ISSN E: 3006-1466
ISSN P: 3006-1458
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
CJSSR
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
Vol.03 No.03 (2025)

STRATEGIC INTEGRATION OF AI IN MARKETING: UNPACKING CAPABILITIES THAT DRIVE ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS

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Abstract
As artificial intelligence (AI) reshapes the marketing landscape, understanding the competencies required to integrate AI effectively into marketing practices has become increasingly important. This study explores the perceptions and experiences of marketing professionals regarding AI-enabled marketing competencies and their influence on organizational performance. Using a qualitative research design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eleven professionals across various industries. Thematic analysis revealed five key themes: predictive intelligence, automation and personalization, ethical data management, digital readiness and literacy, and strategic enablement through service quality. These findings offer both theoretical and practical insights. By emphasizing the value of moral issues and digital culture, the research expands the discussion on artificial intelligence use theoretically. From a management viewpoint, it guides on how to responsibly use artificial intelligence, grow your own skills, and encourage cross functional collaboration. The study is constrained by its small sample size and emphasis on developing countries even if it possesses a lot of contextual expertise. Future research is encouraged to more fully study the dynamics of human-AI collaboration, look at cross-sector variations, and objectively support these conclusions. By demonstrating how artificial intelligence skills could boost creativity and enhance marketing outcomes in a quickly evolving digital environment, this study aids in our understanding of their impact.
Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Marketing, AI-enabled Marketing Competencies, Organizational Performance, Digital Literacy, Strategic Thinking, Customer Experience*

INTRODUCTION

The growing convergence of marketing and artificial intelligence (AI) has significantly altered how businesses operate, interact with customers, and create value. Research on digital and technology advancements in marketing has recently proliferated due to the exponential growth of data, low-cost computational resources, and increasing digitalization (Tzuo & Weisert, 2018; Enholm et al., 2021). (Crittenden et al., 2019). Businesses' interactions with customers, partners, and stakeholders are being impacted by these shifts, which are changing external relationships and organizational procedures (Matt et al., 2015; Kumar et al., 2019; Lauterbach, 2019; Zafar et al., 2025).

Artificial intelligence, particularly narrow AI, has proven to be very beneficial for marketing tasks like consumer segmentation, predictive analytics, dynamic pricing, and content personalization (Arshad et al., 2025; Ameen et al., 2021; Bolton et al., 2018). Artificial intelligence is increasingly viewed as a strategic enabler of marketing transformation as well as a tool for operational efficiency as businesses look for a competitive edge in a fast-paced, data-rich world (Ransbotham et al., 2018; Haenlein & Kaplan, 2019; Amir et al., 2025). By integrating artificial intelligence into marketing decision-making, real-time, data-driven strategies enhanced business response and boosted consumer engagement (Shaukat et al., 2025; Ordoñez de Pablos, 2024; Wirtz et al., 2019).

But in addition to this technical development, companies face major obstacles. These include organizational resistance, complicated integrations, changing skill demands, and ethical issues such data privacy and algorithmic bias (Ullah et al., 2025; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Bughin et al., 2017; Shahid & Li, 2019). Especially, businesses are struggling to match their strategic aims with the adoption of artificial intelligence, modify their organizational structures, and develop capabilities enabling sustainable AI deployment. This complexity has given birth to the idea of AI enabled marketing skills, defined as an company's capacity to purposefully combine artificial intelligence tools, change processes, and foster workforce expertise to produce and maintain marketing value (Mikalef & Gupta, 2021; Karim et al., 2025). Though the phrase "AI capability" has found popularity in IS and management literature (Bag et al., 2021; Ali et al., 2025), its use in marketing is still under investigated.

Although artificial intelligence is becoming more and more important in marketing, the academic literature is restricted in many ways. First of all, most research is theoretical or case-based and has little empirical depth (Vlačić et al., 2021; Grewal et al., 2021). Second, existing research tends to prioritize technical capabilities over the organizational, strategic, and human dimensions of AI integration (Kannan & Li, 2014; Khalid et al., 2025). Third, there is a lack of research that investigates how AI-enabled capabilities influence marketing performance and broader firm outcomes. Moreover, few studies capture the practical perspectives of marketing professionals, who play a critical role in AI adoption and execution (Wierenga, 2010; JBR, 2023; Hashmi et al., 2025; Kodithuwak & Pacillo, 2025). To address these gaps, this study seeks to explore the following research question:

What AI-enabled marketing capabilities are currently being developed and utilized by organizations?

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This study draws on the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece, 1997) and the Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991) to examine how firms build, adapt, and deploy AI-enabled capabilities for strategic advantage. It also integrates insights from Service-Dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) to understand how AI co-creates value in customer interactions.

Theoretically, by bridging the gap between technology capabilities and strategic marketing competences, this study adds to the growing conversation around AI in marketing. It adds to the body of literature by offering a framework that sees AI as a dynamic enabler of marketing transformation rather than merely a stand-alone technology. Policymakers and marketing managers can learn from the research how to align AI initiatives with business strategy, develop the necessary skills, and resolve integration issues. Grounded perspectives on how artificial intelligence is transforming marketing operations in practical contexts are provided by incorporating the viewpoints of industry experts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the ability of computer systems to do tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, perception, and decision-making. In 1950, Alan Turing gave the concept a formal shape; at the Dartmouth Conference in 1956, John McCarthy gave it a name. Since then, artificial intelligence has evolved into two main forms: narrow AI, which focuses on specific tasks like language processing and recommendation systems, and artificial general intelligence (AGI), an ambitious model intended to replicate human cognition across disciplines (Bostrom, 2016; Goertzel, 2014; Marc & Ali, 2023; Minella, 2025).

Modern artificial intelligence breakthroughs are mostly powered by machine learning—especially deep learning and reinforcement learning—which help systems to learn from data and hence improve decision-making (LeCun et al., 2015; Silver et al., 2016).The integration of artificial intelligence with big data and IoT has hastened its use in business, so improving automation, predictive analytics, and customized experiences (Javaid et al., 2022; Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2017).Though promising, artificial intelligence presents ethical and social problems including job displacement, algorithmic prejudice, and data privacy issues (Crawford, 2021; Zuboff, 2019), therefore demanding strong regulatory frameworks (Floridi et al., 2018).

BUSINESS AND MARKETING AI

The growth of data, developments in machine learning, and ever-increasing computing capacity drive the uptake of artificial intelligence in companies (Davenport & Ronanki, 2018; Enholm et al., 2021; Ali & Audi, 2023). Through datadriven insights, companies nowadays use artificial intelligence to improve decision-making, automate processes, and obtain competitive advantage (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2017).

In marketing, artificial intelligence is changing procedures including forecasting, segmentation, dynamic pricing, and personalized content delivery (Ameen et al., 2021; Audi & Al Masri, 2024). Artificial intelligence-enabled CRMs, such Salesforce Einstein, optimise lead scoring and churn prediction, whereas programmatic advertising enables real time, targeted ad placements (Syam & Sharma, 2018; IAB Europe, 2023). Tools like chatbots and recommendation systems have improved customer engagement and operational efficiency (Marc, 2011; Wirtz et al., 2019; Statista, 2024). But ethical dangers and technical complexity still remain major issues in integration challenges (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Floridi et al., 2018). Strategically, AI strengthens firm performance when aligned with customer centric strategies and value cocreation (Wu & Monfort, 2023; Huang & Rust, 2021; Audi et al., 2021).

CONSUMER OPINIONS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN MARKETING

Consumer opinions of artificial intelligence in marketing are molded by a mix of sensed value and worry. Though many people value artificial intelligence's efficiency and personalizing, trust, transparency, and privacy issues persist (Chen et al., 2022; Castelo et al., 2019). Studies indicate that humanlike, sensitive AI systems tend to promote more trust and engagement, especially when they explain their reasoning or demonstrate emotional intelligence (Choung et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2024). Conversely, highly automated systems without human supervision can lower pleasure, especially in delicate areas (Davenport et al., 2020).

Generational divides exist as well; Gen Z and Millennials exhibit more acceptance of AI tools, whereas older generations want more openness and control (Pew Research, 2024; TechRadar, 2025). Concerns about AI mistakes, such as biased recommendations or privacy violations, highlight the need for explainable AI and human-AI hybrid systems to safeguard consumer trust (Arrieta et al., 2020; Wilson & Daugherty, 2018).

Strategic Capabilities and AI-enabled Marketing Competencies

Though the literature often focuses on technical aspects over the organizational change required for artificial intelligence integration (Kannan & Li, 2014), AI in marketing goes beyond automation and tools—it is becoming a driver of dynamic capabilities that enable companies to recognize opportunities, make agile choices, and alter marketing processes (Teece, 2018; Mikalef & Gupta, 2021). AI enhances core marketing abilities like CRM, real-time personalization, and campaign optimization (Kumar et al., 2023).

Notably, there is a lack of empirical and qualitative research exploring how marketing teams restructure workflows, upskill talent, or adapt culturally to AI (Shah & Murthi, 2021). Additionally, gaps persist in understanding consumer trust, demographic influences, and how AI capabilities directly impact performance (Pew Research, 2024; Teece, 2018). Existing studies also underutilize strategic frameworks like the Resource Based View (RBV), Dynamic Capabilities Theory, and Service Dominant Logic to explain AI’s transformative role in marketing (Barney, 1991; Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

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CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
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This study tries to close these gaps by investigating how artificial intelligence changes higher order marketing capabilities and what organizational strategies let companies translate AI adoption into marketing brilliance. By fusing management theories with professional knowledge, the study provides a framework for considering AI as a strategic enabler of marketing transformation rather than merely a tool.

METHODOLOGY

STUDY DESIGN

Using semi-structured interviews and a qualitative research design, this study investigated practitioners' perceptions of AI-enabled marketing skills. This approach was chosen because it can extract deep, context-specific insights from participants, which is crucial when examining a topic as dynamic and intricate as AI integration in marketing. The semi-structured style made it possible to ask follow-up questions and probe further when necessary while maintaining consistency and flexibility in responses.

SAMPLING AND PARTICIPANTS

A purposive sampling approach was used to identify professionals with direct involvement in AI-enabled marketing practices. Participants were selected from firms that had integrated AI into their digital marketing operations. Sixteen individuals were approached; thirteen responded positively, and ultimately eleven in-depth interviews were completed across diverse industries including FMCG, retail, textiles, telecommunications, food and beverage, and automotive. Respondents were selected based on their specific roles related to AI adoption in marketing, ensuring that insights were grounded in practical experience. The sample was considered sufficient for data saturation, as no new themes emerged after the eleventh interview (Guest et al., 2006). The participants' demographic and professional profiles are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample Profile of Participants

Participants	Gender	Age	Years of experience	Industry	Designation
1	F	46	12	Food and Drink manufactured	Head of Marketing Operations
2	F	38	6	Food and beverage Industry	Marketing Manager
3	M	42	11	Automobile industry	Marketing Manager
4	M	39	10	Retail industry	Operations Manager
5	M	52	18	Retail industry	Marketing operations
6	M	58	27	Textile industry	General Manager of Marketing
7	M	41	10	Textile industry	Senior Marketing Manager
8	M	46	13	Food and beverage industry	Marketing Director
9	F	38	8	FMCG	Digital Marketing head
10	M	46	16	Telecommunication industry	General Manager of marketing
11	M	37	8	Telecommunication Industry	Head of Marketing Operations

DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected between 2 oct 2024 and February 2025 using semi-structured interviews, conducted in two formats: 60% of the interviews were synchronous (online via Zoom/Teams), allowing for interactive discussions and real-time follow-ups. 40% were conducted asynchronously via email, offering respondents the flexibility to reflect and provide detailed responses.This blended approach ensured both depth and participation. While email interviews may reduce spontaneous dialogue, they can enhance data richness and reduce social desirability bias by allowing participants time to articulate thoughtful responses (Meho, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2013). Additionally, email-based responses can enhance accessibility for busy professionals and reduce non-response bias (Hill et al., 1997; Burns, 2010).

The interview guide was developed based on key themes identified in the literature, including:

AI-enabled marketing capabilities (e.g., data analysis, automation, personalization)

Strategic alignment and performance outcomes

Organizational enablers and challenges

The guide included both open-ended and probing questions to ensure alignment with the research objectives while allowing participants to share in-depth perspectives. A qualitative content analysis approach was used. Interview transcripts were first read multiple times for familiarity. The coding process involved:

Initial coding: 123 open codes were generated by identifying meaningful units across the dataset.

Categorization: Codes were grouped into subcategories and broader themes based on conceptual similarities.

Theme development: Themes were refined iteratively using the three-step process by Miles et al. (2013): data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Themes focused on the nature, drivers, and outcomes of AI-enabled marketing competencies. The iterative coding process continued until thematic saturation was reached, ensuring the findings reflect the full depth of participant input (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

RESULTS

ISSN E: 3006-1466
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CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
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The thematic analysis of interviews with eleven marketing professionals revealed five core themes that define the competencies and capabilities of AI-enabled marketing(see figure 1& 2)
Predictive Intelligence for Product and Strategy Development
Marketing Automation and Personalization
Data Ethics and Privacy
Digital Literacy and Organizational Readiness
AI-Enhanced Service Quality and Strategic Thinking
These themes were developed based on first- and second-order codes (see Figures 3) and reflect the multifaceted ways AI is transforming marketing practices.

PREDICTIVE INTELLIGENCE FOR PRODUCT AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Respondents consistently emphasized the transformative role of AI in product innovation and market forecasting. AI's ability to analyze patterns in vast datasets enables proactive product development and more refined strategic planning.
R3 shared:
"We can now foresee customer needs even before they are expressed."
This insight was echoed by R6, who explained:
"We are able to make real-time adjustments to our marketing tactics thanks to AI models that identify buying patterns."
R1 included a strategic perspective:
"AI clarifies where the market is heading, hence guiding our R&D pipeline; it's no longer based on guesswork."
R10, another respondent, pointed out how AI-enabled segmentation helped to improve innovation:
"Through artificial intelligence, we have found underutilized segments we had never even considered earlier by evaluating historical data."
These inputs taken together indicate that predictive intelligence is emerging as a basic skill for future-ready marketing organizations.

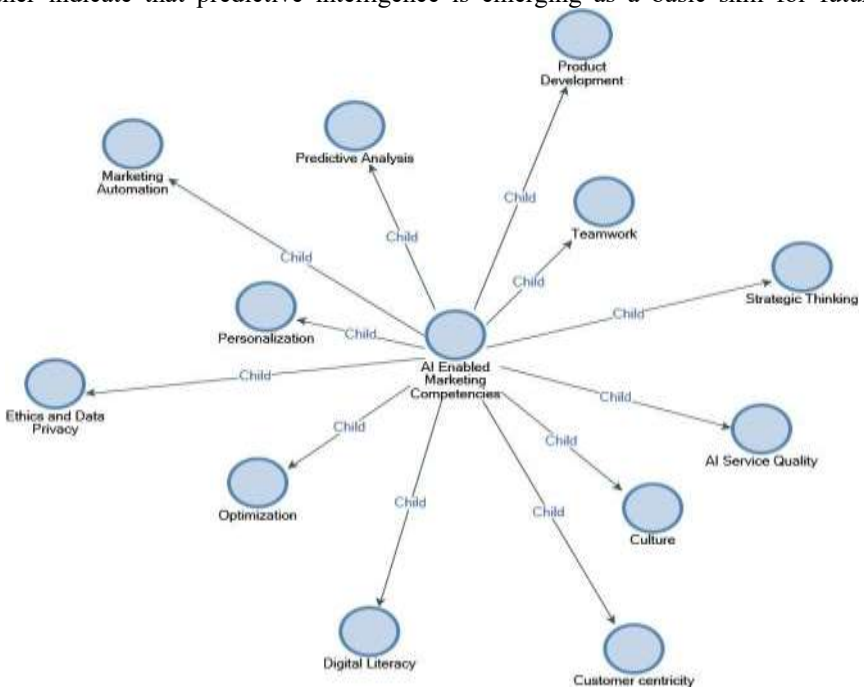

Figure 1: Concept Map of AI-enabled Marketing Capabilities
Source: Author's own work.

MARKETING AUTOMATION AND PERSONALIZATION

Many participants described how AI is streamlining workflows and driving hyper-personalized marketing. Routine marketing tasks—once manually handled—are now executed at scale, freeing up time for strategic focus.
As R2 mentioned:
"With marketing automation, our team has reduced manual work by 60%, allowing us to focus on high-level strategy."
R9 emphasized personalization:
"When customers receive recommendations aligned with their preferences, conversion rates skyrocket."
R5 observed:
"Even emails are now smarter. AI helps us send the right message at the right time, which was hard to do before."
Another insight came from R7:

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"Previously, targeting was generic. Now with AI, we're seeing micro-targeting that responds in real time to user behavior."
These responses reveal how AI enhances both the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing campaigns by personalizing customer journeys at scale.

4.3 Data Ethics and Privacy

Though artificial intelligence offers complex customization, many participants stressed the need of data ethics.Trust and compliance were repeated topics.

R5's advice was:

Personalization is wonderful, but we risk losing confidence if we don't treat data ethically.

The R8 underscored the perspective of regulation:

Similar regulations like GDPR have compelled us to reconsider our approach of gathering and storing data; compliance is not an option anymore.

R6 emphasized the need of transparency:

We explain to consumers how their information is being used; transparency helps us build long-term loyalty.

R4 depicted a helpful action:

Consent management features have been added to make certain we are gathering data ethically and giving consumers power.

This topic emphasizes how important a solid ethical foundation is in order to sustain consumer confidence in effective artificial intelligence marketing.

DIGITAL LITERACY AND ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS

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R4 depicted a helpful action:

Consent management features have been added to make certain we are gathering data ethically and giving consumers power.

This topic emphasizes how important a solid ethical foundation is in order to sustain consumer confidence in effective artificial intelligence marketing. *"Without the right mindset and willingness to experiment, even the best AI tools fail to deliver impact."*These observations underscore that the success of AI integration depends not just on technology, but on people and organizational culture.

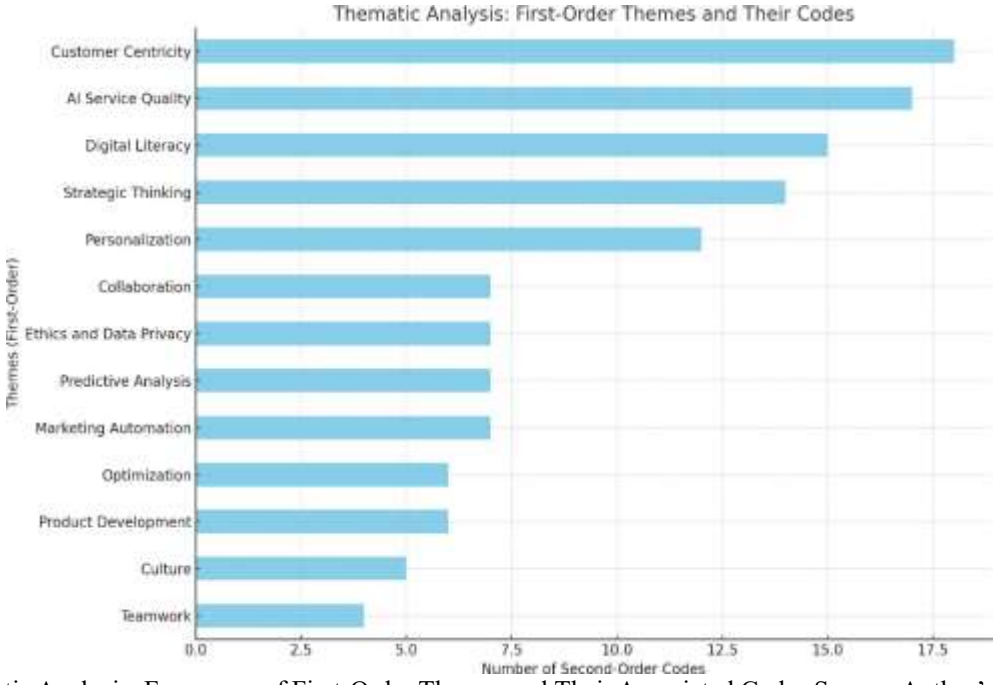

Figure 2: Thematic Analysis: Frequency of First-Order Themes and Their Associated Codes Source: Author's own work.

AI-ENHANCED SERVICE QUALITY AND STRATEGIC THINKING

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ISSN P: 3006-1458
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Finally, respondents described how artificial intelligence is enhancing client service interactions and facilitating more informed corporate choices.

R7 mentioned the operational advantages:

Our artificial intelligence powered support has decreased complaint turnaround by 40%.

R11 underscored strategic depth:

"AI provides us with a 360-degree picture of our market. We can make calculated decisions with improved accuracy."

The importance of sentiment analysis was underlined by R3, who said, "Real-time monitoring of social attitude has enabled us to detect reputation hazards before they flare up." A success story was disclosed by R6: "We analyzed customer reviews on multiple sites using artificial intelligence. It revealed areas of pain that traditional questionnaires would miss.

These observations taken together show how highlevel strategic planning as well as operational excellence benefit from artificial intelligence.

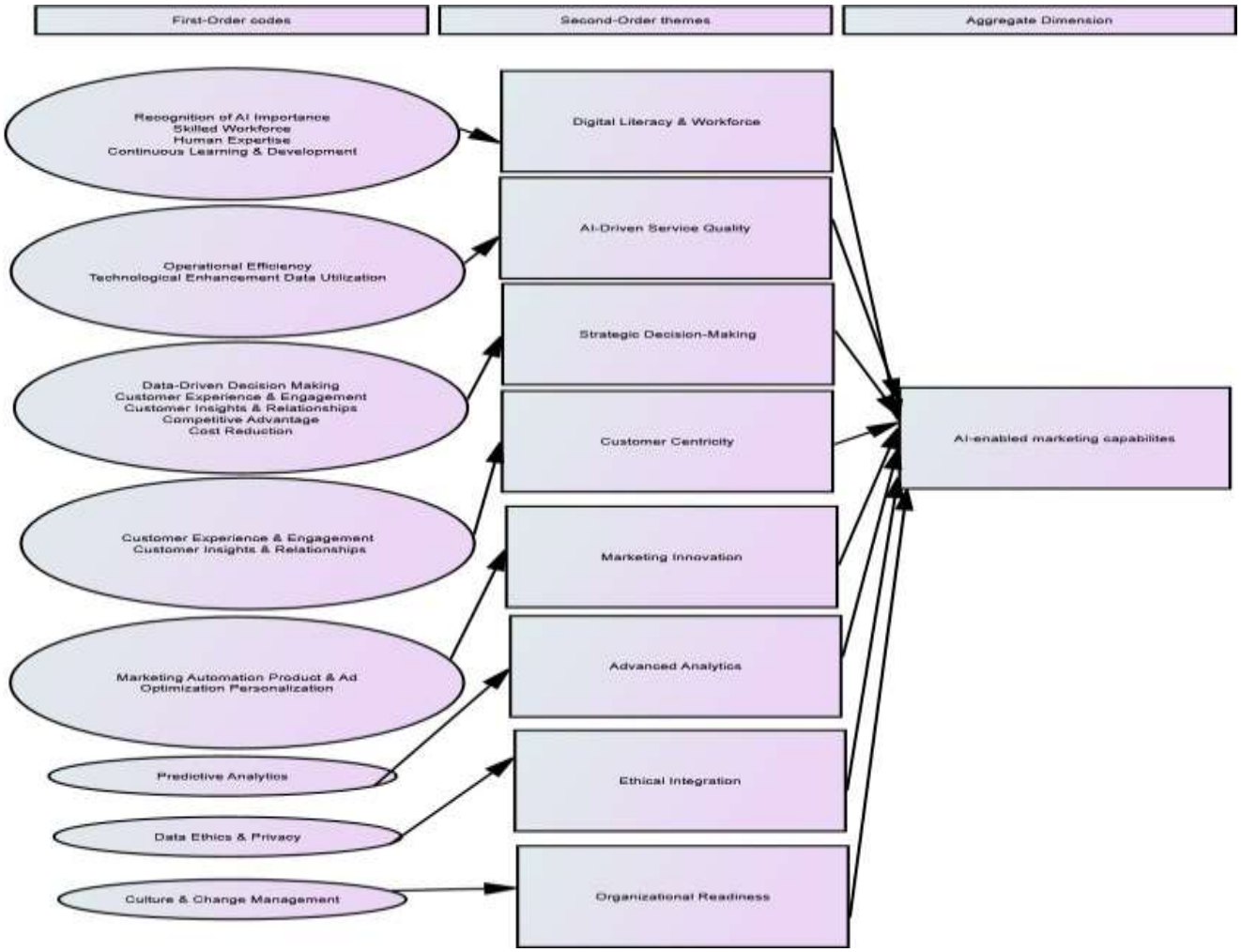

Figure 3:Thematic Network Diagram; Source: Author's own work

CONCLUSION

Using a qualitative lens, this study looked at how marketing experts view and utilize artificial intelligence (AI)enabled skills in their corporate environments, therefore elucidating the practical consequences of AI adoption.The analysis of in-depth interviews revealed five interconnected themes: digital literacy and preparedness, ethical data management, automation and personalization, predictive intelligence, and strategic enablement through high-quality services. These results make clear that marketing artificial intelligence is no more confined to campaign management or automation tactical tools.Rather, it is becoming firmly entrenched in customer relationship management, strategic decision-making procedures, and innovation.The demand to know and cultivate artificial intelligence skills gets more pressing as companies keep negotiating digital transformation. Offering an empirically grounded framework that reflects current industry practices, this study theoretically adds to the expanding body of knowledge on artificial intelligence in marketing.This study adopts a larger perspective by

ISSN E: 3006-1466
ISSN P: 3006-1458
CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW
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examining how artificial intelligence capabilities interact with organizational processes and human knowledge even though much of the previous research either focuses on technological elements or customer-facing results.

The research emphasizes digital literacy and readiness as a crucial enabler, which are concepts frequently covered in publications on digital transformation but less studied in marketing research pertaining to AI. The research highlights this fundamental level by demonstrating that the successful deployment of artificial intelligence requires having the right mentality, skill set, internal culture, and hardware. The inclusion of ethical issues, particularly in data usage and personalization, also improves the theoretical understanding of responsible AI adoption. In light of the current debates surrounding AI governance and the ethical conundrums that marketers have when trying to strike a balance between privacy and personalization, the study is being carried out.

From a managerial standpoint, the results provide insightful information for managers, digital strategists, and marketing executives. Using AI strategically rather than opportunistically is a crucial lesson to be learned. Building long-term capacity should be managers' top priority, not short-term productivity increases.

The first step for businesses should be to invest the reskilling and upskilling of their marketing teams in order to increase their digital and analytical literacy. Beyond their ability to use AI tools, this equips staff to assess these technologies' outcomes critically and match them with more general marketing objectives.

Second, companies should implement internal governance frameworks to control algorithmic transparency, consumer consent, and data privacy. Even the most cutting-edge artificial intelligence systems could have unanticipated implications by undermining consumer confidence in the absence of defined ethical norms and regulations. Thirdly, it is crucial to actively encourage cross-functional cooperation. Data science, IT, customer support, and compliance departments are often required to participate in marketing AI initiatives. Creating collaborative ecosystems inside the company makes it easier to integrate AI into current procedures and guarantee more meaningful results.

Finally, companies ought to view artificial intelligence as a source of strategic insight. Instead of being restricted to digital divisions, tools that facilitate scenario planning, predictive modeling, and consumer insights ought to be incorporated into decision-making procedures. Despite its strengths, there are several issues with the research that must be fixed. Although qualitative research emphasizes depth over breadth and the sample size was limited to eleven people, a bigger and more diverse sample could increase the generalizability of the results. Second, the survey excluded the opinions of C-level executives, IT managers, and data analysts in favor of solely including marketing specialists. A more comprehensive understanding of how AI functions across departments might be possible with future research that takes various points of view into account. Third, because the study relies on self-reported opinions and experiences, response bias may be present. Due to organizational loyalty or confidentiality concerns, participants may give an unduly positive assessment of their AI abilities or underreport challenges. Fourth, businesses operating in emerging markets were the main focus of the study. Even while this offers a wealth of contextual information, the findings might not fairly reflect the use of AI in more developed nations.

To build on these findings, future research could take several alternative approaches:

Quantitative validation: To investigate relationships between AI capabilities, marketing efficacy, and business-level outcomes, the themes that have been identified may be transformed into a measuring model and validated by extensive surveys. Longitudinal Studies: The effects of integrating AI would be examined over time to demonstrate how organizational strategies evolve, what challenges still exist, and how success is sustained or undermined.

Comparisons Across Industries: Given that every industry has a unique set of problems and customer expectations, future research may look into how AI-enabled marketing abilities differ across industries like manufacturing, e-commerce, healthcare, and education.

Ethics and Governance: A more comprehensive analysis of the moral implications of AI in marketing, particularly with regard to algorithmic bias, data permission, and transparency, will greatly advance our understanding of its ethical implications. Human AI Collaboration: Researching how marketers interact with AI systems—whether they trust, ignore, or work alongside them as co-creators—may yield important insights for creating AI training programs and interfaces that are more successful. would make a substantial contribution to the body of knowledge in marketing, particularly in the areas of algorithmic bias, data consent, and transparency.

Human AI Collaboration: Researching how marketers interact with AI systems—whether they trust, ignore, or work alongside them as co-creators—may yield important insights for creating AI training programs and interfaces that are more successful.

The study concludes by highlighting the growing complexity of AI applications in marketing and showing that organizational readiness, human resources, and ethical foresight are just as important to their success as technology. As AI continues to transform marketing roles and strategies, scholars and practitioners alike must remain engaged in understanding the evolving potential and implications of this technology.

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ISSN P: 3006-1458
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