

"A man is
great by
deeds, not by
birth"
-Chanakya

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Managing Fear of AI among frontline hotel employees: How negative rumination, learning adaptability, organizational agility, and psychological capital shape service delivery

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Managing Fear of AI among frontline hotel employees: How negative rumination, learning adaptability, organizational agility, and psychological capital shape service delivery

Abstract:

AI is moving from back-of-house analytics into guest-facing roles in luxury hotels, reshaping how work is done and how guests are served. In this environment, frontline employees' fear of AI can undermine service delivery, putting guest experience and brand standards at risk. This study examines how that fear translates into weaker delivery and when the link can be softened. Guided by conservation-of-resources theory, we argue that fear of AI lowers service delivery partly because it heightens negative rumination, which drains attentional and emotional resources needed for high-quality service. Two personal resources reshape this pathway. Psychological capital reduces the extent to which fear precipitates rumination, and learning adaptability reduces the extent to which rumination harms delivery. Together, these resources progressively weaken the overall indirect effect. We also show that organisational agility magnifies the protective role of learning adaptability, making the pathway least harmful when both learning adaptability and agility are high. Using data from frontline employees in luxury five-star hotels across multiple cities, the results align with this model: fear relates negatively to service delivery, rumination explains part of the association, psychological capital and learning adaptability each buffer their respective stages, their joint presence markedly reduces the full pathway, and organisational agility strengthens the buffering at the second stage. The study isolates a malleable psychological mechanism through which tech-related fear impairs service, identifies dual, trainable resources that neutralise this risk, and demonstrates how organisational agility amplifies employee capabilities, offering actionable levers for sustaining service excellence in AI-intensive settings.



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