Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing

Harnessing artificial intelligence (AI) for interactive branding

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Received 24 March 2025
Revised 20 September 2025
13 December 2025
Accepted 21 December 2025

Abstract

Purpose – Artificial Intelligence (AI) is playing a transformative role in branding, bolstering competitive advantages, and enhancing consumer-brand relationships. As organisations embrace AI, interactive branding is reshaping value co-creation and customer engagement. The existing literature on branding with AI is vast and fragmented, limiting a cohesive and unified view of AI-driven interactive branding that can fully unlock its potential. Thus, the present study aims to address existing gaps and offered an integrated view of branding in the era of AI.

Design/methodology/approach – The present study employs the SPAR-4-SLR framework, which encapsulates both quantitative performance mapping and qualitative intellectual structure mapping. Thematic and content analysis of the topical clusters reveal the breadth and depth of the domain, with poignant dimensions to guide future research and practice.

Findings – This study provides a comprehensive overview of AI-driven interactive branding, highlighting emerging trends, key research areas, and relevant future research directions. The intellectual landscape of AI-driven branding emphasises dynamic consumer-brand interactions and immersive consumer-brand engagements.

Originality/value – The present study pioneers in unpacking a holistic conceptual framework on AI-based interactive branding, highlighting both individual and collective dynamics.

Keywords Branding, Interactive marketing, Artificial intelligence, Consumer-brand relationships, Personalisation, Review

Paper type Literature review

1. Introduction

Interactive marketing is transitioning from transactional interaction to emotional engagement through immersive brand experiences, wherein consumers and firms co-create brand value (Wang, 2024). The key facilitator of transformative branding is Artificial Intelligence (AI), which enhances brand-consumer interactions through dynamic personalisation and real-time responsiveness. Emerging immersive environments, such as the Metaverse and Virtual Reality (VR) platforms, are reshaping consumer brand interactional experiences (Bruni *et al.*, 2025). AI can promptly engage and foster a deeper emotional connection with the consumers (Peltier *et al.*, 2024). In the AI era, brands connect with customers at multiple touchpoints, including self-driving cars, anthropomorphic chatbots, and personalised recommendations (Kozinets, 2022; Longoni and Cian, 2022). Leading brands, such as Google Nest and Tesla, are utilising AI to reinforce brand stories and empower consumers.

AI is a catalyst for driving dialogic consumer-brand interactions (Kozinets, 2022; Longoni and Cian, 2022), reshaping brand positioning (Huang and Rust, 2022), fuelling innovation (Hoffman *et al.*, 2022), novel engagement (Miao *et al.*, 2022), and long-term relationships through immersive engagement (Kumar *et al.*, 2021). Regardless of recognising the importance of AI in branding (Howard and O'Sullivan, 2024), comprehensive reviews on

Funding: We confirm that no funding was received for the present study.

Conflict of interest: All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing
© Emerald Publishing Limited
e-ISSN: 2040-7130
p-ISSN: 2040-7122
DOI 10.1108/JRIM-02-2025-0076

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interactive branding remain limited (Mustak *et al*., 2021). The existing literature focused on nuanced topics, such as AI-powered interaction brands (Peltier *et al*., 2025), consumer participation (Wang, 2021), strategy (Deryl *et al*., 2025), and personalisation (Gao and Liu, 2023), yet lacks a cohesive view of interactive branding systems. The extant literature is vast, diverse, and fragmented. The fragmented literature presents a dual challenge: a lack of a theoretical framework and a myopic perspective for practitioners, leading to consumer skepticism and missed value-creation opportunities. Without a comprehensive, integrative, and holistic framework, the following research questions remain unanswered.

RQ1. What is the performance of key scientific actors in advancing the domain of AI-driven interactive branding?

RQ2. What is the intellectual structure of the AI-driven interactive branding research domain?

RQ3. What are the future research directions in AI-driven interactive branding?

Thus, to answer the above research questions and to resolve the dyadic dilemma, the present study systematically integrates and offers a holistic view of AI-driven branding. The present study aims to map the intellectual structure of the domain, identify key thematic dimensions, develop an integrated conceptual framework, and suggest key future research directions. Table 1 outlines the topical gaps, while Table 2 outlines the methodological gaps, highlighting the need of study. The present study pioneers in blending quantitative (performance analysis) and qualitative (thematic) analysis for mapping the AI-driven interactive branding research domain. The present study makes a two-fold novel contribution, first, the use of a vital review protocol like SPAR-4-SLR, and second, the development of a holistic framework. The present study situates AI-driven branding within the context of interactive marketing, emphasising immersive co-creation over passive communication.

The research paper is systematically structured into eight sections. Section 2 contains the conceptual background, and the methodology is provided in Section 3. The thematic analysis of RQ1 is contained in Section 4. In sections 5 and 6, the intellectual structure mapping and conceptual framework behind RQ2 are provided. Section 7 addresses the implications of the research, and Section 8 provides a conclusion to the study and outlines future research directions, all of which answer RQ3.

2. Conceptual background

2.1 AI and interactive brand equity

Brand equity rests on brand-focused marketing and consumer perceptions (Keller, 2013). Brand equity arises from the co-created value through consistent consumer-brand interactions and shared content (Wang, 2024). AI reinforces equity through personalised experiences, augmenting brand visibility, boosting positive perceptions (Yuan and Gao, 2022), and enhancing consumer-brand interactive engagement (Varsha *et al*., 2021). AI is often viewed as an efficiency tool while participatory dynamics of AI are oversighted (Huang and Rust, 2022). Seamless adoption of AI in consumer brand interactive engagement can lead to a sustainable competitive advantage.

2.2 AI in interactive Brand Management

Brand management involves interactive consumer-brand cocreation of content and value (Wang, 2021; Huang and Rust, 2022). In the AI era, AI manifests in interactive forms such as chatbots, virtual assistants, and avatars (Miao *et al*., 2022), which enhance consumer brand interactions by collecting continuous consumer feedback and facilitating live strategic variations (Kohli *et al*., 2023). AI-driven brand interactions build long-term customer relationships through customer-focused communication (Campbell and Price, 2021; Li *et al*.,

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Table 1. Topical gaps

Authors	Name of paper	Adoption of AI in branding	Customer scepticism in AI acceptance	Impact of text analytics on brand strategy	Assessing the effects of earned, owned, and paid media using AI on brand positioning	Role of UGC and FGC on brand image and brand identity	Intelligent agent technologies affect brand culture	Transition of power into the Customer's hands through content Co-creation	Role of AI in enriching consumer-brand relationships
Campbell and Price (2021)	From Data to Action: How Marketers can leverage AI	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Guerreiro *et al.* (2016)	A text mining-based review of cause-related marketing literature	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
Kumar *et al.* (2016)	Research framework, strategies, and applications of intelligent agent technologies (IATS) in marketing	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N
King *et al.* (2014)	What we know and don't know about online word-of-mouth: a review and synthesis of the literature	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N
Mustak *et al.* (2021)	Artificial Intelligence in Marketing: Bibliometric Analysis, Topic Modeling and Research Agenda	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Varsha *et al.* (2021)	The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Branding: A Bibliometric Analysis (1982–2019)	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
Shahriari *et al.* (2020)	The Meta-Analysis of Neuro-Marketing Studies: Past, Present and Future	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Rana *et al.* (2022)	Reinforcing customer journey through artificial intelligence: a review and research agenda	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N

(*continued*)

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Table 1. Continued

Authors	Name of paper	Adoption of AI in branding	Customer scepticism in AI acceptance	Impact of text analytics on brand strategy	Assessing the effects of earned, owned, and paid media using AI on brand positioning	Role of UGC and FGC on brand image and brand identity	Intelligent agent technologies affect brand culture	Transition of power into the Customer's hands through content Co-creation	Role of AI in enriching consumer-brand relationships
Moro and Rita (2018)	Brand strategies in social media in hospitality and tourism	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Bilro *et al.* (2019)	A consumer engagement systematic review: synthesis and research agenda	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
Present Study	*Comprehensive Review*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*

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Table 2. Methodological gaps

Authors	Name of paper	Literature review paper	Reviewing AI in branding literature	Used AI tools for review	Science mapping	Keyword Co-occurrence	Co-citation network analysis	Bibliographic coupling	SLR	SPAR-4-SLR protocol
Campbell and Price (2021)	From Data to Action: How Marketers can leverage AI	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Guerreiro *et al.* (2016)	A text mining-based review of cause-related marketing literature	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N
Kumar *et al.* (2016)	Research framework, strategies, and applications of intelligent agent technologies (IATS) in marketing	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
King *et al.* (2014)	What we know and don't know about online word-of-mouth: a review and synthesis of the literature	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Mustak *et al.* (2021)	Artificial Intelligence in Marketing: Bibliometric Analysis, Topic Modeling and Research Agenda	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
Varsha *et al.* (2021)	The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Branding: A Bibliometric Analysis (1982–2019)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Shahriari *et al.* (2020)	The Meta-Analysis of Neuro-Marketing Studies: Past, Present and Future	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
Rana *et al.* (2022)	Reinforcing customer journey through artificial intelligence: a review and research agenda	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Moro and Rita (2018)	Brand strategies in social media in hospitality and tourism	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N
Bilro *et al.* (2019)	A consumer engagement systematic review: synthesis and research agenda	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N
Present Study	*Comprehensive Review*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*	*Y*

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2024). Although AI is known for analytics and automation (Davenport *et al.*, 2020), successful AI-driven branding must prioritise authenticity and trust (Smith *et al.*, 2012). AI is repositioning as a brand partner in fostering consumer brand relationships (Wang, 2024).

2.3 AI and interactive brand loyalty

Brand loyalty is characterised by repeat purchases and a long-term, positive attitude towards the brand. Recently, brand loyalty has been reinvented with the help of AI, driven by consistent interaction across multiple digital platforms within the branding ecosystem (Wang, 2021). AI helps pre-empt consumer needs through predictive analytics (Wei *et al.*, 2025), which in turn facilitates the building of emotional bonds through personalisation. However, there is a risk that higher levels of personalisation may raise concerns about privacy and manipulation, resulting in consumer distrust and diminished brand loyalty (Kumar *et al.*, 2021). Hence, AI-enhanced brand loyalty is a dynamic construct, thriving on transparent, team-based, and credible interactions that rely significantly on the quality of disclosure and engagement (Wang, 2024).

2.4 Theoretical underpinnings

In the existing literature, numerous theoretical lenses have been employed to study the phenomenon. The Consumer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) theory views AI as a driver of loyalty (Keller, 2013), whereas the Consumer-Brand Relationship (CBR) emphasises value co-creation through emotional connection. The Parasocial Interaction Theory posits that AI is an anthropomorphic character, whereas the Transformed Social Interactions theory reveals how avatars facilitate real-world, human-like conversations. The flow theory associates AI branding with immersive experiences, while the CASA theory explains the attribution of human qualities to AI agents. The fragmented application of these theories underscores the need to integrate them for a more comprehensive understanding of AI-driven branding (Deryl *et al.*, 2023). The present study adopts an integrative framework-based approach to understand the integration of technology and interactive branding, drawing on the ADO framework.

3. Research methodology

A systematic literature review synthesises the extant literature to identify gaps and build a credible research agenda (Hulland and Houston, 2020). The present study adopts the SPAR-4-SLR review protocol, comprising three steps: Assembling, Arranging, and Assessing, to dissect the theoretical landscape of AI-driven branding. The aim is to build a conceptual framework that explains the nuances of interactive consumer-brand relations (Palmatier *et al.*, 2018). Scientific mapping and intellectual structure mapping are integrated into the systematic process (Paul *et al.*, 2021). Science mapping encompasses the breadth and depth of the domain, while intellectual structure mapping qualitatively analyses the thematic and theoretical landscape of the domain (Donthu *et al.*, 2021).

3.1 Assembling

The assembling phase consists of two phases, namely Identification and Acquisition, which help to retrieve the right dataset for review. Peer-reviewed journal articles form the core of the review dataset (Paul *et al.*, 2021). The bibliometric database Scopus was used to retrieve the data owing to its wide coverage of interdisciplinary management areas, such as marketing, management, information systems, and technology, the main foundational areas of AI-based branding. Scopus has been a widely used metadata source for intellectual mapping and thematic analysis in the design of SPAR-4-SLR reviews (Donthu *et al.*, 2021; Paul *et al.*, 2021). To map both the evolution and recency of the AI-driven branding domain, data spanning the years 2000–2024 was chosen. A total of 4,325 documents were obtained after applying a comprehensive search strategy.

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The keywords used for searching the relevant literature include AI-related terms (e.g. "Artificial Intelligence," "AI," "machine learning," "chatbot," "NLP") alongside branding terms (e.g. "branding," "brand equity," "consumer–brand relationship") using Boolean operators. Keywords are inspired by prior research on AI and Branding streams (Mustak *et al.*, 2021), supported by initial groundwork, and further confirmed through citation tracing to ensure that significant work is not overlooked. Thus, the keyword strategy promises transparency and replicability, as outlined in the SPAR-4-SLR guidelines (Paul *et al.*, 2021).

3.2 Arranging

The arranging phase includes two sub-phases, organisation and purification. During the data organisation process, documents were filtered based on language, time period, subject area, source, and document type. The selected studies were written in English, published in peer-reviewed journals between 2000 and 2024. The purification phase narrowed down the relevant dataset through careful manual screening, like forward and backward citation tracking, resulting in a final dataset of 414 articles. Data quality was ensured by strict inclusion and exclusion criteria. Forth-and-back citation tracking reduces the possibility of exclusion bias, thus ensuring methodological rigour.

3.3 Assessing

The final phase is assessment, which focuses on evaluating and analysing data through an inductive, grounded approach to identify the thematic dimensionality of the research domain (Fahimnia *et al.*, 2015). Performance mapping measures trends in publications (RQ1). Content and thematic analysis of network structures uncovers supporting theories and essential constructs (RQ2) (Donthu *et al.*, 2021). The analysis primarily used Microsoft Excel, Biblioshiny, and VOSViewer (Van Eck and Waltman, 2011) to visualise correlations between documents, keywords, and themes. The present study extends beyond mere mapping to an interpretive synthesis, comparing themes to highlight complementarities, tensions, and underexplored areas, resulting in a coherent conceptual framework (RQ3) rather than a fragmented catalogue.

4. Thematic analysis

The thematic analysis of AI-driven branding discerns the dimensionality and conceptual canvas of the domain. The R program code, which entailed centrality and densities of literature themes, resulted in a strategic diagram as depicted in Figure 1. The centre algorithm organises the themes into four quadrants. The upper-right quadrant exhibits motor themes, with artificial intelligence playing a significant role in driving consumer behaviour and trust (Labrecque *et al.*, 2024). The top-left quadrant encompasses themes such as niche e-commerce and augmented reality marketing, which are less established but are being actively developed. Themes that are new and partially existing, such as brand and customer engagement, depict low centrality and density in the lower-left quadrant. The bottom-right quadrant highlights emerging themes, including AI methods, machine learning, and NLP that may shape future research (Dairo and Szucs, 2025).

The strategic map emphasises the future prospects of AI-based branding research. Personalisation instrumentalises satisfaction and loyalty (Gao and Liu, 2023), yet privacy impacts trust and interaction (Yuan and Gao, 2022), which represents a trade-off between opportunities and challenges of AI. According to consumer-brand relationship theory, AI can be an interactive co-creator. Concomitant AI in developing brand perceptions offers a theoretical gap for advancing AI-based branding. Figure 1 illustrates overlapping themes in complex AI for branding. The data-driven approach bridges the big data and social media branding. The cross-quarter positioning suggests the potential for theoretical convergence.

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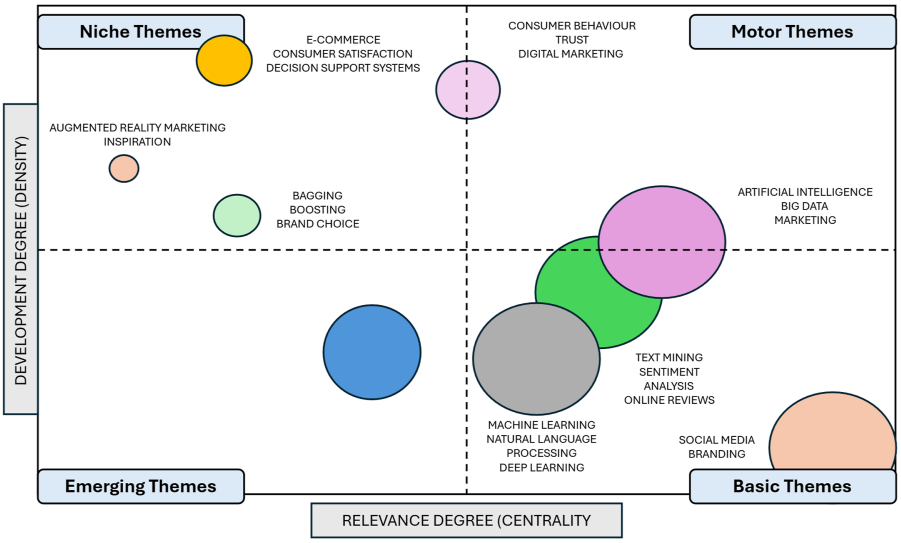


Figure 1. Thematic analysis

Descriptive thematic analysis outlines the intellectual architecture of the discipline, revealing clusters, disaggregation, and dynamic themes to facilitate the conceptual development.

5. Intellectual structure mapping

Mappings of intellectual structures are useful in defining the history, current state, and future of AI-powered branding, utilising tools such as keyword co-occurrence and bibliographic coupling. Network analysis (Louvain algorithm) identifies the clusters both conceptually (through keywords) and intellectually (through documents) that form the foundation of the conceptual framework (Verma and Yadav, 2021). The Louvain algorithm identified modularity of the structural knowledge groups (Pilkington and Meredith, 2009). Centrality, edge thickness, and density metrics depict the strength of connections within and across themes (Leydesdorff and Vaughan, 2006). The emergent themes address the research gaps identified in Tables 1 and 2, serving as the building blocks of the conceptual framework (Figure 2).

5.1 Co-occurrence network analysis

The co-occurrence analysis reveals the conceptual foundations and portrays four broader conceptual building blocks discussed below. The VOS Viewer software visualised the network structure to underpin the structure of nodes. Network structure maps the strength and interconnectedness of network nodes through the Composed Occurrences (OC), Degree (DG), Average Publication Year (APY), and Average Citation (AC) metrics. OC represents the frequency of the keywords, DG reflects the relationship with other keywords, APY represents the recency, and AC represents the influence on the research field.

5.1.1 Transformative branding with AI. The first theme highlights the use of AI tools, including machine learning (ML), natural language processing (NLP), deep learning, user-generated content, and social media analytics, in powering interactive branding. The most widely used techniques are machine learning (OC 56), natural language processing (OC 16), user-generated content (OC 14), deep learning (OC 11), and social media analytics (OC 11). There is the largest connectedness with machine learning (DG 31), followed by the user-

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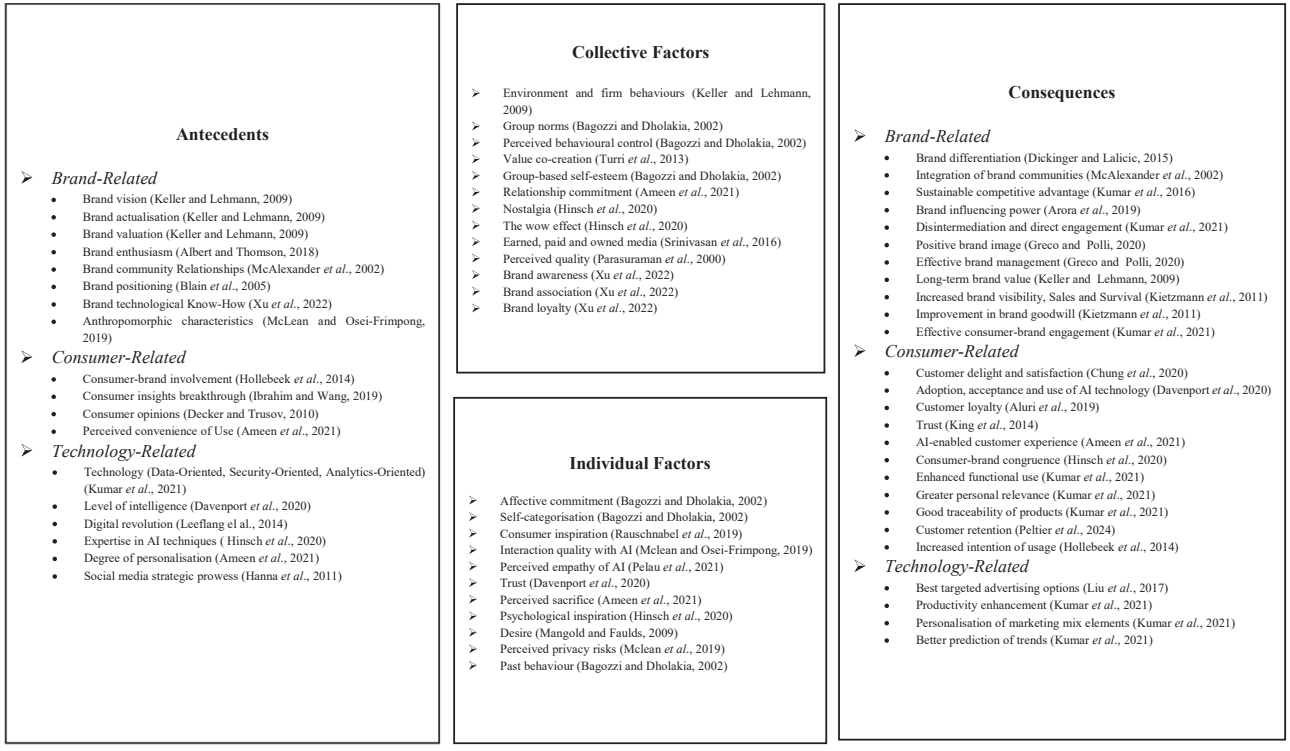


Figure 2. The conceptual framework for AI in branding

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generated content (DG 21). User-generated content (UGC) is frequently cited (AC 249) keyword hinting at the co-creation of interactive branding with users. AI tools, like ML and NLP, utilise UGC for transformational consumer-brand interactive content (Ma and Sun, 2020). AI unlocks opportunities as an interactive marketing facilitator and co-creator of value, while posing a threat of over-automation.

5.1.2 Unlocking brand communities' potential with AI. The second theme highlights the role of AI interventions at the brand community level to reshape branding. The keywords used in the theme are social media, consumer behaviour, and brand community. The most frequently used concept in this cluster includes social media (OC 70), and the highly cited concept is brand community (AC 270). The strong interconnectedness between concepts in the brand community cluster highlights the abundant research potential. The theme emphasises the role of digital platforms as interactive spaces where brand communities flourish, consumers co-create content, and interactions are intensified. Digital brand communities unlock data-driven themes in an immersive environment, prompting the need for AI interventions to unlock the full potential.

5.1.3 Powering brand interactive engagement with AI-powered analytics. The third theme emphasises the significance of text, data, and content analytics in informing brand insights, encompassing five key areas: text mining, sentiment analysis, Facebook, online reviews, and content analysis (Peltier *et al.*, 2024). The most popular keyword is text mining (OC 59), with high connectedness (DG 28). Online reviews pivot consumer insights, whereas the sentiment analysis powers brand insights (DG 19; OC 27). The most frequently cited keywords are Facebook (AC 334) and content analysis (AC 78), indicating interactive engagement on social media platforms. Text mining and sentiment analysis involve a series of feedback cycles that enable active interaction (Graham and Stough, 2025). AI-powered analytics can be utilised in consumer co-creation and trust-building efforts.

5.1.4 Creation of brand experience with AI. Theme 4 focuses on creating brand experience with AI. The fourth theme encompasses keywords such as customer experience, big data, marketing, and AI. This theme highlights the role of AI in enhancing the brand experience. The use of AI-powered immersive tools, such as avatar marketing, generates experiential value, thereby fostering a deeper brand connection (Miao *et al.*, 2022). Immersive technologies, such as AR/VR, can foster trust and advocacy.

5.2 Bibliographic coupling network analysis

The present intellectual mapping identifies emerging themes for the future that address previously unexplored areas in AI-driven branding, aligning with the gaps highlighted in Table 1. The emergent themes suggest future research directions and enhance the proposed agenda for AI-driven brand interactions.

5.2.1 AI acceptance in branding. Business markets are becoming increasingly competitive with the use of AI-powered tools to enhance the customer-brand experience. The extant literature has utilised the lens of the theory of Consumer-Brand Relationships and Trust-Commitment Theory to understand the acceptance of AI in branding. Brand communities co-create customer-brand relationships on social media (McAlexander *et al.*, 2002). Analytical AI generates insights into online brand community behaviour (Davenport *et al.*, 2020) for enhancing brand acceptance (Pelau *et al.*, 2021). AI enhances the customer purchasing process experience (Kumar *et al.*, 2021) through personalised recommendations (Ameen *et al.*, 2021). AR reinvented brand experiences (Campbell and Price, 2021) by spatial visualisation of products or services in real-time (Beck and Crie, 2018). Voice assistants such as Amazon Alexa increase consumer brand interactivity (McLean and Osei-Frimpong, 2019). AI utility perception depends on the confidence level, perceived empathy, and consumer willingness.

5.2.2 AI analytics and brand strategy. AI analytics powers the brand strategy. Social media analytics optimise coherent consumer-brand interaction. AI-driven analytics

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supplements brand image (Költringer and Dickinger, 2015). The Social Influencer Index enables brands to stay ahead of the competition in promotional campaigns and measures the impact of consumer social media activity on brand perceptions (Graham and Stough, 2025). The Correlated Topic Model (CTM) and Emotional Text Mining (ETM) techniques play a significant role in discerning brand identity (Greco and Polli, 2020). Text and sentiment analytics are becoming pivotal in shaping brand strategies (Shareef *et al.*, 2019). Neuroscientific tools identify the right brand personality for enhanced brand value (Hu *et al.*, 2019).

5.2.3 Role of user-generated content (UGC) and firm-generated content (FGC) in branding. UGC and FGC bear an impression on brand image and brand advocacy (Smith *et al.*, 2012). Theoretical lenses like Cognitive Dissonance Theory, the Social Network Theory (Borgatti and Foster, 2003), and the Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould and Thompson, 2005) offered explanations for the role of UGC/FGC in branding. UGC fosters value and content co-creation. Online reviews have a significant influence on consumer perceptions (Lee *et al.*, 2015), and FGC reinforces these positive perceptions (Kumar *et al.*, 2016). Both owned and earned media complement to improve brand awareness and buying intention (Colicev *et al.*, 2018). AI-driven analytics maps the impact of UGC/FGC on consumer-brand relationships and customer engagement (Srinivasan *et al.*, 2016).

5.2.4 Intelligent Agent Technologies (IAT) and branding. Intelligent Agent Technologies (IAT) curate consumer-focused digital campaigns (Kumar *et al.*, 2016) and channel consumer-brand interactions on virtual platforms. Theoretical lenses like the Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad and Wright, 1994) and the Diffusion of Innovation (Rogers, 1995) explain the role of IAT in branding. IAT helps brands to drive positive consumer perceptions, influence public opinion, build cultural experiences, and restore brand goodwill (Carah and Angus, 2018). IAT-driven brand initiatives utilise deep learning to highlight the firm's Dynamic Service Analytics Capabilities (Martin *et al.*, 2017). Brands use intelligent AI agents as partners for developing memorable and immersive brand environments (Akter *et al.*, 2020).

5.2.5 AI for consumer-brand engagement. AI can initiate and sustain consumer-brand interactions through content co-creation. Theoretical foundations, such as the Theory of Buyer Behaviour, Uses and Gratification Theory, Two-Factor Theory, and the Theory of Anthropomorphism, provide the premise for AI in consumer brand engagement. Sentiment analysis systematically captures consumer insight (Paschen *et al.*, 2019), and unstructured content is structured through linguistic computing (Poria *et al.*, 2014). AI enhances consumer-brand interactions (Hoyer *et al.*, 2020), leading to satisfied consumers (Bilro *et al.*, 2019). AI-driven branding co-creates consumer-brand interaction through real-time consumer participation (Buhalis and Sinarta, 2019). Immersive technologies support seamless customer journeys through memorable brand experiences (Shao, 2025; Wedel *et al.*, 2020).

5.2.6 AI for brand positioning and consumer-brand relationships. AI tools and techniques consistently shape brand positioning through recognised theories, such as Cognitive Dissonance, Consumer–Brand Relationships, Hierarchy of Effects, and Commitment–Trust Theory. Text mining and ML gauge consumers' enthusiasm for a brand's positioning strategy (Ma and Sun, 2020) and in building human-like brand associations through brand evangelism (Aluri *et al.*, 2019; Chen *et al.*, 2015). For social media marketing, NLP enables brands to measure consumer engagement levels (Lee *et al.*, 2018). Higher engagement results in better brand knowledge and fosters a positive attitude towards brand efforts (Langaro *et al.*, 2018), thereby ensuring successful AI-driven brand interactions (Liu *et al.*, 2021). Effective AI-driven positioning strategies enhance brand extensions (Völckner and Sattler, 2006) by aligning the brand's personality with the consumer's self-concept (Xu *et al.*, 2022).

The themes derived from network analysis represent a higher-order consolidation of existing relevant literature in the domain of AI-driven interactive branding. Each thematic

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cluster develops its own nuanced contemporary and futuristic research agendas, which ultimately support the integration of fragmented streams into a holistic research field.

The emerging themes have bi-directional perspectives. Studies based on analytics tend to view consumers as a piece of data, whereas CBR-based research defines consumers as active co-creators. The emergent conceptual framework described in the next section is significant in reconsidering AI-based branding as an interactive process that combines firm-based and consumer-based dynamics. Altogether, the themes imply that AI-based interactions with the brand are influenced by technological antecedents, mediated by trust and engagement, moderated by ethics and technological preparedness, and result in outcomes such as advocacy. The thematic integration is pioneering in building the holistic conceptual framework (Figure 2).

6. Conceptual framework

The present study maps the AI-powered brand interactive ecosystem through thematic analysis and intellectual structure mapping. The conceptual framework adopts the Antecedents-Decision-Outcome (A-D-O) lens to condense, categorise, and classify the antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes. Antecedents include AI acceptance, anthropomorphic cues, technological readiness, ethics, personalisation, and brand vision. The mediators emphasise interactive value creation, with variables such as content integration and co-creation. Some of the listed outcomes include loyalty, advocacy, differentiation, and consumer–brand congruence. Privacy and technological readiness are identified as significant moderators. The framework distinguishes between individual motivators (empathy, inspiration, and interaction quality) and collective motivators (community identity and cultural meaning). Thus, AI is situated as both an advanced enabler and an interactive partner.

The conceptual framework (Figure 2) integrates emergent themes to map the AI-fuelled interactive branding using the A-D-O framework. Themes 1 and 6 form the foundational antecedents. Themes 2 and 3 act as mediators, highlighting the importance of trust and sustained engagement. Theme 4 captures collective sense-making through brand community and cultural narratives. Theme 5 leads to consumer outcomes from brand interaction with AI integration. The conceptual framework highlights the evolving yet underexplored influence of AI-driven brand interactions by combining individual and collective brand dimensions. Table 3 offers a summarised snapshot of the themes presented in the study and how they align to build the framework.

7. Research implications

7.1 Theoretical implications

The proposed conceptual framework highlights several antecedents, including technological preparedness and brand vision, that can influence interactive decision-making, leading to outcomes such as customer loyalty and brand resonance. The framework integrates current research with new insights to advance interactive marketing research, utilising AI-based branding within a dialogic engagement model (Wang, 2021, 2024). The framework is inspired by the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model and considers consumers as co-creators of brand meaning. The framework also encompasses technological mediators centred around the dynamic nature of consumer brand relationships. Trust commitment theory paved the way for the inclusion of moderators, such as ethics and technological readiness. Unlike traditional branding models, which regard consumers as passive receivers, the proposed framework focuses on consumers as active participants in AI-driven environments. Thus, the present study's major theoretical contributions are: (1) the acknowledgement of individual and community branding variables; (2) the consideration of ethics and technological preparedness as moderators; and (3) the integration of antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcome, for

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Table 3. Summary of AI in branding research

Keyword co-occurrence themes	Bibliographic coupling themes	Conceptual framework dimensions
Keyword Co-occurrence Analysis • emerging themes - body of Knowledge • based on keywords *Themes* *Theme 1: Role of AI in transforming branding* • Machine Learning • Natural Language Processing • User-Generated Content • Deep Learning • Social Media Analytics *Theme 2: Brand Communities on Social Media* • Social Media • Branding • Brand Management • Consumer Behaviour • Brand Community *Theme 3: Text and content analysis for brand insights* • Text Mining • Sentiment Analysis • Online Reviews • Facebook • Content Analysis *Theme 4: AI and brand experience* • Artificial Intelligence • Big Data • Twitter • Marketing • Customer Experience	*Bibliographic Coupling Analysis* • emerging themes - body of Knowledge • based on citing publications *Themes* *Theme 1: Acceptance of AI in Branding* *Theme 2: Role of User-Generated-Content and Firm-Generated-Content in Brand Image and Brand Advocacy* *Theme 3: Intelligent Agent Technologies Affect Brand Culture* *Theme 4: AI for Consumer-brand engagement* *Theme 5: AI tools in Brand Positioning for Consumer-Brand Relationships*	*Conceptual framework* • Knowledge structure for the future direction • based on dimensions in the research domain *Factors* *Antecedents of AI in Branding* (1) Brand-*Related* Brand Vision/Brand Actualisation/Brand Valuation/Brand Enthusiasm/Brand Community Relationships/Brand Positioning/Brand Technological Know-How/Anthropomorphic Characteristics (2) Customer-*Related* Consumer-Brand Involvement/Consumer Insights Breakthrough/Consumer Opinions/ Perceived Convenience of Use (3) Technology-*Related* Data-Oriented Technology/Security-Oriented Technology/Analytics-Oriented Technology/Level of Intelligence/Digital Revolution/Expertise in AI Techniques/ Degree of Personalisation/Social-Media Strategic Prowess *Individual Factors Affecting AI In Branding* (1) Affective Commitment/Self-Categorisation/Consumer Inspiration/ Interaction Quality/Perceived Empathy/Trust/Perceived Sacrifice/ Desire/Psychological Inspiration/ Perceived Privacy Risks/Past Behaviour *Collective Factors Affecting AI In Branding* (1) Group Norms/Perceived Behavioural Control/Value Co-Creation/Group-Based Self-Esteem/Relationship Commitment/Nostalgia/The WOW Effect Earned-Paid-Owned Media/ Perceived Quality *Consequences of AI In Branding* (1) Brand-*Related* Brand Differentiation/Sustainable Competitive Advantage/Positive Brand Image/Effective Brand Management/Long-Term Brand Value/Consumer-Brand Engagement (2) Customer-*Related* Consumer Delight and Satisfaction/ Consumer Loyalty/Trust/Customer Experience/Customer Retention/Intention of Usage (3) Technology-*Related* Targeted Advertising/Productivity Enhancement/Personalisation/Prediction of Trends

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a holistic view of AI-driven interactive brand relationships. The present study extends beyond the generic synthesis to a dynamic and integrative framework building.

7.2 Managerial implications

Interactive branding is poised with ethical, relational, and strategic concerns in the AI era. The fundamental issues revolve around privacy, transparency, and data security. Consumer trust is the starting point of value co-creation. Although AI helps improve brand capabilities, the question of automation versus genuine human interaction is a moot point. Consumer perceptions of human-AI representation directly influence the levels of trust and credibility. Analytical AI not only enables personalisation and the co-creation of content, but it also raises concerns about authentic engagement and possible manipulation (Peltier *et al.*, 2024). Brand communities are transforming active ecosystems of UGC and FGC that need further analysis for active participation, authentic interaction, and non-manipulative co-creation.

On a strategic level, analytical AI enables agile repositioning through real-time feedback loops, forcing managers to balance short-term responsiveness with long-term brand equity-building. In addition to efficiency, trust, engagement, and co-creation are becoming critical determining factors in the AI adoption, which define advocacy and loyalty in the interactive brand ecosystem. Such developments also raise social and policy issues related to data governance and algorithmic bias (Kozinets, 2022). Practitioners should explore interdisciplinary solutions to safeguard consumer autonomy and accountability. The emergent technological advancements make AI a revolutionary and challenging branding force, which must be navigated with a fine balance between efficiency and authenticity, innovation, and accountability.

8. Future research agenda and conclusion

The present study systematically reviewed the extant literature on AI-driven interactive branding published between 2000 and 2024. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses guided the development of a conceptual framework that positioned AI as an agent that impacts brand value creation. During the framework-building process, key ambiguities were identified, including the personalisation-privacy paradox and the incongruities between AI authenticity and efficiency. The review thereby presents a two-fold contribution, as it addresses emerging inconsistencies and synthesises the domain into six guiding themes that future research can build upon for effective technological integration in consumer-brand interactions.

Each of the themes aligned with the study's implications offers pioneering avenues for future research directions, as seen in Table 4. First, AI acceptance in branding warrants cross-cultural and longitudinal assessment of how trust, ethical judgment, and consumers' technological readiness affect consumer buying journeys. Second, AI tools such as text and sentiment analysis should be viewed as crucial mechanisms for enabling dynamic positioning, rapid crisis response, and campaign optimisation. Third, research should clarify how AI-generated content from brands, consumers, or both contributes to brand image and advocacy in digital environments. Fourth, an in-depth theorisation of the role of intelligent AI agents in establishing brand culture, especially in terms of brand narration, symbolism, and authenticity, is required. Fifth, scholars can examine how AI-driven brand engagement activities, characterised by consumer-brand co-creation, influence both short-term self-brand congruence and long-term brand loyalty. Lastly, it is crucial to assess how brand positioning strategies utilising AI foster brand relationships by promoting co-creation and maintaining consistent consumer-brand dialogue.

The emerging themes underpin future research directions, utilizing modern theoretical frameworks. The current research identifies AI as an effective instigative force driving interactive consumer involvement and brand engagement. The study highlights how the revolutionary shift in AI-driven branding is characterised by a consistent shift from firm-led branding to co-created consumer-brand value.

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Table 4. Future research directions

Theme	Future research questions
Acceptance of AI in Branding	*How can brands leverage AI for firm-customer interactions?*
	What is the customer's willingness to sacrifice privacy for AI benefits?
	How does AI-enabled branding align with customers' personal values and needs?
	What are the regulatory implications of AI-driven branding for data privacy and ethics?
	How can AI be leveraged for brand activism?
AI Analytics and Branding	How do AI analytics amalgamate numeric and qualitative data insights?
	How do Human and AI Analytics complement each other for meaningful brand meaning?
	How will responsible AI resolve data privacy and ethical issues?
	How will Interpretable AI improve brand insights for interactive brand engagement?
	How will Explainable AI improve brand insights for interactive brand engagement?
Role of UGC and FGC in Branding	*How can AI assist brands in influencing consumers' brand perceptions?*
	How can AI support the STP strategy to improve brand advocacy?
	How can UGC and FGC impact brand performance?
	How do brand communications change on virtual platforms?
	How do social cues and unconscious biases affect virtual group intentions?
IAT and Branding	*How can ML help brands understand consumer perceptions and build brand culture?*
	How do IATs help a brand's culture?
	How does AI capitalise on brand culture's participatory aspects?
	How do customers process advertising and social media brand communications?
	How can IATs enable brands to create more effective brand elements?
	How does Dynamic Service Analytics enable brand dynamism using big data?
AI for Consumer-Brand Engagement	*What are the dimensions of brand experience in multiple touchpoints of brand engagement?*
	How do AI and co-created content affect consumer decisions during their buying journey?
	How can AI help stimulate the cognitive/emotional senses in the brand's engagement?
	How does AI impact the level and success of consumer-brand engagement?
	Does real-time content co-creation enhance brand engagement?
AI for Consumer-Brand Relationships	*How can AI-enabled consumer-brand experiences build consumer-brand relationships?*
	How can generative AI assist brands in consumer-brand relationships?
	Can AI-driven branding accurately measure the impact on CBR?
	What branding actions affect immersive brand experiences?
	How do trust and loyalty affect consumer-brand relationships in the AI era?

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Author contributions

All authors have contributed equally to the research article.

Consent for publication

We hereby consent to the publication and availability of data.

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