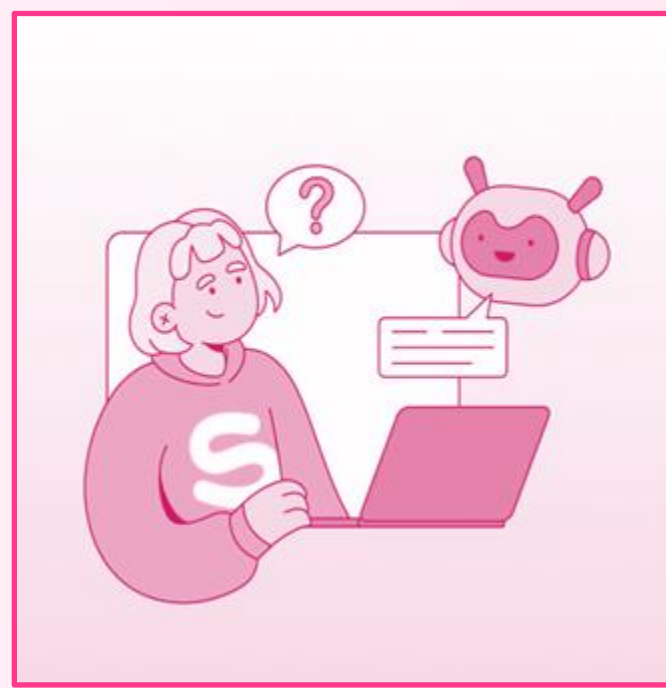


Introduction & Background

AI chatbots are increasingly used in consumer services, offering benefits for retailers. High-quality interactions during complaints can strengthen brand loyalty, making it vital to understand factors influencing technology acceptance. Most research has focused on satisfaction and communication quality, overlooking psychological factors. The role of anthropomorphism in AI communication is neglected, and few studies link consumer trust and purchase intentions through chatbot agreeableness. This study uniquely manipulates chatbot behaviour and will sample participants from individualist/ collectivist cultures, addressing the overreliance on Chinese samples and improving generalisability. It examines how chatbot agreeableness influences Trust, Warmth, Competence, Empathy, Anthropomorphism, and Continuity Intention (CI), with a culturally adaptive survey design featuring agreeable and non-agreeable conditions, and an in-depth literature review.



Construct	Description & Research Support	Hypothesis
Agreeableness	Agreeableness in chatbots enhances rapport, trust, customer intention, anthropomorphism, and service effectiveness when high, but reduces engagement and brand perception when low	H1: Agreeable chatbots will lead to more positive consumer evaluations than non-agreeable chatbots
Psychological Constructs	Agreeableness shapes behavioural intentions via trust, warmth, empathy, competence, anthropomorphism, and CI, with effects mediated by humanness and varying cross-culturally.	H2: The relationship between chatbot agreeableness and consumer behavioural intentions is mediated by psychological constructs.
Cultural Background	Cultural background moderates chatbot agreeableness, as norms, AI familiarity, and social framing influence trust, acceptance, and anthropomorphism.	H3: Cultural background will moderate the relationship between chatbot agreeableness and consumer response.
Trust	Trust, reflecting confidence in reliability and integrity, mediates the effect of agreeableness on purchase, satisfaction, and adoption.	H4: Agreeable chatbots will be rated as more trustworthy than non-agreeable ones
Warmth	Warmth, defined as friendliness and approachability, reinforces agreeableness, enhances trust, empathy, competence, and acceptance, and drives loyalty across cultures.	H5: Agreeable chatbots will be rated as warmer than non-agreeable ones
Competence	Competence, or perceived task effectiveness, strengthens trust when paired with warmth and reflects capability, knowledge, and skill.	H6: Agreeable chatbots will be rated as more competent than non-agreeable ones
Empathy	Empathy, the perceived ability to understand emotions, links to warmth and competence, boosting satisfaction and retention but faltering when unrealistic	H7: Agreeable chatbots will be rated as more empathetic than non-agreeable ones
Anthropomorphism	Anthropomorphism, the attribution of human traits to AI, enhances trust, empathy, warmth, competence, and acceptance, though excess risks the uncanny valley.	H8: Agreeable chatbots will be rated as more anthropomorphic than non-agreeable ones
Continuity Intention	CI, or willingness to continue and recommend use, is driven by agreeableness and trust, predicting adoption, retention, and satisfaction.	H9: Agreeable chatbots will result in higher willingness to interact again non-agreeable ones

Theoretical Framework

This study was underpinned by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), a validated framework for understanding consumer intention and acceptance. Widely used in related research, TAM predicts system adoption, drawing on socio-psychological theories of planned behaviour.

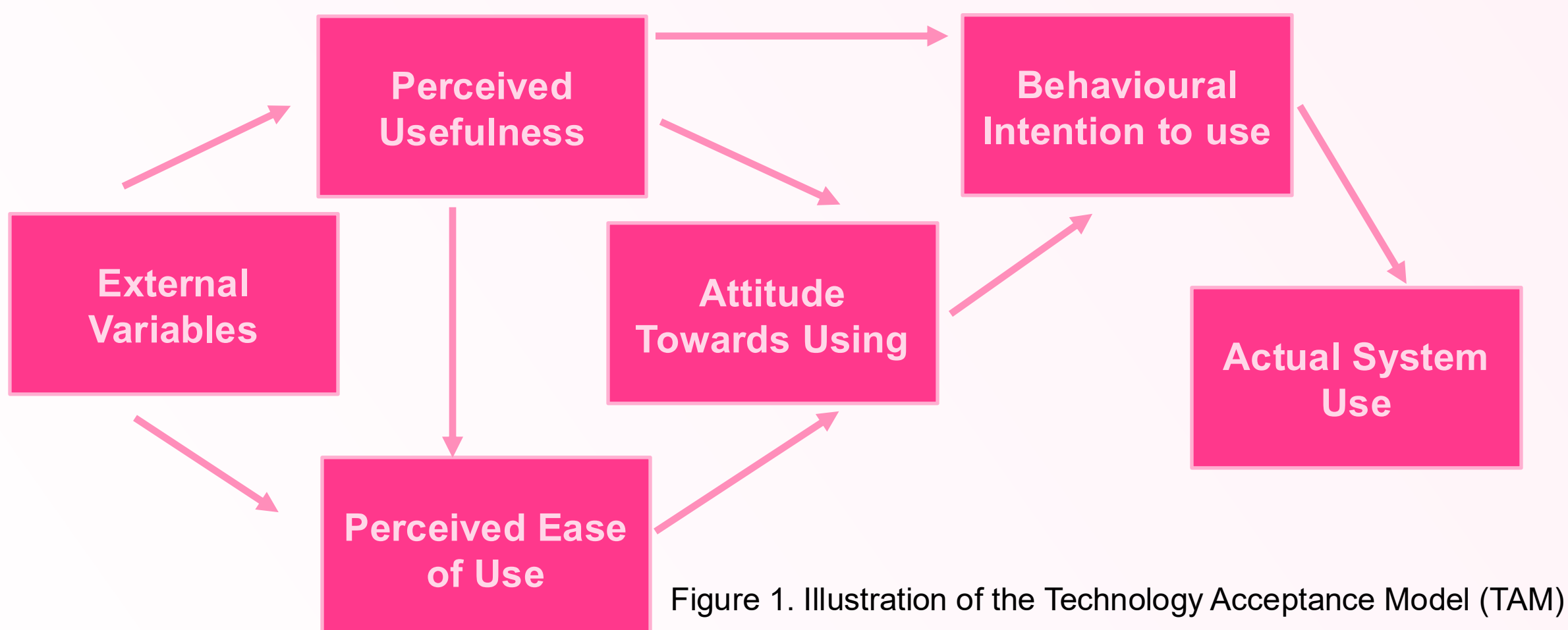
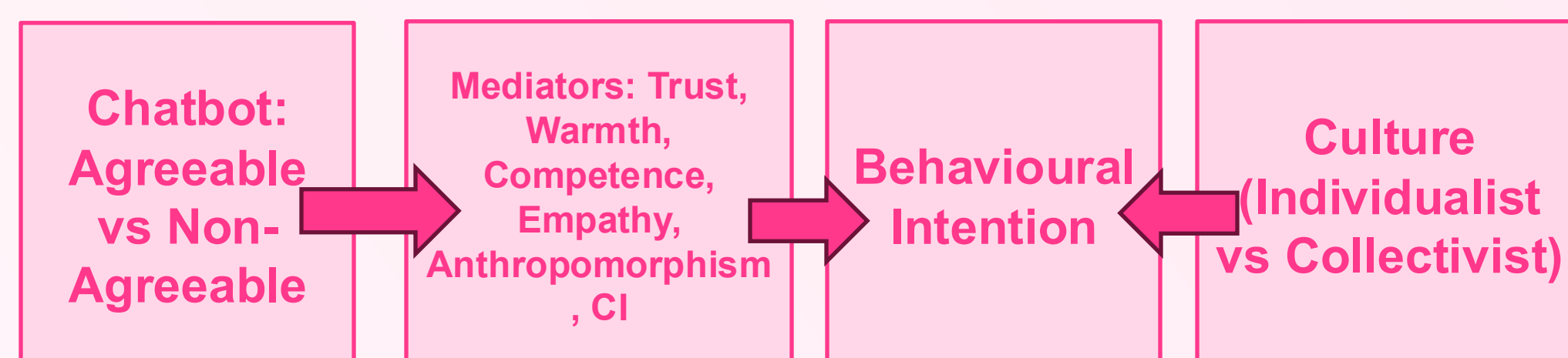


Figure 1. Illustration of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Methodology & Activities

The survey uses a two-condition, between-subjects design comparing chatbots, with random assignment ensuring validity. My literature review highlighted sparse AI research, so I drew on customer service studies and psychometric scales. Building on TAM, I developed 20 realistic service scenarios and a validated survey, guided by top CABS ranked journals.



Challenge	Adaption
Designing controlled customer service scenarios	Manipulated chatbot's tone to distinguish conditions, keeping scenarios and prompts identical to ensure consistency.
Participant disengagement	Attention checks and removal of repetitive items, e.g., 'Choose number 4.'
Cultural barriers	Questions screening participants for English proficiency, ensures clarity cross-culturally.
Ethical approval issues	When running the experiment was unfeasible, I developed a literature review and validated survey using established scales, providing a foundation for future testing.

Findings & Conclusions

The review showed that chatbot agreeableness enhances trust, empathy, and warmth, while negative traits risk harming brand attitudes. Anthropomorphism increases acceptance, to an extent. Cultural factors shape consumer responses, underscoring the need to situate chatbot design within broader psychological frameworks. Building on this, I developed a robust, culturally sensitive survey to test how agreeableness influences perceptions. This extends the TAM by integrating psychological traits and cultural dimensions, offering theoretical insight and practical guidance for adaptive, consumer-focused AI in retail and service contexts.