

Intricacies of Waste: Examining Consumer Responses to Planned Obsolescence

As the world population continues to grow, so does consumption. By 2050 the global population is expected to grow by 2.2 billion (OECD, 2015). An increase in population and consumption leads to an exponential growth in waste accumulation that has severe environmental, social, and economic consequences. If attention is not directed towards the minimization of the use of natural resources and continual production of waste, the current culture of consumption will severely compromise future generations' ability to live a full and prosperous life.

Consumers have an important role to play in the desired shift (Cooper, 2004). This track aims at identifying ways to move consumers towards becoming more informed and sustainable decision makers. More specifically, our efforts seek to study how consumers perceive and respond to planned obsolescence (PO) from a cross-cultural perspective.

The strategy of PO appeared first in the late 1920s in the United States (Slade, 2009). Ever since, the strategy of planning and designing products with limited lifetime became a crucial part of economic growth worldwide. In spite of its relevance, PO has limited coverage in the context of TCR literature.

Following Copper's categorization of PO (technological, psychological and economic), and building on public policy, consumer, and environmental welfare relevance, our goal, in a broad sense, is to examine:

- The role of product lifecycles in shaping consumer expectations
- The role of functional, emotional, and aesthetic durability
- Societal, economic, and environmental aspects of PO
- The role of culture in understanding PO

References

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