



A Review of Spontaneous Sourdough as a Functional Ingredient for Improving the Sensory and Nutritional Quality of Wheat Bread

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Abstract

Background : Currently, the increase in the nutritional value of food constitutes a major challenge in global nutrition, which is mainly aimed at preventing malnutrition and related diseases. Among the foods that are subject to this challenge, wheat bread, the traditional staple food of many populations worldwide, is often denigrated because of its low nutritional value due to the poor manufacturing practices that use baker's yeast. **Methods :** Research was conducted on a wide range of databases (MEDLINE via PubMed, SpringerLink, Scopus, and Science Direct), over the period from 1970 to 2020, using the keywords : Wheat bread, sourdough, Lactic acid bacteria, yeasts, quality characteristics, nutritional value. **Results :** All reviewed publications proposed the use of sourdough during bread-making as an alternative to baker's yeast. Its effectiveness has been proven through its capacity to improve the nutritional composition of wheat bread, which remains capable to satisfy the daily nutritional requirements in macronutrients and micronutrients, along with its sensory characteristics in terms of taste, flavor, volume, texture, and shelf life. Interestingly, the consumption of sourdough bread as a staple food prevents diabetes, gluten intolerance, and mineral deficiency, which are major global public health problems. **Conclusion :** The use of sourdough in the bread production industry may become a future innovative technology, considering the changes in the human diet, caused by the increase in the production of processed foods, rapid urbanization, and changing lifestyles.

1. Introduction

Globally, in developing countries, the diets are mainly plant-based with a limited amount of animal source foods, including cereal products. Among them, wheat bread which is the most consumed product for centuries [1-2]. Nutritionally, its consumption is recommended due to the high nutritional value of wheat, which constitutes an important source of principal micronutrients and macronutrients for billions of people. It is rich in starch, dietary fiber, proteins, minerals, and vitamins [3-4].

Worldwide, commercially produced bread is leavened with baker's yeast mainly dominated by the yeast strain *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* [5-6-7]. The use of baker's yeast, under optimal processing conditions, leads to the production of smooth and uniform dough, and well aerated and

tasty bread because of the production of CO₂ and alcohols during fermentation [5-8-9]. Whereas the CO₂ confers volume and lightness to the bread, and the alcohols (which evaporate during baking) make it tastier [9]. Thus, confirming the technological performance of yeast fermentation in baking applications.

Unfortunately, despite the important gustatory, rheological, and organoleptic profile of baker's yeast bread, nutritionally, its consumption remains inadvisable because of its harmful effects on health. Between many effects, we find the intolerance to gluten, which is an indigestible protein predominantly found in wheat. While it is essential for the elasticity during kneading, and the leavening during fermentation, its ingestion remains intolerable because it provokes an abnormal immune response that induces an excessive production of antibodies against gluten, which creates an inflammatory response in the intestinal villi, that alters the intestinal assimilation of nutrients [10-11- 12-13]. Furthermore, the consumption of bread with baker's yeast increases the blood glycemia level due to the rapid digestion of its starch content, which leads to the development of diabetes [14-15- 16]. Without forgetting the prejudicial effect of chemicals added during industrial bread-making to enhance the flavor and speed up the manufacturing process of bread.

For these reasons, health experts have been interested in the nutritional adequacy of wheat bread in a plant-based diet. Accordingly, numerous studies is carried out by referring to a traditional fermentation process, which remains effective up to the present day, in order to produce bread, which fulfills nutritional requirements of consumers for optimal health along with improved sensory features.

This article highlights the evidence on the reliability of this technology through a selective literature search using electronic databases from 1970 to 2020. A further objective is to discuss the particular challenges in this field and to make recommendations to encourage the use of this technology.

2. Material and Methods

The search for literature and experimental data involved a variety of electronic databases: MEDLINE via PubMed, SpringerLink, Scopus, and Science Direct. The review used the search terms: *Wheat contaminants, sourdough types, sourdough microbiota, sourdough fermentation, sourdough microbiota effects, baker's yeast, bread sourdough, baker's yeast bread, sourdough and starch digestibility, sourdough and gluten degradation, sourdough and phytic acid reduction*. They were searched in sources from 1970 to 2020. This involved all articles written with a focus on the microbial biodiversity of sourdough and its effect in improving the sensory and nutritional quality of wheat bread. There was no language restriction for documentary searches. All data were extracted, fully read, and validated by the first author. 197 articles were identified; 150 of them were retained, of which 84 % concerned full text and 16 % were abstract data. This article was written by the first author and validated by the second, the third and the fourth authors.

3. Results and Discussion

Wheat grains are a significant human foodstuff worldwide [17]. They constitute a staple food in most parts of the world. Their consumption warrants an important role in a healthy diet as it reduces the risk of developing diet-related disorders such as obesity and cardiovascular diseases [18]. Its health benefits can be ascribed mostly to its nutritional composition rich in starch along with fiber, also containing an important amount of proteins, minerals, and vitamins [19]. They not only meet

the nutritional and metabolic needs of humans, but also provide a good substrate for microbial growth [20-21-22]. Natural contaminants of wheat grains belong to the group of eukaryotic (moulds and yeasts) and prokaryotic (bacteria) organisms, which are mostly concentrated in the outer layers [23]. Their biodiversity and concentration depend on grain quality, storage conditions, and mill's process [24]. They are associated with the environment in which grains are grown. They may come from air, dust, soil, water, insects, rodents, birds, animals, humans, storage and shipping containers, and handling and processing equipment [25-26]. The microbial contamination of wheat can be affected by many environmental factors, especially climatic conditions such as temperature and rainfall, physical damage due to insects or mould attacks, and application of insecticides and fungicides [23-27-26].

Microorganisms of wheat grains might follow the different phases of flour production and can be found in products made with flour, such as Sourdough. It consists of an acidic sharp-tasting mixture of flour and water obtained after fermentation using a microbial ecosystem, consisting mostly of lactic acid bacteria which synergistically co-existing with yeast, and originating is either from native wheat grains microbiota, or a starter culture [28-29-30-31-32].

Based on the kind of technology applied in their preparation, as used in artisan and industrial processes, sourdough has been classified into three types [20-21-23-33]. Type I sourdoughs involve in its preparation, traditional techniques, implying three-phase evolution of the growing microbial communities toward a stable ripe active sourdough. This type of sourdough is performed at ambient temperature (20 - 30 °C), and is based on backslopping which ensures its daily and continuous refreshment by leading to the prevalence of strains that are most adapted to the ecosystem of this type of sourdough originating from the flour which acts as the only non-sterile component [34-35]. In contrary to type I sourdoughs, type II sourdoughs develop in one step under temperatures that exceed 30 °C, in a very acidic environment at a pH < 3.5, for long periods of up to 5 days [20-36-37-38]. Those sourdoughs are used mostly in industrial processes using adapted culture starter to the flour- water mixture to start fermentation. Type III sourdoughs involve in its preparation a mixed process that manifests through the initiation with a LAB starter culture, followed by traditional backslopping, and as the last step, the evaporation of subsequent water leading to dried preparation [39-22-40]. They are considered as the dried form of type II sourdoughs [22]. Numerous drying techniques have been used, commonly, spray-drying and drum-drying. However, the use of these techniques provokes a loss of volatile flavor compounds during the evaporation of water. Thus, to keep more complete flavor properties of the sourdough bread produced, some researchers recommend the conservation of this type of sourdough in liquid form and its stabilization by pasteurization or by cooling [41].

As discussed above, wheat flour is not microbiologically sterile, neither is it heat treated before use. When the flour is mixed with water, LAB and yeasts become more and more adapted to the environmental conditions of sourdough and start to grow, reaching numbers above those of the adventitious microbiota, generally between 10^4 and 10^7 CFU/g [20-21-42]. As reported, the higher number is counted for the LAB ($> 10^8$ CFU / g) compared to yeasts ($< 10^7$ CFU / g) (22). Besides, the yeasts and LAB are often associated with sourdough, whereas the yeasts / LAB ratio is generally 1:100 [43-44]. This could indicate a high competition and a lack of non-competitive association between yeast species.

As specified, the LAB species are the most frequently observed bacteria in sourdough. They mostly belong to the genus *Lactobacillus* [45]. The number of *Lactobacillus* species identified has shown a considerable variety. It can reach up to more than 60 different species of LAB [20-46-47].

A large variety of *Lactobacillus* species belonging to the class of homofermentative and heterofermentative species has been isolated from Sourdough. An updated overview of the LAB species most commonly found in fermented sourdough is compiled in Table 1. Undesirable bacteria such as *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Bacillus cereus*, as well as other bacteria, may be present in minor concentrations [20]. Based on the numerous studies which have been performed on the identification of the main species of LAB isolated from sourdough, some authors revealed that the two most prevalent species were *Lactobacillus sanfranciscensis* (present in 47 % of the sourdoughs), *Lactobacillus plantarum* (44 %). These were followed by the *Lactobacillus brevis* (22 %), *Lactobacillus reuteri*, (19 %), *Lactobacillus alimentarius* (18 %), *Lactobacillus rossiae* and *Lactobacillus delbrueckii* (10 %) [48]. Besides to these species, other researchers identified *Lactobacillus fermentum*, *Lactobacillus paralimentarius*, and *Lactobacillus amylovorus* as the most common species isolated from sourdough [22-49-50]. On the other hand, it is postulated that the prevalence of *Lb. sanfranciscensis* in many sourdoughs indicates a dispersal-limited development of the sourdough LAB communities [48]. In a comparative study, 15 Lactobacilli species have been shown to occur both in sourdough and in human and animal intestines, they include *Lactobacillus reuteri*, *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, and *Lactobacillus plantarum* [36].

The biodiversity of LAB sourdough is suggested to be significantly dependent on the types of sourdough. Accordingly, *Lactobacillus brevis*, *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Lactobacillus paralimentarius*, *Lactobacillus rossiae*, and *Lactobacillus sanfranciscensis* are the most dominating bacteria in sourdough fermentation processes that are characterized by low incubation temperatures and continuous backslopping (traditional sourdoughs, type I sourdoughs) [33-51-52]. In sourdough type II, which is characterized by higher temperatures, longer fermentation times, and higher water contents, *Lactobacillus amylovorus*, *Lactobacillus fermentum*, *Lactobacillus pontis*, and *Lactobacillus reuteri*, are the most dominating bacteria in this type of fermentation [33-53-49]. Furthermore, sourdoughs type III are known to be colonized mainly by LAB that is resistant to drying, e.g. *Lactobacillus brevis*, *Pediococcus pentosaceus*, and *Lb. plantarum* [20].

Several species of yeast are also found in sourdough (Table 2). *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, *Candida humilis*, *Pichia kudriavzevii*, *Kazachstania exigua*, *Torulaspota delbrueckii*, *Candida colliculosa*, and *Wickerhamomyces anomalus* are the most frequently encountered in sourdough [54]. However, *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* has been reported to be the main yeast species in the sourdough ecosystem [55-56]. In contrast, in other separate studies, *Pichia anomala* and *W. anomalus* are abundantly found as compared to *S. cerevisiae* [57-22]. In sourdough, *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* is different from baker's yeast because its Crabtree is negative (insensitivity to glucose) [58]. The evidence from the literature indicates that acidity, water content, and sugars affect significantly the growth and abundance of the yeast population [59].

The microbial species coexisting in sourdough often interact among them through nutritional or trophic relationships [27-20-23-25]. These interactions result in the creation of non-competitive associations of different species of LAB on the use of all four flour carbohydrates (Maltose, Sucrose, Fructose, and Glucose), which constitutes an indispensable source of energy for their development and multiplication. A prominent example includes the stable association between *Lb. sanfranciscensis* and *Lb. plantarum*, where the first preferentially utilizes maltose and is generally unable to ferment fructose, while the second preferentially ferments glucose and fructose with maltose metabolism being subject to carbon catabolite repression [27-60]. The lack of competition for carbohydrates seems to be one of the prerequisites for the stability of LAB/yeast associations during fermentation [27].

Table 1 : Species of lactic acid bacteria isolated from sourdough

Species	Obligate heterofermentative	Facultative heterofermentative	Obligate homofermentative	References
<i>Lactobacillus zymae</i>	X	-	-	[41-132-133]
<i>Lactobacillus acidifaninae</i>	X	-	-	[132]
<i>Lactobacillus hammesii</i>	X	-	-	[134]
<i>Lactobacillus buchneri</i>	X	-	-	[20-36-135]
<i>Lactobacillus namurensis</i>	X	-	-	[136]
<i>Lactobacillus spicheri</i>	X	-	-	[133]
<i>Lactobacillus fructivorans</i>	X	-	-	[137-138]
<i>Lactobacillus sanfranciscensis</i>	X	-	-	[137-138-139-140]
<i>Lactobacillus brevis</i>	X	-	-	[132-137-139-138]
<i>Lactobacillus amylovorus</i>	-	-	X	[133-137-138-139]
<i>Lactobacillus delbrueckii</i>	-	-	X	[133-135-137-138-139]
<i>Lactobacillus acidophilus</i>	-	-	X	[133-135-137-138-139]
<i>Lactobacillus johnsonii</i>	-	-	X	[133-135-139]
<i>Lactobacillus paralimentarius</i>	X	X	-	[133-139-141]
<i>Lactobacillus mindensis</i>	X	-	-	[142]
<i>Lactobacillus plantarum</i>	-	X	-	[21-133-137-138-139]
<i>Lactobacillus alimentarius</i>	-	X	-	[133-137-138-139]
<i>Lactobacillus farciminis</i>	-	-	X	[39-133-135-137-138-139]
<i>Lactobacillus casei</i>	-	X	-	[133-137-138]
<i>Lactobacillus fermentum</i>	X	-	-	[133-137-138]
<i>Lactobacillus reuteri</i>	X	-	-	[133-137-138]
<i>Lactobacillus pontis</i>	X	-	-	[133-137-138]
<i>Lactobacillus rossiae</i>	X	-	-	[137-139-144]
<i>Lactobacillus panis</i>	X	-	-	[137-138-139-145]

<i>Lactobacillus frumenti</i>	x	-	-	[139-146]
<i>Lactobacillus siliginis</i>	x	-	-	[41-133]
<i>Pediococcus pentasaceus</i>	-	x	-	[20-139]
<i>Weissella confusa</i>	x	-	-	[135-137-138]
<i>Weissella cibaria</i>	x	-	-	[135-137-138]
<i>Leuconostoc Lc. citreum</i>	x	-	-	[137-138]
<i>Leuconostoc mesenteroïdes</i>	x	-	-	[137-138]
<i>Lactobacillus hilgardii</i>	x	-	-	[41-133]
<i>Lactobacillus rhamnosus</i>	-	x	-	[137-138]
<i>Lactobacillus pentosus</i>	-	x	-	[41-133]
<i>Lactobacillus mindensis</i>	-	-	x	[20-41-133]

Table 2 : Species of yeasts isolated from sourdough

Species	References
<i>Saccharomyces cerevisiae</i>	[47-137-139-147-148-149-150]
<i>Kazachstania exigua</i>	[137-139]
<i>Candida humilis</i>	[137-139]
<i>Pichia kudriavzevii</i>	[137-139]
<i>Torulaspora delbrueckii</i>	[137-139-149]
<i>Wickerhamomyces anomalus</i>	[137-139]
<i>Candida krusei</i>	[47-150]
<i>Torulaspora holmii</i>	[47-61-147-148-149]
<i>Pichia saitoi</i>	[47]
<i>Candida stellata</i>	[61-147]
<i>Saccharomyces exiguus</i>	[147-150]
<i>Streptomyces inusitatus</i>	[147]
<i>Candida guilliermondii</i>	[148]
<i>Hansenula anomala</i>	[149]

For instance, the absence of competition between *Lb. Sanfranciscensis* and *S. exiguus* for maltose is fundamental for the stability of this association, knowing that *S. exiguus* preferentially uses glucose or sucrose, this association is also essential to reduce the competition and enhance the growth of both species [61-62]. The competitive interactions of microbial species in sourdough influence their production of lactic and acetic acids. An example of the association between *Lb. sanfranciscensis* and *S. cerevisiae* were optimal for producing acetic acid [63]. But the addition of *Torulopsis holmii* was found to improve dough acidification by *Lb. sanfranciscensis* and *S. cerevisiae* enhanced acid production by *Lb. sanfranciscensis* and *Lb. Plantarum*. The production of lactic and acetic acids decreased due to the faster consumption of maltose and, especially, of glucose by *S. cerevisiae* when associated with *Lb. Sanfranciscensis* [64-65].

During the last few years, the use of sourdough in the bread-making process has greatly increased, leading to an increase in the demand for bread sourdough consumption, due to its powerful organoleptic, nutritional, rheological, and healthy properties, as compared to bread made with baker's yeast. Table 3 summarizes the characteristics of sourdough bread versus baker's yeast.

The application of sourdough on bread-making make several documented effects, including the improvement of dough acidification, which participates in the optimization of its sensory and rheological properties. Consequently, it enhances the quality, taste, and flavor of wheat bread [66-67- 68]. In a comparative study evaluating the effect of acidification by the addition of sourdough and biological and chemical acidifiers on volume, some researchers confirmed the effectiveness of sourdough acidification in improving rheological properties and reported that the volume of bread was increased when the biological acidifiers were added, while the chemical acidifiers did not influence on bread volume [69]. In contrast, other researchers reported that the higher acidity could negatively affect the bread quality, it could induce an unpleasant flavor, and reduce the volume of bread, as well as diminish the crumb softness [70]. Generally, the acidity development depends on the sourdough microbial biodiversity [71]. For example, the association of *Lactobacillus brevis*, *Lactobacillus plantarum* and *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* is identified as being responsible for the high acidity of the dough during fermentation [72]. In most cases, the sourdoughs produced by heterofermentative LAB (*Lb. brevis*) displayed the lowest pH compared to sourdoughs produced by homofermentative LAB (*Lb. Plantarum*) [73-74]. In this regard, the decrease of pH is attributed to acetic and lactic acid production [75-76]. This production of acids affects the gluten network. For this purpose, acetic acid makes the gluten network harder, while lactic acid generates a more

elastic gluten network, and therefore to obtain a better and more aromatic flavor and textural properties of bread [77-78]. In addition to the influence of sourdough microbiota, the fermentation conditions at particular fermentation times considerably affect the acidity level of dough, where the pH value declined with a longer fermentation time [79-80]. Several authors have widely discussed the effect of the mixture of sourdough and baker's yeast on the acidification degree [81]. It has been reported that this combination developed an acidity higher than the baker's yeast and sourdough individually [72- 81-82]. This finding may be due to the synergistic phenomenon that occurs between the metabolic reactions of the microbiota of this mixture, where the lactic acid bacteria increase the metabolic activity of baker's yeast [83].

Another more interesting effect concerns the volume of dough and bread. The inclusion of sourdough has been reported to either improve [72-84-85-86-87] or decrease the volume of bread [88]. The positive influence of sourdough on volume depends mostly on the microbial strains utilized. It has been reported that the microbial association of *Lb. plantarum*, *Lb. brevis*, and *S. cerevisiae* in sourdough is responsible for the increase in the volume developed during breadmaking, knowing that the association of *Lb. plantarum* and *Lb. brevis* had no effect as reported in the study of some researchers [89]. This is because heterofermentative lactic acid bacteria increase the metabolic activity of *S. cerevisiae* producing considerable amounts of CO₂ during fermentation, and thus increasing the volume of bread [83]. On the other hand, other researchers suggested that the accumulation of water-soluble pentosanes might increase the volume due to the modification of water distribution [82]. One more example of properties that have been improved once sourdough is added is texture. It constitutes one of the determining characteristics of bread quality, which is critical to consumer acceptance of baked products. Bread hardening is mainly attributed to the recrystallization of amylopectin. It has been proposed that moisture diffusion between crumb and crust as well as the starch-gluten interactions contribute significantly to the increase in bread hardness [90]. It has been observed that the bread sourdough exhibits a slower rate of hardening during storage compared to bread made with baker's yeast [68-66]. Numerous studies have explained the softening effect of sourdough treatment by the fact that exo-polysaccharides produced by sourdough LAB have the potential to improve bread texture [66].

Table 3 : Characteristics of sourdough bread versus baker’s yeast bread [131]

Characteristics	Sourdough bread	Baker’s yeast bread
pH	3.8 – 4.6	5.3 – 5.8
Lactic acid	0.4 – 0.8 %	0.005 – 0.04 %
Acetic acid	0.1 – 0.4 %	0.005 – 0.04 %
Bread volume	0.22 – 0.30 %	≤ 0.20
Flavour	Complex aroma and flavour	
Staling	Slow	Rapid
Shelf life	Good protection against microbial contaminations	High sensibility to bacteria and mould spoilage
Some nutritional aspects	Optimal phytase activity and hydrolysis of phytic acid responsible for ion (Ca ²⁺ , Fe ²⁺ , Mg ²⁺ etc.) binding Free amino acid concentration increase Decrease of glycemic index	Low phytase activity, decalcifying effect Free amino acid concentration similar to that of flour

Regarding the shelf life, several studies highlighted that the addition of sourdough has a positive effect on extending the shelf life of bread [91-92-93-94-95-96]. Its restriction is considerably related to the metabolic activities of the microorganisms contaminating the bread. However, the production of various types of antimicrobial compounds by LAB and yeasts of sourdough extend the shelf life of bread. It involves lactic acid, benzoic acid, hydrogen peroxide, propionic, and acetic acid [97-98-99-100]. Likewise, the 4-hydroxyphenyllactic and phenyllactic acids, which are identified in the metabolic products of *Lb. plantarum* has shown a potential antifungal activity [101-102-103]. Moreover, the Reuterin, which is synthesized by *Lb. reuteri*, have also shown a powerful antifungal and antibacterial activity [104]. The usefulness of fatty acids as inhibitors of the development of bread contaminants has been stated through the identification of coriolic acid, which is a hydroxy- fatty acid derived from peroxides [105]. Although it is well known since ancient times, nowadays there is an increasing trend in consumer demands for foods with high nutritional values and with specific physiological functions of health relevance. The sourdough bread represents the ideal food for this category of consumer. Several nutritional effects resulting from the use of sourdough are cited in the literature. In this review, we discussed its influence on wheat gluten degradation, wheat starch digestibility, and wheat phytic acid reduction.

Sourdough fermentation constitutes an innovative practice that solves the nutritional problem of gluten intolerance in populations who depend on wheat as a staple foodstuff. It is well known that wheat gluten represents one of the nutritional components that are prejudicial to health, especially for people with celiac disease [106]. Numerous studies have been carried out to find a pharmacological treatment for this disorder, and the only solution now is to adopt a gluten-free diet [107-108]. The attempts made to reduce wheat gluten content adversely affect the sensory qualities of the gluten-free bread [109-110]. However, the use of sourdough has been reported to be effective in degrading gluten during bread making, while improving the texture and delaying staling of bread produced [110-111-112-113]. Its consumption has been shown in clinical tests to be tolerable by gluten-intolerant patients [114]. The mechanism involved implies the improvement of the enzymatic activity of microbial or native wheat proteolyzes of gluten, favored by the lowering of pH caused by the metabolism of sourdough microbiota especially *Lactobacilli* [115-116-117].

Another advantage of sourdough addition consists of slowing starch digestibility in wheat flour-based products such as bread. Interestingly, the slowing down of starch digestibility constitutes a major nutritional problem, particularly in populations on a diet based on wheat bread with baker's yeast, because its starch content is rapidly digested and absorbed, leading to hyperglycemia in people with diabetes [14-15-16]. However, the use of sourdough delays the digestion of starch, because the organic acids produced during fermentation reduce the postprandial glycemic response in human blood. For instance, acetic acid reduces gastric emptying, while lactic acid induces interactions between starch and gluten, thereby reducing starch availability [118-119-120-121].

The use of sourdough as a fermentation agent during bread making has been stated to be effective in reducing the phytic acid content [122-123]. Knowing that its presence interferes with the absorption of minerals via the complexation mechanism with divalent minerals (Zn^{2+} ; Ca^{2+} ; Mg^{2+} ; Fe^{2+}), leading to the formation of phytates, and thus disrupting their homeostasis in the human body, hence the emergence of mineral deficiencies [124-125-126]. The authors explain this mechanism by the action of exogenous phytases produced by sourdough microbiota, including lactic acid bacteria and yeasts [127-128-129]. In contrast to these studies, the analysis of the flour and the sourdough mixture highlighted the predominance of the wheat endogenous phytase activity over sourdough microorganism phytase activity [122-123]. In this case, the lowering of pH because of acid production due to the fermentative metabolism of sourdough microflora is fundamental in providing favorable

conditions for endogenous wheat phytase [41-129-130]. From these few studies, it is obvious that the acidity conditions created by the addition of sourdough also favor the action of the sourdough microorganism phytases, hence the significant improvement effect of the bioavailability of sourdough bread minerals.

Finally, the use of sourdough in baking constitutes an innovative technology to prevent the pandemic of so-called societal diseases. It is a functional ingredient that improves digestive symptoms by reducing the gluten content in bread for people with celiac disease. It decreases the digestibility of starch and therefore prevents diabetes and hyperglycemia in diabetics. Thus, it provides to the bread a better degradation of phytic acid, while improving the contribution in mineral content, and hence decreasing the prevalence of mineral deficiencies [151,152]. Consequently, sourdough bread allows us to receive all the benefits of wheat cereal. Without forgetting its effect on the improvement of the sensory quality of bread, which is the main objective of many consumers.

4. Recommendations

- ✓ The preparation of sourdough fermentation initiated by a starter culture of optimally selected lactic acid bacteria can be useful for industrial application to obtain higher quality bakery products.
- ✓ There is a need for an appropriate method to preserve the microbial composition and performance of sourdough during its preparation after consecutive refreshments.
- ✓ It is important that health professionals, consumers and other interested stakeholder groups are aware of the negative effects that sourdough microbiota may cause on the biodiversity and metabolic functions of certain intestinal microbial species.
- ✓ It would be interesting to consider a study to elucidate the relationships among the microbial activity of sourdough and sensory properties of bread along with the types of metabolites involved to explain the improving effect of the addition of sourdough.
- ✓ It is recommended that a study of dough rheological behaviour is required to obtain quality results and to develop reference models.
- ✓ When gluten is degraded in sourdough fermentation, it may affect the quality of bread. It is therefore important to select a microbiota, which only degrades the specific allergy-causing fragments of gluten to sustain the bread quality.

5. Conclusion

Over the last few decades, the human diet has undergone a remarkable evolution in response to the increasing demand for healthier foods. Sourdough technology could be useful for the production of healthy and tasty food. It helps to improve dough properties and bread texture and flavor, delays the staling process, and protects the bread from mould and bacterial spoilage. Moreover, it is useful in the production of bread with slow starch digestibility and hence low glycemic responses, low content of phytic acid ensuring a high bioavailability of minerals, and reduced content of gluten tolerable by gluten-intolerant people. Besides, the use of sourdough can also be extended to other bakery and pastry products to improve efficiency and increase customer satisfaction, and thus significantly affecting economic profitability.

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