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## Factors determining Neophobia and Neophilia with regard to new technologies applied to the food sector: a Systematic Review

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### Abstract

This systematic review was performed starting from the understanding of the complexity that characterizes the human relationship to food, combining different dimensions, ranging from those aspects going from the biological (nutritional function) to the cultural (symbolic function), as well as the ones linking the individual to the community, the psychological to the social. Addressing this multi-dimensional character is at the base of sound research paths aiming at assessing the determinants of consumers' choices and behaviors. This systematic review analyses and synthetizes the main results of recent studies dealing with food neophobia and neophilia with regard to new technologies applied to the food sector, both in the context of developed countries and in developing ones. In particular, main factors leading to caution and aversion for food technologies were identified and discussed, as well as different approaches to measure consumers' resistance to the mentioned technologies and to predict consumers' behavior.

Scopus and Web of Science engines were used to search the existing literature and to identify the relevant studies to include, conducted in different countries and by means of different methodological approaches. These studies investigated the mentioned consumers' choices and behaviors, that are influenced by many interacting factors; the adoption of a relevant conceptual framework allows the distinction between distal (or primary) determinants, and proximal (or secondary) ones. Communication and attitudes or psychometric models constitute the base of the cited framework, and the link between the two determinants categories. In particular, an effective tool capable of enhancing the understanding of the neophobia–neophilia forces that determine food choices is the Food Technology Neophobia Scale (FTNS), with its four components constituting the base of a sound analysis of the influence on the mentioned choices of each single neophobia–neophilia force (risk perception and novelty seeking, media influence, own health and environmental concerns) as well as a device to turn the four components into a single, comprehensive framework. Finally, the case of consumer acceptance of the eating of insects is discussed as an emerging trend in food science.

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