



### OC10. Acceptance of exotic beverages with health benefits in Europe: a cross-country comparison of hibiscus products

MONTEIRO, M., J., P.<sup>1\*</sup>, COSTA, A., I., A.<sup>1,2</sup>, FLIEDEL, G.<sup>3</sup>, CISSE, M.<sup>4</sup>, TOMLINS, K.<sup>5</sup> & PINTADO, M., M.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universidade Católica Portuguesa, CBQF - Laboratório Associado, Escola Superior de Biotecnologia; <sup>2</sup> CUBE - Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics; <sup>3</sup> CIRAD; <sup>4</sup> Ecole Supérieure Polytechnique, Université Cheik Anta Diop, Dakar, Senegal; <sup>5</sup> Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, United Kingdom

\* [mjmonteiro@porto.ucp.pt](mailto:mjmonteiro@porto.ucp.pt)

#### ABSTRACT

Hibiscus beverages are rich in organic acids, phenolic compounds and polysaccharides, which have been demonstrated to be linked to important health benefits. Their consumption is widespread in Africa and tropical and subtropical Asia and North-America, but they are still quite unknown amongst European consumers. Recently, due to the rising number of health-conscious consumers, along with the growing consumer's interest of Europeans in beverages made from unique or exotic ingredients, new mainstream market opportunities for high quality hibiscus beverages have been created.

This study sought to compare acceptance and perception of hibiscus beverages by familiar African consumers and mostly unfamiliar consumers in Europe (France, Portugal). Closer patterns of liking and product perception of hibiscus beverages were observed among consumers in European countries than in Africa. Liking of hibiscus beverages appeared to mostly depend on familiarity, exposure and innate or cultural acquired preferences. African consumers favored higher intensities of red color and sweetness whereas in Europe fruity and floral character constituted important drivers of liking. Consumer segments were found, with differences rooted on individual reactions to the color and flavor of beverages, socio-demographic characteristics and consumption patterns of hibiscus and red fruit beverages (in Europe) being uncovered. Findings suggest that exotic hibiscus beverages might be more likely to be consumed in new markets if they share some similar attributes to existing products. Consumer profiling techniques were used to establish sensory profiles and preference maps. Additionally, the chemical composition of the drinks was evaluated and a conjoint analysis was held to determine how consumers valued the composition and African origin of the drinks.

**KEY WORDS:** Sensory, Hibiscus, Consumer preference, Conjoint analysis, Exotic beverages