

A Comparison of Perceived Environmental Sustainability of Brick-and-Mortar Retailing and Online Retailing

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Cite as:

Klein Patrick, Popp Bastian (2022), A Comparison of Perceived Environmental Sustainability of Brick-and-Mortar Retailing and Online Retailing. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 51st, (107258)

Paper from the 51st Annual EMAC Conference, Budapest, May 24-27, 2022



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Abstract

Sustainability has become paramount in society and retail. Therefore, this research aims to compare the environmental sustainability of brick-and-mortar retail and e-commerce. A literature review identifies key determinants of this comparison and shows that most previous studies focus on objective criteria. Three empirical studies provide insights into the perceived environmental sustainability of each channel to reflect the importance of the consumers' perspective for channel choice. Surprisingly, in contrast to the experts' view, consumers perceive e-commerce as less sustainable than brick-and-mortar retailing. Given the potential negative impact on online purchasing behaviour, online retailers should improve their communication strategy and highlight environmental advantages of e-commerce or omni-channel retailing. Moreover, online retailers should continue their efforts towards more sustainability and improving environmental aspects in logistics, packaging and return management.

Keywords: *Environmental Sustainability; Brick-and-mortar retailing; E-Commerce*

Track: Retailing & Omni-Channel Management