

The Best of Both Worlds: How Digital Technologies Can Shape Experiences in Retail Agglomerations

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Abstract

While online retailers list growing sales, shopping areas in cities are confronted with increasing vacancy rates due to a customer-perceived relative disadvantage in terms of attractiveness as shopping destinations. By considering the evolution of innovative technologies as a chance to augment the traditional customer journey, this study aims to assess attributes attracting customers to High Streets, shopping- and town centres. A measurement tool comprising a face-to-face survey with shoppers, an online panel, expert ratings and a sorting-task is developed. The findings demonstrate that both physical and digital factors are perceived as beneficial by customers, but only a complex multi-dimensional structure of themes, categories and items is able to capture the attraction process to retail agglomerations. The study contributes to a theoretical understanding of the development of traditional retail marketing in the digital age as well as indicates practical strategies how to strengthen overall economic performance of a retail destination.

Keywords: *Retail Agglomerations; Scale Development; Attraction Process*

Track: Retailing & Omni-Channel Management