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THE EMERGENCE OF AI IN RETAIL: HOW IT'S CHANGING HOLIDAY SALES

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ABSTRACT

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) tools into Malaysia's retail sector is revolutionizing the holiday shopping experience. As Malaysian consumers increasingly embrace AI-driven platforms, they benefit from personalized shopping experiences, real-time price monitoring, and tailored product recommendations. This transformation is particularly evident during key retail events such as 11.11, 12.12, Cyber Monday, and year-end sales. By enabling price comparisons, delivering customized gift suggestions, and offering seamless online shopping experiences, AI is reshaping how Malaysians approach festive shopping. With capabilities to track prices across various e-commerce platforms, assist in discovering culturally significant gifts, and help shoppers in making informed decisions, AI tools offer a more efficient, personalized, and enjoyable shopping experience. The future of holiday shopping in Malaysia is increasingly defined by AI's capacity to enhance consumer convenience while ensuring the festive purchasing journey remains aligned with individual preferences and budgets.

Keywords: AI, retail, Malaysia, festive, consumer

INTRODUCTION

As Malaysia's festive season approaches at the end of every year, retail is changing slightly. As consumers, we need purchase experiences become more personalized and efficient. Malaysian shops should quickly adopt AI technologies without delay. Imagine having a personal assistant who knows your preferences better than your closest friends. Malaysia's e-commerce is already showing this. Online retail assistants powered by AI are changing customer experiences. For instance, in gift shopping, these digital assistants use your browsing history and past purchases to propose products.

While browsing wide product catalogs on platforms such as TikTok shops, Lazada, and Shopee, you may notice their accurate recommendations. This is the result of powerful AI algorithms. These platforms are leading the way of using AI to improve customer experiences, especially during holiday shopping (Duckett, 2024).

The AI revolution goes beyond product recommendations. Are you tired of enduring endless queues for customer support during bustling shopping periods? Enter AI chatbots: your round-the-clock digital shopping assistants. These advanced virtual assistants are designed to address product queries and provide real-time updates on your orders, revolutionizing the customer service experience. These chatbots not only improve customer satisfaction, but also free up customer care agents to handle more complex issues (Chitra, 2023). The outcome? You get a better, simpler shopping experience, even during the holidays. Therefore, this article explores AI's emerging role in Malaysian retail, particularly during the holiday sales season.

RETAIL DECISION-MAKING USING AI

AI's background impact is just as revolutionary as its client applications. Have you ever wondered how retailers predict your needs, especially during festive seasons? The answer lies in AI-powered analytics. Consider a store manager planning for holiday sales. In the past, they used intuition or basic sales records. Today, they have a lot of AI-analyzed data to predict customer behavior accurately. Jain et al. (2023) explain how this data-driven approach helps merchants adjust their product assortments and pricing to meet consumer demand during peak seasons like the holidays.

AI's predictions go beyond stocking hot items. They are also changing supply chain management. Imagine a popular toy is unavailable before the festive season. This may have caused client dissatisfaction and lower sales. AI-driven analytics help retailers predict supply chain issues. According to Bansal and Bansal (2023), this proactive technique allows enterprises to handle issues before they affect sales, ensuring the availability of critical products during the holiday sales.

In the US, Meier (2024) explains that Savvy Black Friday shoppers are increasingly turning to AI tools like ChatGPT to find the best deals and streamline their holiday shopping experience. This trend reflects a shift from traditional in-store bargain hunting to a more tech-savvy approach, with 44% of likely Black Friday shoppers planning to use AI to navigate dynamic pricing and rapidly changing deals.

MARKETING PERSONALIZATION: AI-DRIVEN STRATEGIES

Let's look at how AI is changing marketing strategies as the holidays approach. Promotional campaigns are no longer uniform. AI allows previously impossible customization. Imagine receiving a personalized promotional email. Malaysian companies are using AI to segment their customers and adapt their marketing. Li et al. (2020) describe how retailers use consumer data to create personalized email marketing, social media ads, and in-app notifications.

Think about this: You are a Malaysian fashionista who is considering winter clothing for your holiday trip. You receive an unexpected winter clothing sale notification from your favorite retailer. Coincidence? Not exactly. This is AI assessing your preferences and purchase habits to offer relevant specials at ideal times. This customization goes beyond convenience. According to Pillai et al. (2020), making customers feel valued and understood builds loyalty. This personal touch is crucial in sales retail competition.

ADDRESSING DIFFICULTIES: HUMANIZING AI INTEGRATION

AI in retail has many benefits, but its drawbacks must be acknowledged. Data privacy and workforce adaptation are major problems as we use AI. Consider the massive personal data needed for AI to function effectively. How can we protect these data? These challenges require Malaysia's Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA). Chitra (2023) explains how this regulation regulates the collection and use of personal data, protecting consumer privacy in the AI era. Equipping the workforce for an AI-driven future may be the biggest issue. Imagine being a retail employee with years of customer service experience, only to watch AI increasingly controls customer relationships. Bansal and Bansal (2023) emphasize worker upskilling to analyze AI-generated insights and improve customer interactions.

CONCLUSION

As another holiday shopping season approaches, AI is revolutionizing Malaysian retail. Shopping has become more engaging and efficient with AI-driven shopping assistants and targeted marketing. Nonetheless, as we move toward an AI-driven future, we must carefully assess its challenges. We can ensure responsible and fair AI benefits by addressing data privacy and investing in secure application development.

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