Responsible Retailing

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Special Session Proposal

RESPONSIBLE RETAILING

Chairs:

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Presentations

1. Stakeholder dynamics in suboptimal food businesses: a multiple case study on food waste reduction

Ying Cheng Huang*, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Ellen Van Droogenbroeck, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

2. Bridging the Protein Gap: How Alternative Meat Products Balance Consumer Identity, Perceptions of Taste and Sustainability

Márcia Dutra de Barcellos, Nova Information Management School & Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul

Simoni F. Rohden*, Nova Information Management School

Lélis Balestrin Espartel, IADE, Universidade Europeia, Lisbon, Portugal

3. Ready for real-life? Consumer acceptance and intentions of True price campaigns – a cross-country study

Doreén Pick*, Merseburg University of Applied Sciences

Marcin Komor, University of Economics in Katowice

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Proposal

The retail landscape is undergoing rapid transition driven by structural market shifts and broader socio-technical developments. Competitive pressures, changing value chains, digitalization, and sustainability demands require retailers to adapt strategically. Even though sustainability represents one of today's most urgent managerial and consumer challenges, its long-term impact remains insufficiently understood. Sustainable retailing highlights the economic, environmental, and social considerations needed to secure the well-being of current and future generations (Vadakkepatt et al., 2021). This triple bottom line requires evaluating retail activities along the entire supply chain, encompassing topics such as corporate social responsibility (Ailawadi et al., 2013), greenwashing (Spielmann, 2021), and the circular economy (Kristoffersen et al., 2020). Recently, the concept of responsible retailing emphasizes retailers' ethical obligations not only to stakeholders but to society and life more broadly (Holtrop et al., 2025).

This special session presents four studies examining how responsible retailing influences customer perceptions and retail decision-making. These contributions explore innovative concepts that either promote or hinder sustainable choices.

Huang and Van Droogenbroeck investigate stakeholder dynamics in the suboptimal food sector, a key area for reducing food waste. As consumers often reject cosmetically imperfect products, circular business models have emerged to rescue and resell these items. Using the Stakeholder Salience Model and Resource Dependence Theory, a multiple case study identifies the most influential stakeholders and the collaboration mechanisms needed to mitigate food waste.

Barcellos et al. consider the proposition of animal and plant proteins in so-called blended meat products as a responsible food alternative. Despite potential benefits, consumer acceptance remains limited due to sensory, cultural, and identity barriers. Drawing on Social Identity Theory, the authors investigate how identity motives, norms, and the compromise effect shape willingness to try meat, blended, and plant-based products. Results suggest blended options help consumers balance identity-consistent eating with societal pressures to reduce meat consumption, supporting the protein transition.

Pick and Komor study consumer reactions to "True Price" campaigns, which incorporate environmental and social externalities into product prices. Using evidence from a German retailer's 2023 initiative—characterized by substantial price increases and reduced purchases—the authors compare consumer responses in Germany and Poland. A scenario-based experiment further examines how shoppers perceive and evaluate retailers adopting true pricing models.

Collectively, these presentations offer new insights into how responsible retailing practices can guide consumers and retailers toward more sustainable behaviors.