

Scanning of the retail environment in forecasting activities

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Purpose: To boost store performance and manage complexity caused by information and task overload, retail managers are focusing on the optimization of processes, efficient practices and facilitating tools. The aim of this research is to highlight the drivers from complex and uncertain environments affecting retail-forecasting activities.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Putting together the traditional concept of environment reflecting on the scanning, uncertainty, and complexity, with social network analysis on citation data it outlines studies that investigate environmental drivers affecting the forecasting process in the retail business.

Findings: It is created the theoretical framework of the external drivers emerging the concept of complexity and uncertainty of the environment in retailing. The decision-maker needs to scan and filter the right patterns defining the causal relationships between environmental drivers and forecasting model in retail.

Practical implications: Highlighting the inherent limits to forecasting, showing that evolution of forecasting methods is necessary and the environmental aspect is opening up new paths to reveal important insights to assist decision-making.

Originality: Representation of a retail environment where a change from past research which generalizes the concept of the environment as complex, uncertain, and dynamic moves to recent trends where the retail environment has been seen as heterogeneous, affected by the level of the intensity and hostility of competition, with the necessity for the continuous scanning of the environment.

Keywords: environment; retail; scanning; uncertainty; complexity; forecasting; drivers