

Using Dark Patterns in Online Service Chatbots

Jan-Lukas Selter
University of Siegen
Julian Schmitz
University of Siegen
Hanna Schramm-Klein
University of Siegen

Cite as:

Selter Jan-Lukas, Schmitz Julian, Schramm-Klein Hanna (2025), Using Dark Patterns in Online Service Chatbots. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 54th, (126223)

Paper from the 54th Annual EMAC Conference, Madrid, Spain, May 25-30, 2025



Using Dark Patterns in Online Service Chatbots

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine three different dark patterns in the context of a live chat service interaction. The three dark patterns are social proof, pricing, and shortage. In addition, the difference between a human chat partner and an AI-based chatbot will be examined. The goal is to investigate trust and purchase intention in more detail. Results show that human chat partners in a service interaction lead to higher trust and higher purchase intention than AI-based chatbots. Dark pattern pricing was able to achieve the highest trust and purchase intention. Dark patterns may be an appropriate way for businesses to persuade consumers to purchase and make online commerce more efficient. However, care must be taken to ensure that dark patterns are not perceived as manipulative. While AI-based chatbots are already an effective alternative to live human chat, there is still an advantage of human chat interactions.

Keywords: dark patterns, chatbots, online retailing

Track: Retailing & Omni-Channel Management