

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE VIÇOSA

ALÉCIA DAILA BARROS GUIMARÃES

**PRÉ-TRATAMENTO ULTRASSÔNICO DA ALCALASE OU DA CASEÍNA DO
LEITE DE CABRA: IMPACTOS NA CINÉTICA DE HIDRÓLISE DA PROTEÍNA, E
NA SOLUBILIDADE E ATIVIDADE ANTIOXIDANTE *IN VITRO* DOS
HIDROLISADOS**

**VIÇOSA – MINAS GERAIS
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Dissertação apresentada à Universidade Federal de Viçosa, como parte das exigências do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciência e Tecnologia de Alimentos, para obtenção do título de *Magister Scientiae*.

Orientador: Bruno Ricardo de Castro Leite Junior

Coorientadores: Alline Artigiani Lima Tribst
Eduardo Basílio de Oliveira

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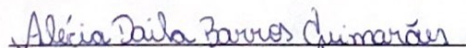
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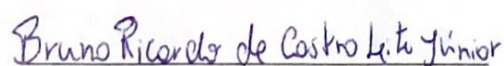
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RESUMO

GUIMARÃES, Alécia Daila Barros, M.Sc, Universidade Federal de Viçosa, julho de 2022. **Pré-tratamento ultrassônico da Alcalase ou da caseína do leite de cabra: impactos na cinética de hidrólise da proteína, e na solubilidade e atividade antioxidante *in vitro* dos hidrolisados.** Orientador: Bruno Ricardo de Castro Leite Júnior. Coorientadores: Alline Artigiani Lima Tribst e Eduardo Basílio de Oliveira.

O leite de cabra é um alimento altamente nutritivo, de fácil digestão e absorção, que vem despertando o interesse da população, pesquisadores e indústrias. As caseínas são as principais proteínas do leite de cabra e apresentam baixa alergenicidade em comparação com o leite bovino. O leite de cabra possui grande potencial para a geração de novos produtos, como hidrolisados proteicos e peptídeos bioativos com propriedades técnico-funcionais e potencialmente biológicas. A hidrólise enzimática é um dos principais métodos para a obtenção de hidrolisados proteicos, no entanto, existem alguns desafios para sua aplicação em escala industrial, como o baixo rendimento e o alto custo das enzimas. Estudos anteriores sugeriram o uso do ultrassom (US) para melhorar o desempenho enzimático. Com isso, este estudo avaliou o efeito do ultrassom (US) no pré-tratamento da Alcalase e da caseína do leite de cabra (CLC) para melhorar a hidrólise realizada a 25, 40 ou 60 ° C por até 180 min. A avaliação foi feita com base na taxa de reação, grau de hidrólise (GH), concentração de proteína solúvel em (ácido tricloroacético) TCA, solubilidade e atividade antioxidante *in vitro*. O pré-tratamento com US da Alcalase (40°C/60 min) ou da CLC (60°C/30 min) aumentou a atividade enzimática relativa em até 15,6 e 18,1%, respectivamente. A hidrólise usando amostras pré-tratadas com US aumentou a taxa de reação (até 154%), GH (até 53%) e concentração de proteína solúvel em TCA (até 65%). Com isso, o US promoveu o aumento na solubilidade (até 37% em pH 4,0) e atividade antioxidante *in vitro* (até 37% para o ensaio com ABTS) dos hidrolisados após 180 min de reação. Portanto, os resultados encontrados ampliam o uso do ultrassom, demonstrando que essa tecnologia pode ser utilizada tanto na Alcalase quanto na CLC para potencializar a hidrólise, visando obter hidrolisados e peptídeos bioativos com melhor apelo nutricional e técnico-funcional.

Palavras-chave: Ultrassom. Leite de Cabra. Peptídeos. Solubilidade de Proteínas. Propriedades Técnico-funcionais. Propriedades Biológicas.

ABSTRACT

GUIMARÃES, Alécia Daila Barros, M.Sc, Universidade Federal de Viçosa, July, 2022. **Ultrasonic pretreatment on Alcalase or goat milk casein: Impact on protein hydrolysis kinetics and on solubility and *in vitro* antioxidant activity of hydrolysates.** Advisor: Bruno Ricardo de Castro Leite Júnior. Co-advisors: Alline Artigiani Lima Tribst and Eduardo Basílio de Oliveira.

Goat milk is a highly nutritious food, easy to digest and absorb, which has been attracting the interest of the population, researchers and industries. Caseins are the main proteins in goat milk and have lower allergenicity compared to bovine casein. Goat milk has great potential for the generation of new products, such as protein hydrolysates and bioactive peptides with techno-functional properties and potentially biological. Enzymatic hydrolysis is one of the main methods for obtaining protein hydrolysates, however it has limitations such as the long hydrolysis time, low yield, and high cost. Previous studies have suggested the use of ultrasound (US) to improve enzyme performance. Thus, this study evaluated the effect of ultrasound (US) in the pretreatment of Alcalase and goat milk casein (GMC) to improve the hydrolysis performed at 25, 40 or 60 °C for up to 180 min. Evaluation was based on reaction rate, degree of hydrolysis (DH), TCA-soluble protein concentration, solubility and *in vitro* antioxidant activity. US pretreatment on Alcalase (40°C/60 min) or on GMC (60°C/30 min) increased the relative enzyme activity by up to 15.6 and 18.1%, respectively. Thus, US promoted an increase in the solubility (up to 37% at pH 4.0) and *in vitro* antioxidant activity (up to 37% for the ABTS assay) of the hydrolysates after 180 min of reaction. Therefore, the results found expand the use of ultrasound, demonstrating that this technology can be used both on Alcalase and on GMC to enhance the hydrolysis, aiming to obtain hydrolysates and bioactive peptides with better nutritional and techno-functional appeal.

Keywords: Ultrasound. Goat milk. Peptides. Protein Solubility. Techno-functional properties. Biological Properties.

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1. INTRODUÇÃO GERAL

O leite de cabra tem se destacado devido sua baixa alergenicidade, melhor digestão e absorção em comparação com o leite bovino (KOSTIĆ et al., 2021). Dentre as proteínas presentes no leite de cabra, cerca de 80% é composto por caseínas. A micela de caseína do leite caprino apresenta maior proporção de β -caseína (cerca de 53%) e menor de α_{s1} -caseína (cerca de 15%) comparado ao leite bovino (CRUZ et al., 2016), o que explica a menor alergenicidade do leite de cabra (DELGADO-JÚNIOR; SIQUEIRA; STOCK, 2020).

A hidrólise das proteínas do leite de cabra pode melhorar suas funcionalidades, como bioatividades (antioxidante, anti-hipertensiva, antidiabética, antimicrobiana, imunomoduladora, entre outras) e propriedades técnico-funcionais (emulsificante, espumante, solubilidade, retenção de água/óleo, etc.) (KOIRALA; PRATHUMPAI; ANAL, 2021; MAGALHÃES et al., 2022). Pesquisas revelaram que peptídeos obtidos das proteínas do leite de cabra exerceram atividade antioxidante e inibidora da enzima conversora da angiotensina (KOIRALA; PRATHUMPAI; ANAL, 2021). Além disso, hidrolisados da caseína do leite caprino apresentaram alta solubilidade e melhor atividade antioxidante *in vitro* em comparação a proteína não hidrolisada (MAGALHÃES et al., 2022).

A hidrólise das proteínas pode ocorrer por via química ou enzimática. A hidrólise química é simples e menos dispendiosa, no entanto, tem muitas limitações, como dificuldades no controle do processo, resultando em composições químicas variáveis (ULUG; JAHANDIDEH; WU, 2021). Já a hidrólise enzimática é um método eficiente e fácil de controlar devido às condições de processamento mais suaves, sendo um dos métodos tecnologicamente preferíveis (CHEN et al., 2021). Entretanto, os custos associados às reações enzimáticas são altos, o tempo de hidrólise é longo, e muitas vezes resultam em baixo rendimento. Assim, uma alternativa para contornar esse revés é a utilização de tecnologias não-convencionais para potencializar a performance enzimática.

Entre as tecnologias não-convencionais no processamento de alimentos, estudos científicos mostram que ultrassom (US) tem resultado em uma melhoria promissora do desempenho de diversas enzimas (SOARES et al., 2019; SOARES et al., 2020; MAGALHÃES et al., 2022). O US é considerado uma tecnologia econômica, e os avanços em sua eficiência e versatilidade ampliaram sua aplicação na indústria de alimentos. O principal efeito do US baseia-se no fenômeno da cavitação acústica. O US é capaz de promover a ativação enzimática (OLIVEIRA et al., 2017) e a aceleração da hidrólise (SUBHEDAR; BABU; GOGATE, 2015) em condições específicas de potência, tempo e temperatura (NADAR; RATHOD, 2017;

SOARES, et al., 2019; SOARES, et al., 2020). O US também pode modificar a conformação molecular das enzimas e dos substratos, facilitando o acesso destes últimos ao sítio ativos das moléculas da enzima. Dependendo das condições de processo, pode assim aumentar a atividade enzimática e o rendimento dos produtos (WANG et al., 2018). O efeito do US em proteínas, incluindo caseína, já foi estudado (principalmente usando ultrassom de sonda), e demonstrou-se que condições de alta energia (alta potência e alta temperatura) podem romper interações hidrofóbicas e ligações de hidrogênio intramoleculares nas moléculas de proteínas (ZHANG et al., 2018; WU et al., 2018; KOIRALA; PRATHUMPAI; ANAL, 2021), levando ao desdobramento, ou à agregação molecular, ou mesmo à hidrólise de proteínas (WU et al., 2018; ZHANG et al., 2018) devido a alterações em suas estruturas secundárias e terciárias (WU et al., 2018; KOIRALA; PRATHUMPAI; ANAL, 2021). Tais alterações podem impactar positivamente a atividade enzimática por aumentar a acessibilidade das enzimas e acelerar a reação.

O US pode agir em diferentes alvos, seja na enzima, no substrato ou na cinética da reação assistida. A reação assistida para potencializar a hidrólise enzimática da caseína do leite de cabra foi recentemente estudada (MAGALHÃES et al., 2022). Apesar de ser uma forma promissora, ela apresenta algumas limitações, como a utilização de um equipamento robusto de alta escalabilidade para que a reação possa ser realizada sob US por longos períodos. Dessa forma, hipotetizamos que o pré-tratamento da Alcalse e da caseína do leite de cabra (CLC) pode ser uma estratégia mais viável para potencializar a hidrólise enzimática, formando hidrolisados com melhores propriedades técnico-funcionais e biológicas, em bateladas menores. Com isso, este estudo avaliou o efeito do ultrassom no pré-tratamento da Alcalase e da CLC e o impacto na cinética de hidrólise da proteína e na solubilidade e atividade antioxidante *in vitro* dos hidrolisados obtidos.

2. OBJETIVOS

2.1. Objetivo Geral

Avaliar o efeito do US no pré-tratamento da Alcalase e da caseína do leite de cabra (CLC) como alternativa para melhorar a cinética de hidrólise enzimática da CLC e obter hidrolisados com melhores solubilidade e atividade antioxidante.

2.2. Objetivos específicos

- Avaliar o efeito do tempo de processo (por até 180 min) e da temperatura (25, 40 e 60 °C) no pré-tratamento ultrassônico da Alcalase e selecionar a condição que levar à maior ativação da enzima.
- Avaliar o efeito do tempo de processo (por até 180 min) e da temperatura (25, 40 e 60 °C) no pré-tratamento ultrassônico da CLC e selecionar a condição que tornar o substrato mais suscetível à hidrólise catalisada pela Alcalase.
- Avaliar a reação enzimática em diferentes temperaturas (25, 40 e 60 °C) utilizando Alcalase ou CLC pré-tratadas por US e o efeito na taxa, no grau de hidrólise (GH) e na concentração de proteínas solúveis em TCA ao longo de 180 min.
- Avaliar o impacto na solubilidade e atividade antioxidante *in vitro* dos hidrolisados de CLC obtidos em 45 e 180 min de hidrólise utilizando a Alcalase ou CLC pré-tratadas por US.

CAPÍTULO 1

REFERENCIAL TEÓRICO

1. Leite de cabra

O leite de cabra e seus produtos têm desempenhado um papel muito importante na viabilidade nutricional e econômica de muitos países em desenvolvimento, bem como nos países do Mediterrâneo, Oriente Médio e Europa Oriental (MOATSOU; PARK, 2017). A produção mundial do leite de cabra aumentou 62% de 1993 a 2013 (HAENLEIN, 2017). De acordo com a Organização das Nações Unidas para Alimentação e Agricultura (FAO), no ano de 2017 a produção global de leite de cabra foi estimada em 18,7 milhões de toneladas (FAO, 2019). Estima-se um aumento na produção de aproximadamente 53 % até 2030 (PULINA et al., 2018; SILVA; FAVARIN, 2020).

A produção de leite de vaca é predominante no Brasil. No entanto, o leite de cabra, mesmo com o menor volume de produção, tem importância na geração de emprego e renda, principalmente para pequenos produtores familiares (DELGADO-JÚNIOR; SIQUEIRA; STOCK, 2020). A caprinocultura brasileira é mais difundida na região Nordeste, onde o mercado caracteriza-se pela informalidade no comércio dos produtos e parte da produção de leite é vendida para o governo que destina o produto para programa de merenda escolar. A região Sudeste é a segunda maior bacia leiteira, sendo o estado de Minas Gerais o terceiro maior produtor de leite de cabra (IBGE, 2017). Segundo Cruz et al. (2016), em regiões subdesenvolvidas, a criação de cabras é voltada quase que exclusivamente para a subsistência das famílias.

O leite de cabra é rico em proteínas, lipídios, carboidratos, vitaminas, minerais e outros micronutrientes. Estudos relatam que o leite de cabra possui glóbulos de gordura pequenos, baixa alergenicidade e mais fácil digestão e absorção em comparação com o leite de vaca (KOSTIĆ et al., 2021). A composição do leite de cabra varia com a dieta, raça, idade do animal, condições ambientais, condições de alimentação e manejo, estação do ano, localidade e estágio de lactação. No final da lactação, por exemplo, os teores de gordura, proteína, sólidos e minerais do leite de cabra aumentam, enquanto o teor de lactose diminui (PARK; HAENLEIN, 2006). O leite caprino pode apresentar uma maior quantidade de proteína e gordura quando comparado ao leite bovino, no entanto apresenta uma menor porcentagem de lactose (Tabela 1).

Tabela 1 - Composição média do leite caprino e bovino

Constituintes (%)	Caprino	Bovino
Sólidos totais	12,2	12,3
Gordura	3,8	3,6
Proteína	3,5	3,3
Lactose	4,1	4,7
Cinzas	0,8	0,7

Fonte: Adaptada de Park et al. (2007).

A produção do leite de cabra tem se tornado importante, pois além de gerar emprego e renda, especialmente para pequenos produtores, também pode resultar em novas oportunidades para indústria. Assim, a busca por novos produtos a partir do leite cabra pode agregar valor à matéria-prima, além disso, pode fornecer para indústria novos ingredientes para a melhoria das características nutricionais, técnico-funcionais e sensoriais dos produtos elaborados.

2. Caseína do leite de cabra

As proteínas do leite despertam grande interesse devido à sua importância na nutrição e fisiologia humana, e por desempenhar papel tecnológico significativo na fabricação de produtos lácteos (SLAČANAC et al., 2010). Entre as proteínas que constituem o leite de cabra, cerca de 80% são representadas pelas caseínas e cerca de 20% pelas proteínas do soro (PARK et al., 2007; AMIGO; FONTECHA, 2011; PARK, 2017). As proteínas encontradas nas micelas de caseína do leite de cabra são as mesmas do leite de outras espécies, nomeadamente as caseínas (α_{s1} -, α_{s2} -, β - e κ -caseína), além das proteínas séricas β -lactoglobulina, α -lactalbumina, albumina sérica e imunoglobulinas (AMIGO; FONTECHA, 2011). O leite caprino possui melhor digestibilidade em razão do menor tamanho dos glóbulos de gordura e apresenta baixa alergenicidade devido a algumas diferenças na micela de caseína quando comparado ao leite bovino (KOSTIĆ et al., 2021).

A micela de caseína do leite de cabra é composta principalmente pela β -caseína, que representa cerca de 53% do total das caseínas, diferentemente da caseína do leite de vaca que representa menos de 40%. Essa diferença revela um impacto muito importante sobre a estrutura, inclusive nas diferenças nutritivas entre o leite de cabra e de vaca. O leite caprino possui quantidades de α_{s2} -caseína (15%) e κ -caseína (13%) semelhantes ao leite bovino, porém, a fração α_{s1} - caseína é muito menor no leite de cabra (15% do total das caseínas) em comparação com o leite bovino (38% do total das caseínas) (CRUZ et al., 2016). Há estudos que relacionam

o menor potencial alergênico do leite de cabra em função da menor quantidade da fração α_{s1} -caseína, tornando-o mais facilmente tolerável para a população, principalmente para as crianças (DELGADO-JÚNIOR; SIQUEIRA; STOCK, 2020).

Ao longo dos últimos anos, as proteínas do leite caprino vêm sendo estudadas em relação aos seus hidrolisados e peptídeos bioativos. Kullisaar et al. (2003) mostraram que a fermentação do leite de cabra melhorou a capacidade antioxidante em humanos, sugerindo que tais efeitos benéficos podem estar relacionados à liberação de peptídeos bioativos das proteínas do leite durante a fermentação. Outros estudos também revelaram a atividade antioxidante de hidrolisados de proteínas do leite de cabra obtidos por hidrólise enzimática (LI et al., 2013; GOBBA et al., 2014; AHMED, et al., 2015).

O interesse por hidrolisados e peptídeos bioativos derivados de proteínas alimentares com propriedades biológicas e técnico-funcionais vem aumentando (GÖRGÜÇ; GENÇDAĞ; YILMAZ, 2020; OLIVERA et al., 2020; BIELECKA; CICHOSZ; CZECZOT, 2022), com isso torna-se interessante a utilização da caseína do leite de cabra como fonte de hidrolisados e peptídeos bioativos na indústria de alimentos e farmacêutica.

3. Hidrólise proteica: melhoria nas propriedades técnico-funcionais e biológicas

A hidrólise das proteínas de diversas fontes alimentícias (leite, grãos, sementes, folhas, algas, etc.) resulta na produção de hidrolisados proteicos (mistura de oligopeptídeos, peptídeos e aminoácidos livres) que podem potencializar a funcionalidade dessas proteínas, resultando na melhoria das propriedades técnico-funcionais, como a solubilidade (AL-SHAMSI et al. 2017; MAGALHÃES et al., 2022), propriedade emulsificante (CALDERÓN-CHIU et al., 2021; DU et al., 2022), retenção de água e óleo (FATHOLLAHY et al., 2021), propriedade espumante (FALLAH-DELAVAR; FARMANI 2018), dentre outras. Além disso, com a hidrólise proteica pode-se obter peptídeos bioativos, que são peptídeos de massa molar inferior às proteínas dos quais se originam, geralmente constituídos por menos de 20 resíduos de aminoácidos com massa molecular menor que 6 kDa, que podem apresentar propriedades potencialmente biológicas, como por exemplo, antioxidante (KOIRALA; PRATHUMPAI; ANAL, 2021; MAGALHÃES et al., 2022; MOHAMMADI et al., 2022), anti-hipertensiva, (KARAMI et al., 2019; OLIVEIRA, et al., 2020) antidiabética, (DU et al., 2022) atividade antimicrobiana (MOHAMMADI et al., 2022) entre outras (Figura 1).

Figura 1- Principais propriedades técnico-funcionais (◀) e biológicas (▶) desempenhadas por hidrolisados derivados de proteínas alimentares.



Fonte: Da autora, 2022.

A solubilidade das proteínas e de seus hidrolisados é um dos fatores determinantes para aplicações em produtos alimentícios, uma vez que afeta outras propriedades técnico-funcionais (Tabela 2) (MOGHADAM et al., 2020). Calderón-Chiu et al. (2021) observaram que o aumento da solubilidade dos hidrolisados obtidos da proteína da folha de jaca foi associado a altas propriedades emulsificantes e espumantes. A solubilidade de uma proteína é altamente influenciada pela redução na massa molar e aumento no número de unidades polipeptídicas menores, mais hidrofílicas e mais facilmente solvatadas. No entanto, a estrutura da proteína, massa molar e a composição e sequência de aminoácidos são fatores que também podem afetar a solubilidade dos produtos da hidrólise proteica (ARTEAGA et al., 2020).

Magalhães et al. (2022) constataram que hidrolisados obtidos da caseína do leite de cabra utilizando diferentes proteases resultou no aumento da solubilidade em diferentes pH, principalmente no pH próximo ao ponto isoelétrico da proteína. A hidrólise enzimática das proteínas do leite de camela também resultou em hidrolisados com maior solubilidade em comparação com proteína não hidrolisada (AL-SHAMSI et al., 2017). A hidrólise proteica gera hidrolisados contendo peptídeos e estruturas menores, com maior número de grupos polares expostos e com consequente aumento de solubilidade, como observado pelos autores (AL-SHAMSI et al., 2017; MAGALHÃES et al., 2022) (Tabela 2).

Tabela 2 - Avaliação da solubilidade e atividade antioxidante de hidrolisados obtidos de diferentes fontes de proteínas

Proteína	Principais conclusões	Referência
Caseinato de sódio	A solubilidade do NaCas em pH ácido foi melhorada. A atividade de eliminação de radicais livres de DPPH e o poder redutor foram aumentados após a hidrólise.	LUO; PAN; ZHONG, 2014
Proteínas do leite de camela	Hidrolisados apresentaram maior solubilidade em comparação com a proteína nativa. As propriedades antioxidantes avaliadas por DPPH, ABTS e atividade de quelação de metal foram melhoradas após hidrólise.	AL-SHAMSI et al., 2017
Proteína da folha de jaca	A solubilidade e a capacidade antioxidante foi dependente do tipo de enzima e aumentou em função do tempo de hidrólise.	CALDERÓN-CHIU 2021
Proteína de <i>Spirulina Platensis</i>	A proteína intacta apresentou menor solubilidade do que seus hidrolisados. A capacidade sequestrante de radicais DPPH e ABTS foi aumentada com a hidrólise	MOHAMMADI et al., 2022
Caseína do leite de cabra	A hidrólise enzimática aumentou a solubilidade do produto hidrolisado em diferentes pH. A atividade antioxidante <i>in vitro</i> melhorou com a hidrólise.	MAGALHÃES et al., 2022

Fonte: Da autora, 2022.

Caseinato de sódio (NaCas) é um ingrediente lácteo desenvolvido para melhorar funcionalidades como solubilidade em água, propriedades emulsificantes e espumantes, bem como capacidades de carreamento de pequenas moléculas com função tecnológica, como aditivos, ou atividade biológica, como vitaminas (SÁNCHEZ; PATINO, 2005; PAN; ZHONG; BAEK, 2013). No entanto, a solubilidade de NaCas em pH ácido próximo ao do ponto isoelétrico (em torno de pH 4,6) é baixa e suas atividades biológicas são limitadas. A hidrólise enzimática do NaCas demonstrou aumentar a solubilidade em pH baixo, e foi observado que a solubilidade dos hidrolisados variou com o tipo de enzima e com o tempo de hidrólise (LUO; PAN; ZHONG, 2014). A solubilidade das proteínas depende da hidrofobicidade da superfície, do tamanho das mesmas e da repulsão eletrostática entre as moléculas. A alta repulsão eletrostática e hidratação dos resíduos de aminoácido expostos às moléculas de água podem levar a uma maior solubilidade do hidrolisado em valores de pH abaixo e acima do ponto isoelétrico (WARNAKULASURIYA; NICKERSON, 2018).

O uso de peptídeos bioativos com capacidade antioxidante tem despertado interesse, pois estes podem atuar como inibidores da peroxidação lipídica, sequestradores diretos de radicais livres e agentes quelantes de íons de metais de transição que catalisam a geração de radicais (FARIDY et al., 2020). A atividade biológica dos peptídeos é determinada pela sequência de aminoácidos, estrutura, configuração e peso molecular. Peptídeos compostos de triptofano, tirosina, histidina, prolina são importantes antioxidantes. Aminoácidos hidrofóbicos (leucina ou valina) presentes na estrutura peptídica afetam a atividade antioxidante dos peptídeos e sua capacidade de inibir a peroxidação lipídica (BIELECKA; CICHOSZ; CZECZOT, 2022). Em geral, a maioria dos peptídeos antioxidantes têm de 4 a 16 unidades de aminoácidos com peso molecular de 0,4 a 2 kDa (GÓRSKA-WARSEWICZ et al., 2018).

Os peptídeos com capacidade antioxidante são benéficos a saúde, pois atua na defesa contra o estresse oxidativo, reduzindo os danos causados pelos radicais livres (LIANG et al., 2019). Além disso, podem prevenir ou retardar a deterioração oxidativa nos alimentos e, assim, prolongar a vida útil do produto (COELHO et al., 2019). A hidrólise da proteína de *Spirulina platensis* gerou peptídeos que exibiram maior capacidade de eliminação de radicais DPPH e ABTS em comparação com a proteína não hidrolisada (MOHAMMADI et al., 2022).

Caseínas e proteínas do soro do leite de cabra foram hidrolisadas pela pepsina, sendo observado a formação de peptídeos com atividade antioxidante, que apresentaram alta atividade de eliminação de radicais superóxido e DPPH. Essa pesquisa demonstrou ainda que as caseínas do leite de cabra contêm peptídeos antioxidantes mais potentes do que os das proteínas do soro (AHMED et al., 2015). Koirala, Prathumpai e Anal, (2021) também encontraram peptídeos com capacidade antioxidante obtidos da hidrólise enzimática das proteínas do leite de cabra. Magalhães et al. (2022) observaram que a atividade antioxidante *in vitro* melhorou com a hidrólise enzimática associado ao ultrassom, e os hidrolisados obtidos pela Alcalase apresentaram aumento da capacidade sequestrante dos radicais ABTS e DPPH ($p < 0,05$) (Tabela 2). É importante salientar que a capacidade antioxidante dos peptídeos vai depender da fonte de proteína e do tipo de protease utilizada na hidrólise.

Portanto, peptídeos obtidos durante a hidrólise enzimática de frações de proteína do leite caprino oferecem potencial para sua aplicação na indústria nutracêutica como peptídeos bioativos, e terapêutica na indústria farmacêutica para tratamento ou prevenção do estresse oxidativo e suas doenças associadas. Além disso podem ser utilizados na indústria de alimentos para evitar a oxidação dos produtos alimentícios (AHMED et al., 2015).

4. Aplicação do ultrassom na melhoria da performance enzimática

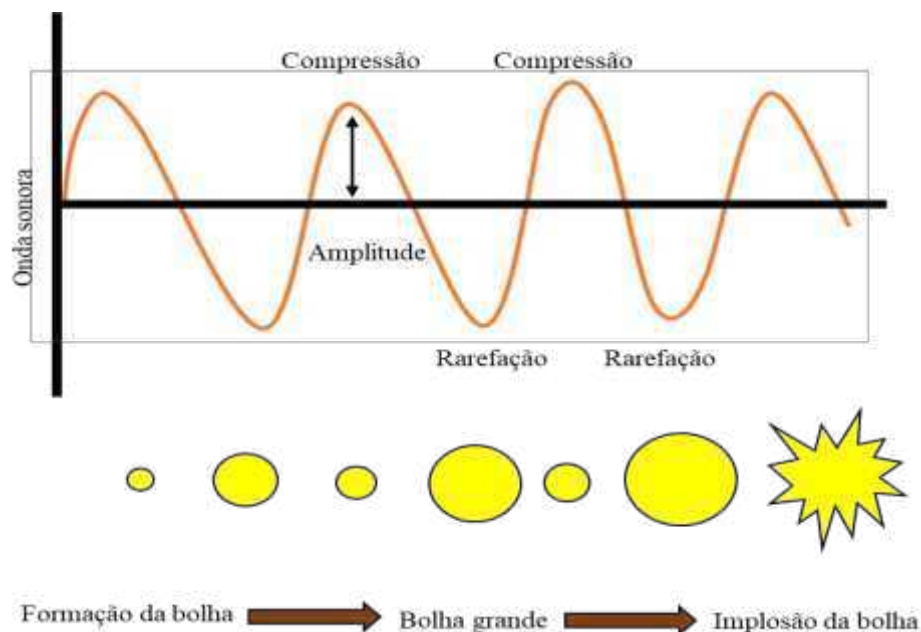
As proteínas podem ser hidrolisadas por diferentes métodos, sendo as hidrólises enzimática e a química, os principais. A hidrólise utilizando enzimas oferece vantagens em relação a hidrólise química, devido às altas especificidade e regiosseletividade das enzimas, e por ser um método seguro e fácil de controlar, por isso muitas vezes esse método é preferível. Entretanto, diferentes combinações de condições de processo incluindo razão enzima-substrato, tempo de hidrólise, temperatura e pH devem ser avaliados experimentalmente e otimizados para obtenção dos compostos de interesse, com maiores rendimentos em menores tempos de reação. Normalmente, o processo de hidrólise é realizado em pH e temperatura ideais de atuação da enzima (UDENIGWE; ALUKO, 2012).

A hidrólise enzimática tem sido utilizada com sucesso em escala laboratorial, no entanto, em nível industrial pode se tornar difícil, pois apesar dos benefícios obtidos com as reações enzimáticas, os custos associados a essas reações são altos, o tempo de hidrólise é longo, e muitas vezes resultam em baixo rendimento. Neste contexto, uma alternativa para contornar esse revés é a utilização de tecnologias não-convencionais para processar enzimas e/ou substratos visando maior taxa de conversão ou maior concentração final do produto de interesse. Tecnologias não-convencionais como processamento por alta pressão, homogeneização a alta pressão, ultrassom, micro-ondas, aquecimento ôhmico, plasma de atmosfera fria, campo elétrico pulsado e ozônio, foram propostas inicialmente como uma alternativa para o processamento de alimentos a fim de desenvolver alimentos seguros e de melhor qualidade (HERNÁNDEZ–HERNÁNDEZ; MORENO-VILETA; VILLANUEVA-RODRÍGUEZ, 2019). Entre as tecnologias não-convencionais no processamento de alimentos, algumas já foram propostas para promover a ativação e estabilização de enzimas, como o processamento por alta pressão (TRIBST; RIBEIRO; CRISTIANINI, 2017), homogeneização a alta pressão (TRIBST; AUGUSTO; CRISTIANINI, 2013), micro-ondas (MAZINANI; YAN, 2016) e ultrassom (SOARES et al., 2019).

O ultrassom (US) é uma tecnologia que apresenta baixo custo quando comparado a outras, como por exemplo, a tecnologia por alta pressão. O US consiste na emissão de ondas sonoras por meio de vibrações mecânicas, que se propagam pelos diferentes estados da matéria com frequências acima do limite da audição humana (>20kHz) (AHMED et al., 2016). Um dos principais efeitos se baseia no fenômeno da cavitação acústica, em que ocorre o crescimento repentino e o colapso de bolhas de gás como resultado da diferença de pressão criada pelas ondas ultrassônicas (Figura 2). O colapso das bolhas de cavitação ocorre quando elas atingem

seu tamanho de crescimento ideal, perdendo sua conformação e produzindo microjatos fortes e ondas de choque, levando a temperaturas e pressões locais extremas (FLORES-JIMÉNEZ et al., 2019). A interação dos microjatos e ondas de choque gera picos de pressão hidrodinâmica que atingem várias centenas de MPa na superfície dos materiais, o que resulta em mudanças na forma, estrutura e composição dos materiais, como enzimas e proteínas. Além disso, esses efeitos mecânicos aumentam a transferência de calor e massa durante o processo (KADAM et al., 2015). Dessa forma, o US pode ser uma alternativa para melhorar a performance enzimática.

Figura 2 - Mecanismo de cavitação provocado pelo ultrassom



Fonte: Da autora, 2022.

O ultrassom é capaz de promover a ativação enzimática (OLIVEIRA et al., 2017) e a aceleração da hidrólise (SUBHEDAR; BABU; GOGATE, 2015) em condições específicas de potência, tempo e temperatura (NADAR; RATHOD, 2017; SOARES, et al., 2019; SOARES et al., 2020). O efeito do US em proteínas, incluindo caseína, já foi estudado (principalmente usando ultrassom de sonda), e os resultados mostraram que condições de alta energia (alta potência e alta temperatura) podem romper interações hidrofóbicas e ligações de hidrogênio intramoleculares das proteínas (ZHANG et al., 2018; WU et al., 2018; KOIRALA; PRATHUMPAI; ANAL, 2021), levando ao desdobramento ou agregação molecular (WU et al., 2018; ZHANG et al., 2018) com conseqüentes alterações em estruturas secundárias e

terciárias das proteínas (WU et al., 2018; KOIRALA; PRATHUMPAI; ANAL, 2021). Tais alterações no substrato podem aumentar a acessibilidade das enzimas e acelerar a reação.

Ma et al. (2011) estudaram o efeito do US na atividade da Alcalase em diferentes condições de potência por 5 min. Os resultados mostraram que o ultrassom teve efeito sobre a atividade da Alcalase e a maior atividade foi alcançada quando a amostra foi tratada na potência ultrassônica de 80 W por 4 min, em que a atividade da enzima aumentou 5,8% em comparação com o controle. Já em potências maiores que 80 W, a atividade de Alcalase diminuiu gradualmente. A hidrólise enzimática do creme de leite de cabra assistida por US foi avaliada por Soares et al. (2020), os autores observaram que a utilização do ultrassom promoveu aumento na taxa de hidrólise de 12% a 55 °C, 23% a 40 °C e 28% a 25 °C, quando comparada ao processamento convencional. Além disso, a temperatura de reação foi um parâmetro importante e temperaturas mais baixas melhoraram os efeitos do US.

Proteína da clara do ovo foi submetida ao pré-tratamento ultrassônico, visando melhorar as propriedades funcionais e físico-químicas dos hidrolisados proteicos. Os resultados do estudo mostraram que o pré-tratamento com ultrassom influenciou a proteólise das proteínas da clara do ovo, melhorando as propriedades de solubilidade, formação de espuma e emulsificação (STEFANOVIC et al., 2018). O efeito do pré-tratamento ultrassônico seguido de hidrólise enzimática da proteína do leite de cabra, resultou no aumento da concentração de proteína solúvel no leite caprino e favoreceu a produção de hidrolisados de proteínas e peptídeos com atividade antioxidante e inibidores da ECA (KOIRALA; PRATHUMPAI; ANAL, 2021). Dessa forma, pode-se observar que o US pode potencializar a hidrólise enzimática resultando na melhora das propriedades técnico-funcionais e biológicas.

Como observado, o ultrassom pode agir em diferentes alvos, seja na enzima, no substrato ou na reação assistida. A reação assistida para potencializar a hidrólise enzimática da caseína do leite de cabra foi recentemente estudada (MAGALHÃES et al., 2022). Embora seja uma forma interessante, ela pode apresentar algumas limitações, como a utilização de um equipamento robusto de alta escalabilidade para que a reação possa ser realizada sob US, com isso, o pré-processamento da enzima e do substrato pode ser uma estratégia mais viável para potencializar a hidrólise enzimática da caseína do leite de cabra e obter os produtos de interesse.

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CAPÍTULO 2

Ultrasonic pretreatment on Alcalase and goat milk casein: Impact on enhancement of protein hydrolysis kinetics, solubility, and *in vitro* antioxidant activity

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CAPITULO 2

Ultrasonic pretreatment on Alcalase and goat milk casein: Impact on enhancement of protein hydrolysis kinetics, solubility, and *in vitro* antioxidant activity

Abstract

The effect of ultrasound (US) as pretreatment of Alcalase and goat milk casein (GMC) to improve hydrolysis carried out at 25, 40, or 60 °C for up to 180 min was evaluated based on the reaction rate, degree hydrolysis (DH), solubility and *in vitro* antioxidant activity. US pretreatment of Alcalase (40°C / 60 min) and GMC (60°C / 30 min) increased the relative enzyme activity by up to 15.6 and 18.1%, respectively. Hydrolysis using US pretreated samples increased the reaction rate (up to 154%), DH (up to 53%), and TCA-soluble protein concentration (up to 65%), which contributed to increase the solubility (up to 37% at pH 4.0) and antioxidant activity (up to 37% for ABTS assay) of the hydrolysates after 180 min reaction ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, US technology can be strategically used to enhance the hydrolysis of GMC, aiming to obtain a food ingredient with improved nutritional and techno-functional appeal.

Industrial relevance

The production of goat milk has increased over the years. This is due to the attractive nutritional value of this food. Caseins are the main proteins in goat milk and have lower allergenicity compared to bovine casein. The enzymatic hydrolysis of these fractions can enhance the techno-functional properties, as well as favor the production of bioactive peptides. However, this operation is a challenge in industrial scale due to the high cost of enzymes, long reaction time, and low yield. This study demonstrates that the ultrasonic pretreatment of Alcalase or goat milk casein is a viable strategy to increase enzymatic activity, as well as to enhance hydrolysis, forming hydrolysates with better techno-functional properties and potentially bioactive.

Keywords: Goat milk protein; Ultrasound; Protein solubility; Techno-functional properties; Biological properties.

1. Introduction

Interest in dairy goat production has been expanding globally. World production of goat milk has doubled in the last 50 years (Miller & Lu, 2019). In addition, an increase of approximately 53% is estimated by 2030 (Pulina et al., 2018; Silva & Favarin, 2020). Among the goat's milk proteins, thereabout 80% are represented by caseins and approximately 20% by whey proteins (Park et al., 2007; Amigo & Fontecha, 2011; Park, 2017). The casein from goat milk has a lower amount of α_{s1} -casein fraction than from bovine milk (Amigo & Fontecha, 2011). The lower allergenic potential of goat milk has been related to lower α_{s1} -casein proportion, which is more easily digested (Park, 2017).

In recent years, many food proteins have been studied in relation to their hydrolysates and bioactive peptides. Protein hydrolysis can result in hydrolysates with improved techno-functional properties, and biologically active peptides (Li et al., 2013; Luo, Pan, & Zhong, 2014; Ibrahim, Ahmed, & Miyata, 2017; Kalyan et al., 2018; Oliveira et al., 2018; Oliveira et al., 2020). Some studies have revealed that hydrolysates and peptides obtained from goat milk proteins exert bioactive antioxidant and ACE-inhibitory activities (Koirala, Prathumpai, & Anal, 2021; Magalhães et al., 2022).

Proteins can be hydrolyzed by different methods, including enzymatic and chemical hydrolysis. Hydrolysis using enzymes offers advantages over chemical hydrolysis, due to the high specificity of the enzymes. However, the costs associated with enzymatic reactions are high, the hydrolysis time is long, and yield is limited. The use of ultrasound has been highlighted as an interesting strategy to overcome these limitations (Soares et al., 2019; Soares et al., 2020; Magalhães et al., 2022), when applied in enzyme or substrate individually (Ulug, Jahandideh, & Wu, 2021) or with reaction carried out under US-assisted conditions (Magalhães et al., 2022). In addition, Ultrasound (US) is considered a cost-effective technology, and advances in its efficiency and versatility have expanded its application in the food industry. The main effect of US is based on the phenomenon of acoustic cavitation. US can promote enzymatic activation (Oliveira et al., 2017) and, hence, hydrolysis acceleration (Subhedar, Babu, & Gogate, 2015) under specific conditions of potency, time, and temperature (Nadar & Rathod, 2017; Soares et al., 2019; Soares et al., 2020; Magalhães et al., 2022), due to structural conformation changes of both enzymes and substrates (Wang et al., 2018).

Previous results showed that enzymatic hydrolysis of goat milk casein has been potentiated by ultrasound in assisted reaction (Magalhães et al., 2022). However, this process presents some limitations, such as the use of robust equipment with high scalability to withstand the long period of hydrolysis under US. Thus, the pretreatment of enzyme or substrate appears

as a more viable strategy to enhance enzymatic performance and, thus, to obtain the products of technological interest.

Therefore, this work aimed to evaluate the effect of US in the pretreatment of Alcalase and goat milk casein as a possibility to improve enzymatic hydrolysis, aiming to increase the hydrolysis rate and quality of the reaction products. In addition, the impact of such pretreatment on the solubility and *in vitro* antioxidant activity of the hydrolysates was also evaluated.

2. Material and Methods

2.1. Enzyme and goat milk casein

The Alcalase® (*Bacillus licheniformis*) was donated from Novozymes Latino Americana Ltda (Paraná, Brazil). Fresh goat milk was obtained from the goat sector of the Federal University of Viçosa (Viçosa, MG, Brazil). The average milk composition was 3.5% lactose, 4.8% protein, 4.5% fat, and 13.7% total dry extract (AOAC Official Method 972.16, AOAC, 1995).

Casein extraction was carried out by isoelectric precipitation according to the method described by Magalhães et al. (2022). The obtained pellet (casein) was lyophilized to obtain goat milk casein (GMC) with 1.6% moisture and 88.6% protein and 9.8% nonprotein dry extract from milk (mainly minerals and residues of fat and lactose).

2.2. Alcalase activity after US pretreatment of enzyme and GMC

To evaluate the effect of ultrasonic pretreatment on Alcalase and goat milk casein, an ultrasound bath (Unique, model USC 2800 A, Indaiatuba, Brazil) was used. Further apparatus specifications are: temperature control, volumetric capacity of 9.5 L, dimensions of 300 x 240 x 150 mm, equipped with five disk transducers arranged below the vat, with a nominal power of 450 W and 20 kHz frequency. The US bath was filled with a volume of 6.5 L of distilled water, and a beaker containing 200 mL of the enzyme solution (0.5% v/v, prepared in 0.1 M phosphate buffer pH 6.8) or 200 mL of GMC (0.7% w/v, prepared in 0.1 M phosphate buffer pH 6.8) were positioned at the point of maximum exposure to ultrasonic intensity (previously determined by the aluminum foil method (Vinatoru, 2015)). The volumetric power (38 W/L) delivery to the solution was measured according to the calorimetric method described by O'Donnell et al. (2010).

Alcalase and GMC were processed separately at three temperatures (25, 40 and 60 °C) for up to 180 min. After 15, 30, 60, 90, 120 and 180 minutes of processing, 10 mL samples

(Alcalase or GMC) were collected and the Alcalase activity was determined according to the procedure described by Magalhães et al. (2022), at optimum pH (6.8) and temperature (60 °C). As controls, 10 mL aliquots were collected at 0 min and the activity measurements were performed under the same conditions.

The relative enzymatic activity after US pretreatment of Alcalase and GMC ($REAP_{ENZ}$ or $REAP_{GMC}$) was calculated considering the activity of the US pretreated samples in relation to the nontreated ones, under the same temperature condition, according to Equation 1 (1).

$$REAP_{ENZ \text{ or } GMC} (\%) = \frac{\text{Activity pretreated samples}}{\text{Activity non_pretreated samples}} \cdot 100 \quad (1)$$

2.3.GMC hydrolysis using US pretreated Alcalase and GMC

To evaluate the GMC hydrolysis using Alcalase and GMC pretreated by US, US at 40°C/60 min for Alcalase and 60°C/30 min for GMC were applied. These conditions were chosen considering the maximum $REAP_{ENZ}$ and $REAP_{GMC}$, according to the results from section 2.2.

For this, a volume of 1.0 mL of the enzyme solution (0.5% v/v, prepared in 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 6.8) was added to 100 mL of the GMC solution (0.7% w/v prepared in 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 6.8). The concentration of Alcalase and GMC were defined based on K_m values and within the dilution range recommended by the manufacturers. The hydrolysis was carried out in a thermostatic bath at 25, 40 and 60°C for up to 180 min and was measured by the degree of hydrolysis (DH) and the concentration of TCA soluble protein. Conventional hydrolysis was carried out under the same conditions using Alcalase and GMC nontreated by US.

2.3.1. Degree of hydrolysis

The degree of hydrolysis (DH) was determined by the pH-stat method according to Adler-Nissen (1986). For this, the Alcalase and GMC solutions were prepared in distilled water, and the initial pH was adjusted to 6.8 (NaOH 0.1 M) and maintained at this value for 180 min of hydrolysis at 25, 40 and 60 °C by adding NaOH (0.1 M). The DH was defined as the percent ratio between the number of peptide bonds broken (h) and the total number of peptide bonds in the substrate studied (h_{tot}), calculated according to Equation 2 (2):

$$DH (\%) = \frac{h}{h_{tot}} \cdot 100 = \frac{V \cdot C}{\alpha \cdot M \cdot h_{tot}} \cdot 100 \quad (2)$$

Where V (mL) is the consumption volume of NaOH, C (mol/L) is the concentration of NaOH, α is the average degree of dissociation of α -NH₂ amino groups released during hydrolysis at a given pH and temperature (0.414 for Alcalase, calculated according to Kurozawa, Park, & Hubinger (2009)), M (g) is the mass of protein to be hydrolyzed in the reaction mixture, and h_{tot} (mmol/g) is the molar number of peptide bonds per unit mass of protein, which is 8.2 for GMC (Gong et al., 2020).

2.3.2. TCA soluble protein concentration

The TCA soluble protein concentration was determined according to the procedures described by Bučko et al. (2016). For this, after 0, 15, 30, 60, 90, 120 and 180 min of hydrolysis at 25, 40 and 60°C, aliquots were collected from the reaction media and added to TCA (20% w/v) at a 1:1 ratio, to stop the reaction. Subsequently, the mixture was centrifuged at 7500g for 15 min at 4 °C. After centrifugation, the TCA-soluble protein concentration (mg/L) was determined by the method of Lowry et al. (1951) using bovine serum albumin as a standard.

2.3.3. GMC hydrolysis kinetics

The GMC hydrolysis kinetics were evaluated using a model of first-order kinetics (Eq. 3), where the reaction rate was demonstrated by the increase in the degree of hydrolysis (DH) or TCA soluble protein concentration (C), following Equation 3 (3).

$$DH_t = DH_{\infty}(1 - e^{-k_1 t}) \text{ or } C_t = C_{\infty}(1 - e^{-k_2 t}) \quad (3)$$

Where:

DH_t = Degree of hydrolysis (%) at time t ;

C_t = TCA soluble protein concentration (mg/L) at time t ;

DH_{∞} = Final degree of hydrolysis (%);

C_{∞} = Final concentration of TCA soluble protein (mg/L);

t = Time of enzymatic reaction (min);

$k = k_1$ or k_2 = hydrolysis reaction rate (min⁻¹) at a given temperature, which represent the GMC hydrolysis quantified by DH or TCA soluble protein concentration, respectively.

2.4. Evaluation of solubility and *in vitro* antioxidant activity of GMC hydrolysates obtained from US-enhanced enzymatic hydrolysis

To assess the solubility and *in vitro* antioxidant activity of the hydrolysates, the reactions were carried out with Alcalase or GMC pretreated by US, as described in section 2.3. After 45 and 180 min of hydrolysis at 60 °C, aliquots were collected, boiled for 10 minutes to stop the reaction, and centrifuged at 7500g for 15 min at 4 °C to obtain the supernatant. As a control, the reaction was performed without US pretreatment, under the same conditions, and aliquots were also collected at the same time during hydrolysis. In addition, non-pretreated native (non-hydrolyzed) protein was also evaluated.

2.4.1. Solubility

The solubility of native GMC and hydrolysates was determined according to the method of Morr et al. (1985) with modifications. Analyses were carried out at pH values ranging from 2.0 to 10.0 with a 2.0 interval. After pH adjustment, the samples were centrifuged at 7500g for 15 min and at 4 °C. The protein content in the supernatant was determined by the method of Lowry et al. (1951). Solubility (%) was calculated according to Equation 4 (4).

$$\text{Solubility (\%)} = \left(\frac{\text{Protein content in the supernatant}}{\text{Total protein content in the sample}} \right) \cdot 100 \quad (4)$$

2.4.2. *In vitro* antioxidant activity

In vitro antioxidant activity was measured by two different assays: 2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) and 2,2'-azino-bis(3-ethylbenzothiazoline-6-sulfonic acid) (ABTS) radical scavenging activities. The DPPH radical scavenging activity was determined according to the methodology described by Timon et al. (2019) with some modifications. For this, an aliquot of 700 µL of the sample was added to 700 µL of ethanol (99.5%) and 175 µL of ethanol containing 0.01% DPPH. The mixture was kept at room temperature for 60 min in the dark, and its absorbance was read at 517 nm. The blank was prepared under the same conditions, replacing the sample by sodium phosphate buffer (0.1M). The DPPH radical scavenging capacity was expressed as a percentage of inhibition and was calculated using Equation 5 (5).

$$\text{Inhibition (\%)} = \frac{(\text{Abs}_{0 \text{ min}} - \text{Abs}_{60 \text{ min}})}{\text{Abs}_{0 \text{ min}}} \cdot 100 \quad (5)$$

Where: Abs_{0min} is the absorbance of the sample at time 0 and Abs_{60min} is the absorbance of the sample after 60 minutes of reaction.

The ABTS radical scavenging activity was determined according to the method described by Zhong et al. (2021) with some modifications. The stock solution containing ABTS (7 mM) and potassium persulfate (2.45 mM) (1:1 ratio), was prepared and stored in the dark at 4°C for 12-16 h before use. The solution was then diluted using distilled water to an absorbance of 0.700 ± 0.02 at 734 nm. Subsequently, 150 μ L of the sample (diluted 1:100) was added to 2.85 mL of the diluted ABTS radical solution. After 60 min of incubation in the dark at room temperature, the absorbance of the mixture was read at 734 nm. The ABTS radical scavenging activity was calculated using Equation 5.

2.5. Experimental design and statistical analysis

For each experiment, three independent repetitions were carried out. Analyses were performed in triplicate for each repetition ($n = 9$). Numerical/quantitative results were expressed as the mean \pm standard deviation. The adjustable parameters of the mathematical models (DH_{∞} , C_{∞} , k_1 and k_2 ; Equation 3) were determined by nonlinear regression, using the software Curve Expert Professional software (version 2.6.5, Hyams Development, Chattanooga, USA). The chosen significance level was 95%. $REAP_{ENZ}$ or GMC, solubility, and *in vitro* antioxidant activity data were analyzed through one-way ANOVA followed by post-hoc Tukey's test for multiple comparisons, also at 95 % of probability (Statistical Analysis System - SAS Institute, Cary, NC, USA; version 9.2).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Enzyme activity after US pretreatment of Alcalase and GMC

Figure 1 shows the data for the $REAP_{ENZ}$ of Alcalase pretreated by ultrasound at 25, 40 and 60 °C for up to 180 min. Results pointed out that US at 25 and 40 °C was able to promote enzymatic activation of Alcalase. Alcalase activity was increased by up to 9.3% and 15.6% at temperatures of 25 °C (for 120 min) and 40 °C (for 60 min), respectively ($p < 0.05$).

The activation effects observed at 25 and 40 °C are likely to be due to cavitation phenomena generated by US. During the collapse of cavitation bubbles, strong shearing occurs, modifying the conformation and exposing better the enzyme active sites (Wang et al., 2018), which increased the Alcalase activity. Similar activation levels were observed for Alcalase used

for proteolysis of casein from cow's milk (Ma et al., 2011) and pepsin (Yu et al., 2014). Although literature data show that US can promote an enzyme activation, the process conditions to achieve enzyme activation must be studied for each enzyme due to differences in equipment and process conditions applied, as well as the reaction conditions (enzyme-substrate ratio, time, temperature, pH, among others) and the specificities of conformational stability of each enzyme and substrate under investigation (Oliveira et al., 2022).

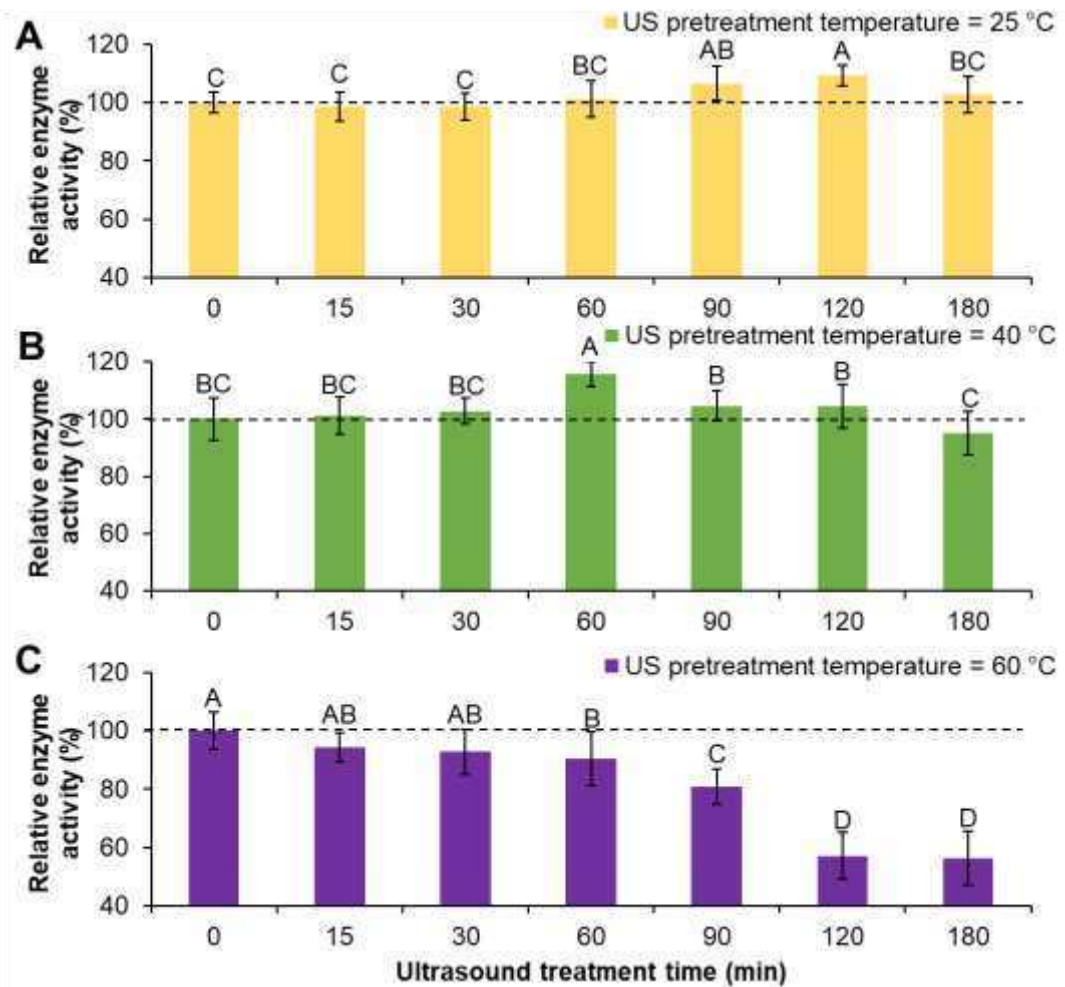


Figure 1. Relative enzymatic activity measured at 60 °C/pH 6.8 on GMC using US pretreated Alcalase (REAPENZ, Eq. (1)) for up to 180 min at different temperatures (A: 25 °C, B: 40 °C and C: 60 °C). Different letters at different times at the same temperature indicate significant differences among non-pretreated sample and US treated samples ($p < 0.05$).

On the other hand, in the processes carried out at 60°C, after 60 min of processing, a reduction in Alcalase activity was verified ($p < 0.05$), with a maximum reduction of 44% after 180 min of processing ($p < 0.05$) (Figure 1). Specifically, the changes in activity are correlated

with the physical effects of ultrasound on the enzyme structure (Soares et al., 2019). In this case, the US process seemed to promote a different kind of change in the enzyme native conformation, making the catalytic residues less accessible to substrates. In fact, different conformational changes can increase or decrease the enzymatic activity, depending on if the docking of substrates molecules in the catalytic cleft (and their consequent access to catalytic amino acid residues) are, respectively, favored or hampered. At 60°C, a greater amount of energy was supplied to the enzyme, which may have contributed to a drastic conformational change after a long period, leading to an extensive enzymatic denaturation, with a consequent loss of activity. Other literature reports corroborate these results. For example, Soares et al. (2019) found a reduction in invertase activity at 55°C (15% of the reduction after 1h of US pretreatment at 25 kHz, 22 W/L).

In addition to the effect on enzymatic activation, US can also act on the substrate, changing its conformation, which may lead it to be more prone to be hydrolyzed. As positive consequences, it is expected an acceleration of the enzymatic reaction, increasing the rate of generation of products. The results obtained from the US pretreatment of GMC are shown in Figure 2. There was an increase in the relative enzymatic activity ($REAP_{GMC}$) when the GMC was pretreated by ultrasound at temperatures of 40 and 60 °C. From 90 min at 40 °C, a significant increase in the enzymatic reaction ($p < 0.05$) of up to 13.5% was observed, however, the greatest effect was observed in the US pretreatment at 60 °C for 30 min (increase of 18.2%; $p < 0.05$). Moreover, US had no effect when the GMC was pretreated at a lower temperature (25 °C) (Figure 2), suggesting that complex structure of casein remained intact, or only with minor changes, at this condition. This may be attributed to lower energy input compared to other processes that associated US with milk heating.

The positive results obtained with the ultrasonic treatment are probably related to the mechanical, thermal, and cavitation effects generated by US, which can cause some unfolding of casein molecules and/or create micropores on the surface of micelles (Wu et al., 2018; Koirala, Prathumpai, & Anal, 2021). These changes can expose sulfhydryl and hydrophobic groups on the substrate (Lei et al., 2011; Wu et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2018), facilitating the access of the enzyme's catalytic residues to the regions of the polypeptide chain susceptible to hydrolysis (Wang et al., 2018). Thus, US pretreatment of substrate probably improves the enzyme-substrate affinity, as well as increases the accessibility of Alcalase to the peptide bonds of GMC.

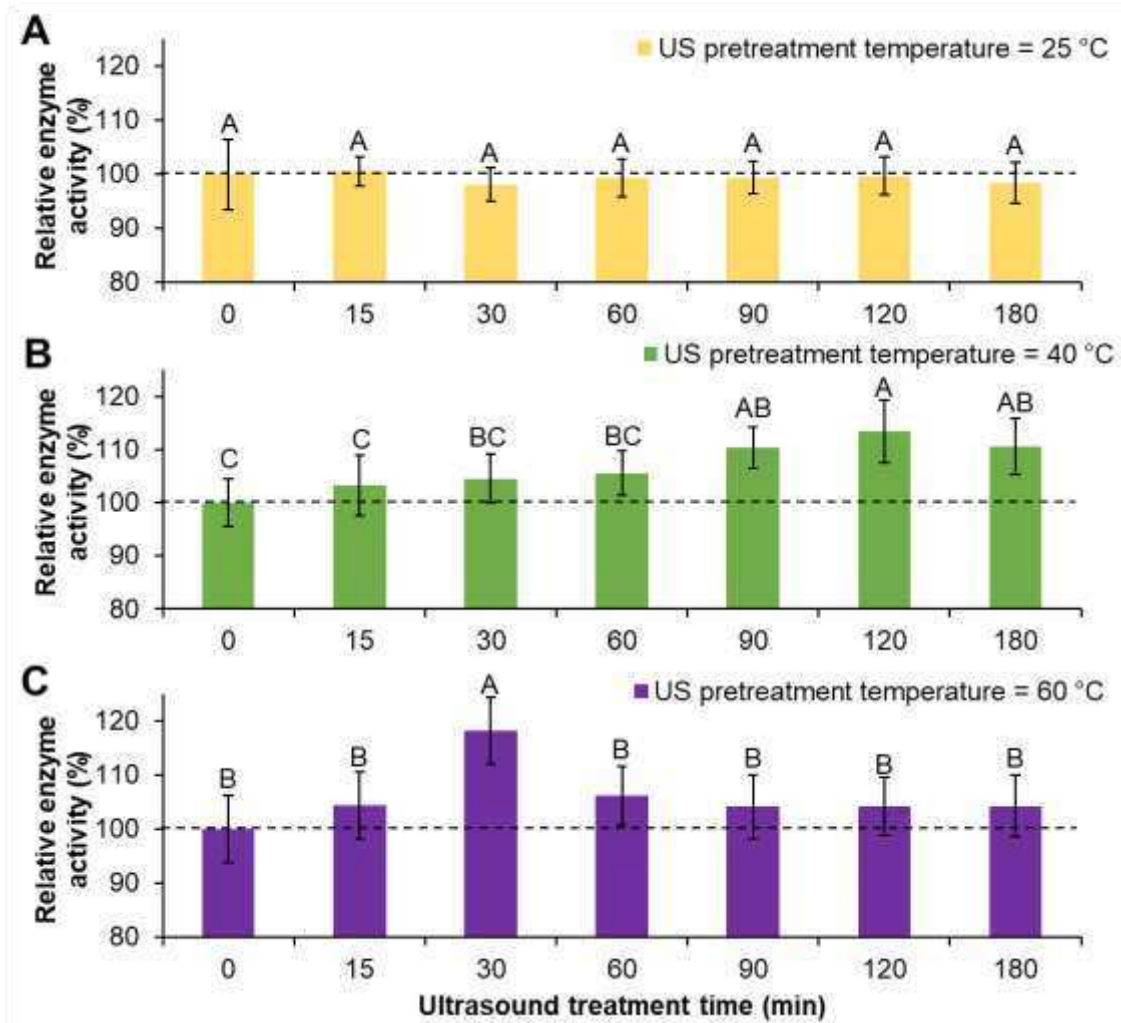


Figure 2. Relative enzymatic activity measured at 60 °C/pH 6.8 after US pretreatment of GMC (REAP_{GMC}, Eq. (1)) for up to 180 min at different temperatures (A: 25 °C, B: 40 °C and C: 60 °C). Different letters at different times at the same temperature indicate significant differences among non-pretreated sample and US treated samples ($p < 0.05$).

Improves on enzyme activity was also verified for defatted wheat germ protein, pork skin gelatin and cow milk casein pretreated by US and posteriorly subjected to hydrolysis (Yu et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2020). Thus, ultrasound can positively impact the structure of proteins, making them more susceptible to enzymatic attack. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the action of the US is strongly influenced by the type of reactor, the frequency and acoustic power, and the time and temperature used in the pretreatment (Jin et al., 2016).

3.2.GMC hydrolysis using US pretreated Alcalase and GMC

Figure 3 shows the curves of the DH and the concentration of TCA soluble protein during hydrolysis at different temperatures using the US pretreated Alcalase (40°C / 60 min) or GMC (60°C / 30 min) and Table 1 shows the parameters from Equation 3 fitted to these experimental data.

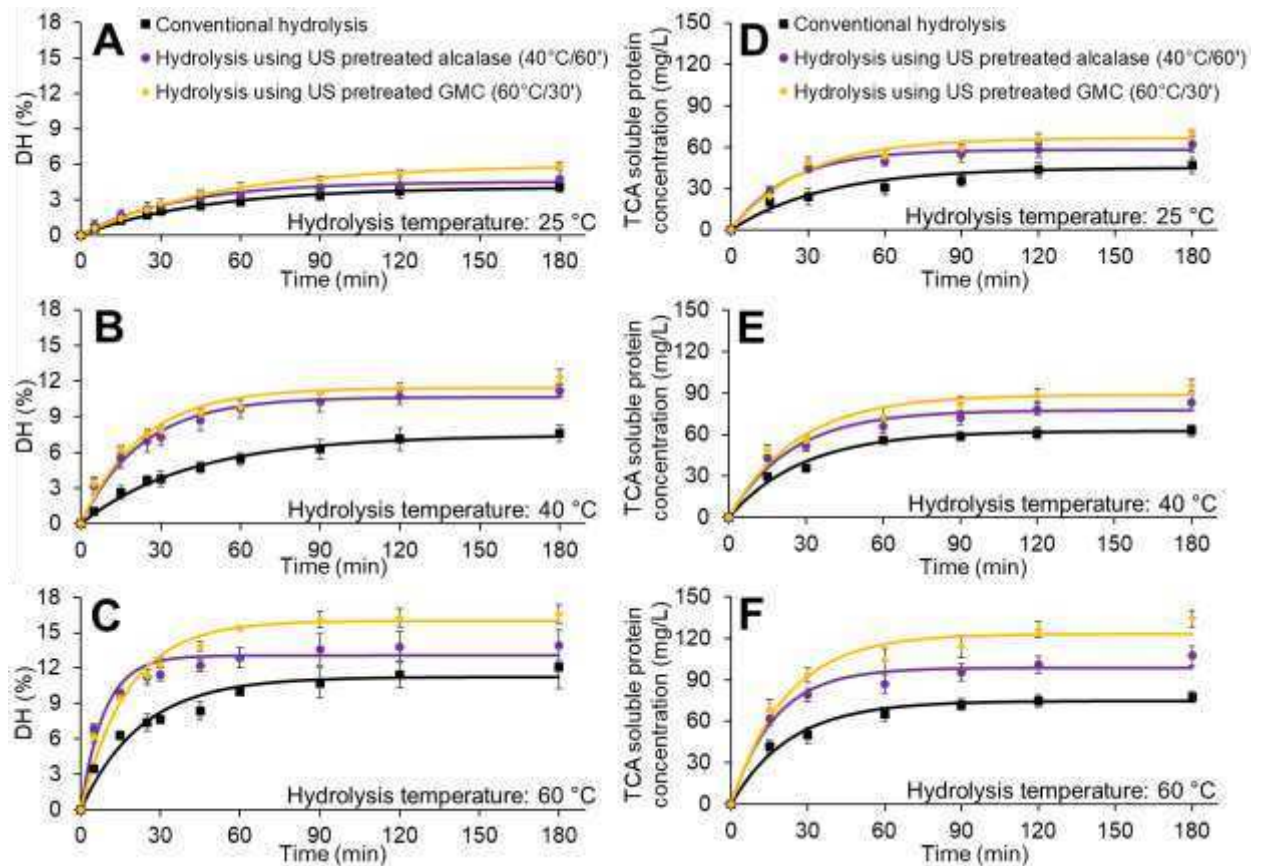


Figure 3. Increase in DH (%) (A, B, and C) and TCA soluble protein concentration (mg/L) (D, E, and F) of GMC hydrolyzed for up to 180 min at 25, 40 and 60 °C using US pretreated Alcalase or GMC. Dots are experimental data; continuous lines are the predicted data using Eq. (3).

As shown, the hydrolysis was improved by increasing the temperature. This result was expected considering that the optimal activity of the enzyme using GMC as a substrate is 60 °C (Magalhães et al., 2022). Besides, the use of Alcalase or GMC pretreated by US potentiated enzymatic hydrolysis, promoting an increase in hydrolysis rates (k_1 and k_2) of up to 154% and 61%, respectively ($p < 0.05$) (Table 1); which is compatible with other studies, even though using different processing conditions (Ma et al., 2011; Qu et al., 2013; Fathi et al., 2021).

Table 1. Parameters of Eq. (3) adjusted to the hydrolysis of GMC at 25, 40 and 60 °C using US pretreated Alcalase or GMC by DH (%) and by TCA soluble protein concentration (mg/L).

Sample	Hydrolysis temperature	*k ₁ (min ⁻¹)	**DH _∞ (%)	R ²
Conventional hydrolysis		0.021±0.001 ^c	4.03±0.27 ^e	0.99
Hydrolysis using US pretreated Alcalase (40°C/60')	25 °C	0.027±0.006 ^c	4.55±1.19 ^e	0.99
Hydrolysis using US pretreated GMC (60°C/30')		0.019±0.002 ^c	5.93±0.27 ^{de}	0.99
Conventional hydrolysis		0.024±0.002 ^c	7.46±0.76 ^d	0.99
Hydrolysis using US pretreated Alcalase (40°C/60')	40 °C	0.044±0.009 ^b	10.68±0.59 ^c	0.99
Hydrolysis using US pretreated GMC (60°C/30')		0.044±0.008 ^b	11.44±0.48 ^{bc}	0.99
Conventional hydrolysis		0.044±0.010 ^b	11.27±1.48 ^{bc}	0.97
Hydrolysis using US pretreated Alcalase (40°C/60')	60 °C	0.112±0.026 ^a	13.04±1.27 ^b	0.98
Hydrolysis using US pretreated GMC (60°C/30')		0.056±0.008 ^b	16.00±0.70 ^a	0.98
Sample	Hydrolysis temperature	*k ₂ (min ⁻¹)	***C _∞ (mg/L)	R ²
Conventional hydrolysis		0.027±0.012 ^d	45.0±5.7 ^g	0.95
Hydrolysis using US pretreated Alcalase (40°C/60')	25 °C	0.044±0.008 ^{bc}	58.3±5.1 ^f	0.99
Hydrolysis using US pretreated GMC (60°C/30')		0.035±0.005 ^{cd}	66.7±2.7 ^e	0.99
Conventional hydrolysis		0.035±0.003 ^{cd}	62.4±3.8 ^{ef}	0.99
Hydrolysis using US pretreated Alcalase (40°C/60')	40 °C	0.041±0.006 ^{bc}	77.8±4.2 ^d	0.98
Hydrolysis using US pretreated GMC (60°C/30')		0.038±0.004 ^{bc}	88.8±4.7 ^c	0.98
Conventional hydrolysis		0.044±0.008 ^{bc}	74.6±4.0 ^d	0.99
Hydrolysis using US pretreated Alcalase (40°C/60')	60 °C	0.059±0.009 ^a	98.9±6.7 ^b	0.99
Hydrolysis using US pretreated GMC (60°C/30')		0.047±0.004 ^b	123.4±6.0 ^a	0.98

*Mean ± standard deviation of nine replicates (n = 9). Different letters in the column quantified by DH or TCA soluble protein concentration indicate significant differences among processes (p<0.05). *k₁ and k₂ = hydrolysis reaction rate (min⁻¹) at a given temperature quantified by DH or TCA soluble protein concentration, respectively. **DH_∞ = Final degree of hydrolysis (%); ***C_∞ = Final concentration of TCA soluble protein (mg/L).

Similar k₁ and k₂ values were found for hydrolysis carried out at 40 °C using Alcalase or GMC pretreated by US compared to conventional hydrolysis at 60 °C (optimal temperature of enzyme). This result suggests that GMC hydrolysis using an enzyme and/or substrate

pretreated by US can be carried out at lower temperatures, which may possibly reduce undesirable thermal effects (Soares et al., 2020).

The degree of hydrolysis indicates the number of cleaved peptide bonds (Wang et al., 2016). Depending on the DH of a reaction, the obtained hydrolysates can improve the techno-functional properties. The pretreatment by US promoted an increase in DH_{∞} compared to conventional hydrolysis (increases of up to 47, 53 and 42% in hydrolysis at 25, 40 and 60°C, respectively) with emphasis on GMC pretreated by US, which presented the highest values of DH (Table 1).

The increase in DH can be attributed to the occurrence of structural changes on the substrate (Koirala, Prathumpai, & Anal, 2021), and on enzymes (Soares et al., 2019; Soares et al., 2020; Li & Tang, 2021; Fathi et al. 2021) (as described in section 3.1). In addition, the use of US pretreated enzyme and/or substrate favored a higher concentration of TCA soluble protein (up to 65.4%) (Table 1) ($p < 0.05$). Again, better performance was observed for the protein pretreated by US, which is consistent with the results observed for DH. Particularly, TCA soluble proteins have low molecular weight and consequently have greater potential to perform biological activities (Karami et al., 2019).

3.3.Evaluation of the solubility of GMC hydrolysates obtained from US-enhanced enzymatic hydrolysis

Protein solubility is an important criterion that directly affects other techno-functional properties, as well as potential biological properties (Tian et al., 2020). Figure 4 shows the results for the solubility at different pH values (2 to 10) of GMC and hydrolysates obtained after 45 and 180 min at 60°C of conventional hydrolysis and hydrolysis using GMC or Alcalase pretreated by US.

The lowest solubility of native GMC was observed near the isoelectric point (4.6% at pH 4 and 23.2% at pH 6), and the highest percentages of soluble proteins were obtained at extreme pH values (65.6% at pH 2.0 and 73.4% at pH 10). These results were expected, considering the low solubility of casein fractions close to the isoelectric point (the isoelectric point of α_{s1} is at pH ~ 4.96 and β -casein is at pH ~ 5.19) (Cayot, Courthaudon, & Lorient, 1991; Duarte et al., 1998; Fathollahy et al., 2021). Note that the ultrasonic pretreatment of GMC increased the solubility of GMC (not hydrolyzed) to 11.4% and 28.2% at pH 4 and 6, respectively ($p < 0.05$) (Figure 4), which is an important pH range considering the pH of most food products

Enzymatic hydrolysis for up to 180 min improved the solubility of GMC at all pH evaluated ($p < 0.05$). These findings are in agreement with previous literature reports (Luo, Pan & Zhong, 2014; Al-Shamsi et al., 2018; Fathollahy et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2021; Magalhães et al., 2022). The increase in protein solubility after enzymatic hydrolysis probably occurred due to the release of smaller soluble peptides from large insoluble aggregates and to the exposure of more amino and carboxyl groups to the solvent (Shi et al., 2018). Furthermore, the solubility of proteins depends on the hydrophobicity of the surface, the size of the proteins, and the electrostatic repulsion between molecules. It is important to note that the high electrostatic repulsion and hydration of ions can lead to a higher solubility of the hydrolysate at pH values below and above the isoelectric point (Warnakulasuriya & Nickerson, 2018), as observed in the present work.

It was observed that US pretreatment increased the solubility of hydrolysates compared to conventional hydrolysis. Enzymatic hydrolysis for 180 min using US pretreated GMC generated hydrolysates with the highest solubility at all evaluated pH values ($p < 0.05$), reaching up to 37.9 and 46.1% of solubility at pH close to the isoelectric point (pH 4 and 6, respectively), whereas in conventional hydrolysis these values were 27.6 and 38.3%, respectively (Figure 4). In addition, the hydrolysis using enzyme or substrate pretreated by US after 45 min of reaction showed the same or higher solubility compared to the conventional hydrolysis after 180 min. This result is important and demonstrates an acceleration in the production of compounds of industrial interest with higher yields, in a faster hydrolysis. Furthermore, these results corroborate those presented and discussed in section 3.2, which showed an increase in the final concentration of TCA soluble protein (up to 65.4%) for hydrolysis using US pretreated samples in relation to conventional hydrolysis.

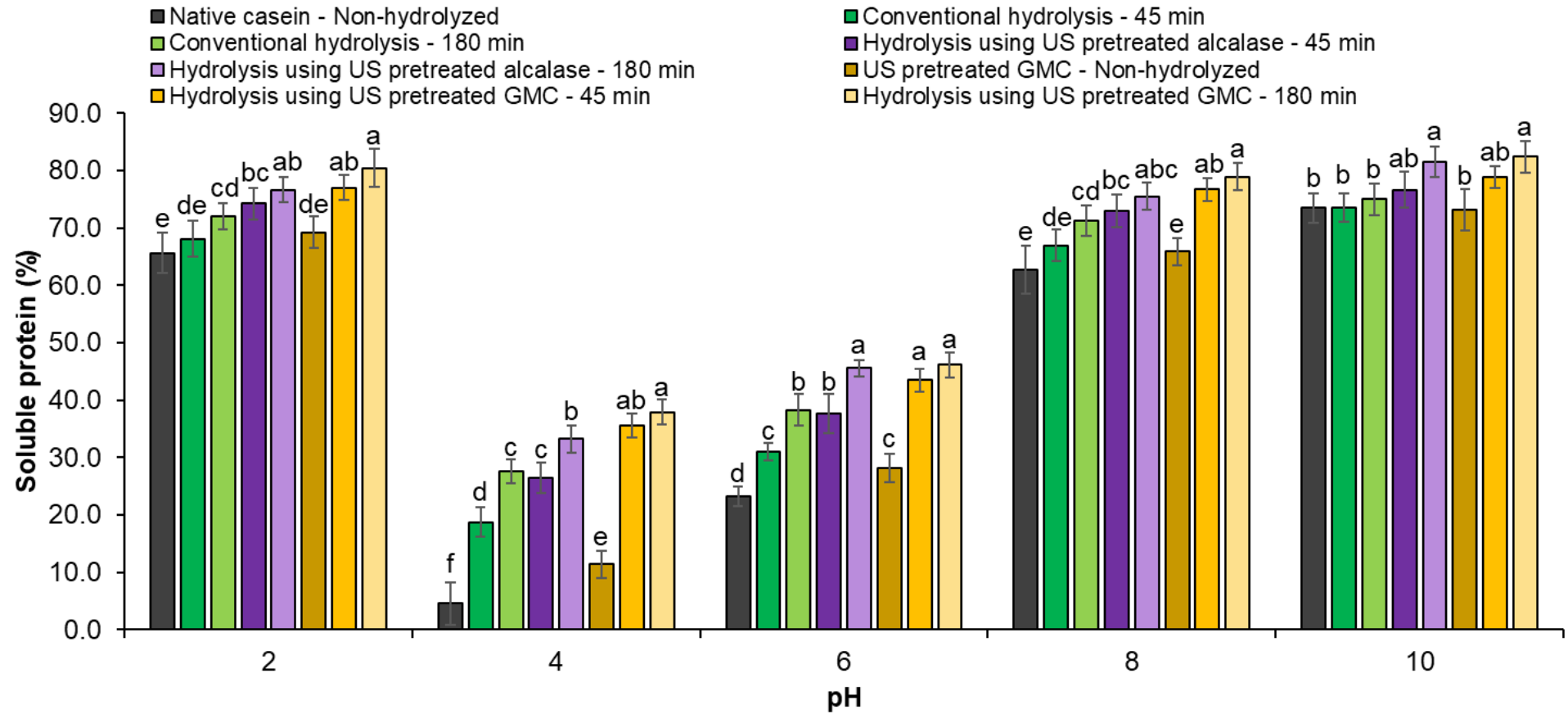


Figure 4. Protein solubility (%) of goat milk casein hydrolyzed for up to 180 min at 60 °C using US pretreated Alcalase or GMC. Different letters at each pH indicate significant differences among samples ($p < 0.05$)

3.4. Evaluation of *in vitro* antioxidant activity of GMC hydrolysates obtained from US-enhanced enzymatic hydrolysis

Figure 5 shows the *in vitro* antioxidant activities of GMC and hydrolysates for the DPPH and ABTS radical scavenging assays. The results showed that conventional hydrolysis of GMC using Alcalase increased the ability of samples to scavenge DPPH and ABTS radicals (up to 8.8 and 1.9-fold, respectively ($p < 0.05$)) compared to non-hydrolysate GMC after 180 min, which was expected considering the capacity to produce bioactive peptides from the hydrolysis of goat milk casein (Li et al., 2013).

The antioxidant activity of protein hydrolysates depends on the substrate and the type of enzyme, due to the specific action of the enzyme on the protein, promoting the release of specific peptides that will present activities such as bioactivity. Generally, alkaline protease, such as Alcalase, catalyzes the hydrolysis mainly of the carboxyls terminals containing the hydrophobic amino acid residues Val, Pro, Gly, Ala, and Phe (Ahmed et al., 2015). Peptides with a high content of the hydrophobic amino acids Trp and Tyr tend to present antioxidant activity due to the ability of phenolic groups to be hydrogen donors, which inhibits the radical-mediated peroxidation chain reaction (Ren et al., 2008; Sarmadi & Ismail, 2010; Zhang et al., 2012). At the N and C-terminal positions, amino acid residues Pro, Val, Phe, and His play a key role in antioxidant activity due to their greater interaction with fatty acids and better lipid free radical scavenging capacity (Li et al., 2013). Thus, the increase in antioxidant activity with the hydrolysis of GMC by Alcalase can be explained by the regioselectivity of this enzyme in proteolysis.

Previous research has shown that hydrolysates obtained by Alcalase action on US pretreated plant proteins showed an increase in DPPH and ABTS radical scavenging capacity (Liang et al., 2017; Guerra-Almonacid et al., 2019). In the present study, ultrasonic pretreatment increased the *in vitro* antioxidant capacity of GMC hydrolysates ($p < 0.05$). After 180 min of hydrolysis, compared to conventional hydrolysis, hydrolysis using US pretreated Alcalase or GMC increased the scavenging capacity of DPPH (up to 13.4 and 27.0%, respectively) and ABTS (up to 19.6 and 37.3%, respectively). Furthermore, there was no significant difference in the results obtained from hydrolysis using Alcalase or GMC pretreated by US after 45 min compared to conventional hydrolysis for 180 min. This suggests that the pretreatment of the enzyme or substrate by US may allow the reduction of the hydrolysis time of the GMC to obtain peptides with antioxidant activity.

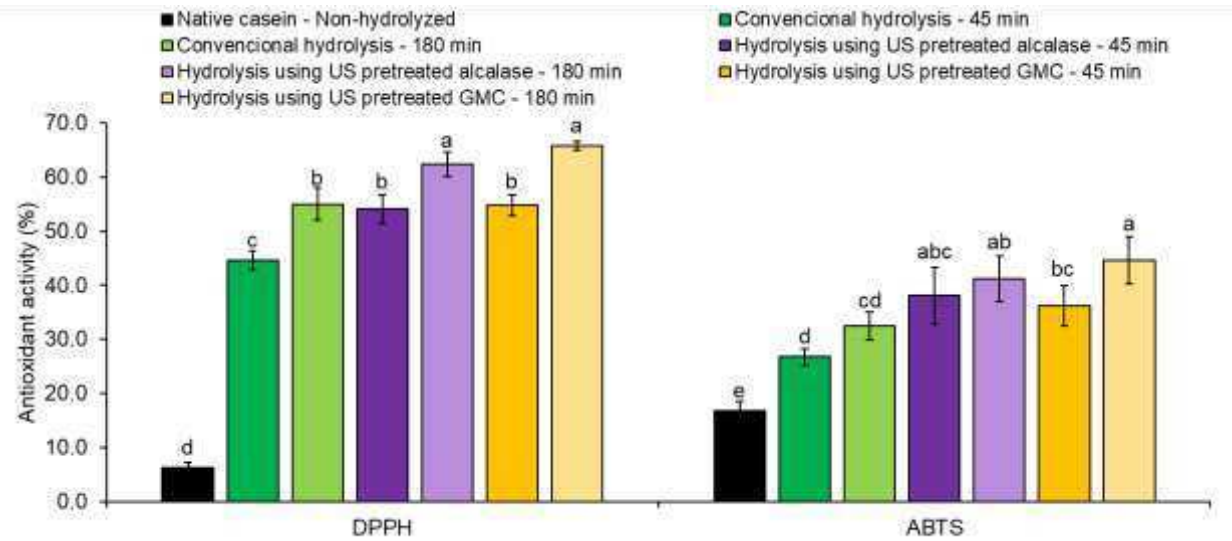


Figure 5. *In vitro* antioxidant activity from the DPPH and ABTS assays of goat milk casein hydrolyzed for up to 180 min at 60 °C using US pretreated Alcalase or US pretreated GMC. Different letters for each assay indicate significant differences among samples ($p < 0.05$).

Thus, the results found in this study are promising and encourage further investigations aiming at the application of ultrasonic pretreatment to obtain and use GMC hydrolysates as antioxidant ingredients in the food industry. It is noteworthy that this is an exploratory research that evaluates the application of ultrasonic pretreatment on Alcalase and GMC as a possibility to improve the enzymatic hydrolysis, aiming at the production of hydrolysates with potential techno-functional properties and biological activities. In the future, our team will carry out is now going to undertake a deeper investigation of the peptides obtained under optimized US conditions, in order to identify their amino acid sequence, as well as to assess their potential allergenicity (Elias, Kellerby, & Decker, 2008) and biological safety for consumption (Elias, Kellerby, & Decker, 2008; Oliveira, Fuentes-Silva, & King, 2012). Indeed, such assessments are imperative before their commercial application as food or pharmacological ingredients.

4. Conclusion

This work demonstrated that the ultrasonic pretreatment of Alcalase and GMC increased the relative enzymatic activity. The hydrolysis rate was increased by up to 154% and 83% using Alcalase and GMC pretreated by US, respectively. In addition, hydrolysis using US pretreated Alcalase or GMC showed higher DH (up to 43 or 53%, respectively) and TCA-soluble protein concentrations (up to 32 or 65%, respectively). Consequently, the ultrasonic pretreatment

increased the solubility of the hydrolysates and potentiated the *in vitro* antioxidant activity. Thus, the results expand the use of ultrasound, demonstrating that this technology can be used both in Alcalase and in GMC to enhance the production of hydrolysates with techno-functional and biological properties.

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CONCLUSÕES GERAIS

No presente trabalho, foi observado que o pré-tratamento ultrassônico da Alcalase (40°C/60 min) ou da CLC (60°C/30 min) aumentou a atividade enzimática relativa, a taxa de reação de hidrólise, o grau de hidrólise e a concentração de proteína solúvel em TCA. Esses resultados estão associados aos efeitos que o US pode provocar na enzima ou no substrato, como a modificação na conformação expondo melhor o sítio ativo da enzima, bem como alterações na estrutura da proteína, o que facilita a acessibilidade da enzima e assim acelera a reação.

Observou-se ainda, que o US promoveu aumento na solubilidade e na atividade antioxidante *in vitro* dos hidrolisados após 180 min de reação. Portanto, os resultados encontrados neste trabalho, ampliam o uso do ultrassom, demonstrando que essa tecnologia pode ser utilizada tanto na Alcalase quanto na CLC para potencializar a hidrólise. Além disso, vale ressaltar que em termos de escalabilidade e tempo de hidrólise a utilização do pré-tratamento ultrassônico pode ser mais vantajoso em relação a hidrólise assistida por US para geração de hidrolisados de CLC com propriedades atraentes, e estas podem agregar valor à matéria-prima, tornando o leite de cabra mais atrativo do ponto de vista econômico.