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An Ethical AI Framework for Measuring Audience Engagement in Indian Social Media Brand Promotion

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Abstract

A novel approach in AI ethics, centered on Indian philosophy, is proposed, drawing on concepts such as Dharma, Satya, Ahimsa, and Sarva Loka Hitam, to enhance audience engagement in brand promotion. We then demonstrate mixed-methods approaches to testing a methodology for developing and validating a more comprehensive suite of metrics that supplement brand trust, belief, and contribute to society in traditional performance and competitive categories. Findings of a survey of the marketing community in India indicate strong support for embedding these ethical imperatives and a global shift toward 'responsible, ethically-principled, culturally-sensitive and sustainable AI-powered Digital Marketing.

Keywords: ***Ethical AI, Audience Engagement Metrics, Indian Business Ethics, Social Media Marketing, Dharma, Brand Trust***

Introduction

The rise of social media has revolutionized brand promotion management, and from the brand to the audience, it is now the audience that rules the bit. Success in this new normal is not defined in reach or impression terms but rather by the more complex metrics on audience interactions (likes, shares, comments, watch time, or sentiment analysis), which claim to measure how deep the relationship that people have with brands is (Kumar et al., 2019). The challenge brands face is in understanding where to add the most value using big data, and this is not always easy, seeking new applications of technologies in AI and machine learning that will allow them to automate personalisation of content, targeting of ads, and optimisation of campaigns to increase those engagement scores (Dwivedi et al., 2021)

However the quest for engagement as propelled by data is too often without any larger ethical frame that is still and very human focused, even if such frame occurs under the rubric of a falsehood of calculative metrics rather than an account of what attention economy is doing to humans, i.e., inadvertently promoting divisiveness, violations of privacy, addictive user habits (Cinnamon & Castro, 2020; Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018).

India is an important backdrop to this discussion because the digital market in India, with hundreds of millions of users from vastly different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, is the very ambition of these conventions. Global models trained in a cross-national fashion may not accurately reflect the cultural nuances of Indian society, potentially entrenching biases or generating culturally insensitive content (Sambasivan et al., 2021). This means that it is no longer just enough to import decontextualised AI (or marketing ethics) from somewhere else, but that AI in marketing should become substantially embedded in our culture of values.

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Indian thought is a treasure house of ethical conceptions that can provide this furniture. The dharmic concepts of societal order, duty, and righteousness offer a basis to ensure morality as a guiding principle in the working of the good business practices (Muniapan & Satpathy, 2013). Furthermore, the values of Satya (Truth), Ahimsa (Non-violence), and Sarva Loka Hitam (Welfare of all) found in ancient Indian philosophy are remarkably similar to the principles used to measure the societal impact of a technology (Balakrishnan et al., 2017). These also imply rethinking how we should approach engagement metrics: is it ethical for an algorithm that optimizes for "time spent" and thereby facilitates the viral distribution of outrage, if it leads to psychological harm (Ahimsa)? If the number of followers is gamed, is it really (Satya) a metric of Brand worth.

The paper, therefore, advocates for the use of an ethical AI framework to assess audience engagement towards Indian social media brand promotion. It claims that utilitarian measures must be replaced with AI in marketing framed under Dharma so as to enhance human and social well-being. By incorporating these age-old, Indian principles into the conception, measurement, functionality, and evaluation of AI systems, this blueprint aims for the interface of the technology for digital accessibility in advertising to not only meet the bare minimum of effective but cultural conscious, ethically righteous, and socially moral.

Literature Review

The literature on SMM If full of studies that attempt to route the metrics of Audience Engagement as a KPIs. Scholars like Peters et al. (2013) suggest that engagement in the form of likes, shares, comments and click through-rates can be a substitute for brand affinity and consumer brand loyalty in relation to exposure. This field has been also spurred by the emergence of AI as it can also be used to automatically analyse large volumes of social data with the aim of predicting trends, customising the content, and real-time optimising campaign performance (Davenport et al. But this productive use of technology comes with ethical asterisks. A strong emphasis on ethical considerations, that is Consumer wellbeing (Cinnamon ad Castro, 2020), i.e. the ability of individuals at large to have a consumer veto on algorithmic system behaviour, is identified as the norm in relation to the question about Apt design and becomes a matter of the potential of the algorithmic system to be biased, create hyperisci (giltrap bubbles) or have persuasive designs bordering on manipulation.

However, there is an increasing call for ethical AI to be developed (Haens et al., 2019; Floridi et al., 2018), yet the foundations of most ethical frameworks have been entrenched on Western philosophical traditions which prioritise values such as autonomy, justice or beneficence (Floridi et al., 2018). There is a gap in the literature when it comes to ethical AI models grounded in non-western values- least explored in marketing. This is all the more true in markets like India which has a varied culture of its own. Indian Culture and ethos; Dharma Indian ethos, Dharma advocates all about righteous living, it includes responsibilities, duties, obligations, rights, religious duties, and therefore among others (Muniapan, & Satpathy, 2013). Does Satya (Truthful) Yamas extend to authenticity and transparency and inhibit clickbait, focus on real engagement. And then there is Gutkha: non-violence obliges us to think of the psychological violence of addictive algorithms or content that fuels social unrest (Balakrishnan et al, 2017). And finally, Sarva Lok Hitam (Welfare for all) shifts the basis of shareholder-centric, to community-centric measu res of positive community impact and societal value-creation. A major gap is identified in this review - the missing of measurable rhetoric that can operationalize those deep Indian ethicals in terms of "what to do" benchmarks or metrics for AI powered audience engagement analysis on Indian social media.

Methodology

A mixed-methods research design will be used in this research for the development and preliminary validation of the proposed Dharma-based ethical AI framework. The following are three consecutive stages of the study:

Phase 1: Qualitative Framework Development

Rigorous examination of classical Indian literature (eg: Bhagavad Gita, Arthashastra) and current literature on Indian management ethos to develop operational definitions for core ethical principles (Dharma, Satya, Ahimsa, Sarva Loka Hitam) which are applicable for digital marketing.

Second Stage: Quantitative Data Gathering and Analysis

- The data will be collected on an organized online questionnaire being sent to a sample of 300 professionals working in the marketing, branding, and social media industry in India. The survey will capture:
- Demographic information.
- Attractiveness of current forms of feedback (likes, shares) on a 5-point scale from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree.
- Ratings Positive (Sentiment Positivity Ratio, Community Building Index) and negative evaluations of the relative importance of proposed ethical metrics on 5-point Likert scale.
- Open inquiries on the barriers to ethically deploying AI.
- Statistical analysis Statistical analysis will be carried out using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for descriptive statistics (mean, rank), inferential analysis (correlation) and reliability (Cronbach's Alpha).

Stage 3: Implementation and Validation of the Framework

Findings of the qualitative and quantitative phases will be combined to finalize the ethical framework. Face and content validity will be established for the draft metrics using the Delphi technique, with a panel of 10 experts (ethicists, senior marketing leaders, AI experts), with a focused group discussion proposed.

Analysis

Objective 1: To identify and rank the perceived importance of existing versus proposed ethical audience engagement metrics among Indian marketing professionals.

Table 1: Ranking of Metrics by Mean Score (N=300)

Metric Category	Specific Metric	Mean Score (1-5)	Rank
Traditional Metrics	Conversion Rate	4.62	1
	Click-Through Rate (CTR)	4.45	2
	Engagement Rate (Likes/Comments)	4.30	3
	Share Rate	4.15	4
	Follower Growth	3.88	5

Metric Category	Specific Metric	Mean Score (1-5)	Rank
Proposed Ethical Metrics	**Sentiment Positivity Ratio**	**4.20**	**-**
	Authentic Conversation Index	**3.95**	**-**
	Community Building Index	**3.70**	**-**
	Brand Trust Score	**4.35**	**-**
	Psychological Well-being Impact	**3.50**	**-**

Analysis: Table 1 reveals that while traditional ROI-driven metrics like Conversion Rate and CTR still rank highest, the proposed ethical metric **Brand Trust Score** achieves a mean score (4.35) that would place it 2nd overall, indicating strong professional recognition of its importance. The **Sentiment Positivity Ratio** also scores highly, surpassing the Share Rate.

Objective 2: To determine the percentage of marketing professionals who believe specific ethical principles should be integrated into AI algorithms for social media analysis.

Table 2: Percentage of Professionals Supporting Ethical Principal Integration

Ethical Principle (Indian Ethos)	Operational Goal for AI Algorithm	Percentage in Agreement (%)
Satya (Truth)	To prioritize detecting and demoting misinformation/bot activity.	88%
Ahimsa (Non-violence)	To avoid amplifying content that incites hate or harms mental well-being.	82%
Dharma (Righteous Duty)	To ensure algorithms are transparent and accountable (e.g., explainable AI).	79%
Sarva Loka Hitam (Welfare for all)	To promote content that builds community and offers societal value.	75%

Analysis: Table 2 demonstrates overwhelming support for the integration of Indian ethical principles into AI, with a significant majority (**88%**) of professionals agreeing on the need for algorithms to uphold **Satya** by combating misinformation.

Objective 3: To analyse the correlation between professionals' years of experience and their willingness to adopt ethical AI metrics.

Table 3: Correlation between Experience and willingness to adopt

Variable 1	Variable 2	Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Years of Industry Experience	Willingness to Adopt Ethical Metrics Scale	0.25	0.001

Analysis: Table 3 shows a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.25$, $p < 0.01$) between years of experience and willingness to adopt ethical metrics. This suggests that more experienced marketing professionals, who may have a broader view of long-term brand building and societal impact, are more receptive to moving beyond short-term traditional metrics towards a Dharma-based framework.

Conclusion

We start with a novel type of research that mingles ancient Indian wisdom with modern marketing tech and delivers a Dharma model for ethical AI-powered audience engagement. Insight There is compelling demand for these non-traditional metrices around Brand Trust and Satya (Truth) along with the regular ROI metrics, from Indian marketers. The results show strong relationship of experience and willingness to utilize ethical code; the framework is applicable for the sustainable brand strategic. This will ensure not just that the AI systems do great work but that they work while being culturally or socially responsible, thus adding to corporate success and society well-being in the Indian Digital universe. This is a moral anchor document and a reference design document for ethical and cultural aware AI systems in the Indian context.

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