

Who Takes the Wheel? Exploring Consumers' Preferences for Service Functioning-Drones

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Abstract

Understanding consumers' preferences for drone operation is crucial as drones driven by artificial intelligence (AI) continue to integrate into consumers' lives. Through two experimental studies, this research explores consumers' preferences (i.e., attitudes and usage intentions) towards human versus AI-operated drones in the context of delivery services. Study 1 found that participants preferred human (vs. AI) operated drones. Study 2 investigated whether product type (hedonic versus utilitarian) influenced consumers' preferences for drones operated by human versus AI. Regardless of the product type, consumers preferred human operated drones, and this effect is explained by greater perceptions of danger being attributed to autonomous drones. Mediation analysis reveals that consumers perceive human-operated drones to be less dangerous than AI-operated drones, which leads them to prefer human-operated (vs. AI-operated) drones.

Subject Areas: *Attitude, Consumer Behaviour*

Track: Consumer Behaviour