

Human-AI Collaboration in Beauty Customer Services: The Role of Job Crafting in Artificial Intelligence Acceptance and Work Efficacy Perceptions

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Abstract

The rapid development of smart technology, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics and algorithms (STARA) has raised academic interest and public concern about service jobs being replaced by these technologies. In contrast, recent studies have begun to show the potential value of human-AI collaboration in improving business outcomes in retail services. Building on these competing arguments, we argue that human resource (HR) management research should focus on the “human digital mindset” of whether and how frontline service employees accept and integrate such technologies in their work mentality and the subsequent impact on self-efficacies. Drawing on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), this study proposes that employees’ perception of work efficacy improves through job crafting, when they accept that AI affords them the opportunity to proactively redefine their customer service behaviors. To test this model, path analysis using survey data from 208 frontline beauty service employees in China shows that job crafting mediates the positive relationship between AI acceptance and work efficacy perception. This finding offers an early critical insight into the role of AI technology acceptance in retail employees’ self-motivational processes. This knowledge informs HR practitioners in service industries about the need to foster frontline employee acceptance of STARA technologies acquired by their organizations, as doing so is highly likely to contribute to the latter’s intrinsic motivation and work performance. Finally, this study extends TAM by providing empirical evidence of human-AI collaboration in the Chinese retail service contexts, in addition to positing the human experience as the foundation in this digital era.

Keywords: China; Digital Mindset; Human Resource; STARA; Technology Acceptance Model