Nifty gadgets for ‘lazy’ folk: a triumph of convenience or bane of the planet?

From a hands-free hair-drying tool to a tablet stand, such devices are a hit with young Chinese, but the waste generated when the novelty wears off is a concern.

**Letter From Beijing**

Goh Yan Han
Correspondent

Such gadgets have been growing in popularity in mainland China over the past year, with an increasing number of posts about them on social media platforms such as Weibo and Xiaohongshu, as one young Shanghai resident noted. She explained that she was using a hands-free hair-drying tool that she had bought on Taobao for just a few Singapore dollars.

These devices, while aimed at making tasks easier, can end up being waste, said the correspondent. They can also be a source of regret, especially if people do not use them as intended.

While some of these gadgets can be useful, others can be a disappointment, she said. For example, a hairdryer turned out to be quite pricey, and a phone remote, which was supposed to prevent neck strain, was found to be quite expensive.

In the case of China, the rise of the lazy gadgets is partly driven by the intense competition in the country's live-streaming industry, which is booming.

People may buy these items on a whim without thinking about their impact. "It's not just about convenience," said the correspondent. "It's also about feeling enlightened by being time-saving, especially for urban Chinese, who are often under pressure."

These "lifehacks" could also be a sign that people are trying to save time and money, especially in a country where time is often seen as money.

Of course, the Chinese are not the only people who use such items – the Japanese have been known for coming up with nifty gadgets that prove useful in daily life.

"There are many lazy gadgets from Japan which have been bought by Singaporeans as well," she said. "Some people have even said they wish they could have them at home."

But is it worth it to buy these gadgets? The correspondent said it depends on the individual.

"For some people, these gadgets can be a fun way to save time and money," she said. "But for others, they can be a waste of money."