



Working Paper

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Effect of Socio – Behavioural Design of Conversational Agents on Customer Responses: A Review

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to review the literature examining the effect of socio-behavioural design of conversational agents on customer responses. Research modelling effect of socio behavioural design on customer responses were synthesised based on their use in different stages in the consumption cycle and in different industry contexts. The effects of anthropomorphic design categorised as (a) communication design cues and (b) agent related design cues were examined on consumer responses classified into four categories, namely-cognitive, affective, socio/relational and behavioural. The design cues had mixed effects on customer responses in different industry contexts and in different use contexts. For instance, anthropomorphic design cues of CA have positive influence on customer responses across industries (ecommerce, movie & entertainment, online gaming) whereas it negatively affect customer responses in banking & finance and e-healthcare industry in purchase/consumption stage, particularly. Anthropomorphic design of CA evoke positive customer responses across various use contexts such (product recommendation, customer assistant, pedagogical agent, advertising), however, leads to negative customer responses while using CA as data collection tool, in pre purchase stage, specifically. We also discussed key mediators and moderators used in modelling effect of CA and its design on customer responses across industries to provide an explanation of varying customer responses to CA design. The potential of CA to increase business and customer value calls for further research in different use and industry contexts to explore customer evaluation mechanisms in the adoption of CA. This emerging area, early stage synthesis of extant research generates insights for future research. (*JEL Code: M*)

Keywords: conversational agent, customer responses, use context, industry context, literature review

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