

## **IAS Online Workshop Report (via Zoom)**

**Workshop title:** Unanticipated and Unintended Consequences of Service Robots in the Frontline

**Date:** 15 September 2022 | 09:00 - 16:00

### **Overview**

The proliferation of touchpoints in today's digitally enriched customer journeys makes managing the customer experience an increasingly complex task. Companies now employ various artificial intelligence (AI) applications, such as Service Robots to improve customer experience. While academics have a growing interest in how AI and Service Robots are shaking up the business world, the impact of such technology on the overall customer service experience remains largely unexplored and unintended consequences of such interactions are still unclear.

This workshop focused on topics related to the unanticipated and unintended consequences of service robots in the frontline from a multitude of domains and will bring together researchers from various disciplines, including AI, marketing management, consumer psychology, and the digital economy. This workshop was organized by the guest editors of a special issue at the Journal of Business Research (ABS 3, IF 10.96). It provides an opportunity for academics interested in this special issue to present their research and receive feedback from the guest editors and audience.

The organizers reviewed and invited 24 research studies among 26 submissions (i.e., 1000 words abstract) to be presented across four panels. These submissions were reviewed by six organizers, including three academics at the University of Surrey and three well-known academics (i.e., highly cited researchers and associated editors at the top tier journals) from the University of Massachusetts (USA), National University of Singapore, and RWTH Aachen University. In each panel, six research studies were presented (i.e., 15 minutes presentation followed by 5 minutes Q&A). On average, over 30 academics attended each panel. Organizing panels across the morning and afternoon facilitate the participation of academics in different time zone, from universities across New Zealand and East Asia to academics in North America.

Morning panels:

Panel 1 - Service Robots acceptance and post-purchase behaviour

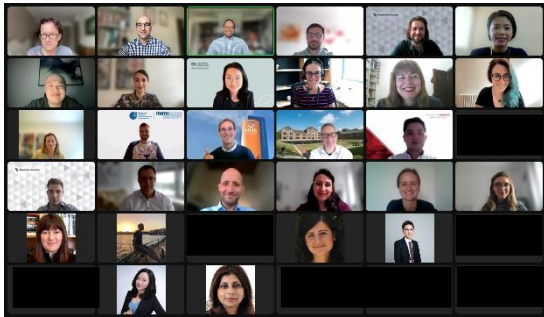
Panel 2 - Service Robots and the changing role of customers and service employees

Afternoon panels:

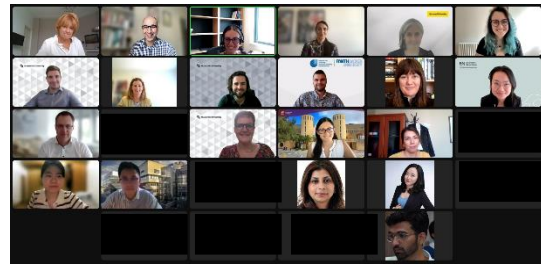
Panel 3 - Service Robots failures

Panel 4 - Service Robots, customer emotions and wellbeing

Morning panel:



Afternoon panel:



## Outcomes

The attendants found the workshop insightful and took the opportunity to network with other academics with similar research areas. It also helped them to meet guest editors, receive feedback on their research, and support them in improving their research for the special issue submission. Overall, the organizers were pleased with the quality of the presented research studies and interactions/networking among the attendants. All academics who presented their research were invited to submit their research to the special issue from 1 December 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Furthermore, the organizers used this workshop to expand their network with other academics and inform them about the achievements and ongoing research projects at the Surrey Business School. This workshop also helped to promote our school on social media and attract attention from prospective PhD applicants. We invited three prospective PhD applicants to attend this workshop to better understand our school research interests. Two of these PhD applicants received the scholarship and will start their PhD programme in January 2023.

### *Selected testimonies from attendants:*

“The fruitful discussions throughout the workshop day reconfirmed our enthusiasm to develop our study towards an impactful submission to your Special Issue in JBR.”

“This is the first time I’ve seen a workshop attached to a special issue, and I think it’s a great idea! We will continue to work on the manuscript and let you all know if we have any questions.”

“It was a very well-organized and focused event, which made it quite attractive for me. I found it very inspiring and already started looking forward to the next event you'd organize.”

## **Acknowledgements**

The organizers gratefully acknowledge the support of the Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS) at the University of Surrey. We especially appreciate the constant support of Mirela Domic and Vicki Blamey from IAS and their advice throughout the process. We also acknowledge the endorsement and promotion of our workshop by the Journal of Business Research, SERVSIG (AMA service research community), and ELMAR (AMA newsletter). Their support helped attract the attention of well-known researchers to submit their research and participate in this workshop.