

# Academic Weekly Digest

## School of Hospitality & Tourism Management



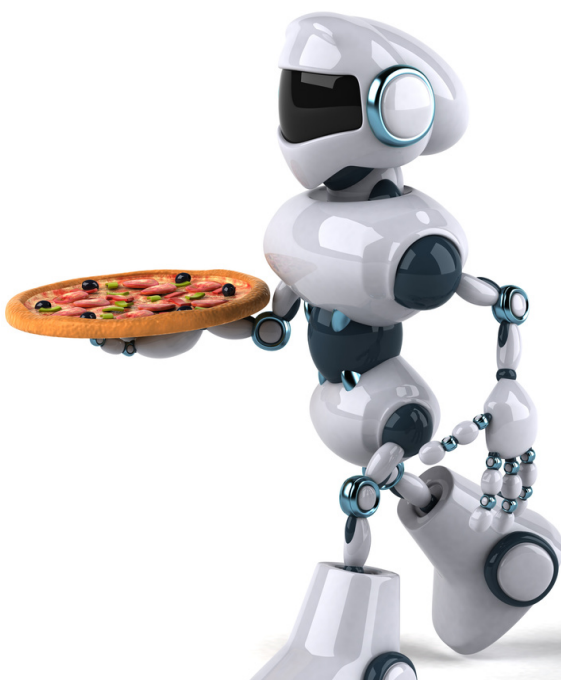
*Can service robot restaurant experience build customers technology readiness?*

The popularity of service robots in hospitality and tourism has attracted increasing research attention. Using an experimental research design, [Prof Emily Ma](#) examined how service robots used at different product/service levels (core, facilitating and augmented) may influence restaurant customers' educational and entertainment experiences, and how exposing under the latest service robots technologies could enhance customers' technology readiness.

# Building restaurant customers' technology readiness through robot-assisted experiences at multiple product levels

Prof Emily Ma

Fortune Business Insights (2021) projected that the market size of service robots will reach USD 41.49 billion by 2027, driven by technological advancements, competitions, rising labour costs, and the outbreak of the COVID-19. Despite the popularity of service robots research, limited studies have examined, from a product/service design perspective. Such a focus is critical—not only for an in-depth understanding of customer experiences but also for restaurant operators to make strategically sound and cost-effective decisions in service experience design and operations. Further service robots embody the mission of showcasing advanced knowledge integrated from the science, engineering, and technology sectors. Can customers gain new knowledge, increase their curiosity and embrace new technologies through their enjoyment of robotic service? This study employed a scenario-based  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  experimental research design, with 378 customers of mid-priced casual restaurants and 312 tourists of a mid-priced theme park restaurant.



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Findings suggest that using robots at all three product/service levels lead to a more positive educational experience but not entertainment experience. By providing memorable experience robotic restaurants can be important stages to showcase the latest robot technologies.

## Further Reading:

Ma, E., Yang, H., Wang, Y-C., & Song, H. (2022). Building restaurant customers' technology readiness through robot-assisted experiences at multiple product levels. *Tourism Management*.

Link: [bit.ly/3U1qvAj](https://bit.ly/3U1qvAj)