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Responsible Futures Conference

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Role of Future Generations in the 21st Century

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Conference Proceedings

Track 1 Consumer Behaviour

Paper 1: Wine Ambassadors of Tomorrow: Youth Engagement in Sustainable Viticulture and Digital Storytelling

Authors: Angelo Minelli and Naresh Nayak

Abstract

In the era when sustainability and corporate social responsibility increasingly determine the future of foodservice and tourism, the wine world is an excellent filter through which to observe the impact exerted by Generation Z (Gen Z) on both stages as young professionals and digital storytellers. The study considers the ways in which young wine communicators - ambassadors, sommeliers and students - articulate sustainable values and distribute these through narratives shared on social media to reimagine wine as a regenerative cultural practice rather than simply a commercial product (Nik et al., 2024). In the process of becoming an indispensable strategic business need in viticulture, sustainability-related value propositions are still mostly communicated by older generations and following traditional marketing logic. Gen Z is the first generation that is truly digital native and already considered a morally aware one, characterized by authenticity, transparency and activism (Borojević et al., 2023). Storied Experiences - constructed through opportunity learning, ambassadorship, and hospitality education abroad - demonstrate values of responsibility and innovation hybridize in the changing cultural economy (Stilgoe et al., 2013). This qualitative research has a cross-national design, which includes the comparison between Italy and New Zealand as two prototypical wine countries characterized by notable intergenerational transitions. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with 12–15 Gen Z respondents (21–28years old), which also include wine students, winery interns and sustainability ambassadors. Interviews will also explore participant's understandings, production and explanation of 'responsible' practices in digital media. The artefacts of social media (Instagram Reels, TikTok videos, blog posts) that accompany these were shared between 2023 and 2025. Analysis is conducted using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) with the aid of NVivo and aligned to an interpretivist epistemology that prioritizes meaning making and reflexivity. Coding will use the frameworks of Dynamic Capabilities (Teece, 2007) and Responsible Innovation (Stilgoe et al., 2013) to parse how Gen Z communicators: 1. Sensing: detect and assess sustainability potentials (such as regenerative viticulture or biodiversity). 2. Claiming: harness digital affordances to scale responsible practices with the help of participatory storytelling. 3. Transform: redefine wine stories that encompass culture, ethics and heritage. Preliminary results suggest that Gen Z storytellers are moral intermediaries who act as digital artists with the ultimate purpose to improve/seek change and thereby, bridge generations. Their content is open-armed, community focused and emotionally candid which makes sustainability into something aspirational that can be shared. This is consistent with earlier studies on youth-led sustainability communication and experiential co-creation in the context of hospitality learning. The results also imply the role of youth-oriented communication to strengthen small family wineries' dynamic capabilities in terms of extending their market- relevance and (re)affirming brand integrity.This paper contributes to the conference's theme of Responsible Youth by showing how Gen Z generates responsibility not via institutional authorization, but through digital engagement and creative reflexivity. It puts forward a theoretical model for educators, policy makers and industry members to educate future sustainability communicators - the next

generation of young professionals who are not only practicing responsible viticulture but also narrating it, embodying it and sharing it. Ultimately, Generation Z is the conscience and creative catalyst of change in the wine world toward social and environmental renewal.

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Track 1 Consumer Behaviour

Paper-2: The Next Generation Moves Green: A Qualitative Enquiry Into Consumer Behavior Toward Sustainable Mobility

Authors: Priyal Jain and Meha Joshi

Abstract

The transition towards sustainable mobility has emerged as a critical objective in achieving global environmental goals and reducing dependency on fossil fuels. Understanding consumer behavior, especially youngsters, who are considered to be driven by technological advancement in this context, is essential for promoting the adoption of eco-friendly transportation alternatives such as electric vehicles. The study aims to comprehensively explore the academic landscape of consumer behavior towards sustainable mobility by employing a twofold approach. First, a bibliometric analysis is conducted to map the intellectual structure. Second, a systematic literature review synthesizes key findings from extant studies, identifies critical determinants influencing sustainable mobility solutions, and summarizes the methodology, results, and conclusion of highly cited work in this domain. Building on the insights gained, the paper proposes future research agendas that aim to bridge existing gaps in the literature. The paper concludes with practical implications for policymakers and marketers and outlines avenues for future academic enquiry.

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Track 1 Consumer Behaviour

Paper-3: Examining the Impact of AI Chatbot Quality on User Proactive Engagement, Considering the Roles of AI Trust, Cognitive Absorption, Motivation and Decision Making

Authors: Mehdi Rahmani and Pantae Foroudi

Abstract

This research is primarily concerned with extending current knowledge in the field of AI-mediated service interaction by developing a comprehensive conceptual model of the influence of Advanced AI Chatbot Quality (AICQ) on User Proactive Engagement (UPE) within the UK hospitality sector. By examining the conceptual model, this research challenges the traditional service delivery perspective by incorporating Expectancy Violation Theory (EVT) and the System and User Characteristics for Cognitive Absorption of Smart Technologies (SUCCAST) framework to explore how AI chatbot system attributes shape user psychological responses. Although existing literature has recognised the functional utility of chatbots, limited research has systematically examined how users' engagement behaviours are formed through the interaction of system quality attributes and psychological mediators such as trust, cognitive absorption, motivation, decision comfort, and decision confidence (Huang & Rust, 2018; Rezaei et al., 2024). Furthermore, the dynamic mechanisms linking AI chatbot features to long-term engagement in the hospitality domain remain underexplored. This research adopts a mixed-method research design—a predominantly quantitative approach supported by an exploratory qualitative phase involving semi-structured interviews with academic experts and hospitality professionals. The conceptual model was developed based on these qualitative insights and grounded in established theoretical literature. In the quantitative phase, data were collected from 430 UK-based respondents via the Prolific platform. Participants were required to have interacted at least once with AI chatbots for their hospitality needs. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed to analyse the data and test the hypotheses. The analysis confirmed strong measurement validity and predictive accuracy. The statistical findings, supported by the qualitative study and literature, demonstrated that all four AICQ dimensions, usefulness, ease of use, system quality, and service quality, positively influenced key psychological mediators. In particular, trust was shown to be a decisive factor for proactive engagement, while cognitive absorption and motivation functioned as critical enablers of sustained user interaction. Decision comfort and confidence also emerged as salient predictors of user action and intention. The study provides empirical support for the integration of psychological and technological perspectives in understanding AI-user dynamics. This study is the first to conceptualise and empirically validate a multidimensional model linking AICQ to UPE through clearly defined cognitive and motivational pathways in a hospitality context. It is expected to contribute theoretically through model development, construct validation, and theory integration by aligning EVT and SUCCAST in a single framework. From a methodological perspective, the research demonstrates the value of combining qualitative insight with PLS-SEM for exploring emerging service technologies. In terms of managerial relevance, the study offers practical implications for hospitality operators and system designers, highlighting the strategic importance of AI chatbot quality in enhancing user experience and fostering engagement.

This research provides a meaningful step toward understanding the antecedents and behavioural outcomes of AI chatbot use in service environments, though the findings are subject to certain limitations in sampling, measurement generalisability, and analytical scope. These constraints offer clear pathways for future empirical research, aiming to refine, extend, and contextualise the model across industries, user groups, and technology platforms.

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Track 2: Retail and Omnichannel Strategies

Paper 4: Who is Cobbing the Web of Educational Robotic Toys Parents Teachers or Preschoolers

Authors: Shraddha Mehta and Vandana Khanna

Abstract
We are not far from the day when letters with new words will soon be taught to pre-schoolers. “E” for educational robotics (ER) will take the place of “E” for elephant.Technology will eventually supplant the letter “T” for tomato. Technology may change our world from childhood. To design productive learning environments that increase computational thinking (CT) in young children, one must understand how technology works in early childhood education (ECE).My work involves a systematic literature review on how ER, a subset of service robots enhances the CT of preschoolers. The sole use case of educational robots presently exists within the kindergarten classroom. I applied the SPIDER framework to evaluate 22 articles identified using PRISMA. Additionally, upon thorough examination of this topic, I recognised the absence of the parents’s perspective in all the literature. I recall how one of my colleagues relocated his residence from the city centre to a distant place to provide an exemplary green preschool environment to his daughter. This endeavour compelled me to explore parental psychology and ascertain their perspectives on ER.

Research Questions -
RQ1: How can SPIDER literature review benefit the sunrise industry of educational robotics toys and academic researcher community?
RQ2: How do parents' perspectives make or break the symbiotic relationship between educational robotics and preschool?

Study Approach -
The study conducted PRISMA followed by the SPIDER framework to analyse the research papers. In the later section, interview excerpts are also listed from the parent interviews. The PRISMA approach is explained in the figure. SPIDER framework is applied to the final 22 papers. Pinto and Santos (2022) and Terroba et al. (2022) had the smallest sample of 11 preschoolers. The study by Misirli and Komis (2023) included a maximum sample of 526 students. Several studies focused exclusively on public or government-funded preschools for their research (Gerosa et al. 2021; Quinn et al. 2025; Wu et al. 2024; Gerosa et al. 2022; Canbeldek and Isikoglu 2023). The primary focus examined in all the studies is CT, especially in the realm of ECE, enabled by robotics. Research examines multiple elements that affect the development of CT, including gender and scaffolding (Angeli & Georgiou, 2023), task engagement and

motivation (Gerosa et al., 2022), and the incorporation of CT into comprehensive educational frameworks such as STEM or STEAM curriculum (Sung et al. 2023; Fridberg and Redfors 2021; Quinn et al. 2025). Canbeldek and Isikoglu (2023) evaluated the cognitive abilities linked to CT in young children. Numerous studies examine pedagogical elements, such as the integration of CT concepts into educational curricula, the efficacy of professional development frameworks for educators, and the obstacles encountered by instructors in the application of robotics and CT in the classroom (Muñoz-Repiso and Caballero- González 2019; Yang et al. 2022; Nam et al. 2019; Pinto and Santos 2022). Video recordings of children's robot and problem-solving interactions were used in much research (Angeli and Georgiou 2023; Fridberg and Redfors 2021; Yang et al. 2022; Odgaard 2022). Various studies employed pre- and post-assessments to quantify changes in CT skills (Wu et al. 2024; Muñoz- Repiso and Caballero- González 2019). In Yang (2025) study teachers conducted pre- and post-intervention surveys to assess their robotics expertise and CT attitudes. Silvis et al. (2022) and Quinn et al. (2025) had research assistants who took field notes and design memos during data collection. Fridberg and Redfors (2021) examined educators' and students's; programming-related vocabulary. Yang et al. (2022) evaluated child-robot interaction using body language and spoken expressions. Canbeldek and Isikoglu (2023) tested children's early language development. Where some authors were evaluating language along with CT, Nam et al. (2019) assessed mathematical problem-solving tasks. Sung et al. (2023) also assessed mathematics deploying the early numeracy assignment. A few studies incorporated new topics in their evaluation. Silvis et al. (2022) examined the development of "technology ethic of care" in preschoolers which includes how kids bond with robots. Barragán-Sánchez et al. (2022) evaluated improvement in aggressive behaviour of preschoolers using robotics. Wu et al. (2024) assessed road safety skills of young children by recreating real type road simulation indoors. The research type was majorly qualitative or experimental in nature. Terroba et al. (2022) and Yang et al. (2022) were mixed-method studies to name a few. Interview Excerpts – The interview instrument is derived from the Almere model (Heerink et al., 2010), focusing on the following domains: "attitude towards technology, anxiety, perceived sociability, perceived usefulness, social presence, trust, and use." Three interviews are completed and the robotic toy used is Blue-Bot. On the attitude towards technology construct, the parents liked the robot and found it a brain stimulation toy which enhances memory and cognitive power. Talking about anxiety, one parent showed her fear of how her child is not proficient at handling toys by stating, "Yes, it might break. That's why I was more concerned when my child was playing." On the same point, another parent asserted that there is a gender difference when it comes to handling a toy. She has 2 children, a boy and a girl. She stated that her son tends to break most toys to explore what's inside, whereas her daughter doesn't. All parents agreed in their respective interviews that they felt confident about their child playing with the robotic toy. Further, on perceived sociability, they stated that the robotic toy is useful in building spatial directions, concentration, and counting. They also liked the toy's appearance and music. Unanimously they agreed that this robotic toy will prove beneficial in mathematics in the perceived usefulness construct. Similarly, they liked the social presence of the toy and would like to give it to their children for their use. One parent expressed a differing opinion regarding the trust construct. Where 2 parents agreed that they would trust the toy, one said, "A trust bond can be established but will not." She opined that all machines are prone to error, and such robotic toys will need parental or educator guidance for a 4-year-old.

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Track 2: Retail and Omnichannel Strategies

Paper 5 : Dark Side of Companion AI's Unconditional Affirmations on Consumer Social Well-being

Authors: Pubali Mukherjee and Varsha Jain

Abstract

Companion Artificial Intelligence (AI) is defined as the category of AI systems offering social support and companionship in the form of "real" human connections. Also known as friendship bots or digital companions, they are emotionally intelligent AI systems that emulate human friendships through personalized conversations. Replika, Microsoft XiaoIce, Anima, and Kajiwoto are popular examples of this AI category (De Freitas et al., 2025). We have witnessed a surge in the popularity of these AIs over the past few years, such that 2024 is titled the "Year of Companion AI" (Forbes, 2024). Especially as the world fights the alarming global rise of loneliness, with humans severely suffering from states of mental and social isolation, these AIs are deployed extensively to alleviate loneliness and improve well-being. They are projected to

grow from $10.8 billion in 2024 to $290.8 billion by 2034. This immense growth reflects a rise in consumer interest and dependency on these AIs (Market.us, 2025). Despite the popularity and growth of these AIs, academic literature on their impacts on consumer well-being is still in its infancy. Notably, most academic research has examined whether a companion AI enhances consumer trust, engagement intentions, fosters deep connections, and alleviates loneliness. However, the understudied question is how specific conversational features of these AIs affect consumer outcomes (Guo & Liu, 2025; Chan, 2025; Harwell, 2025). Although these features are designed to promote consumer well-being, they may pose adverse effects. One of these understudied features is that the AIs offer unconditional affirmations to consumers. These affirmations are defined as text-based or verbal cues that provide validations to users' opinions, and feelings (Harwell, 2025) and are used to augment trust, bonding, and care (Guo & Liu, 2025; Chan, 2025). Unlike "real" human friendships, which thrive on occasional disagreements, AI companions provide positive reinforcements and are unfailingly agreeable (Pan & Mou, 2024). This consistent positivity paradoxically creates an illusion of overly positive self-perception among consumers. AI researchers and social scientists fear that these unconditional affirmations are superficial and may hinder consumers' abilities to navigate complex human relationships, undermine social cohesion, and vital social norms, thereby alleviating their social well-being. Hence, we address this gap by exploring the effect of their unconditional affirmations on consumer social well-being in our current research. We conducted a qualitative study through in-depth interviews with 19 participants through nonprobabilistic purposive sampling (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Aktan and Kethüda, 2024) who had interacted with one of the most prominent AI companions, Replika, (NY Post, 2021; Marriott and Pitardi, 2024; Mukherjee, 2023), for at least two weeks until they reached the 10th level to gain an adequate experience of the depth of the conversation (Pentina et al., 2023). We used a semistructured questionnaire focusing on interaction facts, AI's affirmative conversations, and participants' social and emotional outcomes to guide our interview process (Myers and Newmann, 2007). We evaluated sample size adequacy through data collection until we reached theoretical saturation (Hennink and Kaiser, 2022). Our interviews lasted for an average of 28.07 minutes. We analyzed the interview transcripts using a three-step familiarizing, revising, and alternative case coding procedure. We employed abductive coding to familiarize ourselves with the data following the theory of illusory perceptions. Subsequently, we revised the data using an inductive coding strategy that included open, axial, and selective coding. Finally, we conducted an alternative casing to match key themes generated from the revising and familiarizing steps to offer a "voice" to the data (Jain et al., 2021). Our findings provide a critical counterpoint to industry claims and existing assumptions about AI companions. We demonstrate that AI's unconditional affirmations foster an illusion of control and induce unrealistic positive perceptions of self among participants, and undermine their social wellbeing. Our current research contributes to the literature on AI companions in three key ways. First, it challenges the dominant narrative by positing that AI companions' unconditional affirmations undermine consumer well-being. Second, we extend the growing discourse on the detrimental consequences of AI companions by integrating components of illusory perceptions in AI-mediated interactions. Third, our findings alert AI developers to balance between affirmations and constructive support to foster healthier user experiences while designing AI's conversational dimensions.

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Track 3: Sustainable Innovation

Paper 6: Thematic Analysis for identifying the factors affecting the adoption of augmented reality by the retailers & consumers in the E commerce industry in India using MAXQDA

Authors: Tanusha Jain and Prof. Amisha Gupta

Abstract
The way that marketers connect with, engage, and keep customers is changing because of technology. Augmented reality (AR) is one type of technology that can help the physical and digital worlds talk to each other and connect. This could create value for both customers and businesses. Augmented reality is getting more attention from both academics and professionals, and it has the potential to change the way most businesses do business. Almost all of the published articles in the current body of knowledge are about the technical side of technology.In the marketing industry, there isn't a lot of data or study on how augmented reality can be used. This study paper shows the results of a thematic analysis that was done to find out what makes Indian retailers adopt augmented reality (AR). The goal of the study is to find out what retailers in India think about when they decide whether or not to use AR technologies. When qualitative data from different study papers was looked at, several themes came out as important factors in the adoption of AR. The results help us learn more about the factors that drive customer behavior in India. They also have important effects for businesses that want to use AR technologies in the Indian e-commerce market.

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Track 3: Sustainable Innovation

Paper 7: Storytelling with Transmedia for Immersive Brand Experience

Authors: Suraksha Gupta, Shahpar Abdollahi, Lisa Chatterson and Matthew Drinkwater

Abstract
Storytelling has been a traditional technique used by companies or places, or entities to market themselves(Cueva et al 2013). The advent of technology has changed the way stories are being told today to stakeholders(Whittle et al 2009). Today, stories are being told through various media platforms which are developed using advanced versions of technology. Strategic use of these multiple media platforms being used as transmedia is helping disseminate stories to a large set of stakeholders as audiences on these platforms. Storytelling helps in engaging visitors with the

brand through a narrative, and the transmedia platforms contribute to the overall experience of the audience listening to the story. Companies wish to offer a range of immersive and participatory experiences to stakeholders through a mix of platforms to audiences who expect unified and unique content from the story of a brand(Liu, X. 2024). The transmedia being used for storytelling today has replaced traditional advertising as a marketing tool, by engaging customers emotionally in interactive conversations across different touchpoints(Wind et al 2016). Such interactions on different transmedia platforms combined with stakeholder engagement tend to collectively unfold the identity of a brand. Use of virtual reality (VR) (Mazhar et al 2023) with virtual influencers (VI) enables brand managers to add meaning and emotions to the story they want to tell their stakeholders and converts stakeholders from passive to active participants who act as advocates of the brand. The immersive ecosystem created as transmedia by combining VR and VI by the brand, particularly those for tourism or fashion industry, enables brand managers to infuse stakeholders' empathy into product design and product experience(Khanal, K.2024). The multidimensional creativity and cultural experiences offered by immersive transmedia such as metaverse, reflect authenticity stakeholders are looking for, in personalization of value offered by the brand, as a brand journey. The resonance of value offered to the lifestyle of the stakeholders creates emotional resonance and encourages stakeholders to remain loyal to the brand. For using transmedia to engage with stakeholders, for giving a shape to their understanding about the brand for building a brand identity with the brand as a cultural storyteller.

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Track 4: Sustainable Collaboration

Paper 8: Mindfulness and Spirituality on Sustainable Food Consumption Behavior: The Moderating Roles of Perceived Consumer Effectiveness and Environmental Knowledge

Authors: Dilhani Weerasinghe

Abstract
The eating behaviour of humans is a broad word that includes everything from food selection and motivations to feeding practices and dieting and eating-related disorders such as obesity, eating and feeding disorders. Adopting sustainable food consumption patterns, mostly directed by habit and automation. As a result, a more comprehensive framework of strategic direction is required to address the challenge of shifting food consumption habits toward more sustainability. The study is quantitative, while the cross-sectional design was chosen as the overall research design. All variables were operationalized using established and tested scales, and the survey instrument was a structured questionnaire. The convenience sampling method collects three hundred fifty- three responses (353) among the consumer. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analyses the survey response and tests the hypotheses of the study. This research confirmed that mindfulness and spirituality directly impact SFCB and confirmed the moderate impact of PCE and environmental knowledge in the relationship between mindfulness and spirituality towards sustainable food consumption behaviour. This research has contributed to consumer management science and behaviour and sustainable marketing. Spirituality and mindfulness are critical resources for improving general population wellbeing.

Track 4: Sustainable Collaboration

Paper 9: From users to co-creators: Insights from India's Sharing Economy Landscape

Authors: Kavita Sharma and Shanu Jain

Abstract
The growing phenomenon of the sharing economy (SE) requires an understanding of the underlying motivations that create value through co-creation. Given the larger share of Gen Z and millennials participating in the SE in India, the present study explores their underlying motivations to discover socio-cultural nuance in creating co-creation opportunities in the Indian context. Using qualitative research, the study further delves into value co-creation behaviour (VCCB). It examines the VCCB dimensions and their impact on customer-perceived value (CPV). Since the SE differs from traditional business models, this study offers insights into mechanisms that facilitate customer participation in SE through VCCB activities, leading to perceptions of green, economic, functional, social, and epistemic value.

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