

# European Journal of Business and Strategic Management (EJBSM)

**Generative AI Adoption and Customer Engagement within the Service Industry in  
Kenya**

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Strategy

**Generative AI Adoption and Customer Engagement  
within the Service Industry in Kenya**



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**Article History**

*Received 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025*

*Received in Revised Form 25<sup>th</sup> January 2026*

*Accepted 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026*



How to cite in APA format:

Ondondo, R., & Mwangi, A. (2026). Generative AI Adoption and Customer Engagement within the Service Industry in Kenya. *European Journal of Business and Strategic Management*, 11(1), 32–43. <https://doi.org/10.47604/ejbsm.3657>

**Abstract**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of generative AI adoption on customer engagement within the service industry in Kenya. Generative artificial intelligence (AI) allows machines to carry out tasks that would require human intelligence. Customers have become more enlightened and now require much more engagement with the service industry. It is quite the norm for these customers to appreciate promotions in a manner that targets them directly. With generative artificial intelligence, the service industry can engage customers directly. The entities in the industry need this engagement with customers so as to increase their interactions and hence grow their revenue.

**Methodology:** The study deployed a review of literature as the research design to allow for analysis that provided a link between independent and dependent variables. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed to search on daystar MyLOFT collection. Recent study articles were synthesized to explain how generative AI can impact customer engagement outcomes thus positively impact the service industry in Kenya. 1,120 studies were screened for relevance and 7 studies selected for analysis.

**Findings:** The study found that effective customer engagement can be achieved using generative artificial intelligence technologies. The findings provided practical insights for the service industry in Kenya seeking to improve customer engagement and provided a solution that this can be done through available technologies.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** The study was anchored on Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology, Stakeholder Theory and Social Exchange Theory. UTAUT was extensively discussed to indicate the factors that influence the adoption of technology and hence guide the discussions surrounding generative AI adoption. Stakeholder theory discusses the impact of customer engagement on the service industry and how entities in the industry can ensure these critical stakeholders are adequately engaged through deploying AI. Social exchange theory discusses that customers will engage businesses that provide them with value and indeed this engagement needs to be beneficial and at a cost that is not higher than the benefits. With the increased developments in AI, there are solutions to ensure reduced cost to companies and increased efficiency in targeting customers. Managers should thus increase the utilization of AI in their operations with a surge in customer engagement efforts. Where policy makers are concerned, an enabling environment for enterprises to access and integrate generative AI into their functions is quite critical. This will boost the performance of these entities and indeed ultimately impact the economy of the country.

**Keywords:** *Firm Strategy, Marketing, Customer Retention*

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of artificial intelligence technologies has been in place since 1956 where scientists congregated together in Dartmouth College for a conference to discuss developments in AI. Indeed, since this period great strides have been made with the technologies surrounding AI developing tremendously. Since 2022 vast progress has been achieved in the enhancement of generative AI where these technologies have seen rapid advancements and widespread adoption. Generative AI is now transforming technology by enabling automation and introducing advanced capabilities. Generative AI trains models on existing data sets allowing them to create new data that resemble existing data. Generative AI, through the improvement of analytics, allows for direct understanding of customers through provision of insights into these customers. There are two prominent Generative AI models: the Generative Adversarial Network (GAN) and Generative Pre-trained Transformer (GPT). A GAN uses authentic data to create new data resembling original and fake data while a GPT understands language and generates new texts based on context following being trained on extensive text dataset (Gupta et al., 2024).

Customer engagement is noted as critical for businesses. This includes building relationships with customers through understanding their needs and tailoring experiences to meet and exceed expectations. Customers who are engaged with the brand are more likely to repeat purchases, refer the brand and advocate for the brand, hence leading to high lifetime value and repeat revenue to the business. Customer engagement builds the brand perception, allowing customers and potential customers to view the brand positively. Customer engagement also provides mechanisms for feedback from these stakeholders. Where this feedback is positive, this can boost visibility and credibility for the brand. Engaging customers is also important for building loyalty and hence developing a strong community through fostering a sense of belonging and emotional connection (Suraña-Sánchez & Aramendia-Muneta, 2024).

AI is now in use for mainstream consumer applications with brands adopting these technologies to engage customers and hence ensure personalized experiences, and improved service efficiency and hence customer satisfaction and loyalty. Several AI technologies are available to provide value to brands seeking to enhance their business through improved customer engagement. These technologies are used across the brand infrastructure, and they provide significant value to these brands. This is experienced though AI collecting data on customers and profiling them in a manner that allows them to be understood. The customer journey through the brand infrastructure is also mapped out providing deeper understanding of these stakeholders thus allowing them to be targeted directly (Israfilzade, 2024).

The adoption of generative AI technologies at a global level is quite enhanced. 73% of companies in the USA deployed generative AI for customer engagement as at 2023 (James, 2025). In the UK, the use of generative AI continues to be enhanced especially due to the indication that 60% of the population are aware of generative AI and actively use it for various purposes (Bakhtourine et al., 2023). This therefore necessitates that brands deploy this technology for customer engagement as these same customers are quite aware of the same and seek to use it. In Europe, the small enterprises report that 17% use generative AI, medium enterprises report that 30% use generative AI and large enterprises report that 55% use generative AI. Denmark and Finland report the highest adoption (Eurostat, 2025). Between 2023 and 2024 65% of companies in the Asia-Pacific region have seen generative AI adoption

increasing. Singapore, India, China and Japan experience the highest growth in the adoption of this technology (Luan et al., 2022).

In Africa, 60% of companies in urban areas report the use of at least one AI tool (FSD, 2021). Indeed, the indicators in Africa show that generative AI adoption continues to grow with some countries reporting certain level of adoption of this technology. In Nigeria, 90% of business acknowledge that AI is critical for enhancing customer engagement (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2025). In South Africa, 67% of large enterprises report adoption of generative AI (CNBC Africa, 2025).

Where Kenya is concerned, the level of adoption of generative AI within the service industry is noted to continue to grow. Enterprises within the technology sector continue to make strides in this technology with use cases across different enterprises indicating some growth. The use of generative AI for customer engagement is indeed noted to be quite critical for enterprises with the adoption of the same noted to be growing. In the country, the service industry is grouped into micro, small, medium and large enterprises. Where technology is concerned, the smaller enterprises report low adoption even of the most basic generative AI tools while medium enterprises report some adoption at a small to medium scale of generative AI tools and large enterprises report higher adoption of generative artificial intelligence at a certain scale and depending on the industry. This indicates that customer engagement for these entities is largely still physically implemented with face-to-face meetings with team members, the most primary source of engagement. It is noted that these entities require constant engagement with customers to ensure business revenue is generated and hence the need to enhance their adoption of generative AI so as to enhance their engagement with customers (FSD, 2021).

There is a notable impact of generative artificial intelligence on customer engagement outcomes enabling the service industry to adequately engage these customers in a manner that enhances their interaction with these entities in the industry thus increasing their revenue. The purpose of the study is therefore to determine the impact Generative AI Adoption on Customer Engagement within the service industry in Kenya.

The null hypothesis of the study is:

H<sub>0</sub>: Generative AI Adoption has no significant impact on Customer Engagement within the Service Industry in Kenya

### **Statement of the Problem**

Even with the increased incorporation of AI into various aspects of businesses, some businesses are still trying to find the fit for AI into their operations. A study by McKinsey indicated that 86% of enterprises in the service industry in Kenya are yet to adopt AI (McKinsey, 2025). In addition, only 15% of enterprises are considering deployment of AI in customer service while 11% of entities in the industry are deploying AI in processing to improve efficiency (UNCTAD, 2023). The adoption of artificial intelligence by the service industry has been noted to have significant impact on customer engagement with the same highly adopted at the global scale. In Kenya however, AI adoption amongst different enterprises continues to grow. Where the adoption has been noted, customer engagement has been enhanced and therefore specific positive gains for the service industry. The reverse is true for those entities that have not adopted AI in their operations and particularly where customer engagement is concerned. This study intends to analyze the adoption of generative AI and its impact on customer engagement for the service industry in Kenya through deploying a review of literature. It will allow for an

investigation of this impact in order to provide directions to entities in the industry to engage AI especially where this impact is noted to have a significant effect on their operations and further their engagement with customers and hence their revenues

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Review**

#### **Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology**

Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology was first developed by Venkatesh et al., (2003), to explain user intention to use technology and subsequent behaviours. In a longitudinal study Venkatesh et al., (2003) validated UTAUT and found it to account for 70% of the variance in behavioural intention to use and 50% in actual use. UTAUT has four predictors of intention to use and technology use including performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions.

Performance expectancy where individuals believe that a technology will influence their performance and effort expectancy where the ease of use of the technology is concerned are influences that lead to acceptance. Further, social influence details that when the individual believes that other important entities in an ecosystem encourage them to use the technology, they will adopt it. Facilitating conditions also influence the use of technology, and these include social regulation aspects like the role of government in technology development and adoption (Williams et al., 2015).

The theory is limited in that the performance of the predictors in the theory is highly determined by moderators. These include gender, age and experience which impact the acceptance and use of technology regardless of the predictors. Indeed, these moderators would therefore elicit different results where individuals with different gender age and experience would accept and use technology in different ways. The theory is further limited in its consideration of individuals adoption of technology and a defocus on entities and their adoption of technology (Nguyen, 2024).

Momani (2020), discusses that AI adoption is the acceptance and use of technology which is influenced by numerous factors. These factors ultimately contribute to the extent of use of technology. This scholar allows an understanding that technology acceptance is influenced through expected performance, expected ease of efforts as well as through impact of social influence and facilitating conditions. Where adoption of generative AI by the service industry is concerned, the performance of this technology in enhancing customer engagement is a critical aspect that would influence enhanced adoption.

#### **Stakeholder Theory**

Stakeholder theory was first discussed by R. Edward Freeman in his 1984 book. This theory discusses that enterprises should create value for all stakeholders. These stakeholders are noted to include shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers and the broader community. This theory recognizes that businesses operate within a network of relationships and an enterprise's success depends on the ability to manage these relationships effectively. Ethical considerations are incorporated where companies have a moral obligation to consider impact of any interventions they implement. Where businesses address the needs of stakeholders, they foster loyalty and enhance their long-term success (Harrison et al., 2019).

Stakeholders are entities that have an interest in or can impact an organization. Primary stakeholders have a direct interest in the business and can impact the organization directly. An organization's customers fall under primary stakeholders and are affected by the quality provided by the company in terms of its products or services. The decisions organizations make towards engaging these customers thus directly impacts them. An organization therefore has to consider its primary stakeholders who are individuals or groups that determine a company's success or failure. Customers contribute to the organization's revenue generation and are therefore highly considered where these organizations are concerned (Van der Linden, 2025).

Indeed, where generative AI is concerned and its impact on customer engagement, it is noted that customers desire efficiency where interactions with the service industry are concerned. The implementation of generative AI therefore ensures that the desires of these stakeholders are considered. This builds the engagement of these stakeholders with the enterprise thus providing untold benefits to the business. With the eminent presence of stakeholders for an organization, the organization has to take into consideration the interests of its stakeholders in order to continue to thrive (Åyminkowska, 2025)

Stakeholder theory faces several criticisms. The primary criticism is lack of clear definition of who qualifies as a stakeholder. This can lead to confusion about which groups to place priority on and how to balance their competing interests. The theory also requires that a business places consideration on several groups. These interests could significantly conflict thus placing undue pressure on the business. Benefits of stakeholder relationships are also difficult to assess as they are primarily intangible. Enterprises could therefore lack the means to evaluate the effectiveness of their stakeholder engagement efforts (Van der Linden, 2025).

Mahajan et al., (2023) discuss that organizations aim to generate multiple benefits from a number of stakeholders. These entities need the support of stakeholders in order to thrive. The selection of legitimate stakeholders is also quite critical due to its ultimate impact not only on the efforts placed on them but also on their impact to the enterprise's performance.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

Social Exchange Theory is a support to Stakeholder Theory. The Social Exchange Theory was developed by George Homans in 1958. It is a sociological and psychological framework where social behaviour is viewed as an exchange process where actions are reinforced by rewards and prohibited by costs. This theory posits that relationships form, continue or dissolve based on the perceived benefits. Humans are motivated by self-interest and therefore where enterprises provide value to individuals, continued interactions are noted (Shari Parsons, 2024). Social Exchange Theory provides a means to understand the strategic placement of human interactions. It provides that individuals seek to minimize costs and enhance rewards. Economical, sociological and psychological perspectives are incorporated and hence it is applicable across various contexts.

People are known to compare current outcomes with past experiences and alternatives are sought where satisfaction is lacking. Where rewards are noted to be received in a fair manner based on the investment made, stability in relationships fosters results. Where customers engage with generative artificial intelligence that has been implemented by an entity in the industry, the efficiency in interactions, the personalization of information which is packaged for each customer and communicated to them throughout the engagement leads them to be endeared to the brands represented by these enterprises. This enhances their engagement and thus leads to continued revenue generation (Davlembayeva & Alamanos, 2025).

Social Exchange Theory provides a clear framework for analyzing relationships with enterprises. However, it is criticized for oversimplifying social behaviour. This is because it focuses on rationality in the cost-benefit analysis while neglecting emotional complexities. It therefore lacks full accountability for cultural factors affecting relationships. Business relationships are also increasingly becoming quite complex and hence the need to update this theory with current scenarios in mind (Redmond, 2016).

Ahmad et al., (2023) discuss that Social Exchange Theory is one of the most influential theories in social sciences with its application across various fields. This theory is deeply inculcated in human behaviour and thus can provide foundational basis to understand how customer engagement outcomes are impacted by the implementation of various interventions by the service industry. With the implementation of generative AI technologies, the service industry will enhance the engagement with customers because these technologies are noted to provide specific benefits that will lead to building a relationship with these customers and thus grow revenue for these entities in the industry.

### Conceptual Framework

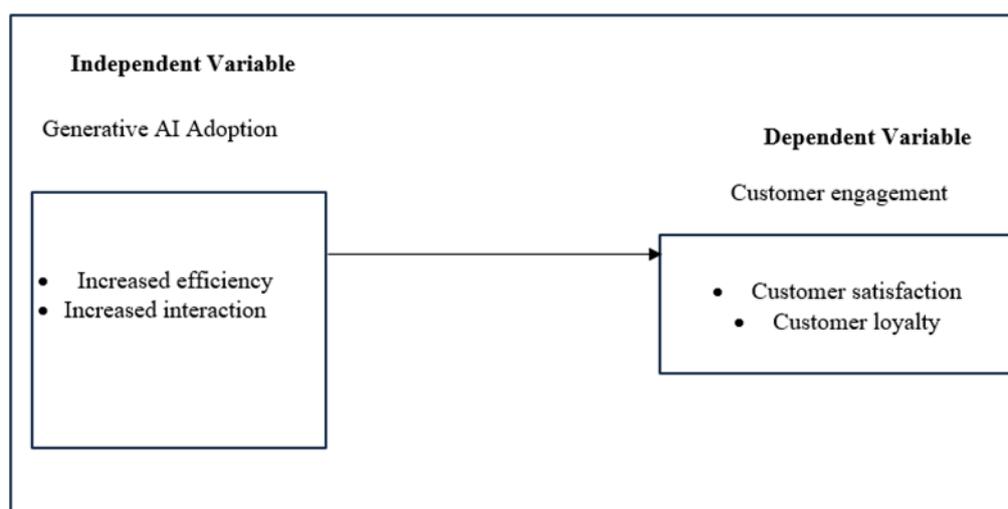


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The independent variable is generative AI adoption and is informed by the constructs increased efficiency and increased interaction. These are the metrics used to analyze the impact of generative AI adoption to customer engagement. Customer engagement is the dependent variable and is denoted by the constructs customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The study therefore seeks to analyze the interplay between generative AI adoption and customer engagement within the context of the service industry in Kenya.

### Empirical Review

Ivanov, (2023) discusses that there have been several debates on the use of AI with its development and use being noted with mixed reactions. On the one hand there is excitement in the developments that have been made and on the other hand there is skepticism of this technology. Part of the reasons for excitement is that technological enhancements have really evolved. These evolutions have been noted to be significantly enhanced over different historical periods with more enhancements noted between 2012 to date. Technology started with heavy machines that required significant data to be able to process information. The

scientists during this period envisioned light machines with the capability of conducting tasks that humans can do. The present state of technological developments indeed presents this ambition. On the other hand, there is skepticism where technology is concerned. The current general feeling is that the more development in technologies, the more simplified work will become. This will provide much-needed efficiencies to entities thus enabling them to provide value to their stakeholders.

Apriani et al., (2024) discuss that generative AI in customer engagement has indeed become increasingly important for businesses seeking to get the most revenue by optimizing their customer interaction efforts. Technological advancements have made AI quite capable of providing adequate engagement with customers. Due to the need for businesses to engage customers and the capabilities AI has in conducting these tasks, businesses have incorporated use of AI in their day-to-day tasks. Previously the use of AI in general marketing endeavors was confined to its use primarily for the collection of data and its analysis which was used to understand customer behaviour and preferences. Since then, the use of AI to engage these customers has been on the increase. With this engagement of customers and coupled with the insights generated on these customers, AI has since began being used to interact with these customers and keep them interested in the service industry.

Mohamed et al., (2024) discuss that generative AI has been noted to be quite resourceful in creating content that provides enhanced engagement with customers. With online platforms optimizing the performance of AI content and allowing the specific metrics reported to show popularity of AI generated content, entities in the service industry are turning to AI for content creation. Customers are also quite engaged where AI content is concerned with reported increase of engagement with content that has been generated from AI. There are therefore significant effects on entities in the service industry who seek the most recent and able AI platforms to generate content targeting their customers. These clients indeed demand for AI generated content and this demand is predicted to increase as it is popular due to its ability to resonate with them. Within the next few years, it is indeed noted that content generation will be conducted mostly using AI.

### **Research Gaps**

A notable drawback in the study by (Bukonola, 2024) presents that Africa has very recently started its journey to leveraging AI whilst economies like United States of America, European Union and China are well advanced where technology and indeed AI strategies are concerned. This position provides material for scholars to use on their academic analysis. This therefore allows that studies on AI adoption on the continent and indeed Kenya are quite few. Consequently, there exists an empirical gap concerning AI adoption and its eminent impact on industries deploying it.

Akello (2022), discusses that the use of artificial intelligence for different purposes by different companies in Kenya needs to indicate requisite growth. This presents that evidence on AI adoption is not quite available for the general public and as a result for academia. Consequently, this indicates a knowledge gap within the academic fraternity on AI adoption in Kenya and its impact on different facets of businesses

### **METHODOLOGY**

This paper sought to analyze the adoption of generative AI and its impact on customer engagement on the service industry in Kenya. This was accomplished using literature review

research design where existing studies were analyzed to establish context, identify gaps and inform new research. The studies selected had the context of Kenya as this study sought to analyze generative AI adoption within the service industry in the country. The target population was studies that discussed generative AI adoption and its impact on customer engagement in the service industry in Kenya. The inclusion criteria was studies published between 2025 and 2026, in English where full text articles were analyzed for the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The exclusion criteria was studies that were published prior to 2025, studies not in English and those that did not have the context of Kenya. The title was used to develop key words that allowed search on Daystar MyLOFT collection. The input of the key words in conjunction with the inclusion and exclusion criteria generated 1,120 studies. These were screened for relevance thus leading to 7 studies selected for review. Data was collected from these 7 studies taking into consideration the relationship between the variables.

## **RESULTS**

### **Descriptive Analysis for Generative AI Adoption in the Service Industry in Kenya**

From the studies, generative artificial intelligence adoption was examined broadly through the lens of digital technology. This was to allow all aspects of digital enhancement to be included in the study so as to adequately review the different strategies aligned to digital technology and their impact on customer engagement. Customer engagement was examined broadly through performance of entities. This is due to the fact that with enhanced customer engagement, these entities continue to experience revenue generation that allows them to record positive performance. Indeed, customers are the backbone of the service industry and with their continued patronization of these enterprises, revenue continues to be generated. Infact, customers then become loyal to these entities leading to the companies experiencing a lifetime value from these customers.

**Table 1: Descriptive Analysis for Generative AI Adoption in the Service Industry in Kenya**

Study ID	Authors	Publication Year	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Findings
Study 1	Kimutai & Muchelule	2025	AI integration	Performance	AI integration = positive performance due to enhanced customer engagement
Study 2	Dr. Misango et al	2025	AI Customer engagement strategies	Enterprise growth	AI Customer Engagement Strategies = Enterprise growth
Study 3	Mwenda & Muthimi	2025	Digital transformation strategies	Organizational performance	Digital transformation strategies = positive organizational performance
Study 4	Malitt et al	2025	Technology deployment strategies	Performance	Technology deployment strategies = positive performance
Study 5	Ndege et al	2025	Technology Innovations	Performance	Technology Innovations = positive performance
Study 6	Kerongo	2025	AI adoption	Content management	AI adoption = effective content
Study 7	Ochieng et al	2025	AI driven marketing strategy	Customer loyalty	AI driven marketing strategy = customer loyalty

Source: Author, 2026

The authors discuss generative AI adoption in line with AI integration and its impact on firm performance. The authors detail that integration of AI into firm processes has a direct and long-lasting impact on its performance. Indeed, this is aligned with the study as the purpose is to analyze the impact of generative AI adoption on customer engagement with customer engagement noted to enhance revenue for the service industry and this directly impact firm performance(Kimutai & Muchelule, 2025).

The authors discuss customer engagement strategies and their impact on enterprise growth. It is quite clear that customer engagement leads to enhanced growth for enterprises. With generative AI adoption engagement of customer continues to grow and hence the enterprises that deploy generative AI adoption experience growth. This is aligned with the study as the purpose is to analyze the impact of generative AI adoption on customer engagement with customer engagement noted to enhance enterprise growth for the service industry (Misango et al., 2025).

The authors detail that digital transformational strategies have a direct impact on organizational performance. It is noted that with the efficiencies experienced through digitalization, enterprises continue to report positive gains through enhanced customer engagement and increased revenue from this engagement. Generative AI adoption is an aspect of this transformation, and its deployment allows enterprises to record organization performance. This is aligned with the study as the purpose is to analyze the impact of generative AI adoption on customer engagement with customer engagement noted to provide positive organizational performance(Mwenda & Muthimi, 2025).

The authors discuss technology deployment strategies as a direct impact on performance. This presents that generative AI has the potential to impact the performance of entities. With efficiencies reported, the customers increase their engagement with these entities thus increasing the revenue. This therefore allows these entities to report positive performance. This is aligned with the study as the purpose is to analyze the impact of generative AI adoption on customer engagement with customer engagement noted to provide positive performance(Malitt et al., 2025).

The authors detail the impact of technology innovations on performance. Generative AI is a critical technology innovation which provides positive performance for firms when incorporated into their processes. This allows continued and enhanced customer engagement, which then provides significant growth in revenue and hence the positive performance of these enterprises. This is aligned with the study as the purpose is to analyze the impact of generative AI adoption on customer engagement with customer engagement noted to provide positive performance(Ndege et al., 2025).

The author positions generative artificial intelligence in commercial media enterprises allowing a clear understanding on the impact of the same on efficiency in media generation and how this media enhances the engagement with customers thus growing the performance of the media entity. This is aligned with the study as the purpose is to analyze the impact of generative AI adoption on customer engagement with generative AI noted to provide positive engagement with customers hence positive performance(Kerongo, 2025).

The authors discuss that generative AI driven marketing strategies lead to engagement with customers in a manner that provides loyalty with them. This indeed indicates that when generative AI is deployed there is positive engagement with customers in a manner that builds loyalty. This is aligned with the study as the purpose is to analyze the impact of generative AI adoption on customer engagement with positive customer engagement noted to customer loyalty(Ochieng et al., 2025).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary

Several ideas were presented in this study and these indeed required alignment in order for there to be much needed synergy and a flow of the specific thoughts. The key factors within the study were found around generative AI which in itself is a topic that is quite recent. These factors also centered around the use of AI and the study therefore presented a myriad of uses of this technology as has been noted in the sections prior to this. The study intended to present use of technology, this technology being AI and the impact to entities directly engaging this technology for their business. This impact was analyzed through the aspect of enhanced customer engagement. The study therefore presents the independent variable being the scope around the adoption of generative AI. The study further presents the dependent variable being the impact of this adoption of AI on customer engagement outcomes and further impact on the overall well-being of the service industry (Witness et al., 2024).

It is therefore against this background that generative AI adoption is presented as resulting in positive customer engagement. Different academic journals were explored within the Daystar MyLOFT collection and a number of studies examined, that indicated the relationship between independent and dependent variables of interest. From the studies inspected, generative AI adoption is discussed broadly and can be presented as technology adoption. It is noted that this adoption does have a positive effect on the customer engagement outcomes of enterprises that have adopted it and hence positive overall firm performance (FSD, 2021).

Through the literature review design, the studies discussed have allowed that the null hypothesis of the study is refuted.

### Conclusion

The business landscape is changing. This has been impacted by developments in technology that provide solutions to companies and allow them to increase efficiency. The marketing function of businesses is quite critical as this is the business section that handles customer engagement operation and has a direct impact on revenue. The need for enhanced engagement with customers has been noted as primary and indeed managers within these enterprises should ensure the interaction with these critical stakeholders operates with utmost efficiency. With the increased developments in AI, there are solutions to ensure reduced cost to companies and increased efficiency in targeting customers. Managers should thus increase the utilization of AI in their operations with a surge in customer engagement efforts (Witness et al., 2024).

### Recommendations

Where policy makers are concerned, an enabling environment for enterprises to access and integrate generative AI into their functions is quite critical. This will boost the performance of these entities and indeed ultimately impact the economy of the country. This therefore means that priority for suitable policy as well as an urgency in implementation of strategies is noted (Lukhanyu, 2025).

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