

# Exploring Consumers' Anticipated Interactions with Smart Objects: An Approach through the Prism of Agency and Simulated Interpersonal Relationships

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## Abstract

### • *Research Objectives*

Recent advancements in artificial intelligence and its diverse applications have significant impacts not only on various marketing practices, but also on the increasingly social interactions between technology-based objects (e.g., smart devices) and consumers, generating apprehensions. This pre-usage apprehension could hinder long-term adoption of these objects. This article aims to explore this impediment by examining consumers' ability to anticipate a social interaction with smart objects, as well as the implications of these anticipations over attitudes, and behavioral intentions.

### • *Methodology*

This article uses the "Album On-Line (AOL)" projective technique to study the mental representations elicited by descriptions of smart objects. Subsequently, building upon AOL results, a second study involving 100 participants investigates the influence of anticipated interactions on consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions.

### • *Results*

Findings suggest that consumers can envision interpersonal interactions with smart objects prior to usage, and the anticipated consequences can either foster or hinder the intention to use them, depending on the depicted capabilities of the smart object.

### • *Managerial implications*

This research enables Internet of Things stakeholders to better comprehend consumers' ability to anticipate future interactions based on simple descriptions. It guides consumers toward mentally constructing positive interpersonal relationships, thus promoting future acceptance of these objects.

### • *Originality*

This study addresses apprehension toward smart objects through the lens of mental simulation and interpersonal relationships. It provides deeper insights into mechanisms influencing pre-usage adoption intentions of these objects.

• **Keywords:** Internet of Things, smart object, interpersonal relationships, mental simulation.

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