

Awareness, Attitude, and Behavior toward Genetically Modified Crops: The Case of Consumers in Iloilo City, Central Philippines

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Abstract

The Philippines was one of the first Asian countries to endorse commercialization of genetically modified (GM) crops such as corn, soybean, etc. To date, there has been great controversy over GM's alleged negative impacts on human health and the environment. Using Icek Ajzen's theory of planned behavior, this study aimed to determine the influence of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on the buying intention and consumption of GM crops of consumers. Level of awareness about GM crops was also measured. With the use of a structured questionnaire, primary data was collected from 246 randomly selected individuals in the seven districts of Iloilo City, Central Philippines. Descriptive statistics was used to describe consumers' level of awareness and consumption of GM crops, and logistic regression was utilized to determine the influence of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control with the intention and actual behavior of the consumer. Results indicated that 80% of the respondents had very low level of awareness about the consequences of consuming GM crops and the processes involved in growing the crops. Level of awareness did not vary across age, sex, income, and educational attainment. Logistic regression revealed that buying intention was statistically significant in predicting actual consumption. Among the three independent variables, only attitude significantly influenced buying intention. Policy implications of the results include instituting mandatory labeling of GM crops and information dissemination about the agricultural processes and effects of consuming GM crops.