

Abstract

Planned obsolescence expresses those activities that incite the need and urge in customers to purchase a new product sooner than it would be necessary, through the means of non-durable product design, using software-based methods in order to impair product functionality and marketing strategies. Planned obsolescence can be viewed as a necessary force in the economy, or as a harmful process for our planet, that misuses the limited amount of resources and thus should not be upheld any longer. This research aims to give a clear and comprehensive perspective on the 'two-faced coin' that is planned obsolescence, through analysing literature on the different aspects of the concept and through conducting empirical research of mixed methodology to better understand the consumer side of the phenomenon. The findings of this research include the different methods of the application of planned obsolescence, the role of consumers in this process, and the environmental impact and future implications of planned obsolescence. The empirical research confirmed that consumers believe that manufacturers practice planned obsolescence and they mostly associate negative feelings with this concept. Consumers demonstrate conscious behaviour regarding the handling product and show willingness to prolong their lifetime through repair, however numerous barriers, that have relations to planned obsolescence makes this harder. With my research, I conclude that consumer behaviour can be and is exploited by companies. Still, consumers accept this as reality, as they feel powerless about it. Planned obsolescence has many benefits for the economy, but its detrimental nature toward the environment cannot be sustained anymore. There is a need to move forward toward more sustainable economic models, that would also address the issues that planned obsolescence would leave behind.