




BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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Introduction

This is the book of edited one-page abstracts of the 29th RARCS conference. It is compiled to assist delegates in choosing the session of their choice. Because we accept both completed work and work in progress, not all abstracts summarize findings. It may be that authors will however be able to present some (preliminary) findings at the conference.

In addition to this book of abstracts of all presentations, extended abstract and full papers of some presentations are included in the proceedings.

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Critical Review of Common Classifications in Channel Marketing – A New Holistic Framework

Channel management has become increasingly relevant for marketing in recent decades, especially since COVID-19 has changed consumer behavior and proliferation of various types of retail formats. Digitalization and online commerce are driving the implementation and use of multiple channels and coordination of these channels to become increasingly important. Current literature, based on consumer's interaction with the channel, supports distinction between single-channel, multi-channel, and omni-channel distribution (Brynjolfsson *et al.*, 2013; Verhoef *et al.*, 2015; Ailawadi & Farris, 2020). Channel strategy has been well-researched, including numerous systematic reviews (Asmare & Zewdie, 2022; Hayes & Kelliher, 2022; Cai & Lo, 2020). However, practical evidence indicates the non-existence of any retail company that has been successful in implementing the omni-channel approach. The retail industry is still struggling to create a truly integrated, seamless consumer experience. New technologies, consumer behavior, and supply chain issues are slowly but surely changing the retail landscape. A new strategy where e-commerce and physical retail are much more intrinsically linked, thus creating a "harmonized" retail strategy is slowly taking the center stage (Dennis, 2022). The concept of harmonized channels is seen as a potentially new terminology in channel marketing. This approach supports customer-centered orientation and the (partial) linking of channels, hence improving consumer (Dennis, 2019). It is critical to note that, the introduction of another term (harmonized channels) cannot solve the fundamental problem of previous classifications. The term, analogous to single-, multi-, and omni-channel, falls short and can neither adequately explain the complexity of different channel structures nor provide purposeful individual recommendations for action. Therefore, it is essential to investigate factors to distinguish different channel structures. Hence, the purpose of this conceptual paper is to provide a holistic framework to better understand the nuances of channel strategy. Expert interviews will be conducted in both US and Germany to investigate relevant factors to better capture and accurately classify companies' channel strategies. The proposed study will add to the body of current literature by (1) challenging common classifications in channel marketing; (2) identifying relevant criteria to facilitate the selection and review of appropriate channel structures and (3) utilize the proposed framework to empirically evaluate current channel strategies and distinguish channel structures and to provide actionable recommendations for retailers.