

Greening the Gap: A Study of Compensatory Beliefs in Sustainable Consumption.

Yacine Ladli

Univ Rennes, CNRS, CREM – UMR 6211, Rennes, France

Fanny Reniou

Univ Rennes, CNRS, CREM – UMR 6211, Rennes, France

Cite as:

Ladli Yacine, Reniou Fanny (2024), Greening the Gap: A Study of Compensatory Beliefs in Sustainable Consumption.. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 53rd, (119375)

Paper from the 53rd Annual EMAC Conference, Bucharest, Romania, May 28-31, 2024



Greening the Gap: A Study of Compensatory Beliefs in Sustainable Consumption.

Abstract

Despite growing environmental awareness and a professed desire for change, a gap persists between consumers' attitudes and behaviors, causing guilt and cognitive dissonance among those most concerned about the environment. This research explores the 'green gap,' emphasizing compensatory beliefs, which posit that the positive outcomes of virtuous behavior can offset the negative consequences of detrimental behavior, serving as a rationalization mechanism. While compensatory beliefs may contribute to explaining this phenomenon, they remain underexplored, and studies on them yield questionable and contrasting results. Through semi-structured interviews with 16 French consumers, our study explores and offers a comprehensive explanation of the compensation phenomenon in sustainable consumption. We identify various types and logics of compensation, along with contextual factors explaining the emergence of compensatory beliefs and their use for rationalizing non-sustainable behaviors.

Subject Areas: *Consumer Behaviour, Decision-Making*

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics