

An application of means-end and extended self theories to explore enablers and inhibitors of autonomous car adoption

Radu Dimitriu

Trinity Business School, Trinity College Dublin

Benedetta Crisafulli

Birkbeck University

Rodrigo Guesalaga

Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

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Abstract

Investments in autonomous cars (ACs) are growing, yet there is scant evidence on the likely adoption of such cars. Integrating the means-end and extended self theories, we explore the holistic drivers behind adopting or not ACs and their linkage with human values and wellbeing, as well as the self-expression considerations of prospective adopters. Data from 54 interviews suggests that consumers perceive AC adoption can both facilitate and hinder the achievement of human values. For example, ACs can enhance life comfort and lower stress by creating convenience and extra time to rest and socialize; equally, they can lower life excitement by eliminating the joy of driving. The autonomy in ACs can mean freedom given the flexibility allowed by driverless technology, but can also hamper freedom and security given the perceived risk of accidents which comes with a novel technology. Importantly, we find ACs' pondered adoption is linked to identity-related and self-image concerns.