

Exploring consumer-service robots interactions in embarrassing service encounters.

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Abstract

Service robots (SR) are becoming increasingly employed in the marketplace, as such, consumers- SR encounters represent a primary research area in shopper marketing. While the majority of studies on this topic have focused on the negative responses triggered by consumers-SR interactions, little is known on particular service delivery contexts under which human-SR encounters might be more beneficial than traditional human-to-human encounters. This research aims to fill this gap and it examines whether the interaction with a SR in the context of a potentially embarrassing service encounter may attenuate consumers' anticipated embarrassment. We argue that this occurs because of the global attribution of mind to the robots. Moreover, we propose to investigate the influence of SR human-likeness appearance on this effect. The study employs a mixed-method approach. Preliminary findings from the qualitative analysis identifies perceptions of mind and humanlikeness appearance as potential factors influencing feelings of embarrassment. Further, results from a first experimental study show that interaction with SR attenuate consumer embarrassment. **Keywords:** service robots, consumer embarrassment, mind attribution **Track:** Services Marketing

Keywords: *Service Robots; mind perception; embarrassment*

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