THE ACCEPTANCE OF GM FOOD WITH HEALTH BENEFITS BY CONSUMERS IN GERMANY: A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL

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ABSTRACT

A study was carried out in Germany in order to assess the consumers' acceptance of GM foods with health benefits. Employing a Structural Equation Model (SEM), it was determined what factors influence over the acceptance of GM food, and how do these factors interact among them. The sample consisted in 183 students from the University of Göttingen, who were approached using a "mall interception" methodology in the University's principal lunch room. Respondents were asked to state their willingness to consume three different hypothetical GM products (GM yoghurt drinks, GM bread, and GM eggs) that contained Omega-3 fatty acids, which were described as helping reduce the risk of having a coronary heart disease, and costing the same as their traditional counterpart. Results show that the inclusion of a health benefit increases the acceptability of GM foods, when its source does not involve animals like in the case of the GM eggs. In addition, the SEM model shows that there are two factors that have a direct influence over the acceptance of GM food with health benefits, which are the respondents' attitude towards biotechnology, and their price consciousness. There were other factors that also have an effect over the acceptability of GM foods in an indirect way, through their influence over the attitude towards biotechnology. These indirect factors were the respondents' health consciousness, their attitude towards organic, and their attitude towards functional foods. These findings should be validated using a sample that is representative of the general consumers in Germany.