



AI-Driven Personalization and Its Role in Customer Segmentation and Brand Positioning

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Abstract

The master's thesis examines the strategic role of AI-based personalization in marketing, showing that personalized communication is becoming increasingly important for companies as customer expectations rise and ever larger amounts of data need to be processed. To this end, it analyses how artificial intelligence (referred to as AI in the thesis) influences the formation and use of customer segments. This, in turn, raises the following question: How can companies use AI effectively to structure complex data in a meaningful way and make it usable for strategic decision-making?

Particular focus is placed on the effects of changed segmentation logic on brand positioning. In particular, the strategic level and the influence of new segmentation approaches on brand perception and positioning are considered. Methodologically, this master's thesis is based on a literature review and nine qualitative, guided interviews. The selection of experts from different fields provides a wide range of insights into current marketing practices.

The results show that AI-based personalization complements static segmentation approaches and that these are increasingly being complemented by dynamic, and above all, data-driven segmentation. It also becomes clear that segmentation is not being fundamentally rethought, but rather that existing concepts can be continuously adapted and further developed with the help of AI. Nevertheless, human strategic control remains essential to ensure brand consistency, authenticity, and customer trust. Taken together, this master's thesis not only provides theoretical results on the interaction between personalization, segmentation, and brand positioning but also practical recommendations for the strategic use of AI in marketing.

Title: AI-Driven Personalization and Its Role in Customer Segmentation and Brand Positioning

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Resumo

Esta dissertação de mestrado analisa o papel estratégico da personalização baseada em inteligência artificial no marketing, evidenciando a crescente relevância da comunicação personalizada diante do aumento das expectativas dos clientes e do volume de dados a processar. Neste contexto, analisa-se de que forma a inteligência artificial (designada como IA ao longo da dissertação) influencia a formação e a utilização de segmentos de clientes, levantando a questão de como as empresas podem utilizar a IA de forma eficaz para estruturar dados complexos e torná-los úteis à tomada de decisões estratégicas.

O foco incide sobre os efeitos de lógicas de segmentação alteradas no posicionamento da marca, considerando, sobretudo, o nível estratégico e a influência de novas abordagens de segmentação na percepção e no posicionamento da marca. Metodologicamente, a dissertação baseia-se numa revisão da literatura e na realização de nove entrevistas qualitativas semiestruturadas com especialistas de diferentes áreas, o que permite obter uma visão abrangente das práticas atuais de marketing.

Os resultados demonstram que a personalização baseada em IA complementa abordagens de segmentação estáticas, sendo progressivamente ampliada por segmentações dinâmicas e orientadas por dados. Verifica-se, ainda, que a segmentação não é fundamentalmente reformulada, mas que os conceitos existentes podem ser continuamente adaptados com o apoio da IA. Contudo, o controlo estratégico humano permanece essencial para garantir a consistência da marca, a autenticidade e a confiança dos clientes. No seu conjunto, a dissertação apresenta contributos teóricos e recomendações práticas para a utilização estratégica da IA no marketing.

Título: Personalização Orientada por Inteligência Artificial e o Seu Papel na Segmentação de Clientes e no Posicionamento da Marca

Autora: Johanna Julia Fricker

Palavras-chave: Inteligência Artificial, Personalização Baseada em Inteligência Artificial, Segmentação de Clientes, Posicionamento da Marca, Marketing Orientado por Dados, Estratégia de Marketing, Marketing Digital

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, companies work with large amounts of data, and above all, very diverse ones. Davenport et al. (2019) show that AI can gain insights from extensive data, primarily numerical, text, and language data. For this reason, AI is a relevant tool in the marketing process, as much of this data typically arises from customer communication. Furthermore, Huang & Rust (2021) describe how certain forms of AI can recognize patterns in data, providing a basis for developing personalized content and addressing target groups more effectively. This creates a connection between the analysis of large amounts of data, the recognition of regularities, and the design of personalized customer communication. This raises the question of how AI-based personalization influences existing segmentation logic and what consequences this has for the brand and its positioning.

1.1 Academic and practical relevance

Previous literature shows that AI is primarily used to analyze large amounts of data and identify patterns that are relevant for marketing purposes (Davenport et al., 2019), demonstrating that AI creates a new technical basis that serves to better understand target groups and adapt content based on this data. A 2025 study by MMA and BCG shows that the majority of marketing decision-makers surveyed expect AI to be used for personalization in the future, as shown in Figure 1. Overall, 98% of respondents say that personalization processes are likely to be supported by AI in the coming years. In addition, other categories, such as content-related tasks, are mentioned in a similar context. These results show that AI is relevant for some important marketing-related processes and, above all, forms a foundation for personalized communication.

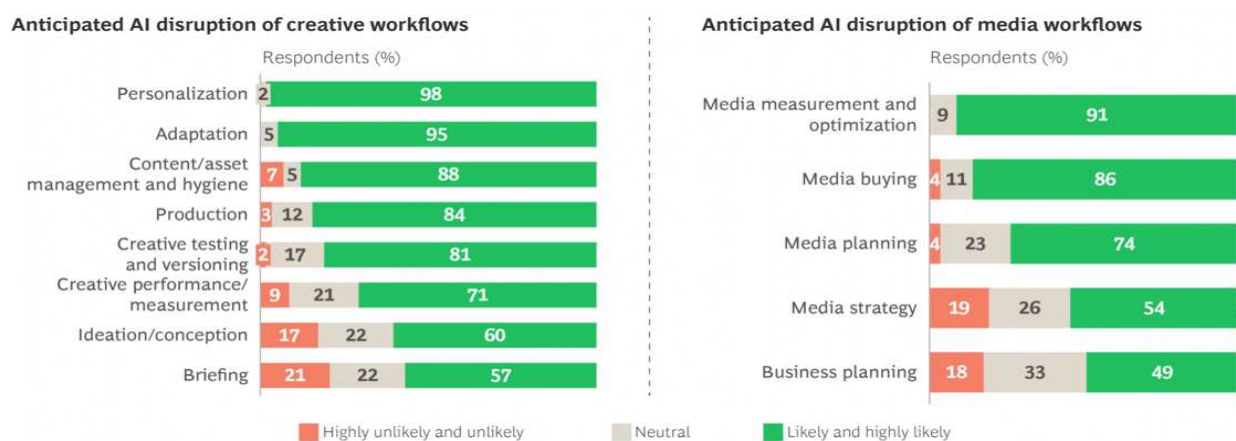


Figure 1: Expected use of artificial intelligence in creative and media workflows

Source: Marketing Measurement & Analytics (MMA) & Boston Consulting Group (BCG) (2025).

1.2 Objective of the thesis

The following master's thesis examines the relationship between AI-based personalization and customer segmentation. In this context, it aims to show how companies use AI to develop personalized content. It also examines whether the form of personalization changes existing segmentation logic. In addition, this thesis analyses the consequences of this development for brand messages and the brand's role in the market. The two research questions, which build on each other, aim to highlight the connections between the three aspects of personalization, segmentation, and brand positioning. This study is based on nine expert interviews, each offering different perspectives from various industries to reflect current views on the use of AI in marketing.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The introduction is followed by the next chapter, which provides the theoretical background and presents the existing literature, followed by the third chapter, which introduces and describes the research design and explains the qualitative methodology of the expert interviews. Subsequently, the data collection process and the analysis procedure are explained, followed by a structured presentation of the interview results in the fifth chapter, organized according to the topics of the research questions. This is then rounded off with a discussion of the results and concludes with a summary of the most critical findings, describing implications for companies and possible starting points for future research.

2. Literature review

The following literature review shows the current state of research on the topic in marketing and how it is changing, from personalization to brand positioning. As an introduction, the use of AI in marketing is outlined, followed by a look at the strategic role that AI-supported personalization plays today. In addition, traditional and AI-based approaches to customer segmentation are presented, before analyzing the connection between personalization and brand perception and the positioning of brands in an AI-driven environment. The literature review concludes by showing how these developments are fundamentally changing roles and tasks in marketing.

2.1 Introduction to AI in marketing

Artificial intelligence plays an increasingly important role in marketing, as it supports companies in analyzing data and making marketing-related decisions (Davenport et al., 2019). It is now embedded across a wide range of marketing processes, from customer segmentation to behavior forecasting and the creation of personalized content (Dhavaleshwar, 2024). Haenlein & Kaplan (2019) defined AI as: “a system’s ability to interpret external data correctly, to learn from such data, and to use those learnings to achieve specific goals and tasks through flexible adaptation.” Building on this, Huang & Rust (2021) frame AI as a technology that enables marketing systems to evolve from mechanical automation to “thinking” and even “feeling” capabilities. This allows firms to analyze customer data and customer interactions at different levels, including cognitive and emotional aspects (Huang & Rust, 2021).

The application of artificial intelligence in marketing has developed in the context of the general digital transformation of companies. Rust & Lemon (2001) have already shown that technological developments have changed the interaction between companies and customers, as well as the handling of customer data. Above all, it is emphasized that digital and interactive channels help companies to understand their customers better and to systematically collect and use information about them (Sousa & Voss, 2006). Companies are increasingly using digital tools to collect and manage customer-related information and incorporate it into marketing activities.

These developments are also reflected in other, later research, as described by Davenport et al. (2019) and De Bruyn et al. (2020). They explain that the methods are used to analyze large amounts of data and identify patterns in customer data. AI is also used to analyze extensive customer data and to assist in identifying and predicting customer preferences (Davenport et al., 2019). AI is also used in a variety of other marketing activities, such as customer segmentation, campaign planning, and the personalization of marketing content (Babatunde et al., 2024). Furthermore, Babatunde et al. (2024) suggest that the use of AI supports marketing processes, primarily by making marketing content more data-driven and adaptable.

Suraña-Sánchez and Aramendia-Muneta (2024) also summarize that some studies analyze the relationship between personalized marketing measures and customer engagement. In addition, Ahmed et al. (2025) discuss the role of artificial intelligence in real-time analysis of customer data in adapting marketing communication to individual customer needs and refer, in this context, to possible implications for trust in the relationship between the customer and the brand.

Nowadays, AI is used in marketing for much more than just individual operational tasks. AI is used in broader marketing contexts, particularly to support decision-making and automate processes (Davenport et al., 2019). In addition, Davenport et al. (2019) describe the use of AI in marketing, particularly in data analysis and the automation of routine, recurring tasks. Huang & Rust (2018) distinguish between different forms of AI in marketing. These include mechanical AI for automating tasks. On the one hand, there is ‘thinking AI’ for the analysis and processing of data, and on the other hand, ‘feeling AI’ in connection with the analysis of customer interactions. Building on this, Davenport et al. (2019) explain that the use of AI goes hand in hand with changing roles for marketing employees, as tasks with high automation potential are increasingly being taken over by systems. On the other hand, Davenport et al. (2019) emphasize that human actors in marketing remain more involved in monitoring, coordinating, and making more strategic decisions.

2.2 AI-driven personalization and its strategic role

This chapter examines personalization in marketing and discusses how artificial intelligence is treated in the literature. First, traditional approaches to personalization are explained, followed by a presentation of AI-driven personalization as discussed in current studies. The chapter also summarises the advantages and challenges, and shows how personalization is treated in current research.

2.2.1 Traditional personalization and its customer impact

Traditional personalization has often relied heavily on static customer segments, such as age or income. However, this is not sufficient to determine dynamic customer behavior and is not flexible enough (Sousa & Voss, 2006). Huang & Rust (2021) describe AI-based systems as enabling learning processes that can adapt to new data patterns. Social media campaigns in particular benefit from AI-based personalization systems, as AI supports the selection and timing of content based on user data (Dhavaleshwar, 2024). These systems can be of great importance, especially for small to medium-sized enterprises, as they allow these companies to scale efficiently with limited resources (Okeke et al., 2024).

Personalization is associated with higher customer satisfaction and brand loyalty (Ifekanandu et al., 2023). By targeting consumers specifically, marketing costs and wastage are reduced, while relevance increases, meaning that personalization is a tool for improving efficiency (Rolando, 2024). Suraña-Sánchez & Aramendia-Muneta (2024) summarize studies that examine the relationship between personalized experiences and customer engagement. The

view is further broadened by the fact that generative AI allows content to be creatively regenerated and not just automated (Patil, 2024).

Recent research discusses AI-driven personalization as an extension of traditional personalization approaches, with a stronger focus on data-driven analysis and automation. The following section now moves away from conventional personalization to AI-driven personalization.

2.2.2 AI-driven personalization and marketing efficiency

AI-supported personalization refers to the use of AI to tailor marketing messages, offers, and content based on individual customer characteristics (Ahmed et al., 2025). To do this, AI uses customer data, such as purchasing behavior, to personalize content (Ahmed et al., 2025) automatically. Bhardwaj et al. (2024) also note that machine learning models can recognize patterns in large datasets and predict future customer behavior. Based on these predictive capabilities, AI-driven personalization helps firms anticipate customer behavior and preferences. This supports data-driven marketing decisions and targeting activities (Bhardwaj et al., 2024). AI can automate repetitive analytical tasks, while human involvement remains focused on oversight and decision-making (Rolando, 2024). In this sense, personalization through AI increases marketing efficiency because it can automate routines, enabling companies to communicate in a more targeted manner (Rolando, 2024). Steffi et al. (2025) discuss AI-based systems that analyze emotional responses in customer interactions and examine their relationship with engagement and brand loyalty.

Nevertheless, there are also some challenges and limitations, as emphasized by Karami et al. (2024). They explain that ethical risks can arise in connection with AI personalization, especially in cases of insufficient transparency or unclear data usage. Users can trust AI-based marketing strategies if they know how and for what purpose their data is being used. Huang & Rust (2021) also issue a warning. They caution against over-personalization, which can occur when AI becomes too individualized. This can lead to reactance, with consumers feeling manipulated and monitored. AI should therefore be used consciously, without creating the feeling that someone is being monitored. Organizational challenges are also emphasized, which play a role especially in the implementation of AI, as some companies fail to integrate it into existing processes or suffer from a shortage of skilled workers. In addition, there is often a lack of vision for the use of AI (Islam et al., 2024).

2.3 Customer segmentation in the age of AI

Before looking at how artificial intelligence is changing customer segmentation, it is crucial to understand the traditional approach to segmentation. The following section introduces these earlier methods, which still serve as the conceptual basis for AI-supported models today.

2.3.1 Traditional segmentation approaches

Smith (1956) is considered the founder of the concept of market segmentation. He distinguished between product differentiation, i.e., the adaptation of supply, and market segmentation, i.e., the adaptation of demand. Traditional segmentation emerged because markets are heterogeneous rather than homogeneous. This means that consumers differ in characteristics such as income, etc. In order to advertise in a more targeted manner and allocate marketing efforts more effectively, the aim was to identify homogeneous groups within heterogeneous markets.

Smith defines segmentation as follows: “a rational and more precise adjustment of product and marketing effort to consumer or user requirements” (Smith, 1956). This classic perspective assumed that segments are stable and long-lasting and was descriptive as well as static.

Based on Smith's work, later researchers such as Wind (2008) developed specific criteria for systematically classifying customers. Classic segmentation criteria according to Wind (2008) are demographic: age, occupation, and income, as well as geographic criteria including city, state, and region, followed by psychographic criteria such as values, personality, and lifestyle, and finally behavioral criteria such as loyalty and price sensitivity. These variables were measurably stable and easy to interpret. Since customers were classified statically, this approach followed the principle of being descriptive rather than dynamic. Once the segments had been defined, researchers formed the basis for strategic marketing decisions. To this end, segmentation became the basis for marketing decisions (Wind, 2008). This approach was discussed in the context of efficiency and profitability considerations in marketing strategy. In addition to precise positioning, this segmentation strategy also led to strong brand loyalty (Wind, 2008).

However, the focus shifted from product logic to customer value logic, as noted by Furrer (2002). In the 2000s, customer value-based segmentation began, whereby customers were grouped according to their customer lifetime value to concentrate marketing resources on long-term profitable customers (Furrer, 2002). This was the beginning of dynamic, value-oriented models, and thus a first step toward data-based and later AI-supported approaches.

Despite progress, traditional segmentation remained limited in its structure, which is why segmentation was hardly able to capture behavioral changes. The data collected mainly did not come from real-time interactions but from surveys. Smith (1956) points out that too many small segments are more accurate, but increase production and marketing costs, which is why a balance is important. Wind (2008) adds that traditional approaches can no longer cope with today's data complexity because customers are not dynamically represented.

However, these concepts form a theoretical basis for modern AI models. Hardcastle et al. (2025) show that AI-based segmentation builds on similar principles, while enabling greater precision and automation.

2.3.2 AI-enabled dynamic segmentation

AI is changing how companies form customer groups, because instead of fixed groups, they use AI to help analyze data and identify similarities in customer behavior. This allows dynamic customer segments to emerge that are constantly adapting (Hardcastle et al., 2025). For this process, AI uses data from previous purchases, clicks, and other behavioral data. From this, patterns are formed that show which customers behave similarly and have similar interests (Hardcastle et al., 2025). Because AI can process data in real time, which supports the delivery of timely and relevant marketing actions (Hardcastle et al., 2025). According to Islam et al. (2024), AI-supported marketing consists of three parts: personalization, predictions, and ethics. Personalization means, among other things, that AI analyzes customer data as well as browsing histories, purchasing behavior, and even online interactions. The goal here is to customize content and offers in real time by having AI learn from personal preferences and thereby support the dynamic adaptation of marketing content. Furthermore, predictions refer to AI-based analyses that identify patterns in consumer behavior to predict future actions and needs. Predictive models enable marketers to forecast what customers are likely to buy and when they will interact. Anticipating these things enables proactive action and more efficient resource allocation in marketing. Moreover, ethics also encompasses the moral and social responsibilities involved in the use and handling of AI. This includes data protection, the avoidance of algorithmic bias, and transparency in automated decisions. In order to build customer trust, it is important to follow ethical standards. Above all, it is relevant for maintaining consumer trust in AI-based marketing.

In addition, AI uses certain methods, such as clustering, which serve to form groups, as well as forecasting models. These methods can be used to create customer groups that exhibit similar

behavior automatically. This method replaces fixed rules with learning systems (Bhardwaj et al., 2024). AI also helps small businesses group their customers, helping to use resources more efficiently and enabling them to offer a personalized approach (Kedi et al., 2024). When analyzing data using AI, it is nevertheless important to consider the quality of the data, because if it is flawed, it will lead to incorrect classifications (Abreu et al., 2025). Nevertheless, there are also risks, such as a lack of transparency or unfair data use. Customers should always know when AI is being used and, above all, how it is using their data, as personalization can otherwise quickly be perceived as intrusive (Karami et al., 2024). However, some people like personalized advertising, especially when it is helpful. For this reason, companies must find a balance between relevance and a certain degree of privacy (Hardcastle et al., 2025).

2.4 From personalization to brand positioning

To understand the impact of AI on brand positioning, it is important to first examine the original function of personalization in shaping brand image. The following sections will examine the impact of customization on brand experience and the evolution of this relationship in the context of AI.

2.4.1 Traditional understanding of personalization

Nowadays, personalization plays a role in how people experience brands. It influences the customer experience and goes far beyond product recommendations. Personalization not only influences customers' thoughts and feelings, but it is also associated with customers' reactions and brand-related perceptions (Weidig et al., 2024). Personalized content can increase the perceived relevance of a brand (Weidig et al., 2024). However, mistrust can also be aroused if algorithms take too much control or are opaque (Obiegbu & Larsen, 2025).

2.4.2 The emotional experience and brand perception

This emotional experience, which was perceived as positive or unpleasant, influences how a brand is perceived, explains Obiegbu & Larsen (2025). A similar contradiction can be seen among young people, as the so-called personalization paradox, especially among Generation Z, shows that although this generation wants personalized offers, it is also concerned about its data (McKee, 2024). According to the definitions, Generation Z refers to individuals born after 1995, characterized by their digital nativeness and distinct behavioral patterns (Jayatissa, 2023). Personalization perceived as too intrusive or critical of data protection can worsen brand perception, whereas brands that take data protection seriously appear more credible (McKee,

2024). Laksamana et al. (2024) also show that AI-based personalization positively impacts brand awareness, brand image, and loyalty. Well-designed chatbot communication, for example, can improve brand image, while impersonal or flawed AI interactions can damage the brand's authenticity (Laksamana et al., 2024).

2.4.3 Brand positioning in an AI-driven environment

Brand positioning, which used to be heavily based on human intuition, is now shaped by AI, as it can take on strategic tasks (Huang & Rust, 2021). To gain a more detailed understanding of how exactly AI is changing brand positioning, the following chapter looks at current research approaches.

Huang & Rust (2021) distinguish between three basic types of AI, which are as follows: Mechanical AI, which means that simple tasks and data processing are automated; thinking AI, which means that patterns are recognized, and data-based decisions are supported; and the third type is feeling AI, which refers to the kind of AI that recognizes emotions and interprets human reactions. The most important of the three types mentioned for brand positioning is the last one, because it can charge brands, making brand messages more emotional and personal (Huang & Rust, 2021).

Hue & Hung (2025) show how AI can be used in different ways in brand management and identify six research directions for the role of AI in branding. They begin with the integration of AI into branding processes, for example, through chatbots, followed by interfaces between AI and social media, where AI evaluates how content influences brand perception. The third area of research is user-generated vs. brand-generated content, where AI evaluates how content influences brand perception. This is followed by analytical approaches, which include sentiment analysis, which can measure emotions and brand image even more accurately. The penultimate area of research is AI in brand strategy and customer experience, where brands can dynamically adjust their positioning. The final area of research is authenticity and trust, where the challenge is to still appear human despite automation. These six schools of thought are intended to show that brand management through AI has become broader in scope and increasingly data-driven (Hue & Hung, 2025).

From a practical perspective, Rodenhausen et al. (2024) emphasize that AI complements human decision-making by optimizing data-driven processes. At the same time, marketing professionals retain strategic and creative control. This collaboration between humans and AI enables competitive and efficient brand management.

For brand positioning to remain credible, trust is required, especially among the younger generation. According to Guerra-Tamez et al. (2024), brand trust depends on the perceived fairness and accuracy of AI systems. Pleasant, transparent, and empathetic AI interactions are particularly effective in building trust, especially among Generation Z. That is why brands that can balance data protection and emotion are considered credible and, above all, forward-looking (Guerra-Tamez et al., 2024).

AI theme	Combined with	Effect on Brand Positioning	Source
Feeling AI	Emotions and human reactions	Makes brand communication emotional and personal	Huang & Rust (2021)
Branding integration	Chatbots and process automation	Incorporates AI directly into brand management	Hue & Hung (2025)
AI social media interface	Content evaluation	AI measures how social content affects brand perception	Hue & Hung (2025)
Analytical approaches	Sentiment analysis	Enables more accurate measurement of emotions and brand image	Hue & Hung (2025)
Human AI interaction	Strategic and creative decisions	Combines AI data optimization with human creativity	Rodenhausen et al. (2024)
AI Systems	Fairness, transparency, empathy	Builds trust and credibility, especially among Generation Z	Guerra-Tamez et al. (2024)

Table 1: Conceptual overview of AI-driven mechanisms influencing brand positioning

2.5 Evolution of marketing roles

Marketing roles have evolved in the context of AI and data-driven marketing (Vlačić et al., 2021). Marketing is now less manual and more analytical, strategic, and technology-oriented (Dutt et al., 2024). The tasks that have changed are explained below.

According to Haleem et al. (2022), AI primarily takes on recurring tasks such as data analysis and campaign-related optimization, which were very time-consuming before the use of AI. Since AI allows for real-time adjustments, campaigns can be quickly adapted as AI constantly analyzes data and recognizes patterns (Rahman et al., 2025). In addition to campaigns, AI also

makes forecasts for future purchasing behavior more reliable, allowing marketers to focus more on strategy and interpretation while AI takes care of execution (Haleem et al., 2022).

Since marketers also need to read and analyze data, they need to develop data literacy (Rosário & Dias, 2023). To do this, they need an understanding of technology so that they are also able to use AI tools correctly (Vlačić et al., 2021). Nevertheless, some soft skills, such as creativity and communication skills, remain important because they are difficult to automate. In addition to soft skills, training and regular continuing education are important to keep pace with current AI systems (Vlačić et al., 2021).

Since constant changes affect entire marketing departments and organizational structures, companies are required to modernize their structures so that AI-supported marketing can function, e.g., by creating new teams and roles (Rosário & Dias, 2023). The new teams and roles introduce new areas of responsibility, including data protection, data quality, and security. If these organizational adjustments are not made, marketing will remain less effective despite the available technology (Rosário & Dias, 2023).

Not only are these roles changing, but marketing executives must possess digital skills and support data-driven decisions. Dutt et al. (2024) discuss the increasing relevance of agility, data use, and narrative capabilities for marketing leaders. It is precisely this combination of data analysis and storytelling that is essential for creating compelling brand communication (Dutt et al., 2024). The newly emerging roles are associated with marketing outcomes such as customer loyalty and sales performance (Rahman et al., 2025). Nowadays, success in marketing is increasingly discussed in relation to measurable performance indicators (Rahman et al., 2025).

2.6 From current knowledge to research focus

Previous literature has shown that AI is changing marketing, with personalization, segmentation, and brand positioning being particularly affected. The following concluding chapter of the literature review highlights what research has shown and identifies open questions. Finally, the research focus is derived from this.

AI supports personalization through pattern recognition in data (Huang & Rust, 2021), while AI-based real-time adjustments support the delivery of relevant advertising messages and are associated with higher interaction rates (Ziakakis & Vlachopoulou, 2023). In addition, personalized content is associated with customer engagement and satisfaction (Potwora et al., 2024). The fact that AI personalizes content also changes customer grouping. Here, AI can help discover new segmentation patterns without marketers having to define variables in advance (Huang & Rust, 2021). Furthermore, AI-based segmentation can help to gain a more

comprehensive understanding of customer needs, as it uses many more data sources (Rosário & Dias, 2023). These segments then, in turn, influence how brands position themselves, for example, through the feeling AI already explained, which helps brands to develop emotionally relevant positioning and be perceived as more relevant by customers (Huang & Rust, 2021).

Although the areas mentioned have already been well researched, other aspects have not yet been sufficiently investigated. This primarily includes studies that only consider individual areas, e.g., often only personalization or exclusively positioning, and there is rarely any research that explains the interplay between personalization, segmentation, and positioning. There is a particular lack of knowledge about how personalization can create or change new segments, and there is little insight into the question of how segmentation specifically influences brand positioning. In addition, research has, so far, rarely identified negative risks, such as customer mistrust and its influence on brands.

The research topic can be embedded in this interface. Personalization can be seen as a basis for redefining target groups. AI can help to group customers into new, smaller, and more dynamic segments, which in turn can change how brands need to be positioned to communicate appropriately. The thesis aims to find out how personalization influences segmentation and what strategic consequences this has for brand positioning. Three areas that have rarely been examined together are investigated here, including AI-driven personalization, customer segmentation, and brand positioning.

3. Problem definition & Research question

3.1 Objectives

AI is changing marketing by enabling new forms of personalization and data-driven decisions. This allows companies to better understand individual customer needs and tailor their communication accordingly. This development also influences how customer segments are defined and how brands position themselves in increasingly dynamic markets. Although these changes have been demonstrated several times in theory, there is little empirical evidence to date on how they manifest themselves in practice. It can be helpful to identify new approaches to segmentation and gain valuable insights for adapting marketing strategies in an AI-driven environment in order to understand how marketing professionals perceive and use AI-supported personalization.

Therefore, this thesis aims to examine how AI-based personalization influences customer segmentation and what strategic consequences this has for brand positioning. By evaluating

interviews with experts from marketing and branding, this thesis aims to contribute to both the scientific understanding and practical application of AI in strategic marketing.

3.2 Research question

This paper examines the influence of AI-supported personalization on key marketing concepts. The focus is on two interrelated dimensions: customer segmentation and brand positioning. The aim is to understand how personalization based on AI technologies influences the structure and dynamics of customer segments and what strategic consequences this has for brands. For this reason, we would like to answer the following research questions in this thesis:

1. How does AI-based personalization influence customer segmentation?

This section examines how AI support enables companies to identify and describe customer segments in new ways. AI enables large amounts of data to be analyzed in real time and patterns in behavior, interests, or interaction with brands to be identified, rather than defining target groups according to demographic or psychographic characteristics as has been the case up to now. This primarily results in dynamic segments that can change more quickly and are tailored more closely to each customer. This research shows how marketing managers perceive these new segmentation approaches, what opportunities and challenges they see in them, and to what extent they are shifting traditional segmentation logic.

2. How do AI-driven changes in customer segmentation influence brand positioning?

The second step involves finding out how these AI-driven changes in customer segmentation influence the strategic orientation and communication of brands. Since the use of AI changes how customer groups are defined and understood, brand messages, differentiation strategies, and values must also be adapted accordingly. For this reason, this paper examines how companies are adapting their positioning to new, data-based customer segments. It considers the potential for more precise and relevant brand communication and also looks at risks such as over-personalization or a possible loss of customer trust. The overall aim is to develop a deeper understanding of how brand strategies must evolve in an AI-driven market environment to remain relevant and credible.

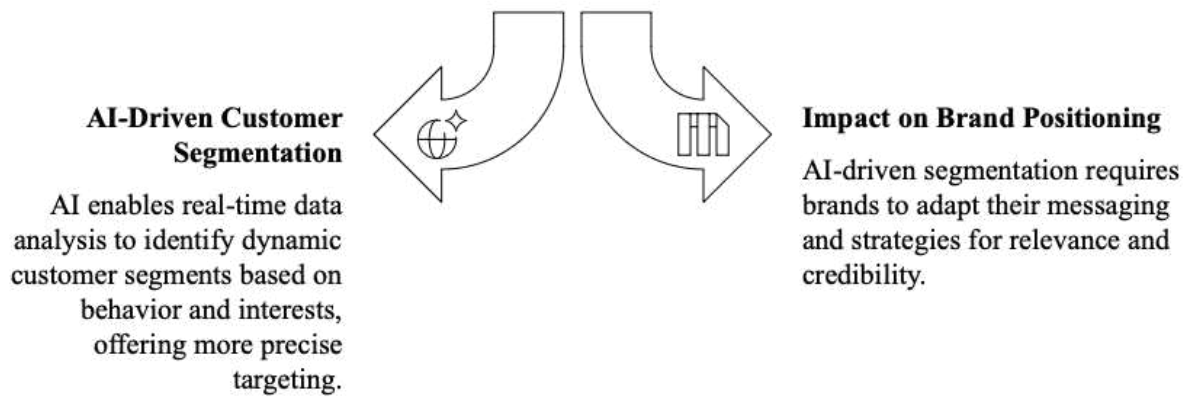


Figure 2: Research Questions

3.3 Problem definition

As already described, previous research shows that AI is changing marketing, especially in personalization, segmentation, and brand positioning. However, it has also become clear that there is still little understanding of how these three areas are precisely connected and influence one another. This leads to a specific problem: although companies are increasingly using AI-supported personalization, there is little empirical evidence on how this development is changing the formation of customer segments and what strategic consequences this has for brand positioning.

Previous studies have mainly provided some theoretical approaches to this issue, while there has been little insight from practice so far. However, this lack of understanding is very relevant for both academia and companies. For further research, it is important to better understand how AI-based personalization and segmentation are related to brand strategy. To remain relevant, companies need to understand how to adapt their brand communication to changing target groups.

This study takes a qualitative approach to investigating this problem. Interviews with marketing and branding experts are used to find out how AI personalization is perceived in practice, what changes are being observed in segmentation, and how this ultimately affects marketing strategies.

3.4 Expected contribution

For the first time, all three areas are linked: AI personalization, dynamic segmentation, and brand positioning. The work shows how brand experts experience these connections in practice. This is a critical perspective that has been missing in the literature or has not yet been explored in depth. The resulting findings can help to supplement or even further develop existing

theoretical models. The study provides concrete categories and patterns that have only been described in general terms in existing research. This master's thesis contributes to a clearer definition of AI's role as a strategic factor in brand management.

Brand managers make an essential practical contribution, as they gain practical insights into how AI personalization is currently being used and what changes this entails. Above all, the thesis shows the impact of new segmentation models on brand messages and positioning. It also offers suggestions on how brands can communicate in a more relevant and trustworthy way when AI is used more extensively. The results of this research can help companies better assess the opportunities and risks of AI personalization going forward.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research design

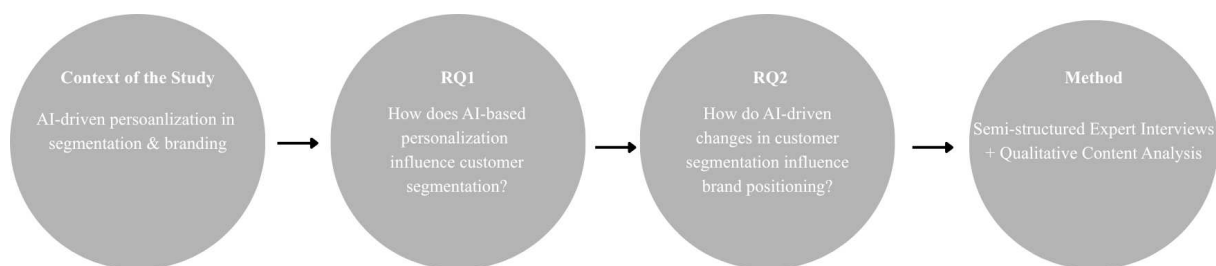


Figure 3: Conceptual Overview of the Research Design

The following chapter describes the research design chosen for this master's thesis. The qualitative method used here is appropriate because it helps to understand subjective experiences, perceptions, and their meanings. Since the field of research on AI-based personalization, segmentation, and brand positioning is still very much in its infancy, there are currently no clearly defined, theoretically established independent variables suitable for statistical testing. Existing studies use different concepts and definitions, leaving no uniform basis. For this reason, this work focuses on using a qualitative approach to first develop an in-depth understanding of relevant influencing factors, mechanisms, and correlations before empirical hypothesis testing becomes feasible and methodologically robust in future research. In addition, the flexible and exploratory nature of this method helps to cover unexpected topics through open questions, which would not be possible with a quantitative method. Since the combination of personalization, segmentation, and brand positioning has been little researched to date, the exploratory design is particularly suitable because it helps to investigate new or

little-researched relationships. The aim here is to discover new patterns and categories using an open method that helps to generate new insights. Since the phenomena of AI-based personalization, segmentation, and brand positioning have only been researched to a limited extent to date, this study takes an exploratory qualitative approach. The qualitative research approach is particularly well-suited and is used here to capture subjective perceptions and strategic decision-making processes in a dynamic market environment. To successfully implement this research approach, interviews with experts are conducted. The experts help to gain insights into how theoretical concepts are applied in practice. They also provide access to information that is not listed or explained in the literature. With their deep and practical knowledge, they can describe real developments and challenges and help improve understanding with concrete examples.

4.2 Data collection

Semi-structured expert interviews are conducted to collect data, striking a good balance between a targeted structure and flexibility. This provides a good mix of fixed research questions and the opportunity to incorporate new ideas from the interviewees. The interviews follow a guideline that was created in advance. This guideline primarily covers the three core areas of AI-based personalization, changes in customer segmentation, and effects on brand positioning. To ensure that only individuals with in-depth specialist knowledge are selected, targeted expert sampling is used. This helps to ensure that the focus is on the depth of the information obtained rather than statistical representativeness.

The target group is marketing and branding experts who already work with AI in marketing and also have experience with data-driven personalization. To ensure the interviews contribute to previous research, selection criteria must be applied when choosing interview partners. Firstly, the person must have at least three years of professional experience in marketing. They must also have a connection to AI, personalization, or brand management. People from different industries were interviewed in order to obtain different perspectives. Nine people were interviewed to ensure sufficient depth and comparability. The exact number of nine interviews was not determined in advance; it was determined during data collection based on the principle of data saturation. After the nine interviews had been conducted, no new relevant content emerged, as the central themes and perspectives began to repeat themselves, which corresponds to the qualitative research understanding of data saturation (Morse, 1995).

The interviews were conducted via Zoom, with the shortest interview lasting 30 Minutes and the longest lasting 50 Minutes. All participants took part voluntarily and were informed in detail

about the purpose and use of their data. Afterwards, all interviews were anonymized. The interviews took place between November 10 and November 29, 2025, allowing sufficient time for scheduling, conducting, and reflecting on each conversation. The selection and recruitment of interview partners is primarily carried out via LinkedIn and personal contacts, with all potential participants being informed in advance by email about the objectives and the procedure.

In order to ensure a clear connection between theoretical findings and empirical research, the interview questions were derived from the central themes of the literature review. In addition, the interview guide was pre-tested with a neutral person before the main interviews were conducted to ensure that all questions were understandable and relevant to practice.

4.3 Transcription process

All interviews were recorded using an app called ‘Minutes’, which transcribes conversations verbatim. To ensure a clean transcription, all irrelevant parts were removed, and statements relevant to the content were retained in full. After recording, the transcripts were edited manually and corrected several times. The aim was to ensure that all statements were reproduced correctly and unambiguously. The data were stored on a password-protected device accessible only to the researcher. No data was shared with third parties. Once the entire research project has been completed, the recordings and transcripts will be deleted entirely in accordance with ethical and data protection regulations.

4.4 Data analysis

The expert interviews are evaluated using a qualitative content analysis, as described by Mayring (1994). This method is used because it helps to structure and systematically understand the interview statements. The whole process aims to identify important topics, connections, and, above all, patterns that show how AI is changing brand positioning, personalization, and segmentation.

The qualitative content analysis used here follows a combined deductive and inductive approach. This means that the main categories are initially derived from the literature and the two research questions. At the same time, the analysis process remains open to new patterns and themes that emerge directly from the data material. This approach makes it possible to test existing theories, but also to develop new insights from practical experience.

The analysis procedure is described as follows. All interviews are transcribed so that no important information or statements are lost. After the interviews are completed, the transcribed

texts are read several times to get a feel for the content and identify initial patterns. Categories are then formed.

At the beginning, main categories are formed from the research questions, from which subcategories are then formed. Important passages in the text were then marked as explained by Mayring (1994) and assigned to the appropriate categories. To support this coding process, a qualitative data analysis software tool was used to organize, code, and systematically compare the interview material (MAXQDA). This helped identify which topics were mentioned frequently and how different experts thought about them.

The most important statements were then condensed, meaning that similar answers from different interviews were summarized. The aim here was to identify central patterns and work out connections.

At the end of the analysis, the statements should show how AI-based personalization creates new customer segments, how this changes brand positioning, and what opportunities and risks marketing experts see in this.

4.5 Reliability and validity

To ensure that the results are reliable and credible, all measures taken are presented below. All steps involved in data collection and evaluation are documented in detail so that the results can be traced later. To ensure that the topics are comparable, the same guidelines are used for all interviews, preventing them from deviating too much from each other in content.

To ensure that all participants answer honestly, all participants are anonymized and personal data is treated confidentially. Another measure is the researcher's reflection. During the analysis, the researcher continuously checks her own attitude to rule out possible prejudices and ensure an objective evaluation. This primarily prevents personal opinions from influencing the interpretations. If desired, the interview partners can receive a summary of their statements to ensure that all their answers have been correctly understood and reproduced.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed when conducting the interviews. These include, on the one hand, the voluntary participation of the interview partners. The person was informed in advance about the purpose of the interviews, how the data would be used, and that they could terminate the interview at any time without any disadvantages.

Secondly, before the interview began, verbal consent was obtained from each participant, confirming that they understood the objectives and purpose of the study and agreed to the recording and evaluation of the interview.

Moreover, as mentioned above, all interviews were anonymized to protect respondents' privacy. In addition, no names, company data, or other information will be published. For the sake of recognizability, participants were referred to in the thesis using neutral pseudonyms.

The collected data were also stored securely and were not passed on to third parties. All collected statements were used exclusively for the scientific purpose of this master's thesis and were therefore treated as strictly confidential. After completion of the thesis, the data will be deleted in accordance with data protection guidelines.

The researcher is aware of her ethical responsibility and ensured that the data was treated in a trustworthy, respectful, and, above all, objective manner throughout the entire research process. The research aims to present statements fairly, without distorting them or taking them out of context.

4.7 Description of the interview partners

For this master's thesis, nine experts from the fields of marketing, brand management, digitalization, and AI-supported business models were interviewed. All interview partners have several years of professional experience in strategic and operational roles related to marketing, communication, innovation, and data analysis.

To highlight different perspectives on AI-supported personalization, the interviewees work across various industries and bring distinct strategic marketing perspectives. Most of the interviewees have management experience or hold positions of responsibility, which provides direct insight into current challenges and strategic decisions. The expertise of those interviewed includes digital business models and innovation, content strategies and media production, data-driven communication and AI-supported personalization, as well as the transformation of marketing processes and leadership and organizational development.

The interviewees were selected based on specific criteria to ensure that only individuals with practical experience and in-depth knowledge of all research questions were interviewed. For data protection reasons, all experts in this master's thesis are anonymized with neutral abbreviations. A tabular overview of all interviewees can be found below.

A.01	A.01 works as a Senior Manager in global marketing at an international strategy consultancy, where she leads global marketing initiatives and develops audience-specific campaigns for senior executives. With around five years of experience in strategy and brand management, A.01 focuses on integrating data and AI to enhance marketing personalization and audience engagement. She holds a double master's degree in International Management and Business, obtained through a joint program between two leading international business schools.
A.02	A.02 is a Group CEO and digital transformation expert with over 20 years of experience in B2B and B2C digital services, e-commerce, and data-driven marketing. He has led multiple companies through large-scale digital change processes and managed cross-functional teams of up to 70 employees. A.02 has extensive expertise in innovation management, business model development, and strategic leadership. He also serves on several advisory and supervisory boards, contributing his knowledge in digital strategy and organizational transformation. A.02 holds a doctorate in digital platforms and has completed executive education in leadership and strategy.
A.03	A.03 is the founder and creative director of a business creativity and media production company based in Germany. With more than seven years of experience in brand strategy, digital marketing, and creative content development, he combines strategic consulting with innovative storytelling to strengthen brand visibility and growth. Before founding his own company, A.03 gained practical experience in social media management and video production. He holds a degree in film production and media economics.
A.04	A.04 works as a senior strategy and innovation leader in the life sciences and healthcare technology sector, where she drives digital transformation and the integration of AI-based solutions into patient care and commercial models. With more than 15 years of international experience in healthcare innovation, data-driven strategy, and patient engagement, she focuses on using technology to enhance personalization and improve treatment outcomes. Before taking on her current leadership role, A.04 held several senior consulting and management positions in global professional services firms. She holds a degree in international business and economics, complemented by postgraduate studies in management and innovation.
A.05	A.05 is an entrepreneur and investor in the digital health and healthcare innovation sector, with extensive experience in venture capital, business development, and technology-driven transformation. As the founder of a European investment platform and a healthtech management company, A.05 focuses on supporting high-growth healthcare start-ups by connecting them with strategic investors and accelerating their path to commercialization. His professional background combines expertise in bioinformatics and economics with more than a decade of leadership in digital health, artificial intelligence, and venture financing. A.05 is passionate about driving innovation that improves healthcare access, efficiency, and patient outcomes.
A.06	A.06 is a co-founder and managing director of an AI-driven training and coaching company that develops video-based solutions to enhance communication, leadership, and behavioral skills. With a strong academic background, including a Ph.D. in Strategy and Organization and international study experience, A.06 combines research expertise with practical application in artificial intelligence and human behavior. Prior to founding his company, he worked in academia and consulting, focusing on organizational development and behavioral science. A.06 is passionate about using AI to analyze and improve human interaction in professional settings and to bridge the gap between technology and psychology.
A.07	A.07 is a senior marketing leader with more than a decade of experience in digital and performance marketing across agency and corporate environments and is currently working in a marketing agency. She has held several leadership positions, managing teams and driving data-driven growth, lead generation, and digital strategy. Her expertise spans paid advertising, SEO, content, and marketing automation, with a strong focus on scaling marketing operations and increasing revenue impact. Prior to her current role, A.07 worked in online marketing management and strategic consulting for B2B and B2C clients and also taught social media at a university. She holds postgraduate degrees in marketing and media management.
A.08	A.08 is a commercial leader in the pharmaceutical industry with more than two decades of experience across Europe, China, Africa, and the USA. He has held senior roles in global and regional brand management, sales operations, and commercial leadership, overseeing complex portfolios and leading cross-functional teams. His background includes P&L responsibility, strategy execution, and driving commercial excellence in diverse markets. Prior to his most recent leadership positions, A.08 advanced through multiple brand management roles, contributing to the development and execution of global strategies for established healthcare brands. He brings deep expertise in delivering measurable business results in high-complexity environments.
A.09	A.09 has professional experience across technology consulting, product management, and business development in both corporate and mid-sized companies. She has worked in roles spanning product and portfolio management, technology advisory, and project management, contributing to digital transformation initiatives and operational improvements. Earlier in her career, A.09 gained experience in investor relations and business development in the 3D-printing industry, as well as operational roles in the automotive sector. She holds a degree in industrial engineering with international study experience in South Korea.

Table 2: Overview and description of all interview partners

4.8 Interview guide

A semi-structured interview guide was created to ensure that the expert interviews were well structured and that all relevant topics were covered. The guide contains all the fixed questions, but also allows for spontaneous questions to be asked or new aspects to be included in the conversation. The guide serves as a basis for all conversations and ensures that the interviews are easily comparable, while also leaving enough room for new ideas and insights from the experts.

The interview was based on the following interview guide, which begins with an introduction and asks about the expert's background, including questions about their professional role and function, their technical background, their experience with data-driven processes, and finally, the context in which they work within the company.

The following section deals with the perception and use of AI-based personalization. Questions are asked about the importance of AI-based personalization and its relevance in marketing today. It also asks which tools are used and how customer communication has changed because of AI. Finally, this section asks what advantages and risks AI-based personalization offers.

The third part of the interview deals with the influence on customer segmentation. The questions here focus primarily on the change in customer segments, whether they are becoming more dynamic, smaller, or more data-driven as a result of AI, and whether new segments are emerging in general. It also asks which data sources and tools are currently used for AI-based segmentation.

The next part of the interview guide deals with the connection between segmentation and brand positioning. Here, the questions deal with the effects of the new AI-based segments on brand positioning, as well as changes in brand communication through AI and the influence of credibility and emotional authenticity, whether personalization ultimately makes the brand appear more human or less authentic.

The last chapter of the interview is primarily personal opinion and an open question, as it asks what strategic adjustments are necessary to integrate AI into brand management and marketing in the long term. Finally, the experts were asked for their personal assessments of future developments and allowed to add any additional comments.

The following section on results presents the questions in the order they were asked in each interview.

5. Results

AI-based personalization is increasingly shaping how companies design customer interactions, analyse target groups, and communicate brand values. To this end, nine guideline-based expert interviews were analysed and evaluated deductively and inductively after transcription. The following results focused heavily on the main areas of the research question: AI-based personalization, customer segmentation, and brand positioning. The results section merely describes what was said in the interviews; the corresponding interpretation or theoretical embedding will follow in a later chapter.

5.1 Perception and use of AI-based personalization

5.1.1 Perceived importance of AI for personalization

The importance of AI for personalized marketing communication is repeatedly emphasized in the interviews. All experts agree that personalization would no longer be feasible without AI today. Several of those interviewed add that the volume and, above all, the current complexity of available customer data can only be processed with the help of artificial intelligence. A.02 describes how AI is even considered a prerequisite for in-depth personalization, while A.03 shows that companies “no longer have a choice” if they want to remain competitive. A key finding shows that AI is perceived as a powerful driver of efficiency. In this context, most experts point to significant productivity gains. A.05 also refers to an “x-fold increase in productivity” in this context. In contrast, A.09, speaking from a platform-based and educational context, points out that AI enables individualized and repeatable communication that requires little effort. The connection between efficiency and personalization runs through all the discussions.

In addition, more than half of the respondents describe AI as an integral part of their daily work. In this context, A.03 points out that there is “no day without AI.” A.01 even describes AI as a “booster” for data-based decisions that enable precise control of personalized content.

On the other hand, three of the nine experts also point out limitations and the necessary conditions. They emphasize that personalization can only really create added value if it is successfully embedded in a strategy. In this context, A.08 warns against “hyper-personalization” and overly detailed micro-segments that do not generate any additional value. In addition, A.04 emphasizes that although artificial intelligence opens new possibilities, its use must be clearly aligned with customer needs to be truly effective.

In conclusion, it can be said that all nine respondents understand AI to be a key technology that fulfills both operational and strategic functions. This makes personalization not only more

comprehensive but also more precise. The requirement for this is that the technology be used responsibly and in a targeted manner.

5.1.2 Using AI to personalize marketing content and customer experiences

The interviews show that all experts actively use AI to personalize marketing content or customer experiences. Text generation tools are used most frequently, with ChatGPT being the most mentioned. Eight respondents say they use AI to help create personalized texts. A.03 explains in this context that the company he works for uses brand-specific trained ChatGPT instances in which things such as tonalities and typical formulations are stored. This results in content that is already automatically adapted to the desired brand voice. A.09 also mentions that she no longer writes texts herself but uses AI for this purpose and uses it as the first step in content creation. In addition, A.05 reports that there is no longer any communication that does not first pass through AI.

As well as text generation, the creation and adaptation of visual content also play a significant role for the respondents. Six out of nine experts use AI to personalize images, presentations, or visual assets. To make visuals appear as if they were developed specifically for the customer, A.06 describes how Google Gemini, for example, is used to automatically design presentations in such a way that logos or images are adapted to individual customers. Other tools used by A.03 are called Sora and Midjourney and are used to quickly visualize ideas. In addition, Canva AI is used by several respondents, primarily to adapt materials linguistically and visually to different international target groups.

Another area of application is personalization along the customer journey. Here, five of the experts surveyed report that AI is used to dynamically adapt content to user behavior and purchase phases. In the HubSpot CRM system, AI-based pop-ups and emails are displayed depending on the respective phase of the user journey, as explained by A.07. A.09 also shows a different perspective, as she works with AI in an e-learning context, which helps to analyze when users are particularly receptive to certain stimuli so that messages can be delivered at the optimal time. In addition, another expert (A.06) describes how AI is used in sales demos to automatically adapt presentations to the corporate design of the customer, thus also creating a highly personalized experience.

AI is also used in decision-making and quality processes, as stated by seven of the experts surveyed. This includes automated variant creation, testing of different test versions, and AI-based quality controls. A.05 describes AI as a “quality check” for consistency and tonality. A.01 shows another use for AI, namely, to generate hypotheses about the interests of CEOs,

which are then incorporated into content planning. This shows that AI not only produces content but can also increasingly be used as an analytical tool to justify personalization decisions.

Although AI offers several opportunities, the interviewees also describe operational limitations. A.03 explains that AI sometimes leads to generic formulations that then must be manually reworked. A.08 also explains that many forms of personalization cannot be used in the pharmaceutical industry for regulatory reasons and that personalization can therefore only take place within a limited framework. In addition, some experts emphasize that personalization is not infinitely scalable despite AI.

5.1.3 Impact of AI-based personalization on customer communication

Six of the nine experts surveyed describe a significant change in the way companies communicate with their customers today, because AI personalization not only leads to higher communication frequency but also to more relevant content, as A.06 and A.09 explain. In addition, the majority emphasize that there are increasing customer expectations regarding relevant content. AI helps above all in faster communication, which increases the frequency of customer contact. For companies, this speed allows them to establish more points of contact and, as A.05 puts it, to remain “top-of-mind.” According to A.06, this leads to more frequent use of email and newsletter communication, as AI can personalize content with little effort.

In addition, AI also helps to make communication more targeted. Some tools enable the tone to be automatically adapted to different target groups, making the messages appear more tailored to the customers. A.01 explains that AI can identify topics that really interest the target groups, making content appear less generic and much more needs-oriented. Customers receive relevant content and less “spam,” which is perceived positively by customers, according to interviewee A.09.

In addition to more targeted communication, AI also helps to deliver content at the right time. Platform contexts use AI to help identify when users are particularly receptive to specific content, as explained by A.09. CRM systems such as HubSpot are used to deliver content based on the customer journey stage.

In addition, AI enables easy translation, allowing brands to present a more consistent global image. A.02 explains that this also allows international target groups to be addressed quickly and consistently in their own language, resulting in culture- and context-specific content that improves the customer experience.

Thanks to AI-personalized communication, customers increasingly expect brands to address them quickly and individually. As A.06 explains in the interview, customers respond more strongly to tailored offers, so personalized content loses its impact.

Furthermore, there is a danger that content will appear too generic or even artificial. This poses the risk of losing brand identity, as texts often sound very similar. Some of the experts interviewed are observing a countermovement toward authenticity and personal exchange, as customers increasingly value “genuineness” above all else.

In addition, there are limitations in industries such as pharmaceuticals, which means communication remains limited in these areas. A.09 reports that strong personalization can also trigger mistrust, especially in cases where it is not clear where the data comes from or where the AI got the data. In this context, personalization can also overwhelm customers.

5.1.4 Benefits and risks of AI-based personalization

Eight out of nine experts report that AI significantly reduces manual effort and speeds up content creation. A.05 describes AI as a “quick check” and efficiency filter that improves communication. Meanwhile, two experts say that AI can evaluate large amounts of data much faster than humans and that repetitive tasks can be outsourced to AI, giving teams more time for conceptual work. AI also helps achieve greater reach by enabling simultaneous, consistent targeting of multiple target groups. In addition, A.09 reports that AI enables “more frequent and repeatable communication with little effort.” Automated image adjustments in particular allow campaigns to be rolled out quickly to large target groups (A.06).

Furthermore, six experts report that content generated with AI appears less generic and is more tailored to customer needs. A.09 also emphasizes that customers receive less “spam” and can be addressed in a more relevant manner. AI can help here by prioritizing interests and topics that are genuinely relevant to the target groups, explains A.01. In addition, AI also helps with linguistic adaptability and enables translations, allowing brands to consistently address global target groups in different languages. Besides that, visual content can also be automatically adapted to cultural contexts.

A final advantage of AI is the improved quality of content, including tone, which can be adapted and optimized for different stakeholders. A.09 also explains that AI helps teams create clear and grammatically correct content.

On the other hand, experts also mention some risks associated with the use of AI. Six experts report that AI always writes very similar-sounding texts, which have a so-called “AI sound,” as

two experts call it. As a result, brand personality or even a clear tone can be lost, or at least suffer in terms of authenticity, if content appears too “smooth.”

In addition, half of the experts are critical of AI when it comes to over-personalization, because excessive personalization can make customers distrustful, especially if they do not know where the data comes from. A.08 warns against personalized emails, especially in the pharmaceutical sector, as these are often unwanted. One interviewee explains that over-personalization can quickly make customers feel like they're losing control if the content seems “too tailored.”

Another risk mentioned by A.08 is what he calls “stupid things faster,” meaning that AI is used to do things that don't add any value. This means, for example, that personalization is pointless if the message is not appropriate or if the target group does not want it, as A.08 adds.

5.2 Impact of AI on customer segmentation

This part of the interview focuses on the influence of AI on customer segmentation. The experts' answers show that AI is increasingly influencing how target groups are segmented in some companies. The experts talk about the acceleration of analytical processes and new insights into customer data. Nevertheless, the interviews also show that AI cannot yet completely replace the basic logic of segmentation, but rather acts primarily as a support and refinement tool. The following chapter shows what the interviewees say about customer segmentation with the support of AI.

5.2.1 Role and importance of AI in customer segmentation

Seven out of nine experts emphasize that AI now plays a central role in segmentation, as it can evaluate data faster and reveal patterns. So far, AI is not perceived as an independent strategic decision-making unit but rather as a primarily analytical tool. Three of those interviewed, on the other hand, see AI as a kind of supporter that makes existing segmentation processes more efficient, but does not fundamentally change them. This is because experts see AI as a supporting and accelerating tool rather than an independent strategic decision-maker, as the fundamental logic of segmentation remains with humans, who continue to make the decisions. In addition, three experts describe AI as an “accelerator” that can quickly process large amounts of data, which would not be possible as rapidly manually. A.02 even refers to AI as a “team member” that pre-structures data and provides initial insights. Another interviewee explains that AI helps divide large datasets into meaningful patterns and target groups. In addition, six of the nine people surveyed state that AI can recognize hidden patterns that are important for segmentation. A.09 explains that AI analyzes user signals in learning platforms and

automatically clusters them into behavior patterns. AI is also described by interviewee A.07 as a tool for identifying personal triggers in HubSpot.

Five experts also state that segmentation decisions are becoming increasingly data-driven. In this context, it is emphasized that AI helps assess target-group needs more objectively before developing communication strategies. A.01 also emphasizes that AI primarily provides data-based hypotheses that serve as a starting point for further analysis.

Nevertheless, some experts make it clear that AI does not change the segments themselves, but rather the way they are used. A.03 says, “AI does not change the segments; artificial intelligence changes how we use them.”

Some experts describe AI as supportive but not decisive, because AI can only analyze what is contained in the data set. Here, A.03 warns against “overinterpretation,” as AI sometimes overemphasizes patterns, especially in small things.

5.2.2 Impact of AI on the size and dynamics of customer segments

A.01 emphasizes that AI clearly makes segmentation more dynamic, as target groups are constantly changing rapidly, and AI enables analyses that would otherwise not be feasible monthly. In this context, AI primarily makes subgroups visible that could not be tracked before. Another respondent states that when testing AI-based “lookalike audiences” in HubSpot, no segments were created. In some cases, however, these small segments were even too small and illogical. A.06 has serious doubts about the quality here, because the criteria for segmentation are often not yet transparent.

One of the interviewees notes that AI has enabled proper segmentation, as it was previously not possible to evaluate large amounts of data. She says that this means basic segmentation is possible, but not that smaller or even more dynamic segments are created. Another interviewee explains that AI has not created any new segments in his company, which is related to the fact that the company is not sure exactly who it wants to target with this segmentation.

According to one expert, microsegmentation is not yet possible due to the limited quality and insufficient real-time customer data. However, it will become feasible within the next three to five years, as AI models improve, data availability increases and new, more detailed segments can be identified.

5.2.3 Data sources and tools for identifying and updating segments

The next question in the guide aims to identify which tools or data sources the experts use to segment or keep segments up to date. Seven out of nine experts named the CRM system as their

primary source for identifying and updating segments. Three experts work closely with HubSpot, which offers them features such as automatic dynamic lists, lookalike segment suggestions, and AI-based pop-ups and email delivery throughout the customer journey. A.03 explains that another tool called “Viva CRM” is used in the pharmaceutical sector. This already has AI modules integrated to automate segmentation logic.

Another important data source mentioned by four of the respondents is LinkedIn, mostly via tools that build on LinkedIn data. For example, A.02 uses Instantly, which is based entirely on LinkedIn data. In addition, another interviewee explains that data on product launches, roles, and responsibilities is automatically matched with LinkedIn profiles. Furthermore, content analyses are also based on LinkedIn behavioral data, as mentioned by A.07. In addition, the tool Clay is mentioned, which links LinkedIn data with product launch information and automatically obtains contact information, while A.08 uses HubSpot-integrated AI features to perform ongoing data maintenance.

Three experts also mention professional databases and research tools that they use on a regular basis. Databases such as Morningstar, Pitchbook, and Crunchbase are mentioned here. These tools are primarily used to update company data, identify essential market changes, and identify potential customer segments, especially in the investor environment.

However, A.04 reports that external specialist agencies are used for complex segmentation models, particularly in the pharmaceutical sector.

Despite this, there are also some limitations here that are mentioned by the experts. A.07 doubts the data quality of HubSpot lookalike segments, while another interviewee criticizes the inaccurate matching data in automated contact acquisition tools.

5.3 Relationship between segmentation and brand positioning

5.3.1 Impact of AI-based segmentation on brand positioning

KI-supported segment logic enables brands to communicate in a more targeted manner because the data shows which topics are truly relevant for which group, explains A.02. This makes positioning clearer and “less broad.” Another interviewee explains that AI-based segment updates help to determine more precisely who the core target group is, which ensures that the brand appears more consistent and focused.

In addition, AI ensures more consistent brand communication, as A.05 emphasizes. He describes AI as a tool that ensures that all brand messages remain consistent and, above all, high-quality, especially in terms of tone. He refers to AI as a “quality check” that protects the brand essence.

AI also leads to change because brands can be experienced differently depending on the target group, as content can be tailored individually, explains another of the people surveyed. This change allows companies to show more facets of their brand, such as emotional or rational, depending on the segment. In addition, A.04 also notes that the classic static segments will increasingly disappear in the future, and brands will once again appear more strongly in one-to-one situations, which, in turn, will change brand impact.

Another essential point that AI-based segments deliver is increased relevance along the customer journey. In this context, one expert explains that, for example, in HubSpot, personalized journey paths ensure that the brand is positioned at exactly the right time with the right message. In his view, this increases brand relevance because communication is more precise in terms of timing. According to him, dynamic segments have a powerful impact on brand perception in the decision-making process.

On the other hand, two experts report that either no segmentation occurs in their company (A.04) or, as in A.05, segmentation is predominantly manual and plays no role, which is why the brand does not change as a result.

5.3.2 Changes in brand messages, values, and communication strategies through AI

The next question in the interview guide concerns the change in brand messages, values, and communication strategies brought about by AI.

Seven experts report that communication strategies have changed due to AI, while five of the nine respondents state that brand messages have also been influenced. A.02 explains that brand language is being translated in a more differentiated way, as AI allows messages to be tailored more closely to different target groups and products. A.05 emphasizes that brand messages are “definitely” changing as a result of AI, as AI inspires additional possibilities. In addition, another expert surveyed emphasizes that AI has become part of the brand message, as it is now a core component of their product: “We work with the latest technologies.” A.03 also describes how brands today need to be more credible and dialogue-oriented, reinforced by AI-driven always-on communication and social media dynamics. On this topic, A.08 also explains that tonality has become more varied because AI enables new wording variations.

In addition, there are also changes in the communication strategy. As A.02 explains, AI enables target group-specific translation of the brand strategy, resulting in more varied content that still fits the brand. A.01 confirms this and adds that AI-generated content appears much more personalized and confidence-inspiring to customers. Another expert describes how companies today need to communicate in a more dialogue-oriented, “always-on,” and transparent manner,

and that AI is reinforcing this development. In addition, the timing of communication has changed, explains another interviewee, because AI learns when we are particularly active. A.09 emphasizes that messages have become “more fragmented” because AI enables a more differentiated message for each segment, which is, of course, positive, but exaggeration can also have a negative effect here.

Moreover, the experts report a change in brand values. One expert explains that AI strengthens values such as innovation, as AI is an integral part of the product. The values themselves do not change, but communication about values becomes much more intense. An Interview partner explains that brand values continue to apply, but AI can convey them better. In addition, A.03 emphasizes that brands must increasingly demonstrate authenticity and credibility because AI is so dominant today. One expert clearly states that values do not change, and that brand positioning is “top-down” and strategic, not AI-driven.

Two of the experts surveyed indicate no change or only a minor change. A.04, for example, does not use AI-based targeting or segmentation and therefore naturally sees no change in brand messages or values, while A.05 emphasizes that although it uses AI, strategic values are clearly not created by AI, but rather AI serves only as a kind of inspiration.

5.3.3 Impact of AI-based changes on brand credibility and emotional authenticity

The next question in the interview relates to the impact of AI-driven change on brand credibility and emotional authenticity. Here, five experts state that AI-driven changes can certainly affect credibility. A.03 emphasizes that authenticity is the “top priority” today and that brands must consciously position themselves as credible in a world full of AI content. He also points out that “9 out of 10 pieces of content” will be generated by AI in the future, which is why genuine, unadulterated content is crucial for customer trust. Another expert (A.06) adds that personalized and relevant content is perceived as more trustworthy if it does not appear generic. A.02 also explains that content that sounds too generic or AI-generated can quickly lead to authenticity issues, which means that customers feel less connected to it.

Nevertheless, several experts see a risk in AI content appearing “too perfect” or too frequently automated, which can cause the brand to lose its personal character. A.08 warns that over-personalization can trigger mistrust, especially when customers do not know where the data comes from and where it originates. Another expert refers to a crisis of trust in society, which is also exacerbated by fake news. This means brands need to be even more credible to avoid a similar loss of trust.

On the other hand, four interviewees also report that AI alone cannot build real trust, because credibility arises, as A.09 explains, when AI-based content and personal human contact occur together. Another expert also refers to this as the “mix of AI and personal work,” since AI enables more targeted communication but is not automatically perceived as more trustworthy. In this context, another expert explains that they consciously work with faces in their brand so that the human level is always maintained despite AI, and inspires trust.

Two experts have a completely different perspective on this, as they see no impact of AI-based changes on credibility or emotional authenticity, albeit for industry-specific reasons. As A.04 already mentioned, there is no segmentation in his company, which is why there are no AI-based changes, while A.05 does not see the biggest mistake in credibility in AI but in the product itself, stating clearly, “In the end, the product has to deliver, because AI has no major influence here.”

5.4 Strategic requirements for sustainable AI integration

The experts show that some companies must meet certain conditions to integrate AI into long-term brand management. Some experts say that specific rules are needed before content can be created using AI. A.03 explains that there must be established guidelines regarding tone and language so that the brand does not lose clarity. Other experts also emphasize that teams need clear standards for content, or AI produces too many generic texts, which in turn undermines customer trust.

In addition, good data maintenance within companies is also important, as AI can only deliver good results if CRM data is clean and, above all, complete. A.02 adds that poor data directly leads to poorer AI results.

Despite the continuously increasing use of AI, some experts emphasize that human control is still needed, as AI helps to speed things up and create content, but in the end, humans still must check whether the content really fits the brand image.

The experts also warn against excessive personalization, as too much or even too precise personalization can make customers suspicious, as already mentioned, especially if the origin of the data is unclear.

Finally, two experts explain that AI only makes sense for a company if clear target groups have already been defined and a strategy is in place, because without this foundation, AI alone will not contribute to success.

6. Discussion

The following discussion combines the results of all nine expert interviews with the theoretical foundations from Chapter 2 and thus addresses the two research questions. As already explained, the literature shows that AI is used in marketing in various industries and is particularly used in personalization, customer data analysis, and communication. In addition, the literature indicates that these three areas have often been studied separately, which is why the interviews provide insights into how these topics are related in practice. For this reason, the interviews help to close the gap described in the problem statement. The aim of the discussion is therefore to show in which areas theory already corresponds with practice and where there are still differences, and, above all, what conclusions can be drawn from this for the research questions. To ensure a connection between the empirical results and the objectives of this study, the discussion is structured around two research questions.

6.1 Research question 1: How does AI-based personalization influence customer segmentation?

6.1.1 Consistency with the literature

To date, AI has been described in the literature as a technology that can analyze large amounts of data, recognize patterns, and personalize faster and, above all, more efficiently. These points are confirmed by experts, who emphasize that AI is now considered a basic requirement for the meaningful evaluation of data sets. With the help of AI, content can be created in a more targeted manner. AI enables the identification of interests and topics that are hard to detect manually. The interviews and literature thus show that AI creates a basis for companies to better understand their target groups and develop personalized content. This finding not only confirms the research results mentioned above but also expands on them by showing how AI-based personalization works in practice as an operational basis for segmentation processes. This underscores the view that AI-based personalization can be seen as the basis for refined segmentation processes and can also be used for this purpose.

6.1.2 Additional practical insights from the interviews

Furthermore, the interviews also make it clear that AI is invaluable in the preliminary work, as it can generate initial hypotheses, structure data, and thus reveal potential subgroups. This helps to revise the segments more frequently and keep them constantly up to date. However, the experts do not describe segmentation as a completely new process, but rather as one that can be

carried out more quickly and regularly thanks to AI. In this context, segmentation and personalization influence each other: new personalized content generates new behavioral data, which is then incorporated into the segmentation models. This highlights the iterative character of AI-based segmentation in practice.

6.1.3 Deviations and limitations compared to the literature

So far, the literature presents AI as a support tool. AI is not presented as a complete replacement for strategic decisions, and this critical point is reiterated in the interviews. Experts explain how it works: AI helps to recognize patterns, but the final segmentation decisions are still made by humans. Experts point out practical limitations, as some tools still provide inaccurate or unusable segment suggestions. In addition, the data quality, which is crucial, is often much more limited than it sounds in theory. In addition, AI-based personalization can be used only to a limited extent, because, for example, in the pharmaceutical industry, AI cannot be used for everything. These limitations illustrate that the practical application of AI-based segmentation is often context-dependent.

6.1.4 Synthesis for research question 1

In summary, theory and practice show that AI makes personalization significantly more efficient and data-driven, continuously generating new data that ultimately improves segmentation. However, segmentation remains a strategic process that humans still determine.

6.2 Research question 2: How do AI-driven changes in customer segmentation influence brand positioning?

6.2.1 Confirmation of the literature

The literature shows that relevant and personalized content can strengthen brand image, promote trust, and create an emotional impact. These points are also confirmed by experts in practice, who explain that AI enables brands to respond more precisely to their target groups and better tailor content to the information needs of specific segments. In addition, AI ensures more consistent and more precise brand communication through automatic adjustment of tone, which builds trust among customers. The links between theory and practice suggest that AI-supported segmentation plays a crucial role in shaping brand positioning and, at the same time, complements existing research by highlighting its practical relevance in everyday marketing.

6.2.2 Additional findings from practice

In addition, there are further complementary findings from the interviews that differ slightly from the theory, as several experts describe how brands today use different messages for different segments without changing their actual core identity. This leads to more flexible positioning, as brands can communicate in a more user-oriented way. This flexibility, in turn, is consistent with theoretical approaches to context-sensitive brand communication.

At the same time, as already noted in the literature, issues of data protection, transparency, and authenticity are fundamental, as experts emphasize that AI-generated content often appears ‘too smooth’ or even generic. These points then lead to excessive personalization, which causes mistrust among many customers. For this reason, there are strict limits on personalized communication, especially in regulated industries. In summary, segmentation can strengthen positioning, but only if the brand remains credible and transparent.

6.2.3 Synthesis for research question 2

It is clear that AI-based segmentation helps brands deliver content that is more precise and relevant, thereby enhancing their capacity to strengthen positioning; however, this also entails certain risks, as highlighted by both the literature and experts. The main conclusion is that brands must use AI consciously, establish clear rules for tone and content, and ultimately maintain transparency towards users.

6.3 Linking the two research questions

The interviews clearly showed that AI personalization, segmentation, and brand positioning build on and influence one another in practice. First, AI personalization continuously generates new and meaningful data about customer behavior, interests, and, ultimately, their reactions to content. This data then supports segmentation by making target groups more precisely describable and quicker to update. The improved segments then serve as the basis for delivering brand messages in a more targeted, relevant, and consistent manner. This communication process generates new data points, which are then incorporated into the next personalization and segmentation cycle. The interviews thus reveal an apparent and, above all, recurring process that has not yet been described in this form in the existing literature. This empirically observed pattern helps to address the research gap explained in the problem statement by providing an integrated understanding of how AI-based personalization not only influences segmentation but also indirectly shapes brand positioning. Thus, the results discussed in this thesis contribute to bringing together the theoretical individual perspectives of the literature and illustrating a

realistic overall picture of this interplay. By linking these three aspects, this study contributes to a holistic perspective on previous research. Overall, this study contributes to existing research by describing AI-driven personalization, segmentation, and brand positioning as a targeted and interdependent process rather than as separate mechanisms.

7. Conclusion

The study shows that AI is playing an increasingly important role in marketing, particularly in personalization and data-based analysis of target groups. AI improves processes and makes communication more precise without replacing strategic decisions. This confirms that AI primarily serves as a supporting tool. AI-based personalization improves segmentation by enabling continuous data-driven refinement without redefining the segmentation logic itself.

Although the literature has primarily considered the three aspects separately up to now, the empirical results clearly show that the areas are interconnected, especially in practice, and influence each other. This master's thesis thus closes the research gap by systematically presenting the interaction between these three areas.

As already explained in the results, companies can benefit from AI if they use it correctly, e.g., if they use personalization to better understand target groups and tailor content more specifically. There are clear rules on tone, data quality, and transparency to ensure that the brand remains credible. And despite the use of AI, it is important to emphasize that human control remains indispensable, even with technological advances.

8. Limitations

As the study is based on nine expert interviews, it provides qualitative results, but only to a limited extent. While one interviewee (A.07) is currently in a marketing agency and contributes valuable insights, external specialist agencies were not included as a distinct interview group. As a result, agency-driven segmentation and personalization practices are reflected only in the work of an individual expert, rather than through a systematic comparison of agency-specific approaches.

The results, therefore, reflect well-founded expert opinions rather than statistically representative patterns. It is important to add here that industry differences and regulatory conditions influence the results. This is particularly relevant for highly regulated industries, where the use of AI-based personalization and segmentation is subject to stricter restrictions.

In addition, AI is developing very rapidly, which means, for this study, that the findings may evolve and change quickly in the future and that this study therefore only reflects the present

situation and does not provide results that will remain unchanged in the future. For this reason, the results should be viewed as a snapshot of current practices and not interpreted as long-term forecasts.

Furthermore, the focus on expert perspectives may underrepresent consumer-level interpretations of AI-based communication. Although expert interviews provide important strategic insights, they can overestimate technological readiness and management intentions compared to actual consumer perceptions. Further research could include larger and industry-specific samples to highlight the differences even more clearly. In this case, a combination of expert interviews and consumer-based empirical data could provide a better and more comprehensive understanding of the impact of AI-driven marketing.

In this context, it is essential to investigate how AI tools are evolving and what consequences this will have for brand management and marketing.

In summary, by answering the research questions, this study shows that AI optimizes marketing processes primarily through improved personalization and customer segmentation. This, in turn, affects strategic brand positioning. At the same time, the results suggest that AI does not fully automate marketing decisions and that companies that use AI responsibly and consciously, while maintaining authenticity and strategic clarity, can strengthen their brand communication in the long term. This underscores that AI is more of a strategic complement than a replacement in modern marketing practice.

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10. Appendix

Appendix A: Interview guide

The following appendix presents the interview guide used for each of the nine interviews. Each interview was based on the questions, and, where necessary, additional questions were asked.

Interview guide

Before the interview begins, there will be a brief introduction to the topic and an explanation of the purposes for which the conversation is being recorded, and that it will be treated anonymously.

1. Introduction and Context

- Could you briefly describe your role in the company and your responsibilities in the marketing area?
- What role does artificial intelligence (AI) currently play in your daily marketing work?
- Are you also responsible for tasks related to segmentation analysis or customer data management in your daily work? Could you describe what a typical workday looked like before the introduction of AI?

2. Perception and Use of AI-Based Personalization

- In your opinion, how important is the use of AI for the personalization of marketing content?
- How do you use AI to personalize marketing content or customer experiences?
- What changes have you noticed in communication with customers as a result of AI?
- What advantages and risks do you see in AI-based personalization (for example, regarding relevance, trust, or over-personalization)?

3. Influence on Customer Segmentation

- To what extent has AI changed the way customer segments are defined in your company?
- Does AI lead to the creation of new, smaller, or more dynamic segments compared to before?
- What data sources or tools do you use to identify or keep these segments up to date?

4. Connection Between Segmentation and Brand Positioning

- How do these new AI-based customer segments affect your company's brand positioning?
- Have brand messages, values, or communication strategies changed due to AI?
- Do you feel that these changes could affect the credibility or emotional authenticity of the brand?

5. Strategic Outlook and Conclusion

- What strategic adjustments do you consider necessary to integrate AI into brand management in the long term successfully?
- Is there anything else you would like to add regarding AI, personalization, or brand strategy?

Appendix B: Interview Summary

The following tables summarize all expert interviews conducted, arranged by question in the same order as in the interview guide. Each table summarizes the most important statements made by all nine experts. The introductory questions were not presented in tabular form, as the descriptions of the individuals and their marketing relationships were already shown in Table 2.

Question 1: In your opinion, how important is the use of AI for the personalization of marketing content?	
A.01	AI is described as very important for personalised marketing communication, as it helps to evaluate large amounts of data and deliver relevant content in a targeted manner. Particular emphasis is placed here on how AI serves as a support for data-based decisions.
A.02	AI is seen as a fundamental prerequisite for personalisation, because without AI, differentiated and scalable personalisation would no longer be realistically feasible.
A.03	In order to remain competitive, AI is described as indispensable. Personalisation without the use of AI is no longer considered appropriate today.
A.04	AI is considered important but should be used with caution, as its use only makes sense if it is clearly aligned with customer needs. Personalisation without a strategic framework is therefore described as critical.
A.05	AI will be a key driver of efficiency, enabling personalised communication on a larger scale. According to this interview, personalisation is hardly possible without AI.
A.06	AI is perceived as a powerful tool for personalised content, particularly for quickly adapting materials and presentations to different target groups.
A.07	AI is described as an important tool for personalisation along the customer journey, especially in CRM systems, where content is dynamically adapted to user behaviour.
A.08	In principle, the importance of AI for personalisation is recognised, but warnings are issued about over-personalisation and a lack of added value due to overly detailed adjustments.
A.09	AI is described as crucial for efficient, individualised and repeatable communication, particularly in digital learning and platform contexts.

Question 2: How do you use AI to personalize marketing content or customer experiences?	
A.01	Interview partners primarily use AI to analyse the interests and topics of specific target groups. AI serves as a basis for forming hypotheses about which content is relevant to decision-makers, thereby supporting the planning of personalised content in line with the customer context.
A.02	AI is used here for the automation and scaling of personalised content, especially for linguistic adaptation and translation. AI helps to provide content that is consistent and efficient for different target groups.
A.03	Above all, AI is used for text and idea generation, including via brand-specific trained ChatGPT instances, in which tone and wording are stored. AI is seen as an integral part of the content creation process.
A.04	Uses AI only to a very limited extent. Personalisation is rare or only occurs at a basic level, as the use of AI-based personalisation is not considered essential or useful in a business context.
A.05	AI is used as a central authority in the communication process. Almost all communication is first prepared or checked by AI. In addition to personalisation, AI also serves as a quality and consistency check.
A.06	Utilises AI to personalise visual presentations, e.g. for presentations or sales demos. Content is automatically adapted to corporate design, logos or customer specifications to create an individual customer experience.
A.07	Uses AI within CRM systems, such as Hubspot. It is used to personalise content along the customer journey. In this case, AI controls pop-ups, emails and content depending on user behaviour at the respective stage of the journey.
A.08	Uses AI primarily for support, but nevertheless points to strong regulatory restrictions, which is why personalisation is only possible within clearly defined limits.
A.09	Uses AI for scalable and repeatable personalisation, especially in digital learning and platform contexts. AI helps to deliver content at the right time and reduce communication efforts.

Question 3: What changes have you noticed in communication with customers as a result of AI?	
A.01	Explains that AI helps identify relevant content by recognising topics that are of genuine interest to the target groups. This makes communication less generic and more needs-oriented.
A.02	Since content can be translated quickly and, above all, consistently into different languages, AI facilitates international communication. This enables a uniform and culturally and context-sensitive approach to global target groups.
A.03	Explains that AI contributes to so-called "always-on" communication, meaning that constant communication is made possible. At the same time, brands must communicate in a more credible and dialogue-oriented manner, as AI-generated content has increased significantly.
A.04	Reports no change in customer communication, as the company does not use AI-supported personalisation or segmentation.
A.05	He talks about 'top-of-mind', describing how AI increases customer communication frequency and helps companies maintain their presence more quickly. AI also helps to check content efficiently and deliver it consistently.
A.06	AI leads to more frequent and more personalised communication, especially in the context of emails and newsletters. Customers respond more strongly to tailored content, but this also creates rising expectations.
A.07	Explains that AI is used in CRM systems (e.g. HubSpot) to deliver content depending on the respective phase of the customer journey. This makes communication more precise in terms of timing and situation-dependent.
A.08	Points out that AI-supported communication is severely restricted in certain industries, particularly in the pharmaceutical sector, and that personalisation is only possible within regulatory limits.
A.09	It describes changes in communication, particularly within digital learning environments and on social media platforms. AI can help to deliver content at the right time, prioritise relevant information and make it more relevant.

Question 4: What advantages and risks do you see in AI-based personalization?		
	perceived benefit	perceived risk
A.01	AI increases the relevance of content, as it allows the interests of target groups to be prioritised more effectively, thereby reducing the amount of irrelevant content displayed.	Risk of incorrect assumptions arising because AI-based hypotheses are accepted without verification
A.02	Efficiency gains through faster analysis of large amounts of data and consistent tone in communication.	Risk of excessive standardisation if AI is used without clear content guidelines.
A.03	Significant time savings and scalability in content creation for recurring communications	Content can quickly appear too polished, which can negatively impact authenticity and brand personality.
A.04	No clear advantages, as AI-based personalisation is rarely used in companies.	No relevant risks, as personalisation is only carried out to a very limited extent.
A.05	AI serves as an efficiency and quality filter, e.g. for tonality testing and rapid variant creation.	Risk that AI will be used to accelerate content that offers no added value in terms of content ("doing the wrong things faster").
A.06	Rapid adaptation of visual content and scalable customisation of presentations and campaigns.	Risk that visual content may appear interchangeable if automation dominates too strongly.
A.07	Reduction of spam through context-related, relevant content along the customer journey.	Risks arising from incorrect or non-transparent data bases in automated segmentation.
A.08	Fundamental efficiency potential, albeit severely limited by regulatory conditions.	The risk of over-personalisation is particularly high in the pharmaceutical sector. This can lead to mistrust among customers.
A.09	Enables frequent, repeatable and relevant communication with minimal effort, especially in digital learning and platform contexts.	Trust risks if personalisation is perceived as too precise and the origin of the data remains unclear.

Question 5: To what extent has AI changed the way customer segments are defined in your company?	
A.01	AI has made the definition of segmentation more dynamic, as segments can be reviewed and adjusted more frequently. However, the basic segmentation logic remains the same as before.
A.02	AI does not change how segments are defined conceptually, but AI facilitates segment definition through faster data analysis.
A.03	AI does not change the definition of segments per se, but rather their application, as segments can be used more flexibly and questioned more regularly.
A.04	In this company, AI has no influence on segment definition, as AI-supported segmentation is not used.
A.05	The segments are still defined manually. AI has not yet had any influence on how segments are formed.
A.06	AI-supported segment definitions are viewed critically, as automated suggestions are often incomprehensible and sometimes generate segments that make little sense.
A.07	AI supports segment definition by continuously updating behavioural data in CRM, allowing segments to be adapted to specific situations.
A.08	Due to regulatory restrictions, the influence of AI on segment definition is limited, but fundamental segment structures remain unchanged.
A.09	AI has significantly changed the definition of segments, as users are automatically classified into dynamic behavioural clusters based on their learning and usage behaviour.

Question 6: Does AI lead to the creation of new, smaller, or more dynamic segments compared to before?	
A.01	KI enables more dynamic segmentation, as target groups can be updated more frequently, but new micro-segments have only emerged to a limited extent so far.
A.02	AI supports the identification of additional patterns, but so far has not led to completely new segments; rather, it refines existing ones.
A.03	Although AI does not create new segments, it does change the use of existing segments, as they can now be used more flexibly and situationally.
A.04	Since no AI-supported segmentation is used, no new and therefore no more dynamic segments are created.
A.05	Since segmentation is still done manually, AI has no influence on segment dynamics here.
A.06	AI-based micro-messages are viewed critically because they are often too small, not very meaningful or incomprehensible.
A.07	Along the customer journey in particular, AI enables smaller and more situational segments, e.g. through behaviour-based triggers.
A.08	Due to regulatory restrictions, no new or smaller segments are emerging, and segment dynamics remain limited.
A.09	AI leads to significantly more dynamic segments, as users are continuously reclassified into clusters based on their behaviour.

Question 7: What data sources or tools do you use to identify or keep these segments up to date?	
A.01	Primarily uses CRM data such as HubSpot and behaviour-based user data to continuously update segments and develop hypotheses about target groups.
A.02	Uses LinkedIn-based tools and external company data to segment target groups based on roles, functions and market changes.
A.03	Works with CRM systems in the pharmaceutical context, in which AI modules are integrated to support segmentation logic.
A.04	Does not use specific segmentation tools, as neither AI-supported segmentation nor systematic target group formation is employed.
A.05	Segmentation is primarily done manually; CRM systems are used, but without AI-supported segmentation logic.
A.06	Uses CRM systems and AI-supported presentation and sales tools, but expresses doubts about the quality of automatically generated segments.
A.07	Makes intensive use of HubSpot, especially dynamic lists and AI-supported triggers along the customer journey.
A.08	Uses HubSpot for data maintenance and segmentation updates, supplementing this with external databases, but also emphasises the regulatory restrictions in this regard.
A.09	Uses platform-based usage and behavioural data to continuously re-cluster segments based on interaction patterns.

Question 8: How do these new AI-based customer segments affect your company's brand positioning?	
A.01	AI-powered segments help tailor brand messages more precisely to different target groups without changing the overall brand identity.
A.02	Data-based segmentation makes brand positioning clearer and more focused, as relevant topics can be communicated to defined target groups in a more targeted manner.
A.03	AI-based segments support consistent brand communication, as tone and content can be systematically reviewed and adjusted.
A.04	No impact on brand positioning, as neither AI-supported segmentation nor personalised target group addressing is used.
A.05	Does not see any direct influence on brand positioning, as segmentation is predominantly manual and strategic brand decisions are made independently of AI.
A.06	AI-supported segment logic enables greater differentiation in brand communication for each target group, revealing different facets of the brand.
A.07	Dynamic segments primarily influence the timing and content placement of brand messages along the customer journey.
A.08	Takes a critical view of the influence of AI on brand positioning, as excessive segmentation can lead to inconsistent brand perception, especially in regulated industries.
A.09	AI-based segmentation enables situation- and user-specific brand communication, particularly in digital learning and platform environments.

Question 9: Have brand messages, values, or communication strategies changed due to AI?	
A.01	The fundamental brand values remain unchanged, while AI is changing the communication strategy, as content is becoming more personalised and dialogue-oriented.
A.02	Brand messages are translated in a more differentiated way using AI, as content can be tailored more specifically to different target groups and products.
A.03	Through always-on communication and social media, AI reinforces the need for credible and digitally oriented brand communication.
A.04	Since they do not use AI-supported segmentation or personalisation, there are no changes in brand messages or values.
A.05	The brand values and strategic messages remain unchanged, as AI is only used as a source of inspiration and an efficiency tool.
A.06	AI primarily influences the design and diversity of brand messages, but not the fundamental brand values.
A.07	AI is changing communication strategies, as content can be delivered in a more context- and time-dependent manner.
A.08	Tone and word choice are becoming more variable thanks to AI, while strategic brand positioning continues to be determined top-down.
A.09	Brand messages are becoming more segment-specific, which offers some opportunities but also carries the risk of quickly becoming exaggerated.

Question 10: Do you feel that these changes could affect the credibility or emotional authenticity of the brand?	
A.01	AI-supported personalisation can strengthen a brand's credibility, as long as the content is relevant and does not appear too generic to customers. However, trust alone does not arise from AI.
A.02	Content that is too obviously generated by AI can weaken the emotional authenticity of the brand and also reduce customer loyalty to the brand.
A.03	A key challenge is seen in authenticity, because nowadays, with the widespread use of AI, brands need to be particularly credible and remain transparent.
A.04	No impact on credibility or authenticity, as there are no AI-supported changes in brand communication.
A.05	AI has only a limited influence on a brand's credibility, as the actual product and service quality of the company remains decisive.
A.06	Personalised content can be perceived as more credible as long as it does not appear overly automated or interchangeable.
A.07	AI can help build customer trust when relevant content is delivered, but it is important to emphasise that AI does not replace personal contact with the brand.
A.08	Over-personalisation can trigger mistrust, especially in cases where customers are unclear about where their data is coming from.
A.09	Credibility arises primarily from the combination of AI-supported communication and human interaction, because AI alone does not create emotional closeness.

Question 11: What strategic adjustments do you consider necessary to integrate AI into brand management in the long term successfully?	
A.01	Before using AI, clear target groups and brand strategies must be defined. AI should then be used strategically to generate data-based hypotheses.
A.02	Clean and well-maintained data structures are important because the quality of AI results depends on the quality of the data, and poor data leads to poor results.
A.03	To ensure that AI-generated content does not negatively alter or damage brand identity, clear guidelines must be defined for the tonality and language of the content.
A.04	Without an existing segmentation and target group strategy, the use of AI in brand management is neither sensible nor effective.
A.05	AI should only be used as a supporting tool for quality and consistency, because strategic decisions and brand values should not be determined by AI.
A.06	Human oversight remains necessary to ensure that AI-generated content fits the brand and appears authentic.
A.07	Standardised processes and clear rules for the use of AI are necessary to avoid generic content and loss of trust.
A.08	Companies must define limits for personalisation in order to prevent over-personalisation and mistrust among customers, especially in regulated industries.
A.09	AI only delivers benefits when it is embedded in an overarching communication and brand strategy and not used in isolation.

Question 12: Is there anything else you would like to add regarding AI, personalization, or brand strategy?	
A.01	AI should be understood as a continuous learning process. In this case, companies must remain open to experimentation and not rely on setups that were defined once, as it is very fast-moving.
A.02	The long-term success of AI depends less on the technology itself than on strategic clarity and the quality of decision-making processes within the company.
A.03	In an increasingly AI-driven communications landscape, authenticity is becoming a key differentiator for brands.
A.04	Clear target groups, strategic orientations and organisational readiness must be defined so that AI delivers sustainable added value for brands.
A.05	AI can accelerate and inspire brand development, but it cannot replace product quality or clear brand positioning.
A.06	The conscious use of human elements (e.g. faces, personal address) remains important in order to ensure trust despite increasing automation.
A.07	Companies should view AI as a structural change in marketing and branding, rather than just a short-term trend.
A.08	A considered approach to AI is particularly necessary in regulated industries, as not everything that is technically possible is also sensible or permissible.
A.09	The combination of AI-supported efficiency and human empathy will be crucial for credible and long-term successful brand communication.