Psychology & Marketing

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Beyond the hype: Psychological mechanisms enabling the acceptance, adoption, and engagement with Artificial Intelligence technology in marketing.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies for marketing are about to reach a peak of inflated expectations for managers and entrepreneurs, based on the Gartner hype cycle. Similarly, marketing academics have anticipated increasing and more sophisticated interactions with customers enabled by AI, leading to a renaissance of research on different aspects of AI in the domain of marketing.

While AI displays many ramifications including *process automation*, *cognitive insight* and *cognitive engagement*, marketers perceive that most of the opportunities lie in the areas of cognitive insight and cognitive engagement. Underpinned by technology such as machine learning and the use of unstructured data, cognitive insight from live interactions with customers enables companies to automate, target, and personalize marketing activities such as digital advertising. Cognitive insights also enable predictive analytics models to optimize marketing mix spending, personalization, but also to forecast more accurately consumer behaviour including purchase and the likelihood of customer churn. In addition, the most popular and visible AI solutions relate to cognitive engagement: Such initiatives encompass virtual assistants and other forms of intelligent agents (e.g. chatbots) offering 24/7 customer service which are increasingly being integrated into the shopping experience.

Cognitive engagement implies the emergence of a conversation between humans and machines. Research on consumer-machine interaction has evolved from less sophisticated types of interactions like in the case of self-service machines to smart products. However, AI-enabled technologies using natural language processing and both text and image analysis are now able to reproduce more natural interactions. Common examples are chatbots or voice generators such as Microsoft Cortana, Amazon Alexa/Echo or Apple/Siri, which in the last decade have improved their capabilities to interact more naturally with their users.

While AI-enabled technology used for cognitive engagement generates some benefits for companies in terms of cost savings, there are some unexplored ramifications when it comes to the psychological mechanisms underpinning humans' cognitive and emotional reactions to this technology. For instance, voice generators helping patients to quit smoking in the UK induce physiologically positive cognitive responses but there have been cases whereby humans have developed forms of addiction or in some cases they simply refuse to have a dialogue with machines. In less sophisticated forms of consumer-technology interactions, trust emerges as one of the most relevant factors that affect adoption and use of these technologies. Furthermore, the nature of the interactions enabled by previous forms of technologies were not characterised by AI-enabled technology that instead can perform a wide variety of complex and temporary extended service tasks in less structured environments. Therefore, the implications of interactions between consumers and these AI-enabled technologies with advanced cognitive engagement capabilities remains understudied.

Although cognitive engagement AI solutions are increasingly used, the psychological and cultural reasons why consumers adopt them remain largely unexplored to date.

This Special Issue will focus on the motives and cultural influences that draw consumers into accepting and engaging with AI-powered technology. A partial listing of sample questions that contributors may wish to address in this regard would include:

- What are the psychological antecedents that drive consumers' adoption of AI-powered technology?
- Does AI technology elicit alienation among customers? If yes, what are the underpinning psychological mechanisms?
- Does AI technology generate addiction among customers? If yes, what are the underpinning psychological mechanisms?
- What are the social aspects that facilitate the adoption and engagement with AI-powered technology?
- Are there cultural (e.g., individualism vs. collectivism) and ideological factors (e.g. techtopian vs luddites views) that motivate consumers to adopt and engage with AI-powered technology?
- How is trust and loyalty developed and maintained between humans and AI-enabled machines?
- How is reciprocity built and maintained between humans and AI-enabled machines?
- How do consumers deal with uncertainty and service failures when engaging with AI-enabled machines?
- How do the psychological mechanisms at play in traditional human-to-human and those in human-to-machine interactions compare? What do they have in common? How do they differ?

All manuscripts directed to answering these and related questions will be considered by the Special Issue Guest Editors, Marcello Mariani (m.mariani@henley.ac.uk) and Rodrigo Perez Vega (r.perezvega@henley.ac.uk).

To submit a manuscript, please follow the manuscript submission guidelines as detailed under "Instructions to Authors" on the Wiley *Psychology & Marketing* website (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/15206793/homepage/forauthors.html). Address your cover letter to Richard J. Harnish (rjh27@psu.edu), Psychology & Marketing Special Issues Editor, and note in your cover letter that your manuscript is being submitted for publication consideration in the "Artificial Intelligence" Special Issue. **The deadline for submitting manuscripts for this Special Issue is April 30th, 2020.**