

Consumer behavior with Artificial Intelligence

Currently available topics for your Master's Thesis

1. **Deceivingly Real Conversations With Artificial Intelligence: The Dilemma Of Being Deceived And Deceiving Others**
 2. **Verbal Abuse of Artificial Intelligence – Why Consumers Abuse AI-Based Assistants and Its Repercussions on Consumer Behavior**
 3. **The Company Is Great, But They Use Artificial Intelligence! Consumer Perceptions Of Companies' AI Use In Customer Interactions**
 4. **Now I want your empathy and now I don't: Task dependency of empathetic AI**
 5. **Talk to me the way I want - Personalized interactions with Artificial Intelligence**
-

Note: These topics can be prepared in German or English.

Deceivingly Real Conversations With AI: The Dilemma Of Being Deceived And Deceiving Others

Artificial Intelligence (AI), in the form of chatbots, voice-based assistants, or algorithms, is playing an increasingly important role in people's everyday lives, whether in private, organizational, or industrial environments. Today, the technology is so advanced that AI's imitation of the human voice appears deceptively real and can have entire conversations without the counterpart knowing to talk to AI (e.g., see Google duplex). This offers new opportunities for companies as well as consumers. Companies could replace human hotline agents with AI-based agents, while consumers could 'outsource' simple tasks to AI assistants on their phones, such as making a doctor's appointment or requesting information from service providers. This Master's thesis examines consumers' ethical perception of such AI use in practice and investigates whether consumers differentiate between using deceptively real AI for their own purpose or being confronted with it when interacting with companies. Based on the findings, theoretical contributions shall be discussed and future research outlined. Further, practical implications for marketers applying AI shall be derived from the findings.

Format: Literature Review & Experiment

Advisor: [Alexander Mueller](#)

Literature:

Royakkers, L., Timmer, J., Kool, L., & van Est, R. (2018). Societal and ethical issues of digitization. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 20(2), 127-142.

Puntoni, S., Reczek, R. W., Giesler, M., & Botti, S. (2021). Consumers and artificial intelligence: An experiential perspective. *Journal of Marketing*, 85(1), 131-151.

Verbal Abuse of Artificial Intelligence – Why Consumers Abuse AI-Based Assistants and Its Repercussions on Consumer Behavior

AI-based assistants, such as Amazon's Alexa or Apple's Siri, have become ubiquitous technology in consumers' daily lives. Additionally, companies successively adopt AI-based assistants for customer interactions. Analyses of user interactions with such assistants show that up to 30% of interactions contain social norm transgressions towards AI such as abusive language, profanities, and even sexual harassment. This Master's thesis aims to investigate why and when consumers abuse AI-based assistants. Additionally, this thesis shall shed light on the consequences of such behavior and on how consumers feel after the abuse. Qualitative in-depth interviews shall be conducted with users of AI-based assistants to reveal their motives for abusive behavior. Based on the qualitative findings, implications for marketing research and practice shall be derived regarding a company's coping strategies after AI abuse by users.

Format: Literature review and qualitative interviews

Advisor: [Alexander Mueller](#)

Literature:

Dietvorst, B. J., & Bartels, D. M. (2022). Consumers object to algorithms making morally relevant tradeoffs because of algorithms' consequentialist decision strategies. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 32(3), 406-424.

Zhou, Y., Fei, Z., He, Y., & Yang, Z. (2022). How Human-Chatbot Interaction Impairs Charitable Giving: The Role of Moral Judgment. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 1-17.

Bartneck, C., & Keijsers, M. (2020). The morality of abusing a robot. *Paladyn, Journal of Behavioral Robotics*, 11(1), 271-283.

The Company Is Great, But They Use Artificial Intelligence! Consumer Perceptions Of Companies' AI Use In Customer Interactions

Scientists and software developers have proven that artificial intelligence (AI) can outperform humans in many tasks ranging from driving a car, predicting someone's personality, or identifying the best treatment for patients. Yet, scholars debate whether people are algorithm averse or appreciate the technology with all its benefits. This Master's thesis shall contribute to the literature in investigating, whether consumers perceive a company's use of AI in customer interactions differently, depending on whether consumers take an outside perspective of customer interactions (not being a customer interacting with AI) or an inside view (being a customer affected). An empirical study shall shed light on potential differences in consumers' AI perception to contribute to the current academic debate. Apart from theoretically contributing, this Master's thesis shall provide practical implications for marketers wanting to implement AI in customer-interaction processes and outline future research.

Format: Literature Review & Experiment

Advisor: [Alexander Mueller](#)

Literature:

Yalcin, G., Lim, S., Puntoni, S., & van Osselaer, S. M. (2021). Thumbs Up or Down: Consumer Reactions to Decisions by Algorithms versus Humans. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 00222437211070016.

Puntoni, S., Reczek, R. W., Giesler, M., & Botti, S. (2021). Consumers and artificial intelligence: An experiential perspective. *Journal of Marketing*, 85(1), 131-151.

Now I want your empathy and now I don't: Task dependency of empathetic AI

Empathy is known to play a crucial role in customer-employee interactions and has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. But with advancing digitalization, customers are increasingly facing Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based tools instead of human employees. These AI-based tools (e.g., conversational agents such as Apple's Siri or ChatGPT) will be the new face of the company towards the customer. Managers must in which situations and context their AI-based tools should react empathetically and when they shouldn't.

The aim of this master thesis is to review literature on empathetic AI and the task-technology-fit to provide an overview of the current state of knowledge. A consumer experiment shall investigate how consumer's perception of empathetic AI differs between tasks and contexts. Based on the findings, implications for marketing research and practice shall be derived.

Format: Literature Review & Experiment

Advisor: [Kjell Herzig](#)

Literature:

Wieseke, J., Geigenmüller, A., & Kraus, F. (2012). On the Role of Empathy in Customer-Employee Interactions. *Journal of Service Research*, 15(3), 316–331.

Liu-Thompkins, Y., Okazaki, S., & Li, H. (2022). Artificial empathy in marketing interactions: Bridging the human-AI gap in affective and social customer experience. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 50(6), 1198-1218.

Lv, X., Yang, Y., Qin, D., Cao, X., & Xu, H. (2022). Artificial intelligence service recovery: The role of empathic response in hospitality customers' continuous usage intention. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 126, 106993.

Talk to me the way I want - Personalized interactions with Artificial Intelligence

Many customers regularly visit a certain restaurant, hairdresser, or doctor. They know the employees there and build personal relationships with them. Conversely, employees know their customers and engage in a specific interaction style with them. But with advancing digitalization, customers are interacting more and more with artificial intelligence (AI) based chatbots (like ChatGPT) instead of human employees. This leads to the question how much AI-based chatbots should adapt in their interaction style to the specific needs and preferences of their users (e.g., formal vs informal, warm vs cold, remembering previous interactions, etc.)

The aim of this master thesis is to review literature on personalization of sales/service interactions in offline and online settings. A consumer experiment shall investigate how personalized chatbot interactions with virtual assistants affect consumer behavior. Based on the findings, implications for marketing research and practice shall be derived.

Format: Literature Review & Experiment

Advisor: [Kjell Herzig](#)

Literature:

Whang, J. B., Song, J. H., Lee, J. H., & Choi, B. (2022). Interacting with Chatbots: Message type and consumers' control. *Journal of Business Research*, 153, 309-318.

Sahni, N. S., Wheeler, S. C., & Chintagunta, P. (2018). Personalization in email marketing: The role of noninformative advertising content. *Marketing Science*, 37(2), 236-258.

Shumanov et al. (2021). Making conversations with chatbots more personalized. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 117, 106627.

Awad, N. F., & Krishnan, M. S. (2006). The personalization privacy paradox: an empirical evaluation of information transparency and the willingness to be profiled online for personalization. *Management Information Systems Quarterly (MISQ)*, 13-28.