





Abstract

Advancing Food Consumer Science to Facilitate Health and Sustainability Transitions: Bridging Complexity, Collaboration, and Ensuring FAIR Data [†]

Ellen van Kleef ^{1,*}, Machiel Reinders ¹, Elena Horská ², Barbara Koroušić Seljak ³, Liisa Lähteenmäki ⁴, Lada Timotijevic ⁵ and Hans van Trijp ¹

¹ Marketing and Consumer Behaviour Group, Wageningen University & Research, 6700 EW Wageningen, The Netherlands; machiel.reinders@wur.nl (M.R.); hans.vantrijp@wur.nl (H.v.T.)

² Faculty of Economics and Management, Slovak University of Agriculture, 949 76 Nitra, Slovakia; elena.horska@gmail.com

³ Computer Systems Department, Jožef Stefan Institute, SI-1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia; barbara.koroušic@ijs.si

⁴ Department of Management, Aarhus University, 8210 Aarhus, Denmark; liisal@mgmt.au.dk

⁵ Food, Consumer Behaviour and Health Research Centre, School of Psychology, University of Surrey, Surrey GU2 7XH, UK; l.timotijevic@surrey.ac.uk

* Correspondence: ellen.vankleef@wur.nl

[†] Presented at the 14th European Nutrition Conference FENS 2023, Belgrade, Serbia, 14–17 November 2023.

Abstract: The nutritional quality of our diet depends on a number of repeated choices we make throughout the day. Understanding consumer behaviour in its full complexity and real-life context is essential for ensuring a sustainable food system that provides nutritious diets to nearly 10 billion people by 2050. Food consumer science, a multidisciplinary field, aims to comprehend how consumers engage with, desire, obtain, utilise, and dispose of food to meet their physiological, psychological, and social needs. However, the field's fragmented nature and narrow focus on isolated product choices have hindered progress in understanding food consumption patterns and their relationships to lifestyles. To address these challenges, fostering greater connectivity and collaboration among scientists from diverse disciplines and regions is crucial. This presentation explores data proliferation and system thinking's potential for significant advancements in the field. While the incorporation of technologies like neuroimaging, physiological measures, virtual reality, and machine learning holds promise, the complexity of the field and the lack of integration present legitimate concerns and obstacles. This presentation highlights food consumer science's indispensable role in health and sustainability transitions, emphasising the importance of ensuring that the data we produce are Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable (FAIR). It showcases approaches to improve data sharing in consumer science, demonstrating progress in harmonising measures, ensuring cross-cultural comparability, and addressing biases in data collection and analysis. Furthermore, we explore the opportunities and challenges associated with establishing research infrastructure in food consumer science, specifically highlighting the EU Horizon 2020-project COMFOCUS as a starting point.

Keywords: research infrastructure; food consumer science; FAIR data; consumer behaviour



Citation: van Kleef, E.; Reinders, M.; Horská, E.; Seljak, B.K.; Lähteenmäki, L.; Timotijevic, L.; van Trijp, H.

Advancing Food Consumer Science to Facilitate Health and Sustainability Transitions: Bridging Complexity, Collaboration, and Ensuring FAIR Data. *Proceedings* 2023, 91, 20.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/proceedings2023091020>

Academic Editors: Sladjana Sobajic and Philip Calder

Published: 14 November 2023



Copyright: © 2023 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Author Contributions: E.v.K. wrote the original draft. All other authors contributed to the review and editing process. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This work has received funded from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement no 101005259.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Data sharing is not applicable to this abstract.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.