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Influence of rationality on food choice: Results from an eye-tracking study with yogurt labels

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Abstract: (Your abstract must use **Normal style** and must fit in this box. Your abstract should be no longer than 300 words. The box will 'expand' over 2 pages as you add text/diagrams into it.)

Decisions have been claimed to be determined by two modes of thinking: System 1 and System. System 1 is experiential and intuitive, being characterized by fast, effortless and associative responses. On the other hand, System 2 is rational, deliberative and analytical, being responsible for slower, effortful, and deliberately controlled thinking operations. The majority of our everyday choices are made without much effort and deliberation and are determined by System 1, or intuitive thinking. People differ in their preference for these two thinking styles, which leads to differences in who they take their decisions. In this context, the aim of the present work was to evaluate the influence of rational and intuitive thinking styles on consumer choices and information processing when evaluating yogurt labels.

Seventy one consumers participated in a choice-conjoint task. Sixteen yogurt labels were designed using a three 2-levels variables were considered: fat and sugar content (low vs. high), label background (background A vs. background B), and traffic light system (present vs. absent). Consumers were presented with 8 choice sets composed of two labels on a computer screen, and were asked to indicate which one they would consume. Their eye movements were recorded during the task using an eye-tracker. After completing the conjoint task, consumers completed the Rational Experiential Inventory (REI).

Hierarchical cluster analysis identified three consumer segments with different preference for analytic-rational or intuitive-experiential thinking styles. Consumers who predominantly relied on analytical-rational thinking engaged on a greater information search and a more thoughtful analysis of nutritional information for making their choices than consumers who preferred intuitive-experiential thinking. Besides, thinking style strongly influenced the part-worth utilities of the evaluated variables. Intuitive consumers gave more relevance to label background than rational consumers. These results indicate that thinking style could be an interesting segmentation strategy, particularly when designing communication strategies.