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Talking On Your Cell Phone and Ethical Responsibility: How Many Children Died for Your Battery?

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Talking On Your Cell Phone and Ethical Responsibility:
How Many Children Died for Your Battery?**

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ABSTRACT

Ethics has been an increasingly important topic in business and many issues stem from this broad subject. Especially when companies cross borders to conduct business, the lines for what is ethical begin to blur when costs and profits are concerned. Thus, many issues emerge when looking at environmental and social responsibility, such as environmental friendliness, local manufacturing, and child labor. These ethical issues have brought about standards of conduct for businesses as consumers tend to react poorly when an ethical line has been crossed. This study attempts to look at how one such issue, child labor, impacts the purchasing behaviors of consumers for the cell phone industry. Coltan is a raw mineral that is used in many technologies, including the batteries of cell phones and computers. This mineral is currently being mined using child labor in Africa, specifically the country of Congo. Unfortunately, this issue has not been publicized and cell phone companies are not currently being held accountable for where the coltan for their cell phones is coming from. Thus, the purpose of this study is to expose this ethical dilemma and measure the potential effect on consumers within the cell phone industry.

Keywords

Lumber industry, optimization, automation, natural resources