

Transferring Creativity from Employee to Anthropomorphized Artificial Agent in a Design Service Team

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Abstract

Even as artificial agents (AAs) are becoming more prevalent in service encounters, customers generally express unfavorable views of AAs' creativity, which may lead to negative service evaluations. Drawing on anthropomorphism and group stereotyping literature, we propose how to transfer creativity from human employees to AAs in dyadic service teams and document its boundary conditions. Four studies show that an anthropomorphized (vs. nonanthropomorphized) AA paired with a creative employee boosts service evaluations. Anthropomorphism induces higher perceived entitativity of the employee-AA dyad, so customers transfer the creativity exhibited by the employee to the AA and perceive the AA as more creative. This effect is attenuated when the temporal stability of the dyad is low, or customers have utilitarian consumption goals. These results contribute novel insights about AAs in service teams, with practical implications.

Keywords: *Service, creativity, anthropomorphism*