

Understanding Consumer Behavior and Sustainability Perception for Digital Technology Products and Services: Addressing End-users' Unmet Sustainability Concerns

About

This study investigates the sustainability perceptions and behaviors of consumers regarding digital technology products and services. Through a global survey of 490 technology end-users, the research identifies their key concerns, unmet expectations, and views on the current sustainability efforts of technology companies.

Problem

While there is extensive research on technology and sustainability, most of it focuses on the digital technologies themselves or the companies behind them, leaving a gap in understanding the end-user's perspective. This study addresses the lack of insight into consumer sustainability perceptions, behaviors, and expectations, which is crucial for promoting sustainable consumption in the digital economy.

Study Outcome

- Consumers' most pressing unmet sustainability needs are product durability, transparency, corporate legitimacy, ethical practices, the right to repair, and reducing water and energy consumption.
- A significant communication gap exists between technology companies and their customers regarding sustainability efforts, leading to consumer skepticism and accusations of 'greenwashing'.
- While over 80% of users rate sustainability as very or extremely important, they perceive tech companies' performance as only moderate, with most ratings clustering between 6 and 8 on a 10-point scale.
- The primary barrier preventing consumers from adopting sustainable technology is the high cost of quality products, cited by 73.3% of respondents.
- Consumers prioritize product longevity and repairability over downstream activities like recycling when it comes to sustainable digital consumption.

Keywords

Consumer behaviour • end-user sustainability perception • unmet sustainability concerns • sustainable production and consumption • digital technology • e-waste