



AfriFOODlinks

INNTA Newsletter

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Subsidized Bread in Tunis*

*Subtitle: Preliminary Findings from the Afrifoodlinks Study Indicate the
Efficacy of a Public Health Intervention Targeting Staple Food Salinity*

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Preliminary Findings from the Afrifoodlinks Study Indicate the Efficacy of a Public Health Intervention Targeting Staple Food Salinity

Introduction and Objectives

As part of the Afrifoodlinks project, a public health intervention was implemented to reduce the sodium content of subsidized bread, a primary staple food in Tunis. To evaluate the efficacy of this reformulation and the corresponding consumer response, a quantitative survey is currently being administered. Preliminary data from a substantial consumer cohort suggest a positive reception, providing initial empirical evidence for the intervention's viability and potential for scalability.



Sensory Analysis and Consumer Acceptability

A primary objective of the study was to assess the sensory acceptability of the reformulated bread. Preliminary analysis indicates a high degree of consumer acceptance, with the majority of respondents rating the product favorably. Critical sensory attributes, including taste, appearance, and aroma, also received high acceptability scores. This finding suggests that the nutritional reformulation was achieved without compromising key sensory attributes, a critical factor for the long-term sustainability of the intervention.



Behavioral Intent and Efficacy of Health Communication

The study also measured consumer purchase intent for the sodium-reduced product. A significant majority of respondents expressed a strong intent to purchase the reformulated bread. This behavioral intent correlates strongly with the project's point-of-purchase health communication campaign, which has demonstrated a high rate of efficacy. Statistical analyses reveal a significant association between consumer age and receptiveness to the campaign's messaging, with the 40-49 age demographic showing particular persuasion. These findings suggest a robust link between the targeted communication strategy and positive consumer behavioral intent.

Assessment of Salt-Related Health Literacy

The population's receptiveness to the intervention is contextualized by a high baseline of health literacy regarding sodium. The survey reveals that an overwhelming majority of participants correctly associate excessive sodium intake with hypertension, and a substantial percentage also link it to cardiovascular diseases. Furthermore, a statistically significant gender-based difference emerged ($p < 0.001$), with female respondents demonstrating a greater ability to identify specific health risks. This is a key finding for the strategic design of future public health messaging.

Conclusion and Public Health Implications

These preliminary findings provide strong, evidence-based support for the subsidized bread reformulation intervention. The convergence of high consumer acceptability, positive purchase intent, and the demonstrated efficacy of health communication strategies presents a compelling case for policy adoption. The initial results strongly support the scalability of this initiative across Tunisia, offering a viable, evidence-based model to reduce population-level sodium intake by reformulating a key staple food.