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THE ROLE OF ALIN MODERN BRAND MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: This study examines the comprehensive function of artificial intelligence as a technology in contemporary brand management. As AI changes many aspects of contemporary marketing this study is one of the first to provide an analysis from the side of brand management. The data collection method is online structured survey. The sample size equals 363 respondents. The main focus of the study is focused primarily on the analysis of AI influence on brand identity, consumer perceptions, engagement and interactions in the digital era. The research procedure includes statistical and empirical approaches to assess survey data collected from respondents, examining opinions towards AI-driven branding initiatives. Significant findings indicate that although AI is regarded as a means to improve creativity and standardization in brand communication, apprehensions around authenticity and ethical ramifications remain. The research underscores the impact of AI on brand distinctiveness, narrative construction, and consumer trust. These findings offer useful guidance for marketers seeking to harmonize technological innovation with authenticity in branding initiatives.

Keywords: AI, Marketing, Brand Management, Brand Identity

JEL Classification: M31, M37, O33

INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic business landscape, brand management requires more attention than ever before, thanks to emerging technologies, rapidly increasing competition, diversification of industries, products and services they offer, and a host of other factors. Those who consistently place value on managing their brand are tapping into a critical factor in ensuring organizational success and competitiveness. A brand is more than just a symbol or a name – it is a representation of a company's values, promises and the emotional connection it forms with its customers. Historically, brand management has relied entirely on traditional marketing strategies, such as physical advertising, word of mouth and direct customer interaction, to build trust and loyalty (Aaker, 1991). As markets have grown and mass communication has emerged as a key enabler of consumer engagement, brand management has become a strategic discipline aimed at creating a unified and recognizable identity across multiple channels. This evolution has been further accelerated by the proliferation of digital technologies, which have provided businesses with new tools to engage consumers and maintain relevance in an ever-changing marketplace, giving rise to the idea of "digital marketing" (Faruk, Rahman, & Hasan, 2021).

In today's highly competitive and saturated markets, a strong brand identity serves as a vital differentiator for customers and consumers. Brands such as Apple, Coca-Cola, and Nike are good examples of how a clear and consistent identity can transcend products and services to establish emotional connections with consumers. Such connections not only foster customer loyalty, but also increase brand equity, allowing companies to manage their pricing and build lasting relationships with their audiences. As businesses face increasing pressure to stand out, creating and maintaining a distinct brand image has become a strategic imperative for long-term success.

The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionized many aspects of brand management, offering tools and technologies that were unimaginable a decade ago, or at least commercially unknown. This innovation allows companies to analyze vast amounts of consumer data, uncovering insights that inform branding decisions and improve personalization on a scale. For example, predictive analytics and machine learning algorithms allow businesses to identify emerging trends, predict customer preferences, and deliver personalized messages to specific audience segments (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2019). AI-powered tools such as natural language processing and image generation have also enabled brands to produce high-quality content, including advertisements, social media posts, and even personalized stories, with unprecedented speed and precision.

Some researchers argue in their studies that the evolving relationship between AI and branding is something to be expected and comes with both opportunities and challenges. A recent empirical study demonstrates that minimalistic aesthetics are positively associated with the perceived trustworthiness of AI-powered tools in branding (Diney, 2025). Another study by Ding shows that AI's ability to analyze cultural and artistic elements allows brands to develop stronger and more relevant identities, making branding efforts more effective and responsive to market trends. His emphasis on the utilization of AI in graphic vectorization points out the technology's capability to accelerate the digitization of conventional hand-drawn designs, assuring both efficiency and uniformity while maintaining essential aesthetic attributes. Employing machine learning and computer vision, AI systems have demonstrated the capability to analyze market trends, examine customer behavior, and evaluate the cultural influences involved. This is precisely what can allow brands to maintain relevance and adaptability in a highly competitive environment. Although in a specific niche of his research, the author points out that automating design and promotional activities reduces the reliance on human intuition alone, offering data-driven branding strategies that increase personalization and user engagement. Ding's study also highlights that branding, as well as AI-driven branding, promotes consistency across digital platforms by ensuring that brand messages remain consistent across media (Ding, 2023).

In addition, AI offers opportunities to improve consistency in brand communication by unifying messages across multiple channels. AI can help businesses establish

guidelines for tone, style, and visual identity, ensuring that their brand image remains cohesive, regardless of platform or audience. This capability is especially valuable in the digital age, where consumers interact with brands across a variety of environments, from social media to e-commerce platforms. Despite its potential to transform brand management, the integration of AI also raises critical questions about authenticity and ethics. While AI-driven branding strategies are often praised for their effectiveness and creativity, they also risk being perceived as impersonal or artificial. Consumers may question the authenticity of AI-generated content, viewing it as lacking the "human touch" that is essential for building trust and emotional connections (Huang & Rust, 2022). Furthermore, ethical concerns related to data privacy and algorithmic bias present significant challenges for businesses, as missteps in these areas can harm brand reputation and erode consumer trust.

This paper explores the role of AI in modern brand management, with a particular focus on its impact on brand identity, trust, and consumer engagement. Through empirical research and statistical analysis, the study aims to provide practical insights for marketers looking to leverage AI technologies while maintaining authenticity and ethical integrity in their branding efforts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS Previous research and literature review

Evolution is a continuous process, but it is especially interesting when two, at first glance, different things are connected. The adoption of technology such as artificial intelligence in brand management represents a significant shift in the way companies develop and maintain their identity, and even in their mindset about how to manage it. Historically, brand building has relied heavily on human creativity, using tools such as visual design, copywriting, and familiar, strategic marketing models. During this process, brand elements, including logos, taglines, captions, storylines, and imagery, have been carefully crafted by designers, marketers, and creatives to accurately and clearly convey the company's beliefs and evoke an emotional response from consumers. The emergence of AI has initiated a paradigm shift in which algorithms and data-driven systems play a more important role in designing and managing these aspects (Hue & Hung, 2025).

Recent discussions in the business world have highlighted the revolutionary potential of AI in brand management, particularly its ability to increase consumer engagement and refine brand strategies. A Harvard Business Review article from 2024 highlights interesting thoughts that AI allows companies to process huge amounts of data in real-time, providing critical and analytical insights into consumer behaviour and preferences. These capabilities allow brands to create hyper-personalized experiences that connect deeply with customers in a completely personalized and discrete manner, thereby building loyalty and sustained engagement from them. Many experts argue that technology can improve consistency in brand identity across platforms by automating repetitive operations, including strategy development, content development, and campaign management and optimization (De Freitas & Ofek, 2024).

Consumers interact with brand elements frequently – sometimes they hear the brand slogan in advertising, other times they remember the music that accompanies it, but it is especially important to remember the logo. It is this connection between a consumer and a brand logo that is particularly valuable and occurs subconsciously,

as found in a study by Bettels & Wiedmann (Bettels & Wiedmann, 2019), and is an undoubted part of brand identification. The visual components and symmetry of the logo are often essential in shaping product perceptions. They highlight that branding choices go beyond logo design and influence the overall brand identity. In the realm of AI-driven branding, these findings raise critical questions about aligning AI-generated brand components with customer expectations and potentially determining modifications to perceptually significant parts. For AI to be widely used in the design of logos and other brand assets, organizations must ensure alignment with customer views to maintain authenticity and emotional resonance. Incorporating AI into branding can enhance personalization. It also requires careful oversight to maintain consistency in branding strategies.

In some of the components of the brand, such as design creation, copywriting, and overall storytelling, the impact of AI is highly noticeable. This type of technology provides solutions such as automated graphic design platforms and text generation applications allow organizations to create any kind of content related to the brand vision faster and more efficiently than before. Platforms such as DALL-E and Midjourney for image generation and ChatGPT for narrative construction allow brands to create personalized content for advertising, social media communications and customer engagement, but not only - they are also found in traditional materials. A study created by Agersborg, Månsson and Roth highlights that companies are adopting these technologies to achieve consistency across communication channels and align with consumer expectations. Furthermore, the researchers claim that AI could also contribute to a higher awareness among relevant groups when implemented into a brand management strategy (Agersborg, Mansson, & Roth, 2020).

According to Javakhishvili (Javakhishvili, 2024), creating AI-driven branding can create a need for hyper-personalization, ensuring that consumer interactions are dynamic, responsive, and continuously optimized. Traditional marketing techniques typically require time-constrained campaigns to captivate consumers. From other perspectives, AI-driven platforms enable companies to sustain ongoing engagement via sentiment-responsive virtual assistants, recommendation algorithms, and chatbots, which are becoming more and more popular. However, the shift to emotionally intelligent AI raises questions about authenticity and consumer trust, especially as brands increasingly rely on machine-generated personas to build relationships. This transition reduces the necessity for regular rebranding initiatives, substituting them with a continuously developing brand presence that effortlessly aligns with consumer expectations. The changing dynamics of consumer trust suggest that while younger audiences are more receptive to AI-driven branding, older demographics still value human-led interactions. Technology's ability to personalize experiences can increase brand loyalty. It can also lead to algorithmic homogenization, where brands lose their distinctiveness by relying too heavily on decision-making process, driven by data. Javakhishvili's findings highlight AI's role in redefining consumer engagement, moving from campaign-driven marketing to real-time brand interactions. Rather than launching discrete marketing campaigns, AI-driven branding enables a continuous dialogue with consumers, eliminating the need for periodic rebranding efforts.

Let us examine it from a theoretical perspective - the transition from human-centered design to AI-driven branding signifies a notable deviation from long-established

methods. Historically, consumers have esteemed brands and generally branding for its perceived human element - a relationship founded on creativity, cultural complexities, and emotional profundity. The recent development of AI contests this notion, as consumers may doubt whether AI-generated material possesses the same authenticity as that produced by humans (Danuser & Kendzia, 2019).

Some empirical research supports this dichotomy. Verma et al. found that while a good number of consumers - 67% do value the consistency of AI-generated brand content, other 52% are skeptical about the emotional resonance of such content (Deryl, Verma, & Srivastava, 2023). These findings highlight the ambivalence of consumer reactions to technology: while AI is seen as a tool for innovation and efficiency, its impersonal nature can create barriers to trust. These traits are fundamental in promoting skepticism regarding AI and have prompted equivalent research by the author of this academic paper.

Kaplan and Haenlein (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019) argue in their academic publications that authenticity is fundamentally related to the human aspect of branding as a process, embodying the collective values, emotions, and cultural experiences that cultivate a deep connection between consumers and creators (or in a business context - companies). Authenticity is not simply a characteristic of content, but a reflection of the ability of a business through its brand to resonate on a personal and emotional level. This perspective is consistent with Fournier's (Fournier, 1998) model of consumer-brand relationships, which identifies trust, intimacy, and engagement as fundamental to building lasting relationships with a brand. When AI takes a dominant role in brand creation, it risks creating a disconnect, as consumers may perceive AI-generated content as lacking the spontaneity, emotional depth, and authenticity inherent in human creativity. Rather than viewing such content as a true representation of a brand's core values, consumers may perceive it as a calculated outcome designed to maximize performance, potentially undermining trust and emotional resonance.

Storytelling plays nowadays a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions. Very often, this component is created in a company's brand kit, under an initial section indicating the tone of the brand's communication, who it is aimed at (specific focus groups/target personas), and what level of formality it should be. Brands may craft and utilize narratives to express their beliefs, evoke emotions, and forge enduring connections with their audience. Algorithmic technologies can showcase their capacity to improve story-telling via data-driven insights and the generation of customized material. The research conducted by the same source (Deryl, Verma, & Srivastava, 2023) examined the application of AI in crafting personalized narratives and discovered that customer engagement rose by 35% when AI-generated material was customized to individual preferences. Nevertheless, the study observed a 20% reduction in engagement when consumers were aware that the content was AI-generated, suggesting that transparency regarding the technology's use can influence perceptions of authenticity. This also prompted a query for the present investigation, which will be answered later in the research.

METHODOLOGY Statistical methods

For the purposes of the quantification of the respondents' opinions about the statements, concerning the evaluation of the role of the AI in modern brand manage-

ment, we have used a 7-point Likert (ordinal) scale (Joshi, Kale, Chandel, & Pal, 2015). The data that were collected have been processed and analyzed using descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing procedures (at 5% significance level) in the environment of the IBM SPSS Statistics ver. 29 software (IBM Corp., 2023). The descriptive statistics include calculation of a mean (average) score for each statement based on all opinions of the respondents and calculation of mean score for each statement distributed by gender and by educational level. The comparison between the mean scores by the subgroups is done by the usage of two common non-parametric tests (Field, 2024): Mann-Whitney U test – for the comparison of the mean scores by gender (male, female) and Kruskal-Wallis 1-way ANOVA test – for the comparison between mean scores by 3 levels of education (bachelor, master and other).

Sampling

The sample size is 363 completed surveys, with respondents being students from Bulgarian universities with a background in Economics and Technology, including majors such as Marketing, Advertising, Artificial Intelligence, Innovation and Technology and related fields. The percentage distribution by educational degree level is as follows - bachelor's degrees 60%, master's degrees 35% and doctoral degrees 5%. The choice of this target group is justified by the growing role of AI in these disciplines, especially in marketing and brand management, where managed processes and automation through AI tools are becoming not only indispensable, but often essential in the work. The sample allows for a robust analysis of attitudes towards AI in branding, providing insight into how future professionals perceive technological integration in brand management.

Data collection method

Data was gathered via an online structured survey due this method was chosen because of its adequacy to the target sample as well because of its speed, accessibility and cost efficiency. The format of the data collected via online survey is also suitable for analysis with statistical software like IBM's SPSS. It allows easy data analysis and interpretation. Given the digital literacy of the target audience for the research, this type of format such as online survey reduces the potential bias related risks.

Questionnaire design

The questionnaire consists of two major sections. Sections one encompasses 14 questions concerning the perceived role of AI in modern brand management. These statements aimed to assess to the respondents the impact of AI on brand identity, consumer perception, engagement, and storytelling within branding related strategies. The second section collected only demographic data, including gender and educational level (bachelor, master, other), which allowed for further segmentation and comparative analysis of responses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perceived negative effects of AI driven strategies on brand identity

In order to summarize the respondents' opinions on the role of AI in the modern brand management we have calculated an average (mean) score for each statement and the results are as follows (Fig.1):

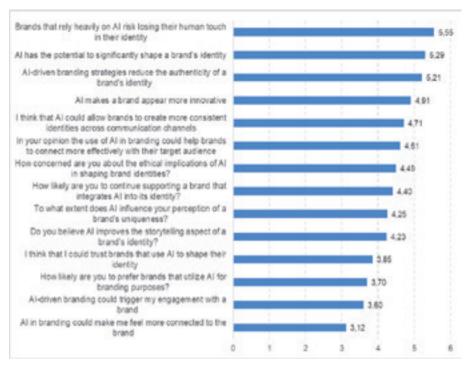


Fig. 1. Ranking of the statements, concerning the role of Al in modern branding, by mean score.

Source: Authors visuzalization

Table 1. Comparison of the mean scores for the statements by gender

Statement	Gender		Significance of the difference (Asymp. sig.)	
Al has the potential to significantly shape a brand's identity	5,34	5,25	No (0,326)	
Al makes a brand appear more innovative	4,75	5,07	No (0,078)	
Al-driven branding strategies reduce the authenticity of a brand's identity	5,21	5,20	No (0,802)	
I think that AI could allow brands to create more consistent identities across communication channels	4,62	4,79	No (0,425)	
In your opinion the use of AI in branding could help brands to connect more effectively with their target audience	4,65	4,58	No (0,761)	
Brands that rely heavily on AI risk losing their human touch in their identity	5,40	5,71	Yes (0,019)	
To what extent does Al influence your perception of a brand's uniqueness?	4,19	4,31	No (0,648)	
How likely are you to prefer brands that utilize AI for branding purposes?	3,65	3,75	No (0,571)	
Do you believe AI improves the storytelling aspect of a brand's identity?	4,21	4,25	No (0,901)	
I think that I could trust brands that use AI to shape their identity	3,94	3,76	No (0,244)	

Statement	Gender		Significance of the difference (Asymp. sig.)
Al-driven branding could trigger my engagement with a brand	3,54	3,65	No (0,608)
Al in branding could make me feel more connected to the brand	3,17	3,07	No (0,400)
How likely are you to continue supporting a brand that integrates Al into its identity?	4,32	4,49	No (0,350)
How concerned are you about the ethical implications of AI in shaping brand identities?	4,32	4,66	No (0,094)
Al has the potential to significantly shape a brand's identity	5,34	5,25	No (0,326)

Source: Authors' visualization

Perceived negative effects of AI driven strategies on brand identity

It is important that AI is not always perceived as a highly positive tool in the context of modern brand management (Fig. I). For example, the average score of the statement "AI in branding could make me feel more connected to the brand" is 3.12. Similar scores are given to the statement concerning "brand engagement" (3,80) as well as the overall attitude expressed by the question "How likely are you to prefer brands that utilize AI for branding purposes?" (3,70). The aspect connected with the "brand trust" is also evaluated very high - 3,85.

Statement mean score comparison by gender and education level

For the exploration purposes of the different 'points-of-view' of the respondents, comparisons are made by gender and by educational level. Although the male respondents form slightly lower mean scores than females for the most of the statements, there are no significant differences at 5% level between the scores of these two sub-groups (Table I). Only the statement "Brands that rely heavily on AI risk losing their human touch in their identity" 'provoked' the females (5,71) to differentiate significantly (in their favor) from the male respondents (5,40).

The comparison by the educational level doesn't present any different 'story' than those by gender. In most of the comparisons (12 of 14) we found that there are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores for the statements at 5% significance level (Table II). However, there are two exceptions:

The respondents holding a master's degree (5,55) consider that the AI has the potential to significantly shape a brand's identity and this mean score is significantly higher in comparison to the respondents with 'other' educational degrees (4,95).

Table 2. Comparison of the mean scores for the statements by gender

Statement	Education			Significance of the
	Bachelor	Master	Other	difference (Asymp. sig.)
Al has the potential to significantly shape a brand's identity	5,16	5,55	4,95	No (0,326)
Al makes a brand appear more innovative	4,55	5,09	5,03	No (0,078)
Al-driven branding strategies reduce the authenticity of a brand's identity	5,23	5,31	4,88	No (0,802)
I think that AI could allow brands to create more consistent identities across communication channels	4,65	4,86	4,38	No (0,425)
In your opinion the use of AI in branding could help brands to connect more effectively with their target audience	4,53	4,83	4,60	No (0,761)
Brands that rely heavily on AI risk losing their human touch in their identity	5,44	5,59	5,40	Yes (0,019)
To what extent does Al influence your perception of a brand's uniqueness?	4,39	4,21	4,17	No (0,648)
How likely are you to prefer brands that utilize Al for branding purposes?	3,65	3,69	3,98	No (0,571)
Do you believe AI improves the storytelling aspect of a brand's identity?	4,15	4,34	4,43	No (0,901)
I think that I could trust brands that use AI to shape their identity	3,93	3,90	3,90	No (0,244)
Al-driven branding could trigger my engagement with a brand	3,45	3,75	3,58	No (0,608)
Al in branding could make me feel more connected to the brand	3,05	3,14	3,35	No (0,400)
How likely are you to continue supporting a brand that integrates Al into its identity?	4,47	4,38	4,52	No (0,350)
How concerned are you about the ethical implications of Al in shaping brand identities?	4,25	4,69	4,15	No (0,094)
Al has the potential to significantly shape a brand's identity	5,16	5,55	4,95	No (0,326)

Source: Authors' visualization

At 5% significance level the masters (5,09) are more convinced than the bachelors (4,55) that the AI makes a brand appear more innovative.

CONCLUSION

AI is a modern tool that is highly evaluated in the marketing sphere. In fact, AI is applied more and more often by the marketing people. It is expected to solve many marketing problems as well as to reduce costs and save time. The implementation in communication processes is advantageous for companies that can integrate such technology. From creation of tone of brand, design etiquette (standard), slogans etc. to optimize the processes of multichannel communication, while keeping in mind all above, AI can digitally transform any organization. In this research we tried to analyze

the perceptions of AI in modern marketing among students.

As can be expected, AI is favored in many aspects - among them are the possibilities of AI to shape brand identity and to make the brand appear more innovative in the eyes of the audience. Despite the benefits, however, concerns about brand authenticity and the loss of human touch persist among consumers, as confirmed by the survey respondents. The results show that respondents recognize the potential of AI to shape brand identity, with an average score of 5.29, reinforcing the notion that AI is a key driver of brand transformation. Yet one of the highest-scoring concerns is the belief that brands that rely heavily on technology risk losing their humanity (5.55), suggesting that while AI increases efficiency, it cannot fully replace human creativity and emotional resonance.

While AI-driven branding is often associated with efficiency, consistency, and proper functionality in data-driven decision-making, its emotional impact on consumers is still a matter of debate. Recognition of AI's ability to enhance storytelling (4.29) is evident, although it does not emerge as a dominant force, suggesting that consumers may continue to find human-generated content superior at evoking emotions. Furthermore, AI's contribution to improving brand engagement is welcomed with moderate enthusiasm (3.80), underscoring the idea that while AI can streamline branding processes, its capacity to cultivate deeper emotional connections is still somewhat limited.

As AI technology advances, its significance in branding is expected to grow in requirement and complexity, enabling organisations to dynamically enhance their branding strategies and facilitating the development of fresh methods in this field. Businesses monitoring their brands must exercise care to prevent AI from dominating the authentic, human-driven elements of brand identity that foster enduring trust and loyalty among consumers. Buyers continue to seek and value the human element. Future research should concentrate on investigating the seamless integration of this technology into branding strategies while preserving the emotional elements that customers cherish in brands. This study implies that although AI offers significant benefits, its successful implementation will hinge on organisations' ability to harmonise technological efficiency with the human element that characterises solid, lasting brands. Furthermore, the findings of this research can contribute to the development of a strategic framework for business, organizations and even NGO's when considering the implementation of AI in their branding in an early stage. As technology grows and evolves every day, brands will need to refine their approaches to solutions regarding the usage of AI while also considering the human touch as an important element for their business. By leveraging data insights with some theoretical know-how, this study sets the stage for further exploration on how AI's evolution can build and shape brand's identity, ensuring that technology adaptation encourages consumers to particular brand rather than diminishes their trust and potential for emotional connection.

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