CONSUMER ACCEPTANCE OF NON
CONVENTIONAL FOODS

Notice Ringa
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Abstract

In this paper we want to model consumer acceptance of non conventional foods. In our context, non conventional foods are defined as foods that have been scientifically modified to possess desired characteristics or traits. Examples of non conventional foods are processed foods, genetically modified foods, functional foods and neutraceticals. We intend to model consumer acceptance of genetically modified foods. Genetically modified foods are produced by molecular biology techniques and the process is carried out at cellular level in a laboratory to enhance desired traits such as improved nutritional content. We want to specifically model consumer acceptance of a genetically modified tomato in a given country or part of country, e.g. Botswana, Africa. In addition to improved nutritional composition, genetically modified tomato contains more solid than water and this translates to less waste during harvesting hence more profit to a producer. Several studies have shown that there exist a wide range of factors that play a role in consumers’ decision process whether or not to accept any kind of a new innovation or food product. Any population comprises of individuals of different characteristics who have varying perceptions and attitudes towards any new idea, innovation or food product. This phenomena is dynamic in nature. Some of the factors which play a vital role in an individual’s decision process are price, health benefits, level of promotion, knowledge and perceived information, peer influence, individual needs, budget and level of promotion of non conventional foods. Various surveys have been carried out in several parts of the world on consumer acceptance of non conventional foods. Studies done in Europe, Asia and America to gauge consumer acceptance of Agricultural biotechnology and genetically modified foods have shown that consumers in Europe are more skeptical to GM foods than their counterparts in the USA and Japan.