

Products as Consumption Companions: How Culture Influences Consumer Responses to Anthropomorphic Products

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Abstract

This research finds that collectivistic consumers show exaggerated preference for anthropomorphic products, because these products represent social surrogates allowing for more communal consumption experiences. Across five studies, including the analysis of a real-world international field data and controlled experiments, we demonstrate that collectivist consumers do indeed show an exaggerated preference for anthropomorphic products. The effect holds across various product categories, regardless of whether collectivistic thinking is measured, primed, or operationalized based on nationality or ethnicity. We provide evidence for the underlying mechanism, perceived consumption companionship, and offer theoretical and practical implications that stem from our findings.

Keywords: *collectivism; anthropomorphism; culture*

Track: Consumer Behaviour