

# Unexpected Consequences of Cobotic Service Teams: How Human Service Providers' Collaboration with Robots Fosters Customer Compliance

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## **Abstract:**

As artificial intelligence technologies, including service robots, become increasingly integrated into the service industry, the dynamics of human-robot collaboration warrant deeper exploration. While previous research has focused on consumer-robot interactions, this study shifts attention to how consumers perceive human employees working alongside robots. We propose that human service providers are perceived as having greater relative power when collaborating with robots rather than other humans, due to the lay belief that robots lack flexibility. Drawing on leadership literature linking flexibility to power, we hypothesize that this heightened power perception enhances customer compliance with the service provider's requests. The results of two scenario-based experiments provided empirical evidence that human-robot service teams increase customer compliance through sequential effects of enhanced flexibility and power perceptions. This research enriches the literature on human-robot collaboration and bridges insights from leadership and service management.

*Keywords: human-robot collaboration, power, service team*

*Track: Service Marketing & Service Innovation*