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Artificial Intelligence as a Strategic Marketing Capability: An Integrated Framework for Firms in Developing Economies

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Abstract

Purpose: Research on artificial intelligence (AI) in marketing is fragmented across applications and theories, and rests largely on evidence from developed economies. This paper conceptualises AI as a firm-level marketing capability and explains how, and under what conditions, it improves marketing performance, with particular attention to developing economies.

Design/methodology/approach: The paper adopts a conceptual, theory-synthesis design. It integrates the resource-based view, dynamic capabilities theory, the marketing capabilities perspective, and relationship marketing and customer equity theory, and develops a framework with nine testable propositions.

Findings: AI capability is proposed to improve marketing performance indirectly, by strengthening marketing capabilities, which in turn create customer value. Because AI technologies are increasingly bought as standardised services, advantage is argued to come less from the technologies themselves than from the complementary resources and dynamic capabilities with which they are bundled. Ethical AI governance and human–AI collaboration condition whether AI-enabled marketing creates customer value, while the institutional voids common in developing economies weaken the conversion of AI capability into marketing capability.

Research limitations/implications: The propositions await empirical testing, preferably with longitudinal, multi-source and cross-country designs.

Practical implications: Managers should invest in data, skills, governance and human–AI routines alongside AI tools. Policymakers should address digital infrastructure, data protection enforcement and the AI capability of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Originality/value: The paper relocates the source of AI-based marketing advantage from technology to

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capability bundles and specifies boundary conditions that are particular to developing economies.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence Capability, Marketing Capabilities, Customer Value Creation, Dynamic Capabilities, Institutional Voids, Developing Economies

1. INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems that perform tasks associated with human cognition, such as learning, reasoning, perception and language use (Russell & Norvig, 2021). Its marketing applications now span market sensing, customer analytics, personalisation, conversational service, pricing and content creation (Davenport et al., 2020; Huang & Rust, 2021). The arrival of generative AI has widened this scope further, bringing the automation of creative and communicative work into routine marketing practice (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Grewal et al., 2025; Kshetri et al., 2024).

Scholarship has not kept pace with this diffusion in two respects. First, it is fragmented. Much of it examines single applications, such as chatbots or recommendation systems, or explains individual adoption through models such as the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989). Strategic frameworks do exist (Davenport et al., 2020; Huang & Rust, 2021; Mikalef & Gupta, 2021), but they either classify AI applications or treat AI capability as a general organisational asset. None specifies the marketing-specific mechanism through which AI is converted into performance, or the conditions under which that conversion succeeds or fails.

Second, the evidence base is concentrated in developed economies. Developing economies differ in ways that marketing theory has long recognised: markets are heterogeneous, infrastructure is uneven, resources are chronically scarce, and much economic activity is informal (Burgess & Steenkamp, 2006; Sheth, 2011; Webb et al., 2009). These features plausibly change how AI works in marketing. A related difficulty affects firms everywhere but is sharper where local technology industries are small: AI is increasingly accessed as a standardised service from global platforms. If competitors can buy the same tools, it is not obvious how AI can be a source of lasting advantage at all.

This paper addresses two questions. Through what mechanisms does AI capability improve marketing performance? And under what organisational and institutional conditions is this effect stronger or weaker, particularly in developing economies? To answer them, it synthesises the resource-based view (RBV), dynamic capabilities theory, the marketing capabilities perspective, and relationship marketing and customer equity theory into an integrated framework with nine propositions.

Methodologically, the paper is a conceptual article of the theory-synthesis type (Jaakkola, 2020; MacInnis, 2011). It does not review the AI-marketing literature exhaustively; it draws purposively on foundational works for each theory, on conceptual and review articles on AI in leading marketing, management and information systems journals (with emphasis on work since 2020), and on research on marketing in emerging and developing economies. A theory is retained only where it explains a specific link in the framework. The resource-based view, dynamic capabilities and marketing capabilities explain how AI becomes and remains a marketing capability. Relationship marketing and customer equity theory explain how that capability yields customer value and performance. Consumer-level theories serve only as micro-foundations for the customer value link, and each proposition states a single relationship so that it can be operationalised and tested.

The paper makes three contributions. First, it specifies a serial mechanism, from AI capability through marketing capabilities and customer value creation to marketing performance, which explains why AI adoption alone does not guarantee results. Second, it resolves the commoditisation problem by locating

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advantage in the bundle of complementary resources and dynamic capabilities rather than in AI technologies themselves. Third, it identifies boundary conditions, namely human–AI collaboration and institutional voids, that are particularly salient in developing economies and that existing frameworks do not address.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature on AI in marketing, including its critical strand, existing frameworks and the developing-economy context, and sets out the theoretical foundations. Section 3 presents the framework and propositions. Section 4 discusses implications, Section 5 sets out limitations and a research agenda, and Section 6 concludes.

2. LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1 AI technologies and marketing applications

AI has developed from symbolic, rule-based systems through statistical machine learning to deep learning and, most recently, large generative models (Jordan & Mitchell, 2015; LeCun et al., 2015; Russell & Norvig, 2021). Each stage has widened the range of marketing tasks that machines can perform. Machine learning supports segmentation, churn prediction, demand forecasting and customer lifetime value estimation (Wedel & Kannan, 2016). Recommendation systems and conversational agents personalise offers and service at scale (Pantano & Pizzi, 2020). Generative AI produces advertising copy, product descriptions, images and customer responses (Grewal et al., 2025; Kshetri et al., 2024).

Huang and Rust (2021) usefully distinguish mechanical AI, which automates repetitive tasks; thinking AI, which analyses data to support decisions; and feeling AI, which recognises and responds to emotion. The practitioner literature describes the resulting division of labour as collaborative intelligence, in which AI and people each do what they do best (Wilson & Daugherty, 2018), a theme that Kotler et al. (2021) place at the centre of what they call Marketing 5.0.

2.2 From tool to capability

Early work treated AI chiefly as a means of automating routine tasks and cutting costs. The information systems literature offers a caution here. Studies of earlier waves of information technology found that performance differences arose not from the technology but from the firm-specific capability to combine it with other resources (Bharadwaj, 2000). Mikalef and Gupta (2021) apply this logic to AI, conceptualising AI capability as a combination of tangible resources (data, technology, basic resources), human resources (technical and business skills) and intangible resources (such as coordination and organisational change capacity), and showing that it relates to firm performance.

Building on this work, the present paper defines *AI capability* as a firm's ability to acquire, combine and deploy AI technologies, data assets, AI-skilled people and human–AI work routines in support of marketing activity. The definition makes clear that AI capability is a bundle. It also separates AI capability from *marketing capabilities*, the processes through which firms understand markets and create and deliver customer value (Day, 1994; Vorhies & Morgan, 2005). The distinction matters, because the framework argues that AI capability creates value only by working through marketing capabilities.

2.3 The critical literature

The effects of AI on customers are not uniformly positive. People often prefer human judgement to algorithmic judgement, especially after seeing an algorithm err (Dietvorst et al., 2015). Consumers experience AI through data capture, classification, delegation and social interaction, and each of these can produce feelings of exploitation, misunderstanding, loss of agency or alienation (Puntoni et al., 2021). Data-intensive marketing raises privacy concerns that can reduce trust and performance (Martin &

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Murphy, 2017). Trust in AI depends on its perceived reliability, transparency and fit with the task (Glikson & Woolley, 2020), and ethical guidelines converge on transparency, fairness, non-maleficence, responsibility and privacy (Jobin et al., 2019). Generative AI adds concerns about accuracy, authenticity and misuse (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

Two implications follow for theory. First, the relationship between AI and customer value is conditional, not automatic, so a credible framework must specify when AI-enabled marketing creates value and when it destroys it. Second, governance and the design of human–AI interaction are not peripheral ethical matters but determinants of performance.

2.4 Existing frameworks and the gap

Table 1 compares three influential frameworks with the one developed here. Each makes an important contribution, but none combines a marketing-specific mechanism with explicit boundary conditions, and none addresses developing economies.

Table 1. ***Positioning of the framework against existing AI-marketing frameworks***

Framework	Core idea	Mechanism to performance	Boundary conditions	Developing-economy focus
Davenport et al. (2020)	Classifies AI by level of intelligence, task type and embodiment; sets a research agenda	Not specified as a causal chain	Discussed as issues (privacy, bias, ethics), not modelled	No
Huang & Rust (2021)	Mechanical, thinking and feeling AI mapped onto marketing research, strategy and action	Stage-based use of AI types across the marketing process	Not modelled as moderators	No
Mikalef & Gupta (2021)	AI capability as tangible, human and intangible resources; scale developed and tested	AI capability → organisational creativity and firm performance (not marketing-specific)	Limited	No
This paper	AI capability as a bundle whose value depends on marketing capabilities and complements	AI capability → marketing capabilities → customer value → marketing performance (P1–P4)	Complementary resources, dynamic marketing capabilities, ethical AI governance, human–AI collaboration (P5–P8)	Yes: institutional voids (P9); relationship-intensive markets (P8)

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Source: Authors, based on the cited works.

The gap is therefore not a shortage of frameworks but the absence of one that explains the full chain from AI capability to marketing performance, specifies which conditions strengthen or weaken each link, and considers settings where institutional support for AI-enabled marketing is weak.

2.5 The developing-economy context

Marketing in developing economies differs systematically from marketing in the settings where most theory was built. Sheth (2011) identifies market heterogeneity, sociopolitical governance, chronic shortage of resources, unbranded competition and inadequate infrastructure as defining features of emerging markets, and Burgess and Steenkamp (2006) argue that these contexts are a source of theoretical advance rather than a special case. Khanna and Palepu (1997) describe the resulting *institutional voids*, meaning the absence or weakness of intermediaries, information systems and enforcement mechanisms that firms elsewhere take for granted. A large share of economic activity also takes place in the informal economy (Webb et al., 2009).

These features bear directly on AI. AI depends on data, and data are thinner, noisier and less complete where transactions are informal, cash-based or undocumented. It depends on reliable connectivity, power and computing capacity. It depends on legal frameworks for data protection, whose enforcement capacity is still developing in many countries even where laws exist, as with Nigeria's Data Protection Act of 2023. At the same time, many markets in these economies are relationship-intensive, with exchange embedded in personal trust. This raises the question of whether AI that replaces human contact creates or erodes customer value in such markets. Because empirical research on AI in marketing in Sub-Saharan Africa remains limited, these questions are largely untheorised. The theoretical foundations that follow (Sections 2.6–2.10) and the framework in Section 3 address them.

2.6 The resource-based view and the commoditisation problem

The RBV holds that sustained competitive advantage arises from resources that are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991; Peteraf, 1993). Capabilities, meaning a firm's capacity to deploy resources in combination, are often a more durable source of advantage than individual assets (Amit & Schoemaker, 1993).

Applied to AI, the RBV exposes a tension. Many AI technologies are now available to any firm on subscription through cloud platforms and application programming interfaces. Technology that is equally available to all competitors is valuable but not rare, and it cannot by itself confer lasting advantage; this is the argument Carr (2003) made about information technology generally. The resolution lies in complementary assets (Teece, 1986) and resource orchestration (Sirmon et al., 2007). Advantage arises when AI is combined with resources that competitors cannot easily obtain, such as proprietary customer data, knowledge of local markets, skilled staff, and routines for using AI outputs in decisions. On this view, AI capability can meet the VRIN conditions even when the AI technologies within it do not. This argument is central to the framework, and it is especially relevant in developing economies, where firms typically buy rather than build AI.

2.7 Dynamic capabilities

Dynamic capabilities are a firm's capacity to integrate, build and reconfigure resources in response to a changing environment (Teece et al., 1997). Teece (2007) breaks them into sensing opportunities, seizing them, and reconfiguring the firm's asset base. In fast-moving markets, dynamic capabilities often take the form of simple, experiential routines rather than elaborate analysis (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000).

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In the framework, dynamic marketing capabilities are treated as higher-order capabilities that govern how quickly and effectively AI capability is translated into operational marketing capabilities, and how those capabilities are renewed as AI technologies and customer expectations change. They are therefore modelled as a moderator of the link between AI capability and marketing capabilities rather than as a separate stage in the causal chain. This choice avoids double-counting and fits the theory, which treats dynamic capabilities as capabilities that act on other capabilities.

2.8 Marketing capabilities

Day (1994) describes market-driven firms as distinguished by outside-in capabilities, above all market sensing and customer linking. Vorhies and Morgan (2005) show that marketing capabilities, including market information management, pricing, product development, communications and selling, are associated with superior performance. Morgan et al. (2009) further show that market orientation and marketing capabilities work as complementary assets, so that market knowledge improves performance when it is deployed through strong marketing processes. AI can strengthen each of these capabilities. It improves the breadth, speed and precision of market sensing (Wedel & Kannan, 2016), supports analytical and strategic decisions (Huang & Rust, 2021), and extends customer linking through personalised engagement at scale. The marketing capabilities perspective therefore supplies the link between AI capability and customer outcomes.

2.9 Relationship marketing and customer equity

Relationship marketing theory holds that trust and commitment are central to successful long-term exchange (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Customer equity theory treats customers as assets whose aggregate lifetime value drives firm value (Rust et al., 2004). Kumar and Reinartz (2016) connect the two by showing how value created for customers is converted into value to the firm through loyalty, lifetime value and advocacy. Customer experience research adds that value is created across the whole customer journey rather than at isolated touchpoints (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016), and relationship marketing research highlights the continuing role of trust and interaction quality (Payne & Frow, 2017). Together, these theories explain how AI-enabled marketing capabilities produce customer value, and how customer value produces marketing performance.

2.10 Consumer-level micro-foundations

The customer value link rests on individual responses. The Stimulus–Organism–Response model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) explains how environmental stimuli, here AI-enabled offers and interactions, shape internal states such as trust and perceived value, which then drive behaviour. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) explains how attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control shape intentions, for instance to accept an AI recommendation or use an AI service channel. These theories are not modelled as separate components of the framework. They serve as micro-foundations that explain why customer value creation, and in particular trust, mediates between marketing capabilities and performance.

3. THE INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK AND PROPOSITIONS

3.1 Overview

Figure 1 presents the framework. Its core is a serial chain in which AI capability strengthens marketing capabilities (P1), marketing capabilities create customer value (P2), and customer value drives marketing performance (P3), so that AI capability affects performance indirectly (P4). Five contingencies condition the chain. Complementary resources (P5) and dynamic marketing capabilities (P6) condition the conversion of AI capability into marketing capabilities. Ethical AI governance (P7) and human–AI

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collaboration (P8) condition whether AI-enabled marketing creates customer value. Institutional voids (P9) weaken the first link and capture the developing-economy boundary condition.

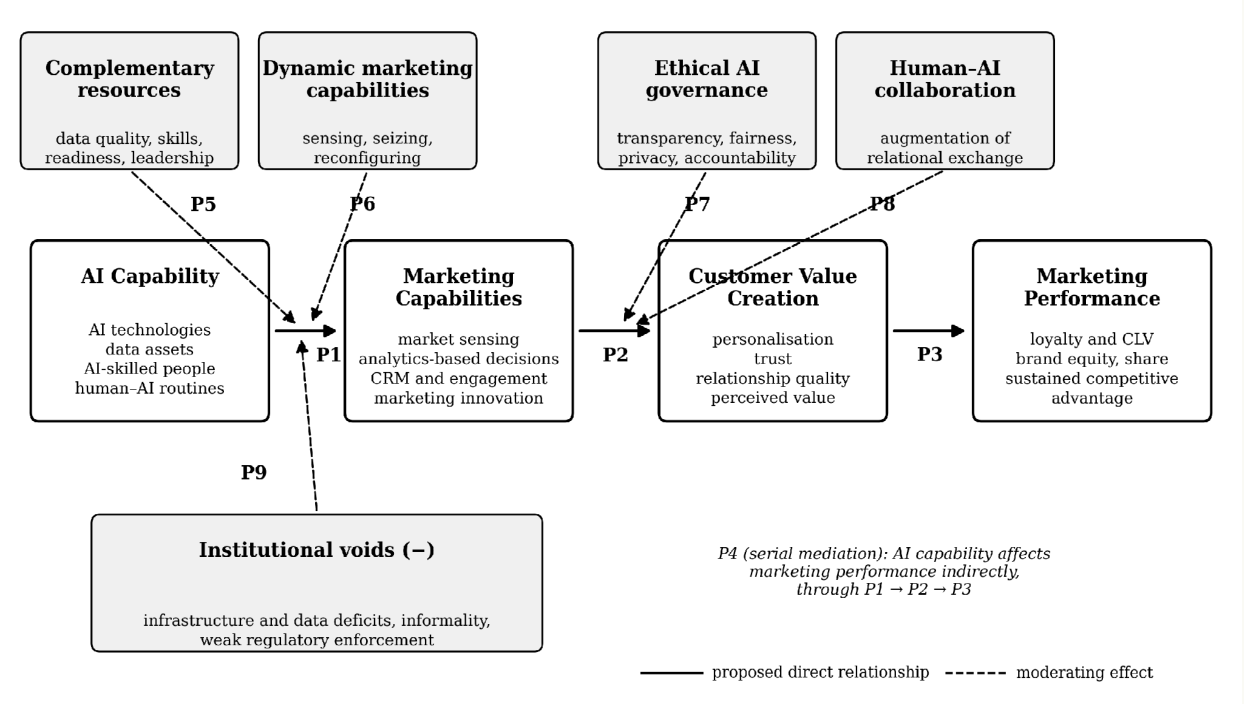


Figure 1. Integrated framework of AI as a strategic marketing capability

Note. Solid arrows denote proposed direct relationships; dashed arrows denote moderating effects on the relationship at which they point. Source: Authors.

3.2 The core mechanism

AI capability allows firms to collect and analyse more market data, faster and with finer resolution, than conventional methods permit. It improves market sensing by detecting patterns in customer behaviour, supports decisions through prediction, and enables personalised engagement at a scale that would otherwise be unaffordable (Davenport et al., 2020; Wedel & Kannan, 2016). Each of these effects enhances one of the marketing capabilities identified by Day (1994) and Vorhies and Morgan (2005).

P1. ***AI capability is positively related to a firm's marketing capabilities.***

Stronger marketing capabilities allow firms to understand customer needs more accurately and to design, communicate and deliver offers that fit them better. Customers experience this as more relevant offers, lower search and effort costs, more responsive service and, over time, greater confidence in the firm (Kumar & Reinartz, 2016; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

P2. ***Marketing capabilities are positively related to customer value creation.***

Customer value is the route through which marketing activity affects financial and market outcomes. Customers who receive superior value are more likely to remain loyal, to buy more and to recommend the firm, which raises customer lifetime value and customer equity (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Rust et al., 2004).

P3. ***Customer value creation is positively related to marketing performance.***

Taken together, these arguments imply that AI capability does not improve performance directly. AI outputs such as predictions, segments and generated content have value only when they are used in marketing processes that create value for customers. This explains why firms that adopt similar AI technologies can achieve very different results, and it is consistent with the capabilities literature, which

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locates performance effects in how resources are deployed through marketing processes (Morgan et al., 2009; Vorhies & Morgan, 2005).

> **P4.** ***The effect of AI capability on marketing performance is mediated serially by marketing capabilities and customer value creation.***

3.3 Organisational contingencies

Section 2.6 argued that where AI technologies are widely available, advantage depends on the resources with which they are combined. High-quality proprietary data give models better inputs; AI-skilled staff can adapt tools to the firm's needs; organisational readiness and leadership support ensure that AI outputs are acted upon (Mikalef & Gupta, 2021; Sirmon et al., 2007). Without these resources, the same technologies produce generic outputs that improve marketing capabilities little. The argument implies that the importance of complementary resources increases as AI technologies become more standardised.

> **P5.** ***Complementary resources (data quality, AI-related skills, organisational readiness and leadership support) positively moderate the relationship between AI capability and marketing capabilities.***

AI technologies, customer expectations and competitors' practices change quickly. Firms with strong dynamic marketing capabilities sense when new AI applications become relevant, commit resources to them, and reconfigure marketing processes to absorb them (Teece, 2007). Firms without such capabilities may acquire AI but leave existing processes unchanged, so that AI capability is only partly translated into better marketing capabilities.

> **P6.** ***Dynamic marketing capabilities positively moderate the relationship between AI capability and marketing capabilities.***

Section 2.3 showed that AI-enabled marketing can reduce customer value when customers perceive it as intrusive, opaque or unfair (Martin & Murphy, 2017; Puntoni et al., 2021). Ethical AI governance, meaning transparent data practices, fairness checks, privacy protection and clear accountability for automated decisions (Jobin et al., 2019), reduces these risks and supports trust (Glikson & Woolley, 2020). Where governance is weak, the same marketing capabilities may produce short-term gains at the expense of trust.

> **P7.** ***Ethical AI governance positively moderates the relationship between marketing capabilities and customer value creation.***

3.4 Developing-economy conditions

In many developing-economy markets, exchange is embedded in personal relationships, and trust is built through repeated face-to-face interaction. AI deployed to replace this interaction may reduce the perceived care and reliability that customers value (Dietvorst et al., 2015; Puntoni et al., 2021). AI deployed to augment it, for example by giving sales staff better information about customers or handling routine queries so that staff can concentrate on relationships, may strengthen it (Wilson & Daugherty, 2018). The framework therefore proposes that the form of human–AI collaboration conditions whether AI-enabled marketing capabilities create customer value, and that this effect is stronger in relationship-intensive markets.

> **P8.** ***Human–AI collaboration, in which AI augments rather than replaces human customer interaction, positively moderates the relationship between marketing capabilities and customer value creation, and this effect is stronger in relationship-intensive markets.***

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Institutional voids impede the conversion of AI capability into marketing capabilities in several ways (Khanna & Palepu, 1997). Unreliable power and connectivity interrupt data flows and AI services. Informality leaves much customer activity unrecorded, so that data are incomplete and models are poorly calibrated to local markets (Webb et al., 2009). Weak enforcement of data protection lowers customers' willingness to share data and raises firms' reputational risk. Scarce specialist skills make it harder to adapt imported AI tools to local conditions (Sheth, 2011). Under these conditions, a given level of AI capability yields a smaller improvement in marketing capabilities.

P9. ***Institutional voids negatively moderate the relationship between AI capability and marketing capabilities.***

Table 2 summarises the propositions and indicates how each could be tested.

Table 2. ***Summary of propositions***

No.	Proposition	Type	Illustrative test
P1	AI capability → marketing capabilities (+)	Direct	Firm survey; AI capability scale adapted from Mikalef & Gupta (2021)
P2	Marketing capabilities → customer value creation (+)	Direct	Matched firm–customer data
P3	Customer value creation → marketing performance (+)	Direct	Customer metrics linked to objective performance data
P4	AI capability → performance via P1–P3	Serial mediation	Longitudinal structural model with indirect-effect tests
P5	Complementary resources strengthen P1	Moderation	Interaction terms; comparison of firms using the same AI tools
P6	Dynamic marketing capabilities strengthen P1	Moderation	Panel data on AI adoption and process change
P7	Ethical AI governance strengthens P2	Moderation	Governance audit combined with customer trust measures
P8	Augmenting human–AI collaboration strengthens P2, more so in relationship-intensive markets	Moderation (three-way)	Field experiment or multi-market survey
P9	Institutional voids weaken P1	Moderation (–)	Cross-country or cross-regional comparison

Source: Authors.

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4. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Theoretical implications

The framework makes three theoretical contributions. First, it specifies the mechanism through which AI affects marketing performance, extending strategic AI frameworks (Davenport et al., 2020; Huang & Rust, 2021) and general AI capability research (Mikalef & Gupta, 2021) by placing marketing capabilities and customer value creation between AI capability and outcomes. This explains the common observation that similar AI investments yield dissimilar results.

Second, it addresses the commoditisation problem that the RBV raises for AI. By treating AI capability as a bundle and making complementary resources and dynamic marketing capabilities explicit moderators, it shows how AI can contribute to sustained advantage even when AI technologies themselves are widely available (Carr, 2003; Teece, 1986). The framework thereby positions AI not as an isolated technological innovation but as one element in a system of resources and capabilities.

Third, it brings developing economies into the theory of AI-enabled marketing through two boundary conditions. Institutional voids weaken the first link of the chain, and human–AI collaboration conditions the second. These conditions follow from established characteristics of emerging markets (Khanna & Palepu, 1997; Sheth, 2011), and they suggest that theory built in developed economies may overstate the returns to AI adoption and understate the importance of how AI is combined with human interaction.

4.2 Managerial implications

For managers, the main implication is that buying AI tools is the beginning rather than the end of building AI capability. Budgets for AI should include investment in data quality, staff skills, and the routines through which AI outputs inform marketing decisions (P5). Because competitors can often buy the same tools, managers should ask what proprietary data, local knowledge or relationships the firm can combine with AI that others cannot easily copy.

Managers should also design the role of AI in customer relationships deliberately. In relationship-intensive markets, using AI to support staff rather than replace them is likely to protect trust (P8). Transparent data practices and clear accountability for automated decisions should be treated as part of the customer value proposition rather than as compliance costs (P7). Finally, managers should monitor marketing capabilities and customer value metrics, not only AI adoption metrics, because the framework predicts that AI improves performance only through these intermediate outcomes (P4).

4.3 Policy implications

The framework suggests that policy can raise the returns to AI adoption by narrowing institutional voids (P9). Priorities include reliable broadband and power, effective enforcement of data protection law, including Nigeria's Data Protection Act of 2023, and support for the digital records that informal and small enterprises need to benefit from AI. Because complementary resources are decisive (P5), public support for SMEs should cover skills and data management as well as access to tools. Universities, polytechnics and professional bodies should incorporate AI capability, analytics and responsible AI governance into marketing curricula and professional standards.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

As a conceptual paper, this study does not test its propositions, and the framework is necessarily selective. It focuses on firm-level mechanisms and treats consumer-level processes as micro-foundations; it does not model feedback loops, although marketing performance is likely to fund further AI investment over time. These limitations suggest several directions for research.

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First, the propositions should be tested using validated measures. AI capability could be operationalised by adapting the scale of Mikalef and Gupta (2021) to marketing, and marketing capabilities by using the measures of Vorhies and Morgan (2005). Because much existing research relies on cross-sectional, single-respondent surveys, multi-source and longitudinal designs that combine managerial reports with customer data and objective performance indicators would reduce common method bias and support stronger causal inference.

Second, cross-country comparisons, for example between developing economies with different levels of infrastructure and regulatory capacity, would test P9 directly. Studies of SMEs and informal enterprises would establish whether the framework applies beyond formal, larger firms. Qualitative research in relationship-intensive markets could clarify how human–AI collaboration shapes trust (P8).

Third, generative AI raises questions about authenticity, creativity and trust in AI-generated brand communication that deserve specific attention (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Grewal et al., 2025). Finally, the framework could be extended to sustainability outcomes by adding environmental and social performance, including the environmental footprint of AI itself and its effects on inclusion, to the outcome construct.

6. CONCLUSION

AI is changing how firms sense markets, make decisions and engage customers, but its effect on marketing performance is neither automatic nor uniform. This paper has argued that AI improves marketing performance by strengthening marketing capabilities, which create customer value, which in turn drives performance. Because AI technologies are increasingly available to all, advantage lies in the bundle of complementary resources and dynamic capabilities with which they are combined. Ethical governance and human–AI collaboration determine whether AI-enabled marketing creates or erodes customer value, and institutional voids limit how far AI capability can be converted into marketing capability in developing economies.

For firms in developing economies, the implication is that competing through AI means building capabilities rather than acquiring tools. For researchers, the nine propositions offer a basis for testing when and how AI creates marketing value in contexts that current theory has largely overlooked.

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