Roles by robot vs. human in the restaurant sector: Perspective of restaurant brand building

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Abstract

Although scholars have conducted studies to understand service robots in the hospitality sector, it is still unclear whether robots and human employees would influence customers' restaurant brand relationship-building experience. Based on the theoretical foundation of role theory and stereotypes, this study conducted two online experiments to test the effect of roles (e.g., chef, host and server) on restaurant brand warmth and competence. Additionally, this study explored the moderator of robot stereotype during the main effect of roles and restaurant brand building. Both experiments confirmed that human chef and server roles have significantly higher brand warmth than robot chef and server roles. Robot stereptype modertes certain parths for the main effect of roles and restaurant brand building. This study contributes new theoretical insights on robot roles in branding and provides managers with implications for adopting robots.

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