

Technically in Love: Individual Differences in Desire for Intimacy with Robots

by

Connor E. Leshner

B.Sc., Arizona State University, 2018

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in the Department of Psychology

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University of Victoria

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Supervisory Committee

Dr. D. Stephen Lindsay, Supervisor
Department of Psychology

Dr. Danu A. Stinson, Co-Supervisor
Department of Psychology

Dr. Rhonda A. Balzarini, External Examiner
Texas State University

Abstract

Engineers have begun creating robots that look and act human, with the aim of maximizing the likability of real-life robot partners for friendship and sex. In science fiction, robots often look and act human, and these robot characters usually develop interpersonal relationships with human characters. Researchers have begun creating robots like those depicted in science fiction, gauging the beliefs of participants to maximize the likability of robot partners in real life. This thesis explored how today's Canadian undergraduates view robots, and if they would want to have a robot as a friend, or to have sex with a robot. I measured participant Robosexuality, or participant interest in having sex with a robot, and Robofriendship, or participant interest in having a robot friend. I also measured how sociosexual orientation, social dominance orientation, hostile sexism, and gender relate to Robosexuality and Robofriendship, including a mediation that examined if men are more sexist than women, and if this sexism explain men's higher Robosexuality. Participants varied widely in their expressed interest in close relationships with robots, with almost flat distributions across both scales. Sociosexual orientation, social dominance orientation, gender, and hostile sexism all predicted Robosexuality, but only hostile sexism predicted Robofriendship. Results from the mediation showed that hostile sexism partially explained the relation between gender and Robosexuality. I conclude by discussing the limitations and future directions for this research.