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The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Relationship Marketing in the B2B Market

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Abstract

This article explores the ways in which artificial intelligence shapes and changes how companies use it in order to grow and retain their business-to-business customers. Through a literature review of previously published and highly praised Scopus articles, primarily, the research aims to uncover some of the ways in which companies utilise this technology. The study begins with an overview of generic information about artificial intelligence, setting a foundation for its understanding. Then, it examines its role in the B2B marketing, putting an emphasis on its capability to optimise and enhance the touchpoints. Lastly, the perceived privacy risks are being tackled, as well, touching upon the legal implications. The research on this topic is in the midst of a flourishing era, with more and more articles and books being published each day, as this is a hot topic currently. By making a synthesis of the current knowledge, this paper intends to provide a summarisation of the current understanding of how artificial intelligence is reshaping relationship marketing, highlighting both its transformative potential, as well as its challenges. Lastly, the paper concludes with the results and discussions around potential topics of further exploration.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, online marketing, relationship marketing, customer experience, B2B marketing, chatbots.

1. Introduction

In this day and age, business-to-business (B2B) wholesale is being revolutionised from the ground up, as an increasing number of companies are now experiencing the remarkable advantages of digitising their operations. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become the buzzword in the business world (Sahoo et al., 2024).

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Although there is, at the moment, no universally accepted definition, we can explain Artificial intelligence as the ability to act and to think like a human person. Artificial intelligence can be seen as residing at the intersection of physiology, philosophy, and computer science (Kureshi, 2025).

The main difference between AI and human intelligence is, undeniably, the fast processing of data (Ameen et al., 2021). Also, another important detail worth mentioning about AI is its ability to unravel hidden patterns and connections within the information (Moradi & Dass, 2022).

Introducing Artificial Intelligence in the daily life of humans and, implicitly, to the businesses, is already changing the way in which companies interact with their consumers and customers.

The existing literature provides insights into the current ways in which AI influences how companies do client relationships with business. Most research will be focusing on how the current available scientifical writing reveal regarding this subject, with a critical eye on the quality and relevance of the texts.

2. Problem Statement

A well-executed literature review is critical to building the foundation of a well-written scientific article. By systematically identifying, evaluating and synthesising current research, the methodology tries to achieve an unbiased understanding of this topic, positioning the paper in a practical context.

The purpose of this review is to establish a theoretical framework around artificial intelligence, more specifically in the marketing field of B2B. The article aims to answer questions such as: what is AI, how is it being used at the moment, what are some of the directions in which AI might be developing in the future, what are some of the risks and challenges privacy-related in regard to AI, and how is AI helping out relationship marketing presently.

2.1 AI – General Knowledge

In his most recent book, The Singularity Is Nearer, entrepreneur Ray Kurzweil explores the history of information technology and concludes that: “the reality is that nearly every aspect of life is getting progressively better as a result of exponentially improving technology” (Harari, 2024, p. XVI).

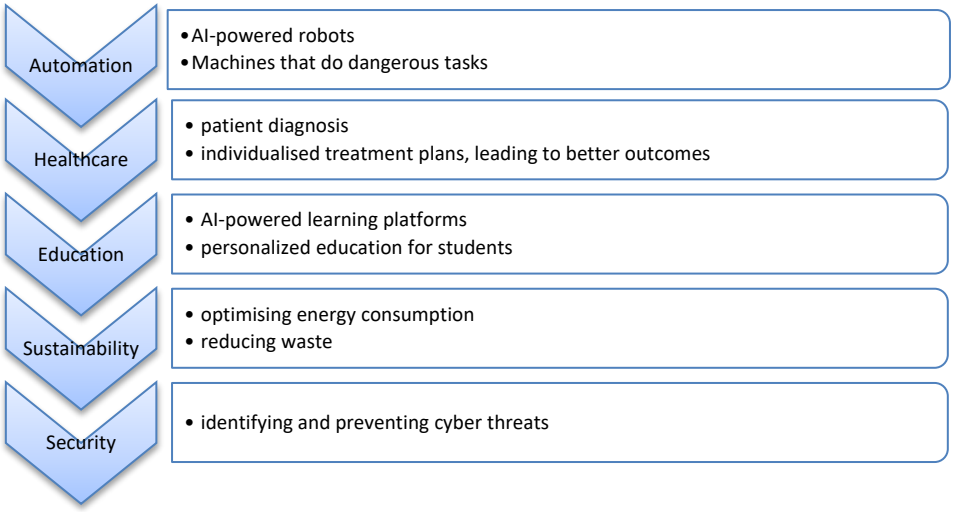
The appearance of machine learning (ML) allowed artificial intelligence systems to educate themselves from their collected data and augment their functioning starting from the early 1980s. Considerable progress has been done in the development of generative artificial intelligence lately, because of the appearance of deep learning techniques (Wach et al., 2023).

AI has a noteworthy influence on how we go about our day-to-day activities. Even though it is less known to the public, it has been around for several decades, but only lately has become an integrated part of our subsistence (Kureshi, 2025). Accomplishing a task using AI instead of a human being can have a higher degree of accuracy and speed. Consequently, AI applications could potentially

move investments from payrolls and income to capital expenditure (Stanford University, 2017).

AI has the prospective of transforming the works in multiple manners, presented below in figure 1 (Silver, 2023).

Figure 1. Ways in which AI can transform the world



Source: own creation.

In the figure above, we can see a list of areas in which AI changes for the better the day-to-day lives of humans. For instance, AI-powered robots make the work more effective, also helping to prevent physical-labour related accidents. In healthcare, AI can help doctors diagnose patients with better accuracy, as the artificial intelligence learns from other similar symptoms. Furthermore, the same logic is being applied for their treatment, leading to better outcomes, percentual speaking. In terms of education, using AI to predict and suggest to students what courses they should take based on their experience, interests and career interests can save students time and potentially the cost of useless courses for them. In security, machine learning models analyses datasets to identify anomalies and predict in real time data breaches. In sustainability, AI-driven climate models improve the monitoring of the environment in real-time while putting in practice (Silver, 2023)

Moreover, AI has the prospective of radically transforming multiple aspects of contemporary wholesale, for example reducing operational costs, assessing and managing risk, optimising marketing activities, uplifting competitive edge, increasing productivity, adjusting price, task automation and, last but not least, analysing large volumes of data (Sahoo et al., 2024).

2.2 Artificial Intelligence in B2B

The integration of artificial intelligence into business-to-business marketing has gained significant traction during the latest years due to its ample potential to drive customer value. AI skills such as business spanning, customer segmentation, and infrastructure have become increasingly important for making data-driven decisions, customisations and using predictive analytics (Bashir et al., 2024).

The research done in the marketing field is ample and includes numerous studies evaluating the applications and effects of different technologies. Conversely, only in the more recent years has the scientific field looked upon the intersection between the spheres of marketing and AI, with consistent requests and interests for researches looking into the roles of various AI related topics into marketing (Vlacic et al., 2021).

While AI is currently being utilised with a plethora of business-to-consumer applications, ranging from chatbots, social networking websites, virtual assistants, search and recommendation systems, shopping assistants, AI-generated content, banking advisors, symptom checkers, B2B marketing professionals, even though left behind, are exploring different types of use cases and problems to be fixed through these new-age technologies. Moreover, the marketeers are interested in the simplification of processes and the multiplying of earnings (Moradi & Dass, 2022). Studies indicate that in the retail sector the use of AI can target the top 1% of customers, who are valued at 18 times more than average customers for retailers. This can be obtained through methods ranging from extreme personalisation to timed engagement, all these based on behavioural data (Ameen et al., 2021).

Intelligent solutions to expand marketing capabilities in the B2B universe are required in the complex business ecosystem, since these types of operations frequently face with large volumes of informational complexities and the prerequisite to make rapid assessments. Thus, AI has the prospect to modernise the way in which the traditional activities are being executed, thanks to the ability to deal with constantly increasing volumes of data and to provide information to stakeholders (Mikalef et al., 2023).

Artificial intelligence is becoming more and more crucial in marketing from a strategic point of view. Companies such as Spotify, Under Armour, Alphabet, Meta, Intel are just some of the exponential-growing list of businesses enhancing their functioning through the adoption of AI-based platforms such as Microsoft, Oracle, Amazon (Vlacic et al., 2021).

Most of the current research is concentrated on the general embracement of artificial intelligence in marketing, but it has not investigated in depth its responsibility in enriching marketing information, planning, and implementation in the B2B contexts (Bashir et al., 2024).

Uncovering the real benefits of AI in the B2B context and how these can be implemented is of vital importance for the reduction of the number of unsuccessful initiatives within the organisations, as well as to fast-track the deployment of AI within these operation types. The adoption and use of marketing based on AI is being driven by both internal and external processes. According to researchers, this technology is rapidly becoming a vital part of companies operating on the B2B

market, by either automating or augmenting key processes. An underestimated and frequently unnoticed benefit of the early adoption of AI technologies is the chance to get ahead of their competitors (Mikalef et al., 2023).

2.3 AI-Powered CRM

Customer relationship management (CRM) comprises the process of enabling structures that enables a strategy attempting to create long-term relationships with specific customers that have profit as their ultimate goal. CRM is in the last couple of years a hot topic, as there is currently a known fact that customer acquisition is pricier than retaining existing customers (Vlacic et al., 2021).

AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants have an increasing popularity in customer services. Such types of bots are able to understand natural language, offer rapid responses and solve customer issues in an effective mode. Furthermore, AI algorithms are able to also analyse consumer behaviours in order to offer personalised recommendations and augmenting the overall customer experience (Emenwa Global, 2023).

Anthropomorphism is more present nowadays as artificial intelligence closes the gap between users and computer, which consequently creates tailored relationships to e-commerce experiences. Latest advancements in tech increase customer relationships' potential through the efficient use of data collection and ample interaction in such a manner that nurtures and enables customer centricity, co-production, and co-creation. In line with these concepts, CRM has been looked at in such a way that it is vital to implement AI due to transforming data into market insights. Some examples include text and voice conversational agents that mimic aspects of human intelligence (Vlacic et al., 2021).

Some studies show that AI has the ability to help companies to become better at more accurately forecast future revenue streams, as well as identify potential risks, allowing them to better manage their cash flows and strengthen their convertible assets position. Moreover, AI is able to help businesses identify new prospects for revenue growth, for example, improved marketing strategies or development of new products (Sahoo et al., 2024).

2.4 Predictive Analytics for Retention and Loyalty

Predictive Artificial Intelligence and generative data-based algorithms can improve activities such as product documentations, personalised shopping, customer support, various types of recommendations, building brand awareness, implementing engaging customers journeys, improving customer experience, increasing sales conversion rates, and so on (Lazaroiu & Rogalska, 2024).

Powerful and deep brand-related value-driven emotional loyalty, connections, and associations related to the purchase of products and services are vital in the shift of mentality related to purchasers' behaviours, as well as streamlining the journeys of customer engagements (Lazaroiu & Rogalska, 2024).

Lazaroiu & Rogalska (2024) also reveal that other important use-cases for predictive analytics based on AI is the forecasting of individual consumer preferences, editing brand messaging, crafting compelling communications, influencing the acquisitions, optimising retention costs, and timing messaging. All these are, at the moment, being successfully achieved through immersive customer behaviour, as well as data about their spending patterns, building emotional connections with them, and last but not least, driving long-term loyalty.

2.5 AI in Relationship Marketing

Another way in which artificial intelligence marketing utilises AI is to generate knowledge. Subsequently, it uses it to both perform and automate relevant marketing processes, such as marketing intelligence, so it can drill down to granular customer level spanning through various activities related to a product or a service (Yau et al., 2021).

Yau et al. (2021) further explain that AI marketing offers four worth mentioning advantages that enhance, upgrade, and boost customer relationship. First, it increases the effectiveness on the marketing activities that a company has, such as the automation of repetitive tasks, which includes the collection, analysis, and processing of data, as well as facilitating problem-solving in a timely manner. The second advantage is related to the decision accuracy for problem solving, as well as the predictions made based on big data. Thirdly, availability is an important advantage, since its able to function 24/7. Last, but not least, it reduces the costs and increases the fiscal gains.

The interactions that customers have with AI technologies have been massively developed during the last decade. This setting has changed the way in which companies take decisions, as well as the manner in which they engage with their customers (Labib, 2024).

Labib (2024) further highlights the limited research done regarding AI in relationship marketing, despite its latest popularity, especially around best practices and recommendations for companies seeking to put to use artificial intelligence for their marketing growth initiatives.

Vlacic et al. (2021) refer to emotion detection technologies in relationship marketing, particularly as a powerful tool to provide outstanding experiences for customers. These leverage AI as well as machine learning for the analysis and interpretation of human emotions; more specifically they combine highly advanced data with insights from psychology to recognise feelings.

2.6 Perceived Privacy Risk and AI's Impact on Trust and Customer Experience

In each domain, even as AI continues to convey valuable benefits, it also brings to the surface noteworthy social and ethical issues, including privacy concerns. As a society, we are currently at crossroads in determining how to implement AI-based

technologies in manners that promote rather than obstruct democratic principles such as equality, independence, freedom, and transparency (Stanford University, 2017).

As it is thoroughly explained by Dinev and Hart (Dinev & Hart, 2006), the term "privacy risk" refers to the fear of the potential loss of confidentiality due to self-disclosure of private information in the online space. This can generate a large range of issues, going from tracking of online behaviours, unsolicited contact by marketeers and undesired profiling (Song et al., 2022)**.**

Debates about how AI is being used, including concerns about how our privacy is being protected, should be encouraged (Stanford University, 2017). Zarafis et al. mentions another important reasoning for an increase in the consumers' concerns about privacy dangers: the novelty of it in the open online space, doubled by the low transparency of their algorithms, lack of human touch, and low ethical intelligibility (Song et al., 2022).

The lack of regulations in the AI field brings into question several drawbacks, challenges, polemics, and risks. Significant debates concerning the absence of regulation in the AI market involve the ethical considerations associated with the development and application of AI technologies, such as ChatGPT. Continuing with the same example, ChatGPT, at the moment, learns from a large variety of textual data available on the open internet, which might contain biases regarding sex, age, race, religion and other sensitive topic. Such data can generate responses that reflect such biases, that can consequently lead to discriminatory outcomes (Wach et al., 2023).

Another concern worth mentioning here is, certainly, the lack of significative regulation of the AI market, at the moment at which this article is being written (Wach et al., 2023). As a way of addressing the risks and implications of AI, the European Commission has launched on August 1st 2024 the AI Act, which will start being fully applicable on August 1st, 2026. The mentioned Act guarantees that the inhabitants of the European Union can rely on what AI has to offer. Some of the risks that the act prohibits are AI-based manipulations, AI-based misuse of vulnerabilities, biometric identifications for law enforcement purposes and cases in law enforcement that might restrict the humans' rights (European Commission, 2025).

Stanford University (2017) shows how over the next couple of years the research in the artificial intelligence field, social and regulatory frameworks will most likely outline how the benefits of AI are balanced against its risks and costs, as well as how vastly these benefits are being spread.

3. Methodology

In this chapter the author should present and discuss the research methods used in obtaining data/results. We suggest the detailing of the research methods, of the period of application, the means of application, the sample, methods, etc.

As this paper aims to research the ways in which relationship marketing applied on companies is being impacted by artificial intelligence, the following research question emerges:

How does AI impact relationship marketing nowadays the B2B market?

Consequently, from this research question, a number of hypothesis and objectives emerge:

OG1: Having a literature review about AI-related terms

OG2: Literature review about using AI in relationship marketing.

OG3: Studying the ethical and legal implications of the use of AI.

OG4: Identifying the connection in terms of published materials between AI and relationship marketing in WOS

H1: Artificial intelligence is an emerging trend in the scientific world.

H2: Companies do not see a change in profit since using AI.

For the writing of this paper, one of the 2 research methods used was the qualitative, to be more specific, desk research through literature review. The initial searches included keywords such as: AI, artificial intelligence, deep learning, chatbots. The next step was, naturally, combining various terms related to artificial intelligence with marketing or business-specific terms, thus resulting in intersectional sets of articles and journals covering all these areas of interest. Some examples of combinations include AI in marketing, AI B2B, AI privacy, relationship marketing, AI ethics, future of AI marketing, AI chatbots and so forward.

When looking at the type and quality of the materials researched, Scopus was preferred, which is a website scrutinising high-quality journals. In terms of narrowing down the search, papers that were focusing on the programming or mathematical of AI were disqualified. Consequently, the articles remaining were schemed and relevant pieces got included as references in this article. The credibility of the papers was essential, of course, in this process. A categorisation was done in order to group the selected literature into themes. Only the relevant paragraphs and pieces for this paper got to be used as point of citation, to keep this article concise. A systematic approach was consequently necessary for the reduction of biases in literature analysis.

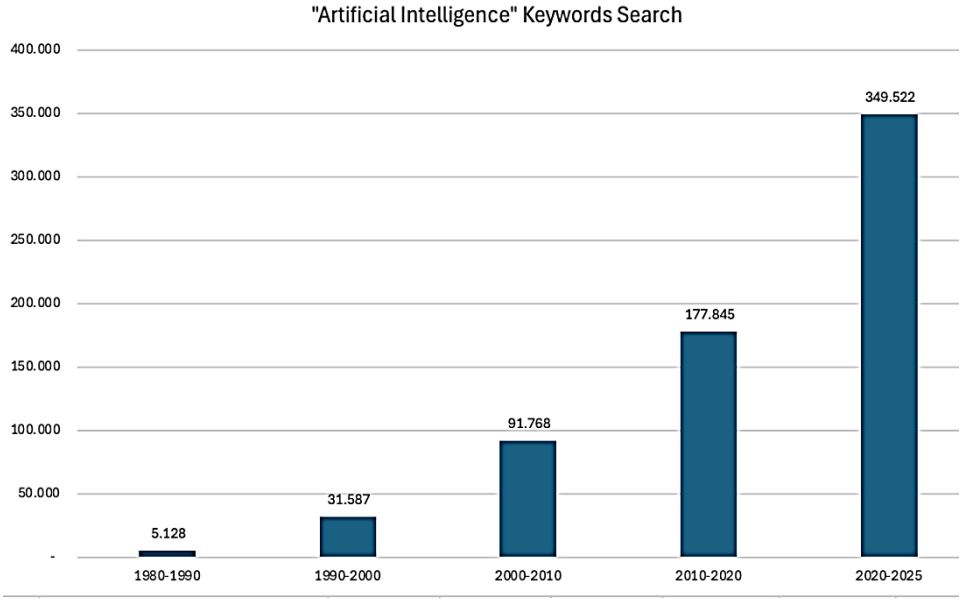
As for the second type of research used, in order to have a more complete and ample view over the interest of how artificial intelligence is being used in the B2B marketing, a meta-analytic study was conducted. More specifically, a map overview was created based on the specialised literature indexed in the Clarivate Analytics database. Scientific publications were identified by refining articles based on certain indicators such as: keyword, topics, year of publication. The bibliometric analysis was carried out based on data provided by the Web of Science platform on April 5th, 2025. The criteria for introducing or excluding are studies and research reports published in articles or proceeding papers published in the database between 2020 and 2025.

For starters, the quantity of scientific produce and its peak have been studied. In the below figure, produced by the author based on Web of Science Data, a data refinement of the frequency of the “artificial intelligence” keywords appearance per time-period can be seen.

A noteworthy observation is that whereas for 10 years, between 2010 and 2020, this keyword appears 177,845 times, during the last 5 years, between 2020-2025 up

to 7th of April, the keyword appears almost double as many, respectively, 349,522 times.

Figure 2. "Artificial Intelligence" keyword search



Source: own creation based on WOS data.

So, we can observe that AI is not a newly discovered concept and that it was been researched for at least 45 years, but once the dot-com bubble burst in the 2000s, the interest on it really grew exponentially. This analysis proved "H1: Artificial intelligence is an emerging trend in the scientific world." as being correct.

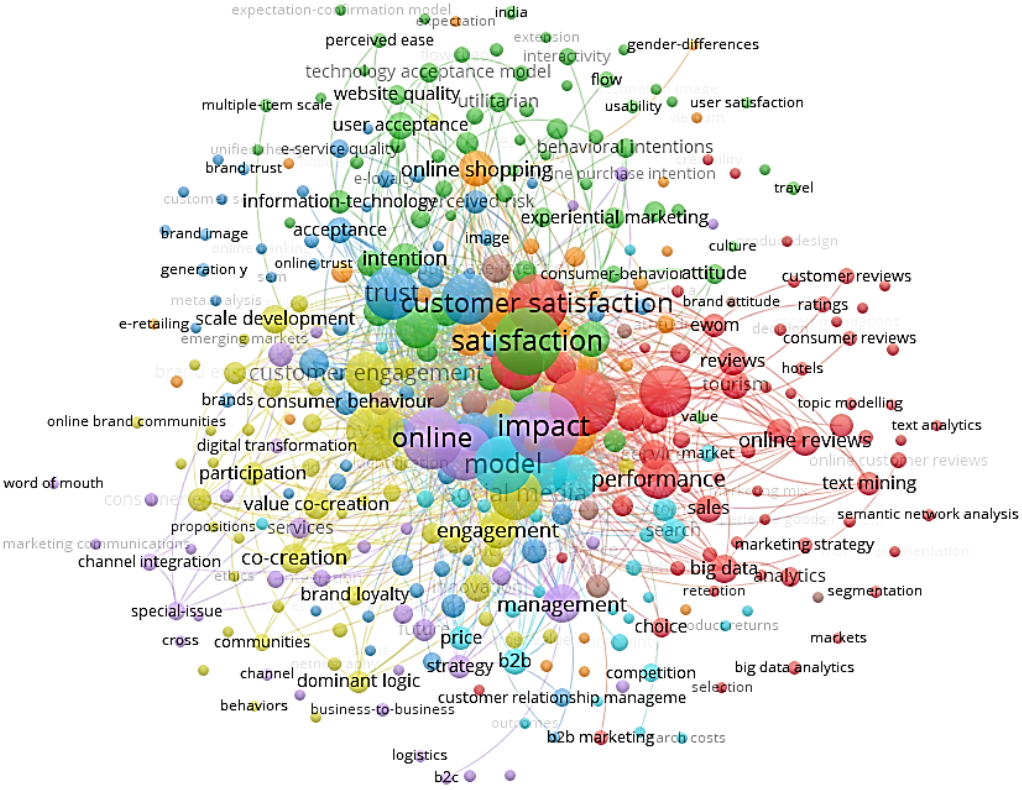
As the interest for AI-related concepts grew during the last 4-5 years, as we can see from the graph, a decision was made for further research, more in-depth. Thus, the VOS Viewer app was used, app that is an useful tool for scientific purposes for getting a clearer picture regarding the research question of this paper.

The co-occurrence of Terms Analysis, with full count and keywords being the Unit of Analysis was based on the Web of Science database, using the following parameters: "artificial intelligence" or "customer experience" or "online marketing" as the topic, keywords used as "B2B" and "relationship marketing" and years of publication between 2020 and 2025, which resulted in 74,023 results from Web of Science Core Collection. With the help of the VOS Viewer analysis, a map based on bibliographic data was created. For ease of reading, the Network Visualisation was used in detriment of the Density Visualisation.

We can see that in the centre of it all are terms such as "impact", "customer satisfaction", "satisfaction", "trust" and "online". In order to keep the analysis relevant, the top 351 with the highest score terms were mapped. Also, the topics are grouped into clusters, each being colour coded. The weight of the bubbles is

allocated based on term occurrence in the research material found that meets the above-mentioned criteria.

Figure 3. WOS analysis



Source: WOS data.

Looking at the analysis, a number of conclusions can be drawn. Relationship marketing focused papers is of interest in the scientific world, which concurs with the marketing trends.

4. Findings

AI adoption in relationship marketing is, at the moment, revolutionising the way in which business create and maintain relationships in the B2B environment. Some of its key benefits include improved customer segmentation, positioning and targeting through data-driven insights, enhanced personalised content for the clients and an increase in return on investment (ROI). AI is also enabling businesses to move even further away from transactional approaches and closer to relationship-focused connections.

In regard to predictive analytics, these have the advantage of being useful in regard to customer loyalty and retention, churn avoidance through identification

of at-risk customers, low spenders and, nonetheless, decreasing spenders. Another benefit worth mentioning found during the research is the improvement of forecast accuracy.

In contrast, such technologies pose certain drawbacks, principally related to the perceived threats of lack of data privacy, which can be a menace for customers' trust. Another somewhat-related concern is perceived to be related to ethical reasons, primarily around sexist, racial or ageist biases. Companies that have implemented already best practices around data privacy and their ethical use of AI can use it as competitive advantage and leverage for further improving their brands' image.

The integration of generative AI, as well as advanced learning models into customer relationship management tools is likely to increase the predictive capabilities that these systems have at the moment.

A topic worth approaching in this paper is around balance, more specifically around the need for both human and technological interventions in the business world. We are, in the end, creatures with a significant need to human touch and, regardless how trendy, fast or efficient or cost-effective AI tools might be, people are still in need and sensitive to it.

More exploring is worth doing around chatbots and what is their impact on relationship marketing. On one hand, they have multiple advantages, such as cost reduction, a speedy response time, and data collection, but on the other hand they lack empathy and emotional intelligence, their training can be lengthy and time consuming, as well as they can have high rates of inaccuracies, reasons for which further analysis and exploration can be advantageous for the marketing field.

Another topic that can be explored is around the challenges in AI adoption, such as costs, integration issues, fear of adoption, lack of knowledgeable workforce, with case studies on companies that have struggled or failed to do so.

Lastly, future research areas could target the differences in perception of AI in relationship marketing based on cultural differences, as well as how these have an impact long term. A full-length paper can be also based solely on the analysis of the AI act released in 2024 and cited in this work. Also, another topic worthy of research can be the use of AI in marketing strategies for corporate social responsibility (CSR). Furthermore, an investigation of future trends and developments in relationship marketing, what technologies are emerging in the near future in this area and what might their impact look like can be of worthy attention.

5. Conclusions

To summarise, the impact of artificial intelligence on relationship marketing in the B2B marketing has multiple facets and is also of great significance. Through the complex literature review done in this paper, various aspects of AI in the B2B context were explored, including general knowledge about artificial intelligence, the perceived privacy risks, legal implications, AI-powered customer relationship management and, last but not least, future trends and opportunities.

Looking at the generic objectives established during the methodology part of this paper, all four have been accomplished, the three related to the literature review, and

the last one, regarding the analysis of terms related to AI and relationship marketing from Web of Science in VOS Viewer.

Regarding the three hypotheses, the first one that states that AI is an emerging trend in the scientifical world confirms with the help of the analysis of the frequency of the terms used. The second one, that stated that companies do not see a change in profit since starting to use AI, is not confirmed, based on the literature review.

Artificial intelligence has irrefutably revolutionised the way in which businesses interact with their consumers, permitting for more customisable and targeted marketing strategies. AI-powered CRM systems have enabled corporations to better understand the needs that their clients have, leading to improved customer satisfaction, retention, and transforming them into a returning client.

However, the AI adoption in marketing also raises concerns, as customers may be left feeling uneased about their collection and use of personal data for marketing purposes. It is proven to be essential for companies that want to show good business ethics to show transparency in their AI use, as well as become and continue being compliant with the AI privacy regulations being set in place that continue getting upgraded with high frequency.

Looking towards the future now, there are interesting prospects for AI in relationship marketing in the B2B market. As these technologies continue to development, businesses are likely to start having entrance to more sophisticated tools for processing and analysing data, as well as predicting consumer behaviour. This will permit companies to deliver even more personalised products, prices and promotional materials, ultimately driving a higher customer retention and an increase in the revenue.

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