Extended abstract

CAN CUSTOMER-AI TIES STIMULATE CONSUMER WELL-BEING?

Sandra Maria Correia Loureiro[a*], João Guerreiro[b]

[a]*Iscte-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa and Business research unit (BRU),* *sandramloureiro@netcabo.pt*
[b]*Iscte-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa and Business research unit (BRU),* *joao.guerreiro@iscte-iul.pt*

*For further information, please contact Sandra Maria Correia Loureiro, Full Professor, Iscte-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa and Business research unit (BRU-IUL) (sandramloureiro@netcabo.pt)

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Description: This research, composed of two studies (n_1= 216 and n_2=122), attempts to contribute to understanding how the interaction between AI and consumers can trigger the perception of consumer well-being.

Research Question

How the interaction between AI and consumers can trigger the perception of consumer well-being?

Method and Data

The first study (n_1= 216) was prepared to analyze H1(Customer-AI interaction influences intimacy) and H2(Attached mediates the relationship between customer-AI interaction and intimacy) and used data from citizens of the United States (USA) through CloudResearch collected in September 2023. The questionnaire was pilot tested with 8 consumers to ensure understanding and no problems with the wording were found. The second study uses a similar

process as employed in study 1, but the data were collected through Prolific during December 2023. The sample (n=122), also composed of USA citizens, was composed mainly of adults between 35 to 44 years old (43.1%), followed by adults within the age range of 25 to 34 years old (34.0%).

Summary of Finding

Findings reveal that the interaction between AI and consumers in flagship stores with AI technology can create intimate relationships, enhanced by the emotional attachment developed. Intimacy plays a relevant role in the well-being perception of consumers. Good skills of responsiveness of the AI are significant in strengthening the relationship between AI-consumer relationship and intimacy.

The way customers interact with AI can have a positive effect on their well-being and fostering intimacy plays an important role in this process. The ability of the AI to respond promptly can strengthen the relationship between the AI and the customer, resulting in increased intimacy, similar to that of close relationships.

Key Contributions

This research adds to the academic marketing discipline by extending the close relationship and attachments theories to the context of the human-artificial intelligence (AI) relationship and demonstrating (1) the relevance of developing an attachment towards AI enhancing intimacy between the two partners (consumer and AI), (2) the role of intimacy in creating a perception of well-being and (3) the importance of responsiveness (of the AI) to reinforce the relationship and create intimacy.

For Flagship stores' brand managers and societal stakeholders, this research shows that a utilitarian and emotionally fulfilled relationship between AI and consumers is key to developing intimacy and consequently creating a feeling of well-being among consumers. AI algorithms

can be developed and can evolve to understand specific consumer individual needs and create a sense of personal connection. They can also evolve to be more ready to recognize and respond to emotional cues and be more accurate in recommending products/services before being requested by consumers. This creates a sense of anticipation and consumer well-being. It is also important to encourage conversations and responsiveness to reduce loneliness and improve well-being. AI's ability to understand, adapt, and personalize consumer interactions contributes to creating intimacy and promoting well-being for consumers. Yet, AI algorithms must also be prepared to respect consumer privacy and consent by balancing personalization with privacy to ensure positive relationships without compromising well-being.