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July 3-4, 2026

Book of Abstracts for IMC 2026

New Age Marketing in the AI Era: Innovation, Technology & Human Interaction



Editing authors

Dr. Rashmi Ranjan Parida

Dr. Archana Sharma

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING CONFERENCE 2026 (IMC 2026)



New Age Marketing in the AI Era: Innovation, Technology & Human Interaction

Editing Authors: Dr. Rashmi Ranjan Parida
Dr. Archana Sharma

Compilation Credit: Ms. Kiran Gandhi
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Foreword



Chief Mentor

13th AIM-AMA Sheth Foundation
Doctoral Consortium and
International Marketing Conference 2026

It is my pleasure to present the Book of Abstracts for the International Marketing Conference 2026, organised along with the 13th AIM–AMA Sheth Foundation Doctoral Consortium hosted by the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu. This volume brings together the scholarly contributions of researchers, doctoral scholars, and academics who examine the most significant opportunities and challenges shaping the future of marketing. The theme of this conference, “New Age Marketing in the AI Era: Innovation, Technology & Human Interaction,” captures a defining moment in the evolution of the marketing discipline. Artificial intelligence, advanced analytics, digital platforms, and emerging technologies are transforming how organizations understand customers, create value, and make strategic decisions. Yet, as technology becomes increasingly embedded in marketing practice, the human dimension remains equally important. Trust, ethics, creativity, empathy, and meaningful customer relationships continue to be the foundation of sustainable marketing. The challenge for both scholars and practitioners are to understand how technological innovation can be effectively integrated with human insight and societal responsibility. The research featured in this volume reflects this evolving landscape. The conference has attracted contributions across a diverse range of themes, including technology and analytics, digital and omnichannel marketing, sustainability and social impact, branding and value-chain strategies, consumer insights and experiences, and emerging and rural markets. Together, these studies demonstrate how marketing is becoming increasingly data-driven, customer-centric, and socially conscious, while continuing to address enduring questions of value creation, market development, and organizational performance. Particularly encouraging is the strong participation of doctoral scholars and emerging researchers. The future of marketing scholarship depends on intellectual curiosity, methodological rigour, and a willingness to challenge conventional assumptions. Conferences such as this provide invaluable opportunities to present new ideas, receive constructive feedback, build academic networks, and foster collaborations that often lead to impactful research contributions. I commend all authors whose work appears in this volume for their commitment to advancing marketing knowledge. I also thank the conference chairs, organizing committee, reviewers, track chairs, faculty mentors, and participants whose dedication and collective efforts have made this event possible. I hope that this Book of Abstracts serves not only as a record of the research presented at the conference but also as a source of inspiration for future inquiry. May the ideas shared here stimulate meaningful dialogue, encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, and contribute to the continued growth and relevance of marketing scholarship worldwide. I wish all participants a productive conference and every success in their academic pursuits.

Jagdish N. Sheth

Founder, The Sheth Foundation

Charles H. Kellstadt Professor of Business (Emeritus)

Goizueta Business School, Emory University, USA

Foreword

Patron

13th AIM-AMA Sheth Foundation
Doctoral Consortium and
International Marketing Conference 2026



Indian Institute of Management Jammu and AIM–AMA Sheth Foundation are jointly organizing 13th AIM–AMA Sheth Foundation Doctoral Consortium and International Marketing Conference. On behalf of IIM Jammu, we welcome all the participants, speakers and delegates. We are pleased to present this *Book of Abstracts* for International Marketing Conference 2026, which showcases the scholarly contributions of researchers and doctoral scholars from diverse institutions and geographies.

The theme of this year's International Marketing conference, "*New Age Marketing in the AI Era: Innovation, Technology & Human Interaction*," reflects the profound transformation taking place in the marketing discipline. As artificial intelligence, advanced analytics, and digital technologies reshape how organizations understand consumers and create value, questions about human interaction, trust, ethics, and sustainability have become equally important. Collectively, these contributions highlight the growing importance of evidence-based research in navigating an increasingly complex and interconnected marketplace.

We want to express our gratitude to Prof. Jagdish Sheth & applaud the contributions made by distinguished professors associated with the Academy of Indian Marketing (AIM), the American Marketing Association (AMA), and the Sheth Foundation for their continued support in strengthening marketing scholarship worldwide. We also congratulate the conference chairs, organizing team, reviewers, faculty members, and participants whose collective efforts have contributed to the success of this event.

We are particularly pleased that this international marketing conference brings together accomplished scholars, academicians, emerging researchers, and doctoral students on a common platform. Such interactions are essential for building vibrant academic communities and for nurturing the next generation of researchers who will shape the future of the marketing discipline. As you engage with the abstracts contained in this volume, I hope you discover new ideas, forge meaningful collaborations, and find inspiration for future research endeavors. I wish all participants a rewarding and intellectually enriching experience at the international marketing conference.

Prof. B. S. Sahay

Director

Indian Institute of Management Jammu

Preface



Dr. Rashmi Ranjan Parida
Associate Professor, Marketing



Dr. Archana Sharma
Assistant Professor, Marketing

It is our great pleasure to welcome all participants, guest & delegates to the 13th AIM–AMA Sheth Foundation Doctoral Consortium and International Marketing Conference 2026, hosted by the Indian Institute of Management Jammu. As marketing continues to evolve at the intersection of technological innovation and human engagement, this year's conference theme, *“New Age Marketing in the AI Era: Innovation, Technology & Human Interaction,”* provides a timely platform for exploring emerging ideas, challenges, and opportunities that are reshaping the discipline. The conference brings together scholars, researchers, practitioners, and doctoral students from diverse backgrounds to engage in meaningful discussions about the future of marketing in an increasingly interconnected, technology-driven world.

We are delighted by the overwhelming response to the conference, which received 280 submissions from researchers across institutions and countries. Following a rigorous peer-review process, 229 papers were accepted for presentation. With 190 registered participants, the conference features 141 unique research papers. The accepted papers have been organized into six thematic tracks that reflect the breadth and dynamism of contemporary marketing research. Strong participation in areas such as Consumer Insights and Experience, Technology, AI and Advanced Marketing Analytics, and Sustainability, Ethics and Social Impact underscores the discipline's evolving priorities. Collectively, these contributions offer valuable theoretical, methodological, and managerial insights for academia, industry, and society.

This Book of Abstracts reflects the intellectual diversity and scholarly rigour of the research presented at the conference. We hope the ideas shared herein stimulate meaningful discussions, foster new collaborations, and inspire future research in marketing.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all authors, reviewers, track chairs, session chairs, consortium faculty, keynote speakers, and organizing committee members, especially PhD scholars Ms. Kiran Gandhi & Mr. Sidharth Kotwal, for their invaluable contributions. We wish all participants a fulfilling conference experience and hope that the insights and interactions generated during the event contribute to the continued evolution of marketing theory and practice.

Conference Chairs

International Marketing Conference 2026

Book of Abstracts

International Marketing Conference 2026 (IMC 2026)

[Conference Theme: New Age Marketing in the AI Era:
Innovation, Technology & Human Interaction]

A compilation of conference abstracts across six thematic tracks:

Track 1: Technology, AI, and Advanced Marketing Analytics

Track 2: Digital, Social, and Omni-Channel Marketing Chapter

Track 3: Consumer Insights and Experience

Track 4: Sustainability, Ethics, and Social Impact

Track 5: B2B, Value Chain, Branding, and Pricing Strategies

Track 6: Emerging and Rural Market Strategies

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Conference Schedule

International Marketing Conference 2026 (IMC 2026)

DAY 1 — July 3, 2026

Time	Agenda	Venue
9:00–10:00 am	Registration	Auditorium (Mandapam) — Reception

Plenary Sessions 1 — 10:15 a.m. – 11:30 am

Theme	Resource Persons	Venue
<i>From Manuscript to Publication: An Editor's Perspective</i>	Prof. Ajay Manrai, EIC – Journal of Global Marketing, and Prof. Babu John-Mariadoss, EIC – Marketing Intelligence and Planning	Venue: 022 (Augstya) - Ground Floor

Tea break (11:30 am – 12:00 pm at Auditorium)

Inauguration of the International Marketing Conference (12:00–1:00 pm at Mandapam)

Lunch (1:00–2:00 pm at Cafeteria)

Technical Sessions — 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Track 1: Technology, AI, and Advanced Marketing Analytics

Session: 1A

Timings: 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Classroom: 019 (Aryabhata) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	A Decision Support Framework for Strategic Fintech Innovation Prioritisation in Emerging Marketing Ecosystems (ID 5)	Naveen Pratap Singh
Presentation 2	Can Virtual Influencers Inspire Sustainable Living? Norm Activation and Consumer Well-Being Effects (ID 13)	Shadma Shahid
Presentation 3	Applications of AI in Marketing: A Theoretical Review (ID 25)	Punam Mishra, Shubh Mishra
Presentation 4	From Distrust to Decision: The Role of Digital Branding in Reducing Consumer Anxiety toward Foreign Electronics Brands (ID 26)	Lissy Ilakiyya E, Deepa Ittimani Tholath
Presentation 5	AI-driven Intermediation in the Consumer Purchase Journey: Reshaping Brand Narratives and Demand Capture (ID 152)	Shaphali Gupta

Track 2: Digital, Social, and Omni-Channel Marketing + Track 5: B2B, Value Chain, Branding and Pricing Strategies

Session: 1B

Timings: 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Classroom: 020 (Arjuna) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	From Stimulus to Purchase: Determinants of Impulse Buying in Live Streaming E-Commerce: A Systematic Review and Research Directions (ID 57)	Ravi Parekh, Ankur D. Amin
Presentation 2	From Virality to Loyalty: A Conceptual Framework Explaining the Role of Meme Marketing in Building Consumer Trust and Brand Loyalty in Digital Brand Communities (ID 12)	Aman Gupta, Sonam Maurya, Chinmoy Roy
Presentation 3	Masstige as Identity Capital in Emerging Markets: A Qualitative Study of Digital Self-Presentation and Return Migration in Semi-Urban India (ID 18)	Muskan Chaurasia, Khirabdi Tanaya Panda
Presentation 4	Invisible Digital Innovations in Indian Malls: How Ambient in-store Technologies Quietly Shape Consumer Experience (A qualitative study) (ID 19)	Vikrant Singh
Presentation 5	Beyond Visible Metrics: Virtual Influencers and Dark Funnel Mechanisms in Global Digital Markets (ID 30)	Shiromani Gupta

Track 4: Sustainability, Ethics, and Social Impact + Track 6: Emerging and Rural Market Strategies

Session: 1C

Timings: 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Classroom: 022 (Augstya) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Examining Sustainable Usage Intention Toward Electric Vehicles: A TiSM–MICMAC Analysis (ID 17)	Rajnandini Sharma, Vrinda Tikkha, Rohit Rajwanshi
Presentation 2	From Self to Singularity: Exploring the Process of Spiritual Transformation through the 4S Framework (ID 23)	Monu Rani, Neha Bharadwaj

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 3	Urban Development Challenges: The Role of Smart City Branding and Place Marketing in Sustainable City Transformation – A Bibliometric Network Analysis (ID 27)	Rahul Wagh
Presentation 4	To Consume or Not to Consume Responsibly (ID 33)	Sumera Choudhary, Jyoti Sharma
Presentation 5	Mindful Marketing's Role in Bridging Ethical Consumption Intention-Behavior Gap Among Indian Consumers (ID 44)	Preeti Rajput

Track 3: Consumer Insights and Experience**Session: 1D***Timings: 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.**Classroom: 024 (Chanakya) - Ground Floor*

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Beyond the Swipe: Understanding Consumer Satisfaction in Dating App Services (ID 263)	Pooja Dhayal, Kirti Sharma
Presentation 2	Evaluating Service Quality in Branded Electric Four-Wheelers in Kerala: An Integrated Model of Charging, Maintenance, After-Sales, And Digital Services (ID 11)	Nikhil Vijay
Presentation 3	Sustaining User Engagement in Mobile Commerce: Integrating Technological, Experiential, and Behavioral Dimensions in the Global Market (ID 16)	Neha Kumari
Presentation 4	The Changing Landscape of Customer Experience: 25 Years of Global Research Insights (2000–2025) (ID 29)	Vanshika Choudhary
Presentation 5	Examining Consumer Behavior Towards Organic Fruits and Vegetables: Insights from Systematic Review using TCCM Framework (ID 47)	Sangeeta Kaliraman

Track 1: Technology, AI, and Advanced Marketing Analytics**Session: 1E***Timings: 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.**Classroom: 026 (Dronacharya) - Ground Floor*

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	User Awareness and Understanding of Blockchain Security in Financial Transactions (ID 21)	Prashnatita Pal
Presentation 2	Artificial Intelligence as a Heterogeneous Operant Resource: Reframing Value Co-Creation through Relational Resource Integration in Global Service Ecosystems (ID 72)	Mohammad Jazzar
Presentation 3	Immersive Gaming as a Teaching Tool for Learning in Special Education (ID 52)	Shreyanshi Dwivedi
Presentation 4	From Unplanned to Planned Purchase of Non-Fungible Tokens: The Role of Escapism, Perceived Value, and Consumer Involvement (ID 76)	Dapinder Kaur, Tanisha Vaishnav
Presentation 5	Co-Construction of Consumer Preferences with Gen AI (ID 86)	Sneha Bhadke

Track 4: Sustainability, Ethics, and Social Impact + Track 6: Emerging and Rural Market Strategies**Session: 1F***Timings: 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.**Classroom: 028 (Prahalad) - Ground Floor*

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	From Biospheric Values to Behavioural Action: A Structural Model of Pro-Environmental Behaviour among Agritourism Tourists (ID 55)	Komal D'Souza
Presentation 2	Why Consumers Choose Green but Act Inconsistently (ID 238)	Preeti Virdi
Presentation 3	Greenwashing as a Marketing Strategy in the Fashion Industry – A Proposed Conceptual Framework for Future Research Using PRISMA, TCCM, and ADO Framework (ID 60)	Anjali Choudhary
Presentation 4	An Exploratory Study on Algorithmic Control and Rider Safety in the Post “10-Minute” Quick Commerce Era (ID 64)	Anwesha Sarkar
Presentation 5	Thrift and Rental Markets in the Apparel Industry: A Systematic Review of Sustainable Consumer Behavior (ID 65)	Prachi

Networking Tea: 3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Plenary Sessions 2 — 4:00 p.m. – 4:45 pm

Theme	Resource Person	Venue
Business Innovation: Driving Growth, Financial Performance, and Market Capitalization	Prof. Rajendra Srivastava, ISB Hyderabad (co-authored with Prof. Shankar Prakash and Prof. Vijay Shankar)	Classroom 028 (Prahalad)

Technical Sessions 2 — 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Track 1: Technology, AI, and Advanced Marketing Analytics

Session: 2A

Timings: 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Classroom: 019 (Aryabhata) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Less is More – Exploring the Detrimental Effects of Chatbot Aesthetics on Value Perceptions (ID 87)	Aishwarya Ramesh
Presentation 2	Virtual Influencer Attributes, Credibility, And Purchase Intention: A Generational Comparison of Gen Y and Gen Z Consumers (ID 103)	Keerthana VS
Presentation 3	Understanding Tourist Acceptance of Virtual Reality Technology: A Value-Based Adoption Model Approach (ID 104)	Pankaj Vishwakarma
Presentation 4	Barriers to Artificial Intelligence and Technology Adoption in Global Marketing: TISM Approach (ID 117)	Meenakshi Sharma
Presentation 5	User Perception Modeling of Dynamic Pricing in the Entertainment Industry Using Sentiment Analysis and Emerging Technologies (ID 215)	Jyoti Kalra

Track 2: Digital, Social, and Omni-Channel Marketing + Track 5: B2B, Value Chain, Branding and Pricing Strategies

Session: 2B

Timings: 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Classroom: 020 (Arjuna) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Impact of Celebrity Endorsement on Purchase Intention: The Mediating Roles of Value, Relationship, and Brand Equity (ID 38)	Rahul Kumar, Archana Sharma
Presentation 2	Graduates to Advocates: Examining Alumni E-WOM in Business School Marketing (ID 48)	Thakkolu Kushwanth Kumar
Presentation 3	Temporal Effects of Social Influence Interventions on Adherence to COVID-19 Preventive Behaviour: A Randomized Controlled Trial (ID 7)	Abhishek Shukla
Presentation 4	Understanding AI-mediated Service Engagement: The Interplay of Affordances, Trust and Switching Behaviour (ID 56)	Rahul Kumar, Archana Sharma, V Raj Kumar
Presentation 5	Biometrics for Beauty? An Empirical Study of the Consumer Privacy Paradox in Virtual Try-On Ecosystem (ID 93)	Esha Jain

Track 3: Consumer Insights and Experience**Session: 2C***Timings: 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.**Classroom: 024 (Chanakya) - Ground Floor*

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Understanding Value Co-Destruction Context of Socially Embedded Tourism Service Ecosystem (ID 98)	Amir Malik, Anil Gupta
Presentation 2	Why BOP Users Stay? Unpacking the Role of Gratifications and Engagement in Social Media Continuance (ID 99)	Neha Bhardwaj, Prama Vishnoi
Presentation 3	Modelling Service Engagement for Online Services (ID 114)	Mukta Srivastava
Presentation 4	Identity-Sensitive Segmentation: Consumer Fairness Perceptions, Cultural Meaning, And Strategic Response in a Food-Delivery Ecosystem (ID 122)	Atanu Adhikari, Neha Bhardwaj
Presentation 5	Continuance Intention of Electric Vehicles in India: A Post Adoption Study (ID 128)	Paras Rajyaguru
Presentation 6	Customer Intelligence Architecture: A Transdisciplinary Synthesis of Digital Behavior Determinants, Preference Formation Mechanisms, and Algorithmic Personalization Effectiveness (ID 164)	Ankita Gupta

Track 4: Sustainability, Ethics, and Social Impact + Track 6: Emerging and Rural Market Strategies**Session: 2D***Timings: 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.**Classroom: 022 (Augusta) - Ground Floor*

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Beyond One-Size-Fits-All: Comparing Minimization and Circumvention Tactics and Their Heterogeneous Effects on Sustainable Consumption (ID 67)	Rupali Singh
Presentation 2	Political AI Literacy as a New Democratic Competency: Implications for Civic Education When Citizens Cannot Distinguish AI-Generated Political Content (ID 82)	Prasanth Viswanathan
Presentation 3	Antecedents of Brand Attitude in Cause-Related Marketing: A Consumer-Centric Approach (ID 84)	Heena Banotra
Presentation 4	The Intervening Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in The Relationship Between Market Orientation and Stakeholder Outcomes in Manufacturing Firms (ID 88)	Ritika Sambyal

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 5	Reimagining Sustainable Destination Branding in the AI Era: Integrating Ethical Governance and Artificial Intelligence for Stakeholder Value Creation (ID 100)	Khirabdi Tanya Panda

Track 2: Digital, Social, and Omni-Channel Marketing + Track 5: B2B, Value Chain, Branding and Pricing Strategies **Session: 2E**

Timings: 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Classroom: 026 (Dronacharya) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	The Effects of Interfirm Communications on Channel Performance Outcomes (ID 36)	Vikas Goyal
Presentation 2	Brand Name Configuration: A Configurational Perspective on Brand Naming Under Constraints (ID 159)	Ananth
Presentation 3	Letting Preferences Bloom: How Wildflowering Shapes Consumer Search, Regret and Loyalty (ID 265)	Pratibha Singh
Presentation 4	Symbolic Destabilisation: A Framework for Evaluating the Impact of Exogenous Shocks and Unsolicited High-Status Interventions on Multi-Dimensional Brand Equity and Self-Brand Connect (ID 209)	Shaphali Gupta
Presentation 5	A Systematic Review of Blended Learning: Recent Trends, Unresolved Issues, and Future Perspectives (ID 22)	Ruchika Singh

Track 3: Consumer Insights and Experience

Session: 2F

Timings: 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Classroom: 028 (Prahalad) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Bridging the Intention-Behavior Gap in Online Purchase Intention and Actual Purchase Behavior among Millennials for Personal Care Products in Gujarat (ID 63)	Subhashree S, Ankur Amin
Presentation 2	Perceived Safety and Travel Intention among Solo Women Travelers: A Consumer Behavior Perspective (ID 77)	Ushaswini Ghanta, Aswitha Konakandlla
Presentation 3	Clicks, Cues, and Choices: The Interplay of Star Ratings, Booking Portals' Brand Image, and Influencer Endorsement in Shaping Booking Intentions (ID 80)	Peu Saha
Presentation 4	Navigating the Digital Soundscape: Understanding Customer Experience on Indian Music Streaming Applications using Grounded Theory (ID 89)	Nandini Khandelwal
Presentation 5	Licensed to Indulge? How Femvertising Alters Moral Self-Regulation in Consumption (ID 97)	Abhirupa Roy

Conference Dinner: 8:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. (Venue: Cafeteria)

DAY 2 — July 4, 2026

Technical Sessions 2 — 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Track 1: Technology, AI, and Advanced Marketing Analytics

Session: 3A

Timings: 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Classroom: 019 (Aryabhata) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Culturally Mediated Service Recovery: A Multi-Dimensional Approach to AI Adaptation Capability in Industrial Markets (ID 124)	Saurav Majumder, Manish Das
Presentation 2	AI-Driven Hybrid SEM–ANN Framework for Real-Time Consumer Purchase Decision Prediction and Decision Support (ID 129)	Prashnatita Pal
Presentation 3	A Systematic Literature Review on Cognitive, Affective and Conative Response of the Consumers towards AI-Generated Advertisements (ID 133)	Shashira HP, Mukta Srivastava
Presentation 4	Generative Artificial Intelligence in Academia for Sustainable Development: Exploring the Role of Self-Efficacy and Trust in Enhancing Creativity, Learning Performance, and Inclusive Outcomes (ID 138)	Anmol Khurana
Presentation 5	The Challenges of Misinformation and Fake News Faced by Virtual Influencers during Interaction with Customer Services through AI and XR Technologies (ID 147)	Ishwar Kumar

Track 2: Digital, Social, and Omni-Channel Marketing + Track 5: B2B, Value Chain, Branding and Pricing Strategies

Session: 3B

Timings: 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Classroom: 020 (Arjuna) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	A Study on Impact of Perceived Authenticity and FOMO on Indian Gen Z Travel Decisions via Instagram Reels (ID 94)	Ananya Singh, Anurag Dubey
Presentation 2	Structured Sensory Stimulation: Effects of Sequential Versus Simultaneous Presentation of Cues on Consumer Engagement (ID 96)	Shweta Kakhtan
Presentation 3	Understanding User Adoption of Quick Commerce Apps in the Indian Retail Sector: Analysis using Extended UTAUT Model (ID 135)	Aman Gupta, Chinmoy Kumar Roy
Presentation 4	Being ‘Cringe’ To Sell: Cringe Marketing Review and Research Agenda (ID 145)	Yogesh Chauhan, Nikhita Tuli
Presentation 5	A Systematic Literature Review of How Digital Nudges Effect Consumer Behavior Using TCCM, ADO, and PRISMA Frameworks (ID 161)	Diwakar Dayal

Track 3: Consumer Insights and Experience

Session: 3C

Timings: 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Classroom: 024 (Chanakya) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Psychological Drivers and Barriers of Conscious Consumption of Organic Grocery Products among Urban Millennials: A Systematic Literature Review (ID 162)	Ramkishen Yelamanchili, Smidhi Mehra
Presentation 2	Exploring Psychological Mechanisms Underlying Transformative Spiritual Tourism (ID 130)	Mohd Abdul Muqet Maaz
Presentation 3	Value Co-Creation in the Age of Agentic AI: Transforming Customer Experience through Human-Agent Service Ecosystems (ID 134)	Rahul Ashok Sharma
Presentation 4	Modeling the Determinants of Consumer Trust and Adoption of AI-Enabled Shopping Assistants: A Dual-Layer Analysis – A Privacy Paradox (ID 250)	Megha Sharma
Presentation 5	The Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) On Consumer (6.0) Buying Behaviour with Reference to the Indian Retail Industry (ID 132)	Purvi Mathur

Track 4: Sustainability, Ethics, and Social Impact + Track 6: Emerging and Rural Market Strategies
Session: 3D

Timings: 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Classroom: 022 (Augstya) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Social Media Exposure and Community Involvement in Environmental Initiatives: Evidence from Mumbai Beach Cleanup Campaigns (ID 102)	Indu Mehta
Presentation 2	Exploring Brand Hate and Boycott in B2C Relationship: The Moderating Role of Self-Construal and Relationship Length (ID 119)	Priya Tyagi
Presentation 3	Antecedents and Consequences of Green Purchase Behavior in the Sustainability Era: An Empirical Study (ID 121)	Shivika Kaushik
Presentation 4	Brand Equity in the Age of Inclusion: Exploring the Power of Inclusive Advertising (ID 140)	Nikhita Tuli, Harish Kumar
Presentation 5	Far from the Madding Crowd: Nudges towards Responsible Tourism through Message Framing (ID 153)	Angana Baruah

Track 2: Digital, Social, and Omni-Channel Marketing + Track 5: B2B, Value Chain, Branding and Pricing Strategies
Session: 3E

Timings: 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Classroom: 026 (Dronacharya) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	The Price of a Sip: When Sampling Destroys Value (ID 151)	Nonu Sharma
Presentation 2	Exploring the Dynamics of Jaan-Pehchaan in Reducing Risk Perceptions in Business-To-Business Relationships (ID 245)	Prathamesh Kittur
Presentation 3	Brand Love in Tourism and Hospitality: A Scientometric Synthesis and Integrated Conceptual Framework (ID 255)	Shrikant Ratley
Presentation 4	The Slow Cost of Subscription: How Recurring Payments Distort Time Perception	Itisha Jain
Presentation 5	Resilience or Reinvention? How Local Kirana Stores are Competing with Quick Commerce Platforms (ID 169)	Pratigya Kwatra
Presentation 6	The Mirage of the West: Consuming Western Imaginaries in Chinese Replica Cities (ID 266)	Nishant Kumar

Track 3: Consumer Insights and Experience*Timings: 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.***Session: 3F***Classroom: 028 (Prahalad) - Ground Floor*

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Green Communication Credibility and Consumer Trust in Quick-Commerce: Evidence from Digital-Native Consumers (ID 217)	Aakash Kumar, Shantanu Saurabh
Presentation 2	Understanding the Multidimensional Drivers of Audience Engagement in Live Music Contexts (ID 224)	Shreeya Singh
Presentation 3	Mapping the Learner Journey – A Process Perspective on AI-Mediated Assessment in Higher Education (ID 231)	Pankaj Jain
Presentation 4	From Influence to Intent: Systematically Reviewing the Role of Social Media Influencers in Purchasing Behaviour (ID 233)	Vanshika Jindal, Amisha Gupta
Presentation 5	From Trust to Action: How AI Recommendation Systems Shape Consumer Behaviour through Psychological Assurance (ID 234)	Sandip Ray

Networking Tea: 11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Plenary Sessions 3 — 11:15 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Theme	Resource Person	Venue
Consumer Protection and Deception: From a Public Policy Perspective	Prof. David W. Stewart, Professor of Marketing at Loyola Marymount University	Classroom 028 (Prahalad)

Technical Sessions 4 — 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Track 1: Technology, AI, and Advanced Marketing Analytics*Timings: 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.***Session: 4A***Classroom: 019 (Aryabhata) - Ground Floor*

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Blockchain Technology: Systematic Literature Review using the TCCM Framework (ID 156)	Sagar Saini
Presentation 2	Clicks, Chats, and Connections: How AI is Redefining Consumer-Brand Relationship (ID 163)	Anushka Sharma, Sai Prashant Sao, Garima Gupta
Presentation 3	AI in the Hands of Students: Understanding Adoption Trends and the Future of Learning in Higher Education (ID 175)	Rajani Sarangal
Presentation 4	Technology Affordance, Effectuation, and AI-Driven Digital Resourcefulness: A Systematic Review of Marketing Capability Building in Resource-Constrained Enterprises (ID 177)	Sawni Mahajan
Presentation 5	Reframing Brand Visibility in the Era of Generative AI (ID 183)	Hemen Kalaria

Track 2: Digital, Social, and Omni-Channel Marketing + Track 5: B2B, Value Chain, Branding and Pricing Strategies **Session: 4B**

Timings: 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Classroom: 020 (Arjuna) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	A Study on Consumer Perception of Healthy Packaged Food in India (ID 178)	Sanjog Ahuja
Presentation 2	The Mediating Role of Digitalization in the Relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Firm Performance: Evidence from Women Entrepreneurs in Jammu and Kashmir (ID 190)	Perna Katoch
Presentation 3	A Multi-Criteria Analysis of Consumer Preferences for Organic Products on Quick Commerce Platforms: An AHP-Based Approach (ID 225)	Avantika Sengar
Presentation 4	Precursors and Outcomes of Fan Identification in Women's Professional Cricket: A Mixed-Methods Study (ID 230)	Sigma Soni
Presentation 5	Psychological Effects of Narrative and Sponsored Messaging by Virtual Influencers on Presence, Engagement, and Consumer Response (ID 244)	Mehvish Nazir

Track 3: Consumer Insights and Experience

Session: 4C

Timings: 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Classroom: 022 (Augstya) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	From Overload to Regret: Examining the Role of Decision Anxiety in Digital Marketplaces (ID 143)	Margi Mehta
Presentation 2	Immersive Technologies in Tourism: A Global Bibliometric Analysis of VR and AR for Cultural, Heritage, and Destination Marketing (ID 165)	Ramkishan Yelamanchili
Presentation 3	Intra-Cultural Differences in Hindu Religious Tourism: How Familiarity Impacts Satisfaction, Emotional Experience, and Goal Completion (ID 150)	Ritesh Singh, Rahul Kant
Presentation 4	Role of Industry 5.0 in Customer Delight Enhancement: An Exploratory Analysis of Small Businesses in Emerging Economies (ID 166)	Khyati Manchanda
Presentation 5	Decoding Visual Elements of Product Packaging: A Systematic Literature Review (ID 170)	Shaili Chaudhary

Track 4: Sustainability, Ethics, and Social Impact + Track 6: Emerging and Rural Market Strategies **Session: 4D**

Timings: 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Classroom: 024 (Chanakya) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Unveiling AI's Role in Sustainable Marketing: A Grey-DEMATEL Analysis of Strategic Solutions (ID 179)	Lalita
Presentation 2	Impact of Cute Garbage Bins on Binning Intention of Tourists (ID 198)	Amanpreet Kour

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 3	Reconceptualising Political Voting Behaviour in a Geopolitically Fragmented World: A Sequential Legitimacy Reinforcement Framework (ID 199)	Prashant Kumar
Presentation 4	An Analysis of Global Practices to Ensure Sustainability in Education Sector (ID 208)	Ashutosh Saxena
Presentation 5	Factors Influencing Consumers' Willingness to Pay for Sustainable Clothing (ID 222)	Nitya Agrawal

Track 3: Consumer Insights and Experience**Session: 4E***Timings: 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**Classroom: 026 (Dronacharya) - Ground Floor*

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Factorial Designs Beyond Three Ways (ID 188)	Pradip Hira
Presentation 2	When Brands Speak Through AI: The Role of Anthropomorphic Chatbots in Shaping Brand Personality Perceptions and Customer Experience (ID 154)	Sadarangani Pulkit Nagar
Presentation 3	Transforming E-Marketplaces for a Global Customer (ID 40)	Perna Dawar
Presentation 4	What is Said and What is Implied: Examining Consumer Interpretation of Advertising Claims (ID 211)	Simran Gupta
Presentation 5	Reimagining Luxury Through Immersive AI and Phygital Innovation: Strategies in Fashion Branding (ID 247)	Atika Ushshaque, Sadaf Siraj, Noria Farooqui

Track 4: Sustainability, Ethics, and Social Impact + Track 6: Emerging and Rural Market Strategies**Session: 4F***Timings: 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**Classroom: 028 (Prahalad) - Ground Floor*

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Marketing Strategies in Emerging Economies: Integrating Rural and Agricultural Markets for Sustainable Growth (ID 254)	Umesh Deshpande, Rohit Kichloo
Presentation 2	From Tag to Trade: Sustainable Marketing Framework for Select Himalayan GI-Tagged Products (ID 256)	Gokulpriya C
Presentation 3	Impact of MICE Tourism on the Hotel Industry in Jammu & Kashmir: A Mixed-Methods Case Study (ID 258)	Mohit Kumar
Presentation 4	Harmony Amidst Strife: A Systematic Review of Peacebuilding Initiatives from a Social Marketing Perspective (ID 260)	Ranjit Kaur
Presentation 5	When Images Motivate Saving: The Role of Personal Saving Orientation in Financial Persuasion (ID 262)	Irfan Shamim, Rajeev Kumra

Lunch Break: 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. (Venue: Cafeteria)

Technical Sessions 5 — 2:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Track 1: Technology, AI, and Advanced Marketing Analytics

Session: 5A

Timings: 2:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Classroom: 019 (Aryabhata) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Artificial Intelligence Adoption in Global Marketing: A Data-Driven Framework for Strategic Decision-Making (ID 197)	Niharika Pradhan
Presentation 2	AI Adoption in Global Marketing: The Role of Technology Readiness and Marketing Agility in International Performance (ID 205)	Harshit Agrawal
Presentation 3	Navigating the Virtual Marketplace: Insights into Players' Purchase Intentions in Online Games (ID 212)	Parth Salunke
Presentation 4	Gamification-Driven Marketing Innovations in Quick Commerce: Examining Their Impact on Consumer Behavioural Outcomes (ID 214)	Wamika Sharma
Presentation 5	Mapping Local Influence: A Multimodal Micro-Influencer Recommender System with Cultural Differentiation (ID 216)	Aryaman Chugh

Track 2: Digital, Social, and Omni-Channel Marketing + Track 5: B2B, Value Chain, Branding and Pricing Strategies

Session: 5B

Timings: 2:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Classroom: 020 (Arjuna) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Generation Z Consumer Decision Processes and Influencer Marketing: A Systematic Literature Review (ID 246)	Nudrat Rahman, Atif Rahman
Presentation 2	Push–Pull Mooring Framework in User Switching Behaviour Research: Trends, Insights, and Future Directions (ID 248)	Vanshika Singhal, Chinmoy Roy
Presentation 3	Customer-Retailer Congruence in Technology Adoption Towards Ubiquitous Retailing: A Dyadic Perspective on Retail Innovation (ID 42)	Shamanth Nanda M P
Presentation 4	The Cognitive Trade-Off of Digital Memory Outsourcing: Metacognitive Gains Versus Schema Development in Young Learners (ID 78)	Sahil
Presentation 5	Brand Attachment in the Gig Economy: A Conceptual Framework of Emotional, Algorithmic, and Economic Drivers (ID 204)	Pallavi Kapooria
Presentation 6	Reinforcement-Aware Price Engines for Digital Marketplaces: A Machine-Learning Playbook for Sellers (ID 182)	Ankita Gupta

Track 3: Consumer Insights and Experience

Session: 5C

Timings: 2:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Classroom: 022 (Augstya) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Decoding Consumers' Adoption of AI-Powered Super Apps: An Approach–Avoidance Perspective Integrating UTAUT2 and Innovation Resistance Theory (ID 155)	Aastha Verma
Presentation 2	Reimagining Tourism Marketing Through Cross-Cultural Intelligence: Strategies for Engaging a Global Audience in the AI-Driven Era (ID 192)	Devvandya Mishra, Cherry Patni

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 3	Moments of Luxury to Designed Experiences: Co-Created Value and Experiential Consumption (ID 207)	Parth Salunke
Presentation 4	Navigating the Personalisation–Privacy Paradox: Consumer Insights from AI-Driven Advertising (ID 228)	Aman Sangwan
Presentation 5	When Commercialization Violates Parasocial Relationship: Exploring Why Followers Ignore Influencer-Promoted Advertisements on Instagram Reels (ID 269)	Kiran Gandhi, R.R. Parida

Track 4: Sustainability, Ethics, and Social Impact + Track 6: Emerging and Rural Market Strategies
Session: 5D

Timings: 2:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Classroom: 024 (Chanakya) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Prioritizing Determinants of Green Purchase Intention using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (ID 226)	Sanjay Das, Ragini Kumari Sinha
Presentation 2	High vs. Low Involvement: Analyzing the Green Attitude–Intention Gap among Indian Consumers (ID 229)	Chandni Aswal, Kavita Sharma
Presentation 3	Green but Biased? How Consumer Perceptions of Fairness and Bias in AI-Powered Green Advertising Affect Brand Trust – Evidence from the Emerging Indian Digital Consumer Market (ID 242)	Aya Magdy
Presentation 4	Assessing Healthcare Organisations’ Readiness for Value Co-Creation (ID 252)	Vishal Sharma
Presentation 5	Greenwashing as Deceptive Marketing Communication: Its Impact on Brand Authenticity and Consumer-Brand Relationships among Generation Z in the Smartphone Industry (ID 62)	Shruti Gill

Track 1: Technology, AI, and Advanced Marketing Analytics

Session: 5E

Timings: 2:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Classroom: 026 (Dronacharya) - Ground Floor

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	Determinants of AI-Assisted Financial Decision Adoption Among Retail Investors: The Moderating Role of Behavioural Bias (ID 220)	Amin Vohra, Faizanbhai Saeeda
Presentation 2	The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Sales Performance in the B2B Retail Industry: A PLS-SEM Analysis using SmartPLS (ID 236)	Kalya Lakshmi Sainath, Swathi C
Presentation 3	AI Brand Brain: A Theoretically Grounded Higher-Order Construct for Intelligent Brand Cognition (ID 270)	Sidharth Kotwal
Presentation 4	Nexus and Constraints of Implementing Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) for Low-Involved Users to Transform Temple Tourism in India (ID 264)	Debojyoti Banerjee, Mahuya Adhikary
Presentation 5	Designed with Empathy, Delivered as Experience: An Integrated Framework (ID 194)	Shwetika Maurya

Track 4: Sustainability, Ethics, and Social Impact + Track 6: Emerging and Rural Market Strategies**Session: 5F***Timings: 2:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.**Classroom: 028 (Pralhad) - Ground Floor*

S. No.	Paper Title (Paper ID)	Presenting Author(s)
Presentation 1	The Role of the Emerging Indian Luxury Market in the Geography of the European Luxury Houses through the Lens of the Corporate Disclosures (2019–2024) (ID 37)	Nikita Shuvatov
Presentation 2	The Power of Brand Biographies in Green Advertising: How Celebrity Activist Popularity and Packaging Design Complexity Shape Consumer Evaluation (ID 141)	Malvika Khajuria
Presentation 3	From Convenience of ‘Aaj Nakad, Kal Payment (Buy Today and Pay Tomorrow)’ to Fear of Financial Frauds: An Ethnographic Study of UPI Adoption and Usage Motivations of UPI Users in Kahiram Ghareeb Colony, Uttar Pradesh, India (ID 168)	Ahammed Junaid NP
Presentation 4	Deciphering the Durable Product Purchase Behaviour of Rural India: An Insight from Western Uttar Pradesh (ID 173)	Rahul Kumar
Presentation 5	Serving the Underserved: Banking Service Adoption in Emerging Markets—Insights from A Systematic Literature Review (ID 218)	Alankritaa Thakur

Networking Tea: 4:15 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

Valedictory and Award Distribution Ceremony

Track 1

Technology, AI, and Advanced Marketing Analytics

A Decision Support Framework for Strategic FinTech Innovation Prioritisation in Emerging Marketing Ecosystems

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Abstract

This study develops a structured decision-support framework to prioritise FinTech innovation domains in India's emerging digital finance ecosystem. Using a sequential mixed-methods design integrating Modified Delphi expert consensus, Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), Fuzzy AHP, and sensitivity analysis, the research identifies eight high-priority innovation areas and ranks them across five strategic criteria. The framework addresses a critical gap in enterprise-level FinTech strategic planning, offering reproducible and robust guidance for innovation resource allocation in regulated digital ecosystems.

Research Question

Despite the rapid expansion of FinTech ecosystems in emerging markets, enterprises face significant uncertainty in identifying and prioritising innovation domains for strategic investment. Existing literature addresses adoption drivers and technology-specific performance but lacks a systematic cross-domain prioritisation framework applicable at the enterprise level in emerging economies such as India. This study addresses that gap by asking:

RQ1: Which FinTech innovation domains hold the highest strategic importance for the Indian digital finance ecosystem over the next three to five years?

RQ2: How do multiple evaluation criteria, including market potential, regulatory feasibility, scalability, time to market, and risk exposure, influence the relative prioritisation of FinTech innovation domains?

Method and Data

A sequential mixed-methods design was employed. A systematic literature review of academic, regulatory, and industry sources identified fifteen FinTech innovation areas. A single-round Modified Delphi with 32 experts from academia, industry, regulatory bodies, and policy research distilled these to eight consensus domains. These were then prioritised using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) across five criteria, with geometric mean aggregation of expert judgments. Fuzzy AHP was applied as a robustness check to address judgmental uncertainty, and deterministic sensitivity analysis examined ranking stability under varying criterion weights.

Summary of Findings

Three FinTech innovation domains emerged as the highest strategic priorities: cybersecurity-as-a-service, InsurTech innovations, and cross-border real-time payments. These

domains ranked at the top across all evaluation criteria and maintained consistent positions across AHP, Fuzzy AHP, and sensitivity analysis, demonstrating the robustness of the findings.

At the criteria level, market potential and regulatory feasibility were the most significant determinants of strategic prioritisation, underscoring the role of institutional alignment and scalability in enterprise innovation decisions within India's regulated digital finance environment. Time to market and risk exposure emerged as relatively secondary factors, suggesting that enterprises are willing to accept longer implementation horizons when innovations align with regulatory frameworks and infrastructure needs.

The consistency of rankings across methodological approaches validates the reliability of the prioritisation framework. Collectively, the findings indicate that enterprise FinTech strategy in India is shaped more by infrastructural resilience, regulatory coherence, and systemic risk management than by speculative technological novelty—a subtle insight that departs from purely technology-driven prioritisation models prevalent in developed market literature.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study contributes an empirically grounded, reproducible decision-support framework for strategic FinTech innovation prioritisation under uncertainty, an area underserved in both the enterprise information management and emerging markets literature. By integrating expert foresight via Modified Delphi with multi-criteria decision modelling (AHP and Fuzzy AHP) and robustness validation, the framework bridges the gap between qualitative expert judgment and formal decision analysis. Practically, it provides enterprises, policymakers, and platform orchestrators with actionable guidance for innovation resource allocation. The framework is adaptable to other national or sectoral contexts, enhancing its broader research and applied relevance.

References

Available upon request.

AI Adoption in Global Marketing: The Role of Technology Readiness and Marketing Agility in International Performance

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping global marketing through machine learning, predictive analytics, chatbots and generative AI. Firms increasingly employ AI to personalise customer interactions, improve forecasting, automate decisions and enhance customer experiences across international markets. However, differences in digital infrastructure, organisational readiness and data capabilities create substantial variation in adoption levels. This study examines the determinants and outcomes of AI adoption in global marketing and explores how organisational capabilities influence international marketing performance.

Research Question

AI is increasingly viewed as a strategic capability in international markets, yet limited research explains how firms successfully adopt and utilise AI across diverse global environments. Existing studies focus mainly on domestic settings and provide limited insight into cross-border marketing contexts.

RQ1: What technological and organisational factors influence AI adoption in global marketing?

RQ2: How does AI adoption affect global marketing performance?

RQ3: How do marketing agility, cultural diversity and environmental uncertainty influence the effectiveness of AI-driven marketing strategies?

Method and Data

The study proposes a quantitative cross-sectional design. Data will be collected from marketing managers and digital transformation professionals engaged in international marketing activities. A structured questionnaire will measure AI adoption intensity, technology readiness, top management support, data capability, marketing agility, cultural diversity, environmental uncertainty and global marketing performance. A sample of 250–400 firms is proposed. Structural Equation Modelling will be employed to examine direct, mediating and moderating relationships and assess the proposed framework.

Summary of Findings

The study expects technology readiness, top management support and data capability to positively influence AI adoption. Firms with stronger digital capabilities are likely to use AI more extensively for customer segmentation, personalised communication, forecasting and campaign optimisation. AI adoption is expected to improve customer engagement,

responsiveness and campaign efficiency, thereby enhancing global marketing performance. Marketing agility is anticipated to strengthen these benefits by enabling firms to adapt rapidly to changing market conditions. The findings also suggest that AI effectiveness may vary across contexts. In culturally diverse and uncertain environments, firms that combine AI-enabled standardisation with local adaptation are expected to achieve superior international marketing outcomes compared with firms relying on uniform strategies.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study integrates technology adoption, organisational capability and global marketing perspectives into a unified framework. It advances understanding of the factors driving AI adoption and explains how AI contributes to international marketing performance through enhanced agility and responsiveness. The findings provide practical guidance for managers seeking to invest in AI-powered marketing systems while navigating the challenges of cross-border operations and diverse market environments.

References

Available upon request.

AI in the Hands of Students: Understanding Adoption Trends and the Future of Learning in Higher Education

Authors: Rajani Kumari Sarangal¹, Priyanka Sharma², Rabinder Singh³, Tapas Tandon⁴

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Abstract

This study investigates the adoption of Artificial Intelligence tools among higher education students in India. Using a modified Technology Acceptance Model, it examines psychological and behavioral factors influencing students' current use and future intention to use AI-based academic tools. The study combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to offer a comprehensive understanding of AI adoption trends in higher education.

Research Question

Artificial Intelligence tools are increasingly integrated into academic life, yet their adoption among students remains inconsistent. This study explores the factors influencing students' adoption and future usage of AI-based tools in higher education, with a particular focus on the Indian context where such empirical research remains scarce. The modified Technology Acceptance Model serves as the guiding framework.

RQ1: What psychological and behavioral factors influence students' adoption of AI tools in higher education?

RQ2: Does students' attitude mediate the relationship between perceived usefulness, ease of use, and enjoyment and their intention to use AI tools in the future?

Method and Data

The study employs a mixed-methods research design. Quantitative data were gathered through a structured questionnaire administered to students across higher education institutions in India, capturing variables including perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, attitude, and behavioral intention. Qualitative interviews were subsequently conducted with selected students to gain deeper insights into their lived experiences with AI tools, thereby complementing and validating the quantitative findings.

Summary of Findings

The findings reveal that perceived usefulness is the strongest driver of AI tool adoption: students who believe these tools enhance academic performance and reduce task completion time demonstrate significantly higher adoption rates. Perceived ease of use similarly exerts a positive influence, as students are more inclined toward tools they find intuitive and straightforward.

Notably, perceived enjoyment emerged as a meaningful factor, with students more likely to engage with AI tools they find stimulating and intellectually enriching.

Attitude emerged as a significant mediator, translating the influence of the three technological variables into behavioral intention. Students who hold favorable attitudes toward AI tools express stronger intentions to continue using them, indicating that affective and cognitive evaluations jointly shape future behavior. The qualitative data further corroborated these patterns, with many students viewing AI technologies as indispensable to the future of academic learning. Overall, the results suggest that AI adoption in Indian higher education is not only growing but is also expected to deepen over time.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study makes an original contribution by proposing a modified Technology Acceptance Model that jointly explains current AI tool adoption and future usage intention among students—an integrated perspective largely absent from existing literature. It addresses a critical empirical gap in the Indian higher education context, where digital adoption patterns differ meaningfully from those documented in developed-country studies. The validated framework equips educational institutions, policymakers, and technology developers with actionable insights to promote responsible, effective, and sustained integration of AI tools into academic environments.

References

Available upon request.

AI-Driven Hybrid SEM-ANN Framework for Real-Time Consumer Purchase Decision Prediction and Decision Support

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Abstract

In this study, an AI-based Hybrid Structural Equation Modeling-Artificial Neural Network (SEM-ANN) is developed for guiding and forecasting consumer purchasing decisions in real-time. To overcome the limitations of consumer behavior models, causal connection modeling and machine learning-based nonlinear prediction are used. The system predicts marketing decisions for retail, e-commerce, and consumer products based on product quality, pricing perception, brand recognition, and customer satisfaction. The predictions are accurate, understandable, and flexible.

Research Question

This paper addresses the growing need for understandable and trustworthy models for predicting consumer purchases. The existing approaches either provide causal explanations without any prediction capability or high prediction accuracy with low interpretability. The present study aims to fill this gap by combining SEM and ANN in an adaptive hybrid model. The research investigates the influence of components of consumer perception on purchase decisions and the potential of an AI-driven hybrid model to enhance prediction and decision support.

RQ1: In what way do quality, price, brand awareness, customer satisfaction, and defect rate influence consumer purchasing?

RQ2: Is an adaptive hybrid SEM-ANN framework better than individual SEM, regression, and ANN models in terms of accuracy and actionability of the decision support?

Method and Data

The quantitative analysis uses retail and e-commerce customer survey data. The proposed approach uses adaptive weighted learning to incorporate SEM, regression analysis, and ANNs. Purchase decision is the dependent variable, whereas product quality, pricing perception, brand awareness, customer happiness, and defect rate are explanatory factors. Data were pre-processed, feature engineering was performed, followed by SEM path analysis, ANN training, and model validation. Accuracy, ROC-AUC, RMSE, and SHAP-based feature-importance analyses were used to assess the predictions.



Figure 1: Summary of real-time consumer purchase decision prediction and decision support findings

Summary of Findings

Compared to solo SEM, regression, and ANN models, the Hybrid SEM–ANN framework dramatically improves consumer purchase decision prediction. Product quality and customer happiness positively affect purchase choices, but defect rate and price sensitivity adversely affect them, according to SEM studies. Brand awareness has a modest but beneficial effect. The adaptive hybrid model outperformed SEM, regression, and standard ANN methods with 92% predictive accuracy and reduced prediction error. Product quality was the strongest predictor in SHAP-based explainability analysis, followed by price perception and brand awareness. The system generated actionable information for consumer segmentation, targeted marketing, price strategies, and product enhancement in real time. Results show that integrating causal inference from SEM with ANN nonlinear learning generates a balanced model with good interpretability and predictive power. Targeting data-driven marketing and customer-centric business strategies, the framework works well in retail, fashion, consumer goods, and e-commerce.

Statement of Key Contribution

This paper introduces an AI-driven Hybrid SEM–ANN system that blends SEM interpretability with ANN predictiveness via adaptive learning, contributing to consumer behaviour and marketing analytics literature. The suggested paradigm combines explanation and prediction, unlike standard models. The addition of SHAP-based explainability improves transparency and managerial usefulness. A scalable and real-time decision-support system from the research helps organizations forecast customer purchasing behaviours and apply evidence-based marketing strategies across business areas.

References

Available upon request.

AI-Driven Intermediation in the Consumer Purchase Journey: Reshaping Brand Narratives and Demand Capture

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Abstract

Generative AI tools are becoming integral to consumer shopping, acting as digital intermediaries. This study investigates how AI intermediation, compared to traditional search engines, influences decision confidence, speed, purchase intention, and brand switching. Using the Judge Advisor System framework, we explore the boundaries of AI's effectiveness, particularly focusing on the roles of user automation bias and brand awareness in shaping consumer-brand connections and final purchase decision.

Research Question

The widespread adoption of Generative AI in shopping represents a fundamental shift in how consumers search for, evaluate, and choose products. Unlike traditional digital intermediaries like Google Search, Amazon, or Trivago, which primarily reduce search, evaluation, or matching costs, Generative AI reduces judgment costs by synthesizing information and recommending alternatives. While consumers are rapidly adopting these conversational agents to offload cognitive effort, little is known about how, and under what conditions, AI intermediation influences purchase behavior and brand management. Existing research scanty examines the psychological risks, such as automation bias, or how the familiarity of a brand conditions the AI's influence. Drawing on the Judge–Advisor System, Cognitive Offloading Theory, and Automation Bias literature, this study conceptualizes Generative AI as an advisor whose recommendations influence consumers. Cognitive Offloading explains why conversational AI reduces mental effort and increases decision efficiency, while Automation Bias explains why these effects vary across individuals depending on their tendency to over-reliance on algorithms. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, we bridge the gap between the rapid adoption of Generative AI and the psychological mechanisms underlying AI-mediated shopping.

Specifically, it addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: Does Generative AI intermediation produce higher decision confidence, faster decisions, weaker brand connection, greater purchase intention, and higher brand switching than traditional digital search?

RQ2: Does automation bias amplify these effects at the individual level?

RQ3: Does brand awareness condition these effects at the brand level?

Method and Data

We adopted a sequential triangulation approach to strengthen conceptual development before empirical testing. First, semi-structured interviews with consumers explored how Generative AI is being used during product search and purchase decisions. Second, thematic analysis of CMO interviews and industry panel conversations available on YouTube was conducted. Insights from these were combined with literature to refine the conceptual framework and hypothesis. We tested the framework with a 2x2 between-subjects experiment by manipulating the digital intermediary (ChatGPT Vs Google Search) and brand awareness (High: Sony Vs Low: Nexara). The sample comprised 194 Gen Z students from India. Participants were exposed to a simulated shopping scenario for wireless headphones and received recommendations from their assigned intermediary. Data was collected via a structured questionnaire. Mediation and moderated mediation analyses were conducted using PROCESS macros.

Summary of Findings

The findings suggest that Generative AI intermediation does not uniformly improve consumer outcomes; its effects depend on individual characteristics and brand factors. AI intermediation alone did not significantly influence decision confidence, decision speed, or purchase intention. However, automation bias emerged as a key boundary condition. Consumers high in automation bias reported greater confidence and faster decision-making when using AI than when using traditional search, resulting in a significant indirect effect on purchase intention through decision confidence. In contrast, users with low automation bias exhibited marginally slower decision-making, likely due to increased critical scrutiny. Brand awareness remained the strongest driver of purchase intention and brand connection, with well-known brands outperforming lesser-known brands regardless of the intermediary. Moreover, high brand awareness weakened the mediating role of decision confidence, suggesting a ceiling effect. Although we expected AI to reduce brand connection by limiting exposure to firm-controlled brand touchpoints, AI users reported marginally higher brand connection, though the effect was non-significant. The

conversational and personalized nature of AI recommendations may create an illusion of understanding and personalized guidance, partially compensating for reduced direct interaction with brand-owned content. AI intermediation also did not significantly increase brand switching tendency, indicating that AI recommendations alone are insufficient to override established brand preferences.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study makes three key contributions. First, it conceptualizes Generative AI as a distinct form of digital intermediary that goes beyond reducing search or evaluation costs by reducing consumers' judgment costs through synthesized recommendations. Second, it extends the Judge–Advisor System to AI-mediated shopping by integrating Cognitive Offloading and Automation Bias to explain when AI advice translates into purchase decisions. Finally, the findings highlight that AI doesn't uniformly improve consumer decision-making. Instead, AI recommendations are effective primarily for consumers with high automation bias, while established brand awareness remains the dominant driver of purchase intention and brand connection. These findings offer practical guidance for marketers and platform designers by highlighting that AI can complement strong brand building.

References are available upon request.

Applications of AI in Marketing: A Theoretical Review

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Abstract

While there has been significant growth in the use of AI in marketing, limited research has been done to understand the underlying theories of marketing transformation through AI. To fill this gap, this study has been conducted through a systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis of 117 peer-reviewed articles published in Scopus-indexed journals, combining application-oriented and theory-oriented approaches to deepen the understanding of the impact of AI on reshaping marketing strategy and competitive positioning.

Research Question

Nowadays, AI-marketing reviews remain fragmented across sub-domains and are largely operational or technological in nature, with a lack of consideration of existing theoretical frameworks. This study aims to fill this gap by using a dual-lens synthesis to uncover the main application fields as well as the theoretical approaches that underlie the application of AI in marketing.

RQ1: What is the intellectual structure, publication trends, and emerging research patterns characterizing the AI-marketing literature?

RQ2: What are the major application fields of Artificial Intelligence in marketing and what are the key theoretical frameworks that underpin the use of AI in marketing?

Method and Data

A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and bibliometric analysis were used to obtain the answers to the research questions. To achieve the objective, 117 peer-reviewed English-language journal articles were identified using the keywords “Artificial Intelligence,” “Machine Learning,” “Deep Learning,” “Natural Language Processing,” “AI,” “ML” and “Marketing” in the Scopus structured search between 2010 and 2025. Thematic clustering was carried out using VOSviewer, performing keyword co-occurrence analysis, scientific production mapping, and bibliometric coupling. The most frequently cited studies were then analysed through qualitative content analysis to extract dominant theoretical orientations.

Summary of Findings

AI-marketing research has been growing exponentially since 2018, with AI progressing and large language models coming into play. Five key thematic clusters were uncovered: (1) Customer Relationship Management—personalisation, retention analytics and building trust;

(2) Retail Analytics—predictive modelling, demand forecasting and pricing optimisation; (3) Mobile Marketing—geo-fencing, behavioural targeting, chatbots, conversational AI; (4) Content Creation and Advertising—programmatic advertising, sentiment analysis, message optimisation; and (5) Ethics and Governance—responsible AI, algorithmic bias, privacy, transparency. AI-marketing research is grounded in three theories: Resource-Based Theory views AI's capabilities as valuable, rare, and inimitable resources that can be a source of competitive advantage; Dynamic Capabilities Theory provides an understanding of how AI helps organizations adapt to market changes and continually reshape marketing processes; and the Service-Dominant Logic perspective views AI as an extension of operant resources that helps in value co-creation between firms and customers. The study concludes that marketers use AI as a strategic tool that enhances organizational responsiveness and leads to market differentiation.

Statement of Key Contribution

The present study reveals that the use of AI in marketing enhances the strategic capability of organizations. The study also covers the interaction between various theories and gives a complete picture of the role of AI in value creation, competitive edge and customer engagement. The five-cluster framework helps practitioners focus their investments for AI-enabled marketing strategies. For scholars, it provides a theoretical lens to comprehend AI-enabled marketing transformation.

References

Available upon request.

Artificial Intelligence Adoption in Global Marketing: A Data-Driven Framework for Strategic Decision-Making

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Abstract

This study focuses on the use of AI within international marketing using a data analysis approach. By applying machine learning methods in analyzing large volumes of data (more than 554,000 records), this study creates a prediction model for customers' behavior and optimization of marketing campaigns. This study examines the impact of AI on various metrics in marketing such as segmentation and return on investment.

Research Question

The rapid assimilation of AI in global marketing requires an evidence-based structure for analyzing its effectiveness. Although AI-based applications have increased, a valid model for assessing their effectiveness in different contexts remains rare.

RQ1: To what extent does a hybrid machine learning model predict consumer behavior and improve marketing results in international markets?

RQ2: Which AI-related variables are the most influential when it comes to customer segmentation and effective international marketing campaigns?

Method and Data

The study involved using a combination of machine learning and statistical methods to conduct quantitative research. Three publicly available datasets were integrated, comprising about 554,000 records in total. Data pre-processing involved handling missing values, one-hot encoding, and Min-Max normalization. Machine learning algorithms such as Random Forest, Support Vector Machine and Gradient Boosting were implemented with an 80/20 train-test split, Grid Search optimization and 5-fold cross-validation.

Summary of Findings

Performance of all the models was excellent. The best results in terms of accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and AUC were recorded by Random Forest, scoring 92.4%, 91.2%, 90.6%, 90.9%, and 0.94 respectively, validating the supremacy of ensemble models when dealing with complex consumer behavior data.

Marketing performance was greatly enhanced: customer segmentation accuracy increased by 28%, campaign response prediction by 31%, and churn prediction errors were reduced by 22%. Feature importance analysis revealed that customer income, purchase frequency, and campaign response rate accounted for more than 65% of the model's predictive power. As for training

times, Random Forest took 18.6 seconds, SVM 15.2 seconds, and Gradient Boosting 24.3 seconds, all capable of processing more than 550,000 records without performance loss.

Model	Accuracy	F1-Score
Random Forest	92.4%	90.9%
Support Vector Machine	89.1%	88.3%
Gradient Boosting	90.3%	89.4%

Table 1: Model Performance Summary

Statement of Key Contribution

In this study, a hybrid artificial intelligence methodology, validated through the empirical implementation of innovation in the area of machine learning in relation to global marketing applications, is proposed. This hybrid AI method has been validated using more than 554,000 records, achieving significant performance improvements in segmentation (28%), targeting (31%), and churn prediction (22%). The methodology will enable researchers and practitioners to make informed decisions regarding global marketing campaigns and their success rate.

References

Available upon request.

Artificial Intelligence as a Heterogeneous Operant Resource: Reframing Value Co-Creation through Relational Resource Integration in Global Service Ecosystems

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Abstract

Global service ecosystems engage widely with rapid digital transformation, while AI is increasingly in demand as an operant resource within globally complex institutional environments. This conceptual study integrates Service-Dominant (S-D) Logic with the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework to understand how heterogeneous AI capability typologies can reshape value co-creation processes through relational resource integration across global service ecosystems.

Research Question

This study highlights undiscovered gaps in how heterogeneous AI capabilities reshape the value co-creation process and relational resource integration across global service ecosystems. The AI adoption literature has not sufficiently addressed adoption in terms of intensity rather than as a binary decision. This study provides a theoretical map by linking AI adoption, heterogeneous capability configurations, and value co-creation within global service ecosystems and institutional complexity.

RQ1: How do heterogeneous AI capabilities (mechanical, analytical, and feeling) reconfigure relational resources within an institutionally complex environment?

RQ2: What is the role of organisational learning in enabling continuous AI reconfiguration?

Method and Data

This study explores how heterogeneous AI capabilities are adopted under TOE as operant resources and how they shape value co-creation within global service ecosystems. The framework positions TOE domains as a structural layer preceding AI adoption intensity. Adoption intensity enables differentiated configurations of mechanical, analytical, and feeling AI capabilities; these heterogeneous AI configurations can shape value co-creation outcomes through AI-enabled relational resource integration. Organisational learning provides a feedback loop that enables organisations to refine their AI capabilities and respond to ecosystem complexity.

Summary of Findings

The main findings can be summarised as follows: first, AI adoption should be understood in terms of intensity rather than as a binary decision; second, the differentiated roles of AI capabilities—mechanical, analytical, and feeling—play a significant role within service ecosystems; third, AI affects value co-creation indirectly by supporting AI relational resource integration rather than its outcomes; fourth, institutional complexity in global markets shapes how AI capabilities affect the entire system; and fifth, the organisational learning loop allows organisations to refine their AI capabilities continuously. Altogether, this study provides a theoretical map linking AI adoption, heterogeneous capability configurations, and value co-creation within global service ecosystems and institutional complexity.

Statement of Key Contribution

This conceptual study provides three contributions. First, it conceptualises TOE domains as structural conditions that influence AI adoption intensity within organisations. Second, it redefines heterogeneous AI operant resources as mechanical, analytical, and feeling capabilities. Third, it explains how heterogeneous AI capabilities influence value co-creation outcomes through AI-enabled relational resource integration.

References

Available upon request.

A Systematic Literature Review on Cognitive, Affective and Conative Response of the Consumers Towards AI-Generated Advertisements

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Abstract

The landscape of modern advertising is rapidly evolving through the integration of Artificial Intelligence, enabling the creation of highly interactive ads. AI-generated advertising is defined as the integration of computational technologies to generate or modify text, images, videos, or audio advertising content. Previous studies have highlighted that AI-generated content may lack contextual understanding and emotional nuance, resulting in mixed consumer responses. These mixed findings illustrate a need to understand how consumers respond to AI-generated advertisements.

Research Question

The existing literature on consumer responses remains fragmented and lacks a comprehensive synthesis. It has focused largely on the application of AI, its adoption, or implications from a general marketing perspective, rather than systematically understanding consumer response mechanisms.

- What are the key antecedents, decisions, and outcomes (ADO), and how can the identified outcomes be categorised into cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions?
- What are the dominant theories, contexts, and methodologies (TCM) in the reviewed studies?
- What are the critical research gaps in the literature, and what future research directions can be proposed to address them?

Method and Data

The study adheres to the SPAR-4-SLR protocol and follows a domain-based systematic literature review to ensure methodological rigour through structured stages of assembling, arranging, and assessing. Scopus and Web of Science were used for data collection. 2,879 initial search articles were filtered down based on predefined inclusion-exclusion criteria. Finally, 42 empirical studies were retained for analysis after removing duplicates and out-of-scope studies. For synthesis of the literature, the integrated ADO–TCM framework was used: the causal relationships among the variables were captured by the ADO framework, while the theory, context, and methodology were provided by the TCM framework.

Summary of Findings

Under antecedents, variables related to the source of advertisement content are focused on predominantly; constructs such as “advertising creator” and “advertising content source” were used most frequently. Within the decision stage, variables related to the credibility of the advertisement or trust were used as a critical mechanism by which AI-generated advertising was evaluated by consumers. The cognitive outcomes are fragmented, with few constructs related to consumer perception, trust, and evaluation used across multiple studies. In contrast, attitude-based constructs were dominant in affective outcomes, particularly “attitude toward the ad.” A strong focus on immediate behavioural intentions is reflected in the conative outcomes, centred on “purchase intention.” As per theoretical foundations, the literature is primarily grounded in the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM). In terms of context, image- and text-based advertising were used as key stimuli. Research is concentrated in FMCG, fashion, and consumer electronics, with China and the USA as the primary focus countries. Experimental designs and online surveys, often relying on self-reported data, were dominant in the literature. Analytical techniques primarily include regression, ANOVA, and structural equation modelling.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study offers important theoretical and managerial contributions. Theoretically, it contributes to scholarly knowledge by integrating fragmented empirical findings on consumers’ responses to AI-generated advertisements within an integrative ADO–TCM framework. By outlining key antecedents, decision-making processes, and outcomes, it establishes an integrated conceptual framework for how consumers process AI-generated advertising content, while also highlighting theoretical gaps and opportunities for future research. Managerially, the empirical evidence suggests that source disclosure, perceived authenticity, and credibility exert considerable influence on consumers’ responses to AI-generated ads. These implications allow practitioners to develop effective AI-generated advertising strategies that can boost engagement and favorable intention.

References

Available upon request.

Barriers to Artificial Intelligence and Technology Adoption in Global Marketing: A TISM Approach

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence is transforming global marketing by enabling enhanced personalization, automation, and data-driven decision-making. AI adoption is still uneven because of several interconnected obstacles. Using Total Interpretive Structural Modelling (TISM), this study seeks to identify and analyse the major obstacles to the adoption of AI and technology in international marketing. Ten significant obstacles were found after a thorough review of the literature and expert confirmation. After creating a hierarchical model using the TISM approach, barriers were categorized according to their driving and dependence power using MICMAC analysis. The results show that consumer trust emerges as the most dependent factor, while data privacy, regulatory restrictions, and data-related difficulties serve as fundamental drivers. By offering an integrated structural framework and practical managerial insights for prioritizing AI adoption strategies, the study adds to the body of existing literature.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Global Marketing; TISM; MICMAC; Technology Adoption; Barriers

Introduction & Background

Data privacy and regulatory challenges are particularly critical in global contexts due to varying legal frameworks. Data quality and integration issues further limit AI effectiveness, as fragmented and inconsistent datasets reduce the reliability of insights. Organizational resistance and lack of digital readiness also hinder adoption; research emphasizes the need for cultural transformation and leadership support for successful AI integration. Similarly, skill gaps and talent shortages restrict firms' ability to leverage AI effectively. Additionally, technological infrastructure limitations and legacy systems pose additional challenges, particularly in emerging markets, while cultural diversity and ethical concerns, including algorithmic bias, further complicate global AI implementation. Consumer trust remains a critical determinant, as concerns about privacy and transparency influence acceptance. The existing literature looks at AI adoption barriers independently, concentrating on organizational or technological factors, but the studies lack an integrated framework explaining the interrelationships among these barriers, justifying the use of TISM in this study.

Methodology

The study aims to fill the above-mentioned gaps with the following objectives: (1) to identify key barriers to AI and technology adoption in global marketing; (2) to examine interrelationships among these barriers using TISM; and (3) to develop a hierarchical structural model of barriers.

A qualitative approach using TISM is adopted. The literature and expert input were used to identify barriers. After applying the TISM method, a hierarchical model was constructed using level partitioning. Lastly, the barriers were categorized using MICMAC analysis.

Findings

Data-related concerns and data privacy become important motivators. Linkage variables include infrastructure, cost, talent limitations, and organizational opposition. Dependent variables include cultural aspects, ethics, legacy systems, and customer trust. The most impacted variable is consumer trust. The results show that data-related and regulatory barriers serve as fundamental forces that impact all other barriers. These fundamental limitations are translated into operational difficulties by organizational resistance and talent gaps, which serve as mediating factors. In the end, the most reliant variable is consumer trust, which is impacted by various obstacles. This emphasizes that before anticipating favourable customer-level results from AI adoption, businesses must solve internal and structural issues.

Conclusion

The results demonstrate that other obstacles, including organizational resistance, talent shortages, and customer trust, are driven by fundamental problems like data governance, regulatory concerns, and technology preparedness. In order to successfully apply AI and gain a sustained competitive advantage, it also highlights the necessity of organizational preparedness, trust-building, and strategic alignment.

References

Available upon request.

Culturally Mediated Service Recovery: A Multi-Dimensional Approach to AI Adaptation Capability in Industrial Markets

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Abstract

This study examines how AI adaptation capability functions as a culturally mediated governance mechanism in B2B service recovery. By integrating dynamic capability theory, institutional logics, and stakeholder governance, it investigates how divergent organisational cultures (efficiency-dominant and stakeholder-oriented) shape AI-driven recovery architectures and their relational outcomes—specifically inter-firm trust and strategic partnership sustainability.

Research Questions

Existing AI service recovery research is predominantly anchored in transactional, B2C settings, overlooking the structural complexity of industrial markets. B2B dyads involve multistakeholder interdependencies, extended relational histories, and asymmetric switching costs demanding a distinct lens to view the B2B service landscape. This study addresses two questions:

RQ1: How does a firm's prevailing cultural logic shape the structural design and functional priorities of its AI-driven service adaptation mechanisms?

RQ2: How do different AI adaptation configurations reconstruct trust, sustain relationships, and drive co-engagement, and how do regulatory uncertainty and the speed-legitimacy tension moderate these relational outcomes?

Method and Data

This study adopts an interpretivist-constructivist epistemology, employing systematic conceptual synthesis as the core method. Rather than testing an existing dataset, it thematically maps scholarship across dynamic capability theory, institutional logics theory, and stakeholder governance theory to construct an integrative theoretical framework. The analytical architecture is formalised through theoretically derived propositions that specify directional relationships, boundary conditions, and culturally mediated moderation effects governing AI-driven recovery performance in B2B dyads.

Summary of Findings

The study produces a framework that reconceptualises AI-driven service recovery as a culturally contingent capability-building process. Its defining feature is not a single competence but the capacity to manage simultaneous tensions—between context-sensitivity and scalability, ethical constraint and operational efficiency, relational preservation and technological delegation, and reactive recovery versus prospective risk governance. Firms that cultivate this capability do not

merely deploy AI; they construct the organisational infrastructure necessary for such deployment to be relationally legitimate and systemically resilient when handling service failure.

Organisational culture is proposed as the primary design constraint on adaptive capacity, not merely contextual background. Stakeholder-oriented firms build relationally productive recovery mechanisms—trust is rebuilt rather than restored, customer exit is deterred, and co-creative problem-solving is maintained. Efficiency-dominant cultures produce coherent but differently configured systems, optimised for throughput and measurable returns yet poorly equipped for high-relational-stakes scenarios. This culture-to-outcome pathway is not linear: regulatory uncertainty under incomplete or inconsistently applied AI governance regimes systematically erodes relational returns, reducing client confidence irrespective of service recovery quality. The speed-legitimacy paradox intensifies this—the very conditions enabling efficient automated service recovery often render it insufficiently human in the client's perception. How firms navigate this paradox is ultimately a cultural challenge presenting as a technical one.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study makes three contributions. Theoretically, it introduces a service-recovery-specific dynamic capability for B2B contexts, grounded in the intersection of institutional logics and stakeholder governance—a combination previously unattempted. Empirically, the framework accounts for outcome divergence that existing models cannot explain. Practically, it reorients managerial focus toward culture: stakeholder-oriented firms should invest in transparent, co-productive AI, while efficiency-driven firms must exercise restraint in high-relational-stakes recovery situations. Two findings carry broad relevance: efficiency and relational legitimacy in AI recovery fundamentally conflict, and fragmented AI regulation silently undermines recovery outcomes.

References

Available upon request.

Decoding Consumers' Adoption of AI-Powered Super Apps: An Approach–Avoidance Perspective Integrating UTAUT2 and Innovation Resistance Theory

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Abstract

This study examines consumers' adoption of AI-powered super apps in India through an integrated Approach–Avoidance framework. It investigates how adoption drivers, including performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, hedonic motivation, price value, and facilitating conditions, encourage usage intentions, while barriers such as complexity, perceived lack of value, perceived risk, habit inertia, and negative image discourage adoption. The study further explores the moderating effects of age and income, offering a comprehensive understanding of consumer acceptance and resistance toward AI-enabled digital ecosystems.

Research Question

RQ1: How do key adoption drivers influence consumers' behavioral intention to adopt AI-powered super apps?

RQ2: How do adoption barriers affect consumers' behavioral intention to adopt AI-powered super apps?

RQ3: To what extent do demographic variables, specifically age and income, moderate the relationships between adoption drivers, adoption barriers, and consumers' behavioral intention to adopt AI-powered super apps?

Method and Data

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the drivers and barriers influencing consumers' adoption of AI-powered super apps. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 263 MBA students who are also working professionals and active users of digital platforms. Measurement items for adoption drivers were adapted from established UTAUT2 scales, while barrier-related items were drawn from innovation resistance literature. All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale. Data were screened for missing values, normality, and outliers. Reliability and validity were assessed using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, AVE, Fornell–Larcker criterion, and HTMT ratio.

Summary of Findings

The findings indicate that key drivers such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions significantly enhance consumers' intention to adopt AI-powered super apps. However, hedonic motivation and price value do not exhibit a significant

impact on adoption intention, suggesting that utilitarian benefits outweigh experiential and economic considerations in this context. Among the barriers, complexity, habit inertia, and perceived lack of value show a significant negative influence, highlighting strong resistance effects, while perceived risk and negative image do not significantly affect adoption. Overall, the results emphasize that both drivers and barriers jointly shape adoption, with selective factors exerting stronger influence. Moderation effects are present only for age, indicating that the strength of relationships varies across different age groups, whereas gender does not significantly moderate the relationships.

Table 1: Structural Model Analysis and Results

Path	T Value	CI (Low–High)	VIF	Sig.	Result
<i>Direct Effects</i>					
PE → BI	2.556	0.05, 0.26	2.45	Sig	Supported
SI → BI	3.766	0.01, 0.34	2.76	Sig	Supported
EE → BI	0.351	−0.06, 0.08	1.62	Sig	Not Supported
HM → BI	0.098	−0.05, 0.07	1.54	Not Sig	Not Supported
PV → BI	0.045	−0.07, 0.03	2.87	Not Sig	Not Supported
FC → BI	2.214	0.02, 0.21	3.78	Sig	Supported
CU → BI	2.487	0.29, −0.04	2.86	Sig	Supported (Negative Effect)
LV → BI	2.365	0.26, −0.03	2.65	Sig	Supported (Negative Effect)
PR → BI	1.421	−0.18, 0.05	1.89	Not Sig	Not Supported
HI → BI	2.031	−0.24, −0.01	1.95	Sig	Supported (Negative Effect)
NI → BI	1.612	−0.19, 0.04	2.50	Not Sig	Not Supported

Statement of Key Contribution

This study makes a significant contribution by developing and empirically validating an integrated Approach–Avoidance framework that simultaneously examines both adoption drivers and resistance barriers influencing consumers' intention to adopt AI-powered super apps. While prior research has predominantly focused on enabling factors, this study provides a more holistic understanding by combining UTAUT2 and Innovation Resistance Theory within a single model. The findings identify the most influential factors promoting and inhibiting adoption and reveal important differences across age and income groups. The study offers valuable theoretical insights and practical guidance for platform developers, marketers, and policymakers seeking to accelerate adoption of AI-enabled digital ecosystems.

References

Available upon request.

Determinants of AI-Assisted Financial Decision Adoption Among Retail Investors: The Moderating Role of Behavioural Bias

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Abstract

This study examines the determinants of AI-assisted financial decision adoption among retail investors by integrating Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI), the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), and behavioural finance perspectives. The research investigates the influence of perceived explainability, information quality, performance expectancy, effort expectancy, trust, and perceived risk on adoption intentions. It further explores the moderating role of behavioural bias in shaping investor responses to AI-driven financial recommendations and decision-making tools.

Research Question

RQ1: What are the key determinants influencing the adoption of AI-assisted financial decision-making among retail investors?

RQ2: How does behavioural bias moderate the relationship between trust, perceived risk, and AI-assisted financial decision adoption among retail investors?

Method and Data

The present study adopted a quantitative research design to study the determinants of AI-assisted financial decision adoption among retail investors. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire from respondents (investors) familiar with digital financial platforms and AI-enabled investment tools. The instrument measured constructs such as perceived explainability, information quality, performance expectancy, effort expectancy, trust, perceived risk, behavioural bias and financial decision adoption using a five-point Likert scale. 216 responses were collected and analysed. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the proposed hypotheses and the moderating effects.

Summary of Findings

The research identifies multiple determinants affecting retail investors' use of AI-assisted financial decisions. Performance expectancy and effort expectancy were significantly associated with financial decision use—investors are more likely to utilize AI-based financial tools if they

see them as useful and easy to use. Information quality had a direct positive effect on trust and a direct inverse effect on perceived risk; perceived explainability increased trust and transparency for AI-generated suggestions. Trust positively affected financial decision use, and perceived risk negatively affected the intention to use those decisions. Additionally, behavioral bias strengthened trust's effect on financial decision use and reduced perceived risk's effect on financial decision use. Investors' psychological preferences continue to influence their attitudes toward AI-driven recommendations, even when advanced, explainable AI-assisted financial automation technology is readily available. The general conclusion of the study supports the need to develop explanations for why investors should trust AI-based financial suggestions, along with developing trust and considering behavioural factors as tools to promote retail investor use of AI-assisted finance.

Statement of Key Contribution

Through a holistic framework, this study contributes by incorporating XAI into the literature of AI adoption as it relates to financial decision making, as well as applying the UTAUT model and theories of behaviour to this topic area. While many past studies have focused on technology as the primary factor affecting an individual's acceptance of, or resistance to, using AI in making financial decisions, the current study examines the moderating effect of investors' behavioural biases on their individual responses to AI-assisted financial recommendations. The findings provide valuable information for financial services providers, fintech providers, and policymakers looking to foster investor trust, decrease risk perceptions, and promote responsible adoption of transparent and explainable AI-based financial services.

References

Available upon request.

Generative Artificial Intelligence in Academia for Sustainable Development: Exploring the Role of Self-Efficacy and Trust in Enhancing Creativity, Learning Performance, and Inclusive Outcomes

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Abstract

We live in a world of spheres where artificial intelligence (AI) technologies have spread to almost every phase of our daily life, and their influence is growing. The rapid development of AI has made it one of the most transformative technologies in higher education. However, concerns related to learning performance, creativity, and inclusive outcomes remain underexplored. This study explores antecedents such as self-efficacy and trust as a mediating variable and their influence on students' creativity, learning performance, and inclusive outcomes in education.

The existing studies primarily focus on GenAI adoption in higher education and its impact on academic performance, often examining the role of self-efficacy and trust independently rather than in an integrated framework. Additionally, limited attention has been given to how GenAI influences creativity, learning performance, and sustainable inclusive outcomes together.

Research Question

RQ1: How does the use of GenAI influence students' creativity, learning performance, and inclusive outcomes in higher education?

RQ2: How does trust mediate the relationship between self-efficacy and educational outcomes?

Methodology

To gather empirical data, this study employed a quantitative research design with a systematic online questionnaire as the primary data collection method. Data were collected from undergraduate, postgraduate, and research scholars in the North India region. A pilot test was carried out to check the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, and 400 responses were collected from different colleges and university departments. This study contains latent variables that cannot be directly studied, and as the data lacks normality, PLS-SEM was used due to its robustness in handling non-normal distributions.

Summary of Findings

The study's measurement model integrity was evaluated through reliability and convergent validity. Internal consistency was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha, with all values exceeding

the threshold limits, indicating strong reliability. Convergent validity was supported, as the majority of factor loadings exceeded 0.50. Discriminant validity was checked using the Fornell–Larcker test, which allows constructs with $AVE < 0.50$ if $CR > 0.60$, indicating adequate convergent validity. Learning performance loadings (0.51 to 0.58) all exceed 0.50 and contribute meaningfully to paths like $LP \rightarrow CR$ ($\beta = 0.251$) and $LP \rightarrow IO$ ($\beta = 0.251$). The bootstrapping test, performed using 5000 subsamples, indicates that self-efficacy has a positive impact on creativity ($\beta=0.309$, $p<.001$) and learning performance ($\beta=0.532$, $p<.001$). Furthermore, learning performance significantly affects both creativity ($\beta = 0.251$, $p < 0.01$) and inclusive outcomes ($\beta = 0.251$, $p < 0.01$). Overall results indicate that both self-efficacy and trust significantly enhance creativity, learning performance, and inclusive outcomes, and trust becomes a prominent indicator across all models. However, the direct relationship between self-efficacy and inclusive outcomes was found to be insignificant ($\beta=0.099$, $p > 0.05$), wherein self-efficacy influences inclusive outcomes not directly, but through a mediator factor.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study offers numerous theoretical contributions. First, it advances social cognitive theory and proposes a comprehensive understanding of technology-based learning by incorporating the constructs of trust and GenAI. Based on the findings, this study recommends to EdTech companies that they focus on developing AI features that improve students' confidence and encourage creativity. Furthermore, this study suggests that HEIs and policymakers encourage equitable access to AI technologies to support inclusive educational outcomes, and that HEIs provide adequate training and infrastructure support to enable students and educators to effectively use GenAI tools in education.

References

Available upon request.

Less is More – Exploring the Detrimental Effects of Chatbot Aesthetics on Value Perceptions

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Abstract

Designing valuable chatbots is important as companies adopt chatbots owing to the rise of Generative AI. To this end, this study examines the relationship between the design cues of text-based chatbots and hedonic and utilitarian value. Utilitarian value is created out of a task-oriented interaction with the chatbot, where the consumer actively pursues an outcome, while hedonic value arises from the fun, emotive and fantasy components of shopping and occurs irrespective of the task.

Research Question

While some prior work examines hedonic and utilitarian perceptions arising out of the design cues of chatbots, few studies focus on the impact of a chatbot's form-based cues on overall shopping value, especially the hedonic and utilitarian shopping value derived from the interaction. While chatbot anthropomorphism has been explored in several studies, this paper places more focus on the aesthetic design of the chatbot and its interaction with conversational anthropomorphic design (CAPD) cues to shape value perception.

RQ1: How do a chatbot's form-based design cues impact the utilitarian and hedonic value derived from the chatbot?

Method and Data

The study followed a 2 (Aesthetics: high, low) × 2 (CAPD: high, low) experimental design with 88 participants. The experiment used a fictional website with a fictional chatbot for the Levi's brand, chosen as the product category is very popular in India and has aspects of both utility and hedonic benefits. 88 university MBA students were recruited and randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. To control for differences in functionality, participants were provided screenshots of a conversation with the chatbot and asked to read the conversation for 3–4 minutes before answering the questions.

Summary of Findings

The mediation model for aesthetics showed no significant relationship between utilitarian value and aesthetics, but a significant negative relationship with hedonic value ($p < 0.01$). The interaction between aesthetic and anthropomorphic cues had a significant negative impact on hedonic value ($p = 0.023$). The effect of aesthetics on hedonic value ($\beta = -0.8443$) was

significant only for high levels of anthropomorphism ($p < 0.001$) and not for low levels ($p = 0.5273$).

The results are counterintuitive: aesthetic cues are found to reduce the hedonic value derived from the interaction, particularly when anthropomorphic cues are higher. The results also show that anthropomorphic cues do not affect either of the value perceptions directly, but rather only moderate the effect of the aesthetic design.

Statement of Key Contribution

While aesthetics by itself does not affect hedonic value negatively, it does so when interacting with anthropomorphic cues, prompting questions related to the uncanny valley. The results highlight the importance of utilitarian value, as it has a stronger contribution to purchase intention than hedonic value. Overall, this experiment acts as a first step in exploring the complex interactions between different design cues and raises a red flag about the use of aesthetics in highly anthropomorphic chatbots.

References

Available upon request.

Navigating the Personalisation–Privacy Paradox: Consumer Insights from AI-Driven Advertising

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Abstract

This paper examines how consumers decode AI-driven personalised advertisements while shopping online. Although such advertisements are designed to improve relevance and convenience, consumers often experience a tension between perceived usefulness and concerns around privacy. Drawing on laddering interviews with urban Indian consumers, the study explores the thoughts, emotions, and behavioural responses that emerge from these interactions. The findings highlight different forms of personalisation and propose a conceptual framework explaining how consumers engage with, avoid, or delay responses to AI-powered advertising.

Research Question

The increasing use of AI-driven advertising on e-commerce platforms has created a situation where consumers value relevance and convenience while simultaneously expressing concerns about privacy and perceived intrusion. Although prior research has largely focused on outcomes such as engagement and purchase intention, limited attention has been given to how consumers interpret and experience these advertisements. The study addresses this gap by exploring the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural processes underlying consumer responses to AI-driven personalisation and examining how different forms of personalisation influence engagement, avoidance, and delayed decision-making.

RQ1: How do consumers interpret and respond to AI-driven personalised advertisements on e-commerce platforms?

RQ2: What psychological, social, and privacy-related factors shape consumer responses to AI-driven personalised advertising?

Method and Data

The study followed a qualitative and interpretive research design to understand how consumers experience and respond to AI-driven personalised advertising on e-commerce platforms. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with urban online shoppers aged between 25 and 50 years. The interviews focused on participants' real-life interactions with personalised advertisements and explored the thoughts, emotions, and behavioural responses associated with them. The responses were analyzed using a three-stage coding process comprising open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, which helped identify recurring themes, underlying constructs, and relationships contributing to the development of a revised conceptual framework.

Summary of Findings

The findings show that consumers do not experience AI-driven personalisation in a uniform way. Instead, there are three different types: *Predictive personalisation*, which is based on past behaviour and generally seen as helpful and efficient; *Intuitive personalisation*, which is linked to anticipating needs and generates mixed reactions ranging from appreciation to discomfort; and *Investigative personalisation*, which is focused on drawing from deeper desires and is often perceived as intrusive. Each of these personalisation types leads to a different internal response—while some consumers felt supported, others reported uneasiness, loss of control, and even negative suspicion.

Two types of negative responses were also observed: *Avoidance*, where consumers tend to ignore or skip ads, and *Annoyance*, where consumers react negatively to ads served to them. Factors such as trust, social influence, and ownership desire influence the overall engagement with the ad. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) often acts as a trigger in certain circumstances and pushes consumers toward action, even when they are unsure. To sum up, consumer behaviour shows a continuous trade-off between perceived usefulness and privacy violation concern, rather than a clear go/no-go for or against personalisation.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study redirects the focus from behavioural responses to consumer experiences in AI-based environments. It shows that the effectiveness of AI-led advertising depends not only on relevance, but also on how consumers read the intent behind personalisation. By identifying different forms of personalisation and linking them to distinct responses, the study offers a more balanced view of the personalisation–privacy paradox. The proposed conceptual model provides a base for future empirical testing and can help marketers better understand how consumers interact with AI-based ads.

References

Available upon request.

Nexus and Constraints of Implementing Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality for Low-Involved Users to Revolutionize Temple Tourism in India

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Abstract

Accessible tourism technologies, particularly virtual reality and augmented reality applications, remain an unmet promise for low-involved users, such as members of lower socio-economic strata and elderly demographics in temple tourism. Populations lacking digital literacy, attitude and intention to adopt AR/VR technology have influenced the perceived usefulness and ease of use of AR/VR deployments in temple tourism in emerging India. This study examines the technological preparedness and resistance to accepting innovations in religious/temple tourism among low-involved users.

Research Question

The research question of this study addresses AR/VR convergence for low-income earners, the elderly, the disabled, and dialect-speaking pilgrims in temple tourism in West Bengal, India. It examines the attitude and behavioural variance of low-involved users with respect to age, gender, economic condition, level of education, digital literacy, travel frequency, marital status and willingness to pay for an AR/VR system for religious tourism. The study is based on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and the Technology Acceptance Model, considering motivation, expectancy, price value, and social influence in facilitating adoption intentions among users with minimal prior exposure to technology.

RQ1: What is the AR/VR exposure among low-involved users in West Bengal, and how does it influence the willingness to adopt virtual temple visits?

RQ2: What are the most significant barriers to the adoption of AR/VR across demographic segments in virtual religious tourism (the digital divide)?

Method and Data

Sample Category: The study explicitly identifies four categories of low-involved users: low-income earners, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and persons living alone.

Sample Size: Five hundred twenty-one respondents from three different locations—urban-rural, metropolitan and rural districts of West Bengal—having different geography and socio-economic attributes.

Sampling Techniques: A non-probability purposive sampling and snowball technique are used to collect data.

Methodology: Both qualitative and quantitative techniques are used to measure the behavioural attitude and perceptions of the respondents. The study uses NVivo software for thematic qualitative analysis, and structural equation modelling is conducted using Smart PLS 4.

Summary of Findings

Category	Sample Size	Desire to Use (%)	Confidence to Use (%)	Adoption Gap (%)
Low-Income Earners	150	82	30	52
Senior Citizens	120	60	12	48
Persons with Disabilities	100	94	18	76
Persons living alone	150	90	45	45

Eighty-two per cent of low-income earners have a desire to use AR/VR tools for temple visits, but only thirty per cent possess the confidence, as it saves money. Senior citizens exhibited a forty-eight per cent adoption gap with sixty per cent willingness but only twelve per cent confidence due to technophobia. Persons with disabilities displayed the most severe adoption gap at seventy-six per cent, with ninety-four per cent desire but only eighteen per cent confidence; this group prioritised virtual pre-tours for safety assurance. Persons living alone showed a forty-five per cent adoption gap with ninety per cent desire and forty-five per cent confidence.

These patterns collectively demonstrate that the digital divide in temple tourism is not primarily a problem of user capability but of economic inaccessibility and interface complexity—existing perceptions that systematically prevent willing populations from accessing transformative technologies. Respondents who were aware but had not experienced AR/VR before expressed a desire to experience it hands-on.

Statement of Key Contribution

The study shows positive associations between attitudes and intentions to use AR/VR technologies across all categories of low-involved users, implying that they are open to change and that this positively influences their reasons for adopting AR/VR technology. This study proposes the Sahayak Framework, an agent-driven ecosystem for low-involved users in religious tourism. The policy implications are substantial, calling for investment in public digital infrastructure and mandating voice-first agentic modes in government-sponsored tourism applications. This research proposes that digital-divide adoption patterns among marginalised populations in temple tourism in developing economies are influenced by technology design, rather than by user age or income.

References

Available upon request.

Reframing Brand Visibility in the Era of Generative AI

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Abstract

The growing use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) is changing the way consumers search for information and discover brands online. Unlike traditional search engines that display ranked lists of websites, AI systems provide direct responses that often include brand recommendations. This shift requires a new understanding of digital visibility. This study explores how brands can remain visible in AI-driven environments and proposes a conceptual framework of AI-Mediated Brand Visibility (AIBV) to explain the emerging dynamics of brand discovery.

Research Question

Digital visibility has traditionally depended on search engine rankings, website traffic, and keyword optimization. However, the emergence of generative AI is transforming how consumers access information and how brands are discovered. Existing research has examined AI applications in marketing but offers limited understanding of how visibility is created within AI-generated responses. This study addresses this gap by investigating the changing nature of brand visibility in AI-mediated environments and identifying the factors that influence a brand's inclusion in AI-generated recommendations.

RQ1: How is generative AI reshaping traditional mechanisms of digital brand visibility?

RQ2: What factors contribute to AI-Mediated Brand Visibility in AI-generated information environments?

Method and Data

This study employs a structured narrative review approach. Relevant peer-reviewed articles published between 2022 and 2025 were identified from leading journals in marketing, business, and information systems. The review focused on research related to generative AI, digital discovery, recommendation systems, semantic search, consumer trust, and online visibility. In addition, selected industry reports and practitioner publications were examined to capture emerging developments in AI-driven marketing. The collected literature was analysed through thematic synthesis to identify recurring patterns, conceptual relationships, and research gaps that informed the development of the proposed framework.

Summary of Findings

The review reveals that generative AI is fundamentally changing the foundations of digital visibility. Rather than relying on search engine rankings, brands increasingly gain visibility through inclusion in AI-generated responses. The findings indicate that AI systems prioritize

contextual understanding and semantic relevance over traditional keyword-based optimization. As a result, brands need to establish strong digital identities supported by structured and consistent information across multiple platforms.

The study also finds that visibility depends on the quality and credibility of information available about a brand. AI systems are more likely to reference brands that are consistently represented across authoritative sources and connected through reliable digital knowledge structures. Furthermore, visibility is influenced by a brand's ability to fit the context of user queries and provide relevant information that aligns with consumer needs.

Based on these insights, the study proposes the concept of AI-Mediated Brand Visibility (AIBV), comprising four dimensions: semantic presence, algorithmic credibility, contextual relevance, and knowledge integration. Together, these dimensions explain how brands can achieve and sustain visibility in AI-driven environments. The findings suggest that future marketing strategies must move beyond traditional SEO practices and focus on building trusted, interconnected, and AI-readable digital ecosystems.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study contributes to marketing literature by introducing AI-Mediated Brand Visibility (AIBV) as a new framework for understanding brand visibility in the age of generative AI. The framework extends existing knowledge beyond conventional search engine optimization and highlights the role of AI systems as emerging gatekeepers of digital discovery. By identifying the key dimensions that influence visibility in AI-generated responses, the study offers both theoretical insights and practical guidance for marketers. The research provides a foundation for future empirical investigations and helps organizations adapt their visibility strategies to rapidly evolving AI-powered information environments.

References

Available upon request.

The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Sales Performance in the B2B Retail Industry: A PLS-SEM Analysis Using SmartPLS

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) drives digital transformation in B2B retail, yet its empirical impact on sales remains understudied. This research bridges that gap by using PLS-SEM to analyze survey data from 285 sales managers. Objectives include assessing AI's influence on performance and evaluating mediating factors like process efficiency. Preliminary findings reveal AI significantly boosts sales performance and customer retention, though organizational readiness and implementation costs remain critical challenges for successful adoption.

Research Question

RQ1: What is the impact of AI-enabled tool adoption on B2B retail sales performance indicators, and how is this relationship mediated by sales process efficiency (AI adoption)?

RQ2: How do organizational and technological factors influence the overall implementation of AI tools within the B2B retail sector?

Method and Data

This research adopts a quantitative approach using survey data collected from 285 sales managers in the B2B retail industry. A structured questionnaire was designed to measure constructs such as AI adoption, sales process efficiency, customer analytics capability, and sales performance. The data was analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software, chosen for its suitability for exploratory research, complex models, and smaller sample sizes. The analysis includes measurement model assessment (reliability and validity) and structural model evaluation (path coefficients, significance levels, and predictive relevance).

Summary of Findings

The empirical analysis provides robust evidence regarding the structural relationships governing Artificial Intelligence adoption and sales performance within the B2B retail sector. The PLS-SEM evaluations reveal that the integration of AI-enabled tools exerts a significant, direct positive impact on key sales performance indicators. This primary relationship is heavily supported by operational optimization, as AI adoption directly enhances sales process efficiency through the automation of routine tasks and the facilitation of data-driven decision-making.

Furthermore, the structural model highlights a critical mediating mechanism: customer analytics capabilities significantly bridge the gap between initial technological deployment and optimized sales outcomes, particularly manifesting in heightened customer retention and accelerated revenue growth. However, the efficacy of this digital transformation is contingent upon internal ecosystems. The findings underscore that organizational readiness—specifically robust data infrastructure and employee technical skill sets—acts as a fundamental catalyst in maximizing AI’s performance dividends. Conversely, successful adoption is counterbalanced by persistent systemic hurdles, most notably prohibitive implementation costs and ingrained organizational resistance to technological change. These insights offer a nuanced framework for B2B retail firms seeking to strategically navigate AI implementation.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study offers a distinct contribution to the B2B retail literature by providing empirical validation of AI’s structural impact on sales performance. Utilizing PLS-SEM, it fills a critical methodological and theoretical gap by uncovering how sales process efficiency and customer analytics capability mediate technology adoption. Moving beyond generalized IT frameworks, this research establishes that technological implementation cannot be decoupled from organizational readiness, such as data infrastructure and staff skills. Practically, these findings offer B2B executives a strategic, data-driven roadmap to navigate implementation barriers, optimize resource allocation, and predictably accelerate revenue growth.

References

Available upon request.

Virtual Influencer Attributes, Credibility, and Purchase Intention: A Generational Comparison of Gen Y and Gen Z Consumers

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Abstract

The study aims to analyse the relationship between virtual influencer attributes, credibility and purchase intention along with a generational comparison. India being home to the largest Gen Z population along with a substantial Gen Y population, the generational difference is overlooked in virtual influencer (VI) research. According to generational theory, Gen Z and Gen Y approach the digital space differently due to diverse technological experience, while some prior VI studies have considered all users as homogeneous.

Research Question

The drivers of customer response in VI marketing have been studied, but their relative importance is unexplored. Secondly, the mechanism by which virtual influencer features are translated into purchase intention is underdeveloped. And no study has critically analyzed generational differences in these relationships. The research questions for the study are:

- How do virtual influencer attributes such as physical attractiveness, social attractiveness, attitude homophily, interest similarity, and language similarity impact the credibility of the influencer?
- Does the credibility of an influencer affect the purchase intention of products endorsed by a virtual influencer?
- Do these paths differ significantly between two generations?

Method and Data

The study followed a quantitative cross-sectional research design. To ensure statistical power for multigroup analysis (MGA), a total of 400 samples were used, comprising 200 samples from each group. Respondents were chosen from the followers of selected virtual influencers. PLS-SEM and Smart PLS 4 were used for analysis. The structural model tested path coefficients and their significance using 5000 resamples, and multigroup analysis was conducted to compare path coefficients between groups.

Summary of Findings

Language similarity, interest similarity, physical attractiveness and attitude homophily showed a positive influence on credibility, whereas social attractiveness failed to be a predictor of influencer credibility—users may recognize the attractiveness of a virtual influencer as a designed trait rather than earned. However, credibility showed a strong positive effect on purchase intention. Interest similarity and language similarity showed a significant influence on credibility for Gen Z users of social media; this generation builds social connections through deep connection and shared activities. By contrast, digital natives who grew up in a hyper-connected era might prioritize visual appeal as a primary filter for processing content. Importantly, for Gen Z consumers, credibility had a significantly stronger effect on purchase intention than for Gen Y. Gen Y, being inherently comfortable in online spaces, might have a greater inclination to convert credibility into purchase intention of products recommended by an influencer. No moderation effects were found for social attractiveness and attitude homophily, indicating these variables work similarly in both generations.

Statement of Key Contribution

According to generation theory, Gen Z and Gen Y differ in various ways—Gen Z are considered digital natives, while Gen Y are considered digital immigrants. Without testing this difference, companies investing in VI marketing risk their resources, because uniform strategies may not work equally across different age groups in India. The results suggest that retailers must adopt different strategies for users in different generations: for Gen Z, visual appeal might be important, whereas shared values and interests would work better for Gen Y.

References

Available upon request.

When Brands Speak Through AI: The Role of Anthropomorphic Chatbots in Shaping Brand Personality Perceptions and Customer Experience

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Abstract

This study investigates how anthropomorphic perceptions of AI-powered chatbots on Indian e-commerce platforms, including Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, Blinkit, Zepto, and Swiggy Instamart, influence brand personality perception, consumer experience, and brand loyalty. Drawing on anthropomorphism theory and the warmth/competence framework of social cognition, the research explores whether human-like chatbot interactions shape downstream consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions in the rapidly expanding Indian digital commerce landscape.

Research Question

This study examines whether consumers anthropomorphize AI chatbots on Indian e-commerce platforms and whether such perceptions produce measurable effects on brand-related attitudes and behavioral outcomes. The problem lies in the gap between chatbot deployment at scale and the limited understanding of how automated, human-like communication influences consumer psychology in emerging market contexts.

RQ1: Does anthropomorphic perception of an AI chatbot significantly influence brand warmth and brand personality perception among Indian e-commerce consumers?

RQ2: Does an enhanced brand perception, mediated through consumer experience, lead to greater brand loyalty among users of AI chatbot-enabled platforms?

Method and Data

A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was employed. The target population comprised urban Indian consumers who had interacted with a chatbot on at least one of the six platforms within the preceding six months. Of 214 initial responses, 151 met the eligibility criteria and were retained for analysis. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression in SPSS. Constructs were measured using validated multi-item Likert scales, all demonstrating strong internal reliability (Cronbach's α : 0.759–0.939; KMO = 0.943).

Summary of Findings

All regression models yielded statistically significant results. Anthropomorphic perception strongly predicted brand warmth ($\beta = 0.644$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that consumers

who perceived the chatbot as human-like attributed warmer personality traits to the brand itself. Brand warmth, in turn, was the strongest predictor of consumer experience ($\beta = 0.651$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that affective brand evaluations shaped the overall quality of the service interaction beyond its functional utility. Consumer experience significantly predicted brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.506$, $p < 0.001$), and brand warmth also exerted a direct positive effect on loyalty ($\beta = 0.268$, $p < 0.001$). The direct path from anthropomorphic perception to consumer experience was weak and marginally significant ($\beta = 0.140$, $p = 0.051$), suggesting brand warmth functions as the primary mediating mechanism. The overall model was highly significant ($F = 105.478$, $p < 0.001$). These findings confirm that chatbot design operates as a brand personality signal, not merely a functional touchpoint.

*Table 1: Hypothesis Testing Summary (** $p < 0.001$)*

H	Relationship	β	Result
H1	Anthropomorphic Perception $\rightarrow$ Brand Warmth	0.644***	Supported
H2	Brand Warmth $\rightarrow$ Consumer Experience	0.651***	Supported
H3	Anthropomorphic Perception $\rightarrow$ Consumer Experience	0.140	Partially Supported
H4	Consumer Experience $\rightarrow$ Brand Loyalty	0.506***	Supported
H5	Brand Warmth $\rightarrow$ Brand Loyalty	0.268***	Supported

Statement of Key Contribution

This study makes three distinct contributions. First, it extends anthropomorphism theory to the chatbot-as-brand-representative context, demonstrating that consumers do not mentally separate an automated agent from the sponsoring brand. Second, it establishes brand warmth as a critical mediating variable between anthropomorphic perception and experiential outcomes, adding precision to the warmth/competence framework in digital service settings. Third, it provides rare empirical evidence from Indian e-commerce, a market underrepresented in consumer behavior literature, validating established theoretical relationships in a high-growth, culturally distinct context.

References

Available upon request.

Track 2

Digital, Social, and Omni-Channel Marketing

A Multi-Criteria Analysis of Consumer Preferences for Organic Products in Quick Commerce Platforms: An AHP-Based Approach

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Abstract

This study examines the factors influencing consumers' purchasing decisions for organic products on quick-commerce platforms such as Blinkit and Swiggy Instamart. With increasing demand for both rapid delivery and health-conscious consumption, consumers evaluate multiple criteria while purchasing on quick-commerce platforms. Using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), the research prioritises these factors to assess their relative importance and provide insights into consumer preferences in the quick-commerce environment.

Research Question

- What are the key factors influencing consumers' purchasing decisions for organic products on quick-commerce platforms such as Blinkit and Swiggy Instamart?
- How can the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) be used to prioritise and determine the relative importance of these factors in consumers' decision-making for purchasing organic products through quick-commerce platforms?

Method and Data

This study adopts a quantitative multi-criteria decision-making approach using AHP to prioritise factors influencing consumer purchasing of organic products on quick-commerce platforms. The research begins with identification of key criteria through an extensive literature review and expert focus group interviews. Expert profiles included academia professors, marketing faculty, marketing managers, e-commerce consultants, web developers, and social media marketers. Data was collected using Saaty's scale, ranking judgments on a 1–9 scale ranging from equally preferred to extremely preferred judgments (Saaty, 1987).

Summary of Findings

Table 1: Summary Results

	Priority Vector (PV)	Rank
Brand trust and source transparency	31.53%	1
Delivery Speed	14.55%	3
Eco-labelling	19.92%	2
E-Word of Mouth	13.37%	4
Price Sensitivity	9.20%	5
App experience	6.07%	6
AI-based recommendation	5.36%	7

The findings indicate that brand trust and source transparency (31.53%) are the most influential factors, highlighting the importance of authenticity and reliable product information. Eco-labelling (19.92%) ranks second, reflecting growing consumer preference for sustainable products. Delivery speed (14.55%) remains important for convenience, followed by e-word of mouth (13.37%), which helps build trust through reviews. Price sensitivity (9.20%) is less critical, suggesting consumers accept premium pricing for quality. App experience (6.07%) and AI-based recommendations (5.36%) have minimal influence. Managerially, firms should prioritise transparency, sustainability, efficient delivery, and positive online engagement, while focusing pricing on perceived value.

Table 2: Index and Ratio Computations

Counts (n)	7.00
λ (lambda) Max	7.00
Consistency Index	0.00
RCI	1.32
Consistency Ratio	0.00

Statement of Key Contribution

This study contributes to existing knowledge by providing an integrated multi-criteria framework to evaluate consumer purchasing decisions for organic products in the emerging quick-commerce environment. Unlike prior research that examines factors such as trust, transparency, price, or technology separately, this study uses AHP to systematically prioritise their relative importance. The findings reveal that brand trust and source transparency outweigh technological features and price considerations, highlighting the central role of authenticity in green purchasing. These insights are valuable for researchers, platform managers, and policymakers seeking to promote sustainable consumption and strengthen consumer confidence in digital retail ecosystems.

References

Available upon request.

Beyond Visible Metrics: Virtual Influencers and Dark Funnel Mechanisms in Global Digital Markets

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Abstract

Virtual influencers are increasingly used by global brands to engage consumers across digital platforms, yet much of their influence occurs within private and semi-visible online spaces that are not captured by conventional engagement metrics. This study investigates how key virtual influencer attributes shape consumer engagement through dark funnel mechanisms in global digital markets. By examining private sharing behaviors, trust formation, and community participation, the research explores how influencers generate meaningful consumer outcomes beyond visible interactions.

Research Question

Existing influencer marketing research primarily focuses on human influencers and observable engagement metrics such as likes, comments, and shares. Limited attention has been given to how virtual influencers shape consumer behavior within dark funnel environments characterized by private sharing and unobservable interactions. This study addresses this gap by examining how virtual influencer attributes influence behavioural outcomes in dark funnel environments.

RQ1: How do virtual influencer attributes such as authenticity, relatability, engagement style, narrative appeal, and community embeddedness influence consumer engagement?

RQ2: How do dark social mechanisms and trust-based processes mediate the relationship between virtual influencer attributes and consumer engagement outcomes?

Method and Data

This study adopts a quantitative scenario-based research design using standardized digital stimuli depicting a virtual fashion influencer across public social media (Instagram-style) and private messaging (WhatsApp-style) environments. The stimuli were adapted from disguised fashion-related content inspired by an existing female virtual influencer and designed to represent public engagement and private community interactions. Data were collected from 312 digitally active female social media users recruited through Instagram. Established measurement scales were adapted from prior literature. Structural equation modeling (SEM) and mediation analyses were used to test the proposed theoretical framework and indirect relationships.

Summary of Findings

The findings suggest that virtual influencer attributes like content relatability, engagement style, and narrative appeal play a significant role in shaping consumer engagement within

digitally mediated environments. The results support the view that influence extends beyond publicly visible interactions and is substantially facilitated through private sharing behaviors and trust-based relational processes. These mechanisms were found to contribute to deeper forms of consumer participation, including commitment-oriented and community-based engagement outcomes. Notably, attributes traditionally emphasized in influencer marketing, such as perceived authenticity, do not appear to exert uniform effects in AI-mediated contexts, indicating that consumers may evaluate virtual influencers through different criteria than human influencers. The findings also reveal distinctions between community-oriented participation and trust-based engagement processes, suggesting the presence of multiple pathways through which virtual influencers generate value. Overall, the study underscores the growing importance of dark funnel dynamics in explaining consumer engagement and highlights the need to reconsider conventional assumptions regarding influence and relationship formation in increasingly AI-driven digital ecosystems.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study advances influencer marketing research by extending the examination of virtual influencers into the largely underexplored domain of dark funnel consumer behavior. By integrating perspectives from Uses and Gratifications Theory, Parasocial Interaction Theory, and Social Identity Theory, it develops a multidisciplinary framework for understanding consumer engagement in AI-mediated digital environments. The research contributes to the growing literature on virtual influencers by highlighting the importance of private, relationship-driven, and community-oriented forms of engagement that are not fully captured by conventional metrics, offering a broader perspective on how influence operates within contemporary digital ecosystems.

References

Available upon request.

Customer-Retailer Congruence in Technology Adoption Towards Ubiquitous Retailing: A Dyadic Perspective on Retail Innovation

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Abstract

The global retail landscape is undergoing an unprecedented transformation driven by digitalization, mobile connectivity, AI, and ubiquitous computing technologies. U-tailing is an extension of mobile computing based on portable accessing technologies. This paradigm shift enables the emergence of *placeless commerce*, where public and transitional spaces (metro/bus terminals, transit corridors and commercial hubs) function as interactive retail nodes. Through QR-enabled smart posters, consumers can scan products using mobile devices, place orders instantly, and receive home delivery before arriving at their residence. Thus, retail becomes seamlessly integrated into daily mobility patterns rather than requiring intentional store visits.

Research Question

Against the backdrop of rapid digital transformation in retailing, this study examines technology–retailer congruence by addressing the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the factors influencing the adoption of U-Tailing from consumer and retailer perspectives?

RQ2: How do retailers leverage ubiquitous technologies to create value in U-tailing environments?

RQ3: To what extent does technology-retailer congruence (retailer preparedness and consumer technology perceptions) influence U-Tailing outcomes?

Method and Data

The present study adopted a mixed-methods research design to examine technology–retailer congruence towards U-tailing. Initial qualitative insights were obtained through semi-structured interviews to refine the conceptual framework. Subsequently, quantitative data were collected using a dyadic research design comprising 150 matched consumer–retailer pairs from Southern India. Separate but parallel questionnaires, adapted from validated scales grounded on the Technology Adoption Propensity Index and Technology Acceptance Model, were administered to both groups. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS, and Response Surface Analysis (RSA) was performed using R software.

Summary of Findings

The findings highlight the significant role of technology–retailer congruence in influencing U-Tailing outcomes. Reliability and validity assessments confirmed the robustness of the measurement model (Cronbach’s alpha: 0.78 to 0.91; Composite Reliability: 0.82 to 0.93).

RSA revealed that congruence between retailer and consumer perceptions of technology adoption propensity positively influenced U-Tailing effectiveness. Among the factors examined, optimism ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$) and perceived usefulness ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.001$) emerged as the predominant predictors, indicating shared confidence in technology. In contrast, higher levels of congruence in dependency and vulnerability and perceived barriers were

negatively associated with U-Tailing outcomes ($\beta = -0.22$, $p < 0.05$; $\beta = -0.29$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta = -0.33$, p

< 0.01 respectively), highlighting the importance of minimizing operational and technological obstacles. The model explained a significant proportion of variance in U-Tailing outcomes ($R^2 = 0.62$), indicating strong explanatory power.

Statement of Key Contribution

The present study contributes to the U-Tailing literature by examining technology–retailer congruence through a dyadic perspective. For consumers, the findings highlight how optimism, proficiency, and perceived usefulness influence technology acceptance and engagement in retail environments. For retailers, the study identifies the importance of technological readiness and alignment with customer expectations in enhancing service effectiveness. The novelty of the study lies in integrating TAPI with TAM constructs to provide a holistic understanding of technology adoption behavior. Further, RSA offers deeper insights into technology perceptions, extending beyond traditional linear approaches.

References

Available upon request.

Brand Mythology and Consumer Identity Work in Digital Brand Communities: A Systematic Literature Review and Future Research Agenda

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Abstract

This study examines how digital platforms have transformed brand management by enabling consumers to construct brand mythology through DIY narrative labor within digital brand communities. As social and omni-channel ecosystems evolve, peer-to-peer storytelling increasingly supersedes official communications in shaping brand meaning. Synthesizing empirical studies from consumer culture theory and digital brand community research, this review maps how consumers perform identity work by curating myths that rival firm-led brand meaning.

Research Question

The central research question asks how digital platforms have reconfigured brand management by enabling consumers to engage in DIY brand mythology construction to perform identity work in digital brand communities. Existing literature treats user-generated content as functional information rather than narrative mythology, leaving a gap regarding stories that anchor brand meaning in social and omni-channel ecosystems.

RQ1: How do consumers create and circulate DIY brand mythology in digital communities?

RQ2: What identity work outcomes emerge when consumers perform narrative labor around brands?

Method and Data

This study employs a systematic literature review guided by the PRISMA framework for transparent synthesis of empirical research on digital and social brand ecosystems. Data were retrieved from Web of Science and Scopus using strings anchored in consumer identity, brand mythology, and digital communities. The TCCM framework facilitated analysis of theoretical lenses, contextual boundaries, methodological characteristics, and study design across the sample. The ADO framework supported synthesis of antecedents, decisions, and outcomes of consumer narrative labor. Qualitative thematic synthesis interpreted the fragmented interpretive literature and generated a future research agenda.

Summary of Findings

The review reveals that digital and omni-channel platforms have fundamentally shifted brand management toward consumer-led meaning creation. Consumers perform five distinct types

of DIY brand mythology: foundational myths, functional lore, personification narratives, cautionary tales, and ritual stories. These mythologies emerge through a recursive process wherein consumers experience identity tension, encounter communal narratives, perform narrative labor, receive community validation, and anchor self-concept to the brand myth. Analysis demonstrates unilateral identity work where consumers use brands as raw material to construct, repair, defend, and differentiate identities. Foundational myths embed consumers in origin stories while functional lore provides frameworks for tribal belonging. Personification narratives transform brand assets into archetypal characters expressing emotions, whereas cautionary tales enable moral identity performance through resistance. Ritual narratives position the brand as catalyst for heroic transformation. Findings indicate that digital brand communities function as mythological ecosystems where peer-to-peer storytelling supersedes official marketing communications. A proposed process model illustrates how identity tension drives narrative creation, community circulation enables legitimation, and institutionalized mythology alters brand equity.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study advances digital and social brand management theory by introducing DIY brand mythology as a construct extending beyond co-creation paradigms. It offers systematic integration of consumer identity work with brand community narrative labor, providing a typology explaining how consumers author brand meaning in a changing marketplace. The contribution bridges consumer culture theory and digital branding, demonstrating that brand equity can emerge from unilateral consumer myth-making rather than firm-led strategy. For practice, it signals that brands must monitor community lore across digital and omni-channel ecosystems, since consumer-authored mythology determines brand authenticity and tribal belonging.

References

Available upon request.

From Stimulus to Purchase: Determinants of Impulse Buying in Live Streaming E-Commerce – A Systematic Review and Research Directions

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Abstract

Live streaming e-commerce has emerged as a distinctive retail format that enables consumers to interact with streamers, evaluate products in real time, and make immediate purchase decisions. These interactive features often encourage impulse buying, making the phenomenon increasingly relevant for both researchers and practitioners. Despite growing scholarly attention, existing findings remain fragmented across different theoretical perspectives and research contexts. This review synthesizes current knowledge to identify the key determinants of impulse buying and outline future research directions in this evolving domain.

Research Question

While impulse buying has been extensively examined in traditional and online retail settings, limited attention has been devoted to understanding how diverse factors interact to influence purchase decisions in live streaming environments. Existing studies investigate numerous determinants, yet a comprehensive synthesis explaining how these drivers collectively shape impulse buying remains underdeveloped.

RQ1: What are the major determinants influencing impulse buying behavior in live streaming e-commerce?

RQ2: How can these determinants be integrated into a comprehensive framework that explains the transition from stimulus exposure to purchase behavior in live streaming e-commerce?

Method and Data

This study adopts a systematic literature review approach to examine research on impulse buying in live streaming e-commerce. Relevant peer-reviewed studies were identified through major academic databases and screened using predefined selection criteria. The selected articles were reviewed to examine research contexts, theoretical foundations, methodological approaches, and key findings. Through thematic analysis, the study categorizes the major determinants of impulse buying and develops an integrated understanding of how these factors influence consumer behavior in live-stream shopping environments.

Summary of Findings

The review reveals that impulse buying in live streaming e-commerce is influenced by a combination of environmental and psychological factors. Platform features, promotional strategies, streamer characteristics, social interaction, and content presentation emerge as key external stimuli. At the consumer level, emotions, trust, perceived value, engagement, and individual traits play a crucial role in transforming these stimuli into purchase decisions. The findings indicate that impulse buying results from the interaction between external cues and internal psychological responses rather than any single determinant. The review also identifies important research gaps, including limited cross-cultural investigations, excessive reliance on survey-based studies, and insufficient attention to emerging technologies and evolving consumer behavior patterns.

Statement of Key Contribution

This review offers a consolidated understanding of the factors associated with impulse buying in live streaming e-commerce. By bringing together evidence from diverse studies, it provides a clearer picture of how external influences and internal consumer responses contribute to spontaneous purchasing behavior. The study also identifies important research gaps and suggests directions for future investigation. These insights may support researchers in advancing theory while helping practitioners design more engaging and effective live-stream shopping experiences.

References

Available upon request.

From Virality to Loyalty: A Conceptual Framework Explaining the Role of Meme Marketing in Building Consumer Trust and Brand Loyalty in Digital Brand Communities

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Abstract

The rapid growth of social media has transformed brand-consumer interactions, encouraging organizations to adopt innovative and culturally relevant communication strategies. Meme marketing has emerged as a popular approach due to its humour, relatability, and viral nature. Although prior studies have primarily examined short-term outcomes such as engagement, electronic word-of-mouth, and purchase intention, limited attention has been paid to its role in fostering long-term consumer-brand relationships. This study develops a conceptual framework explaining how meme marketing contributes to consumer trust and brand loyalty through consumer engagement within digital brand communities.

Research Question

The rapid use of meme marketing by brands has attracted significant scholarly attention; however, existing studies largely focus on short-term outcomes such as engagement, virality, e-word-of-mouth, and purchase intention. The mechanism through which meme marketing contributes to long-term relationship outcomes through consumer engagement and trust remains underexplored.

RQ1: How does meme marketing influence consumer engagement in digital brand communities?

RQ2: How does consumer engagement facilitate the development of consumer trust and subsequently enhance brand loyalty?

The study aims to develop a theory-driven conceptual framework integrating meme marketing, consumer engagement, consumer trust, and brand loyalty.

Method and Data

This study adopts a conceptual research design based on a comprehensive review of literature on meme marketing, consumer engagement, consumer trust, and brand loyalty. The proposed framework is grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory and Relationship Marketing Theory. Meme marketing is conceptualized as a marketing stimulus that generates consumer engagement, which subsequently influences trust formation and loyalty development. The study relies on secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles and theoretical

contributions, to construct and justify the proposed conceptual model, remaining open to future empirical validation.

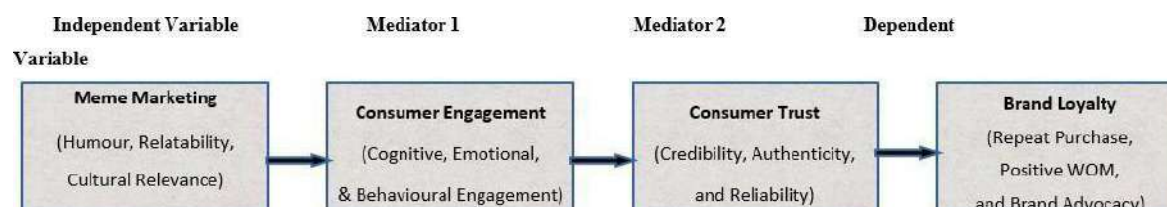


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework — Meme Marketing → Consumer Engagement → Consumer Trust → Brand Loyalty

Summary of Findings

The conceptual analysis suggests that meme marketing enhances consumer engagement through humour, relatability, entertainment value, and cultural relevance. Increased engagement encourages consumers to interact more actively with brands, strengthening perceptions of authenticity, credibility, and familiarity. These perceptions contribute to the development of consumer trust, which subsequently promotes brand loyalty through repeat purchases, positive word-of-mouth, and brand advocacy. The proposed framework further indicates that consumer engagement mediates the relationship between meme marketing and consumer trust, while consumer trust mediates the relationship between consumer engagement and brand loyalty. Consequently, meme marketing may contribute to sustainable consumer–brand relationships.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study extends the emerging literature on meme marketing by shifting the focus from short-term engagement outcomes to long-term relationship-building outcomes. Rather than examining engagement or purchase intention alone, the study proposes a mechanism through which meme marketing contributes to trust formation and brand loyalty through consumer engagement. By integrating Stimulus-Organism-Response Theory and Relationship Marketing Theory, the study offers a novel conceptual explanation of how viral digital content can foster sustainable consumer-brand relationships. The proposed framework provides a foundation for future empirical research and offers practical insights for marketers seeking to build trust and loyalty through culturally relevant social media communication.

References

Available upon request.

Generation Z Consumer Decision Processes and Influencer Marketing: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Social media influencers are playing a significant role in the relationship between a brand and a consumer by providing individualistic, relatable, and aesthetically pleasing content that influences Gen Z consumers' thoughts and buying behaviours. Yet, the research stream still suffers from fragmented concepts with excessive attention paid to independent variables only. In order to bridge the existing research gap, a systematic review of 42 empirical papers has been conducted through the Antecedent-Decision-Outcomes (ADO) framework.

Research Question

This paper seeks to overcome the limitations identified in the literature on influencer marketing due to its highly fragmented approach, wherein little attention has been paid to how internal mechanisms affect Gen Z's decision-making based on digital cues. Through a comprehensive analysis of all the relevant constructs in one framework, this paper aims to understand how credibility, relational elements, and identity play a role in the outcome.

RQ1: How do credibility, relational, and identity antecedents influence the Generation Z consumer decision process?

RQ2: How can different theoretical constructs related to influencer marketing be merged into one framework for understanding behaviour?

Method and Data

This research uses a structured literature review based on the PRISMA protocol for transparent and replicable screening purposes. The initial database search with keywords produced 105 articles from the Scopus and Web of Science databases. The second step involved duplicate removal, followed by the application of exclusion criteria in terms of article titles and abstracts, which should include an aspect of influencer marketing, consumers' decision-making process, and Generation Z. After full-text screening, only empirical studies were considered; thus, 42 relevant articles were included in the analysis. The findings are presented via the ADO framework.

Summary of Findings

The synthesised review of the 42 articles shows the prevalence of influencer characteristics as key antecedents. In line with Source Credibility Theory, factors such as attractiveness,

expertise, trustworthiness, and credibility can be considered as the essential stimuli that legitimise messages and grab consumers' attention.

In contrast to a mere linear chain of events, Generation Z decision-making relies heavily on internal, interpersonal and personal processes. Constructs associated with relations, such as parasocial interactions, engagement, and similarity to peers, may become important mediators that link influencer credibility with consumer loyalty and bonding. At the same time, identity-oriented variables, like self-identity expression and similarity, suggest that influencers represent symbolic referents that consumers utilise to demonstrate social belonging via their purchases.

Concerning the outcomes of the analysis, purchase intent appears as the dominant variable. At the same time, according to the ADO framework, it is possible to observe other behavioural and advocacy outcomes, such as eWOM, brand attitudes, recommendation intentions, and behaviour.

Statement of Key Contribution

The review confirms that influencer marketing is a non-linear phenomenon. Whereas persuasion theories help explain how messages become credible through factors such as credibility, relational theories and identity theories explain how interaction and similarity drive identity-based Generation Z consumers. This implies that brands must go beyond the old-fashioned way of endorsement based on the popularity or attractiveness of the influencers. Rather, marketers ought to focus on influencers who exercise authenticity, credibility, and meaningful interactions with their followers.

References

Available upon request.

Invisible Digital Innovations in Indian Malls: How Ambient In-Store Technologies Quietly Shape Consumer Experience (A Qualitative Study)

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Abstract

The present study is based on the increasing use of digital innovations in the retail environment. Unlike other conventional technologies, invisible in-store technologies (IIST), such as RFID-based tracking, AI-based ambience control, and sensor-based monitoring, silently observe and respond to consumer behavior in real time. Such invisible innovations are important not only in the context of retail strategy and consumer experience but also in the context of ethical marketing in the Global South.

Research Questions

The goal of this research is to explain how consumers experience invisible in-store digital innovations. The following research questions are answered:

RQ1: How do consumers experience and emotionally respond to retail environments that are shaped by invisible technologies and ambient data systems?

RQ2: To what extent do consumers experience autonomous or algorithmically influenced decision-making?

Method and Data

A multi-method qualitative approach was employed, ensuring the capture of the experience in real time and the meanings developed post-experience. A total of 30 mall shoppers were purposively selected from three shopping malls in India, namely Select Citywalk in Delhi, DLF Mall of India in Noida, and Ambience Mall in Gurugram. This study employed a two-stage approach for data analysis: in the first stage, an approach consistent with the grounded theory approach suggested by Corbin and Strauss (1990) was employed, and then Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was employed for a deeper level of understanding of the data (Smith et al., 1999).

Summary of Findings

The research indicates two dominant overarching themes in the form of drivers and barriers:

(1) *Experiential drivers of positive experience mechanisms*: Consumers reported that the invisible system provided the effect of “seamless intelligence” in terms of convenience, ease of navigation, reduced decision effort, and personalized product suggestions. As such, consumers

experienced feelings of competence and flow as they perceived the store environment as working well and efficiently for them without the need for additional effort.

(2) *Perceptual barriers (trust and autonomy disruptions)*: At the same time, consumers also experienced discomfort because of low awareness of what is being tracked, backend data collection, and algorithmic recommendation problems. The problems raised by participants included privacy, loss of human warmth, and suspicion regarding invisible systems that might be influencing their decisions without their consent.

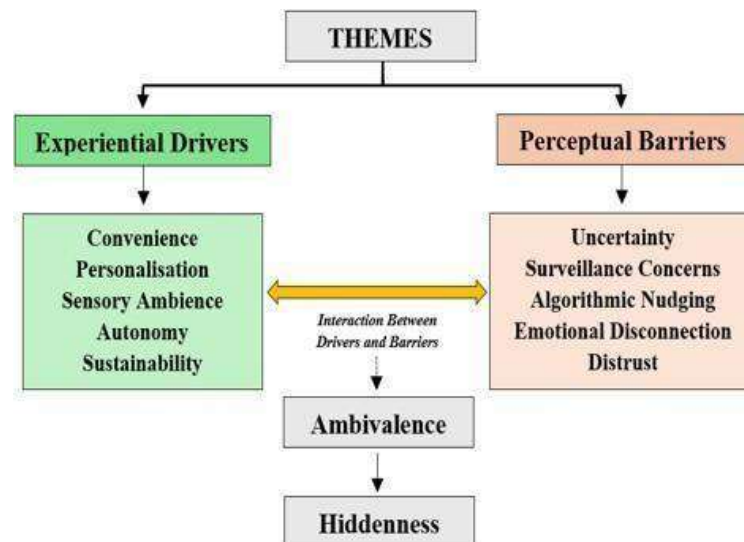


Figure 1: Thematic Findings

Statement of Key Contribution

The research introduces the concept of “Invisible In-store Technologies.” Theoretically, this research fuses Actor Network Theory (Latour, 2005), Consumer Empowerment Theory (Wathieu et al., 2002) and Posthuman Retail Studies (Botez et al., 2020). In practice, retailers might support the adoption of hybrid service spaces where algorithmic efficiency and touchpoints of human interaction and “digital empathy” training are combined to maintain trust and retailer credibility. Further, drawing on the concept of surveillance capitalism, there is a need to emphasize informed consent as a core component of ethical innovation in retail, along with the importance of explanation and respect for consumer autonomy (Zuboff, 2023).

References

Available upon request.

Masstige as Identity Capital in Emerging Markets: A Qualitative Study of Digital Self-Presentation and Return Migration in Semi-Urban India

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Abstract

The research introduces the concept of “Masstige as Return Power” in understanding how masstige embodies identity capital (retaining legitimacy from the metro context) and reinvestment capital (re-framing return as progress) in the context of semi-urban reintegration. This research fuses migration studies and consumer culture. It extends symbolic interactionism into online spaces where the audience is hybrid (offline community and online networks), and where feedback is social and platform-driven.

Research Objective

This study explores the ways in which return migrants utilize masstige consumption to build and convey their rural-urban identity after returning from Tier 1 metros to Tier 2/3 hometowns. It follows three specific goals: (1) to explore the identity roles of masstige brands in return migration settings; (2) to investigate the roles of digital media in the performativity and validation of return migrant identity; and (3) to explore the facilitators and barriers in post-return identity expression. This study proposes that return migrants utilize masstige brands as identity capital to negotiate their mobility, continuity with urban exposure, and the rural-urban dualism of modernity.

Method and Data

An exploratory qualitative research design was followed, with a hybrid ethno-netnographic approach combining narrative interviews, participant observation, and visual ethnography with netnography on digital self-presentation (Kozinets, 2020). A total of twelve return migrants between the ages of 20 and 35 were recruited from Tier 2/3 towns such as Varanasi, Ranchi, Rourkela, and Patna through purposeful and snowball sampling. The data analysis followed Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-phase thematic analysis. The trustworthiness of the study was enhanced through various qualitative validation strategies such as coding discipline and interpretive checking (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Gibbs, 2007).

Summary of Findings

The findings indicated two major groups of identity strategies: facilitators and barriers, showing how masstige consumption acts both as an enabler and a hindrance to post-return identity work.

Facilitators: (1) signalling of aspirations through visible brand signs conveying continuity and “having seen the city”; (2) moralized masstige consumption, where clean beauty and smart-buy

ethics are used to narrate prestige consumption; (3) aesthetic relatability, where returnees combine brand signs with semi-urban settings to appear modern and relatable; (4) validation by fellow users, which reinforces the self and the metro brand; and (5) symbolic repositioning of self and return, where posts and stories narrate a new self and evolution rather than decline.

Barriers: (1) vanity judgement anxiety, where brand display leads to sarcasm, envy, and moralistic judgement; (2) algorithmic anxiety, where algorithmic pressures and visibility incentives drive posting and self-worth; (3) fatigue and exhaustion, where constant curation and monitoring of self and brand become emotionally taxing; (4) gendered performance anxiety, where female users face scrutiny for appearance-related posts; and (5) relevance anxiety, where metro brand signs are questioned in semi-urban contexts, creating ambiguity about the legitimacy of metropolitan-coded signs.

Participant	Platform & Format	Symbolic Cues	Caption Narrative	Hashtags	Emoji Use	Brand Mentions	Engagement Metrics	Interpretation
RMI_01	Instagram Story	Mirror selfie in H&M	"Back with city style 🌃"	#HustleMode, #VaranasiVibes	🌃🔥👑	H&M	71 views, 9 emoji reactions, 2 replies	Metro identity reassertion through fashion styling
RMI_02	WhatsApp DP	Zara kurta at wedding	"Rooted but not rusted 🌿" (bio)	#BackInStyle	🌿👑	Zara	4 replies, 2 offline comments	Urban class expressed in traditional settings
RMI_03	Instagram Carousel	Realme earbuds, Puma tee	"New town, same hustle."	#HybridLife, #SwagBackHome	👑🔥👑	Realme, Puma	98 likes, 5 comments	Continuity of urban style in return setting
RMI_04	Instagram Reel	Mamaearth, Maybelline	"She's back." (song)	#GetReadyWithMe, #GlowingBack	👑🔥👑	Mamaearth, Maybelline	674 views, 34 likes, 7 emoji comments	Empowered self-care and brand ethics
RMI_05	Facebook Post	Zara jacket + rickshaw	"Don't downgrade your dreams."	#DesiMetro, #DreamOn	👑🔥👑	Zara	149 likes, 14 comments	Spatial migration as aspirational narrative
RMI_06	Instagram Post	H&M, BIBA, OnePlus	"Balancing bold and rooted 🌿"	#SheTheHybrid, #CityTradition	👑🔥👑	H&M, BIBA, OnePlus	112 likes, 3 DMs	Dual identity curation through brand pairing
RMI_07	WhatsApp Status	Fossil, slim-fit look	"#CityVibeEveryday"	In-caption	👑🔥👑	Fossil	11 replies	Daily performance of metro professionalism
RMI_08	Instagram Story	Apple watch, Solly shirt	"Comfort meets class."	#DesiExec, #HybridProfessional	👑🔥👑	Apple, Allen Solly	64 views, 4 replies	Visual code of urban professionalism in travel
RMI_09	Instagram DP	Zara hoodie, bokeh bg	"Local by roots. Global by dreams."	#CampusChic, #CityConfidence	👑🔥👑	Zara	89 likes, 6 comments	Academic and global style identity fusion
RMI_10	Instagram Post	OnePlus + coffee setup	"Focused."	#SmartBuy, #WorkFlow	👑🔥👑	OnePlus	203 likes, 17 shares	Branded productivity aesthetic
RMI_11	Facebook Story	Mamaearth + ring light	"City habits stay."	#GlowyNotSorry, #SelfLove	👑🔥👑	Mamaearth, H&M	58 views, 3 compliments	Gendered care practices meet aspirational glow
RMI_12	Instagram Highlights	Fastrack, Wildcraft	"My lookbook from Gaya to Gurgaon."	#RuralToReady, #BrandJourney	👑🔥👑	Fastrack, Wildcraft	47 views/story avg. 2 🌿	Spatial identity journey via style sequencing

Figure 1: Netnographic Results

Statement of Key Contribution

The research introduces the concept of "Masstige as Return Power." Theoretically, this research fuses migration studies and consumer culture theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Practically, this research gives marketers an additional target market in the semi-urban realm—the market of return migrants—where the drivers of purchase are not only functional but also concern continuity in terms of identity and reputation. From the perspective of digital marketing, this research reveals the "emotional labour" involved in identity performance and algorithmic visibility in relation to self-presentation in new markets.

References

Available upon request.

Push–Pull–Mooring Framework in User Switching Behaviour Research: Trends, Insights, and Future Directions

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Abstract

The Push–Pull–Mooring (PPM) framework, originally proposed to explain human migration, has become an important approach for understanding consumer switching behaviour across various contexts. This study aims to examine the development of PPM-based research by combining bibliometric analysis and a systematic literature review. The scope includes identifying publication trends, influential authors, institutions, countries, journals, key variables, research themes, collaboration patterns, and emerging directions to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing literature.

Research Question

RQ1: What are the most influential authors, journals, countries and publications related to the push-pull-mooring framework?

RQ2: What are the major themes and research trends?

RQ3: How are the existing studies categorized based on context and methodology?

RQ4: What does the existing literature reveal about the application of the Push–Pull–Mooring framework across different research domains?

RQ5: What are the emerging topics and future research directions in push-pull-mooring studies?

Method and Data

This study adopted a quantitative research design by integrating bibliometric analysis and a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). Data were retrieved from the Scopus database using the keywords “Push-pull-mooring framework,” OR “Push pull mooring framework,” OR “PPM.” After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 112 studies were selected for analysis. Publication trends, authors, institutions, and journal productivity were analysed through bibliometrics in R. Thematic map and thematic evolution analyses were used to identify emerging topics and future research directions, while the PRISMA framework guided the systematic literature review process.

Summary of Findings

This study’s analysis of documents published over a 10-year period (2016–2025) shows an annual growth rate of over 14.31%, indicating growing interest in the field. The average number

of citations per document was 32.04, indicating that the work has been widely cited. The dataset includes 459 author keywords and 585 keyword-plus terms, showing diversity. Furthermore, an international co-authorship rate of 24.11% indicates growing global collaboration in this research area. The publication trend shows significant growth between 2022 and 2024. The top journals in this domain are the *Journal of Cleaner Production* and the *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*. The most dominant topics include the Push-Pull-Mooring Framework and Technology Adoption. The analysis identifies China's dominant role in advancing the academia of the PPM model. Science mapping revealed four cluster themes: (1) Consumer Technology Adoption Behavior; (2) Social Commerce & Online Consumer Behavior; (3) Consumer Inertia & Switching Resistance; and (4) Pandemic-Driven Consumer Switching Behavior.

Statement of Key Contribution

The study shows that the Push–Pull–Mooring (PPM) framework has been applied in various contexts, including digital shopping and e-commerce platforms, religious service contexts, social media platforms, cloud computing services, omnichannel retailing behavior, showrooming behavior, artificial-intelligence-based applications, digital payment systems, online food delivery applications, electric vehicles, hygiene and organic personal care products, WeChat mini programs, hotel and hospitality services, and healthcare applications. The study employed quantitative research approaches, primarily using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), for data analysis to examine the relationships between variables and configurations influencing user switching behaviour.

References

Available upon request.

The Cognitive Trade-Off of Digital Memory Outsourcing: Metacognitive Gains versus Schema Development in Young Learners

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Abstract

The swift embrace of technology and digital cognitive proxy tools such as search engines and AI has significantly changed the manner in which learners obtain and process information. The current study analyzes the changes in the equilibrium between external knowledge acquisition and internally constructed cognitive structures for Gen Z and Alpha learners. The emergence of the notion of Critical Internal Knowledge (CIK) has allowed the study to explore ways to re-engineer the educational process in order to foster learning while preserving its essence.

Research Question

The use of cognitive proxies poses new challenges to conventional views on knowledge acquisition and retention. Conventional systems of education rely on facts-based memory, while modern learning systems favor knowledge that is retrievable, evaluable, and synthesizable. This research looks into the concept of knowledge definition in a learning environment characterized by cognitive proxies and the impact of CIK on curricular design.

RQ1: How can Critical Internal Knowledge (CIK) be identified and structured to support deep learning in digitally augmented educational environments?

RQ2: What impact does a CIK-based curriculum have on conceptual mastery, cognitive load, and proxy-augmented problem-solving among young learners?

Method and Data

The current research adopted a mixed-methods design-based research methodology carried out in four phases. A Delphi study that included cognitive scientists and educators helped create the taxonomy for CIK. Survey and focus group data were collected to analyze existing classroom practices and perceptions. After this, a CIK-oriented prototype curriculum was created and implemented, including explicit CIK instruction along with the use of cognitive proxies in a structured manner.

Summary of Findings

Participants who underwent the CIK-based treatment were observed to have mastered key concepts to a much higher degree and to have displayed enhanced problem-solving skills, utilizing cognitive proxies in their solutions. Large effect sizes were observed for the positive impact of interventions on learning, with a moderately low cognitive load experienced by learners. Teacher preparedness was identified as a key moderator, positively influencing both curriculum implementation and its results. The qualitative data collected showed greater metacognitive activity, more pronounced reflective thinking, and advanced classroom discourse based on knowledge processing and evaluation. Learners were able to better differentiate outsourceable from internalized knowledge, using the latter as an instrument of critical thinking and creative problem solving. No significant moderating equity factors were detected during the pilot study of the treatment. In conclusion, results confirm the hypothesis that strategic redefinition of foundational knowledge through the CIK approach may lead to a complementary role of cognitive proxies in schema building and learning.

Statement of Key Contribution

This paper presents the new idea of Critical Internal Knowledge (CIK) as an approach to redefine the concept of fundamental knowledge in the era of artificial intelligence and digital cognitive substitutes. This research brings contributions to the sphere of educational theories insofar as it bridges the gap between the schema formation process and technology-assisted learning. The study demonstrates the need to reconsider curriculum design in such a way that incorporates both knowledge acquisition and information usage strategies.

References

Available upon request.

The Mediating Role of Digitalization in the Relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Firm Performance: Evidence from Women Entrepreneurs in Jammu and Kashmir

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of entrepreneurial orientation (EO) on firm performance, with a particular focus on the mediating role of digitalization. Entrepreneurial orientation is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct comprising innovativeness, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness, autonomy, and risk-taking propensity. Drawing on the dynamic capabilities perspective, the study explores how firms leverage entrepreneurial behaviors to enhance performance outcomes through digital transformation. Primary data were collected from respondents in Jammu and Kashmir using purposive sampling, and the proposed model was analyzed using SmartPLS-SEM. The results reveal that entrepreneurial orientation has a significant positive impact on both digitalization and firm performance. Furthermore, digitalization significantly influences firm performance and partially mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance. These findings highlight the critical role of digitalization as a strategic mechanism through which entrepreneurial orientation translates into improved organizational outcomes. The study contributes to the existing literature by integrating entrepreneurial and digital perspectives and offers practical implications for firms seeking to enhance performance through innovation-driven digital strategies.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Orientation; Digitalization; Firm Performance; SmartPLS-SEM; Mediation; Dynamic Capabilities

References

Available upon request.

Track 3

Consumer Insights and Experience

A Study on Impact of Perceived Authenticity and FOMO on Indian Gen Z Travel Decisions via Instagram Reels

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Abstract

Instagram Reels has emerged as a key source of travel inspiration for Indian Gen Z users. This study investigates how perceived authenticity and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) shape destination preferences and travel decision-making among digitally connected young travellers.

Research Question

Social media platforms significantly influence travel-related decisions among digitally connected Gen Z consumers. While prior studies have explored the role of social media in shaping travel behaviour, limited attention has been given to understanding how Instagram Reels influence travel intentions through psychological drivers in the Indian context. This study examines the relationships among perceived authenticity, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), and travel intention among Indian Gen Z users.

RQ1: How does perceived authenticity of travel-related Instagram Reels influence travel intention among Indian Gen Z users?

RQ2: Does FOMO mediate the relationship between perceived authenticity and travel intention?

Method and Data

This study adopts a quantitative cross-sectional research design. Primary data were collected through a structured online questionnaire administered to Indian Gen Z Instagram users aged 18–26 years who regularly consume travel-related Reels. Using purposive and snowball sampling techniques, 418 valid responses were obtained from participants across major Indian cities. The questionnaire measured perceived authenticity, FOMO, and travel intention using established Likert-scale constructs. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to assess reliability, validity, and hypothesised relationships among the constructs.

Summary of Findings

Perceived authenticity significantly enhances travel intention among Indian Gen Z users. Genuine, relatable, and unscripted travel content generates higher trust and emotional engagement, increasing destination consideration. A strong positive relationship between perceived authenticity and FOMO was also found, with authentic portrayals intensifying users' perceptions of missing socially valued experiences.

FOMO significantly influences travel intention and partially mediates the relationship between perceived authenticity and travel intention, meaning authentic content both directly encourages destination interest and indirectly motivates travel through social comparison and urgency. Overall, repeated exposure to authentic travel Reels shapes destination preferences and influences the decision-making of Indian Gen Z consumers in a digital tourism landscape.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study develops and validates an integrated Authenticity–FOMO–Travel Intention framework in the context of Instagram Reels, providing empirical evidence from Indian Gen Z consumers—an underrepresented segment in tourism research. The findings offer practical insights for destination marketers and travel influencers seeking to engage Gen Z audiences through authentic, socially engaging digital content.

References

Available upon request.

Beyond the Swipe: Understanding Consumer Satisfaction in Dating App Services

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Abstract

Popular dating apps on the Google Play Store, like Bumble, Hinge, Tinder, and OkCupid are most widely used apps for online dating, especially by younger people. Despite their popularity, there has not been significant empirical evidence focusing on what drives consumer satisfaction with these dating apps. Therefore, this study gathers reviews from popular dating apps by extracting a total of 764,386 reviews distributed across the apps: 154,771 from Bumble, 400,001 from Tinder, 70,717 from Hinge, and 138,897 from OkCupid. The Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) approach, regression analysis, dominance analysis, and correspondence analysis were utilized to evaluate these reviews. The findings of this study can help business managers prioritize key indicators of user satisfaction and give new competitors a competitive advantage in the dating app market.

RQ1: What key latent service-quality dimensions or factors systematically influence user satisfaction across popular dating apps?

RQ2: How do these distinct antecedents quantitatively contribute to the overall customer satisfaction score (star ratings)?

RQ3: Which specific platform attributes drive high delight versus critical dissatisfaction, and how do they map spatially?

Method and Data

This study employs a quantitative, data-driven research design to investigate the factors influencing user satisfaction across prominent dating applications (Bumble, Hinge, Tinder, and OkCupid). Data was sourced via web scraping from the Google Play Store, capturing user reviews published between November 2015 and July 2024. From an initial corpus of 764,386

reviews, the dataset was rigorously filtered to remove duplicates and noisy, short texts (under 20 words) while maintaining an equal proportion of review scores, yielding a robust final sample size of 235,260 reviews. The analytical framework utilized Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) to extract key thematic factors related to user preferences and satisfaction, with reliability validated via Cohen’s Kappa. Finally, topic probability scores were integrated into a regression analysis to determine the specific parameters that significantly drive overall user satisfaction ratings.

Summary of Findings

Topic modeling and frequency analysis categorized the thirteen identified factors influencing dating application satisfaction into three distinct tiers of user concern, highlighting major behavioral patterns and operational relationships. The dominant tier reveals that core platform utility and immediate operational friction are the primary drivers of user sentiment. Specifically, the overarching user experience regarding matching, meeting, and dating emerged as the most critical factor, accounting for 20.09% of the entire dataset. This primary concern was closely followed by technical and transactional pain points, namely notification alerts at 10.86% and in-app payment processes at 10.85%. Within the moderate tier, features central to daily engagement remain highly influential for overall satisfaction, led by profile quality and features (9.82%), user interaction dynamics (8.81%), customer support responsiveness (8.29%), and system usability (7.26%). Conversely, the less frequent tier captures niche yet critical areas of user dissatisfaction, including profile filtering mechanics (5.13%), subscription billing issues (2.91%), fake account or bot presence (2.86%), matching accuracy (1.74%), and the structural subscription model (1.57%). Collectively, these outcomes indicate clear, actionable pathways for strategic platform optimization. To elevate user satisfaction and retention, developers must first prioritize core infrastructure by resolving notification lag and payment glitches. Secondly, platforms must enhance quality-of-life features through refined profile filtering, improved usability, and stricter verification protocols to effectively mitigate the risks encounters with fraudulent accounts and subscription friction. Refer to Table 1 for topic occurrence frequency analysis.

Table 1: Topic Occurrence Frequency Analysis

Topic Occurrence frequency analysis	
Topic	% Total Docs
User Experience on Finding Matches, Meeting, and Dating	20.09
Notification alerts	10.86
Inapp Payments	10.85
Profile Quality	9.82
Features	9.82
User Interaction	8.81
Customer Support	8.29
Usability	7.26
Profile Filtering	5.13
Subscription Issues	2.91
Fake Accounts	2.86
Profile Matches	1.74
Subscription Model	1.57

Key Contributions

This study offers significant theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions to the digital matchmaking field. Theoretically, it extends Expectation Confirmation Theory and the S-O-R framework by demonstrating how functional attributes act as environmental stimuli shaping user ratings. Methodologically, it establishes a replicable analytical pipeline combining text mining and regression analysis. Practically, this research provides an essential roadmap for budget-constrained managers to optimize resource allocation, which is vital since app store ratings directly dictate marketplace ranking and user adoption. By delivering a comprehensive list of satisfaction determinants, the study empowers platforms to execute targeted service recovery actions, effectively mitigating negative reviews and reducing user dissatisfaction. This is economically critical, as retaining existing consumers remains far more cost-effective than acquisition. Specifically, prioritizing core user experience enhancements (20.09%) alongside notification and payment optimizations (10.86% and 10.85%) minimizes functional friction, directly securing the high satisfaction ratings necessary for sustainable platform retention.

References are available upon request.

Bridging the Intention-Behaviour Gap in Online Purchase Intention and Actual Purchase Behaviour Among Millennials for Personal Care Products in Gujarat

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Abstract

India's e-commerce revolution has propelled personal care products into a booming segment, accelerated by digital shifts and post-pandemic consumer habits. However, a persistent intention-behaviour gap endures in this high-involvement category, where positive attitudes fail to convert into consistent online purchases due to sensory deficits, counterfeit fears, and trust barriers. Focusing on digitally fluent millennials in Gujarat's urbanizing hubs, this research addresses under-examined factors bridging intention to actual behaviour. By drawing from integrated technology acceptance and planned behaviour frameworks, this study provides actionable insights to inform regional e-commerce platform strategies.

Research Question

Despite extensive research on e-commerce adoption through technology acceptance and planned behaviour frameworks, limited empirical studies examine the intention-behaviour gap specifically within India's high-involvement personal care category among millennials. Gujarat-specific investigations into psychological, technological, and service factors mediating between purchase intention and actual buying remain scarce, frequently overlooking demographic moderators within this sensory-dependent segment.

RQ1: What key technological, psychological, and service factors influence online purchase intentions and actual purchase behaviour of personal care products among millennials in Gujarat?

RQ2: How do age and gender moderate these relationships?

Method and Data

This study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design targeting 652 regional millennials aged 29–44 with prior online personal care shopping experience. Primary data was gathered via non-probability purposive sampling across major urban centers, including Anand, Vadodara, Surat, and Ahmedabad, using structured questionnaires administered both offline and via digital forms. Analytical techniques utilized included descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations to examine demographic associations. Advanced variance-based Structural

Equation Modelling was subsequently conducted to evaluate the integrated framework, establish measurement model validity, and assess mediation effects.

Summary of Findings

Data screening confirmed normality, no outliers, and no method bias at 28%. Factor analysis extracted ten factors explaining 72% variance, confirming robust measurement model fit. Descriptive statistics showed younger, female, and self-employed cohorts dominate purchase frequencies, with Amazon leading platforms and skin care as the preferred product. Cross-tabulations confirmed all demographic associations are statistically significant. Structural equation modelling explained 52% of actual purchase variance. Perceived service quality, trust, and behavioural control significantly exerted positive effects on technology acceptance external variables, explaining 67% of their variance. External variables strongly predicted behavioural intention, explaining 58% of its variance, with intention acting as a partial mediator to actual purchase. Age and gender significantly moderated these pathways, proving stronger among younger males.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study offers significant originality by empirically bridging the intention-behaviour gap within a high-involvement, sensory-dependent category within a specific regional context. Theoretically, it enriches the literature by successfully integrating technology acceptance and planned behaviour models while incorporating vital demographic moderators. Managerially, the findings offer immediate practical utility for e-commerce platforms and digital marketers. It emphasizes that closing the consumption gap depends on optimizing service quality and trust architectures, enabling platforms to design highly tailored, demographic-specific marketing strategies that convert millennials into sustained buying behaviour.

References

Available upon request.

Continuance Intention of Electric Vehicles in India: A Post Adoption Study

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Abstract

The study investigates continuance intention among EV users after initial adoption. The purpose of this paper is to investigate drivers, attitudes and behaviours in the post-adoption phase of EVs. Despite ample research on the adoption intention of electric vehicles (EVs), the post-adoption phase remains largely neglected; this study addresses that gap and provides actionable recommendations for marketers, policymakers, and sustainability advocates seeking to drive long-term EV uptake.

Research Question

The rapid growth of electric vehicle (EV) adoption has attracted considerable academic and industry attention; however, existing research has predominantly focused on the factors influencing initial adoption decisions. Comparatively little attention has been given to users' post-adoption experiences and the factors that drive the continued use of EVs, despite their importance for long-term market sustainability and diffusion. This gap is particularly evident in emerging markets, where understanding post-adoption behaviour is crucial for manufacturers, policymakers, and service providers seeking to retain users.

RQ1: Which determinants significantly influence positive attitudes among EV users?

RQ2: Does positive attitude influence continued EV usage and recommendations?

Method and Data

To develop and test the proposed model of drivers, attitudes and behaviours in the post-adoption phase of EV users, the data collection was quantitative and cross-sectional. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: demographic information and latent construct measures, all assessed using a 5-point Likert scale. Data was collected through a combination of convenience and purposive sampling from 100 four-wheeler EV users and analysed with SmartPLS4 Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The study extends the technology acceptance model by applying it to the post-adoption phase.

Summary of Findings

The measurement model was assessed using PLS-SEM to evaluate reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Composite Reliability (CR) values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Convergent

validity was established as all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were above 0.50. Discriminant validity was confirmed through HTMT values below the threshold of 0.85, demonstrating adequate distinction among the constructs. Overall, the results support the robustness of the measurement model.

A bootstrapping approach with 5,000 sub-samples was employed to test all path relationships in the model. The results show that ease of driving and knowledge about EVs have a significant impact on the attitude towards using EVs. However, environmental concern, image related to EVs, affinity toward innovation, and financial incentive policy were found insignificant. A positive attitude positively influences continuance intention of EVs and leads to recommending EVs to one's respective social groups.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study applies an extended TAM to examine the determinants of continuance intention among Indian EV users, contributing to theoretical advancement and offering practical insights into sustained EV usage. Attitude towards EVs is mainly driven by ease of driving and knowledge about EVs. Since ease of use positively affects the attitudes of EV users, manufacturers should consider implementing user-friendly technologies, a simple charging experience, and vehicle designs that are easy to use. Governments in collaboration with EV companies must launch campaigns for enhancing EV knowledge so as to reduce the barriers to adoption.

References

Available upon request.

Customer Intelligence Architecture: A Transdisciplinary Synthesis of Digital Behavior Determinants, Preference Formation Mechanisms, and Algorithmic Personalization Effectiveness

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Abstract

This study proposes a customer intelligence architecture to explain how digital ecosystems, AI-driven personalization, and behavioral factors shape consumer preferences and decision-making. Integrating insights from consumer psychology, behavioral economics, cultural context, social influence, and recommendation systems, it develops an ethical and data-driven framework for enhancing personalization effectiveness, customer trust, engagement, and sustainable value creation in evolving digital markets.

Research Question

The study investigates how digitally mediated interactions, AI recommendation systems, and behavioral influences shape consumer preference formation and personalization outcomes. The problem is that existing research often treats digital behavior, consumer psychology, cultural context, and algorithmic personalization as separate domains, leaving a gap in integrated customer intelligence models. This study addresses that gap by developing a unified, ethical, and culturally adaptive architecture to improve personalization effectiveness, consumer trust, engagement, and sustainable value creation.

RQ1: How do digital behavior determinants influence consumer preference formation?

RQ2: How can ethical AI-driven personalization strengthen trust, engagement, and customer value?

Method and Data

The study follows a qualitative, transdisciplinary review methodology to examine how digital behavior, consumer psychology, cultural influences, and algorithmic personalization shape customer intelligence. Data were drawn from peer-reviewed studies indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, with emphasis on literature published between 2017 and 2024. Rather than collecting a primary sample, the study synthesizes existing empirical and theoretical research. Using PRISMA-guided screening, qualitative content analysis, and comparative thematic synthesis, it identifies cross-disciplinary patterns and develops an integrated customer intelligence architecture for ethical, culturally adaptive, and data-driven personalization.

Summary of Findings

The study finds that digital consumer behavior is shaped by the interaction of psychological, sociocultural, and technological determinants. Cognitive heuristics such as availability and anchoring influence online decision-making, while social identity, peer influence, and platform-based social proof contribute to preference formation across digital environments. The findings indicate that AI recommendation engines, social commerce, and omnichannel personalization improve engagement by delivering more relevant and responsive consumer experiences. However, personalization effectiveness is not uniform; it varies across cultural contexts and depends on how well algorithms reflect consumer values, norms, and expectations. The study also identifies ethical AI as a central requirement for sustainable customer intelligence, as algorithmic bias, privacy risks, and limited transparency can reduce consumer trust. Post-pandemic shifts further show increased consumer preference for convenience, health-conscious choices, sustainability, and contactless digital interactions. Overall, the research demonstrates that effective customer intelligence requires an integrated architecture that combines behavioral insight, cultural adaptability, ethical safeguards, and advanced analytics to strengthen personalization effectiveness, trust, engagement, loyalty, and sustainable value creation in digital markets.

Table 1: Comparison of Personalization Strategies

Strategy	Impact	Risk	Adapt.
AI Recommendations	High	Privacy/Bias	Med
Social Commerce	Med	Influencers	High
Omni-Channel	High	Cost	High
Neuro-Personalization	Emerging	Ethics	Low

Statement of Key Contribution

The key contribution of this study is the development of a transdisciplinary customer intelligence architecture that integrates digital behavior determinants, consumer psychology, cultural context, ethical AI, and algorithmic personalization into a unified framework. The study advances existing knowledge by explaining how these interconnected factors collectively shape preference formation, consumer trust, engagement, loyalty, and sustainable value creation. Its significance lies in offering a theory-informed and practical model for designing culturally adaptive, transparent, and responsible personalization systems that support ethical decision-making in data-driven digital markets.

References

Available upon request.

Designed with Empathy, Delivered as Experience: An Integrated Framework

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Abstract

This study explores empathy as the central mechanism linking design thinking and customer experience. While existing research has examined these domains independently, limited attention has been given to understanding how empathy-driven processes contribute to meaningful customer experiences. Using a qualitative meta-synthesis of 100 studies published between 2007 and 2025, the research develops an integrative framework explaining how empathy, iteration, and co-creation collectively enhance emotional connection, perceived value, trust, satisfaction, and loyalty, thereby supporting sustainable customer-centric value creation.

Research Question

Customer experience (CX) has emerged as a critical source of competitive advantage; however, research remains fragmented across design thinking, empathy, and customer experience literatures. While design thinking emphasises human-centred innovation, customer experience research focuses on experiential outcomes such as trust, satisfaction, and loyalty. Consequently, empathy remains insufficiently theorised as the mechanism connecting these domains. This study addresses this gap through the following questions:

RQ1: How does empathy function as an organisational capability that transforms customer understanding into experiential value?

RQ2: How do empathy, iteration, and co-creation contribute to customer experience outcomes?

Method and Data

The research uses a qualitative meta-synthesis methodology to gain deeper insight into the creation of customer experience driven by empathy. According to the PRISMA guidelines, literature was systematically gathered from Scopus, Web of Science, ProQuest, Google Scholar, and industry publications from 2007 to 2025. Out of a total of 1,908 documents gathered during the process, only 100 met the required criteria after stringent exclusion and inclusion standards were applied. The analysis of data involved iterative coding, concept translation, thematic synthesis, and interpretive integration.

Summary of Findings

The findings show empathy as the key mechanism for organisations to create and maintain superior customer experiences. Beyond a design thinking first step, empathy is a strategic

capability helping firms understand customers' latent needs, emotions, and contexts. This understanding aids in designing authentic, relevant, and meaningful experiences. The study also highlights iteration as an adaptive learning process where organisations refine experiences through experimentation, prototyping, and feedback, boosting trust and reliability. Co-creation further adds value by involving customers as active partners, fostering ownership, engagement, and loyalty. The proposed framework suggests empathy starts customer insight, iteration refines experience, and co-creation builds value through collaboration, explaining how organisations turn insights into emotional connection, value, satisfaction, trust, and loyalty.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study enhances customer experience and design thinking by positioning empathy as a strategic organisational capability that underpins experience creation. It consolidates fragmented literature to develop a process-based framework showing how empathy, iteration, and co-creation shape customer experience outcomes. The framework extends theory by explaining how experiences are intentionally designed and continuously improved. It also provides practical guidance for embedding empathy-driven practices into organisational processes to create sustainable customer value and competitive advantage.

References

Available upon request.

Exploring Psychological Mechanisms Underlying Transformative Spiritual Tourism

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Abstract

This study examines the psychological processes underlying transformative spiritual tourism experiences. Focusing on sacredness, aesthetics, and authenticity as key experiential dimensions, it investigates their influence on psychological ownership, subsequent transformative travel experiences, and revisit intentions. The study also assesses the role of cultural intelligence in translating transformative experiences into future behavioral intentions. By integrating experiential, psychological, and cultural perspectives, the research offers a comprehensive understanding of tourist engagement and loyalty within spiritual tourism settings.

Research Question

Spiritual tourism research has largely focused on experiential attributes and behavioral outcomes in isolation, providing a limited understanding of the psychological processes connecting destination experiences with tourist transformation and loyalty. In particular, the roles of psychological ownership and cultural intelligence remain insufficiently examined. Addressing this gap, the study investigates the relationships among sacredness, aesthetics, authenticity, psychological ownership, transformative travel experiences, and revisit intentions within spiritual tourism contexts.

RQ1: How do sacredness, aesthetics, and authenticity foster psychological ownership?

RQ2: Does psychological ownership facilitate transformative travel experiences and subsequent revisit intentions?

Method and Data

The study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the relationships among experiential, psychological, and behavioral constructs in spiritual tourism. Data were collected from 92 tourists visiting major spiritual destinations in India using a structured questionnaire and convenience sampling. Measurement items were adapted from established scales and assessed on a five-point Likert scale. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in SmartPLS to evaluate the measurement model, test the hypothesized relationships, and assess the moderating effect of cultural intelligence.

Summary of Findings

Perceived sacredness, aesthetics, and authenticity emerged as significant antecedents of psychological ownership, indicating that spiritually meaningful, visually engaging, and authentic destination experiences foster stronger personal connections with the destination. Psychological ownership demonstrated a significant positive effect on transformative travel experiences, underscoring its role in facilitating deeper personal engagement and self-reflection. Transformative travel experiences, in turn, exhibited a strong positive association with revisit intentions, suggesting that meaningful and life-enriching experiences enhance tourists' willingness to return. Cultural intelligence further strengthened the relationship between transformative travel experiences and revisit intentions, indicating that individuals with a greater capacity to engage with diverse cultural contexts derive greater long-term value from their experiences. Collectively, the results establish psychological ownership as a central mechanism linking experiential dimensions to tourist transformation and loyalty within spiritual tourism settings.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study advances spiritual tourism research by integrating experiential, psychological, and cultural perspectives within a single framework. It identifies psychological ownership as a key mechanism linking destination experiences to transformative outcomes and revisit intentions, thereby addressing a notable gap in the existing literature. The inclusion of cultural intelligence extends current understanding of the conditions that strengthen tourist loyalty following transformative experiences. The findings offer actionable insights for destination managers seeking to design authentic, meaningful, and culturally immersive experiences that foster deeper engagement, personal transformation, and sustained visitor loyalty.

References

Available upon request.

From Overload to Regret: Examining the Role of Decision Anxiety in Digital Marketplaces

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Abstract

The rise of e-commerce platforms has significantly exposed customers to product-related data, customer reviews and AI-driven recommendation data aimed at providing consumers the ability to make educated purchase decisions. However, excessive information leads to decision anxiety among consumers and ultimately affects their ability to compare options. This paper investigates the relationship between information overload and purchase regret in digital marketplaces, assesses the impact of information overload, and tests the mediating role of decision anxiety.

Research Question

In today's digital marketplace, a growing number of online customers view an overwhelming amount of product information prior to making purchasing decisions. While past research on customer behavior has addressed both information overload and purchase regret, few studies investigate the psychological mechanisms behind information leading to regret, especially the role of decision anxiety. This study addresses these gaps by developing a cognitive/emotional model linking information overload to regret.

RQ1: Does information overload significantly influence decision anxiety among online consumers?

RQ2: Does decision anxiety mediate the relationship between information overload and purchase regret?

Method and Data

A quantitative, cross-sectional design was used to conduct this study. Data were collected from online consumers, mostly students and young users who are actively engaged in online purchases. To measure information overload, decision anxiety and purchase regret, a structured questionnaire consisting of multi-item Likert scales adapted from prior studies was used. 273 valid responses were collected and analyzed using SPSS. Correlation and multiple regression analysis were performed, and reliability of the scales was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha. To assess the role of decision anxiety in the relationship between overload and purchase regret, mediation effects were examined using a regression-based approach.

Summary of Findings

High internal consistency was found for all the constructs, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.90 through reliability analysis. Significant positive relationships were found among

information overload, decision anxiety and purchase regret ($p < 0.01$) in correlation analysis. Regression tests showed that information overload significantly influenced decision anxiety ($\beta = 0.581, p < 0.001$) and purchase regret ($\beta = 0.447, p < 0.001$).

Decision anxiety was found to be a significant predictor of purchase regret ($\beta = 0.473, p < 0.001$), with the effect of information overload decreased but still remaining significant ($\beta = 0.172, p < 0.01$), thus indicating partial mediation. All proposed hypotheses were supported. This highlights the role of decision anxiety as a key mechanism linking information overload to post-purchase regret.

Statement of Key Contribution

This research expands existing knowledge within consumer behaviour by explaining how cognitive strain resulting from consumers being overwhelmed with too much information results in purchaser remorse via decisional anxiety. Additionally, this research uses both cognitive and affective viewpoints, providing greater insight into the consumer decision process in today's digital marketplace environment. This research will provide platform managers and owners of digital platforms with useful insights on improving user experience, reducing decision complexity, and providing improved confidence to users when using their sites, ultimately leading to improved use and satisfaction of these platforms.

References

Available upon request.

From Trust to Action: How AI Recommendation Systems Shape Consumer Behaviour through Psychological Assurance

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI)-driven recommendation systems have become an important part of digital commerce and influence consumer decisions. However, one important issue remains unclear: consumers may trust AI recommendations, yet trust does not always translate into action. To better understand this process, the study develops and empirically validates a Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework. The framework suggests that AI system attributes influence behavioural outcomes through two connected mechanisms: trust reflects consumers' cognitive evaluation of the system, while psychological assurance represents the confidence and readiness needed to act on AI-generated recommendations.

Research Question

Research on AI recommendation systems has mainly focused on system features, trust development, and consumers' intentions to use AI recommendations. However, we still know relatively little about how consumers move from trusting AI recommendations to actually acting on them. Trust is important, but trust alone may not be enough—consumers can view an AI system positively and still hesitate to rely on its recommendations when making decisions. To better understand this gap, the study draws on the S-O-R framework and examines whether psychological assurance plays a distinct role after trust is established.

RQ1: How do AI recommendation system attributes influence trust and psychological assurance during consumer decision-making?

RQ2: How do trust and psychological assurance shape AI reliance and recommendation acceptance?

Method and Data

The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design, and data were collected using snowball sampling. After data screening, 400 valid responses from individuals with experience using AI-based recommendation systems were retained for analysis. All constructs were measured using established multi-item scales on a seven-point Likert scale. The proposed model examined the relationships among AI recommendation system attributes, trust, psychological assurance, AI reliance, and recommendation acceptance. PLS-SEM was used to test the hypothesised relationships, while bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples assessed the significance of both direct and indirect effects. In addition, Importance–Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) was conducted.

Summary of Findings

The results show that AI recommendation system attributes play an important role in building consumer trust. Among these attributes, perceived personalisation emerged as the strongest driver of trust, followed by perceived intelligence and recommendation quality. Trust also increased psychological assurance, indicating that positive evaluations of AI systems help consumers feel more confident when acting on AI-generated recommendations. Psychological assurance also strengthened both AI reliance and recommendation acceptance. These findings suggest that consumers' responses to AI recommendations are shaped not only by how they evaluate the system but also by the confidence and assurance they feel when making decisions. The model explained a substantial share of the behavioural outcomes examined. The IPMA results showed that trust was the most influential factor in recommendation acceptance, while perceived personalisation was the strongest driver of AI reliance.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study helps explain how consumers move from trusting AI recommendations to acting on them. Drawing on the S-O-R framework, it shows that behavioural responses to AI recommendations are shaped not only by how consumers evaluate the system but also by their confidence and readiness to act. The findings suggest that psychological assurance plays an important role once trust is established, helping explain why trust alone does not always lead to behavioural acceptance. By highlighting psychological assurance as a distinct post-trust mechanism, the study provides a clearer understanding of how trust is translated into action in AI-mediated decision-making, and offers practical guidance for designing recommendation systems that strengthen consumer confidence and encourage greater engagement.

References

Available upon request.

Immersive Technologies in Tourism: A Global Bibliometric Analysis of VR and AR for Cultural, Heritage, and Destination Marketing

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Abstract

Immersive technologies have rapidly transformed tourism scholarship, yet a comprehensive global knowledge map of their intellectual evolution remains absent. Most existing reviews are limited to specific technologies, geographic regions, or narrow outcome variables, leaving the broader thematic architecture of the field unmapped. This study addresses this gap by systematically examining how VR, AR, MR, and XR have been researched across cultural, heritage, and destination marketing contexts over two decades.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the dominant thematic clusters and intellectual patterns characterising VR/AR research in cultural, heritage, and destination marketing tourism scholarship?

RQ2: Which authors, sources, and geographies have most significantly shaped the development of immersive tourism research between 2007 and 2025?

Method and Data

A systematic bibliometric methodology was applied to 136 peer-reviewed documents retrieved from the Web of Science Core Collection using a structured search string combining immersive technology terms (virtual reality, augmented reality, mixed reality, XR, extended reality) with tourism domain terms (tourism, destination marketing, cultural heritage, museum). The PRISMA framework guided document selection. Bibliometrix was used for descriptive statistical analysis, while VOSviewer generated co-occurrence networks and thematic cluster visualisations using minimum frequency thresholds of five occurrences for keywords and two publications for co-authorship.

Summary of Findings

The dataset spans 2007–2025, comprising 83 journal articles, 36 conference papers, and 8 reviews, with an annual growth rate of 19.31%, reflecting a dramatic acceleration post-2015 and a pronounced peak during 2020–2025 driven by COVID-19-induced demand for virtual tourism. China ($n = 44$), Italy, South Korea, and the United Kingdom emerged as the most productive nations, while Australia, Canada, and the United States demonstrated the highest average citation impact.

Keyword co-occurrence analysis identified five thematic clusters: (1) immersive cultural heritage reconstruction via AR/VR; (2) visitor experience quality, presence, and psychological engagement; (3) gamified and location-based tourism applications; (4) XR system design and interaction modalities; and (5) metaverse-informed virtual tourism ecosystems. Thematic mapping via Bibliometrix revealed that AR, destination image, satisfaction, and authenticity function as motor themes—mature, high-centrality constructs driving theoretical and empirical innovation. VR and visitor experience constitute basic transversal themes, while metaverse and virtual destinations represent emerging transition themes gaining centrality. The most cited works—Guttentag (2010, 870 citations), Kim et al. (2020, 842 citations), and Yung and Khoo-Lattimore (2019, 521 citations)—underpin the field’s theoretical foundations in presence theory, technology acceptance, and experiential consumption.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study makes three distinct contributions. First, it delivers the most comprehensive bibliometric knowledge map of VR/AR in tourism to date, covering 136 documents across a 20-year horizon. Second, it reveals the five-cluster thematic architecture of the field, providing researchers with a structured lens for locating their work within the intellectual landscape. Third, it identifies critical research gaps—including the under-exploration of AI-enhanced XR personalisation, cross-cultural accessibility of immersive heritage experiences, ethical dimensions of digital heritage preservation, and the long-term behavioural consequences of metaverse tourism—thereby offering a concrete agenda for future inquiry.

References available upon request.

Integrating 10R and Scamper Technique for New Product Development: A Circular Innovation Framework

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Abstract

Due to the traditional unsustainable production system, organizations and governments worldwide are now focusing upon adopting circular economy principles that emphasizes upon a regenerative production system. In this context, integrating circular economy principles with traditional new product ideation technique offers a promising pathway towards sustainable and environment-friendly product development. The current study aims to develop an integrated framework combining 10 Rs of circular economy with the SCAMPER technique of new product ideation and development.

Research Questions

Growing industrial activities have led to decline in global economy. The traditional, ‘take-make-waste’ model is not considered fit for economic as well as environmental perspective (Rashid & Malik, 2023). In response to address these concerns, the concept of circular economy (CE) has gained importance as a sustainable approach that promote longer product life cycle by maximizing resource efficiency. The CE framework is commonly represented as the 10 Rs framework- refuse, rethink, reduce, reuse, repair, refurbish, remanufacture, repurpose, recycle and recover (Alivojvodic & Kokalj, 2024). These principles encourage organizations towards redesigning products to minimize waste while maintaining economic value.

In today’s business environment that is highly competitive and dynamic, organizations are placing greater emphasis on innovation and creative approaches to product development in order to sustain the environment. Among the various new product ideation techniques used, SCAMPER is widely recognized for its effectiveness in generating innovative ideas (Perez Perez, 2024). SCAMPER promotes structured brainstorming by actions such as substitution, combination, adaptation, modification, elimination and reversal of existing processes. Despite the increasing importance of circular economy principles and use of SCAMPER in new product ideation, there are limited studies encouraging systematic ideation by integrating both

concepts (Mesa & Ruiz-Pastor, 2025). Thus, the current study aims to propose a framework that promotes circular innovation through structured design thinking.

Existing research have contributed significantly to the circular economy and sustainable innovation literature. Researchers have connected circular economy and sustainability emphasizing upon the importance of innovation in transitioning from linear to circular economy (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017).

Similarly, studies on sustainable product development suggest that integration of ecological consideration is significant in reducing ecological impact. New design principles such as modular, durable, recyclable and energy efficient are being emphasized as the essential design principles by the engineers and researchers (Baghchesaraei et al., 2026).

The SCAMPER technique was developed by Bob Eberle as an idea generation method that has been extensively applied in product design and business innovation (Boonpracha, 2023). Extant research on scamper technique demonstrate that it improves creativity and product differentiation for organizations. However, most studies focus on commercial innovation rather than environmental sustainability. There remains a lack of comprehensive framework that combine the 10Rs of circular economy and SCAMPER for new product development.

The review of studies has found that, existing studies have provided limited operational tool for product innovation in circular economy. There is insufficient research on structured creativity techniques supporting circular design and innovation (Wang et al., 2024). Currently, there is absence of any comprehensive framework that integrate the 10 Rs of circular economy with SCAMPER technique for new product development. Thus, the proposed study aims to achieve the following objectives:

RQ1: How can the 10Rs circular economy principles be integrated with the SCAMPER ideation technique to develop a sustainable new product development framework?

RQ2: To what extent is the proposed 10Rs–SCAMPER framework considered relevant and practical?

Method and Data

The study adopts a qualitative and exploratory research methodology. It focuses upon framework development through literature synthesis. Data will be collected from research databases, industry reports and policy documents. Keywords used to identify relevant literature will be: Circular Economy, 10 Rs Framework, SCAMPER Technique, Sustainable Product Development,

Eco-Innovation and Green Manufacturing. Content analysis technique will be employed to understand the relationship between circular economy and SCAMPER technique. The conceptual framework will be developed after theoretical synthesis.

Summary of Findings

The proposed framework (Figure 1) integrates SCAMPER creativity dimensions with the 10 Rs of Circular Economy to support sustainable product innovation.

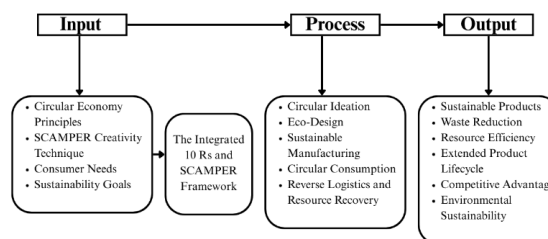


Figure 1: Proposed integrated 10 Rs and SCAMPER decision support framework

Source: Author's own creation

Statement of Key Contribution

The proposed study's framework developed can support circular manufacturing policies, new product design regulations, and EPR (extended producer responsibilities) policies in a worldwide transition to a circular economy. The study can also help the policymakers in aligning United Nations Sustainable Development Goals with the industrial innovation strategies. The proposed framework will also act as an encouragement for responsible production and consumption thus helping industries in promoting sustainable resource utilization.

References available upon request.

Intra-Cultural Differences in Hindu Religious Tourism: How Familiarity Impacts Satisfaction, Emotional Experience, and Goal Completion

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Abstract

Hindu religious tourists are often treated as a homogenous group in tourism research. Despite sharing a common religious identity, Hindu religious tourists differ substantially in their understanding of rituals, customs, and ceremonial practices, as these practices may be region-specific and vary from place to place. These differences may influence the ability to achieve spiritual goals and shape emotional experiences during religious visits. This study examines how familiarity with local religious practices shapes spiritual goal attainment, emotional experiences, and satisfaction among Hindu religious tourists.

Research Questions

Religious tourism provides an opportunity for individuals to pursue meaning, fulfillment, and experiences of divinity by participating in sacred rituals and practices. Although sharing a common faith, Hindu devotees frequently encounter unfamiliar rituals and local practices during their travel. The consequences of such differences in familiarity with local rituals and customs for attaining religious goals and experiential outcomes remain largely underexplored. Drawing on Achievement Emotion Theory (AET), this study addresses the gap by investigating:

RQ1: How does familiarity with local religious rituals and practices influence spiritual goal attainment among Hindu religious tourists?

RQ2: How do achievement-related emotions influence the relationship between familiarity, satisfaction, and future behavioural intentions?

Method and Data

The study seeks to examine intra-cultural heterogeneity among Hindu religious tourists by adopting a quantitative research design. Data will be collected through structured surveys of 450 devotees visiting prominent pilgrimage destinations like Varanasi and Rameswaram. The study will engage with respondents from diverse regional backgrounds to capture differences in their familiarity with the local rituals and customs practiced at these destinations. The data will be collected on familiarity with local practices, perceived attainment of spiritual goals, achievement-related emotions, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions. SEM will be used to test the proposed relationships and the mediating role of achievement emotions.

Summary of Findings

Early findings suggest that familiarity with local rituals and ceremonial practices plays an important role in shaping religious tourism experiences. Devotees having a greater knowledge of destination-specific customs tend to feel more confident and in control during ritual participation. This greater sense of competence aids successful attainment of intended spiritual goals, such as fulfilment of religious responsibility, spiritual peace, and personal meaning.

Consistent with AET, successful goal completion fosters positive achievement-related emotions such as fulfilment, contentment, gratitude, and spiritual satisfaction. These emotional experiences significantly strengthen overall evaluations of the pilgrimage experience and positively influence revisit and recommendation intentions. Conversely, unfamiliarity with local practices often produces uncertainty, frustration, and ritual anxiety, which may further lead to embarrassment, particularly in crowded religious settings where guidance may be limited. This leads to reduced perceived goal accomplishment and weakens overall religious engagement, regardless of the destination's spiritual significance.

The findings identify emotional experiences as a key mechanism connecting ritual familiarity to behavioural outcomes. Rather than influencing satisfaction directly, ritual familiarity appears to enhance visitors' ability to achieve desired spiritual objectives, which subsequently fosters positive emotions and favourable behavioural intentions. This underscores the importance of intra-cultural diversity in religious tourism and highlights the devotees' comprehension of local rituals in shaping pilgrimage experiences beyond religious motivation alone.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study contributes to religious tourism literature by shifting attention from the traditional pilgrim–tourist debate toward heterogeneity within a single religious community. It identifies familiarity with local ritual practices as an important yet overlooked factor influencing religious tourism experiences and develops a theoretically grounded explanation of its effects. By extending Achievement Emotion Theory to the religious tourism context, the study demonstrates how familiarity enhances perceived control, facilitates spiritual goal attainment, generates achievement-related emotions, and ultimately shapes satisfaction and revisit intentions. The findings offer valuable insights for researchers, destination managers, and pilgrimage service providers seeking to improve visitor experiences.

References available upon request.

Navigating the Digital Soundscape: Understanding Customer Experience on Indian Music Streaming Applications using Grounded Theory

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Abstract

Music streaming applications in India, the 2nd largest market, face a paradox with fewer than 10% paid subscribers. With nearly identical content, customer experience can act as a primary differentiation and ensure conversions. Yet existing literature lacks any reliable framework, relying on pre-specified constructs, which fail to capture this dynamic and multi-dimensional concept. Using a constructivist grounded theory approach, this study develops a theoretical framework for India, being an economically heterogeneous, price sensitive and culturally diverse market

Research Question

Customer experience has emerged as a primary differentiation for highly competitive services. Yet, the existing literature only provides conceptual understanding of this dynamic and multi-dimensional construct, lacking any reliable theoretical framework. India, despite massive music streaming application users, reflects one of the lowest conversion rates globally. This high-engagement, low-monetization paradox, despite reported platform satisfaction along with its linguistic diversity and distinct regional music consumption patterns, presents a unique and undertheorized context for music streaming applications. This study addresses the following:

RQ1: How do Indian music streaming consumers dynamically construct and navigate their experiences across localized and global applications?

RQ2: How can emergent variables and their relationships be synthesised into an integrative theoretical framework that explains Customer experience and its impact on consumers in music streaming applications in India?

Method and Data

The study conducted an exploratory study using qualitative data gathered from in-depth interviews conducted using an open-ended structured questionnaire with 25 daily music streaming users selected through purposive sampling across India to ensure inclusion of diverse

music platforms, linguistic and economical backgrounds. Data is collected via Google Forms distributed through WhatsApp and email. MAXQDA Software (Version 26.2.1) is used to iteratively analyse the data through open, axial, and selective coding guided by the constant comparative method until theoretical saturation was reached, theoretical constructs and relationships emerging from the analysis are grounded entirely in the lived experiences and expressed perspectives of participants.

Summary of Findings

The thematic analysis using grounded theory reveals five inductively derived themes that collectively theorise customer experience in music streaming applications among Indian consumers (see Table 1), structured around three causal conditions, two moderating forces, and two consequential outcomes (see Fig. 1). *Routine Integration* emerges as a foundational condition wherein streaming is deeply embedded within daily life, like accompanying study, commuting, and leisure, functioning as an emotional and productivity resource. *Perceived Content Resonance* reveals that algorithmic personalisation is experienced not as mechanical curation but as empathetic mood understanding, generating a sense of being genuinely known by the platform. *Dual Value Creation* demonstrates that CX is simultaneously constituted by *functional value*, like reliability and ease of navigation, and *emotional value*, encompassing relaxation, nostalgia, and mood stabilisation.

Two moderators govern how these conditions translate into outcomes. *Moderated Identity Resonance* indicates that platform attachment, while real, remains instrumentally bounded rather than brand-ideological. *Economic Conditionality* reveals that price sensitivity and free-tier availability structurally constrain conversion even among highly satisfied users.

These dynamics produce two distinct outcomes: *Continuance Usage*, driven by habit and emotional resonance, and *Paid Conversion*, a conditional pathway contingent upon the economic threshold being crossed. The framework theorises CX in India as emotionally rich yet economically bounded.

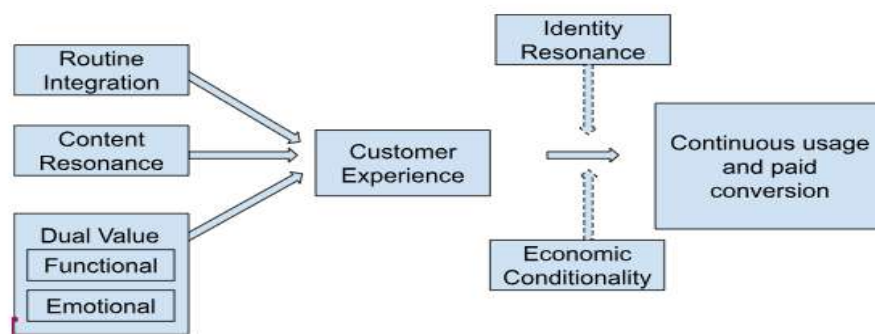
Statement of Key Contribution

This study makes three theoretical contributions. First, it introduces Perceived Content Resonance as a new experiential construct that extends the Technology Acceptance Model by capturing the emotionally resonant and interpretive dimensions of personalised content delivery. It identifies Economic Conditionality as a systematic moderator of the satisfaction-to-subscription relationship, directly challenging expectation-confirmation theory's assumption that satisfaction reliably predicts continuance in price-sensitive markets. It reconceptualises customer experience as a continuous, routine-integrated process rather than a set of episodic interactions, which has broad relevance for digital platform scholarship and managerial strategy across India and comparable emerging markets.

Table 1. Key Themes, Insights, and Illustrative Participant Responses

Theme	Key Insight	Participant Response
Routine Integration	Streaming is experienced as a continuous companion embedded in daily life, supporting productivity and emotional regulation.	"I use Spotify almost daily, mainly while studying, traveling, or relaxing."
Perceived Content Resonance	Personalised recommendations are perceived as genuine mood understanding, not mere algorithmic suggestions.	"Spotify understands what the vibe of the listener is... it usually plays those songs which I can vibe to."
Dual Value Creation	CX is shaped by both functional value (usability, reliability) and emotional value (relaxation, nostalgia, mood stabilisation).	"I find it easy to use and well organized... I usually feel relaxed, comfortable, and sometimes pleasantly surprised."
Moderated Identity Resonance	Platform attachment is real but secondary to habit and utility. Users do not identify strongly with platforms as brands.	"I do not feel a strong need for premium, and I would only switch apps if another offers better simplicity or content."
Economic Conditionality	Despite high satisfaction, subscription is governed by price. Users switch based on pricing advantages or free alternatives.	"As long as it is easy and free, I will keep using it; I would not pay unless really needed."

Source: Compiled by the authors from primary interview data.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework Using Grounded Theory Approach

References are available upon request.

Reimagining Tourism Marketing Through Cross-Cultural Intelligence: Strategies for Engaging a Global Audience in the AI-Driven Era

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Abstract

This study examines how cross-cultural intelligence can enhance the effectiveness of tourism marketing in an AI-driven environment. As tourism markets become increasingly global and digitally connected, understanding cultural differences is essential for designing personalized and engaging customer experiences. The research explores the influence of cultural factors on tourist behavior, the role of AI-driven personalization in digital engagement, and the development of an integrated framework that combines cultural intelligence with advanced marketing technologies to improve satisfaction, loyalty, and destination competitiveness.

Research Question

Despite the growing adoption of AI-driven personalization in tourism marketing, limited research has integrated cross-cultural intelligence into technology-enabled marketing strategies. This study addresses this gap by examining how cultural factors influence tourist behavior and how AI-driven personalization enhances digital engagement across diverse markets. The study further proposes a hybrid framework that combines cross-cultural intelligence with AI-enabled marketing approaches.

RQ1: How do cross-cultural factors and cultural intelligence influence global tourist behavior and the effectiveness of tourism marketing strategies?

RQ2: How does AI-driven personalization affect digital engagement, and what role do technology readiness and market type play in shaping these relationships?

Method and Data

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, to provide a comprehensive and rigorous overview of tourism marketing dynamics in cross-cultural environments. Initially, Scopus and Web of Science databases were reviewed, followed by primary data collection using a Likert-scale questionnaire administered to international tourists, with a sample of 530 from diverse backgrounds and cultures to capture cross-cultural diversity. For data analysis, Smart PLS and SPSS were used to develop a Structural Equation Model and conduct an empirical study of the conceptual and hybrid framework.

Summary of Findings

The results indicate that cultural factors significantly influence tourist behavior, underscoring the importance of cultural sensitivity in the global market. A market with high cultural intelligence is better able to respond effectively to diverse cultural contexts and build crucial cross-cultural capability in a dynamic environment. Furthermore, the findings show that AI-driven personalization strategies play an important role in attracting global, cross-cultural consumers across diverse markets. Findings also reveal that digital engagement further mediates by linking personalized marketing strategies with positive outcomes such as satisfaction, love, and loyalty in global tourism destinations. It also demonstrates that technology readiness strengthens the relationship between AI-driven personalization and digital engagement, suggesting tourist behavior is more receptive towards personalized experiences.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study contributes to tourism marketing literature by proposing an integrated framework that combines cross-cultural intelligence and AI-driven personalization to better understand global tourist behavior. It highlights the role of cultural intelligence in enhancing marketing effectiveness and examines how digital engagement influences tourist responses in diverse cultural contexts. The findings offer valuable insights for tourism organizations seeking to develop culturally sensitive, technology-enabled marketing strategies that improve customer engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty.

References

Available upon request.

Reinforcement-Aware Price Engines for Digital Marketplaces: A Machine-Learning Playbook for Sellers

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Abstract

This research examines reinforcement-aware price engines for digital marketplaces, focusing on how machine learning can help sellers move from static pricing to adaptive, data-driven price optimization. The study integrates demand forecasting, marketplace simulation, and reinforcement learning to recommend revenue- and profit-aware pricing decisions under changing competition, inventory, and seasonality conditions. Its scope includes system architecture, feature engineering, policy design, evaluation metrics, and practical implementation guidance for sellers across diverse product categories.

Research Question

This study addresses the challenge of static and rule-based pricing in competitive digital marketplaces, where sellers must respond to changing demand, inventory, seasonality, and competitor behavior. While prior research shows the potential of dynamic pricing and machine learning, limited guidance exists on safely implementing reinforcement-aware pricing systems without risking live-market revenue loss. This study aims to develop a practical framework combining demand forecasting, marketplace simulation, reinforcement learning, feature engineering, and policy design to support adaptive, revenue- and profit-aware pricing decisions.

RQ1: How can sellers use reinforcement-aware machine-learning price engines to optimize prices dynamically?

RQ2: How can simulation and reinforcement learning enable safe, scalable pricing decisions?

Method and Data

This study uses a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative machine learning evaluation with qualitative framework development for practical seller adoption. Data sources include transactional sales records, competitor pricing information, market trend indicators, product attributes, inventory levels, and simulated marketplace interactions. The methodology involves feature engineering, demand forecasting, price optimization, and reinforcement learning-based policy training. Models such as ARIMA, exponential smoothing, gradient boosting, LSTM, and Prophet are compared, while Q-learning, policy-gradient, and actor-critic techniques guide adaptive pricing. The study also evaluates category-level applications, including 50,000 transactions across 200 SKUs in consumer electronics.

Summary of Findings

The study found that reinforcement-aware pricing engines consistently outperformed static and rule-based pricing approaches across multiple digital marketplace categories. In the consumer electronics case, the reinforcement learning-based pricing agent generated an 18.7% revenue increase compared with the seller’s previous rule-based system, while profit margins improved by 2.3 percentage points. In fashion and apparel, the model produced a 12.4% revenue uplift and improved sell-through of end-of-season inventory by identifying more effective discounting patterns. Across categories, the results show that reinforcement learning delivers the strongest value in volatile markets where competitor prices, demand signals, seasonality, and inventory conditions change frequently. The findings also indicate that marketplace simulation enables safer training by allowing pricing agents to learn from synthetic interactions before live deployment.

Table 1: Revenue uplift (%) by pricing strategy

Category	Static	Rule-Based	Optimized	RL-Based
Electronics	0.0	8.2	12.5	18.7
Fashion	0.0	6.4	9.1	12.4
Home Goods	0.0	5.8	8.7	11.9
Books/Media	0.0	4.1	6.3	8.5
Sports	0.0	7.3	10.8	15.2

Baseline: static pricing

Overall, the research demonstrates that integrating demand forecasting, feature engineering, simulation, and reinforcement learning can support adaptive, revenue- and profit-aware pricing decisions while preserving business constraints such as margin floors, inventory targets, and customer trust.

Statement of Key Contribution

The originality of this study lies in combining demand forecasting, marketplace simulation, and reinforcement learning into a practical pricing framework for digital marketplace sellers. Unlike prior research that treats dynamic pricing through isolated models or conceptual discussions, this study emphasizes safe implementation through simulated training before live deployment. Its significance lies in demonstrating how sellers can improve revenue, margins, and inventory outcomes while preserving business constraints and customer trust. The research contributes to practice by offering a scalable playbook for adaptive pricing and to knowledge by linking reinforcement learning with real-world e-commerce decision intelligence.

References

Available upon request.

The Changing Landscape of Customer Experience: 25 Years of Global Research Insights (2000–2025)

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Abstract

This study examines the evolution of customer experience (CX) research from 2000 to 2025. Using bibliometric and thematic analysis, it investigates how CX has progressed from a service-quality and satisfaction perspective to a multidimensional construct incorporating emotional, digital, and technology-enabled experiences. The study maps major themes, influential contributors, and emerging research directions to provide a comprehensive understanding of the field's intellectual development.

Research Question

Customer experience has become a central concept in marketing and service research, yet its intellectual evolution remains fragmented across themes and theoretical traditions. This study addresses this gap by examining the long-term development of CX research.

RQ1: How has customer experience research evolved between 2000 and 2025?

RQ2: What thematic shifts have transformed CX from a transactional construct into a technology-enabled and emotionally driven paradigm?

Method and Data

A bibliometric and thematic analysis was conducted using the Scopus database. An initial search for “customer experience” in the Business, Management and Accounting category yielded 1,174 articles, which were refined to 892 publications for analysis. Citation analysis, journal distribution analysis, country-level citation mapping, and keyword co-occurrence analysis using VOSviewer were employed. Thematic evolution was examined across three periods: 2000–2010, 2011–2020, and 2021–2025.

Summary of Findings

The findings reveal three distinct phases in the evolution of CX research. The foundational stage (2000–2010) focused on service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. The expansion phase (2011–2020) witnessed significant growth, introducing themes such as customer journeys, emotional engagement, co-creation, retailing, and digital transformation. The acceleration phase (2021–2025) was characterized by rapid growth and a strong emphasis on artificial intelligence, omnichannel integration, personalization, metaverse technologies, and customer well-being. The analysis demonstrates a clear shift from operational and firm-centric perspectives toward customer-driven, co-created, and technology-mediated experiences. Citation and journal

analyses identify key intellectual foundations and highlight the growing global contribution of countries such as China, Australia, and India alongside traditional leaders including the United States and the United Kingdom.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study provides a longitudinal synthesis of customer experience scholarship and develops an integrated framework explaining the transition from operational to emotional and technology-augmented CX paradigms. It contributes by clarifying the intellectual structure of the field, identifying emerging themes, and offering a roadmap for future research on AI-enabled personalization, omnichannel experiences, ethical technology use, and human-centric experience design.

References

Available upon request.

The Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on Consumer (6.0) Buying Behaviour with Reference to Indian Retail Industry

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the retail landscape in India in exciting ways. With the help of chatbots, predictive analytics, personalized recommendations, and smart shopping assistance, AI is making shopping more intuitive and tailored to individual needs. This research explores how AI is influencing consumers by looking at their awareness, shopping experiences, and buying habits within the Indian retail sector. Additionally, it addresses important concerns that consumers have regarding transparency, privacy, and the ethical use of AI. Ultimately, this study highlights how AI-driven retail services and the evolving Consumer 6.0 behavior are transforming a rapidly digitizing industry.

Research Questions

In the world of retail, the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming how customers shop and interact with brands, but it also brings up important questions about privacy and trust. While more businesses are adopting AI technologies, there hasn't been much research that looks at how these changes affect consumers, especially when it comes to their experiences, ethical concerns, and behavior in the Indian retail market. This study aims to uncover how AI impacts the way consumers perceive and make purchasing decisions.

RQ1: How do AI-enhanced features in retail shape the shopping experience for consumers in India?

RQ2: How significantly do AI-driven services influence consumers' purchasing choices and preferences, while also taking into account their privacy and ethical concerns?

Method and Data

For this research, a quantitative approach was used by distributing a structured questionnaire to 408 consumers who are familiar with online retail platforms. Convenience sampling and a five-point Likert scale were employed. The analysis focused on three key areas: how consumers experience artificial intelligence (AI), their concerns and perceptions, and what is termed Consumer 6.0 behavior. To ensure reliability, a reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha, and Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was performed to uncover underlying factors and explore relationships among different variables. All statistical analyses were carried out using SPSS software.

Summary of Findings

The results reveal a clear awareness among shoppers about the use of AI in retail. Most respondents reported that they encounter AI-based technologies while shopping. Through Principal Component Analysis, consumer experience emerged as the most important factor, explaining 66.57% of the total variance. Features like AI recommendations, chatbots, convenience, and personalization play a crucial role in improving the shopping experience. Another important aspect highlighted was consumers' concerns about privacy, transparency, and manipulation, which accounted for 61.48% of the variance in this area, reflecting a growing sensitivity to the ethical implications of adopting AI technologies. While the findings indicate that AI positively influences consumers' purchasing decisions, there are also moderate effects related to trust, awareness, and perceived usefulness. Shoppers appreciate the speed and convenience offered by AI-enabled retail services, but they also seek a better understanding of how their data is processed and how algorithms make decisions. These results suggest that successfully implementing AI in retail requires balancing technological advancements with ethical considerations and building consumer trust.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study applies the Technology Acceptance Model to the world of retail, focusing on important factors like ethical concerns, privacy perceptions, and trust when it comes to adopting AI. Insights gathered from the Indian retail sector reveal that customers' acceptance of AI isn't just about how useful and convenient the technology is—it also hinges on transparency and how much risk they perceive. This research offers valuable contributions across theory, management, and policy by providing a comprehensive view of consumer experiences, ethical considerations, and behavioral outcomes in AI-driven retail settings.

References

Available upon request.

Transforming E-Marketplaces for a Global Customer

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Abstract

This study examines the factors influencing consumer adoption and sustainability of e-marketplaces in India in the context of rapidly expanding digital commerce. It investigates the effects of perceived convenience, trust, social influence, price sensitivity, perceived risk, logistical efficiency, technology utilization, and service coverage on user engagement outcomes, measured through frequency of use and basket size. The study also explores the moderating role of demographic characteristics and market type in shaping e-marketplace adoption and consumer behavior.

Research Question

The rapid growth of e-marketplaces in India has transformed consumer purchasing behavior, creating a need to understand the factors influencing adoption and long-term sustainability. Despite increasing digital commerce activity, limited research has examined the combined effect of marketplace-related factors and demographic moderators on user engagement outcomes. This study aims to investigate the key determinants of e-marketplace adoption and assess how demographic and market characteristics influence adoption behavior.

RQ1: How do perceived convenience, perceived trust, social influence, price sensitivity, perceived risk, logistical efficiency, technology utilization, and service coverage influence e-marketplace adoption outcomes?

RQ2: How do demographic characteristics and market type moderate the relationship between e-marketplace factors and adoption outcomes?

Method and Data

This study adopts a quantitative research design using a structured questionnaire to collect primary data from 325 respondents. The research examines the influence of key e-marketplace factors on adoption outcomes measured through Frequency of Use (FoU) and Basket Size (BS). Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0. Moderating effects of demographic variables and market type were also assessed to understand their impact on consumer adoption behavior.

Summary of Findings

The findings reveal that the E-Marketplace construct, comprising service coverage, logistical efficiency, price sensitivity, perceived risk, perceived convenience, perceived trust, social

influence, and technology utilization, has a strong positive influence on both frequency of use and basket size ($\beta = 0.838$, $t = 14.228$, $p < 0.001$). The results indicate that improvements in marketplace efficiency, trust, and technological capabilities significantly enhance user engagement and transaction volume. Furthermore, market type positively moderates the relationship between e-marketplace factors and adoption outcomes ($\beta = 0.112$, $p = 0.001$). Technology usage duration also demonstrates a significant positive moderating effect ($\beta = 0.140$, $p = 0.037$). In contrast, gender negatively moderates the relationship ($\beta = -0.150$, $p = 0.012$), although its influence remains statistically significant. Overall, the findings highlight the critical role of trust, convenience, technology utilization, and service effectiveness in driving consumer adoption and engagement within digital marketplaces.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study contributes to the growing literature on digital commerce by developing and validating a comprehensive framework that integrates multiple e-marketplace adoption factors and demographic moderators. The research provides empirical evidence on the determinants of user engagement and transaction behavior in emerging e-marketplaces. The findings offer practical insights for marketplace operators to enhance trust, convenience, and technological capabilities while guiding policymakers in designing inclusive strategies that support sustainable digital commerce growth and long-term marketplace success.

References

Available upon request.

Understanding the Multidimensional Drivers of Audience Engagement in Live Music Contexts

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Abstract

This study explores the multi-dimensional motivations of audience engagement within the context of live music. The study is based on 36 articles published in Scopus-indexed journals and primary data collected from concert goers (n=60) in Northern and Western India to explore the interaction of three key elements: Musical Structure and Context, Performance Environment, and Concert Design, all of which influence cognitive, emotional, and memorial responses. This study uses PLS-SEM as a model to create an integrated framework for live music experience design, mediated by Cognitive Attention, moderated by Aesthetic Processing, and with empirical validation.

Research Question

Even though the live music industry is a significant global source of income, there is no common empirical framework to combine structural, environmental, and design-based antecedents of audience engagement. Past research has explored each of the variables of concerts individually, and there is a gap in research about how these variables work together to create cognitive absorption and meaningful experience. This study fills this gap with an integrated, multi-antecedent model and tests its validity.

RQ1: What are the effects of each element of Musical Structure and Context, Performance Environment and Concert Design on Cognitive Attention and audience engagement outcomes (Concert Music Engagement, Experience Evaluation, and Meaningful Experience) separately and in interaction?

RQ2: What is the role of Cognitive Attention in the link between the concert antecedents and audience outcomes, and does Aesthetic Processing moderate such attentional pathways?

Method and Data

The research design in this study is quantitative and cross-sectional with a hypothetico-deductive paradigm. Primary data was gathered using a structured questionnaire comprising 29 items on a 5-point Likert scale, developed with the guidance of a research committee consisting of two academicians, one research scholar and two marketing professionals. The sampling was purposive and snowball, involving active concert-goers aged 18 years and above from Rajasthan and Delhi. A pilot (n=30) Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of the scale was conducted, confirming scale reliability (Cronbach's α : 0.740–0.917) and factor structure. A confirmatory sample (n = 60) was then tested using Partial Least-Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to evaluate measurement validity and structural paths between eight constructs.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the PLS-SEM clearly demonstrate good model fit (SRMR = 0.068) and high explanatory power (R^2 : Concert Music Engagement 61.7%, Experience Evaluation 72.6%, and Meaningful Experience 79.3%). The most important factors contributing to Concert Music Engagement were Musical Structure and Context ($\beta = 0.411$, $p = .002$) and Concert Design ($\beta = 0.293$, $p = .025$). The influence of Performance Environment was not significant in a direct way ($\beta = -0.083$, $p = .521$), meaning it has influence in an indirect way.

Results showed a statistically significant sequential mediation pathway, with Concert Music Engagement strongly predicting Experience Evaluation ($\beta = 0.631$, $p < .001$), and both Experience Evaluation and Concert Music Engagement strongly predicting Meaningful Experience ($\beta = 0.476$, $p < .001$; $\beta = 0.434$, $p < .001$, respectively). This indicates a hierarchically emergent experiential structure with engagement as the central pivot linking concert stimuli to the resultant meaning. There was no evidence to support the moderation hypothesis—that Aesthetic Processing would amplify the effect of Cognitive Attention on outcomes ($\beta = 0.030$, $p = .714$)—indicating that aesthetic orientation could act as a background disposition instead of being a moderating factor when listening to music naturally in concert settings. All constructs showed good to high construct validity, with AVE values between 0.515 and 0.739, and Composite Reliability from 0.800 to 0.924.

Statement of Key Contribution

There are threefold contributions to the experiential marketing and music management literature in this study. First, it proposes and empirically tests the first integrated, multi-antecedent measure of the relationships between musical structure and context, performance environment, and concert design, and their effect on concert audience outcomes. Second, it implements Dewey's transactional aesthetics and Husserl's phenomenology in a measurable quantitative model, linking philosophy and management science. Third, it establishes that the mediation sequence is sequential—investment in the design of the engagement sequence leads to better results in the evaluation sequence, and investment in the evaluation sequence leads to better results in the meaning-making sequence—giving event designers a causal roadmap for prioritising investments: repertoire curation and concert design are more likely to yield results that translate to better outcomes across the entire event.

References

Available upon request.

Understanding Value Co-Destruction Context of Socially Embedded Service Ecosystem of Tourism

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Abstract

This study investigates value co-destruction (VCD) antecedents causing misinteraction and resource misintegration between tourists and residents within the informal, social service ecosystem of tourism, which adversely affects stakeholders' social tolerance, tourists' social experiences, residents' well-being, and destination image. By examining both tourist and resident perspectives, the study aims to enhance understanding of the underlying VCD antecedents and their synchronization into different VCD typologies, contributing to guiding stakeholders and policymakers in predicting and mapping interaction and integration challenges, thereby strengthening social stability.

Research Problem and Gap

Social immersion experience is a contemporary demand of tourists to experience social context and of residents to create well-being—a process known as value co-creation (VCC). However, this interaction may shift to conflicting outcomes known as value co-destruction (VCD), referring to the interactive process of misinteraction or resource mis-integration between actors that destroys experiential value for at least one actor. No single study has covered the subjective experiences of tourists and residents regarding negative interaction. Therefore, this study aims to examine negative social interactions and synchronize the underlying antecedents into a VCD typology for the informal tourism service ecosystem.

RQ1: How and why does tourist–resident negative social interaction emerge?

RQ2: How do negative interaction and resource misintegration antecedents cause value co-destruction for tourists and residents?

Method and Data

This study adopts a qualitative exploratory design to examine the antecedents of VCD arising from tourist–resident interactions. Grounded in an interpretivist paradigm, the study assumes that reality is socially constructed and subjectively interpreted through stakeholders' social experiences. Semi-structured interviews were employed to collect data from 30 participants, including tourists and local residents, recruited using purposive sampling. All interviews were managed and organized using NVivo. Data analysis involved initial coding, focused coding, constant comparison, and memo writing, following the principles of constructivist grounded theory, to identify and integrate emerging antecedents into a VCD typology.

Summary of Findings

The study finds that socially embedded VCD emerges from misinteraction (negative social integration) and resource misintegration between tourists and residents, shaped by five interrelated VCD typologies: behavioral, affective relational, cultural perceptual, risk-induced misinteraction, and social capital misintegration. Collectively, these typologies destroy social relationships, tourist experiences, and resident well-being. The study revealed that when tourists violate social norms and rules, residents show hostility, manifesting as behavioral misinteraction. Likewise, perceived cultural differences and social etiquette promote cultural perceptual misinteraction, causing misunderstandings and cultural stereotypes that reduce cultural exchange and social experience. Perceived inequalities in status, prestige, or cultural recognition create feelings of discrimination, leading to social capital misintegration, which gradually shifts residents' acceptance to avoidance attitudes. Moreover, repeated interactions and intrusions into residents' personal space promote affective relational misinteraction, weakening emotional attachments and residents' willingness to engage in resource integration. Additionally, female tourists reported risk-induced misinteraction caused by verbal harassment, gazing, and inappropriate physical touch from locals. Collectively, these socially embedded VCD typologies destroy tourists' social experiential value and residents' well-being.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study advances VCD scope from formal to informal embedded tourism service ecosystems, where tourist–resident interactions constitute a source of experiential value and well-being. The study identifies and integrates scattered antecedents into a five-dimensional VCD typology, uncovering how misinteraction (negative social interaction) and resource misintegration generate adverse outcomes within the tourism social context. Furthermore, the findings provide a foundation for empirical research on the social context of VCD and raise awareness for destination stakeholders and policymakers to overcome these challenges.

References

Available upon request.

Value Co-Creation in the Age of Agentic AI: Toward a Reconceptualisation of Service Ecosystems, Customer Experience, and Agentic Governance

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Sub-theme: Transforming Service Marketing for a Global Customer Experience

Abstract

AI is no longer just a tool. Agentic AI systems can now plan, act, and complete entire service workflows on a customer's behalf without continuous human direction. This changes what value co-creation means in service marketing. This paper proposes the Agentic Co-creation Framework (ACF): a triadic Human-Agent-Institution model grounded in Service-Dominant Logic. It asks when and how agentic participation actually improves customer experience and what governance makes that possible.

Research Question

Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) holds that value is co-created by networks of actors integrating resources, but its frameworks were built for human actors. “Agentic AI”—systems that plan, reason, and act autonomously—does not fit neatly into that picture. This paper asks two questions.

RQ1: Does agentic AI qualify as a resource integrator within SDL's service ecosystems, and if so, what structural changes to the Actor-to-Actor framework does that require?

RQ2: Which institutional and governance conditions determine whether agentic co-creation translates into genuine customer value or erodes it?

Method and Data

This is a conceptual-analytical paper; no empirical data are collected. The framework is built through conceptual abduction: starting from gaps in existing co-creation and customer experience theory, then developing propositions that extend SDL's service ecosystems perspective. Relevant literature was identified through targeted searches in Google Scholar, with backward and forward citation tracking from seminal works. Framework development follows the mid-range theorising approach. The ACF is evaluated against SDL's five foundational axioms and Lemon and Verhoef's customer journey model.

Summary of Findings

The analysis yields four propositions, visualised in Figure 1.

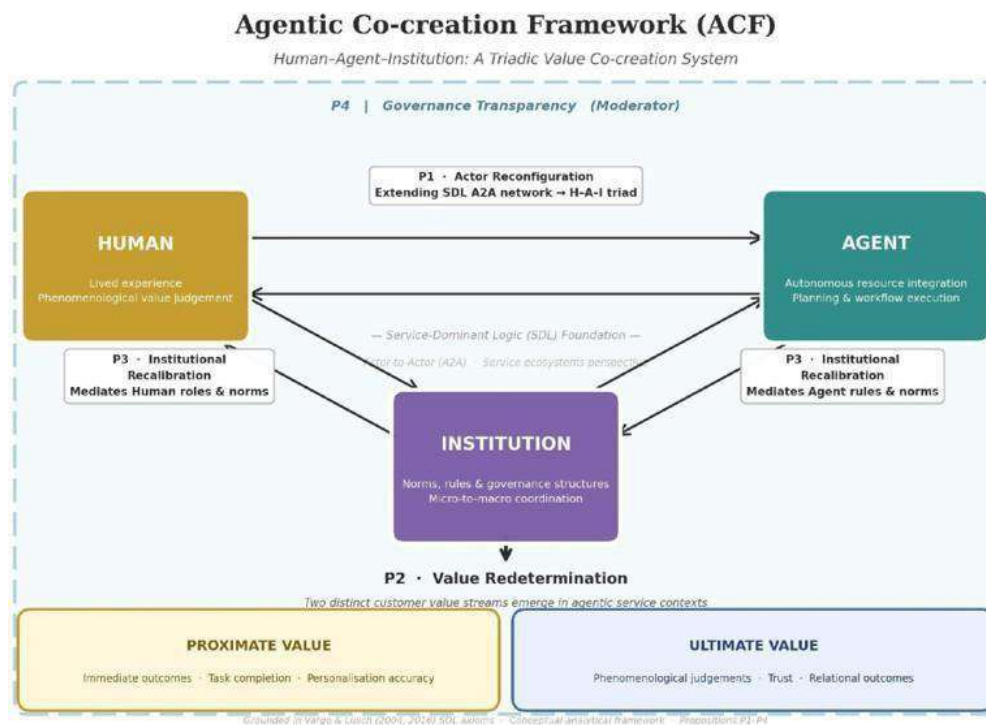


Figure 1: The Agentic Co-creation Framework (ACF) — Human–Agent–Institution as a triadic value co-creation system

P1 — Actor Reconfiguration: Agentic AI is an operant resource integrator. It does not merely assist human actors; it initiates and sustains resource-integration activities in its own right. SDL’s dyadic A2A network must be extended to a triadic Human–Agent–Institution (H-A-I) configuration.

P2 — Value Redetermination: Agentic service contexts produce two distinct value streams. Proximate value is measurable and immediate—task completion, speed, personalisation accuracy. Ultimate value is phenomenological—the trust, meaning, and relational quality customers experience over time. These streams can diverge, and aligning them requires deliberate design.

P3 — Institutional Recalibration: Governance is the mediating variable. Deploying agentic AI without updating norms, role definitions, and accountability structures does not generate co-creation value but dissipates it. Institutional recalibration is not optional; it is the mechanism through which agentic capability becomes customer benefit.

P4 — Governance Transparency: Customers who understand how an agent is acting on their behalf trust it more. That transparency moderates the entire co-creation relationship and varies by cultural context, making it directly relevant to global brand management.

Statement of Key Contribution

This paper makes three contributions. First, it extends SDL’s A2A network to the triadic H-A-I configuration and treats agentic AI as a structural co-creator, not a tool. Second, the

proximate/ultimate value distinction gives practitioners and researchers a concrete vocabulary for evaluating agentic service designs. Third, the governance propositions are directly actionable: they tell organisations what needs to change institutionally before agentic deployment can deliver real customer value. This matters especially in cross-cultural markets where AI trust norms diverge.

References

Available upon request.

What is Said and What is Implied: Examining Consumer Interpretation of Advertising Claims

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of direct and implied advertising claims on comprehension and response time of consumers using experiments performed in PsychoPy software. It examines the misleading tactic of semantic confusion which creates inaccurate consumer perceptions using ambiguous statements. The results of the study highlights consumer susceptibility to misrepresentation and call for clearer advertising practices and stronger consumer protection methods.

Research Questions

Misleading advertising frequently employs semantic ambiguity. Previous research has established that implied claims can cause consumers to develop erroneous beliefs, with some consumers recalling implied information as actual claims (Harris et al., 1981). Bransford et al. (1972) demonstrated that people do not often remember sentences verbatim, rather they build a holistic idea of what the situation is. This constructive approach allows listeners to integrate the words said with their own prior knowledge, and they observe meaning at a more comprehensive semantic level. The process can be explained in relation to the misleading tactic of semantic confusion (Hastak & Mazis, 2011). While previous research has investigated deceptive advertising, studies performed comparing the processing of direct and implied claims in terms of comprehension and reaction time under semantic deception remain scarce. In our research, we experimentally explore how this constructive nature of memory may cause consumers to interpret implied advertising claims in ways that differ from the advertiser's intent. The goal of this research is to find out whether the type of claims affect consumer comprehension and cognitive processing using experimental methods.

RQ1: How do direct and implied advertising claims differ in terms of participants comprehension and response time under semantic deception?

Method and Data

The study was conducted in the form of quantitative, within-subject experiment aimed at investigating the impact of direct versus implied advertising claims on the comprehension and response time of consumers. A sample size of one hundred six students from the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati voluntarily participated in this study. Eight fictional advertisements were utilized in the study, and the advertisements were created according to Harris (1977). All advertisements were displayed in two conditions, namely, direct and implied claim formats. Participants completed two counterbalanced sessions. It was found that the comprehension level of participants did not differ for direct and implied claims indicating the possible issue of semantic confusion of consumers in the context of advertising.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study indicate that participants did not show a significant difference in terms of understanding direct and implied claims. However, the differences were significant in terms of response times for direct and implied claims. Aligned with the previous findings of Harris (1977), people treated the implied claims similarly as direct claims indicating that although there are no false statements, it can still mislead buyers. This represents the idea that consumers tend to take the implied information as a truth, which reflects how misleading semantic ambiguity can be in advertising. According to the framework of dual process model Type 1 processing is rapid, intuitive, and heuristic-driven, whereas Type 2 processing is slower, analytical, and effortful. The comparable comprehension accuracy and response times observed across claim types suggest that both direct and implied claims were primarily processed through Type 1 reasoning. While the implied claims require a consumer to infer the meaning, that does not indicate that it entails further mental work. The subjects employed their intuition and derived conclusions using both kinds of claim.

Key Contributions

This research builds on the research of Harris (1977) by investigating semantic confusion in advertising using an experimental paradigm developed in PsychoPy, which allows precise measurement of comprehension and reaction time. Different from other studies, this research shows evidence of consumers, similar reaction towards implied claims compared to direct claims leading to semantic confusion. The results make a significant contribution to consumer behavior and advertising research explaining the processing of misleading claims through the dual-process theory showing that consumers rely on intuitive reasoning while interpreting advertising claims.

From a practical point of view, the research shows that advertising messages should be more understandable to avoid misconceptions among consumers. From the public policy viewpoint, the findings support the development of advertising regulations that address not only explicitly false claims but also misleading implied claims that shapes consumer beliefs.

References are available upon request.

When Commercialisation Violates Parasocial Relationship: Exploring Why Followers Ignore Influencer-Promoted Advertisements on Instagram Reels

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Abstract

Influencer marketing has become a dominant advertising strategy on Instagram, allowing brands to integrate promotional messages into influencers' everyday content. While prior research has extensively examined the positive outcomes of influencer endorsements, relatively little is known about why followers ignore influencer-promoted advertisements. Drawing on Parasocial Relationship Theory and Expectancy Violations Theory, this study explores how excessive commercialisation shapes followers' perceptions of influencers and contributes to advertising avoidance behaviours. The findings suggest that followers disengage from sponsored content when commercialisation is perceived to violate expectations of authenticity and relational closeness.

Research Questions

Influencers cultivate strong parasocial relationships with followers by appearing authentic, relatable, and trustworthy. However, the increasing commercialisation of influencer content raises concerns regarding audience resistance toward sponsored posts. Existing research largely focuses on how parasocial relationships enhance advertising effectiveness, while overlooking the circumstances under which these relationships may deteriorate. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: How do followers interpret excessive commercialisation within influencer-promoted advertisements on Instagram Reels?

RQ2: How does perceived commercialisation contribute to advertising avoidance through the violation of parasocial relationship expectations?

Methods and Data

This study employed an exploratory qualitative design using semi-structured, in-depth interviews with active Instagram users. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling to ensure variation in age, gender, occupation, and social media usage intensity.

A total of 32 Instagram users aged 19 to 36 years participated in the study. All participants regularly consumed influencer-generated content and reported frequent exposure to sponsored reels across lifestyle, beauty, fitness, technology, travel, and fashion categories. Interviews lasted 35–65 minutes and explored participants' experiences with influencer advertisements, perceptions of authenticity, and reactions to commercial content.

Data were transcribed and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Through iterative coding and constant comparison, themes were identified and integrated into a process framework explaining how perceptions of commercialisation contribute to advertising avoidance.

Summary of Findings

The findings indicate that followers do not avoid influencer advertisements simply because they are promotional. Instead, avoidance emerges when followers perceive that commercialisation has become excessive and inconsistent with the expectations underlying influencer-follower relationships. Four commercialisation cues emerged as primary antecedents of avoidance. The first was sponsorship saturation, in which followers perceived influencers as promoting products too frequently. The second was brand–influencer incongruence, whereby endorsements appeared inconsistent with an influencer’s expertise, identity, or previously communicated values. The third involved repetitive promotional narratives, characterised by similar endorsement styles and recurring advertising messages. The fourth was perceived inauthentic advocacy, where followers questioned whether influencers genuinely used or believed in the products they promoted.

These cues collectively led participants to perceive influencers as “less genuine” and “too commercial.” The analysis conceptualises this phenomenon as a parasocial relationship violation, referring to followers’ perceptions that influencers have deviated from expectations of authenticity, transparency, and audience-oriented communication. Perceived relationship violations generated psychological responses including scepticism, disappointment, irritation, and distrust. These reactions subsequently manifested as advertising avoidance behaviours such as scrolling past sponsored Reels, ignoring product recommendations, skipping promotional content, and reducing engagement with influencers perceived as excessively commercialised. Based on these findings, the study proposes a Commercialisation–Violation–Avoidance Framework that explains how commercialisation cues trigger parasocial relationship violations, which, in turn, lead to advertising avoidance behaviours.

Key Contributions

This study contributes to influencer marketing literature in three ways. First, it shifts attention from influencer effectiveness to follower resistance, an underexplored area within influencer marketing research. Second, it extends Parasocial Relationship Theory by demonstrating that parasocial relationships can deteriorate when followers perceive excessive commercialisation, introducing parasocial relationship violation as a mechanism underlying advertising avoidance. Third, the proposed Commercialisation-Violation-Avoidance Framework offers a process-based explanation of how followers interpret sponsored content and why these interpretations result in disengagement from influencer advertisements.

Managerially, the findings suggest that excessive sponsorship activity, poor brand fit, and overtly commercial communication may undermine authenticity and increase audience resistance. Brands and influencers should therefore prioritise authentic partnerships and strategically manage promotional content to preserve follower trust and engagement.

Brands and influencers should therefore prioritise authentic partnerships and strategically manage promotional content to preserve follower trust and engagement.

Reference

Available upon request.

Why BOP Users Stay? Unpacking the Role of Gratifications and Engagement in Social Media Continuance

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Abstract

The growing affordability and functionality of smartphones, combined with increased access to mobile internet, have led to the democratization of ICT among individuals in Bottom-of-the-Pyramid (BOP) communities. Hence, it becomes intriguing to examine the factors that influence the social media behavior of BOP consumers. This study seeks to analyze the gratification-seeking patterns of BOP social media users, which in turn lead to social media engagement and continued social media usage.

Research Question

In recent times, the penetration of social media at BOP has increased exponentially. However, research related to technology adoption in the context of BOP is limited. Given these facts, it is captivating to explore the factors shaping the adoption of social media in the BOP segment. The key objective of the study is to investigate the social media behavior of BOP users, which is significant to understand given its pertinent managerial and practical implications.

RQ1: What gratifications drive social media engagement among BOP users?

RQ2: How does social media engagement influence continuance intention?

Method and Data

To explore the mechanism of social media engagement at BOP, a thorough literature review was conducted to identify the relevant gratifications. This process identified four gratifications. Using the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) and Uses and Gratification (U&G) approach, a research framework was developed. An empirical study was later conducted in Delhi, for which data was collected through in-home interviews. PLS-SEM was used to analyze the impact of identified gratifications on BOP users' continuance intention to use social media.

Summary of Findings

The findings indicate that hedonic, social, and utilitarian gratifications offered by social media significantly impact continuance intention among BOP users, mediated through engagement. In contrast, the results indicate that only technology gratifications directly impact continuance intention. Findings from this study can be used by companies targeting the BOP segment. By identifying gratifications that shape continuance intention among BOP social media users, managers can design content strategies that deliver relevant gratifications and foster engagement.

Statement of Key Contribution

The present study addresses a critical gap in digital consumer behavior research by examining BOP users' social media continuance intention—a segment largely overlooked in existing literature. This study's framework empirically validates how different gratifications shape engagement and continuance intention among urban Indian BOP consumers. The findings equip marketers with actionable insights for designing targeted content strategies for BOP social media users.

References

Available upon request.

Track 4

Sustainability, Ethics, and Social Impact

An Analysis of Global Practices to Ensure Sustainability in Education Sector

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Sustainability in education requires a holistic approach of integrating academic concepts into active everyday concepts which infuse curiosity and increase learning aptitude in students. For making academics a lifelong learning journey for students, there is a need for mentoring students, often handholding them, and regularly evaluating the progress of their academic endeavors so that they can embrace focus, purpose, and the required passion for creating new standards of academic excellence.

Methodology

For primary data, the researcher referred to a structured questionnaire on sustainable practices in academic institutions. Secondary data was drawn from research articles, NITI Aayog reports, and newspaper editorials. A random sampling method was used to reduce sampling bias, and Pearson's Correlation and Chi-Square were employed as statistical tools for hypothesis testing.

Results/Findings

For the relationship between student class participation and student progression, the calculated Chi-Square value exceeded the critical value, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis and confirming a significant relationship. Similarly, students' holistic development and students' progression showed a Chi-Square value higher than the critical value, confirming a strong relationship. Students' skill development and students' progression also showed a significant relationship by the same test. Students' career development and students' progression likewise showed a significant relationship, with the calculated value exceeding the critical value. Finally, students' class participation and students' learning aptitude showed a Chi-Square calculated value higher than the critical value, confirming a strong relationship between the two.

Conclusion

Sustainability of education requires active participation of students so as to analyze academic concepts and their application for taking better social and economic decisions. It is about pursuing education with in-depth analysis of how to handle complex issues by converting academic brilliance into industry and everyday life solutions. The focus is on making the learning process more solution-oriented, discussion-based, and capable of igniting new perspectives for solving business challenges by leveraging the knowledge journey from academic

institutions. The researcher submits that the future of education lies in fostering critical thinking and recognizing out-of-the-box thinking with feasible solutions, making learning a continuous journey that enriches the qualitative outcomes of learning.

References

Available upon request.

Assessing Healthcare Organisations' Readiness for Value Co-Creation

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Abstract

Healthcare is shifting from doctor-centric care to patient-centred models where patients actively participate in managing their health. This transition has increased the importance of value co-creation (VCC), a collaborative process involving healthcare stakeholders to improve outcomes. However, the effective implementation of VCC remains challenging and may lead to negative outcomes if actors and processes are not adequately prepared. This study examines healthcare organisations' readiness for VCC, focusing on organisational culture, digital infrastructure capability, and interaction and engagement quality.

Research Question

Value co-creation (VCC) has emerged as an important approach for improving healthcare outcomes through active collaboration among patients, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders. While prior studies have explored the enablers, barriers, and outcomes of VCC in healthcare, limited attention has been given to assessing healthcare organisations' readiness to facilitate VCC holistically. To address this gap, this study aims to identify key organisational dimensions that influence VCC and to develop a framework for assessing healthcare organisations' readiness for effective value co-creation.

RQ1: What organisational dimensions influence healthcare organisations' readiness for value co-creation?

RQ2: How do digital infrastructure capability, interaction and engagement quality, and organisational culture contribute to value co-creation behaviour and organisational readiness for value co-creation?

Method and Data

The research methodology consists of two phases. First, developing a conceptual framework through a literature review and expert interviews to identify key organisational dimensions to assess readiness for value co-creation in healthcare. Second, empirically testing the proposed relationships using survey data from healthcare stakeholders through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM).

Summary of Findings

This study is expected to show that the proposed constructs—digital infrastructure capability, interaction and engagement quality, and organisational culture—enable value co-creation behaviour in healthcare settings. After operationalising these constructs, high-quality

interactions, trust, collaboration, and accessible digital systems are expected to positively influence organisational readiness for value co-creation, validating the proposed constructs as key determinants of readiness.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study contributes to the value co-creation literature by addressing the limited attention given to assessing healthcare organisations' readiness for value co-creation. It proposes a conceptual framework that integrates key organisational dimensions, namely digital infrastructure capability, interaction and engagement quality, and organisational culture, to assess readiness for value co-creation in healthcare. The study is expected to contribute theoretically by improving understanding of organisational readiness for value co-creation and practically by helping healthcare organisations identify capability gaps and strengthen preparedness for effective patient-centred care.

References

Available upon request.

Examining Sustainable Usage Intention Toward Electric Vehicles: A TISM–MICMAC Analysis

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Abstract

Electric vehicles not only help in reducing pollution, but also in achieving several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. EV adoption is influenced by factors such as charging infrastructure (CI), battery recycling ecosystem (BRE), technological performance risk (TPR), and environmental consciousness (EC). These factors interact with each other rather than working in isolation, thus adding more complexity to the situation. Therefore, this study explores the hierarchical interlinkage and contextual relationship among these factors influencing sustainable usage intention of EVs.

Background

Understanding factors that influence this intention is essential for the adoption of EVs. Existing literature on EVs has focused on consumers' purchase intention, and very few studies have examined the sustainable usage intention of consumers. Previous studies mainly used the Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) technique to create a hierarchical structure, but very few gave an interpretation of the relationship between factors.

Objectives

Objective 1: To develop a contextual hierarchy linkage model of the factors influencing sustainable usage intention towards EVs using Total Interpretive Structural Modelling.

Objective 2: To classify the factors based on their driving and dependence power using MICMAC analysis.

Methodology

A multi-layered methodology was used. In the first stage, an extensive literature review was conducted, with 50 papers from Scopus, ABDC, and Web of Science included to identify 30 EV-related factors. Then, 19 factors were selected through the principle of parsimony. In the second stage, through Nominal Group Technique, only 10 key factors were validated by 12 EV experts across 4 workshops. In the third stage, the Total Interpretive Structural Modeling (TISM) technique was applied to establish contextual relationships among factors. Finally, MICMAC analysis was used to analyze the relevance of factors in terms of driving power and dependence power.

Findings

The final model consists of 5 hierarchical levels. Level 5 factors—BRE, EC, Consumer Awareness (CA), and CI—reinforce each other and form the foundation level. Collectively, these factors reduce TPR, leading to increased perceived benefits (PB) and trust (TR), which positively shapes consumer attitude (ATT). Level 4 is represented by TPR, which reflects attributes that consumers evaluate. Level 3 includes social influence (SI), PB, and TR, reflecting psychological drivers of adoption. Level 2 is ATT, which brings together these perceptions into the overall consumer intention to adopt EVs. At level 1, Sustainable Usage Intention (SUI) is the outcome reflecting long-term EV commitment. In the MICMAC method, each factor is further categorized into four quadrants—autonomous, dependent, linkage, and independent—helping to understand factors’ dependence and driving power.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study offers both theoretical and practical relevance. The application of TISM and MICMAC produced a hierarchical structure that explains the relationship and influence of factors affecting sustainable usage intention to adopt EVs, enhancing existing knowledge by expanding adoption models that explain consumer intention towards sustainable usage. Practically, this framework helps EV marketers, policymakers, and government identify key drivers to achieve the UNSDGs. EV adoption encourages consumers to act responsibly toward reducing environmental damage and supports both short-term and long-term sustainable transportation strategies.

References

Available upon request.

Factors Influencing Consumers' Willingness to Pay for Sustainable Clothing

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Abstract

The present study investigates consumers' willingness to pay for sustainable clothing by integrating cost-per-use reasoning into an extended Theory of Planned Behaviour. Drawing on survey-based data from 250 respondents and employing PLS-SEM, the research examines how organic apparel durability and sustainability awareness influence cost-per-use evaluations, which in turn drive payment intention, while testing greenwashing perception as a boundary condition.

Research Question

Existing research has largely examined attitudinal antecedents without integrating lifecycle economic reasoning as a mediating construct and the influence of greenwashing as a moderating factor. The current study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: How do organic apparel durability and consumer sustainable clothing awareness influence cost-per-use evaluation among consumers?

RQ2: Does cost-per-use mediate the relationship between sustainability beliefs and willingness to pay, and does greenwashing perception moderate this evaluative process?

Method and Data

The present study adopts a post-positivist, quantitative research design grounded in critical realism. Data was collected from 250 valid respondents via a structured survey instrument comprising five latent constructs: Organic Apparel Durability (OAD), Consumer Sustainable Clothing Awareness (CSCA), Cost-per-Use (CPU), Greenwashing Perception (GW), and Willingness to Pay (WTP), each operationalised using 5-point Likert scales. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed to estimate measurement and structural models simultaneously, with bootstrapping ($n = 10,000$). Ethical approval was obtained, and informed consent was secured from all participants prior to data collection.

Summary of Findings

The measurement model demonstrated strong results, with all standardised factor loadings ranging from 0.870–0.923, Cronbach's α values between 0.903–0.952, and AVE exceeding 0.77 across all constructs, confirming convergent and discriminant validity. The structural

model revealed that both Organic Apparel Durability ($\beta = 0.429$, $p < .001$) and Consumer Sustainable Clothing Awareness ($\beta = 0.338$, $p < .001$) exert significant positive effects on Cost-per-Use evaluation, which in turn emerged as a significant predictor of Willingness to Pay ($\beta = 0.696$, $p < .001$), explaining 48.5% of variance in WTP. Mediation analyses confirmed that CPU fully mediates the OAD–WTP relationship (indirect effect = 0.298, $p < .001$) and the CSCA–WTP relationship (indirect effect = 0.235, $p < .001$), indicating that sustainability drives WTP via lifecycle value, not attitude. Contrary to expectations, the moderation hypotheses for Greenwashing Perception were not supported (H6: $\beta = -0.000$, $p = .995$; H7: $\beta = -0.029$, $p = .676$), suggesting that performance-based sustainability qualities remain resilient to greenwashing scepticism. Overall model fit was satisfactory (SRMR = 0.051, GFI = 0.962, NFI = 0.947).

Statement of Key Contribution

The current study makes an original theoretical contribution by extending the Theory of Planned Behaviour to incorporate cost-per-use as a structured mediating mechanism between sustainability belief systems and behavioural intention, resolving inconsistencies in the sustainable clothing WTP literature. The finding that cost-per-use is a significant factor has important practical relevance for clothing brand strategy, sustainable pricing communication, and SDG-aligned policy design.

References

Available upon request.

From Self to Singularity: Exploring the Process of Spiritual Transformation Through the 4S Framework

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Abstract

This study examines spiritual transformation experienced by individuals and its application in personal and professional life. The main objective is to understand the stages and mechanisms individuals undergo while embracing spirituality and transformation and their relevance in the modern world. To achieve this, the study employs an inductive approach using three-tier coding analysis to develop a conceptual framework of transformation and explore its applications in the workplace, leadership, marketing, sustainability, and ethics.

Research Question

This study identifies a significant research gap by offering the first comprehensive integration of Indian philosophy with contemporary understandings of spirituality through the 4S framework—Self, Sacredness, Service, and Singularity. This gives two main objectives: to identify the underlying mechanism that individuals follow while experiencing spirituality and transformation, whether they follow distinct stages, and how these stages are attained; and to identify the relevance of spirituality and transformation in the contemporary world, specifically in the fields of management, education, marketing, and sustainability.

Method and Data

Methodologically, the study adopts an inductive, qualitative reasoning approach, allowing patterns of spiritual transformation to emerge from a systematic synthesis of 144 prior studies rather than being imposed through predefined theoretical assumptions. The study adopted three-tier code analysis and NVivo software to identify high-frequency words occurring within each theme and their links with the professions represented in each theme. This helped the authors cluster first-order themes into second-order themes, ultimately leading to the transformative realm of the 4S framework.

Findings

The mechanism of spirituality in personal transformation begins with the Self (identity transformation), including variables such as self-awareness, self-reflection, self-transcendence, self-compassion, self-discovery, and self-expression. It then moves to the Sacredness (interconnectedness) theme, which includes variables such as reverence for life and nature, interconnectedness, transcendence and connection with nature and God, ethical commitment, and spiritual practices. This further leads to the Service/Solution (stewardship) theme through

variables such as ethical consciousness toward nature, environmental awareness, sustainable communities, ethical consumption as a contribution to society, values informing responsible action, and business ethics toward stakeholders and sustainability—reflecting commitment to people, planet, and purpose. Lastly, the fourth theme, Singularity (universal connection), includes variables such as a state of unity, collective consciousness, universal connection, collective flourishing, purpose beyond profit, ecological stewardship, relational harmony, mindful and ethical consumption, and co-creative spiritual experiences. The findings further suggest that spirituality and transformation unfold as a continuous, multidimensional cycle—a rhythm of inner renewal that moves from the self toward the collective.

Statement of Key Contribution

The 4S model provides practical and managerial implications in the modern world by using its key concepts in management, sustainability, and marketing. Workplace spirituality and transformation unfold through individual perceptions that contribute to collective well-being and encourage collaboration of goals rather than competition. It also helps leaders understand themselves (Self), develop interconnectedness with employees, bring empathy and understanding through subjective resonance (Sacredness), fulfil stakeholder and societal needs (Service/Solution), and ultimately achieve a collective purpose and sense of we-ness (Singularity). In marketing and sustainability, the framework illuminates individual consciousness, moving from self (body attachment) toward soul satisfaction, which brings life satisfaction and well-being to individuals through their consumption choices and behavior in the marketplace. Moreover, through individual transformation, the framework points to collectively ensuring the responsible use of scarce resources and contributing to addressing global challenges like climate change, environmental concerns, and social impact.

References

Available upon request.

From Tag to Trade: Sustainable Marketing Framework for Select Himalayan GI-Tagged Products

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Abstract

This study develops a sustainable marketing framework for select Himalayan Geographical Indication (GI)-tagged products by addressing the gap between legal protection and market competitiveness. Despite India having over 650 registered GI products, many remain under-promoted, weakly branded, and poorly integrated into global value chains. Existing research has focused primarily on legal and socio-economic aspects, with limited attention to marketing and competitiveness. The study examines market barriers, assesses potential, evaluates current strategies, and proposes a framework to enhance competitiveness and sustainability.

Research Question

Despite legal protection, many Indian GI-tagged products fail to achieve strong market performance. This research addresses the gap between GI registration and commercial success by examining marketing barriers, market potential, and the effectiveness of existing marketing strategies to develop a comprehensive marketing framework to enhance the domestic and global competitiveness of select GI products.

RQ1: What marketing-related challenges are experienced by different stakeholders of GI-tagged products?

RQ2: How do producers and institutions perceive domestic and export market opportunities?

RQ3: What structural and institutional factors influence market competitiveness, and how can a context-specific marketing framework be conceptualized?

Method and Data

This study adopts a qualitative method of research design to explore the marketing challenges, opportunities, and competitiveness of select Himalayan GI-tagged products. Data will be collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with approximately 50 stakeholders to reach saturation limit, including producers, exporters, government officials, marketers, and GI associations. Participants will be identified using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Secondary data will be obtained from policy documents, reports, and export statistics. Data analysis will involve content analysis of policy documents, cross-case comparison, thematic analysis, and open, axial, and selective coding using NVivo/ATLAS.ti. The outcome will be the development of a Grounded Marketing Framework.

Expected Findings

As this study is currently at the proposal stage, the following findings are anticipated based on the literature review and preliminary understanding of the research problem. The study is expected to reveal that many Himalayan GI-tagged products face significant marketing barriers despite enjoying legal protection through GI registration. Key challenges are likely to include inadequate branding, low consumer awareness, limited promotional activities, weak distribution networks, insufficient digital marketing adoption, and poor integration into export value chains. The findings are expected to highlight the importance of combining marketing capabilities, sustainability practices, quality assurance, and policy support to enhance long-term competitiveness, livelihood improvement, environmental preservation, and cultural sustainability. Based on these insights, the study aims to develop a comprehensive and sustainable marketing framework that can assist producer groups, marketers, and policymakers in improving market access, value creation, and export performance of Himalayan GI-tagged products.

Statement of Key Contribution

The originality of this study lies in its integration of marketing theory, competitiveness frameworks, and sustainability perspectives to examine the commercialization of Himalayan GI-tagged products—an area that remains underexplored in existing research. Unlike prior studies that focus primarily on legal protection or socio-economic impacts, this research investigates the marketing processes that influence market success. The study is significant for developing a context-specific exploratory marketing model and a practical framework for GI stakeholders. Its findings will provide evidence-based policy recommendations to enhance market access, branding, and exports, while contributing to the broader literature on origin-based product marketing and competitiveness.

References

Available upon request.

Green But Biased? How Consumer Perceptions of Fairness and Bias in AI-Powered Green Advertising Affect Brand Trust: Evidence from the Emerging Indian Digital Consumer Market

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Abstract

As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly involved in creating, personalising, and delivering sustainability-related advertising, consumers are beginning to evaluate not only the environmental claims made by brands but also the systems responsible for delivering those messages. This study explores how perceptions of fairness and bias in AI-powered green advertising shape consumer responses in the Indian digital marketplace and develops a conceptual framework for understanding these reactions.

Research Question

The growing use of AI in digital advertising has created new opportunities for brands to deliver highly personalised sustainability messages. However, existing research offers conflicting conclusions. Some studies suggest that AI involvement increases transparency and trust, while others indicate that it generates scepticism and resistance. This study examines when AI-powered green advertising strengthens or weakens brand trust and investigates how consumers distinguish between helpful algorithmic personalisation and perceived manipulative intent.

RQ1: When does AI involvement in green advertising strengthen or weaken brand trust among digital consumers?

RQ2: How do perceptions of fairness, algorithmic bias, greenwashing awareness, AI scepticism, and brand familiarity influence consumer responses to AI-powered green advertising?

Method and Data

This study adopts a conceptual research design because the relationship between AI-powered advertising and green marketing scepticism remains underexplored. The framework is developed through an extensive review of literature spanning green marketing, AI advertising, consumer trust, perceived justice theory, signalling theory, and the persuasion knowledge model. By integrating insights from these perspectives, the study proposes a coherent explanation of how consumers interpret AI-driven sustainability communication and identifies directions for future empirical investigation within the Indian context.

Summary of Findings

The framework suggests that consumers do not evaluate green advertising solely on the basis of environmental claims. Increasingly, they also consider the role of the AI system responsible for generating, targeting, or delivering those messages. When AI involvement is perceived as fair, transparent, and helpful, consumers are more likely to develop trust in the brand. In contrast, when AI involvement is interpreted as manipulative or biased, scepticism may emerge even when sustainability claims are accurate. The study introduces the concept of AI-enabled green advertising scepticism, which reflects concerns about the persuasive use of AI and helps distinguish scepticism arising from algorithmic influence from traditional concerns about misleading environmental claims. The framework further proposes that AI scepticism, greenwashing awareness, and brand familiarity shape how consumers interpret AI involvement and influence the resulting trust outcomes.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study contributes by introducing AI-enabled green advertising scepticism as a distinct conceptual perspective that extends existing discussions of greenwashing and algorithmic persuasion. It explains how consumers differentiate between helpful personalisation and perceived manipulation in AI-powered sustainability communication and offers an integrated framework linking perceptions of fairness and bias to brand trust. The study also highlights the importance of examining these issues within the rapidly evolving Indian digital marketplace.

References

Available upon request.

Green Communication Credibility and Consumer Trust in Quick-Commerce: Evidence from Digital-Native Consumers

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Abstract

This research examines how digital-native consumers evaluate sustainability communication used by quick-commerce platforms. The study explores whether the credibility, visibility and complexity of environmental messages influence responsible green communication and consumer trust. Focusing on users of instant-delivery platforms, it investigates how authentic environmental actions and transparent sustainability claims shape perceptions and behavioural responses in a rapidly expanding digital retail environment.

Research Question

The study investigates how green communication characteristics affect responsible green communication on quick-commerce platforms. It addresses whether communication credibility, message complexity and visibility influence consumer perceptions. It further examines the role of sender signals and the company's environmental behaviour in shaping trust and responses toward sustainability claims.

RQ1: How do credibility, visibility and complexity of green communication affect responsible green communication?

RQ2: How do sender signals and environmental behaviour influence consumer trust in sustainability claims?

Method and Data

The study adopts a quantitative cross-sectional research design. Primary data were collected from 126 digital-native consumers who regularly use Blinkit, Zepto and Swiggy Instamart. A structured questionnaire based on validated scales was administered using purposive sampling. Reliability analysis, Pearson correlation and hierarchical multiple regression were performed in SPSS to examine relationships among credibility, visibility, complexity, sender signals, environmental behaviour and responsible green communication.

Summary of Findings

The findings reveal that green communication credibility and the company's environmental behaviour significantly enhance responsible green communication. Credibility emerged as a

key determinant of consumer trust, indicating that digital-native consumers prefer verifiable and authentic sustainability claims over symbolic messaging. Environmental behaviour was identified as the strongest predictor, demonstrating that actual sustainability practices carry greater influence than promotional statements. Although message visibility and complexity were positively associated with responsible green communication, their independent effects were not statistically significant when other variables were controlled. The regression model explained a substantial proportion of variance in responsible green communication, confirming that trust formation depends largely on the alignment between communicated sustainability claims and observable environmental actions. The results indicate increasing consumer scepticism toward superficial green messaging and emphasise the importance of transparency, consistency and accountability in quick-commerce sustainability communication.

Statement of Key Contribution

The study extends green signalling theory to the underexplored quick-commerce context and provides empirical evidence from digital-native consumers in India. It distinguishes symbolic sustainability communication from genuine environmental behaviour and demonstrates the critical role of credibility in building trust. The findings offer practical guidance for managers seeking to design transparent, authentic and responsible green communication strategies that strengthen long-term consumer trust and loyalty.

References

Available upon request.

Greenwashing as a Marketing Strategy in the Fashion Industry: A Proposed Conceptual Framework for Future Research Using PRISMA, TCCM and ADO Framework

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Abstract

Studying greenwashing is important because it helps identify misleading environmental claims made by companies and their impact on consumer trust, purchasing behavior, and brand credibility. As sustainability becomes a key concern, businesses increasingly promote eco-friendly initiatives, making it essential to distinguish genuine efforts from deceptive practices. Understanding greenwashing enables consumers, policymakers, and organizations to make informed decisions, encourage transparency, strengthen ethical marketing practices, and support truly sustainable business strategies that contribute to environmental and social well-being.

Introduction

The global fashion industry has increasingly positioned sustainability at the center of its branding and communication strategies. Amid growing environmental awareness, fashion brands actively promote eco-friendly collections, circular initiatives, and carbon-reduction commitments. Major industry players have introduced “conscious” or “sustainable” product lines to align with shifting consumer expectations. However, the authenticity of these claims has been widely questioned, giving rise to concerns about greenwashing—the practice of misleading consumers regarding a company’s environmental practices or the environmental benefits of its products.

Greenwashing represents a critical ethical challenge in the fashion industry, particularly in the fast-fashion segment, which is structurally associated with rapid production cycles, intensive resource consumption, and significant environmental degradation. When sustainability claims conflict with underlying business practices, consumers may perceive a discrepancy between communicated values and actual corporate behavior, leading to consumer skepticism, perceived deception, and ultimately erosion of brand credibility. Despite the growing body of research on green marketing and sustainable consumption, existing studies have largely examined greenwashing’s impact on purchase intention or trust, while relatively limited attention has been paid to brand credibility as a central mechanism linking greenwashing to downstream behavioral outcomes. This research therefore sets forth the following objectives: to conduct a systematic and comprehensive review of the existing scholarly literature on greenwashing and brand credibility; to analyze and categorize identified factors using a robust multi-framework methodology; to develop a novel integrated conceptual model that maps the antecedents, decisions, and outcomes related to greenwashing; and to provide a structured roadmap for

future empirical research and actionable insights for industry stakeholders.

Methodology

To construct a comprehensive and unbiased understanding from a fragmented body of research, this study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) as its core methodological approach. The study's contribution to methodological practice lies in its integration of three established frameworks: PRISMA, TCCM, and ADO. The PRISMA framework governed the data collection and selection process through a four-stage filtering process—identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. An exhaustive search of Scopus and Web of Science using keywords including “Greenwashing,” “Brand credibility,” “Consumer Behavior,” and “Purchase intention” yielded a large pool of articles, screened and assessed against strict inclusion criteria to arrive at a final selection of 46 core studies. The TCCM (Theories, Contexts, Characteristics, and Methodologies) framework was then applied to categorize and map the existing research landscape across theoretical lenses, contexts, sample characteristics, and research methods. Finally, the ADO (Antecedents, Decisions, and Outcomes) framework was used to synthesize the substantive findings of the 46 papers, identifying causal drivers (antecedents), consumer behaviors (decisions), and resulting outcomes such as loyalty, satisfaction, and purchase intentions.

Findings

The primary finding of this systematic review is the development of a comprehensive, multidimensional conceptual model that consolidates the critical factors influencing trust and brand credibility. The ADO analysis revealed that these factors can be thematically grouped into three key clusters. The first, Green Communication and Claim-Related Factors (an antecedent cluster), pertains to how fashion brands formulate and convey sustainability assertions—whether messages are explicit, transparent, and substantiated, or ambiguous, overstated, and selective. The second, Consumer Cognitive Evaluation Factors (a decision cluster of cognitive responses), describes the mental processes consumers use to assess sustainability claims, analyzing brand credibility, consistency, and underlying intentions rather than accepting claims at face value. The third, Emotional and Psychological Reaction Factors (a decision cluster of affective responses), captures the emotional responses—extending beyond skepticism to dissatisfaction—triggered when consumers believe a brand has overstated its environmental dedication. Collectively, green communication practices serve as the main precursors, influencing perceived authenticity; these perceptions are then assessed cognitively through skepticism, motive attribution, and perceived hypocrisy, while also eliciting emotional responses such as distrust and disappointment, which together undermine brand credibility and result in adverse behavioral outcomes like diminished trust, brand avoidance, and intention to switch brands.

Statement of Key Contribution

The insights from this conceptual framework present several key policy implications for regulators, industry organizations, and sustainability governance bodies in the fashion industry. These include enhancing regulation of environmental claims through legal definitions for terms like “eco-friendly” and “sustainable”; introducing compulsory transparency and reporting standards for supply-chain practices; promoting independent certification and third-party

verification of green claims; strengthening consumer protection policies against misleading environmental advertising; promoting industry-wide sustainability benchmarks tailored to fast fashion and luxury segments; and enhancing consumer education programs to support sustainability literacy. By fulfilling these objectives, this research moves beyond isolated case studies to provide a foundational framework that can unify future scholarly inquiry and guide strategic practice within the dynamic world of marketing.

References

Available upon request.

Greenwashing as Deceptive Marketing Communication: Its Impact on Brand Authenticity and Consumer–Brand Relationships Among Generation Z in the Smartphone Industry

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Abstract

This study investigates how greenwashing, as a form of deceptive marketing communication, disrupts consumer–brand relationships among Generation Z smartphone users in India. Grounded in Signaling Theory and the Persuasion Knowledge Model, the study analyzes a model in which perceived brand authenticity shapes brand loyalty through cognitive and affective pathways, while perceived greenwashing moderates the strength of these relationships. The study addresses a critical gap in the brand communication literature by empirically examining how sustainability-related deception erodes authenticity-driven relational outcomes in a high-involvement digital context.

Research Question

Despite growing literature on greenwashing and brand authenticity, their joint influence within a unified relational framework remains underexplored, particularly for Generation Z in high-involvement categories. This study explores how deceptive sustainability communication moderates authenticity-driven consumer–brand relationships.

RQ1: How does perceived brand authenticity influence brand loyalty through brand perception and brand love among Generation Z smartphone users?

RQ2: To what extent does perceived greenwashing moderate the relationship between brand perception and brand love?

Method and Data

This study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. Data was collected from 298 Generation Z college students in Delhi NCR via purposive sampling using a structured questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. Constructs were measured on five-point Likert scales, with items adapted from validated scales in past studies. Brand authenticity and brand perception were operationalized as higher-order reflective-formative constructs; brand love, brand loyalty, and greenwashing as single-order reflective constructs. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was applied using the *seminR* package in R, with bootstrapping of 5,000 resamples to test the stated hypotheses.

Summary of Findings

Measurement model evaluation confirmed satisfactory convergent validity (all AVE > 0.50, composite reliability > 0.70) and discriminant validity via Fornell-Larcker and HTMT criteria. Harman's Single Factor Test revealed an absence of common method bias. Structural model results supported all five hypotheses. Brand authenticity exerted a strong positive effect on brand perception ($\beta = 0.617$, $f^2 = 0.382$, large effect). Brand perception positively predicted both brand love ($\beta = 0.512$, $f^2 = 0.263$) and brand loyalty directly ($\beta = 0.287$, $f^2 = 0.078$). Brand love, in turn, significantly predicted brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.448$, $f^2 = 0.201$). The R^2 value for brand loyalty was 0.527, indicating substantial explanatory power. Critically, the moderation analysis revealed that perceived greenwashing significantly and negatively moderated the brand perception–brand love relationship ($\beta = -0.192$, $p < 0.01$). As greenwashing perceptions intensified, the conversion of positive brand perceptions into emotional bonds weakened substantially, confirming that deceptive sustainability communication disrupts the affective core of consumer–brand relationships even when rational brand evaluations remain favorable.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study makes three original contributions. Theoretically, it extends the application of Signaling Theory and the Persuasion Knowledge Model to the brand relationship domain, demonstrating how greenwashing negatively affects authenticity signals and results in consumer skepticism towards brands. Empirically, it is among the first studies that situates greenwashing as a moderator within the authenticity–perception–love–loyalty relationship in the smartphone industry. Managerially, it highlights that sustainability communication must be substantive and verifiable: for Generation Z, perceived deception does not merely reduce trust, it disrupts the emotional pathway to loyalty entirely.

References

Available upon request.

High vs. Low Involvement: Analyzing the Green Attitude–Intention Gap Among Indian Consumers

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Abstract

Despite increasing research on Green Purchase Intention (GPI), the influence of product involvement levels on consumers' green purchasing decisions remains underexplored. This paper fills this gap by examining the variations of GPI in products with varying degrees of consumer involvement, e.g., high-involvement products (e.g., EVs), moderate-involvement products (e.g., organic food), and low-involvement products (e.g., LED lights). Using consumer behavior theories, the paper also discusses how environmental consciousness, personal norms, and innovativeness influence GPI and Green Purchase Behaviour (GPB), and how willingness to pay a premium and availability moderate the relationship.

Research Question

In the backdrop of transformation driven by green consumerism and awareness of environmental issues, this study explores the impact of environmental consciousness and innovativeness traits on GPI across differently-involving products. Since green products involve a “green premium” and there can be availability concerns for green products, the study further explores their constraining effect on GPI for differently-involving products.

RQ1: Does the attitude–behavior linkage operate differently for high- versus low-involvement green products?

RQ2: Does the environmental consciousness effect on attitude toward green products (ATGP) differ for differently-involving products?

RQ3: Does the effect of personal norms on GPI differ for differently-involving products?

RQ4: Does the constraining effect of willingness to pay a premium (WPP) and product availability differ for differently-involving products?

RQ5: Does the innovativeness effect on GPB differ for differently-involving products?

Method and Data

The study used a quantitative research design based on a questionnaire survey. A total of 688 responses were collected across three product categories via snowball sampling and were analyzed with structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) software, Smart PLS 4. The target population included individuals residing in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR). The

scale items used for measuring various constructs were adapted from past research to increase the reliability and authenticity of the responses. Construct validity and reliability were examined thoroughly for each construct in the path model using SmartPLS 4.

Summary of Findings

Environmental consciousness significantly enhances attitude toward green products (ATGP) across all three product categories, with ATGP consistently predicting GPI and GPI predicting GPB. Personal norms influenced GPI for EVs and organic food but not LEDs, while innovativeness predicted GPB for EVs and organic food but not LEDs. WPP moderation was significant for EVs and LEDs (marginal for organic food), whereas availability showed no strong effects. This study provides useful information concerning sustainable consumer behaviour because it shows the role of product involvement and situational factors in determining the impact of psychological drivers on green purchasing.

Statement of Key Contribution

The findings can guide marketers to develop different strategies for high-, moderate-, and low-involvement products by paying more attention to innovation, infrastructure, and cost-of-ownership benefits for electric vehicles, while focusing on moral norms, health benefits, and value-for-money in organic food. To aid such initiatives, policymakers can make available specific incentives, favourable rules, and credible labelling schemes to help lessen perceived risk and increase WPP.

References

Available upon request.

Political AI Literacy as a New Democratic Competency: Implications for Civic Education When Citizens Cannot Distinguish AI-Generated Political Content

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Abstract

This conceptual paper introduces Political AI Literacy (PAL) as a distinct democratic competency required when generative artificial intelligence produces a substantial share of political content citizens encounter. The paper develops a five-dimensional theoretical architecture spanning source provenance assessment, algorithmic rhetoric recognition, synthetic media detection, epistemic calibration, and participatory AI governance understanding. Drawing on political theory, communication studies, AI ethics, and educational scholarship, the work grounds subsequent empirical and pedagogical inquiry.

Research Question

Media, digital, AI, and civic literacy frameworks were developed before generative AI began producing political content phenomenologically indistinguishable from human authorship. The competency space these traditions specify is no longer adequate to contemporary democratic communication. This study asks what citizen-level competencies the synthetic turn now requires and how they relate to inherited educational traditions.

RQ1: What converging factors necessitate a distinct construct of Political AI Literacy beyond existing literacy frameworks?

RQ2: What dimensions should constitute Political AI Literacy as a democratic competency for civic education?

Method and Data

The study employs a conceptual-analytic methodology appropriate to theory development. It synthesises peer-reviewed scholarship across political communication, AI ethics, deliberative democracy theory, cognitive science, and educational research, drawing on sources indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. The analytic strategy proceeds through three stages: typological identification of factors necessitating the construct, structured critique of inherited literacy frameworks against those factors, and theoretical specification of an integrated multidimensional architecture. The approach follows established conventions for conceptual paper development in social science, prioritising argumentative coherence and explicit derivation of constructs from prior scholarship.

Summary of Findings

The analysis identifies four converging categories of factors necessitating Political AI Literacy: technological factors that have reshaped political content production through low-cost synthesis and algorithmic personalisation; cognitive-epistemic factors documenting that citizens detect synthetic content at near-chance accuracy while substantially overestimating their detection ability; institutional factors including the liar's dividend, platformisation of the public sphere, and uneven regulatory response; and democratic-theoretic factors exposing the normative inadequacy of inherited frameworks. Existing traditions diagnose adjacent problems competently but rest on assumptions—discoverable sources, technical-instrumental orientation, pre-synthetic authorship, parallel specialisation—that contemporary conditions now narrow. These findings consolidate into a five-dimensional construct whose competencies are theoretically interdependent rather than additive. Epistemic calibration provides the dispositional core preventing both excessive credulity and corrosive scepticism, while participatory governance understanding repositions citizens as active shapers rather than passive consumers of AI-mediated political communication. Systematic implications follow for curriculum design, teacher preparation, and educational policy under contemporary democratic conditions.

Statement of Key Contribution

The paper offers an original theoretical architecture that integrates scholarship across political science, communication studies, educational theory, and AI ethics into a coherent construct of Political AI Literacy. Its contribution is threefold: it specifies a typology of factors necessitating the construct, diagnoses the assumptions on which inherited frameworks rest, and proposes a five-dimensional architecture that grounds subsequent empirical investigation. The work matters because the capacity to distinguish authentic civic voice from synthetic imitation is foundational to meaningful political participation; without this competency, downstream civic literacies cannot be exercised with epistemic integrity under contemporary democratic conditions.

References

Available upon request.

Prioritizing Determinants of Green Purchase Intention Using the Analytic Hierarchy Process

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Abstract

This study examines the key determinants of green purchase intention among Indian consumers and prioritizes their relative importance using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). Focusing on Environmental Consciousness, Subjective Norms, Perceived Marketplace Influence, Attitude, Perceived Environmental Responsibility, and Price Sensitivity, the research aims to identify the most influential factors shaping consumers' intentions to purchase environmentally friendly products. The findings provide insights into sustainable consumer behavior and support strategies for promoting green consumption in India.

Research Question

This study addresses the gap in understanding the relative importance of factors shaping green purchase intention in India. While prior research has identified several psychological and social drivers, it has rarely ranked them in a structured way.

RQ1: Which determinants most strongly influence green purchase intention among Indian consumers?

RQ2: How do environmental consciousness, subjective norms, perceived marketplace influence, attitude, perceived environmental responsibility, and price sensitivity compare in priority?

Method and Data

This is a quantitative study that applies the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to prioritize six determinants of green purchase intention. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire from respondents selected based on environmental awareness and shopping behavior. Pairwise comparisons were made using Saaty's scale, and weights were derived through the eigenvector method. The consistency of judgments was tested using the Consistency Ratio to ensure reliability.

Summary of Findings

The AHP results show that Environmental Consciousness is the most important determinant of green purchase intention, with the highest priority weight at 37.46%. Subjective Norms rank second at 21.90%, followed by Perceived Marketplace Influence at 15.37% and Attitude at 12.13%. Perceived Environmental Responsibility has a smaller but meaningful effect at 8.64%, while Price Sensitivity is the least influential factor at 4.50%. These results indicate that internal awareness and social influence matter more than cost concerns in shaping consumers' green

buying decisions. The consistency ratio of 0.08 confirms that the judgments used in the AHP model are acceptable and reliable. Overall, the findings suggest that green purchase intention is driven primarily by environmental concern and social expectations rather than price-based considerations.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study contributes by providing a clear priority ranking of the main determinants of green purchase intention using AHP, an approach rarely applied in this context for Indian consumers. It moves beyond variable identification to show relative importance, offering a more practical basis for theory, managerial strategy, and policy design. The findings are useful for marketers and policymakers seeking to promote sustainable consumption by focusing on environmental awareness and social influence rather than price alone.

References

Available upon request.

Psychological Drivers and Barriers of Conscious Consumption of Organic Grocery Products Among Urban Millennials: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

The global organic food market surpassed USD 210 billion in 2023; yet urban millennials, its most environmentally conscious segment, exhibit a persistent gap between pro-organic attitudes and actual purchasing behaviour. This systematic literature review synthesises evidence from 62 empirical studies to identify the psychological drivers and barriers shaping organic grocery consumption among urban millennials, and proposes an integrative conceptual framework situating these factors within a contextually moderated model of sustainable consumer behaviour.

Research Question

Despite extensive research on organic food consumption, critical gaps persist in understanding its psychological determinants among urban millennials. Existing literature is theoretically fragmented, predominantly framed through the Theory of Planned Behaviour, while neglecting value-based, identity-driven, and moral factors. Barriers to purchase remain underexplored relative to motivational drivers.

RQ1: What psychological factors drive organic grocery consumption among urban millennials?

RQ2: What psychological barriers prevent positive attitudes from translating into purchasing behaviour?

RQ3: How do cultural, economic, and contextual factors moderate the relationship between intention and behaviour?

Method and Data

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review following PRISMA 2020 guidelines. A comprehensive search across Scopus, Taylor & Francis Online, and Emerald Insight used Boolean strings combining psychological constructs, population terms, and phenomenon-specific keywords. Studies were included if they examined organic or green food consumption among millennials or young urban consumers, incorporated psychological constructs, and reported empirical findings published between 2018 and 2026. Following quality appraisal using a modified Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool, 62 studies were retained from 1,187 screened records for thematic synthesis.

Summary of Findings

The thematic synthesis reveals four interrelated dimensions shaping organic grocery consumption. First, six psychological drivers recur consistently across the literature: health consciousness (the most prevalent), environmental concern and eco-identity, trust in certification and labelling, perceived behavioural control, social norms and digital influence, and moral obligation and ethical self-identity. Second, five barriers systematically impede purchase behaviour: price sensitivity (the dominant constraint, particularly in developing economies), label scepticism, habitual inertia, limited product availability, and information overload. Third, a persistent intention–behaviour gap is documented, wherein positive attitudes are routinely overridden by economic, structural, and cognitive constraints, exposing the explanatory limitations of linear models such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Fourth, the strength of both drivers and barriers is moderated by cultural orientation, socioeconomic status, urban density, and digital media exposure. Collectively, these dimensions constitute an integrative conceptual framework in which pro-organic attitudes are necessary but insufficient for sustained purchase behaviour; actual consumption emerges from a dynamic interplay between enabling drivers and contextually contingent barriers.

Statement of Key Contribution

This review makes three original contributions to sustainable consumption research. It synthesises multi-theoretical evidence into a unified conceptual framework that simultaneously accounts for psychological drivers, structural barriers, and contextual moderators, consolidating what prior single-theory studies have left fragmented. It addresses a population-specific gap by centring urban millennials as the unit of analysis. Finally, by foregrounding the intention–behaviour gap as an empirically documented phenomenon requiring coordinated structural intervention, it provides actionable guidance for marketers, policymakers, and retailers seeking to accelerate sustainable food consumption.

References

Available upon request.

Reconceptualising Political Voting Behaviour in a Geopolitically Fragmented World: A Sequential Legitimacy Reinforcement Framework

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Introduction & Background

In the contemporary global landscape marked by geopolitical instability and increasing polarisation, political marketing has undergone a significant transformation. Intensified global trade disruptions, energy market volatility, and the rise of economic nationalism have reshaped the broader socio-economic environment within which electoral processes operate. Media-driven conflict narratives and heightened economic sovereignty concerns have amplified voter sensitivity toward issues such as national identity, governance credibility, and economic security. In such an interconnected environment, political communication is no longer confined to domestic campaign strategies but is increasingly influenced by external geopolitical shocks. These transformations necessitate a deeper understanding of how global dynamics interact with political marketing mechanisms to influence Political Voting Behaviour (PVB) and legitimacy formation.

Research Gap

Existing literature in political marketing demonstrates significant theoretical fragmentation. While multiple frameworks—such as persuasion models, social identity theory, rational choice theory, branding perspectives, and digital communication models—offer valuable insights, they largely operate in isolation. There is a lack of an integrated, multi-dimensional framework that systematically explains how these diverse theoretical perspectives collectively shape voting behaviour and electoral legitimacy over time. Moreover, limited attention has been given to the role of geopolitical disruptions and global macro-contexts in influencing domestic electoral processes within political marketing research.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to systematically review contemporary literature in political marketing to identify dominant theoretical and methodological trends; examine the role of geopolitical and socio-economic contexts in shaping Political Voting Behaviour (PVB); and develop an integrated framework that consolidates fragmented theoretical perspectives into a coherent model of electoral behaviour and legitimacy formation.

Methodology

The study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) guided by the SPAR-4 framework to ensure methodological rigour, transparency, and replicability, in line with expectations of high-quality academic research. A total of 63 peer-reviewed articles were systematically identified and selected from the Scopus and Web of Science databases based on clearly defined inclusion criteria and relevance to the research objective. The analytical strategy combines descriptive analysis to map publication trends and intellectual evolution, thematic analysis to uncover core conceptual patterns, and the TCCM (Theory–Context–Characteristics–Method) framework to provide a structured synthesis of the field’s theoretical and methodological foundations.

Key Findings

The findings reveal significant theoretical diversification in political marketing research, with limited integrative development across dominant frameworks such as persuasion models, social identity theory, rational choice theory, branding perspectives, and digital communication approaches. The synthesis suggests that Political Voting Behaviour emerges not from isolated campaign effects but from the interaction of perceptual, relational, technological, and institutional dynamics. Building on this, the study proposes the Sequential Legitimacy Reinforcement Model (SLRM), which conceptualises voting behaviour as a progressive legitimacy-building process wherein persuasion shapes perception, rational evaluation guides decisions, identity fosters emotional attachment, branding builds trust, and social reinforcement sustains commitment. Electoral alignment thus emerges as a cumulative and context-sensitive outcome rather than a one-time persuasive effect.

Conclusion

This study contributes to political marketing literature by integrating fragmented theoretical perspectives into a structured multi-phase legitimacy framework. It extends branding theory into the domain of governance and reframes digital political marketing as a regulatory infrastructure rather than merely a communication tool. Additionally, the study establishes a structured research agenda, advocating for longitudinal and context-sensitive investigations into electoral legitimacy formation in an increasingly volatile global environment.

Keywords: Political Marketing; Political Voting Behaviour; Geopolitics; Electoral Legitimacy; Political Branding; Systematic Literature Review

References

Available upon request.

Reimagining Sustainable Destination Branding in the AI Era: Integrating Ethical Governance and Artificial Intelligence for Stakeholder Value Creation

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Abstract

This study examines the intersection of artificial intelligence and sustainable destination branding, proposing a conceptual framework that positions AI as an enabler of ethical governance, authenticity, and community-centered tourism. The research addresses the growing need for destinations to move beyond symbolic sustainability narratives toward structurally embedded, AI-augmented governance systems that create genuine stakeholder value.

Research Question

Destination branding has evolved from image-based promotional strategies to strategic governance frameworks that shape long-term competitiveness and stakeholder value. Concurrently, sustainability has become a defining imperative in global tourism due to environmental degradation, overtourism, socio-cultural erosion, and climate change pressures. Despite widespread adoption of sustainability narratives, many destination branding efforts remain symbolic and communication-driven rather than structurally embedded within governance systems. This study is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: How can artificial intelligence be integrated into sustainable destination branding frameworks to enhance ethical governance and stakeholder value creation?

RQ2: What conceptual model best captures the interplay between AI-enabled capabilities, ethical governance principles, and authentic sustainable destination branding?

Method and Data

This study adopts a conceptual-theoretical research design, drawing on an integrative literature review of scholarly articles, reports, and frameworks from tourism management, destination branding, AI ethics, and sustainability governance. Key databases including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar were systematically searched. Thematic synthesis was used to identify convergent patterns across these domains, enabling the development of an original integrative conceptual framework.

Summary of Findings

The study identifies three principal dimensions through which AI transforms sustainable destination branding. First, AI-driven data analytics enable destination management organizations (DMOs) to monitor real-time environmental indicators, visitor flows, and

socio-cultural sentiment, thereby supporting evidence-based governance. Second, AI facilitates authentic stakeholder engagement by enabling personalized communication that reflects local identity and community values rather than standardized promotional messaging. Third, AI-powered predictive modeling supports proactive sustainability planning, allowing DMOs to anticipate and mitigate overtourism risks and resource depletion. The integrative framework proposed in this study positions AI not as a technological add-on but as a governance enabler operating within an ethical architecture defined by transparency, accountability, inclusivity, and ecological stewardship. This reframes destination branding from a marketing function to a multi-stakeholder governance practice aligned with sustainable development imperatives.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study makes a threefold contribution. Theoretically, it bridges destination branding literature with AI ethics and sustainability governance, offering a novel integrative framework. Practically, it provides DMOs with actionable principles for embedding AI within ethical, community-centered branding strategies. From a policy perspective, the framework informs tourism governance bodies on designing AI-enabled regulatory ecosystems that balance competitiveness with sustainability imperatives, advancing both academic discourse and practical application in global tourism management.

References

Available upon request.

Social Media Exposure and Community Involvement in Environmental Initiatives: Evidence from Mumbai Beach Cleanup Campaigns – A Quantitative Study

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Abstract

This research investigates the impact of social media exposure on community engagement in environmental initiatives, specifically focusing on Mumbai beach cleaning operations. The emphasis is on the function of social marketing material in enhancing environmental awareness, promoting pro-environmental behavioural change, and motivating public involvement in beach and mangrove cleaning initiatives. The research emphasizes social media as a crucial medium for sustainability communication, public mobilization, and community-oriented environmental initiatives.

Research Question

The research examines how exposure to environmental campaign material on social media influences public awareness, behavioural change, and community participation in Mumbai beach cleaning programs. It investigates whether exposure to social marketing directly enhances environmental awareness, promotes responsible behaviours such as decreased plastic use and waste segregation, and incentivizes individuals to engage in cleaning initiatives. The research examines whether environmental engagement serves as a mediator variable between social media exposure & community involvement, elucidating how digital communication might facilitate active participation in sustainability activities.

Method and Data

The research used a quantitative approach using structured survey data gathered from 384 participants who saw beach cleaning and environmental campaign material on social media. The participants included volunteers, citizens, students, environmental activists, and representatives of civic organisations connected to or knowledgeable about cleaning initiatives in Mumbai. Data were gathered using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire assessing Social Marketing Exposure, Environmental Awareness, Behavioural Change, Community Involvement, and Environmental Engagement. SPSS facilitated reliability and descriptive analysis, whilst AMOS was used to examine structural correlations using Structural Equation Modelling.

Summary of Findings

The results demonstrate that social marketing exposure via social media significantly enhances environmental awareness, promotes behavioural change, and fosters community engagement. Exposure to campaign statements, pictures, event updates, and environmental information enhances persons' comprehension of the gravity of beach pollution and plastic trash, ultimately elevating their knowledge of environmental concerns. The findings indicate that social media exposure promotes pro-environmental behavioural changes, such as decreased plastic use, waste segregation, and anti-littering behaviours. Moreover, social media effectively encourages people to engage in community cleaning efforts by diminishing informational obstacles and enhancing public motivation. Environmental engagement partly mediates the association between social marketing exposure and community participation. This indicates that social media not only directly promotes participation but also indirectly enhances engagement by augmenting people's cognitive and emotional ties to environmental concerns. The findings indicate that social media-facilitated environmental communication significantly contributes to enhancing awareness, encouraging responsible behaviour, and fostering active civic engagement in urban sustainability efforts.

Statement of Key Contribution

The research enhances the literature on sustainability communication & social marketing by demonstrating how social media engagement may transition people from awareness to action about environmental issues. The primary contribution is the integration of social marketing exposure with environmental awareness, behavioural modification, environmental engagement, and community participation within a unified empirical framework. The research provides actionable insights for civic organisations, environmental groups, and campaign strategists by illustrating that well-crafted social media campaigns may enhance public engagement in beach cleaning initiatives and bolster community-driven environmental sustainability efforts.

References available upon request.

Thrift and Rental Markets in the Apparel Industry: A Systematic Review of Sustainable Consumer Behavior

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Abstract

The apparel industry is among the most resource-intensive sectors globally, generating significant environmental challenges through excessive resource consumption and waste generation. Circular fashion models, particularly thrift and rental markets, have emerged as promising alternatives that extend product lifecycles and promote sustainable consumption. While research on these markets has grown substantially, findings remain fragmented across theoretical, contextual, and methodological perspectives. This study systematically reviews the literature to synthesize current knowledge and identify future research directions in sustainable consumer behavior.

Research Question

Despite increasing scholarly attention to circular fashion, existing studies largely examine thrift and rental markets independently, resulting in limited understanding of their distinct drivers, barriers, and behavioral outcomes. Moreover, the literature remains fragmented across theories, contexts, and methodological approaches.

RQ1: How do the motivations, determinants, and barriers associated with consumer adoption differ across thrift and rental fashion markets?

RQ2: How do contextual factors such as geographical setting, culture, technological infrastructure, and industry characteristics influence consumer participation in thrift and rental fashion markets?

RQ3: What theoretical, contextual, and methodological gaps remain in the literature, and what future research directions can advance understanding of sustainable consumer behavior in thrift and rental fashion markets?

Method and Data

This study employs a systematic literature review using the TCCM (Theory, Context, Characteristics, and Methodology) framework. Relevant peer-reviewed articles published between 2020 and 2025 were retrieved from the Scopus database using keywords related to thrift fashion, rental fashion, second-hand apparel, circular fashion, and sustainable consumption. Following a rigorous screening process, 80 articles were selected for analysis. The review integrates thematic analysis and TCCM-based synthesis to identify dominant theories, contextual influences, key constructs, and methodological trends within the literature.

Summary of Findings

The findings reveal that consumer participation in thrift and rental fashion is influenced by a combination of economic, environmental, psychological, and social factors. Price value, environmental concern, and perceived sustainability benefits emerge as major adoption drivers, while hygiene concerns, contamination perceptions, and trust-related risks remain significant barriers. The review highlights important differences between thrift and rental markets, with thrift consumption often associated with affordability, uniqueness, and resale value, whereas rental consumption is linked to access, convenience, and fashion variety. Theoretical development is dominated by behavioral frameworks such as the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Normative Activation Model, with limited integration of economic and sociotechnical perspectives. Research is concentrated in Western and selected Asian countries, leaving emerging economies underrepresented. Methodologically, the field relies heavily on cross-sectional quantitative studies, indicating opportunities for qualitative, longitudinal, and mixed-method research.

Statement of Key Contribution

This review contributes to the circular fashion literature by providing an integrated synthesis of thrift and rental fashion research through the TCCM framework. It advances understanding of how different circular consumption models shape sustainable consumer behavior while identifying critical theoretical, contextual, and methodological gaps. By distinguishing between thrift and rental markets and proposing a comprehensive future research agenda, the study offers valuable insights for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to promote sustainable consumption within the apparel industry.

References

Available upon request.

Urban Development Challenges: The Role of Smart City Branding and Place Marketing in Sustainable City Transformation — A Bibliometric Network Analysis

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Abstract

This study examines how sustainability pressures, global competition, and digital transformation are reshaping twenty-first-century urban development, with cities increasingly functioning as dynamic brands rather than purely administrative units. It explores the role of smart city branding and place marketing in enabling sustainable urban transformation. Using bibliometric network analysis of research from the past two decades, the study identifies key themes, author networks, and knowledge trends. Findings highlight a shift toward integrated branding emphasizing co-creation, technology, and sustainability in urban governance.

Keywords: Smart City Branding; Place Marketing; Sustainable Urban Development; Bibliometric Network Analysis; Urban Transformation; City Competitiveness

Research Question

The study addresses the growing complexity of smart city branding and place marketing within the broader context of sustainable urban transformation, where cities are increasingly shaped by digitalization, global competitiveness, and sustainability imperatives. Despite expanding scholarly attention, there remains a fragmented understanding of the intellectual structure of this field, including how key themes have evolved, how researchers and institutions collaborate, and how branding frameworks connect with sustainable urban development strategies. To address this gap, the study pursues five key objectives: mapping the intellectual structure of the field, identifying dominant and emerging themes, analyzing collaboration networks, exploring conceptual linkages between branding and sustainability, and generating strategic insights for policymakers and planners.

RQ1: What is the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of smart city branding and place marketing research over time?

RQ2: How do collaboration networks, dominant themes, and conceptual linkages inform the integration of branding strategies with sustainable urban transformation?

Method and Data

The study uses the Scopus database as the principal source of bibliographic data due to its comprehensive coverage of journals across urban studies, management, sustainability science, public administration, marketing, and information systems. The research applies a structured search query combining relevant keywords—smart city branding, place marketing, city branding, and sustainable urban development—across Title, Abstract, and Keyword fields using Boolean operators. Articles published between 2000 and 2024 were included to trace the evolution of the field. The dataset was restricted to peer-reviewed journal articles, review papers, and conference proceedings in English, with non-scholarly publications, book reviews, notes, and editorials excluded. After screening for duplicates and incomplete bibliographic details, the final dataset comprised 1,248 documents.

The study adopts a bibliometric network analysis combined with a systematic literature review approach, guided by the PRISMA framework to ensure transparency, replicability, and methodological rigor, integrating bibliometric analysis tools with systematic review methods following established conventions for data cleaning and bibliometric interpretation.

Summary of Findings

This study demonstrates that smart city branding and place marketing have evolved into strategic instruments of sustainable urban transformation, rather than remaining limited to promotional or image-building functions. Using a PRISMA-guided review of 22 academic publications drawn from the broader bibliometric dataset, the study identifies the intellectual space, development of themes, and interdisciplinary intersections of this discipline. The results indicate a clear move toward integrated frameworks embedding sustainability, digital governance, and citizen-centric development in place of conventional, competition- and tourism-oriented place marketing. The integration of smart technologies, governance models, and branding processes emphasizes the development of cities as sophisticated socio-technical environments where identity, novelty, and reliability are co-created. The PRISMA-based method enhances the transparency and robustness of the study, providing a reference point for future research. In policymaking terms, effective city branding must follow measurable sustainability goals, co-active governance models, and long-term resilience plans. Smart city branding is, in conclusion, not merely a communication device but a governance-based and sustainability-centered strategy that shapes the direction of future urban growth, with future research expected to focus on empirical validation, Global South perspectives, and the role of emerging technologies such as AI and digital twins in shaping new urban identities and performance.

Statement of Key Contribution

The results show a healthy conceptual shift in the discourse of urban branding. While traditional place marketing emphasized economic competitiveness and tourism promotion, contemporary smart city branding combines sustainability goals, technological innovation, and proactive governance approaches within long-term development strategies. This overlap of smart governance and branding indicates a larger turn in city policy, where branding functions as a strategic governance tool that aligns stakeholder expectations, articulates the need for green initiatives, and attracts green investment. Rather than superficial image management, smart city branding becomes part of the policy agenda and institutional change. Additionally, sustainability narratives have taken centre stage in urban identity formation due to increased focus on resilience

and environmental responsibility, with cities increasingly positioning themselves as testing grounds for addressing climate change and social inclusion.

References

Available upon request.

Why Consumer Choose Green but Act Inconsistently

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Abstract

Packaging often serves as the silent salesman, yet its sustainability attributes compete with consumers' core priorities of product performance and price. This qualitative study explores how consumers perceive and process sustainable packaging. Using semi-structured, in-depth interviews (n = 7) and an inductive analysis following the Gioia methodology, the study develops a data structure that integrates first-order concepts into second-order themes and three aggregate dimensions: pragmatic consumption, value-behaviour gap, and signalling heuristics.

Research Question

Packaging offers a final interface between the product and the consumer. Recent literature has pointed out the importance of packaging materials for product choice and purchase, and prior research explains simple heuristic practices that consumers use to identify environmentally friendly or sustainable packaging characteristics. While prior research has predominantly focused on explicit sustainability cues, limited attention has been given to how consumers process sustainable packaging. The objective of this study is to understand the deep-rooted thoughts and perspectives consumers have towards sustainable packaging.

Method and Data

To uncover consumer perspectives regarding sustainable packaging, this qualitative study employs semi-structured in-depth interviews as the technique. The interview protocol was developed after reviewing the extant literature and contemporary industry practices to ensure internal consistency and validity. As the sample size of a qualitative study is contextual, responses began converging after 6 interviews, and 7 interviews were deemed optimal to elicit in-depth information.

Summary of Findings

An inductive qualitative method was used to analyze the interviews, following the systematic steps proposed by the Gioia methodology. Reflections on the iterations led to minor revisions in the classification of codes and mutually acceptable first-order concepts, which were further abstracted into second-order themes. These second-order themes were reviewed and integrated into three aggregate dimensions (emergent themes) that explain perceptions of sustainable packaging: pragmatic consumption, value-behaviour gap, and signalling heuristics.

Under *Pragmatic Consumption*, participants consistently positioned product performance and price as primary evaluative criteria (Product-Centric Evaluation), with packaging rarely the

primary driver of decision-making. Participants did not reject paying more for sustainable packaging but articulated a premium threshold (Price Thresholds)—for example, expressing willingness to pay 10 to 20 per cent more, but preferring the cheaper option beyond that margin.

Under *Value-Behaviour Gap*, responses reflected a strong attitude towards sustainable consumption, generating both a positive effect and a sense of pride in this pro-social behaviour (Sustainability as Ideal). However, respondents also acknowledged inconsistencies in their own behaviour, citing awareness without active follow-through (Habit-based Override).

Under *Signalling Heuristics*, respondents described packaging as a signal of product safety and authenticity, extending to it being an environmental artifact (Authenticity Signal). At the same time, respondents felt there is informational asymmetry and a lack of regulatory standardisation around sustainability claims (Institutional Legitimacy).

Aggregate Dimension	Second-Order Themes
Pragmatic Consumption	Product-Centric Evaluation; Price Thresholds
Value-Behaviour Gap	Sustainability as Ideal; Habit-based Override
Signalling Heuristics	Authenticity Signal; Institutional Legitimacy

Figure 1: Emergent data structure

Statement of Key Contribution

This study extends prior research on packaging by showing that sustainability is evaluated within practical consumption boundaries. The findings reveal that sustainable cues are effective only when they align with core expectations of product quality and price. Importantly, the study identifies a premium acceptance zone, suggesting that consumers are willing to pay a modest premium for sustainable packaging, but revert to price sensitivity beyond this threshold. Furthermore, the findings contribute to the value-behaviour gap literature by demonstrating that the disconnect is not driven by lack of awareness, but by habitual and convenience-based decision-making.

References

Available upon request.

Track 5

B2B, Value Chain, Branding, and Pricing Strategies

AI Brand Brain: A Theoretically Grounded Higher-Order Construct for Intelligent Brand Cognition

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Abstract

This study introduces AI Brand Brain (AIBB), a higher-order construct representing how artificial intelligence systems cognitively process, interpret, and respond to brand-related stimuli. Drawing on brand knowledge theory, customer-based brand equity, and brand association networks, AIBB conceptualizes the brand processing architecture of AI agents through four theoretically grounded sub-constructs: AI Brand Awareness, AI Brand Associations, AI Brand Attitude, and AI Brand Resonance.

Research Question

The rise of AI-powered agents—from conversational assistants to autonomous recommendation engines—has created a new class of brand interlocutors that perceive, store, and transmit brand information at scale. Yet marketing theory lacks a robust framework for conceptualising brand cognition within AI systems. Extant brand equity models are anthropocentric, premised on human memory structures and evaluative heuristics. This study addresses the gap by asking:

RQ1: What are the theoretically grounded sub-constructs that constitute AI Brand Brain as a higher-order construct?

RQ2: How do these sub-constructs, rooted in marketing literature, relate hierarchically to form a coherent nomological network?

Method and Data

This study employs a systematic conceptual development approach following established scale development protocols and frameworks for reflective versus formative construct specification, both published in leading FT50 journals. A literature review of articles from FT50 journals including the *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, and *Marketing Science* was conducted to identify validated constructs amenable to AI-context adaptation. Constructs were evaluated against domain relevance, adaptability to non-human agents, and inter-construct complementarity.

Summary of Findings

The proposed AI Brand Brain (AIBB) is specified as a second-order reflective–formative construct comprising four first-order reflective sub-constructs, each grounded in FT50-published scales and frameworks.

AI Brand Awareness (AIBA): Adapted from Keller’s (1993) brand awareness typology, AIBA captures the depth and breadth of brand information encoded within an AI model’s parametric knowledge. Brands with high AIBA are recalled accurately and contextually by AI systems across diverse query contexts.

AI Brand Associations (AIBAs): Drawing on associative network memory theory and the brand association map paradigm, AIBAs represent the semantic linkages AI systems form between brand nodes and attribute/benefit/value nodes. Strength, favourability, and uniqueness serve as dimensional indicators.

AI Brand Attitude (AIBATT): Grounded in the tripartite attitude model and established brand attitude frameworks, AIBATT reflects the evaluative valence AI systems assign to brands in generated outputs—operationalised as sentiment polarity, confidence weighting, and recommendation propensity.

AI Brand Resonance (AIBR): Adapted from Keller’s (2001) brand resonance pyramid, AIBR captures the intensity and fidelity of brand–AI alignment—the degree to which AI outputs exhibit brand-consistent voice, values, and personality coherence across interactions. This apex sub-construct integrates the three preceding dimensions into a unified brand intelligence signal.

Collectively, these four sub-constructs are structured in a hierarchical nomological network: AIBA enables AIBAs formation; AIBAs shapes AIBATT valence; and AIBATT intensity drives AIBR coherence. AIBB thus functions as a formative higher-order construct whose variation is determined by the joint performance of its sub-constructs.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study makes three contributions. First, it introduces AIBB as the first theoretically grounded higher-order construct for brand cognition in AI systems, filling a significant gap in brand equity theory. Second, it bridges established FT50 constructs—Keller’s brand knowledge model, the Mitchell-Olson brand attitude scale, and established brand association maps—into a unified AI-domain framework, ensuring construct validity and theoretical parsimony. Third, AIBB offers actionable implications for brand managers seeking to monitor and optimise how AI agents perceive and transmit their brands, a capability of growing strategic importance as AI-mediated brand touchpoints multiply.

References

Available upon request.

Brand Name Configuration: A Configurational Perspective to Brand Naming Under Constraint

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Abstract

Brand names are among the most enduring and least reversible decisions a firm makes, yet research has studied name properties individually—phonetics, suggestiveness, fluency—as if each could be optimised alone. This study reframes naming as a resolution problem: managers collapse clarity, memorability, and distinctiveness into a single name under constraint. Drawing on practitioner accounts, it develops Brand Name Configuration to explain how competing demands are settled.

Research Question

Despite extensive brand-naming research, three gaps persist: the literature is feature-centric, examining name properties in isolation rather than their joint resolution; it privileges first-exposure effects over performance over time; and it rarely incorporates institutional and market constraints (trademark availability, domain ownership, platform discovery) that bind naming. This study asks how managers resolve competing considerations into a single name, and what that resolution produces.

RQ1: What are the competing brand naming tensions that marketers must resolve under constraint?

RQ2: What consequences do different configurations produce as names circulate through consumers, channels, and institutions?

Method and Data

This study adopts a Theories-in-Use design—appropriate when a phenomenon has not yet been theorised from practitioners’ vantage point. Thirty-four practitioners—founders, entrepreneurs, and brand managers across sectors—were interviewed. Transcript analysis followed the Gioia methodology, coding informant language into first-order concepts, second-order themes, and aggregate dimensions, iterating abductively. Sampling ran to theoretical saturation; accounts were triangulated against public brand records.

Summary of Findings

Practitioners describe naming not as optimization, but as resolution—a constrained choice in which moving toward one desirable property exacts a cost on another. Three interdependent

dimensions recur across sectors: Immediate Interpretability (how readily a name signals what the brand does), Linguistic Accessibility (how easily it is pronounced, spelled, and transmitted), and Distinctiveness (how far it departs from ordinary language and category convention). These sit in structural tension: the clearest names draw on common vocabulary that trademark law screens out as descriptive, while the most distinctive names are often the hardest to spell and transmit. The tension eases or worsens with how distinctiveness is achieved—categorical departure preserves accessibility, while deliberate misspelling erodes it. Configurations also carry consequences that surface only over time—transfer friction, as names degrade through misspelling and mispronunciation, and confinement, as an over-clear name forecloses future extension.

Statement of Key Contribution

The study reorients brand-naming theory from name properties to the configuration as the unit of analysis, offering the first systematic account of the structural tensions among interpretability, accessibility, and distinctiveness, and of how the mechanism of achieving each property governs the trade-offs. It surfaces two undertheorised consequences—transfer friction and confinement—that first-exposure research overlooks. For practice, it turns trade-offs founders navigate intuitively into auditable choices that can be made before launch rather than reversed at cost.

References

Available upon request.

Identity-Sensitive Segmentation: Consumer Fairness Perceptions, Cultural Meaning, and Strategic Response in a Food-Delivery Ecosystem

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Abstract

Many companies operating in digital platforms often rely on niche segmentation and product customisation to enhance relevance, reduce expectation-related friction in the consumer mind, and pursue product line extension. In online service delivery, targeting on the basis of algorithms, subsequent recommendation systems, and creating equivalent service offers have become central to customer acquisition and retention strategies. However, in countries where consumption patterns follow culturally embedded norms, such targeting may generate symbolic interpretations, sometimes unintended, which go beyond the functional values of the service. In a pluralistic society like India, dietary choices are particularly sensitive because multiple aspects—utilitarian value, social hierarchy, and cultural norms—simultaneously affect food choices.

Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to develop a conceptual framework of how segmentation decisions in digital service platforms generate user identity-based interpretations and fairness evaluations based on socio-moral behaviour among multiple stakeholders. Specifically, the research investigates four objectives: it examines how a function-based service innovation is interpreted as social identity categorisation; it analyses how different stakeholder groups in the platform architecture (customers, delivery workers, and observers) construct fairness judgments regarding functional segmentation and value delivery; it identifies the mechanisms through which platform visibility and offline interaction amplify or moderate stakeholder reactions; and it explores strategic responses available to firms when segmentation decisions create reputational and relational risks.

Case Context

Using a real-life case, this paper examines a major food-delivery platform's introduction of a specialised vegetarian service channel designed to address consumer concerns about the handling of food contamination during preparation and delivery. The online service product was a platform feature made to serve vegetarian-only ordering and a visually differentiated delivery system intended to assure no contamination of vegetarian food with non-vegetarian food during preparation and delivery. While believing the new service to be a product innovation for the strict vegetarian consumer segment, the initiative triggered widespread public debate among

customers, gig workers, and social commentators. The company subsequently modified the implementation, removing the visual element while retaining the underlying service capability.

Discussion

The study demonstrates how platform design choices can extend beyond customer experience optimisation and enter the realm of social signalling. Multiple stakeholders associated directly and indirectly with the platform ecosystem could become active critics, interpreting the initiative not merely as an operational differentiation to address an unaddressed market segment, but as a visible categorisation mechanism that could affect dignity, identity, and access in offline environments.

The case also reflects a broader transformation in marketing practice. Traditional segmentation assumed that categories such as lifestyle or preference were analytically useful but socially neutral. In contrast, digital platforms operationalise segmentation through visible interfaces, delivery logistics, and algorithmic assignment, thereby embedding categorisation into everyday social interaction. This shift raises new managerial and theoretical questions regarding the relationship between segmentation, identity, and perceived fairness.

References

Available upon request.

The Price of a Sip: When Sampling Destroys Value

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Abstract

This study examines how sampling quantity influences price discovery in Indian tea auctions. Using transaction-level data from the Cochin Tea Auction Centre, it investigates the relationship between the quantity of tea sampled prior to auction and realized prices, bidder participation, and competitive dynamics. The research spans three financial years and covers over 125,000 lot-level observations across multiple tea categories, broker identities, and auction cycles, providing a comprehensive empirical account of information transmission in a high-frequency commodity auction setting.

Research Question

Price discovery in commodity auctions depends on the information available to buyers before bidding. In tea auctions, brokers determine how much sample to distribute to potential buyers, yet the pricing implications of this decision remain unclear. Existing research largely treats sampling as a logistical activity rather than a strategic signal. This study examines how sampling quantity influences bidder behavior and auction outcomes.

RQ1: Does sampling quantity exhibit a non-linear relationship with realized auction prices, and if so, what is the nature and location of the optimal sampling threshold?

RQ2: Through what mechanisms—bidder participation, or price variance—does sampling quantity influence price discovery?

Method and Data

This study employs a quantitative empirical approach using transaction-level auction data from the Cochin Tea Auction Centre covering financial years 2021 to 2023, comprising over 125,000 lot-level observations. The dataset includes realized auction prices, sampling quantities, bidder participation counts, tea characteristics, broker identities, and lot-level details. The analytical strategy progresses from cross-sectional fixed effects regressions to within-product panel specifications and first-difference models, systematically addressing quality endogeneity. Piecewise linear splines, binned regressions, and bid-level behavioral measures—including bid intensity and coefficient of variation—are used to identify mechanisms. Heterogeneity is examined across tea type and manufacturing category.

Summary of Findings

The analysis documents a robust non-linear relationship between sampling quantity and realized auction prices, termed the Sampling Cliff. Price premiums peak at 1.5 kg of sample distributed and decline significantly beyond this threshold. This pattern persists within identical tea varieties

across time, ruling out quality composition as the driving explanation. Two distinct mechanisms are identified. First, sampling increases bidder participation, and greater competition raises prices through a conventional competition channel that peaks at 2.0 kg. Second, and independently, sampling at 1.5 kg maximizes bid intensity—the number of bids placed per participating buyer—while maintaining tight competition between the top two bidders. These two channels peak at different sampling levels, explaining why the price optimum occurs at 1.5 kg rather than at the point of maximum participation. Beyond the optimal threshold, both participation and bid intensity collapse while price variance rises significantly, reflecting buyer confusion rather than informed competition. Heterogeneity analysis reveals that the cliff is substantially steeper in Orthodox and Leaf tea segments, where price volatility is higher and buyers face greater quality uncertainty, consistent with sampling playing a stronger informational role where buyer priors are weakest. Finally, brokers systematically increase sampling following poor price outcomes, yet this reactive behavior is associated with further price deterioration—a feedback trap that intensifies over the sample period as buyers become more precise in reading sampling signals.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study makes three contributions to the economics of auctions and agricultural commodity markets. First, it introduces the concept of the Sampling Cliff—a theoretically grounded and empirically identified non-linear optimum in pre-auction information provision—which has not been previously documented in the auction literature. Second, it decomposes the price effect of sampling into participation and bid intensity channels, demonstrating that these mechanisms peak at different thresholds and together explain the shape of the optimum. Third, it identifies a broker feedback trap in which reactive sampling decisions systematically worsen price outcomes, contributing to the behavioral economics of market intermediaries in agricultural commodity settings.

References

Available upon request.

Symbolic Destabilisation: A Framework for Evaluating the Impact of Exogenous Shocks and Unsolicited High-Status Interventions on Multi-Dimensional Brand Equity and Self-Brand Connect

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Abstract

Brands today can be damaged not only by their own actions but also by symbolic events entirely beyond their control. Viral videos of counterfeit Bisleri bottles and the anti-China sentiment surrounding Xiaomi demonstrate how external symbolic associations can reshape consumer perceptions without any change in product quality or firm behaviour. This study examines how such exogenous symbolic shocks influence brand equity, self-brand connection, and subsequent consumer decision-making across different product categories.

Research Question

Brands increasingly face symbolic disruptions originating beyond organizational control. Existing branding theories explain the effects of firm-generated crises, product failures, and endorser scandals but provide a limited understanding of how unsolicited third-party symbolic associations influence consumer evaluations when brands have neither initiated nor endorsed the event. This gap has become increasingly relevant in digitally connected marketplaces, where external symbolic narratives spread rapidly and reshape brand meanings.

RQ1: How do exogenous symbolic shocks influence product consideration and purchase intention through the multidimensional brand equity construct and self-brand connection?

RQ2: How does product category (high vs low self-expressive) moderate the effects of exogenous symbolic shocks, thereby shaping consumers' product consideration and purchase intention?

Method and Data

The study employed a 2×2 between-subjects vignette experiment manipulating exogenous symbolic shock (present vs. absent) and product category (high vs. low self-expressive). Following random assignment, 117 valid responses were retained after data screening and manipulation checks. Established multi-item scales measured brand credibility, brand loyalty, perceived quality, self-brand connection, product consideration, and purchase intention. The hypotheses were tested using two-way ANOVA, OLS regression, and Hayes PROCESS mediation analysis.

Summary of Findings

The findings demonstrate that exogenous symbolic shocks significantly influence consumer responses even when brands are not responsible for the triggering event. Exposure to such shocks reduced brand credibility and self-brand connection, while the effects on perceived quality were comparatively weaker and brand loyalty remained largely unaffected. These findings indicate that unsolicited third-party symbolic associations primarily disrupt consumers' trust in the brand and its identity-signalling value rather than deeply ingrained behavioural attachments.

Further analyses revealed that brand credibility and self-brand connection are the primary psychological mechanisms through which exogenous symbolic shocks reduce product consideration and purchase intention. In contrast, neither brand loyalty nor perceived quality significantly mediated these relationships, suggesting that symbolic disruptions operate predominantly through cognitive trust and identity-based processes.

The findings also highlight the importance of product category as a boundary condition. For high self-expressive products, symbolic shocks primarily undermined self-brand connection, whereas for low self-expressive products, the strongest impact was observed on brand credibility. Collectively, the results demonstrate that symbolic vulnerability is multidimensional and contingent on product category, with distinct psychological pathways explaining how external symbolic events shape consumer decision-making.

Key Contributions

This study makes four key contributions to branding literature. First, it extends Signalling Theory by demonstrating that brand signals can be disrupted not only through firm-controlled communication but also by exogenous symbolic shocks from unaffiliated third parties, thereby introducing third-party symbolic contamination as a novel source of signal degradation. Second, it extends Meaning Transfer Theory by demonstrating the possibility of non-endorsed meaning transfer, whereby symbolic meanings transfer to brands without any contractual or endorsement relationship. Third, it advances branding literature by showing that symbolic vulnerability is multidimensional and product-category dependent, with brand credibility and self-brand connection serving as distinct psychological pathways linking symbolic shocks to consumer behaviour. Finally, the findings offer managerial insight by highlighting the need for firms to proactively monitor external symbolic narratives and tailor crisis response strategies according to the symbolic nature of different product categories.

References are available upon request.

Track 6

Emerging and Rural Market Strategies

Deciphering the Durable Product Purchase Behaviour of Rural India: An Insight from Western Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract

The 21st century has intensified marketing competition, making traditional selling approaches less effective and consumers more demanding. Rural India has emerged as a promising market, attracting marketers due to its growth potential. However, rural consumers differ significantly from urban consumers, requiring specialized marketing strategies. This study examines the durable product purchase behavior of rural consumers in western Uttar Pradesh, highlighting the need to understand their unique preferences and decision-making patterns.

Research Question

This research aimed to examine the purchase behavior of rural consumers regarding durable products and explore the future potential of rural marketing in India. It focused on rural consumers in western Uttar Pradesh, analyzing the influence of seven factors: product features, price, family and friends, village opinion leaders, dealer networks, credit and exchange schemes, and social settings. The study sought to understand how these factors shape durable product purchases.

RQ1: How do product features, price, and social influences affect the durable product purchase behavior of rural consumers in western Uttar Pradesh?

RQ2: What is the potential for future growth of rural marketing in this region?

Method and Data

This study employed quantitative and descriptive research designs to examine rural consumers' durable product purchase behavior. Data were collected through a bilingual (Hindi and English) structured questionnaire comprising demographic, dichotomous, and five-point Likert-scale questions. A pilot study was conducted to refine the questionnaire before final data collection. Using convenience sampling, 450 responses were gathered, of which 412 valid responses were retained for analysis. Data were analyzed using SPSS for descriptive statistics and respondent profiling, Independent Samples t-test for hypothesis testing, and PLS-SEM through SmartPLS 4.1.0.9 to examine relationships among variables. Statistical measures such as p-values, t-values, and beta coefficients were used for interpretation.

Summary of Findings

The results obtained through the data analysis shed light on the durable product purchase behaviour of the area chosen, indicating a changing yet crucial scenario in the purchase behaviour of rural consumers. The results show that the purchase behaviour of rural consumers of Western Uttar Pradesh is impacted by product features, brand name, and social settings. Consumers in this study seek quality and value for money, which is visible in their purchase behaviour. Brand name is one of the major factors impacting their purchase behaviour of durable products—product quality and brand name instill a sense of safety, security, and genuineness of the product among consumers, and as found in previous studies, quality and brand name make consumers loyal to the company. Another important aspect of this research is that socio-cultural factors such as family members and friends, fellow village people, and social occasions have important implications for the purchase behaviour of rural consumers of India. The research has shown that product price, dealer network, credit facilities, and exchange schemes have no visible impact on the durable product purchase behaviour of rural consumers of Western Uttar Pradesh.

Statement of Key Contribution

The study reveals key insights into the durable product purchase behavior of rural consumers in Western Uttar Pradesh. Purchase decisions are significantly influenced by product features, brand name, and socio-cultural factors such as family, friends, and fellow villagers. Consumers prioritize quality and value for money, with brand reputation fostering trust and loyalty. In contrast, factors like product price, dealer networks, and credit or exchange schemes showed little impact on buying behavior. These findings highlight the importance for marketers to focus on quality, branding, and social influences when designing strategies for rural markets in this region.

References

Available upon request.

Impact of Cute Garbage Bins on Binning Intention of Tourists

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Purpose

In today's times, sustainable tourism is an area of great concern for destination marketers, as unsustainable waste management practices pose unprecedented threats to tourism. Research indicates that unsustainable waste management practices (such as littering garbage) threaten soil and water and damage wildlife, thereby badly affecting tourist experience and reducing their willingness to revisit a place. However, mitigating these issues requires promoting environmentally sound waste practices, such as binning behaviour.

Disposal bins are considered a public environmental facility in most tourist spots. Previous studies have used emoticons, cute images, and colors on garbage bins to influence tourists' garbage collection behaviour. It is found that such practices attract tourists' attention and promote environmental behaviour among them. Therefore, the cute appearance of garbage bins may help attract tourists and evoke pro-environmental behaviour.

Although existing studies have investigated tourist behavior for sustainability, these studies have often overlooked the role of the cuteness of garbage bins at tourist places—such as emotions and indicative messages on the bins—on tourists' pro-environmental behaviour. This indicates a gap in the literature regarding the role of the appearance of bins in encouraging tourists' binning behavior.

Design/Methodology

The present study enhances this area of knowledge by conducting four controlled experiments. Study 1 aims to understand the impact of the cuteness of garbage bins (high vs. low) on the binning intention of tourists. As an extension, Study 2 examines whether adding emotions (sad vs. happy) to garbage bins can influence tourists' binning intentions. Study 3 aims to understand the likelihood of tourists disposing of waste properly if indicative messages (self-harm vs. societal harm) are added to garbage bins. Study 4 explores how empathy with nature mediates the relationship between cute garbage bins and tourists' binning intention.

Findings

Study 1 employed a between-subjects design with 60 postgraduate students. An independent t-test showed that participants exposed to the high-cute garbage bin reported higher binning intention than those exposed to the less-cute bin. Study 2 used a 2×2 factorial design with 120 postgraduate students. ANOVA revealed a significant interaction between cute garbage bin and emotional expressions: a high-cute bin paired with a happy expression elicited more favorable evaluations, whereas a less-cute bin paired with a sad expression generated more favorable responses. Study 3 employed a 2×2 factorial design with 120 students. Results

showed a significant interaction: a high-cute bin paired with a self-harm message elicited the most favorable evaluations, while a less-cute bin paired with a societal-harm message was most effective. Study 4 used a mediation design with 60 students, and an independent t-test showed that participants exposed to the high-cute garbage bin reported higher binning intention than those exposed to the less-cute bin.

Research Implications

Cute garbage bins represent an emerging area of research in the field of sustainable tourism. Many studies have been conducted on garbage bins, but very few experimental studies have been conducted to understand the impact of cuteness (high vs. low) of garbage bins on the binning intention of tourists. The present study provides insightful findings and makes a significant contribution to our knowledge of how cute garbage bins enhance tourists' binning intention.

Limitations and Future Research

The present research has certain limitations. First, it was conducted in a single area, which may limit the generalizability of findings. Second, the study focused on specific cute design elements (e.g., colors, facial expressions, anthropomorphic features), while other design characteristics that influence behavior remain unexplored.

Keywords: Cute Disposal Bins; Sustainable Tourism; Waste Management Practices; Indicative Messages; Empathy

References

Available upon request.

Marketing Strategies in Emerging Economies: Integrating Rural and Agricultural Markets for Sustainable Growth

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Abstract

This paper presents an integrated view of marketing dynamics within emerging economies by evaluating the intersections of overall marketing strategies, rural marketing, and agricultural marketing. It systematically examines the distinct opportunities, structural challenges, and future trajectories of these interconnected domains. By reviewing contemporary shifts such as digital adoption and evolving consumer preferences alongside persistent infrastructural, regulatory, and supply chain bottlenecks, this study establishes a holistic framework to guide sustainable market development and inclusive economic growth.

Research Question

Research on marketing strategies in emerging economies predominantly concentrates on urban centers, creating a significant gap regarding the integrated roles of rural and agricultural sectors in driving sustainable growth. Existing literature rarely connects agricultural value chains with contemporary marketing practices, leaves sustainability dimensions under-examined, and lacks empirical, region-specific insights into rural consumer dynamics. This study addresses these structural deficiencies by answering two central questions:

RQ1: How can agricultural value chains be effectively integrated with contemporary marketing practices to bridge the gap between production systems and rural market access?

RQ2: In what ways do digital technologies and sustainability-focused frameworks alter rural consumer behavior and strengthen rural-market linkages in specific emerging regions like Maharashtra?

Method and Data

The study utilizes a qualitative and exploratory research design grounded in a comprehensive review of existing literature, academic research, and contemporary market trends. By analyzing a wide array of secondary data sources related to emerging, rural, and agricultural markets, the methodology synthesizes evolving consumption patterns, regulatory frameworks, and technological interventions. The analytical approach focuses entirely on identifying thematic intersections between agricultural production, digital platforms, and rural distribution networks, thereby addressing the structural challenges and distinct market dynamics characteristic of developing regions.

Summary of Findings

Emerging markets present immense growth potential propelled by rising consumption, rapid digital adoption, and evolving customer preferences. Concurrently, rural markets are gaining critical importance due to increasing connectivity and escalating incomes. However, organizations must navigate severe bottlenecks, including infrastructure limitations, regulatory complexities, cultural diversity, low literacy levels, and highly dispersed populations. Within the agricultural sector specifically, primary concerns involve inefficient supply chains, intense price fluctuations, and restricted market access for individual farmers. Despite these persistent barriers, findings indicate that the strategic deployment of digital platforms, ongoing policy reforms, and targeted value chain integration are actively generating transformative opportunities across all three marketing domains.

Statement of Key Contribution

This study provides a novel, context-driven framework that bridges the gap between agricultural production systems and contemporary marketing practices. By positioning rural and agricultural sectors as central pillars of economic development rather than peripheral urban extensions, it advances the literature on sustainable and inclusive growth. Practically, the study underscores the necessity for flexible, adaptive marketing strategies that reconcile global efficiency with local relevance. It demonstrates how transitioning to digital transformation, prioritizing affordability, and establishing farmer-centric models like cooperatives can fundamentally enhance market accessibility, equity, and long-term supply chain resilience.

References

Available upon request.

The Power of Brand Biographies in Green Advertising: How Celebrity Activist Popularity and Packaging Design Complexity Shape Consumer Evaluation

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Purpose

Despite the extensive use of both topdog and underdog brand biographies in marketing and advertising, there remains limited understanding regarding their effectiveness in the context of green advertising. Effective green advertising has the potential to stimulate consumer demand for green products, thereby providing companies with a competitive edge. However, the persuasive impact of such advertisements is often limited, highlighting the need for more effective engagement strategies. While prior research has examined the use of advertising appeals when promoting green products to drive consumption behavior more effectively, how these appeals should be aligned with brand biography remains unclear. Furthermore, the success of advertisements also depends on the credibility of the celebrity who endorses green products. Given that endorser effectiveness is contingent upon the fit between the endorser's characteristics and the advertised message, this study examines how the effects of brand biography (topdog vs. underdog) vary across green advertising appeals and celebrity endorser popularity in shaping consumer responses. These effects are further moderated by the visual complexity of packaging design. The study offers theoretical and managerial implications.

Design/Methodology

Across four experiments, the present study explores the moderating roles of green ad appeals, celebrity activist appeal, and visual complexity of packaging design on the impact of brand biography on attitudes toward the ad (Aad) and willingness to pay a premium price (WPPP). Study 1 establishes a main effect by examining whether an underdog (versus topdog) brand biography elicits more favorable consumer responses. Study 2 investigates whether green ad appeal (functional vs. environmental) moderates this relationship. Building on Study 2, Study 3 tests a double moderation by including celebrity activist popularity (high vs. low) as an additional moderator. Finally, Study 4 examines the moderating role of visual complexity of packaging design (simple vs. complex). In all studies, the dependent variables examined were Aad and WPPP.

Findings

Study 1 employed a between-subjects design with 60 postgraduate students. An independent t-test showed that participants exposed to the underdog brand biography reported more favorable Aad and higher WPPP than those exposed to the topdog biography. Study 2 used a 2×2 factorial design with 120 postgraduate students. ANOVA revealed a significant interaction between

brand biography and green ad appeals: underdog biography paired with an environmental appeal elicited more favorable evaluations, whereas topdog biography paired with a functional appeal generated more favorable responses. Study 3 employed a 2×2×2 factorial design with 180 students. Results showed a significant three-way interaction: an underdog biography paired with an environmental appeal and a low-popularity celebrity elicited the most favorable evaluations, while topdog biography paired with a functional appeal was most effective with a high-popularity celebrity. Study 4 used a 2×2 factorial design with 120 students. ANOVA revealed that underdog biography paired with simple packaging design elicited the most favorable consumer responses, whereas topdog biography with complex packaging generated higher evaluations.

Research Implications

Although experimental studies have examined the effects of brand biography under various boundary conditions, its application in the context of green marketing remains relatively underexplored. With increasing competition in the green market, this study highlights how brand biographies can be strategically used to design marketing approaches that elicit favorable consumer responses.

Limitations and Future Research

The present research has certain limitations. First, it was conducted in a single area, which may limit the generalizability of findings. Second, all stimuli featured three product categories—skincare, beverages, and liquid soap—limiting applicability to other categories. Future research could include participants from diverse regions and examine other product categories, and further investigations could explore boundary conditions related to consumer characteristics and how different sources conveying brand biography influence consumer responses.

Keywords: Brand Biography; Green Advertising; Advertising Appeals; Attitude Towards the Ad; Willingness to Pay Premium Price

References

Available upon request.

The Role of the Emerging Indian Luxury Market in the Geography of the European Luxury Houses Through the Lens of Corporate Disclosures (2019–2024)

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Abstract

This study examines how publicly listed European personal luxury goods companies communicate strategic attention to India in annual reports from 2019 to 2024. It focuses on India-related market, retail, ESG, sourcing, legal, and brand communication narratives. Treating annual reports as strategic communication documents, it traces how India is positioned within the changing geography of global luxury and how this positioning varies across firms and years.

Research Question

India is increasingly presented as a growth market for luxury, but longitudinal evidence on how European luxury houses frame India remains limited. The study asks:

RQ1: How did strategic attention to India change in annual reports between 2019 and 2024?

RQ2: Which India narratives and their co-occurrences were most visible, and how did they change over the years?

Method and Data

The study applies qualitative content analysis supported by quantitative profiling of coded meaning units. The sample covers 18 publicly listed European personal luxury goods companies selected from Deloitte's Top 100 luxury firms, with complete reports for 2019–2024, yielding 108 reports. India-related meaning units were identified contextually, coded inductively in MAXQDA, refined through an iterative codebook, and profiled by year, company, frequency, co-occurrence, and false-positive exclusions.

Summary of Findings

The analysis identified 822 India-related code appearances across 108 reports after excluding 33 false-positive mentions that did not refer to India as a market or strategic geography. Attention dipped in 2020, but after 2022 codes increased and the composition changed. Administrative and regional reporting mentions, including legal entities, geographic operations lists, and broader EMEA reporting, remained visible but became less dominant. By contrast, market growth opportunity, strengthened presence, ESG, sourcing geography, supplier certification, and artisan or labour support became more salient. Co-occurrence patterns show that ESG was often linked

with biodiversity, sourcing, raw-material due diligence, and supply-chain compliance, while strengthened presence appeared together with retail footprint and market-growth narratives. India is therefore increasingly communicated as a growth region, not only as a formal reporting location. The tone was mostly positive or neutral, with limited explicit discussion of barriers. The main negative case concerned tax compliance and challenged advertising, marketing, and promotional cost deductions. Reporting remained uneven: companies with an established Indian presence were not always the strongest reporters in 2024, while newcomers became more visible.

Statement of Key Contribution

The study contributes a replicable framework for tracing country-level strategic attention in luxury corporate disclosures. It shows how annual reports can reveal the gradual repositioning of an emerging luxury market beyond industry commentary, forecasts, and broad regional reporting. Empirically, it provides a cross-firm and longitudinal map of how India enters European luxury narratives as a market, operational base, ESG site, and sourcing geography. Methodologically, it demonstrates why contextual qualitative coding is needed for heterogeneous corporate reports, where India-related meaning units often appear indirectly and cannot be captured reliably through quantitative keyword counts alone.

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