

An Experimental Study: How Does Empathetic AI Impact Human Control?

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An Experimental Study: How Does Empathetic AI Impact Human Control?

Abstract:

The proliferation of generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies has transformed various fields, including digital marketing. Since AI is becoming increasingly agentic and emotionally adept, AI capabilities start to influence human in turn. As humans, many of us do not want to lose control to AI. In this study, drawing on multiple literature, including mind perception theory, perceived control theory, human-computer interaction literature, and customer experience literature, we aim to investigate the impact of empathy and agency (high vs. low) capabilities of AI agent on human's control, human-AI relationship (AI closeness), and further customer experiences' outcomes, such as satisfaction and purchase behavior. The study deploys an experimental design with 410 participants. The results show that AI empathy significantly influence human's control in decision-making process assisted by AI, and brand outcomes for the company. Our study also offers managerial implications for companies which are enthusiastic about frontline AI deployment to serve customers.

Keywords: generative AI, human control, human-AI interaction

Track: digital marketing & social media