can see that, for Itapetininga and region, this correlation is quite significant, since 33% of respondents who said they did not eat vegetables, not studied; one possibility is that for these people lacked education, the information is important for their health the daily consumption of vegetables. Already those who reported consuming at least one time a week, 50% had 1 full degree and there is this group illiterates. For those who consume 3 to 5 times a week the ratio of 1st and 2nd level of education decreases, only 9% have the 1st degree and the majority (67%) have the 2nd full extent, in this group you can see that there is already the presence of 23% of respondents with graduation. Finally, the respondents who said they consumed more than 5 times a week 55% finished 2nd grade, 27% said they graduate and 18% of them have graduate.

**Figure 1 - Percentage breakdown of education in vegetable consumption frequency**

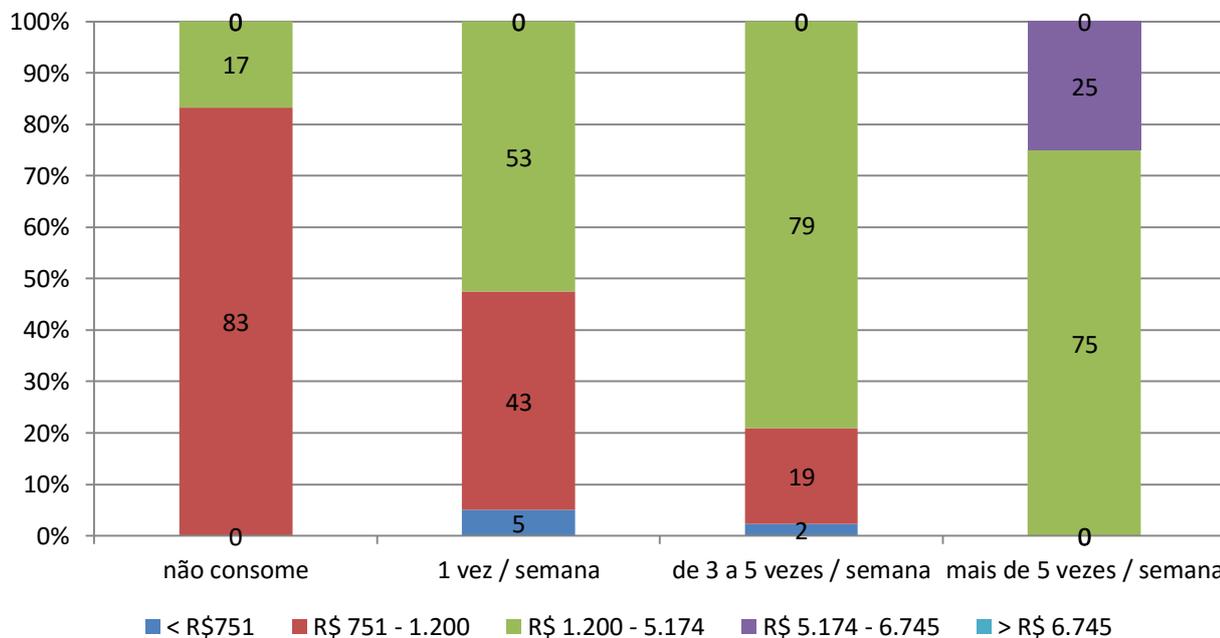


Analyzing these data we can say that the greater the degree of the person's education, more vegetables they consume. This may be linked to the knowledge and information obtained in the course of their life, how important the composition of a healthy diet is for people's health.

In Figure 2 you can see that for Itapetininga region and increasing family income is automatically reflected in higher consumption of vegetables. In Figure 2, 83% of respondents

who said they did not consume vegetables, have a monthly income between R\$ 751.00 and R\$ 1,200.00. Already those who consume 1 once a week and those who consume 3 to 5 times a week the majority (53% and 79% of respondents, respectively) have a monthly family income between R \$ 1,200.00 and 5,174.00. For respondents who have the habit of consuming more vegetables 5 times a week is observed that 75% have family income of around R \$ 1,200.00 and 5174.00 and the remaining 25% have family income above that amount. These results demonstrate that the higher the household income, the more they consume vegetables.

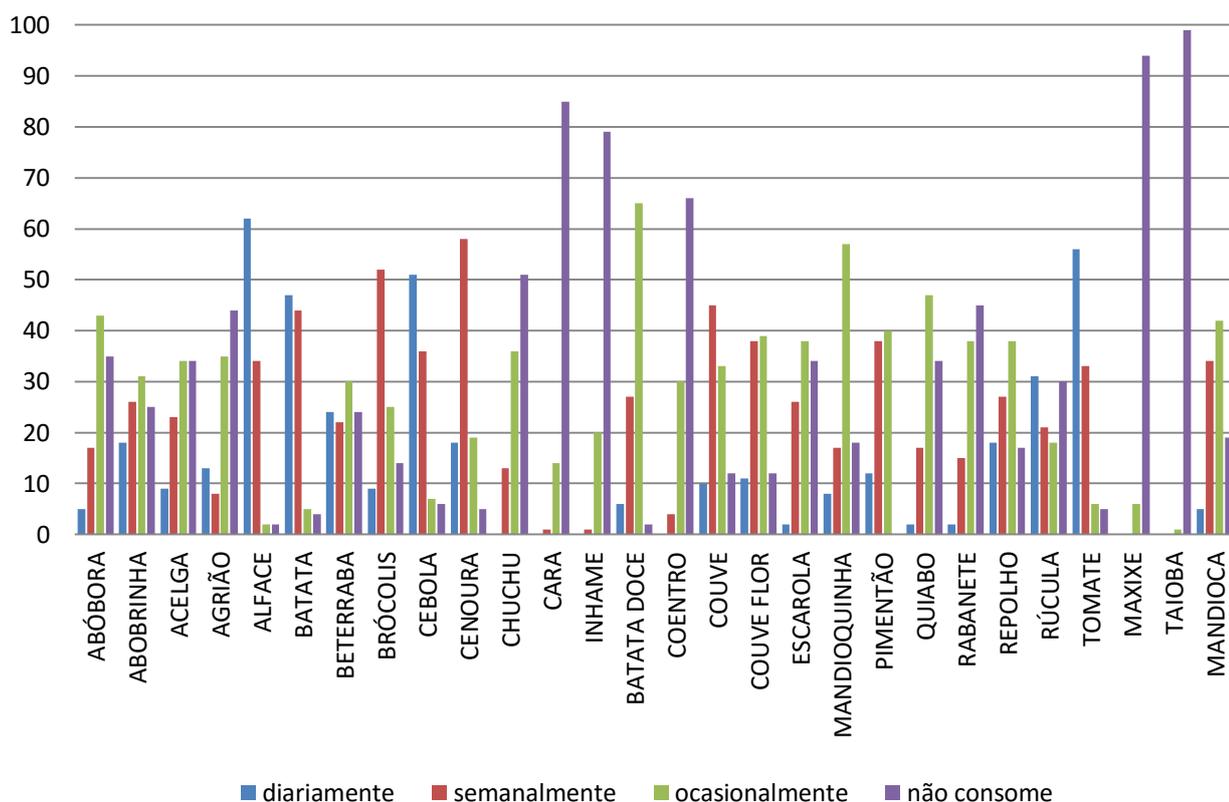
**Figure 2 - Percentage breakdown of income in vegetable consumption frequency (Own elaboration, 2014)**



As the habit of consumption, 75% of respondents said they consume as much raw vegetables as cooked ones and only 6% do not consume at all. Since the frequency of consumption was divided, 43% of respondents said they consumed vegetables 3-5 times per week and 40% consumes 1-2 times, only 11% consume more than 5 times a week.

Figure 3 is worth noting that lettuce, tomato and onion are the most consumed vegetables daily by respondents, so are foods that represent the habits and preferences of families. You can assign a high intake of these vegetables to factors such as relatively low cost, easy to prepare and is highly available to the consumer, ie is found in various sales points.

**Figure 3 - Main vegetables consumed in Itapetininga and region (Elaborated, 2014)**

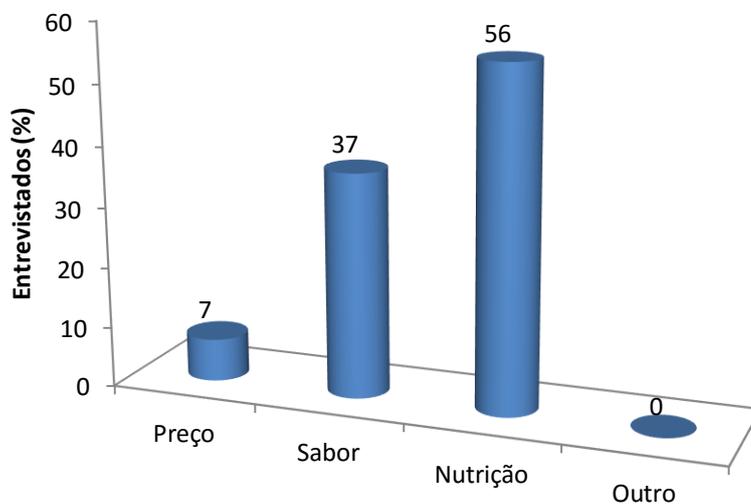


Analyzing the foods consumed weekly, the main were potato, broccoli, carrots, cabbage and peppers. Potato is not consumed daily, it is seen as the villain in the diet for being rich in carbohydrates, on the other hand, broccoli and carrot have been gaining ground in healthier dishes due to the publicity given to its nutritional composition.

Respondents also said they occasionally consume pumpkin, watercress, sweet potatoes, cassava and okra, these products are not always consumed due to high price or difficulty in preparation. It is also important to highlight the main products the respondents said they did not consume as Taioba, Maxixe, yam and Chinese yam, even saying they have never seen these vegetables. Unfortunately these products are being pushed aside by consumers, maybe because they are not practical in preparation, or even because they are not found on the market for sale.

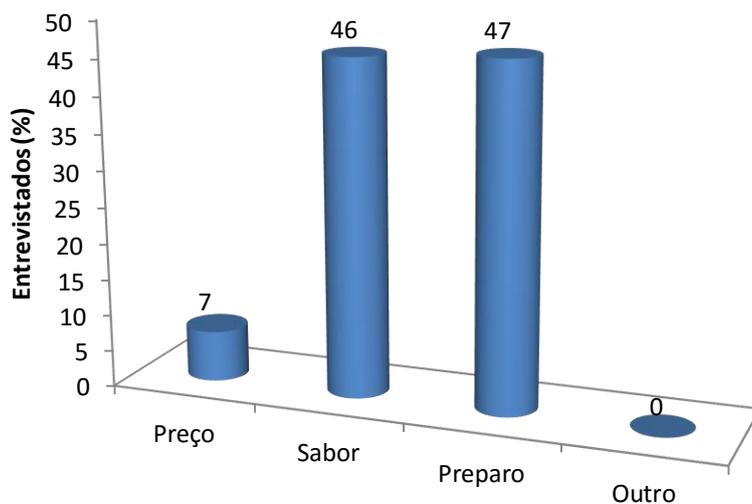
Campaigns and incentive programs to help the population to know the qualities and preparation of vegetables. The exhibition strategy repeated to different types of vegetables in childhood should be encouraged, so that the habit of consumption of these foods can be built together with the child's growth. The disclosure and guidance attractive recipes with vegetables the adult population can aid in fostering choice and consequently the consumption of these foods. Such strategies would approach the population's consumption reality besides encouraging the consumption of a greater variety of foods.

**Figure 4 - factors that motivate the consumption of vegetables (Elaborated, 2014)**



In Figure 1, it has been proposed that the level of education could affect the consumption of vegetables, as one who is unaware of the nutritional qualities might not be interested in consuming them. In Figure 4, one of the main reasons for consuming vegetables is precisely because they know that it is a healthy food, and 56% take into account this factor, the remaining 37% and 7% value the taste and price, respectively.

**Figure 5 - Factors that discourage the consumption of vegetables (Elaborated, 2014)**



Thinking of expanding the market, one must understand why the consumer chooses not to have vegetables on their table. In this context, it was observed in Figure 5 that 47% of respondents pointed to the preparation as the main cause for the lack of consumption. This finding is quite interesting because it shows that the market needs more easily available products, thereby minimally processed vegetables could be a way to add value and benefits to producers while filling daily diet more nutritious consumer products.

#### 4 FINAL REMARKS

In this study it was found that most respondents consumed both raw as cooked vegetables, more than 3 times a week. It was also found that, as the level of education and household income increases, there is also an increase in vegetable consumption.

Lettuce, tomato and onion are the most consumed vegetables daily by respondents, followed by potatoes, broccoli, carrots, cabbage and peppers and the main reason that drives the consumption of vegetables is related to health and nutrition.

The biggest reason for not consuming this type of food refers to the preparation, this may be taken into consideration in the search for new markets, thus minimal processing stands out as a promising activity.

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