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THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

The purpose of the paper "The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Consumer Behavior" is to investigate and analyze how the use of AI technologies influences purchasing decisions and consumer behavior. This purpose may involve: exploring behavioral changes, studying how AI influences consumer preferences, decisions and experiences in the purchase process, identifying advantages and disadvantages, analyzing the benefits and risks of using artificial intelligence in relation to the consumer purchase experience, understanding future trends, projecting possible directions of consumer behavior and how AI technology will continue to shape purchasing processes in the future, market and industry suggestions: providing recommendations and strategies for the industry to adapt and grow accordingly with the changes driven by the use of artificial intelligence in the commercial environment.

Keywords: *E-commerce, personalized shopping experiences, predictive analytics, customer behavior, preferences, marketing effectiveness.*

JEL classification: D12, M31, O33

1. Review of the scientific literature

The purpose of the paper "The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Consumer Behavior" is to investigate and analyze how the use of AI technologies influences purchasing decisions and consumer behavior. With the advancement of artificial intelligence (AI), significant changes in how companies communicate with customers are becoming more apparent. In this context, the need to implement an explicable AI capable of providing personalized shopping experiences increases (Popescu, 2002). Explainable AI brings considerable potential by providing shopping experiences tailored to individual customer needs and preferences. It is characterized by the ability to explain the decisions made and the results produced, which is becoming increasingly important in the context of personalized shopping experiences.

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AI explainable benefits for personalized shopping experiences are varied, it allows customers to feel more informed and confident in their purchase decisions. Moreover, companies can adjust their recommendations in a more precise way, leading to an increased level of customer satisfaction and a higher likelihood of return. The ethical aspect of AI also provides a safe way to use customer data, thereby building trust between consumers and companies (Bradlow et al., 2017).

As explainable AI becomes an essential tool for companies looking to deliver personalized shopping experiences, understanding the decisions made by AI becomes crucial for customers. This gives customers not only an informative experience, but also a sense of security in the purchasing process. In addition, the ethical use of customer data is becoming a hallmark for companies that want to build strong relationships with their customers.

In terms of predictive analysis of shopping patterns, retailers are increasingly adopting explainable AI to gain a deeper understanding of customer behavior and preferences. This allows them to better anticipate future trends and optimize marketing strategies to target customers more effectively (Levinson, 1993). By integrating AI into predictive analytics (Kartal et al., 2016), retailers can personalize offers and campaigns, thereby increasing the relevance and effectiveness of their actions (Carter & Tessa, 1991).

In conclusion, deploying explainable AI and using it for predictive analytics are significant steps towards delivering personalized and efficient shopping experiences. These technologies bring benefits to both customers and companies through increased information, increased trust and optimization of marketing processes (Maghroui & Belghith, 2019).

In the era of fast technology and constant innovations, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming more and more present in our daily lives (Kaplan & Haentein, 2019). Its impact on consumer behavior is a topic of increased interest, as AI decisively influences how we interact with the products and services around us (Bradlow et al., 2017).

One of the most obvious aspects of the impact of Artificial Intelligence is the increased personalization of the consumer experience. AI-powered recommendation systems analyze user behavioral patterns, offering personalized suggestions and products tailored to individual preferences. Thus, consumers are exposed to a wider range of relevant options, which can lead to greater brand satisfaction and loyalty (Radu, 2017).

However, this increased personalization may also raise privacy questions. The extensive collection of personal data to feed AI algorithms may raise concerns about the protection of individual privacy (Shneiderman, 2016). It is crucial for businesses to strike a balance between personalization and respect for privacy in order to build trust among consumers (Balaure, 2016).

Another significant influence of Artificial Intelligence on consumer behavior can be seen in the field of e-commerce. AI-powered chatbots provide real-time support, enhancing the online shopping experience (Malkridakis, 2018). They can quickly answer customer questions, provide product information and guide the purchasing process. In addition, AI algorithms can analyze users' browsing behavior to anticipate their preferences and improve online interaction (Gay et al., 2007).

However, excessive implementation of chatbot technologies can lead to a loss of the human element in customer interaction. It is important for businesses to strike a balance, ensuring that AI complements and enhances services without completely replacing human contact (Carter & Tessa, 1991).

In the advertising sector, Artificial Intelligence also plays an essential role. Advanced algorithms can analyze online consumer behavior to create personalized and relevant advertising campaigns. This targeted approach can maximize the impact of your ads and increase conversion rates.

However, there is a risk that excessive personalization will lead to consumer ad fatigue. If advertising messages become too invasive or too frequent, consumers may develop a resistance to them and the effectiveness of advertising campaigns may decrease (Dobre, 2006).

Another area where Artificial Intelligence is fundamentally changing consumer behavior is in the healthcare sector. AI-powered apps and devices monitor and analyze users' health data, providing personalized healthy lifestyle recommendations. These technologies can improve awareness and engagement in their own health, motivating consumers to make healthier choices.

However, concerns about the security of health data and the correct interpretation of information provided by AI devices are critical topics. It is essential to have rigorous regulation and high standards to ensure the quality and privacy of health data (Feng & Fay, 2020).

Another crucial aspect of the impact of Artificial Intelligence on consumer behavior is the increased reliance on technology. With the ever-wider integration of AI into everyday life, consumers are becoming more dependent on technology to fulfill their needs and wants. This addiction can have mental health consequences and can raise concerns about the loss of essential human skills.

As technology advances, it is imperative that society remains vigilant in monitoring and regulating the use of AI to maximize benefits and minimize potential risks. Increased personalization, efficiency in e-commerce, targeted advertising and improved health are just a few aspects of the significant changes that Artificial Intelligence is bringing to the way we consume and interact with the world around us (Gerlick & Liozu, 2020).

Artificial Intelligence explains and helps retailers better understand consumer buying behaviors and trends. With this technology, retailers can gain deeper insight into their customers' preferences, enabling them to make smarter decisions and drive greater customer satisfaction.

Explainable AI is a technology that allows computers to explain their decision-making processes to humans. Through this technology, retailers can better understand how and why their customers make certain decisions. For example, AI-based models can predict customer growth rates and analyze customer buying patterns to identify the most popular products (Kumar et al., 2017). This data can then be used to inform product recommendations, offer personalized discounts and create more effective marketing campaigns (Grewal et al., 2017).

Explainable AI also gives retailers a better understanding of how customer behaviors change over time (Inman & Nikolova, 2017). By tracking and analyzing customer interactions across multiple channels, retailers can gain a better understanding of customer

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preferences and trends. This data can then be used to develop new strategies to target customers and improve customer service (Huang & Rust, 2018).

Ultimately, explainable AI helps retailers better understand customer shopping behaviors and trends. Using this technology, retailers can gain a deeper understanding of their customers, enabling them to make smarter decisions and leading to greater customer satisfaction (Holmqvist et al., 2017).

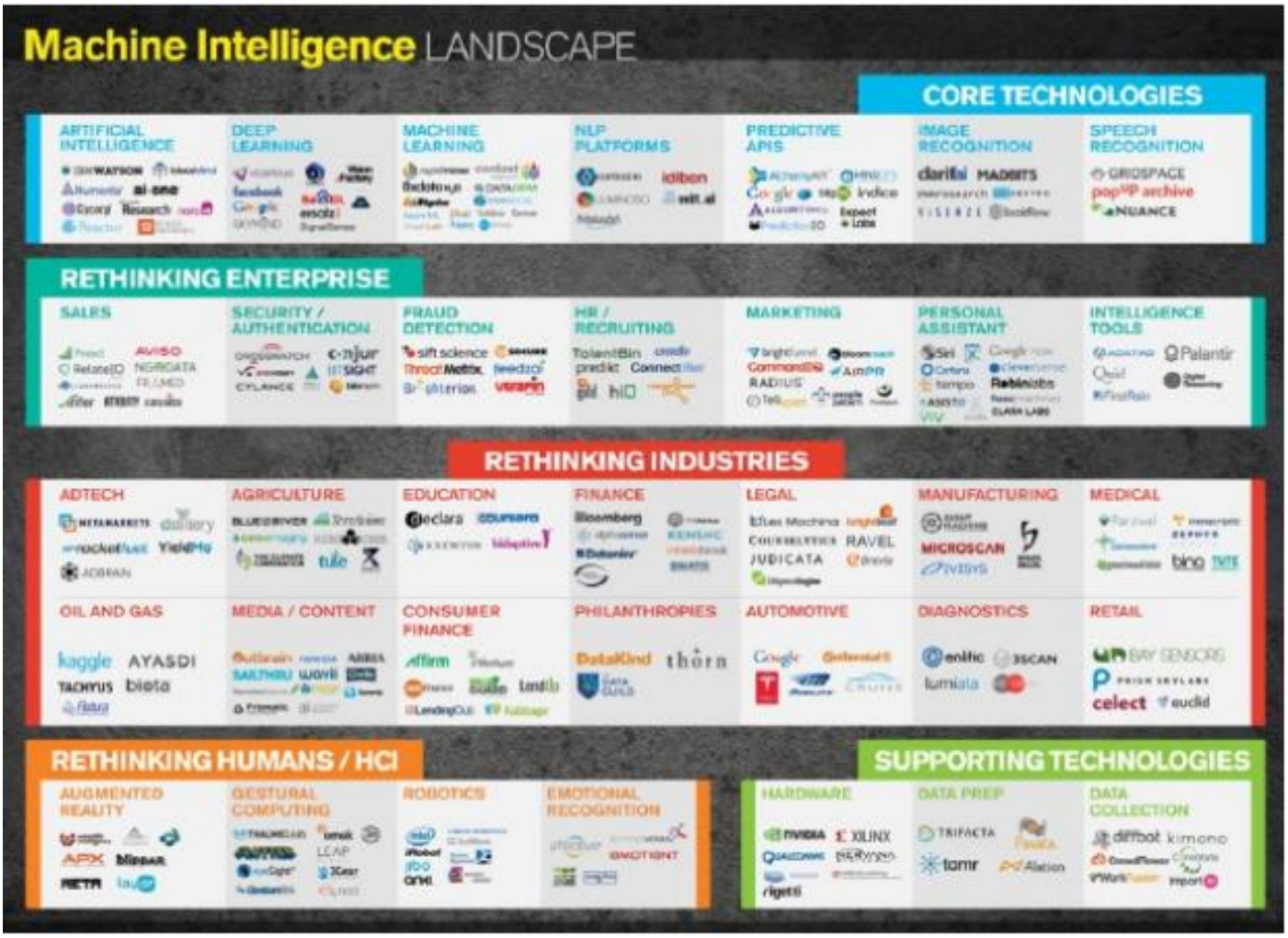

Figure 1. Exploring the benefits of explainable AI for the shopping experience

Theories used in the acceptance of technologies

The UTAUT model (Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology) is a model that explains the intentions of users who interact with information systems (figure 2). The model was developed by Venkatesh et al. (2003) and contains four major factors:

- performance expectancy: refers to the extent to which a user believes that the use of technology or a computer system will help him obtain advantages in the performance of work tasks.
- effort expectation: the degree of ease with which the computer system is used.
- social influence: the degree to which a user believes that other people want him to use the system in question and that it is important to do so.
- favorable conditions: the degree to which an individual believes that his organization has the necessary resources to support the use of the system.

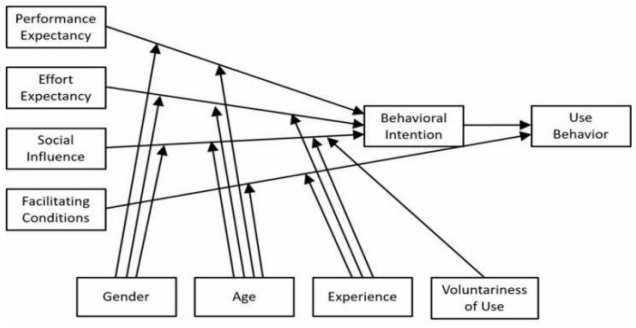

Figure 2. The UTAUT model

2. Theory of Rational Action (TRA)

The theory of rational action explains the relationship between individuals' attitudes and their behaviors, with the authors Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) emphasizing that attitudes explain human actions. TRA highlights how attitudes and behaviors correlate with the individual's intentions in carrying out an action. An individual's intention to perform a certain behavior is a determining factor of the action, and the attitude towards a behavior and the subjective norm are factors of the behavioral intention (figure 3).

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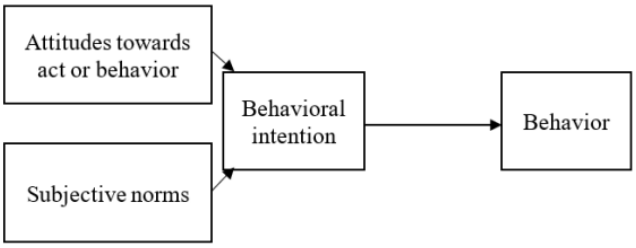

Figure 3. Theory of rational action

Advantages and disadvantages of using AI.

The table below highlights the advantages and disadvantages of using artificial intelligence:

Table 1. Advantages and disadvantages of using artificial intelligence

Advantages of using Artificial Intelligence	Disadvantages of using Artificial Intelligence
Automate repetitive processes and tedious work.	The risk of job losses in certain sectors.
Improving accuracy and efficiency in decision-making processes.	Dependence on accurate data and its quality for the proper functioning of AI.
Personalizing user experiences and recommendations.	Data security and privacy issues.
Increasing innovation and the ability to solve complex problems.	The possibility of perpetuating or amplifying biases in the data used.
Optimizing costs and improving operational efficiency.	The need for understanding and clear regulations for the ethical use of AI.
Accelerating and improving machine learning processes.	High implementation and maintenance costs of complex AI technologies.
These are just a few examples of advantages and disadvantages of artificial intelligence, and there are many more depending on the specific field or context of application. Evaluating the pros and cons of AI must consider its impact across a wide range of sectors and aspects of life.	

Yes, the adaptation to online shopping is one of the obvious trends in sales in Romania and can be important for consumers regardless of the environment, whether rural or urban. Here are some key points:

3. Increase in online shopping in Romania.

Digitization trend: Romania is experiencing a steady increase in internet access and smartphone usage, leading to greater exposure and adoption of online shopping.

Accessibility and Convenience: Online shopping offers 24/7 accessibility and a wide range of products, as well as a convenient shopping experience without the need to physically travel.

Online Deals and Promotions: Online retailers often offer promotions, discounts and special offers that attract consumers and encourage them to purchase the products online.

User experience: Online platforms invest in improving user experience by providing easy navigation, ratings, reviews and customer support, which can encourage consumers to buy online.

Consumer Adaptation.

Confidence in security: Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the security of data and online payments, which imposes the need for retailers to ensure a secure and trusted environment.

Education and trust: More education is needed among consumers, especially in rural areas, to understand the benefits and how online shopping works.

Infrastructure and Internet access: To support the growth of online shopping in rural areas, there is a need for investment in digital infrastructure and the facilitation of high-speed Internet access (Rowan, 2016).

Adaptation to online shopping in Romania will continue to be a process, with an emphasis on trust, education and accessibility. It is essential that both consumers and retailers adapt to this digital evolution to enjoy the benefits of online shopping.

The purpose, objectives and hypotheses of the research

The purpose of the paper "The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Consumer Behavior" is to investigate and analyze how the use of AI technologies influences purchasing decisions and consumer behavior.

The objectives of the research are:

1. Clarifying the objectives of the interview to understand how AI influences consumer behavior, how they adjust their expectations and preferences in the context of these technologies.
2. Identifying Consumer Types: Defining the consumer segments you want to explore in terms of their interaction with AI in the buying process.

The research hypotheses are:

Hypothesis H1: The use of artificial intelligence in personalized recommendations leads to an increase in the frequency and average value of purchases.

Hypothesis H2: The convenience and accessibility of online shopping with the help of artificial intelligence causes a significant shift in consumer preferences in favor of online over offline.

Hypothesis H3: The use of artificial intelligence in customer support services leads to improved customer satisfaction and increased brand loyalty.

Hypothesis H4: Exposure to dynamic pricing algorithms causes a change in consumer behavior, including when and how they make purchases.

Hypothesis H5: Increasing the level of awareness and education about the operation of artificial intelligence influences the trust and adoption of this technology in the purchase process.

These hypotheses can form the basis for investigating and evaluating the impact of artificial intelligence on consumer behavior. They can be tested and analyzed through an empirical study or research involving data analysis and direct interaction with consumers to obtain concrete results and relevant insights (Roberts & Bergers, 1999).

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4. Research methodology

The research design was carried out through a questionnaire, inspired by the positivist research philosophy, adopted throughout the entire study. Using this design, data collection was established only at the buyer level.

The analysis was based on 137 respondents in a workshop held at the Petre Andrei University in Iasi, on the same theme of the influence of AI on consumer behavior.

A quantitative research methodology was used in the research, because qualitative research techniques cannot be used to quantify variables (Guriţă, 2023). The questionnaire method was used. The questionnaire is one of the popular research methods characterized by efficiency, simplicity and effectiveness.

The questionnaire included questions about artificial intelligence. These questions are adapted and adjusted according to the specific objectives and assumptions of the questionnaire and the details we want to obtain from the respondents. The questions were quantified using the 5-point Linkert scale: 1= total disagreement; 2= do not agree; 3= neither agree nor disagree; 4= agree; 5= totally agree. In table 2 we find the questions of the questionnaire.

Table 2. Questionnaire questions

Nr. Crt.	Question
1	How is artificial intelligence (AI) influencing your purchasing decisions?
2	What aspects of AI do you value most during the buying process?
3	Have you noticed changes in your buying preferences since using AI? If so, what are they?
4	How do you think AI is personalizing your shopping experience?
5	What are the benefits you perceive in using AI in your buying process?
6	Is there a specific AI feature you'd like to see improved in your shopping experience?
7	Have you ever experienced difficulty or frustration using AI while shopping? If so, what were they?
8	How do you think AI could improve the overall shopping experience?
9	Have you noticed any impact of using AI on your purchasing decisions in terms of quantity or frequency of purchases?
10	Do you feel more confident in your purchasing decisions thanks to AI assistance?
11	How do you think AI is influencing your understanding of the products/services you intend to purchase?
12	Do you have any privacy or security concerns about using AI in shopping?
13	Have you noticed any change in the level of loyalty towards certain brands or stores due to interaction with AI while shopping?
14	How do you think AI might influence consumer buying behavior in the future?

Analysis of respondents' profiles

1. Distribution of respondents according to gender

The first parameter of interest was the gender of the respondents. The aim was to distribute the respondents according to whether they are male or female. The results indicated that female respondents dominated the sample with 58.3% while male respondents accounted for 41.7%. Table 3 illustrates the distribution of respondents by gender.

2. Distribution of respondents according to age

The second parameter of interest was the respondents' income. The results showed that the group with the most respondents had people between the ages of 26-30, constituting 43%. The group was followed by respondents aged 31-40, which constituted 24.9%. The group with the fewest respondents was people over 50, representing only 5.1% of the total. Table 3 illustrates the distribution of respondents by age.

Table 3. Demographic characteristics

Demographic parameters Frequency Percentage (%)	Demographic parameters Frequency Percentage (%)	Demographic parameters Frequency Percentage (%)
Kind	Kind	Kind
Men 57 41.7	Men 57 41.7	Men 57 41.7
Women 80 58.3	Women 80 58.3	Women 80 58.3
Age	Age	Age
18-25 23 16.7	18-25 23 16.7	18-25 23 16.7
26-30 59 43	26-30 59 43	26-30 59 43
31-40 34 24.9	31-40 34 24.9	31-40 34 24.9
41-50 14 10.3	41-50 14 10.3	41-50 14 10.3
>50 7 5.1	>50 7 5.1	>50 7 5.1

5. Research results

For almost all questions, 82% of the respondents answered that they agree that artificial intelligence has changed the buying behavior and that it is best to buy online because it is easier and makes thinking and working easier.

Most respondents indicated that AI had a significant impact on their purchasing behavior, finding online purchasing more convenient and AI making decision-making and work easier. It is interesting to observe how technology has influenced consumer preferences and perceptions.

It's true that without an interview or market research we can't figure out how much AI is worth. Assessing the value of artificial intelligence (AI) often requires detailed research, an interview process or market analysis to truly understand the impact and benefits it brings to a particular field or industry. The value of AI can vary depending on the context of its application, the efficiency of its implementation, and how it benefits users or businesses.

Beyond simply evaluating price, the value of AI can be measured by multiple aspects, such as:

Operational efficiency: How does AI improve existing processes and operations? Reducing costs and increasing efficiency can bring significant value.

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User Experience: The impact that AI has on user or customer experience can be measured by the degree of personalization, ease of interaction, and user satisfaction.

Revenue growth and innovation: AI can bring value by facilitating innovation, identifying new business opportunities, and generating additional revenue by improving products or services.

Improved decision-making: If AI helps make better and faster decisions, it can be considered a significant added value.

Assessing value: AI often requires a complex and holistic approach, considering the multiple aspects of its use and implementation in a given context or domain. It is important to conduct case studies, impact analyzes and interviews to fully assess the value that AI brings to a specific organization or market.

Hypothesis H1: The use of artificial intelligence in personalized recommendations leads to an increase in the frequency and average value of purchases – validated

Hypothesis H2: The convenience and accessibility of online shopping with the help of artificial intelligence causes a significant change in consumer preferences in favor of the online environment at the expense of the offline one – validated

Hypothesis H3: The use of artificial intelligence in customer support services leads to improved customer satisfaction and increased brand loyalty. – validated

Hypothesis H4: Exposure to dynamic pricing algorithms causes a change in consumer behavior, including when and how they make purchases. - validated

Hypothesis H5: Increasing the level of awareness and education regarding the operation of artificial intelligence influences the trust and adoption of this technology in the purchase process - validated. As a result, all hypotheses were validated.

One of the problems will be that of the firms if they are all prepared to meet the needs and demands of the consumers in the market or else the demand or supply of goods is greater than the demand. Therefore, adapting companies to the demands and needs of consumers on the Romanian market is an important aspect and can be a critical factor in their long-term success. In general, there are some aspects to consider:

Adaptation of supply and demand:
Understanding consumer demands: Companies need to understand changes in consumer behavior and preferences in order to provide products and services that meet their demands.

Flexibility of offer: The ability to quickly adjust offers and services according to changes in the market or consumer demands is crucial to remain competitive in the market.

Inventory and Supply Chain Management: It is important to have effective inventory and supply chain management to meet consumer demand without incurring losses due to excess or shortage of products.

Investment in technology: Implementing technologies that support a better understanding of consumer behavior, such as data analytics, can help firms tailor their offerings to match demands (Nistoreanu, 2002).

Assessment of ability to meet demand

Resources and infrastructure: Firms need to have adequate resources and a well-developed infrastructure to meet the increased demand without compromising the quality or services offered.
Strategic planning: A well-crafted strategic plan that includes assessment and predictability of future demand can help firms prepare to meet increased demand.
Adaptability and innovation: The ability to quickly adapt to market changes and innovate in offerings or strategies can be a major advantage in meeting consumer demands (Priyadarshi et al., 2019).

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, the impact of artificial intelligence on consumer behavior is profound and constantly evolving. While it brings significant benefits in providing more personalized and efficient experiences for consumers, there is a need to find a balance between innovation and data protection to maintain consumer trust and loyalty. It is also essential that firms are flexible, responsive to change and have the ability to adapt to meet the fluctuating demands and needs of consumers, whether it is demand or supply in the market.

The future of sales in Romania and consumers must adapt to online shopping whether in rural or urban areas. This analysis highlights the major aspects of the influence of artificial intelligence on consumer behavior, covering both the advantages and concerns associated with the use of this technology in the company-consumer relationship. The impact of AI on consumer behavior is significant and diverse, with far-reaching consequences for the marketplace and shopping experience.

Notable findings include:
Personalization and adaptability: The use of AI enables the delivery of personalized shopping experiences based on individual consumer data and preferences. This adaptability leads to increased customer satisfaction.

Increase efficiency and processes: Artificial intelligence optimizes purchasing and marketing processes by providing more detailed information and analysis, which can lead to more informed decisions for businesses.

Improving customer service: AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants provide fast and personalized responses, improving the customer experience and speeding up resolution of customer issues.

Changing the way people buy: Artificial intelligence is influencing consumer behavior, driving them towards online purchases, especially through personalized recommendations and ease of purchase.
Credibility and trust: Building trustworthy algorithms and making AI processes transparent are critical to gaining consumer trust in these technologies.

Revolutionizing Marketing: Data collected and analyzed with the help of AI allows companies to adjust their marketing strategies to better adapt to consumer needs and preferences.

Overall, the integration of artificial intelligence into marketing and sales is having a significant impact on how consumers make purchasing decisions and interact with brands. Personalization, efficiency and innovation thus become key pillars in offering an optimized shopping experience geared towards individual needs.

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