

Responsibility beyond the point of sale – How product stewardship forges sustainable consumption behavior

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Abstract

The concept of product stewardship emphasizes the responsibility of companies along the entire product life cycle. In this paper, we examine the company's difficulties in extending product stewardship downward their value chain to the consumption phase and explore potential measures to foster sustainable consumption behavior. For this purpose, we conducted a qualitative study with 31 semi-structured expert interviews in the consumer goods industry in German-speaking countries. Our results show that product stewardship in the consumption phase can be ensured by overcoming not only consumer-driven but also corporate-driven challenges. To facilitate sustainable consumption, companies can apply a number of consumer-, product-, and company-related measures. Our study found deviations between our identified measures and the measures discussed in the literature, thus opening future research areas.

Keywords: *Sustainability; Stewardship; Consumption*

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