Journal of Marketing Analytics (2024) 12:743–745
https://doi.org/10.1057/s41270-024-00357-4

EDITORIAL

Marketing analytics in 2024 conferences: AI and data-driven decision-making

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Accepted: 11 October 2024 / Published online: 28 October 2024
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The field of marketing (and business) analytics has been developing significantly during the last decade, especially with regard to new (generative) AI technologies. A reflection of this rapid evolution can be seen by the strong presence of analytics-related topics in prominent marketing conferences of 2024. Some of the key themes appearing in the 2024 marketing conferences in relation to marketing analytics include AI integration, consumer engagement, data-driven decision-making, and ethical aspects, as reflected in Fig. 1 and discussed below.

The American Marketing Association (AMA) has been a leading force in shaping marketing since 1953 when Neil Borden introduced the concept of the "marketing mix" (AMA 2024). The AMA's mission is to be the most relevant force and voice shaping marketing globally and to serve as an essential community for marketers. In 2015, the "Next AMA" launched four transformational strategies for its North American operations, including (1) committing to service leadership, (2) providing a unified voice and community, (3) establishing an intellectual agenda, and (4) building a personalized and connected marketplace of knowledge. The AMA also publishes leading journals in the field of marketing, including the *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, *Journal of International Marketing*, and *Journal of Interactive Marketing*.

The 2024 AMA Summer Academic Conference reflects a strong focus on marketing analytics, which is prominently featured in multiple sessions and presentations, particularly under the Marketing Research and Analytics track (AMA Conference 2024). Notable contributions to this area include studies on advanced techniques such as logit modeling and text analysis for short-form content in marketing, as well as sequential decision-making processes in marketing. Additionally, the track explores innovative methodologies, such as adapting text analysis for short texts and item response theory for measuring consumer motivations. These topic areas demonstrate the evolving role of marketing analytics in offering insights into consumer behavior, improving decision-making models, and optimizing marketing strategies through data-driven approaches.

Founded in 1971, the Academy of Marketing Science (AMS) has become one of the world's leading scholarly marketing organizations (Babin and Krey 2022; Berkman 1992). Its mission is to raise collaboration among scholars, educators, and practitioners from around the world while promoting high standards in marketing education, research, and practice (Ferrell et al. 2021). To achieve this aim, the AMS holds two conferences each year: The AMS Annual Conference held in North America, attracts scholars from various countries for presentations, panels, and workshops centering around marketing topics. The World Marketing Congress brings similar conversations to locations around the world, to create fellowship, collaboration, and networking across borders.

In 1973, the AMS began to publish the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (*JAMS*), which is devoted to advancing the science and practice of marketing through research-based articles. *JAMS* ranks among the journals with the highest academic impact factors in marketing and business (Borah et al. 2023). Since 2011, the AMS has published *AMS Review*, which focuses on conceptual contributions that integrate research and theory from marketing and non-marketing disciplines (Babin et al. 2021; Crittenden and Peterson 2011). The AMS also publishes *AMS Quarterly*, a newsletter that provides updates on AMS activities, member achievements, and other relevant news (AMS 2024).

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Fig. 1 Main conference marketing analytics themes

Topics surrounding marketing analytics have traditionally been strongly represented at AMS events. For example, the AMS has offered various courses on marketing analytics and advances in structural equation modeling, a webinar series on how to integrate AI into marketing education, and a generative AI certificate program. Similarly, the AMS Annual Conference and World Marketing Congress have a long tradition of featuring tracks related to marketing analytics. This year's Academy of Marketing Science (AMS) and AMS World Marketing Congress (WMC) conferences emphasize the growing significance of marketing analytics and AI in shaping the future of marketing strategies. One of the key tracks is focused on **AI, Big Data, and Marketing Analytics**, co-chaired by Dr. Maria Petrescu, highlighting the essential role of AI in marketing (AMS Conference 2024). Presentations such as, "Leveraging Big Data Analytics to Facilitate Hospitality Firm Value," showcase the application of data analytics to improve firm performance, while another session, entitled **Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Sales**, explores the role of AI in sales decision-making and its impact on performance. Various AMS-WMC sessions also discuss how AI and analytics are driving insights into consumer behavior and emphasize the role of advanced data analytics methods in marketing research (AMS-WMC 2024).

The European Marketing Academy (EMAC), established in 1975, is a professional society dedicated to individuals involved with or interested in marketing theory and research (EMAC 2024). The purpose of EMAC is to provide a platform for professionals interested in marketing theory and research. It aims to serve as the core of a communication network meant to inform and promote international exchange in the field of marketing, and it currently has over 1000 members from more than 57 countries across all five continents (EMAC 2024). This organization also publishes the *International Journal of Research in Marketing*.

The 2024 EMAC conference had a strong focus on marketing analytics, particularly reflected in various sessions that integrated machine learning, AI, and quantitative methods. Key sessions included topics such as Quantitative Marketing: Machine Learning & AI, and AI and Analytics in the Multidisciplinary Marketing Ecosystem, which explore advanced analytical approaches like zero-shot learning for product recommendation and the role of large language models in optimizing digital marketing (EMAC Conference 2024).

The Society for Marketing Advances (SMA) is a premier marketing association that hosts an annual conference bringing together marketing educators and professionals from the US and abroad (SMA 2024). SMA is founded to encourage service, research, and education in all marketing phases and facilitate the exchange of ideas among members with similar interests. SMA promotes the growth of intellectual leadership in the field of marketing on the part of teachers, researchers, students in universities, businesses, and the government.

The 2024 Society for Marketing Advances (SMA) conference prominently features marketing analytics through multiple sessions focusing on the integration of AI, digital transformation, and data-driven decision-making in marketing practices. Specific sessions that reflect marketing analytics include workshops and panels addressing AI's growing role in consumer engagement and branding, such as AI—The Good, the Bad and the Scary, AI-Powered Marketing, and Big Data & AI—How Do They Work Together? (SMA Conference 2024). These sessions explore the application of AI tools in predictive analytics, consumer behavior analysis, and enhancing marketing strategies. Discussion topics also focus on using AI to improve marketing education including the ethical implications of these technologies. For example, the session entitled, "How AI Is Revolutionizing Marketing," highlights the impact of AI on data collection, segmentation, and targeting, displaying the relevance of marketing analytics in real-world applications. Additionally, sessions like, "Maximizing Higher Education Marketing with AI and AI in Marketing—Equipping Students for Future Success," underscore the importance of incorporating analytics into educational curriculums, and preparing the next generation of marketers for a data-driven future.

The Association of Collegiate Marketing Educators (ACME) is a non-profit organization with the mission to advance marketing education, research, and the development of marketing faculty (ACME 2024). This organization is aimed at improving the effectiveness of marketing education in preparation for the practice of marketing. The 2024 Association of Collegiate Marketing Educators (ACME) conference presentations highlighted a significant focus on marketing analytics, reflecting its growing importance across multiple areas of marketing research and practice. This year's conference featured a specific track on **Marketing Research and Analytics**, co-chaired by Dr. Anjala Krishen, with key presentations including research on innovative techniques integrating AI, such as ChatGPT, to enhance consumer experience and marketing processes (ACME 2024).

One notable presentation examined the integration of Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) in consumer behavior and marketing strategies, discussing their role in enhancing predictive accuracy and improving consumer engagement. Another session explored data privacy concerns, trust, and risk in social media, specifically analyzing how these factors influence consumer behavior toward privacy policy knowledge.

Data availability Not available.

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Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

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