

# Touch by an untrustworthy virtual agent reduces compliance in a price negotiation

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Cite as:

Kolesnyk Dasha, Sallaberry Camille, Mader Angelika, van Erp Jan (2024), Touch by an untrustworthy virtual agent reduces compliance in a price negotiation. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 53rd, (119762)

Paper from the 53rd Annual EMAC Conference, Bucharest, Romania, May 28-31, 2024



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## **Abstract**

The recent rise in adoption of virtual reality (VR) hardware calls for studying how the insights from offline interaction with consumers translate into virtual environment. In particular, in VR sales and negotiations can be done by a virtual agent (VA). The goal of this study is to explore the effects of a social touch by a virtual agent (VA) in a price negotiation setting. In Experiment 1, participants negotiated prices with a virtual agent who either touched them or not. In Experiment 2, we manipulated the trustworthiness of the VA as well as the presence of social touch. The results revealed that the positive effect of social touch on compliance established in previous offline studies, may not hold, or even be reversed to negative, if the Virtual Agent is perceived as untrustworthy. This study broadens our understanding of VR marketing and calls for further exploration of the design requirements for effective marketing in VR.

**Subject Areas:** *Consumer Behaviour, Electronic Commerce and Internet Marketing, Information Systems*

**Track:** Digital Marketing & Social Media