

Anthropomorphic characteristics, empathy and interaction quality in the service relation
between consumers and AI devices

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Abstract

The implementation of AI devices in the service industry will bring undoubtedly increased profits and efficiency. However a key element for their success is the consumers' acceptance and trust. In three mediation models we prove that the psychological anthropomorphic characteristics of AI devices impact in a positive way the empathy perceived by consumers and the interaction quality in the consumer-AI relation. Empathy mediates the relation between anthropomorphic characteristics and interaction quality, while interaction quality mediates the relation between anthropomorphism and acceptance of AI. Empathy fully mediates the relation between psychological anthropomorphic characteristics and acceptance of AI devices. The results have important implications for the future design of AI devices in the service industry. In order to be easily accepted by the consumers, AI devices have to show care and interest towards the consumers' needs and empathy should be present in the consumers-AI interactions.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence; consumer-AI interaction; anthropomorphism*

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