

The Commitment to Keep: How Consumer-Initiated Nontradability Supports Sustainable Consumption

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Abstract

Modern consumers increasingly approach purchases with a resale mindset, relying on the option to resell as a psychological safety net that reduces the perceived commitment of buying. This mindset can shorten product usage lifetimes and undermine sustainability goals. We introduce consumer-initiated nontradability, a voluntary commitment made at the point of purchase not to resell a product through monetary exchange. We conceptualize how nontradability may influence consumption through symbolic, emotional, and cognitive pathways, and empirically test the first component of this framework. Across two experiments, we show that nontradability increases self-extension and, as a downstream consequence, lengthens intended product usage lifetimes. These initial findings position nontradability as a meaningful psychological antecedent of sustainable consumption. Future studies will examine the full model as well as downstream outcomes such as product care and non-market-mediated disposal.

Track: Consumer Behaviour