

## A MODEL FOR IMPROVING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN E-MARKETING AND CUSTOMERS

**Olivia Doina NEGOIȚĂ**

*Politehnica University of Bucharest  
Splaiul Independenței no. 313, Bucharest, Romania  
negoita.olivia@gmail.com*

**Anca Alexandra PURCĂREA**

*Politehnica University of Bucharest  
Splaiul Independenței no. 313, Bucharest, Romania  
apurcarea@gmail.com*

**Mirona Ana-Maria POPESCU**

*Politehnica University of Bucharest  
Splaiul Independenței no. 313, Bucharest, Romania  
mirona.popescu15@gmail.com*

**Abstract.** *For modern businesses, e-marketing strategy is required to establish the information flow. The relationship between the company and the customers by tracking the actual weight of channels preferred by the consumers and potential clients is becoming a priority at the present moment. Because the weights of the favorite channels are changing very quickly, tracking the actual weight of channels to the attention of consumers is not an easy objective to accomplish, and marketers need to understand the trends very well. Some companies hire people trained to provide a specific professional skill, and other companies are externalizing this service, depending on a cost-benefit analysis to find the proper approach. With the desire to get as close as possible to the customer, today's companies have made an important step by integrating online business efficiency tools and technology development. Developing customer relationship management based on personalized IT systems developed on business specificity and using socializing and promotion channels to increase visibility and online availability on all the customer's favorite channels is translated in engaging customers. Also, using the consumers' reviews in the process of developing/improving products/services is giving to businesses an advantage over the competition. Business management must constantly pursue the dynamism of the market according to the trends of the industry in which it plays, adapting the vision and the uniqueness of the business to the dynamism of the market. Recent studies about marketing programs in which companies are tending to invest anticipate a further increase in investment in 2018, on customer service management programs, which suggests that the business's intention to increase loyalty to existing customers is a core marketing trend for modern companies. This article will explore the link between e-marketing and the client, in order to identify the connections between them and to provide a theoretical model for improving the marketing process, considering the client's requirements. The aim of the proposed model is to improve the current marketing process implemented by companies through digital solutions to strengthen the relations between e-marketing and the client, after identifying the weaknesses the respective companies are facing.*

**Keywords:** *e-marketing; customer's requirements; digital technologies; online channels.*

## Introduction

Digital marketing is a dynamic field where change is the leitmotiv. The change means adapting to the needs and demands of the market, but also streamline the way of choosing to respond to them. The development of technology and the fact that it is becoming more accessible in terms of learning and costs have led to its spread amongst marketers and consumers alike.

If 2017 was about the expansion of smartphones usage and interaction with VR, AR, and 3D printing, in 2018, all this gather together and dynamize the marketing. Consumers are equipped with smartphones and smart gadgets, connected to the Internet because their available time has decreased. Consumers are open to responding to those who speak their language in the environments they prefer and in real time.

New challenges bring new opportunities, and marketers can take advantage of them by taking into consideration a few aspects. The year 2018 is about consumers and how to deliver them personalized services and products. It is an important requirement to determine what and where to look for and exploit their micro-moment to place a trigger on the sales page.

Search engines learn from every use, thus collecting a lot of user data. Marketers only need to understand this information that stands in front of them. The future is represented by interactions that humanize the process of learning, documenting, socializing, and eventually acquiring products and services. In 2018, businesses should be in concordance with the needs and desires of their customers, who are motivated not by the intention to buy as much as possible but by the desire to experience as much as possible.

Thus, this article aims to determine the new e-marketing methods, as well as the relationship between them and the consumer. By establishing a more personalized profile of the consumer and his interaction with the technology, one can determine the ways through which it can be attracted to the acquisition of a product/service. Once these means to which the consumer is receptive have been identified, a digital marketing model can be developed to help the company grow on multiple levels.

## Theoretical backgrounds

Numerous researchers have studied consumer perceptions, their relationships with companies, and the means by which they are targeted in digital marketing campaigns. Some of these concepts are elaborated in books written by authors like Shaltoni et al. (2018) who investigated how SMEs use e-marketing, Turban (2018), who talk about social commerce and marketing, Ali and Bani Hashim (2017), who analyze consumer satisfaction following e-marketing, but also by others who describe their analysis in scientific articles.

Bonetti, Warnaby, and Quinn (2018) summarize the current perceptions of Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality applications in the context of sales, including the reasons for their use in marketing. Marasco et al. (2018) investigate the impact of virtual reality experiences on websites and how to attract consumers in a certain direction. Scholz and Duffy (2018) carry out an ethnographic study to examine consumer and brand

relationships through Augmented Reality, focusing on the physical and the inner context of how self-augmentations are integrated into consumer self-concepts.

Marinchak, Forrest and Hoanca (2018) examine the state of Artificial Intelligence, focusing on marketing applications and new engagement rules. He considers that marketing will be directed to Virtual Personal Assistants, focusing on meeting the real needs of the user. Siau and Yang (2017) sustain that sales and marketing are influenced by Artificial Intelligence, robotics, and automated learning, replacing sales and marketing professionals in online stores. The research consists of a longitudinal case study to analyze the evolutionary nature of sales and marketing.

Sotolongo and Copulsky (2018) highlight trends that have contributed to the increased number of conversational interfaces and the implications of marketing conversational data. Thus, it can be noticed that through conversational interfaces, the needs of consumers are better satisfied. The Barwise and Farley's study (2005) shows that e-marketing is growing, but there is little empirical research about its impact on marketing and performance.

Tulk's invention (2018) consists of an Internet-based marketing method that correlates organizations and consumers of services through a simple mobile application. Papista et al. (2018) tested a model that included motivational factors for the relationship between consumers and brands, wanting to build customer value for a company. Waheed and Jianhua (2018) initiated a research to determine the link between e-marketing and consumer behavioral peculiarities. An important role in their decision to purchase products is given through online marketing.

Chaturvedi (2018) shows that today's companies have focused on owning a website to promote their product. In his research, 80-90% of the population is attracted to online advertising, especially to social sites.

### **Consumer profile - a determinant factor in implementing marketing strategies**

The term prosumer is not a new one, it appeared in the '80s and represented the professional consumer, specifically targeting users of high-performance audio-video equipment. The online environment has, however, brought new valences to this notion, prosumer being today a *mélange* between the producer and the consumer. In other words, this consumer not only uses certain products but is also actively involved in the production processes, influencing the direction of company development and communication strategies. The prosumer has a distinct behavior that a company should know in order not to have unpleasant surprises. A prosumer is not only confined to consumer products and services, it will also talk about his experience with them and will try to influence the process of achieving them. The prosumer is a kind of unsolicited advocate of companies, who will articulate his opinions with frankness whenever he or she will feel the need publicly. Prospectors strive to be part of the production process. Every time, on a site, blog, Twitter or Facebook account, there can be seen user suggestions about the ingredients of a product, the way a service works or the design of some products. Prosumers are aware that they are informed and feel responsible to improve the products and services they consume.

The definition of a consumer profile refers to those data about habits, behavior, beliefs, and decisions that a buyer/customer has in relation to a particular product or service. Delivering a more accurate profile to the consumer is extremely important for both a business, a supplier of the product or service in question, and for the specialists in the promotion.

Getting to know better the client will give a precise perspective about what attracts him and makes him buy and use this information to better shape the product or service of a company according to consumer preferences. At the same time, using this information, promoters will know how to address their potential client and which communication channels they should use to arrive at the consumer faster. Therefore, here are the advantages of making a consumer profile as accurate as possible: defining the target (the consumer profile contributes to determining the main features of the business target), relevant and qualitative messages (include relevant customer information so that they are determined to choose the company's product rather than the competition), budget optimization (the channels through which a company can reach potential customers without testing different campaigns and promotion methods, but will go straight to the target with the right messages and communication channels used by them), creating a strong brand (when the customer is known, a company will have more chances to determine exactly what he needs and can deliver products and services accordingly. Having satisfied customers, the popularity of the brand will increase, which will lead to a strong image, well impregnated in consumer memory).

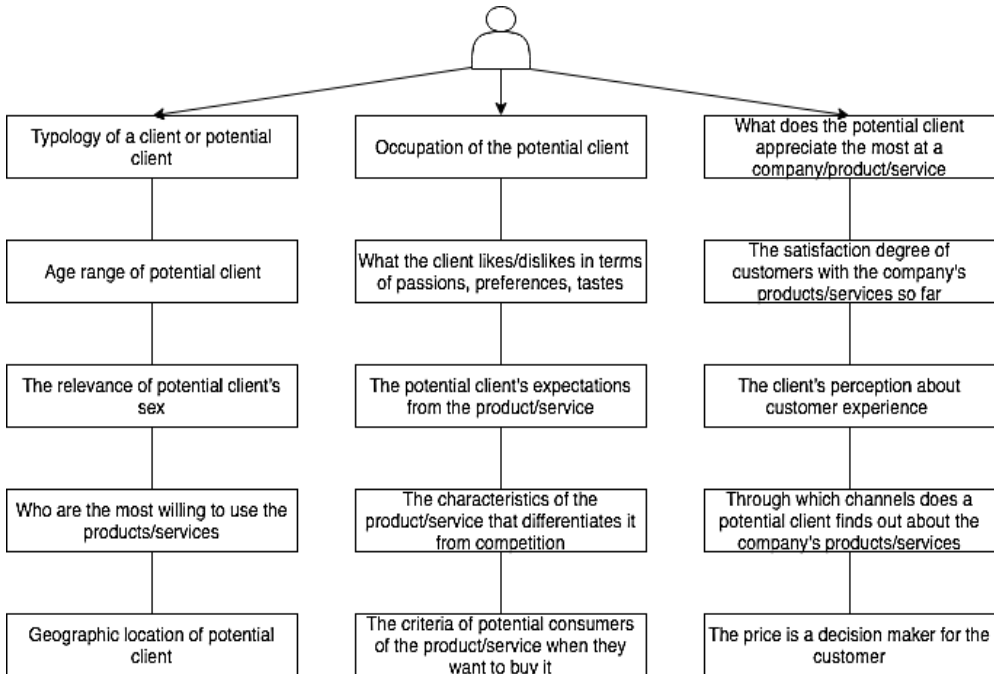
### **Elements of a proposed model user profile**

After determining the need for a consumer profile, it is necessary to determine what data it contains. Broadly speaking, the consumer profile should be similar to the description of a real person, from age and geographical location to favorite socializing passions and networks. When it comes to creating a profile, it is important to follow:

- Consumer age range, gender and geographical location - even in everyday life. This information is equally relevant when trying to sell a particular product or service or transmitting a message about what a company delivers / supplies / produces.
- Occupation of the potential client is necessary to estimate important customer data, such as the level of studies he/she has, the average of the income he/she enters, the consumption habits.
- Preferences, habits, passions - the more a consumer is better known, the better is known what he wants. Information about what he likes/dislikes, how he spends his spare time or what his passions are, can be extremely useful when projecting a marketing campaign, for example. A company will know exactly what kind of images / information / messages will make him react positively.
- The features/benefits of a product a person would buy or a service to call - when delivering something to a certain audience, a company needs to know exactly what the public would like from the product or service that is offered to him. Therefore, a company needs to know the potential customer's claims in order to give him what he desires - an important decision-maker in the acquisition process.

- Where are potential customers - which social networks they use, what sites they visit, what kind of publications they read, or what information channels they use. Thus, they can be greeted with products and information exactly where they are needed, in a familiar and enjoyable environment for them.

In order to categorize all this information as easily as possible, a consumer profile kit has been created with customer-specific questions to help shape the person:



**Figure 1. Model for consumer's profile**

### Methods of e-marketing – analysis

Social Media Marketing is growing in importance, but it becomes more segmented in 2018. In 2018 Facebook surpassed the incredible number of 2,000,000,000 users. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook>) Instagram, which is also owned by Facebook, will surely reach billions of users in 2018. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instagram>)

No business, and especially B2C, can afford to ignore the social environment. However, the results will be more and more difficult to achieve. Unless it is talked about a large brand that has a considerably marketing budget, the chances of achieving tangible marketing results through a wide-ranging campaign for everyone are nonexistent. The costs of promotion paid on social networks will increase and the organic impact will decrease. In order to have a positive return on investment in marketing, and to make the most of these platforms, there must be a more segmented strategy.

Augmented Reality (AR - Augmented Reality) has moved from a niche to a must-have technology, becoming the mainstream. In June 2017, Apple introduced ARKit, a tool for

software developers to help them develop iPhone AR experiences. Google soon released ARCore, the version for Android. By providing additional information to consumers about products until they are able to test them virtually, the applicability of AR can already be seen in the gaming, fashion, retail, and marketing industry.

AR causes consumers to interact more with products on the shelf in the store. Brands use AR technology to bring product labels to life and thus provide consumers with a fresh experience. Those interactive moments bring a new breath and help differentiate the product into the mind of the consumer. Interactivity generated by AR does not stop between store walls, passing them directly into the online. AR technology has the advantage of generating content in social media, improving word-of-mouth marketing strategy.

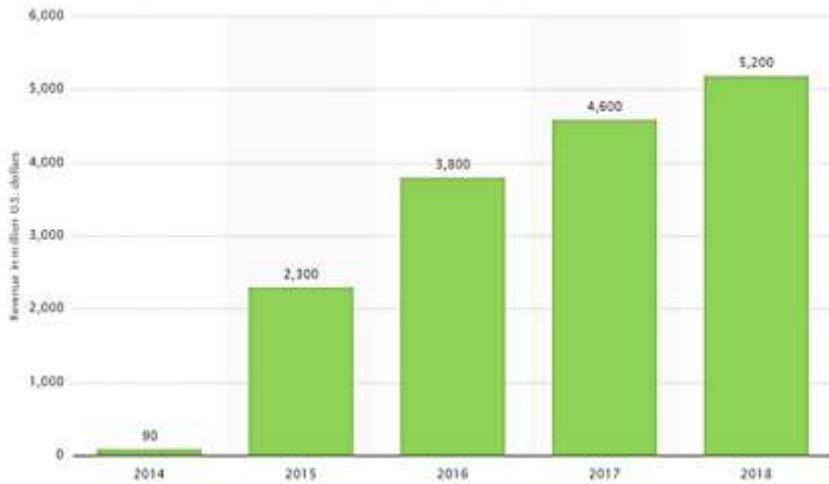
With the emergence of multiple channels of communication, marketers will be aware of the lack of distributional attention of consumers and will have to carefully choose where to do the promotion.

Virtual Reality (VR) - The spread of high-speed Internet access (5G) increases the demand for novelty technology features. This is also the case for Virtual Reality (VR) applications. By 2022, the total VR market will exceed \$ 26 billion, according to a survey by Zion Market Research. (<https://www.zionmarketresearch.com/news/virtual-reality-market>) Retailers, brands and service providers will have to rethink the strategy in the light of these issues.

Brands that offer 3D experiences will receive more attention from consumers. Advertising and the way in which sales are made will be strongly influenced by VR. Using the consumer's (or persona) profile, marketers will be able to place targeted ads in the 3D experience that the user considers relevant. VR already allows visual and audio experiences. The following senses that will be stimulated are the olfactory and tactile, practically a transposition into another reality. These upgrades will allow consumers to test and feel the products before they buy them. The VR is part of the future of retail. This will not only discuss e-commerce (electronic commerce) but also v-commerce (virtual commerce) or virtual commerce.

VR can also be used in e-retail. WebVR is an open-source tool to be integrated into your browser. The tool allows users to view 3D objects directly into the browser without having to download additional applications anymore. Basically, the user who wants to find out more details puts his 3D glasses that integrate the smartphone on which the product's image is displayed in the browser. The user can see the product from all angles, rotate it and even try its functionality.

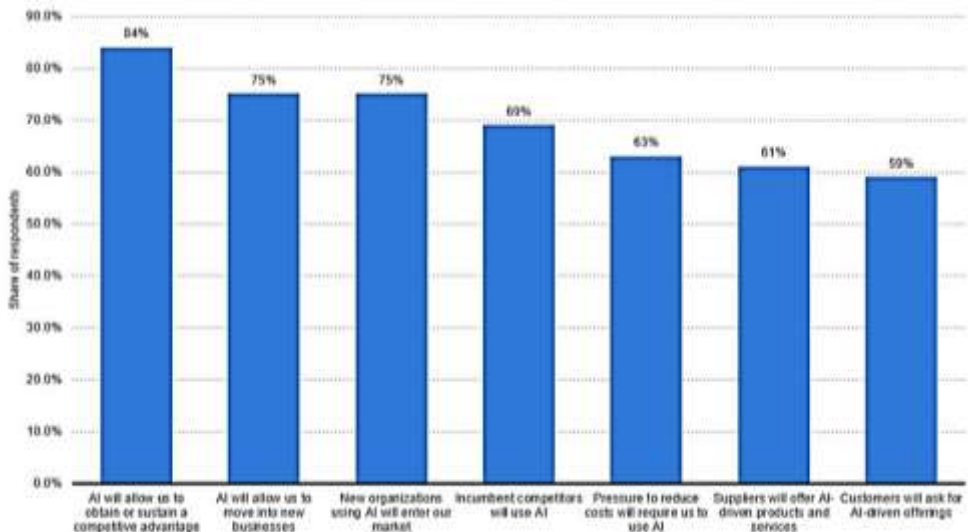
The Statista published an estimate by 2018 of revenue from VR, software, and hardware (see Figure 2, p.115).



**Figure 2. Virtual Reality incomes in the last four years (<https://www.brandweb.ro/blog/cum-imparti-placinta-pentru-a-fi-in-trend-in-2017-9-directii-pentru-bugetul-de-marketing>, accessed on June 15, 2018)**

The trend is to bring online facilities directly into store shelves. Retail and technology will become inseparable. Artificial Intelligence, Virtual & Enhanced Reality, and the Internet of Things will make a significant contribution to customizing your shopping experience.

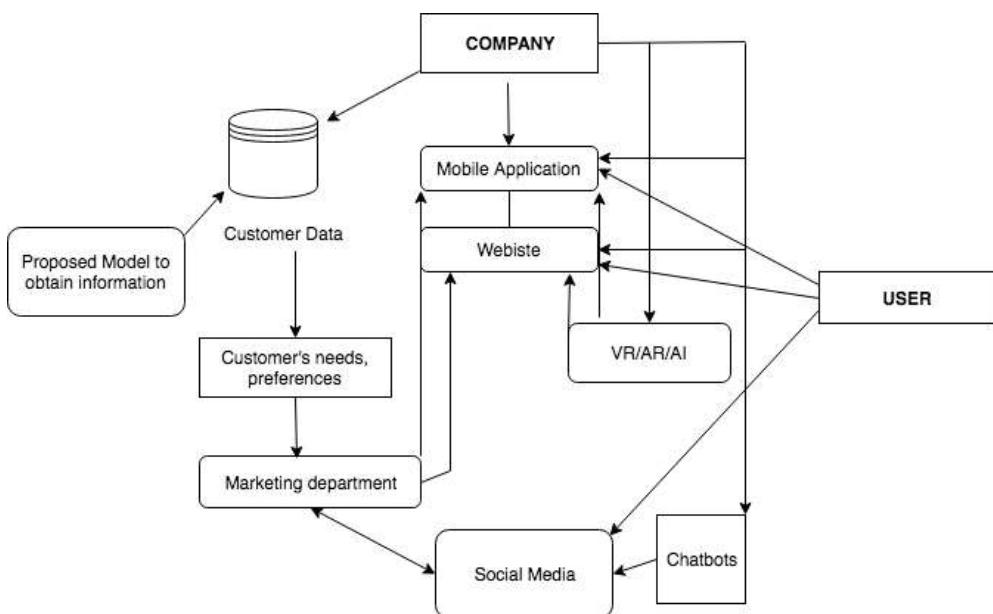
Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to change the way organizations and businesses communicate and innovate. Any industry that operates with huge amounts of data, those sets of data that cannot be independently analyzed and interpreted by the human mind, can turn to AI. Of course, any industry that needs customer service will find appropriate solutions in AI. Already, in customer - talking with robots that solve problems. In the near future, these robots are expected to be emotionally intelligent, to have the ability to recognize and communicate emotions and feelings.



**Figure 3. Predictions of AI usage (<https://blogs-images.forbes.com/louiscolombus/files/2018/01/Reasons-for-adopting-AI-Worldwide.jpg>, accessed on June 18, 2018)**

Chatbot - Due to expanding Internet access and increasing the number of smartphone users, messaging applications have become a significant part of the mobile applications market, providing users with an alternative to SMS messaging. Messaging applications have enhanced features such as group chats or photo sharing. Mobile messaging applications are the ideal communication channels for consumers who are always on the move and want an instant response. Consumers want to know that their issues are important and that someone will immediately deal with their resolution. A chatbot has this ability to respond immediately and even to solve tasks that an employee should spend time on. Chatbot chats can be used in marketing as the first contact with customers and to collect their email addresses for subscribing to the newsletter, for example.

It can be seen that people tend to increasingly use mobile devices and applications that can be installed on them. Because of the lack of time, they are starting to increasingly prefer the activation of goods and services through the online environment. By offering attractive means to help them visualize their appearance, consider them a necessity that they must hold, they become consumers of certain brands. Thus, companies should identify their target market and focus on using these new marketing methods, which are preferred by consumers and who rely on their wishes to win and turn them into loyal customers. The following model aims to adopt the newest e-marketing methods, which are proven to be consumers' and enjoyable:



**Figure 4. Model of using new marketing methods**

The model proposed to find out as much information about the consumer is one needed to build their profiles, data that will be stored in a company database. These data are processed and used by the marketing department, which is essential in determining the methods and channels through which they can contact consumers. The company must also have a web page or website. Integrating chatbots into both social media channels as well as on the site and application facilitates communication with users, giving them quick information and helping them 24/24 hours. The VR, AR, and AI elements



contribute to a pleasant experience, helping people visualize products in a manner that is close to reality without moving to a physical location or remaining undecided or not.

### **Conclusions and implications / Discussions**

The role of marketing in the market economy is inconceivable. Marketing combines the two fundamental functions of society - production and consumption and directs the whole economic activity to meet the needs and desires of consumers. Marketing has the role of providing the necessary information to market knowledge, bringing the company's technological capabilities to the needs of potential buyers. In addition, its relational character allows the establishment of credibility links between the firm and the environment, absolutely necessary for business success, transforming society's needs into business opportunities.

In any market economy and even in any competitive field, in order to achieve its objectives (profit, sales, market survival, etc.), the consumer occupies the central position. The consumer is the reference element for the actions of the suppliers of products or services, merchants. By purchasing their decisions, consumers determine the sales and profits of a company. In a competitive environment, the company does not survive if it does not study the consumer. Successful, profitable companies in market-economy countries are based on their consumer-related marketing strategies. To be profitable, an organization must first meet the consumer's needs: study it, understand its needs, wishes, motivation, and seek to achieve genuine consumer satisfaction.

Marketing is a field flooded with new technologies without which we thought we could not work. Sophisticated tools, digital strategies, and smart technologies make it easier for marketing people to make their choices more difficult. Technology creates new opportunities, for example, chatbots, facial recognition, image recognition and robotics. All provide marketers with information to train Artificial Intelligence and deliver personalized and geo-localized experiences, impressing their customers. These trends should not be seen as a must-have, but must of all be understood and filtered by the critical mind of the marketing man who finally chooses those technologies that support his business goals.

This paper proposes a model that helps to establish the level of consumer knowledge in order to develop a marketing strategy. We have identified new marketing methods that are growing in size and that have a positive impact on people in order to make them choose a product/service from a particular company to the detriment of another. Thus, once held information about consumers, as well as about the methods to which they are receptive and who attract them, a marketing model is proposed for companies, aiming at increasing the number of clients, sales, notoriety, turnover, brand consolidation.

### **References**

- Ali, R., & Bani Hashim, A.Y. (2017). Integrating policies and e-marketing. An examination of the outcomes on customer satisfaction capability. *International Journal of Human and Technology Interaction (IJHaTI)*, 1(1). Retrieved from <http://journal.utem.edu.my/index.php/ijhati/article/download/2837/1974>.

- Barwise, P., & Farley, J.U. (2005). The state of interactive marketing in seven countries: interactive marketing comes of age. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 19(3), 67-80.
- Bonetti, F., Warnaby, G., & Quinn, L. (2018). Augmented reality and virtual reality in physical and online retailing: a review, synthesis and research agenda. In Timothy Jung and M. Claudia tom Dieck (eds.), *Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality* (pp. 119-132). Cham: Springer.
- Chaturvedi, M. (2018). A Conceptual Study on Recent Trends, Challenges and Opportunities in E-Marketing:-in Special Reference with 7 Up Case Study. *International Journal of Engineering Technology Science and Research - IJETSR*, 5(1), 817-825. Retrieved from [http://www.ijetsr.com/images/short\\_pdf/1516554424\\_817-825-SJ84\\_molly.pdf](http://www.ijetsr.com/images/short_pdf/1516554424_817-825-SJ84_molly.pdf).
- Marasco, A., et al., (2018). Exploring the role of next-generation virtual technologies in destination marketing. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 9, 138-148.
- Marinchak, C.L.M., Forrest, E., & Hoanca, B. (2018). The Impact of Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Personal Assistants on Marketing. In *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology* (pp. 5748-5756), Fourth Edition, IGI Global.
- Papista, E., Chrysochou, P., Krystallis, A., & Dimitriadis, S. (2018). Types of value and cost in consumer-green brands relationship and loyalty behaviour. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 17(1), e101-e113.
- Scholz, J., & Duffy, K. (2018). We ARe at home: How augmented reality reshapes mobile marketing and consumer-brand relationships. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 44, 11-23.
- Shaltoni, A.M., et al. (2018). Electronic marketing orientation in the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises context. *European Business Review*, 30(3), 272-284.
- Siau, K., & Yang, Y. (2017). Impact of Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, and Machine Learning on Sales and Marketing. In *Twelve Annual Midwest Association for Information Systems Conference (MWAIS 2017)* (pp. 18-19), May.
- Sotolongo, N., & Copulsky, J. (2018). Conversational marketing: Creating compelling customer connections. *Applied Marketing Analytics*, 4(1), 6-21.
- Tulk, S.A. (2018). Comprehensive business marketing methodology integrating business, community, community organizations and consumer, and simultaneously integrating and adapting technologies: internet, mobile device, location navigation, application and QR code technology. U.S. Patent Application No. 14/999,819.
- Turban, E., et al. (2018). Social Commerce: Foundations, Social Marketing, and Advertising. In E. Turban et al., *Electronic Commerce* (pp. 285-324), second edition, Cham: Springer.
- Waheed, A., & Jianhua, Y. (2018). Achieving consumers' attention through emerging technologies: The linkage between e-marketing and consumers' exploratory buying behavior tendencies. *Baltic Journal of Management*, 13(2), 209-235.