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Unveiling the Power of AI in Social Media Marketing: Necessary and Sufficient Conditions as a Supplementary Analysis Approach

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Summary Statement

This study attempts to unveil the role of artificial intelligence (AI), particularly chatbots, in social media marketing (SMM). The study applies self-determination theory and user gratification theory to investigate the driving forces involved in developing positive favorable behavior outcomes through using AI (chatbots) as a strategic weapon in social media marketing. Additionally, it employs fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) to research as a supplementary approach to identify the necessary and sufficient best SMM outcomes.

Competitive Short Paper

In today's digital age, social media marketing (SMM) has become indispensable for businesses seeking to expand their reach, engage with customers, and enhance their brand presence and recognition (Dwivedi et al., 2021). The unique capability of social media to connect with a vast audience in real-time offers unparalleled advantages for businesses. Typically, through social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, firms/businesses attempt to showcase their products, drive sales, provide customer service, and gather feedback for co-creating products or services (Ali et al., 2023). Although this approach is not a traditional method of marketing communication, with the rapid evolution of AI, it can be seen as a less advanced approach in social media marketing.

Incorporating artificial intelligence (AI), particularly chatbots, in social media marketing made a revolutionary shift, especially in marketing strategies and customer relationship management (Lin & Wu, 2022). Various research studies have explored how social media marketing, by offering personalised content, leads to positive behavioural outcomes, enhances brand building, affects buying behaviour, and informs purchasing decisions (Armutcu et al., 2023; Kulikovskaja et al., 2023). However, existing studies in SMM have primarily focused on conventional strategies, often overlooking the profound impact AI (Chatbots) can have. For example, there needs to be more research on how AI integration in creating personalised content can improve user experience. Additionally, the role of AI in automating content creation and providing tailored customer service, such as through chatbots, requires further exploration in enhancing user experience/perception and engagement (Aslam, 2023).

This paper aims to bridge this overlooked gap through the integration of self-determination theory (STD) and user gratification theory (GDT) by discussing how leveraging AI mainly focusing on chatbot in SMM can influence 'social glue' and 'brand recall (positive behavioural outcomes).' Social glue refers to a brand's ability to build and maintain solid and meaningful relationships with its target audience. On the other hand, brand recall is the extent to which a brand remains top-of-mind for consumers. Moreover, most existing studies in marketing, particularly in the context of social media marketing (Kurtz et al., 2021; Le & Wang, 2020; Shieh et al., 2019), have assessed the relationships between variables through variance-based or covariance-based analysis, primarily focusing on path coefficients. However, as some studies argue, this method may not accurately reflect the true impact of exogenous and endogenous variables due to the issue of endogeneity within a proposed model (Kock, 2022). Therefore, future researchers are encouraged to validate the path coefficients in their models using supplementary methods. This study applied a fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis approach (fsQCA) as a complementary method for robustness. Applying fsQCA offers various advantages over solely using structural equation modeling in this study. For instance, it allows us to address complex causal relationships through multiple configurations. It assists in identifying the necessary and sufficient conditions to achieve the best outcomes from non-linear and asymmetric causal relationships/patterns (Castelló-Sirvent, 2022; Olsen, 2022).