



Discovering Barriers of Sustainable Energy Transition For Sustainability-Oriented, Low-Income Citizens

Written by Dóra Mocos
Supervisor: Prof Dr Gjalt de Jong

Introduction

The topic of sustainable energy transition became forefront in the last two decades as a part of tackling the problem of climate change. Although attention is high on the harm caused by industries, individuals and households can and should also enhance the transition. This research aims to explore barriers of sustainable energy transition for sustainability-oriented but low-income individuals. This specific group was chosen because lower-income groups of developed countries seem to be stuck at using fossil fuels, and to highlight that although motivation and an interest in sustainability are important, it is unfortunately not enough to make changes. Accordingly the research question became:

How do sustainability-oriented, low-income individuals perceive the barriers of sustainable energy transition?

Theories

4 kinds of energy use

Previous barriers



Source Surroundings Habits Indirect



Motivation Knowledge Context

Method

This topic was approached with an exploratory qualitative research including semi-structured interviews to gain detailed insights. 6 sustainability-related students were interviewed about the 4 kinds of energy use with a focus on the reasons behind their actions.

Results

1st-order Themes	2nd-order Themes	Barriers
MOTIVATION	Self-centeredness	Comfort preference
		Habits
		Background
	Ambiguity, Abstractness	Taking energy for granted
		No feeling of control
		Feeling of insignificant contribution
KNOWLEDGE	About current situation	Lack of knowledge about home & devices
		Value attachment problems
	Lack of informed decision-making	Difficulties in getting information
		Lack of trust in information
	About options	Shopping habits, bounded rationality
		Confusion about what is more sustainable
CONTEXT	Living situation	No control over living space
		Short-term focus, no attachment
		Property traits
	Finances	Low-income
		Investment, premium pricing
		Buying second-hand
Lack of options	No available greener products	

Implications

Those who wish to accelerate energy transition could support overcoming these barriers. For example extra focus is needed on education, operative support, transparency, measuring E-use, financial support, persuading landlords, and increasing sustainable options.