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Investigating determinants of willingness to buy genetically modified foods: an approach of structural equation modeling

[Soghra Aliasgharzadeh](#), [Mahdieh Abbasalizad Farhangi](#), [Maliheh Barzegari](#) 

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Abstract

Purpose

The tendency towards genetically modified (GM) food consumption and production is increasing worldwide. The purpose of this study was to examine the factors influencing the general population's willingness to buy GM foods in Iran.

Design/methodology/approach

A conceptual model was derived and tested via the primary data gathered from 450 individuals recruited from ten districts of Tabriz, Iran. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was carried out to identify the relationship between related constructs and willingness to buy GM foods.

Findings

Results indicated that attitudes towards GM technology and foods along with trust in GM institutes were positive determinants of willingness to buy, while knowledge had a significantly negative impact. Accordingly, the most potent factors influencing consumers' willingness to buy include attitude, which is affected by moral and ethical concerns, and trust followed by knowledge.

Originality/value

The results of this study can help policymakers, farmers, and food industries to make appropriate decisions about the application of gene technology in food production and also cultivation of such products in developing countries such as Iran, where people have little information about these products, despite the import and supply of GM foods.

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