

From Algorithms to Authenticity: Ensuring Ethical Customer Engagement in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract

Integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into customer engagement practices transforms how organizations interact with consumers and offers enhanced personalization and efficiency. However, this technological evolution introduces significant ethical challenges, including algorithmic bias, data privacy violations, and a potential decline in consumer trust. This research, Algorithms to Authenticity (ATA), investigates the intricate relationship between AI technologies and authentic, ethical engagement strategies. The central idea of the research study is to explore three main questions: 1. How can businesses effectively implement AI technologies to improve customer engagement ethically? 2. What are the ethical dilemmas and potential risks associated with AI-driven customer engagement? 3. How can transparency and authenticity be maintained in AI-driven interactions to foster trust? The study emphasizes the urgent need for businesses to transition from an algorithm-centric model to one that prioritizes authenticity. This research analyzed ethical concerns for maintaining consumer trust and loyalty. The result of the study aims to provide actionable insights to help businesses navigate the ethical challenges posed by AI to reinforce the commitment to ethical standards while enhancing consumer satisfaction. The study's findings advocate for transparency, accountability, and proactive measures mitigating the risks associated with AI deployment. Given the findings, the three key directions of the study are promoting ethical AI implementation, addressing risks associated with algorithmic misuse, and enhancing transparency to foster authentic customer relationships and trust, reinforced by the concept of ATA ensuring ethical customer engagement. The directions guide organizations, researchers, and policymakers toward ethical AI practices.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, algorithmic bias, ethics and transparency, dynamic customer connection, meaningful customer partnerships

1. Introduction

In the rapidly evolving landscape of digital interaction, integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into customer engagement practices has fundamentally transformed how organizations interact with consumers. AI technologies enable businesses to analyze vast amounts of data, predict consumer behavior, and deliver personalized experiences tailored to individual preferences. This transformation could create significant advancements in how brands connect with their customers. However, along with these technological benefits, crucial ethical considerations must be addressed to maintain effective customer engagement strategies and to ensure authenticity. Consequently, the transition from algorithmic reliance to a focus on authenticity emerges as a pivotal theme in navigating the complexities of AI-driven customer engagement. As organizations increasingly depend on sophisticated algorithms to curate content, segment audiences, and automate responses, they face intense scrutiny regarding the implications of these practices on consumer trust and satisfaction. In this context, consumers play a decisive role in shaping the future of AI in marketing and customer service. Their demand for enhanced brand transparency and accountability concerning data collection, usage, and protection drives a paradigm shift towards more authentic and ethical engagement practices. This heightened awareness necessitates that organizations prioritize the utility of their algorithms while adopting responsible practices that foster trust and demonstrate a commitment to ethical standards. Cunha et al. (2024) argued that applying the k-means clustering algorithm to their collected dataset has revealed distinct patterns of consumer behavior and preferences, underscoring the potential of AI and ML to revolutionize marketing approaches and consumer engagement. Research indicates that authenticity in customer engagement is increasingly linked to consumer

loyalty, brand reputation, and overall satisfaction. Organizations that fail to tackle the ethical challenges associated with algorithmic decision-making risk alienating customers and jeopardizing their long-term viability.

This study explores the intricate relationship between AI technologies and ethical customer engagement, focusing on challenges and opportunities in fostering authentic connections with consumers. By examining best practices and ethical frameworks for implementing AI in customer engagement, this research aims to illuminate pathways for organizations striving to balance technological enhancement with commitments to authenticity and moral responsibility. The literature highlights various perspectives on ethical considerations in AI design. For instance, insights from political philosophy are crucial for creating fair machine-learning systems, and fairness is multifaceted and requires a nuanced understanding. A strong industry needs to enhance fairness in machine learning through collaboration and transparency. Identifying barriers to integrating fairness principles and proposing strategies to overcome these challenges is essential. A global overview of ethical guidelines regarding AI highlights the ongoing debates surrounding algorithmic ethics. Additionally, the implications of data protection regulations on automated decision-making stress the importance of transparency while maintaining data privacy. Frameworks for ensuring trustworthy AI, particularly in the public sector, and organizational perspectives on ethical AI strategies are critical for successful integration.

The emergence and integration of artificial intelligence (AI) have brought about significant changes in various sectors, leading to complex discussions surrounding trust, ethics, and efficiency. One critical exploration is presented by Bock et al. (2024), who emphasize the pressing trust issues associated with AI systems. They highlight how inherent biases, lack of transparency, and unpredictable outcomes can considerably undermine consumer confidence in these technologies. The authors advocate for establishing clear ethical standards and transparency measures alongside proactive communication, which are essential to foster trust and facilitate the responsible adoption of AI across different industries. Also addressing the implications of AI, Berkowitz (2024) investigates the landscape of AI-generated music, particularly about copyright and cataloging practices. The author critiques existing policy frameworks offered by the United States Copyright Office and the Program for Cooperative Cataloging, identifying notable deficiencies in their ability to accommodate AI's role in music creation. Berkowitz proposes enhancements to these policies by incorporating moral philosophical frameworks, such as virtue ethics and consequentialism, aiming to craft cataloging practices that prioritize truth-seeking in the context of AI-generated music.

Bressler and Bressler (2024) explore AI's potential to enhance business profitability through improved operational efficiencies. Their analysis reveals a dual narrative: while AI can significantly elevate business performance, it raises significant concerns regarding consumer privacy, especially in data handling practices. The study underscores businesses' need to evaluate their growth objectives against ethical data use, balancing technological progress with consumer rights. Furthermore, investigations into foundational concepts and future directions for AI in service contexts emphasize the significance of ethical practices. The necessity for ethical AI strategies to enhance customer engagement and discussions surrounding algorithmic accountability is also notable. There are profound implications related to biased advertising mechanisms that reveal potential discrimination in online advertising. Recent reports underline the current trends and the vital role of ethical frameworks in AI applications, while analyses of customer service transformations due to AI advancements offer insights into the evolving landscape of industry practices (Figure 1).

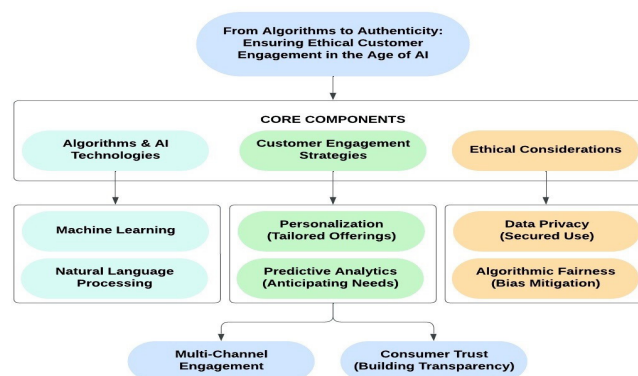


Figure 1. Algorithm to authenticity ensuring ethical consumer engagement

This research study examines how integrating AI into customer engagement practices can enhance personalization while addressing essential ethical concerns to ensure authenticity. Moreover, using AI in customer service can lead to job displacement, which raises several ethical concerns. These include the loss of worker income, the potential for increased economic inequality, and the urgent need for reskilling. Balancing innovation with social responsibility requires to address these issues to ensure that AI is implemented ethically, protecting human dignity and aiding employees in transitioning to new roles.

The study encourages organizations to shift away from solely algorithm-centric strategies and foster genuine AI interactions by promoting an authenticity-driven approach. Key priorities include algorithmic fairness, data privacy, consumer trust, and adopting ethical frameworks emphasizing transparency, accountability, and consumer rights for authentic engagement. The research further suggests that a deeper philosophical understanding of fairness in AI is crucial for designing algorithms that promote equitable outcomes and do not reinforce existing social inequalities. It introduces the ATA concept, highlighting the need for ethical customer engagement in the age of AI. By advocating for vigilance in the development of AI systems, the study aims to ensure that these technologies foster sustainable relationships while adhering to ethical standards, ultimately enhancing consumer trust and loyalty in ATA-driven interactions.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies in customer engagement has given rise to urgent and complex ethical challenges that demand immediate scholarly attention. As organizations strive to enhance personalization in their interactions with customers, concerns regarding algorithmic bias, data privacy violations, and the potential erosion of consumer trust have become increasingly prevalent. While consumers are increasingly seeking tailored experiences that reflect their preferences and behaviors, they are also expressing concerns about how their data is used and the fairness of the algorithms that govern these interactions. This dichotomy presents a pivotal challenge: Businesses must navigate the fine line between leveraging AI for improved customer engagement and ethically managing the implications of such technologies. The pressure to provide personalized experiences raises significant risks, as algorithmic biases, such as favoring specific demographics in product recommendations or credit scoring, can result in unequal treatment of diverse customer groups, undermining the principles of fairness and equity. Furthermore, the persistent threat of data privacy breaches exacerbates consumer skepticism, leading to dissatisfaction and potential disengagement from brands that fail to safeguard sensitive information.

In a marketplace characterized by heightened competition, organizations that fail to address these ethical concerns adequately may inadvertently foster an environment of distrust, jeopardizing customer loyalty and satisfaction. Therefore, each organization must understand and effectively respond to the dual demands for personalized engagement and ethical AI practices. This is underscored by the concept of ATA, which emphasizes ensuring ethical customer engagement in the age of AI. Hence, the organization's role in this is essential for the sustainability of customer relationships and the reputation and viability of businesses in the digital age. This research explores these pressing issues, providing insights that can guide organizations in balancing innovation with ethical responsibility within their customer engagement strategies.

1.2 Significance and Contextual Contribution

The ATA research is of immediate relevance in addressing the ethical implications of artificial intelligence (AI) in customer engagement practices. As organizations increasingly rely on AI to enhance personalization and streamline interactions, understanding the associated ethical challenges becomes more pressing. This study contributes to the discourse by synthesizing current knowledge on algorithmic bias, data privacy, and consumer trust, specifically within marketing and customer service. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the need for a paradigm shift from a predominantly algorithm-driven model to one that prioritizes authenticity and ethical responsibility. By outlining best practices and moral frameworks in a practical and actionable manner, the study provides insights that organizations can readily apply to navigate the complexities of AI-driven engagement while upholding ethical standards. In a broader context, this work situates the discussion within societal debates about technology's impact on privacy, equity, and data protection. It advocates for transparency and accountability in AI applications, aiming to significantly enhance consumer trust in a digitally informed era (Figure 2).

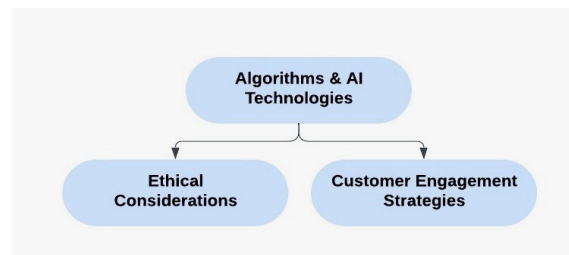


Figure 2. Algorithm and AI Technologies with Embedded Ethics and Consumer Engagement.

By exploring these critical dimensions, the research enriches academic and practical discussions on ethical considerations in AI, mainly through the lens of ATA, which emphasizes ensuring ethical customer engagement in the age of AI. It positions authenticity as a foundational element in sustainable customer engagement, aiming to influence organizational practices and policymaking. In doing so, this study aspires to ensure that integrating AI technologies enhances business outcomes while promoting consumer welfare and alignment with social values.

2. Method

This research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data to provide a more comprehensive and robust analysis. The use of secondary data from existing literature on AI ethics, customer engagement, surveys, and case studies of organizations successfully implementing ethical AI practices, along with their respective case studies, allowed for a thorough examination of consumer perceptions of AI ethics and its impact on customer engagement. Businesses face significant challenges establishing consumer trust regarding artificial intelligence (AI) systems. As AI technologies become more integrated into various sectors, concerns around data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the transparency of AI operations have surfaced, leading to a noticeable trust deficit between companies and consumers. This study highlights that trust is essential for successfully deploying AI, particularly in sensitive domains like healthcare, finance, and customer service, where ethical practices are paramount. To mitigate fears related to AI, organizations are encouraged to engage proactively with their customers. This includes fostering transparency by clearly communicating AI capabilities and limitations, providing straightforward disclosures about data usage, and implementing robust privacy measures.

Furthermore, establishing ethical guidelines for AI applications is crucial in building consumer confidence. The authors suggest businesses prioritize trust-building initiatives, such as allowing consumer feedback on AI systems and involving customers in the development process. Chandra, Shirsh, and Srivastava (2022) examine the role of human-like competencies in conversational AI agents. Their study highlights a paradigmatic shift from traditional IT user engagement, which centers on functional value, to one that prioritizes human likeness in enhancing user engagement. By theorizing AI's cognitive, relational, and emotional competencies, they consider how these factors affect user trust and overall interaction quality, aiming to guide both scholarly research and practical applications in creating effective AI agents. Similarly, Bobro et al. (2024) delve into AI's transformative impact on marketing strategies. The authors investigate how AI can personalize marketing approaches and refine decision-making processes. By identifying the potential benefits and challenges of AI incorporation into marketing, they advocate for effective regulations and standards to harness AI's advantages while minimizing associated risks. Their research lays a scientific foundation for further exploration into optimizing marketing operations through AI technologies. By adopting these strategies, companies can enhance their AI trust scores, improving customer loyalty and overall satisfaction. Addressing AI's trust problem is vital for fully harnessing its potential to drive innovation and elevate customer experiences.

2.1 Surveys and Case Studies

2.1.1 Washington State University Survey - 2024 - Ethical Marketing Survey with AI

The Washington State University's Carson College of Business survey aimed to capture American views on AI, mis- and disinformation, and influencer marketing. This online survey, conducted from October 7-18 with a demographically representative sample of 1,000 adults, sought to gauge the excitement and concerns regarding new marketing technologies, the ability to identify AI-generated content, and the implications for government and business practices.

Key findings indicate that Americans are skeptical about AI's role in marketing. Although AI has potential benefits, 76% believe transparency in its use is essential, with only 40% feeling that the company's market is ethical today. Generational differences were noted; Millennials show the highest comfort with AI at 49%, compared to about one-third of Gen Z, Gen X, and Boomers. Men exhibit more comfort (43%) than women (32%).

Confidence in recognizing misinformation is higher among frequent social media and AI users, with 64% feeling adept in spotting such content. Furthermore, many Americans are uneasy about personal data collection, with 40% finding the current amount unacceptable and 37% expressing concerns about insufficient privacy protections.

2.1.2 Twilio's Survey - 2024 - Ethical Customer Interactions with AI

Twilio's State of Personalization survey highlights how consumer demand increasingly influences corporate strategies, pushing executives to embrace predictive, emotionally intelligent, and personalized customer engagements. From April 8 to May 5, 2024, the research surveyed 521 full-time B2B and B2C company directors from larger organizations across 12 countries, including the US, UK, and Germany. The survey aimed to gather insights from leaders familiar with customer experience and data strategies, emphasizing the importance of ethical and dynamic approaches to customer interactions as AI technology becomes integral to business operations.

The report underscores a pivotal shift in how businesses approach customer engagement, mainly through the lens of AI. An overwhelming 89% of respondents believe that the ethical application of AI can provide a competitive edge, and 54% are actively working to mitigate consumer concerns surrounding data privacy. Twilio revealed that nearly half of consumers (49%) are likelier to trust brands that communicate their use of customer data and AI technologies. This transparency and innovative AI applications allow companies to build consumer trust while enhancing the overall customer experience by delivering highly customized services and interactions.

Brands increasingly focus on predictive personalization as consumer expectations evolve, especially among younger generations. The report emphasizes the growing influence of Gen Z consumers (ages 18-27), who demand authentic and transparent engagement. This demographic, significantly invested in digital interactions, prompts 85% of companies to rethink their marketing strategies to cater to their preferences. Executives predict that 86% of organizations will shift towards predictive personalization, utilizing AI and machine learning to anticipate customer needs and tailor messages to individual preferences, moving beyond traditional marketing approaches.

Furthermore, the report outlines the importance of emotional intelligence in AI systems as businesses strive to connect with customers more deeply. 82% of leaders recognize the need to integrate emotional responses into AI applications. This shift in strategy is supported by the expectation that 80% of marketers will adopt more sophisticated metrics, such as customer lifetime value and emotional engagement, rather than relying solely on conventional conversion rates to gauge the success of personalization efforts. This evolution signifies transforming from reactive interactions to proactive, meaningful consumer engagement. Finally, the report reveals that AI will play a crucial role across various business functions, from marketing to customer service. About 73% of business leaders agree that AI will revolutionize personalization strategies, while 58% expect AI chatbots to be the most significant technology for personalization in the coming five years. 59% of respondents anticipate their teams will use AI daily by 2025. Furthermore, 72% of companies currently employ customer data platforms (CDPs) for personalization, and 48% utilize data warehouses, indicating a robust infrastructure ready to support dynamic, real-time customer engagement through personalized strategies. As brands leverage these technologies, the focus on ethical AI usage and data-driven insights will become integral to enhancing customer relationships and driving business success.

2.1.3 Gartner Survey - 2024 - Ethical Customer Service with AI

The Gartner survey reveals that 85% of customer service leaders plan to explore or pilot customer-facing conversational generative AI (GenAI) technologies in 2025. This trend highlights a significant shift in the customer service landscape as organizations look to enhance their customer interactions through advanced AI solutions. With the ability to automate responses and streamline service processes, conversational GenAI is expected to improve customer engagement and satisfaction.

The survey also indicates that 67% of respondents believe conversational GenAI can significantly improve the efficiency of customer service operations. Additionally, 72% of customer service leaders agree that implementing these AI solutions could lead to cost savings as operational efficiencies are realized. This reflects a growing recognition of the potential benefits of integrating AI technologies into customer service frameworks as

organizations aim to reduce wait times and enhance the overall service experience for their customers (Figure 3).

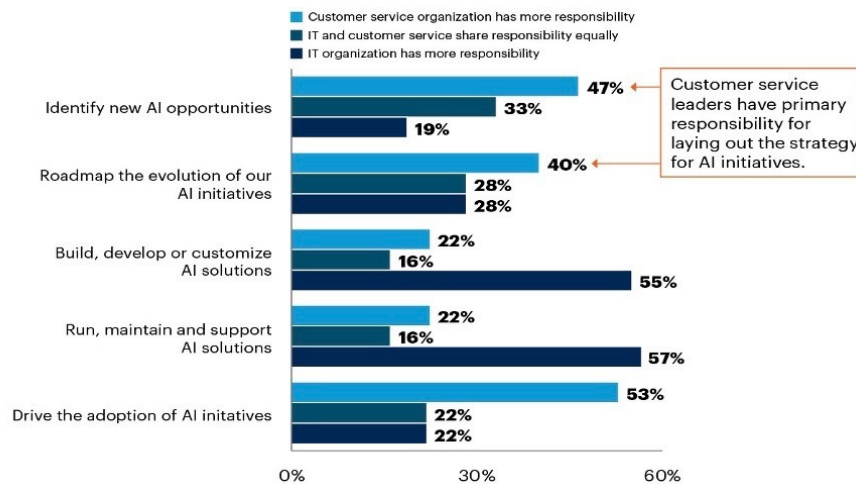


Figure 3. Ethical customer service with AI [Courtesy: Gartner, 2024]

However, integrating conversational GenAI technology is not without its challenges. Approximately 54% of customer service leaders acknowledged data privacy and security concerns when deploying AI systems. Moreover, 61% of respondents expressed the need for improvements in the accuracy and reliability of AI-generated responses before fully adopting these technologies. As organizations navigate these hurdles, ongoing investment in AI capabilities and addressing these concerns will be essential for successfully leveraging conversational GenAI in the customer service sector.

2.1.4 Riverbed’s Global AI Survey - Associated Risks - 2024

Riverbed’s survey reveals important trends in integrating AI technologies across organizations. The survey gathered insights from over 1,000 IT leaders globally, indicating that approximately 79% of organizations have adopted AI to enhance operational efficiency and customer experience. A significant 78% of IT leaders reported improved performance in their applications and services due to AI implementation. Furthermore, 83% of respondents believe AI will significantly enhance customer experience, mainly through increased personalization and responsiveness in service delivery.

Despite AI’s promises, the survey highlights persistent challenges. Nearly 60% of respondents indicated difficulties in effectively integrating AI into their operations, with data quality issues (42%) and a lack of skilled personnel (38%) identified as common obstacles.

Organizations are optimistic about AI’s potential, with 71% planning to increase their investments in AI technologies over the next year. This sentiment reflects a strong belief in the return on investment that AI initiatives can generate, emphasizing the transformative role AI is set to play in enhancing digital experiences while navigating these challenges.

2.1.5 KPMG Survey - 2024 - AI and Empathic Customer Experience

The KPMG report highlights critical factors influencing customer expectations and satisfaction. An impressive 6% of customers view the quality of their experience as essential for brand loyalty, with 72% preferring personalized interactions. Trust is also crucial, as 75% of consumers will abandon a brand if it is compromised. Brands that communicate their values effectively can enhance loyalty, with 68% willing to pay more for trusted brands. Technology plays a significant role, with 67% of consumers believing it improves their overall experiences—organizations utilizing data analytics report 19% higher satisfaction rates.

Furthermore, 80% of consumers expect superior service interactions, and 58% would switch to competitors after a negative experience. Retail and healthcare sectors show varying satisfaction levels, with retail scoring 75% and healthcare at 65%, while e-commerce leads at 82%. 66% of consumers would recommend a brand after exceptional service, contributing to 14% more significant revenue growth for top-performing brands.

Additionally, 77% of respondents believe customer experience will become increasingly important over the next five years, with a 25% year-over-year increase in investments in customer experience technology. The survey emphasizes that businesses must prioritize customer experience strategically to foster loyalty and enhance

market position in 2024 and beyond.

This study details a multifaceted methodology combining literature review and case studies to highlight the ethical implications of AI-driven customer engagement, focusing on algorithmic bias, data privacy, and trust. By integrating authenticity, transparency, and accountability (the ATA concept), businesses can adopt responsible practices in AI interactions, ultimately fostering trust and loyalty in a digital landscape.

3. Results

The 2024 Ethical Marketing Surveys provide valuable insights into consumer perceptions and corporate strategies concerning AI in customer interactions. The Washington State University survey involving 1,000 adults indicates that 76% of Americans demand transparency in AI marketing, with only 40% trusting companies to act ethically. Millennials show the highest comfort with AI at 49% compared to one-third of Gen Z, Gen X, and Boomers. Additionally, 64% of frequent social media and AI users feel confident identifying misinformation, while 40% find current data collection practices unacceptable. Twilio's survey reveals that 89% of executives see ethical AI as a competitive edge, with 54% addressing data privacy concerns. Gartner indicates that 85% of customer service leaders plan to explore conversational generative AI in 2025, with 67% expecting efficiency improvements. Moreover, Riverbed found that 79% of organizations have adopted AI, with 78% reporting enhanced performance despite 60% facing integration challenges. The KPMG report highlights that 77% of respondents recognize the growing importance of customer experience, underscoring the necessity for strategic focus on improving customer interactions through ethical AI practices. These findings illustrate transparency and ethics' integral role in effectively leveraging AI technologies.

The study illustrates the significant advantages of implementing ethical AI practices in organizations, particularly within the hospitality industry. Findings indicate that businesses prioritizing ethical considerations in AI experience notable improvements in service quality, enhancing customer interactions and fostering increased satisfaction and loyalty. When services are perceived as personalized and authentic, brand loyalty substantially strengthens. Additionally, the importance of transparent communications powered by AI is emphasized, demonstrating that offering human interaction options for complex queries leads to a more positive customer experience by combining technology with personal engagement. Cook et al. (2024) provide insights into the law sector's evolution due to AI. The authors argue that attorneys must become proficient in harnessing AI's predictive and analytical capabilities while maintaining ethical standards. Their extensive examination of legal professionals' ethical responsibilities includes discussions focused on competence, confidentiality, and communication. Additionally, they address privacy concerns related to AI tools within various legal data protection frameworks. Corinal Pelau et al. (2024) investigate the growing role of AI devices and robots in consumers' daily lives. They empirically test the hypothesis that emotional behaviors exhibited by AI can foster stronger consumer trust and elicit feelings of friendship, leading to increased self-disclosure of personal information. Their findings hold significant implications for enhancing consumer-AI interactions through emotional engagement. Fichter and Agueloy (2024) discuss using AI-driven chatbots in the insurance sector, addressing their impact on communication and sales. They highlight both the advantages of AI chatbots in customer service efficiency and the associated challenges regarding data privacy and user trust.

The necessity of developing frameworks to mitigate algorithmic bias and safeguard data privacy is also highlighted, showing that proactive organizations maintain consumer trust more effectively. Incorporating ethical guidelines into AI implementations boosts operational efficiency and reinforces consumer confidence. A systematic approach to ethical AI is advocated, as it significantly elevates consumer trust and enhances organizational standards. Ethical considerations and strategies for responsible AI use in customer service are explored, focusing on understanding AI bias in customer engagement and proposing solutions to mitigate its effects. The transformative nature of AI on customer experience is discussed, along with the examination of trust psychology and its implications for AI applications. Lastly, integrating AI with emotional intelligence is presented to improve customer interactions.

To achieve the promise of AI-enabled customer service excellence companies can match the reimagined vision for engagement across all customer touchpoints to the appropriate AI-powered tools, core technology, and data. Figure 4 captures the new model for customer service—from communicating with customers before they even reach out with a specific need, through to providing AI-supported solutions and evaluating performance after the fact (Figure 4).

The future of customer service builds on AI to deliver engaging experiences and generate lasting value.

The stages of an AI-supported customer-service process

- A Proactive communication**
linked to key demand drivers
- B Intent recognition and nudges**
before customer reaches out
- C Omnichannel enablement**
with self-service for service journeys
- D Conversational AI**
at each entry point
- E Frontline enablement** with coaching
for agents supported by a knowledge
repository and AI
- F Highly personalized, advisory interactions**
drive relationship and value, with STP or
quick resolution of issues
- G Performance measurement** via a centrally
managed nerve center that tracks
resolution accuracy and efficiency

McKinsey & Company

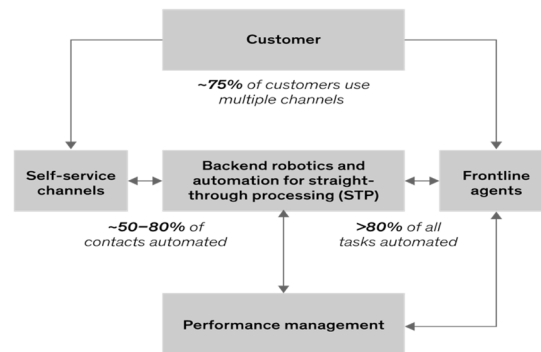


Figure 4. Customer Service Excellence Built on AI for Lasting Value [Courtesy: McKinsey & Company, 2024]

These studies highlight the critical role of ethical standards, trust, and emotional intelligence in shaping AI-driven customer service. They emphasize that organizations must adopt best practices prioritizing transparency, data privacy, and ethical standards to build authentic customer connections, ensuring their interactions are perceived as genuine and credible in an increasingly automated landscape. ATA, which focuses on ethical engagement in the AI age, is advocated to cultivate stronger consumer relationships and sustain growth in this competitive environment.

4. Discussion

Integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into customer engagement has emerged as a pivotal strategy for organizations seeking to enhance personalization and operational efficiency. However, these organizations must proactively address the ethical implications of AI technologies. A primary concern is that AI applications can unintentionally perpetuate biases embedded in training data, leading to unfair treatment of specific customer segments. Consequently, establishing comprehensive ethical guidelines surrounding AI usage is essential for fostering trust and credibility and maintaining authentic customer relationships. The transformative potential of AI in the hospitality industry demonstrates how it can significantly improve service quality through personalized guest experiences and operational efficiencies. While AI technologies can enhance customer interactions and satisfaction, they also raise concerns regarding employee engagement. There is a risk of job displacement and changing workforce dynamics due to automation. Thus, a balanced approach that leverages AI's advantages while safeguarding employee roles is vital. Investing in training and development will enable organizations to align these technologies with the needs of both customers and employees, ensuring a harmonious operational environment.

In addition, the broader implications of AI on human rights identify various current ethical guidelines across different jurisdictions that ensure AI systems respect human rights, emphasizing transparency, accountability, and fairness principles. However, significant disparities exist in adopting and enforcing these ethical guidelines. This highlights the urgent need for international collaboration to harmonize ethical standards and safeguards to prevent AI from infringing upon individual rights and freedoms. This study contributes to the ongoing dialogue by comprehensively analyzing the ethical debates surrounding algorithms and identifies critical principles such as fairness, privacy, and accountability that guide algorithmic decision-making. The study argues for a structured approach to understanding these moral issues, which is essential for developing robust guidelines for the responsible creation and deployment of AI systems. This study stresses that carefully examining algorithms can ensure they promote transparency and fairness, significantly influencing user perceptions of authenticity. Gabriel et al. (2024) analyze contemporary challenges faced by traditional survey methods in marketing due to innovations in AI and shifts in consumer behavior. They suggest that while surveys remain relevant, they must evolve by integrating new technologies, including AI, and combining qualitative approaches to adapt effectively to technology-influenced conditions. The future of surveys hinges on their ability to reinvent and complement emerging research methodologies, ensuring validity and relevance in consumer behavior studies.

The rapid rise of generative artificial intelligence (AI), particularly with the popularity of ChatGPT, has

significantly impacted the advertising industry. Gu et al. (2024) explore how the characteristics of AI-generated advertisements affect consumer acceptance, focusing on perceived eeriness and perceived intelligence. The study finds that consumers' perceptions of the verisimilitude and creativity of these advertisements can reduce perceived eeriness, while synthesis—how different elements are combined—has a mixed effect, positively influencing perceived eeriness but negatively impacting perceived intelligence. Ultimately, the research indicates that a higher perception of intelligence correlates with greater acceptance of AI-generated ads, while increased eeriness diminishes consumer willingness to accept them. The findings suggest that advertisers should carefully assess AI advertisements' characteristics to better leverage generative AI in their strategies. He et al. (2024) address how AI technologies reshape human-machine interactions, mainly through innovative interactions facilitated by in-home voice assistants (AVAs). They apply privacy calculus theory to analyze how these interactions influence users' intentions to engage. Using an online survey, the authors highlight that innovative interactions positively impact stickiness intention through utilitarian and hedonic benefits. However, the study reveals that the perception of humanness in AI presents a U-shaped relationship with privacy risk and that various aspects of AI interaction influence perceived privacy risks. The results emphasize the complex nature of personalization and humanness in designing interactive, innovative AI services, offering valuable insights for service providers.

Hermann, Williams, and Puntoni (2024) examine AI technologies' ethical challenges, especially concerning vulnerable consumers who may face discrimination or exclusion. They propose an AID framework to leverage AI to better serve these consumers by making services more accessible and dynamically enhancing consumer decision-making. Their multi-stakeholder perspective acknowledges the shared responsibility of researchers, managers, consumers, and policymakers in addressing these challenges and creating a more equitable marketplace. Islami and Mulolli (2024) conducted a literature review analyzing the interaction between artificial intelligence (AI) and human intelligence (HI), particularly in management functions. The authors argue that a symbiotic relationship between AI and HI can enhance management functions such as planning, decision-making, organizing, leading, and controlling. By identifying gaps in existing literature, the review offers practical advice on effectively integrating AI into management functions and underscores the ethical dilemmas that may arise during this transition. Kishen et al. (2024) focus on the transformative effect of AI within the retail sector, propelled by the exponential growth of digital shopper data. Their study aims to understand how AI adoption influences customer management strategies, including personalized marketing initiatives, supply chain agility through robotics, and branding practices. By developing a conceptual model of AI's role in retail, the research employs an online survey to gather insights into consumer behaviors shaped by AI. The results provide critical knowledge for retail marketers and supply chain partners on enhancing customer management practices via AI solutions, thereby highlighting the importance of adopting AI technologies for better engagement in a data-driven economy. These studies collectively illustrate the pervasive influence of AI across various domains, from advertising to retail and management, emphasizing the need for ethical considerations, consumer-centered design, and strategic application of AI technologies across industries.

Integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into business processes, mainly through AI-enabled chatbots, has sparked significant research interest, focusing on their impact on workforce dynamics and performance. Lin et al. (2024) argue that while chatbots have been adopted to enhance customer service and streamline structured tasks, they remain inadequate for handling unstructured tasks. This leads organizations to consider using chatbots to automate repetitive tasks while augmenting employee roles in more complex areas. The authors address the under-explored aspect of how chatbots can augment employee performance rather than merely reduce the workforce. Using a mixed-methods design, they present a model that illustrates how chatbots affect perceived work performance through various affordances, highlighting the importance of informational and emotional support. Their findings suggest that these affordances contribute positively to post-adoptive chatbot use, enhancing perceived work performance and offering guidelines for organizations on integrating chatbots effectively. Furthermore, this research emphasizes the need for humanizing AI in customer interactions and advocates for balancing technological advancements with genuine human engagement in customer support to enrich the customer experience. The study provides practical guidance for organizational leaders on implementing ethical AI practices within customer service frameworks. These insights are crucial for fostering an environment that values ethical standards while effectively utilizing AI technologies. The issue of data privacy is also paramount. The customer perspectives regarding AI applications and transparency in data handling enhance consumer trust. The opportunities and risks associated with personalization in AI-driven services indicate that while AI can provide tailored experiences, it must be approached cautiously to avoid overstepping ethical boundaries.

These studies underscore the critical need for ethical, personalized, and human-centric approaches in AI-enhanced customer service. As organizations harness AI, they must prioritize authenticity and ethical considerations to impact customer relationships positively. The integration of AI should not only focus on efficiency and personalization but also encompass a commitment to respecting human rights and fostering genuine engagement. By establishing ethical guidelines and investing in employee training, organizations can create a sustainable framework that maximizes the benefits of AI while safeguarding the core values of trust and responsiveness in customer interactions. This proactive stance will ultimately enhance consumer trust and more meaningful relationships in the digital age (Figure 5).

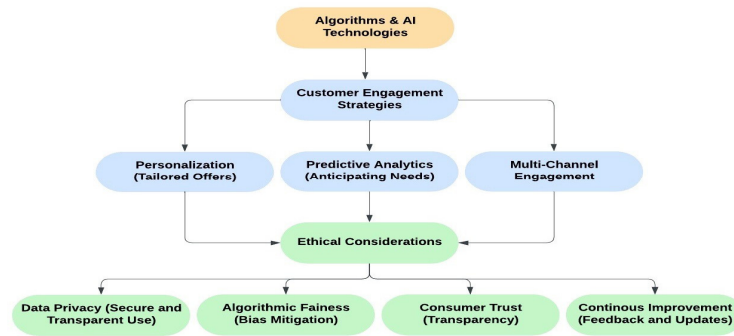


Figure 5. Algorithms and AI Technologies: Transparency, Bias Mitigation and Improvement

Moreover, the rise of AI in customer service poses ethical challenges, including job loss, increased inequality, and economic disparities. To ensure the ethical deployment of AI, it is essential to address these issues by supporting affected workers through reskilling and implementing social policies. Additionally, it is important to ensure that the benefits of AI are distributed relatively fairly to prevent worsening existing socioeconomic inequalities.

The discussion highlights the intricate relationship between AI technology and ethical considerations, underscoring the necessity of frameworks prioritizing authenticity, human rights, and organizational responsibility, such as ATA. ATA emphasizes the importance of ensuring ethical customer engagement in the age of AI, advocating for practices that integrate authenticity into technological processes. A balanced approach, which harmonizes algorithmic efficiency with the need for genuine engagement, is essential for enhancing consumer trust and ensuring sustainable interactions in the digital age.

5. Conclusion

The transition from algorithms to authenticity in customer engagement necessitates a robust commitment to ethical practices in AI applications. Emphasizing transparency and fairness and incorporating a human element into AI interactions can significantly enhance customer satisfaction and trust while helping organizations achieve their business objectives. This responsible deployment of AI technologies is critical for developing sustainable customer engagement models in the rapidly evolving digital landscape. Research indicates a growing demand for AI systems that deliver accurate recommendations and foster genuine user engagement. As technologies become more integrated into daily life, algorithms must prioritize user trust and transparency while aligning with ethical standards that resonate with consumer values for future AI developments to focus on functional benefits while maintaining moral integrity.

Incorporating ethical AI practices enhances customer engagement by fostering authentic interactions. Consumers are increasingly aware of AI-driven processes and are drawn to brands that demonstrate a genuine commitment to authenticity through ethical algorithm utilization. This trend encourages organizations to adopt more transparent practices, thereby improving their overall reputation and trustworthiness in the eyes of consumers. Looking to the future, an interdisciplinary dialogue involving technologists, ethicists, and social scientists will be crucial in addressing emerging challenges associated with algorithms and authenticity. Integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into business processes, mainly through AI-enabled chatbots, has sparked significant research interest, focusing on their impact on workforce dynamics and performance. Lin et al. (2024) argue that while chatbots have been adopted to enhance customer service and streamline structured tasks, they remain inadequate for handling unstructured tasks. This leads organizations to consider using chatbots to automate repetitive tasks

while augmenting employee roles in more complex areas. The authors address the under-explored aspect of how chatbots can augment employee performance rather than merely reduce the workforce. Using a mixed-methods design, they present a model that illustrates how chatbots affect perceived work performance through various affordances, highlighting the importance of informational and emotional support. Their findings suggest that these affordances contribute positively to post-adoptive chatbot use, enhancing perceived work performance and offering guidelines for organizations on integrating chatbots effectively.

Pentina et al. (2024) offer a comprehensive systematic literature review, analyzing 37 peer-reviewed studies on human-AI relationships published between 2018 and 2023. They identify significant theoretical domains, including social psychology and human-machine interactions, underlie this emerging field. The review points out the predominance of quantitative methodologies, suggesting a need for more qualitative and mixed-method approaches to enrich the understanding of human-AI interactions. The authors propose an integrative conceptual framework that includes essential constructs such as agency, reciprocity, and empathy, urging researchers to develop a robust and comprehensive theory of human-AI relationships that better reflects the complexities of social AI. Saffarizadeh et al. (2024) introduce a novel perspective on trust in AI systems, exploring how user trust in AI creators influences trust in AI systems. Through randomized experiments, the study examines alignment-related attributes of AI, finding that creator-based steerability enhances trust transfer from creator to system, while user-based steerability and autonomy can detract from it. The authors advocate for an alignment strategy that considers the goals and values of all stakeholders involved, moving away from generic alignment approaches. Their findings contribute to understanding trust transference theory, highlighting the nuances involved in building trust in AI systems. Shabangu (2024) discusses the adoption of AI in African organizations, emphasizing its role in enhancing customer relationships and strategic communication. However, she notes that significant transparency issues associated with data-driven technologies undermine effective communication. A survey indicates a low public awareness of AI, illustrating a gap in understanding and engagement with the technology despite its potential benefits. The study emphasizes the ongoing relevance of AI in academic discussions and public perception as it increasingly permeates various aspects of life.

Schneider-Kamp (2024) examines how AI-enabled smart objects influence consumer behavior and ethics. Employing a socio-material perspective, the authors argue that consumer ethics emerge from the relationships between consumers and smart objects. They explore how this interactivity affects consumer agency and ethical considerations in a world dominated by updatable and autonomous technologies, advocating for continued exploration of these dynamics in future research. In Vatankhan et al.'s study (2024), a systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis reveal challenges related to ethical AI implementation in service industries, such as privacy and accountability. The research underscores the necessity for ethical practices, particularly in sensitive data sectors. The findings advocate for interdisciplinary collaboration and sector-specific policies to create responsible AI frameworks, facilitating a trustworthy deployment of AI while addressing ethical concerns in service delivery. These studies underscore the transformative impact of AI across various domains, highlighting the need for strategic integration, ethical considerations, and an ongoing dialogue about human-AI interactions as AI technologies evolve in complexity and prevalence.

The importance of regulatory frameworks and community engagement in shaping algorithmic standards respect diverse cultural values and human rights. Transparency in AI systems is essential for building trust in automated customer interactions, with strategies for practical implementation presented as vital for fostering confidence in technology. Moreover, a customer-centric approach to trust in AI stresses aligning AI practices with customer expectations. It is essential to craft ethical AI strategies that enhance engagement while addressing potential dilemmas related to privacy and bias. Practical strategies were employed to enhance the generalizability of the research, which relies on secondary data and case studies. First, multiple case studies provided a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Second, enhanced theoretical underpinning significantly boosted the applicability of the research findings. Additionally, grounded theory techniques and reproductive reasoning facilitated the development of transferable conceptual generalizations. Moreover, framing the research within a global context allowed for a broader perspective transcending local conditions. Finally, cross-verifying findings with various secondary data sources achieved consistent results, strengthening the reliability and relevance of this research strategy and enhancing the study's credibility and impact in the field.

This research collectively underscores the need for businesses to prioritize ethical practices in AI-driven customer engagement to build trust and authenticity. Organizations can ensure that their customer interactions remain personalized and respectful by implementing transparency, respecting data privacy, and adhering to ethical standards. While challenges like algorithmic bias and data misuse exist, proactive strategies can mitigate these risks. Maintaining transparency is essential for fostering authentic relationships with customers.

Organizations should effectively communicate AI capabilities, establish feedback mechanisms, and uphold ethical data practices. This balanced approach, emphasizing ethical considerations and stakeholder engagement, will allow organizations to navigate the complexities of AI while fostering meaningful customer relationships. By adhering to these principles, business leaders, AI practitioners, and researchers can effectively shape the future of AI and ensure genuine customer engagement.

6. Recommendations

This ATA research study provides the following recommendations, designed to guide businesses toward a more responsible and effective use of AI technologies:

6.1 Develop Comprehensive Ethical Guidelines

Organizations should create comprehensive ethical frameworks that govern the deployment of AI in customer engagement processes. These guidelines emphasize key principles such as transparency, fairness, and accountability, align marketing practices with consumer values and societal expectations, foster consumer trust, and mitigate the risk of reputational damage associated with unethical AI practices. This reassures businesses of the positive impact on their operations and customer relationships.

6.2 Train Staff on Ethical AI Practices

It is vital to provide customer service professionals with ethical AI practices training. This training, covering topics such as the significance of maintaining authentic interactions, recognizing the limits of AI, and the necessity of human oversight, empowers employees to utilize AI tools effectively while fostering genuine connections with customers. It instills confidence in the team's abilities and role in creating authentic customer interactions.

6.3 Implement Bias Mitigation Strategies

Organizations should regularly audit their AI algorithms to identify and mitigate biases affecting customer interactions. AI bias can lead to unfair treatment of specific customer segments, damaging relationships and trust. Companies can ensure that their AI systems operate fairly and inclusively by implementing strategies that address these biases—such as using diverse datasets and refining algorithms. Regular assessments can help identify areas for improvement and reinforce a commitment to ethical engagement practices.

6.4 Foster Human-AI Collaboration

Encouraging a hybrid customer service model that combines AI and human agents is crucial for ensuring high-quality interactions. This collaboration, which enhances operational efficiency and ensures that customers receive personalized service, represents the future of customer service. By integrating emotional intelligence into AI processes, organizations can create a more balanced and authentic customer engagement experience, fostering optimism about the potential of AI in customer service.

6.5 Prioritize Data Privacy

Establishing robust data privacy policies is essential to protecting consumer information and fostering trust in AI applications. By prioritizing data privacy, organizations not only comply with regulatory requirements and reassure customers that their personal information is safeguarded but also strengthen customer loyalty and enhance their reputation in the marketplace. This can increase customer engagement and trust, ultimately benefiting the business.

6.6 Ethical AI Strategies for Job Displacement

To address AI-driven job displacement in customer service, prioritize ethical AI use by enhancing worker retraining programs, ensuring human oversight in AI roles, and fostering collaboration among businesses, policymakers, and communities. This approach minimizes negative impacts and promotes equitable job distribution and economic resilience.

Organizations that do not follow these recommendations risk damaging their reputation, losing customer trust, and facing potential legal and regulatory issues. By following these recommendations, organizations can ensure that their use of AI in customer engagement is ethical, transparent, and aligned with consumer expectations. This structured ATA approach promises to enhance authenticity in customer interactions while navigating the complexities of AI in marketing practices.

7. Directions and Implications for Future Research and Practice

Moreover, transparency strategies' impact across sectors such as healthcare and finance assesses effectiveness in promoting ethical decision-making and compares different approaches' influence on stakeholders. Consider

longitudinal studies to evaluate long-term transparency outcomes and integrate user feedback loops to refine AI system transparency continually. Understanding consumer preferences regarding AI's role in these interactions can guide brands in enhancing their engagement strategies.

Secondly, ethical AI practices foster authentic customer interactions. Future research could examine the ethical frameworks organizations adopt and analyze their effects on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Such studies could offer invaluable insights into implementing best practices across different sectors, informing organizations on effectively integrating ethical considerations into their customer engagement strategies.

Thirdly, the significance of regulatory frameworks and community engagement in shaping future standards for algorithmic design. Policymakers should prioritize the creation of comprehensive regulations that ensure ethical AI usage. Future research could explore the effectiveness of these regulations in practice, examining how organizations comply with ethical guidelines and how these affect consumer trust and engagement. More interdisciplinary efforts that bring together technologists, ethicists, and social scientists will be crucial in discussing and creating policies that reflect diverse perspectives and priorities. Practitioners need ongoing training and awareness programs that focus on the ethical use of AI. Training initiatives can help employees understand the importance of transparency and fairness in AI applications. Organizations should also encourage customer feedback to understand their concerns and expectations regarding AI technologies. Researching consumer trust dynamics will illuminate the best practices for maintaining strong, authentic customer relationships.

Lastly, future research should also focus on cross-cultural perspectives on AI and authenticity, as highlighted by the need for algorithmic accountability to respect diverse cultural values. Understanding how different demographics perceive and interact with AI could inform tailored approaches in multinational organizations striving for authentic customer engagement.

This study argues that the future direction for ATA research and practice in AI and customer engagement emphasizes the necessity for ethical considerations, consumer-centric strategies, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Organizations can enhance customer trust and satisfaction by fostering an environment where authenticity and ethics are prioritized, driving sustainable growth and meaningful brand loyalty in an increasingly AI-driven landscape.

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