

# The cognitive processes at play in Food Consumer Confusion

**Axelle Dorisse**

UCLouvain - LouRIM

**Karine Charry**

UCLouvain

**Béatrice Parguel**

CNRS - Université Paris-Dauphine PSL

Cite as:

Dorisse Axelle, Charry Karine, Parguel Béatrice (2025), The cognitive processes at play in Food Consumer Confusion. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 54th, (125833)

Paper from the 54th Annual EMAC Conference, Madrid, Spain, May 25-30, 2025



## **The cognitive processes at play in Food Consumer Confusion**

Consumers often encounter overwhelming, conflicting information about food, potentially leading to confusion. However, the mechanisms at play in consumer confusion remain unclear. Using a quantitative study, we therefore investigate how conflicting environmental food labels impact consumer confusion, and any spillover effect (i.e., when confusion related to a product engenders confusion related to other products). We show how cognitive load and skepticism drive consumer confusion, while cognitive dissonance does not, and the existence of a potential spillover effect. As such, we offer insights for consumers, managers, and policymakers and contribute to consumer confusion research.

*Key words: consumer confusion; information proliferation; cognitive processes*

*Track: consumer behaviour*