

# Lecture series: Female Scientists for Female Students

Lecture by Prof. Dr. Kristina Klein for the Lecture series: Female Scientists for Female Students



TECHNISCHE  
UNIVERSITÄT  
DARMSTADT

“Too Warm or Too Competent – How Ambient Scent Might Affect the Two Trust Dimensions Differently Depending on Service Employees’ Gender”



Prof. Dr. Kristina Klein  
(Universität Bremen)

10.12.2018  
13:00-14:30  
(S2|02 A102)



Privacy and Trust  
for Mobile Users



Deutsche  
Forschungsgemeinschaft



Prof. Dr. Kristina Klein  
(Universität Bremen):

### **“Too Warm or Too Competent – How Ambient Scent Might Affect the Two Trust Dimensions Differently Depending on Service Employees’ Gender”**

Trust is an essential part of (long-term) relationships between companies and consumers. It is particularly important in the service industry, where consumers personally interact with employees. Generally, overall trust perceptions and subsequent evaluations of (service) employees are driven by how warm (i.e., likeable, helpful, etc.) and competent consumers perceive this person.

Previous research has dealt with external cues (such as clothing style, mimics, etc.) to signal warmth and competence. However, environmental cues can also trigger trust perceptions: Some scents and scent molecules have been shown to influence people’s perception of trust. This project aims at showing that different scents influence competence and warmth perceptions of service employees differently, also depending on the employee’s gender. According to the Stereotype Content Model (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick and Xu 2002), all personal perceptions happen along the warmth and competence dimensions. Gender stereotyping research shows that warmth is rather seen as a feminine cue, whereas competence is rather a masculine cue (Broverman et al. 1972).

Our pretest results show that different scents can make one of the two dimensions more salient. We expect to show the following with our project: A woody smell, which is associated with competence, should increase competence perceptions of a female service employee. That is, adding a “competent” smell enhances a female’s perception on this dimension, where, stereotypically, females are “missing out.” On the other hand, a warm smell, such as vanilla, makes the male’s less pronounced dimension of warmth more salient. However, as warmth is harder to fake than competence (Grandey 2003), rendering the effectiveness of gender-related cues ambiguous, making warmth more salient should negatively affect consumers’ perceptions of a male service employee.

10.12.2018, 13:00-14:30 (S2|02 A102)

