The Feeling Economy in Healthcare: Satisfaction with Conversational AI

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of Conversational AI on satisfaction in healthcare services. Drawing upon the Feeling Economy framework, we demonstrate that Conversational AI, as compared to human agents, negatively affects satisfaction primarily due to a perceived lack of empathy, particularly in scenarios involving physical health symptoms. Conversely, in mental health contexts, Conversational AI is preferred, indicating that its technological attributes provide unique benefits to consumers that extend beyond empathy. Across three experimental studies, the findings highlight a nuanced role of AI in healthcare: while it may negatively impact certain service encounters, it also offers enhancements in others, depending on the specific health issues involved. This research offers significant insights for healthcare providers and AI developers on optimizing AI deployment in healthcare settings.

Subject Areas: *Consumer Behavior;Consumer Services;Customer Satisfaction and Delight;Services Marketing*