

Fear of Product Obsolescence and Intention to Upgrade

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Keywords: *fear of psychological obsolescence, fear of economic obsolescence, fear of technological obsolescence, recency, age*

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

1. How do consumers' fears specific to product obsolescence change with the time elapsed since last purchase?
2. What are the relationships between different obsolescence fears, i.e., fear of psychological obsolescence, fear of economic obsolescence, and fear of technological obsolescence, and consumers' intention to purchase high-tech upgrades?
3. Will the mechanism that underlies the fear-intention to upgrade causality vary with the consumer's age?

Method and Data

An online survey was employed in Taiwan to acquire the data needed for testing the hypothesized model. Respondents were solicited to complete a questionnaire consisting the measurement items of constructs of interest, along with their experience and behavior in buying and using smartphones. A series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) establish convergent validity, reliability, and discriminant validity. The hypotheses were tested using the mediated and moderated regression analysis.

Summary of Findings

In an upgrading decision context, both fear of psychological obsolescence and fear of technological obsolescence par-

tially mediate the relationship between the time elapsed since last purchase and consumers' intentions to upgrade. The impact of fear of psychological obsolescence on upgrading intention is moderated by the consumer's age. Fear of economic obsolescence and age imposes an interaction effect on intention to upgrade, meaning that older consumers laden with fear of economic obsolescence have stronger intention to upgrade their smartphones than younger consumers worried about economic obsolescence.

Key Contributions

This research contributes to the burgeoning literature on upgrading high-technology durables by building theoretical connections to both cognitive evaluation and affective responses concerning consumer's replacing high-technology products from a temporal perspective. The empirical results should be able to shed some light on predicting consumer behavior with respect to whether and/or when to upgrade and offer several managerial guidelines for managing and launching consumer high-technology products.

References are available on request.

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