

Wired for Warmth: How Automated Social Presence Shapes Service Recovery Outcomes

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Abstract

With artificial intelligence transforming service delivery, an underexplored area is the effectiveness of automated social presence (ASP) in service recovery. Using three experiments, we investigate how ASP enhances recovery outcomes across customers with varying relationship orientations with the firm (relational vs. transactional). We begin by demonstrating that outcome failures develop more adverse outcomes among relational customers, whereas process failures affect transactional customers more. Building on this, Study 2 demonstrated that the recovery intervention (psychological vs. tangible) need to align with the type of failure and customer relationship orientation to mitigate the negative impact. Finally, Study 3 found that high ASP significantly enhances recovery effectiveness, mediated by warmth and competence. The study provides novel insights to literature and practice on the role of ASP in enhancing recovery effectiveness.

Track: Marketing and Technology Interaction