

Title: Understanding Gen Z shoppers' interaction with customer-service robots: a cognitive-affective-normative perspective

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Abstract: Purpose Large supermarket chains are adopting customer-service robots to improve service delivery in physical stores. Successful deployment of these robots depends on shoppers' willingness to interact with them, requiring an understanding of influencing factors. This study, grounded in the Cognitive-Affective-Normative (CAN) theory, seeks to systematically explore the factors influencing Gen Z shoppers' willingness to interact with customer-service robots.

Design/methodology/approach A hybrid approach combining Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and Necessary Condition Analysis (NCA) was employed to analyze survey data collected from 945 Gen Zs in the Czech Republic.

Findings The results from SEM highlight significant cognitive, normative, and affective factors that influence the intention of Gen Z shoppers to interact with a customer-service robot. Specifically, cognitive factors such as effort and performance expectancy, along with normative factors like subjective norms, emerged as critical determinants. Furthermore, affective factors such as technology anxiety and positive emotions significantly influence users' readiness to use customer-service robots for service requests. The study also underscores that positive emotions, effort expectancy, performance expectancy, and subjective norms are vital prerequisites for interacting with customer-service robots.

Originality/value The originality of this work lies in its two significant contributions to the burgeoning field of SRs in retail literature. First, it extends the CAN theory to the context of SRs among Gen Z shoppers in Czechia, thereby enriching the existing literature on SRs in retail. Second, by employing a hybrid analytical approach, our research offers both empirical and methodological advancements, providing rigorous insights crucial for enhancing the understanding of the pivotal factors influencing shoppers' interactions with SRs in physical store environments.

Keywords: Cognitive-affective-normative theory, Generation Z, NCA, SEM, Service requests, Service robots

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