

## Genuine Empathy or Simulated Understanding: Comparing Human and Gen-AI in Organizational Decision-Making Contexts

Jimmy Jing

Cate School, Carpinteria, California

Juhui Geng

Antai College of Economics and Management, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai, China

### Abstract:

This paper explores the differences in empathic reactions between generative artificial intelligence (Gen-AI) and humans, along with their impact on organizational management decisions, through a scenario-based experiment. By having both human and Gen-AI participants engage in role-playing, the study finds that although both AI and humans can demonstrate cognitive empathy, only humans can exhibit affective empathy. This indicates that AI's empathy relies on data simulation rather than genuine emotional experience. In professional decision-making contexts (such as financial reporting), both humans and AI follow objective principles and are unaffected by empathy manipulation. However, in personnel decisions, humans are more inclined to protect colleagues' interests (e.g., delaying technology promotion) due to affective empathy, whereas AI does not exhibit this tendency. The study highlights the limitations of AI's empathy, which can only simulate understanding and lacks deep emotional drive, providing a theoretical basis for organizations to design decision-making systems for human-AI collaboration.

### Keywords:

Cognitive empathy; Affective empathy; Role-taking; Generative Artificial Intelligence; Experiment.