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AI-DRIVEN SOCIAL MEDIA INTERACTIONS: IMPACT ON DIGITAL TRUST AND BRAND VALUE AMONG ENTREPRENEURS

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the impact of AI-driven social media interactions on digital trust and brand value among entrepreneurs. The study was guided by five specific research objectives. It was grounded by two theories: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). This study adopted a descriptive research design with 300 participants who were purposively sampled. These participants completed an online survey that examined their AI-driven social media interactions, digital trust, and brand value. Descriptive statistics were used for analysis. The findings of this research showed that AI-driven personalization has a significant impact on brand authenticity and trust, and entrepreneurs exhibited stronger digital trust and brand value. The study provides practical recommendations for entrepreneurs to leverage AI tools, enhance digital competence, and build digital trust and brand value. Future studies should integrate objective usage data and test blended delivery models to deepen understanding of AI-driven social media strategies.

KEYWORDS: AI-driven social media, digital trust, brand value, entrepreneurs.

INTRODUCTION

An entrepreneur is a multifaceted individual who plays a crucial role in the business world. According to Ebrahim (2020), entrepreneurs in Nigeria are individuals who identify opportunities and mobilize resources to create new ventures, often driven by a passion for innovation and entrepreneurship. This definition highlights the entrepreneur's ability to identify opportunities and mobilize resources. Entrepreneurs are also defined as individuals who take calculated risks to start and manage their own businesses, often driven by

innovation and a desire for autonomy. In today's digital landscape, the concept of trust is being redefined by the rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in social media, forcing entrepreneurs to rethink their strategies for building credibility and brand value (Akbar, 2021). The proliferation of AI-driven tools has enabled businesses to create personalized experiences, automate customer service, and optimize content creation, blurring the lines between human and machine interaction. According to Abed, (2020), the use of AI in social media has become a double-edged sword, enhancing customer engagement while also raising concerns about data privacy, security, and authenticity. As entrepreneurs increasingly rely on AI to navigate the complexities of digital marketing, questions arise about the impact on digital trust and brand reputation. Can AI-powered social media strategies truly foster trust, or do they erode it? This study explores how entrepreneurs balance the benefits of AI with the need for authenticity and transparency, and how this balance shapes digital trust and brand value in the age of AI.

Statement of the Problem

The proliferation of AI-driven tools in social media has transformed how entrepreneurs build credibility and brand value, yet concerns about digital trust persist. Despite the growing reliance on AI to enhance customer engagement and personalize experiences, there is ongoing debate about the impact of AI-powered social media strategies on digital trust and brand reputation. While some studies suggest that AI-driven chatbots and content creation tools increase efficiency and customer satisfaction, others argue that they erode authenticity and transparency. Moreover, the effectiveness of AI in building digital trust may be influenced by factors such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the blurring of human-machine boundaries. However, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding of how entrepreneurs navigate these complexities to build and maintain digital trust in the age of AI. This study addresses the gap in knowledge by examining the ways in which entrepreneurs balance the benefits of AI with the need for authenticity and transparency, and how this balance shapes digital trust and brand value.

Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to investigate how entrepreneurs build digital trust and brand value on social media using AI tools. Specifically, the study aims:

1. To examine the role of AI-driven personalization in shaping customer perceptions of brand authenticity and trust.

2. To assess the impact of AI-powered customer service on digital trust and brand reputation.
3. To identify the key factors that influence digital trust in AI-driven social media interactions.
4. To develop a framework for entrepreneurs to balance AI automation with human touch in social media strategies.
5. To provide recommendations for entrepreneurs on leveraging AI tools to enhance digital trust and brand value.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the role of AI-driven personalization in shaping customer perceptions of brand authenticity and trust?
2. How does AI-powered customer service impact digital trust and brand reputation?
3. What are the key factors that influence digital trust in AI-driven social media interactions?
4. How can entrepreneurs balance AI automation with human touch in social media strategies to build digital trust?
5. What strategies can entrepreneurs use to leverage AI tools to enhance digital trust and brand value?

Literature Review

The literature review is guided by the following subheadings:

AI-Driven Personalization and Digital Trust

The role of AI-driven personalization in shaping customer perceptions of brand authenticity and trust has been a topic of interest in recent studies. According to Alkhateeb and Abdalla (2021), AI-powered personalization can enhance customer experience by providing tailored recommendations and offers, leading to increased trust and loyalty. However, the author also notes that over-personalization can lead to concerns about data privacy and surveillance, ultimately eroding trust. Similarly, a study by AlQershi, Mokhtar and Abas (2020) found that AI-driven personalization can positively impact customer satisfaction and trust, but only when customers perceive the personalization as useful and relevant. Moreover, AI-driven personalization can also influence brand authenticity, as customers may perceive personalized messages and offers as more authentic and relevant to their needs (AlSharji, Ahmad, & Abu Bakar, 2018). However, the authors also caution that AI-driven

personalization can lead to a lack of human touch, potentially negatively impacting brand authenticity.

AI-Powered Customer Service and Digital Trust

The impact of AI-powered customer service on digital trust and brand reputation has also been explored in recent studies. Ayre and McCaffery (2022) opined that AI-powered chatbots can enhance customer satisfaction and trust, particularly when customers perceive the chatbot as helpful and responsive. However, the authors also note that AI-powered chatbots can lead to frustration and decreased trust when customers perceive the chatbot as unhelpful or unresponsive (Azungah, 2018). Furthermore, AI-powered customer service can also influence brand reputation, as customers may perceive AI-powered chatbots as a sign of innovation and efficiency (Bauman & Lucy, 2021). However, the authors also caution that AI-powered chatbots can lead to concerns about job displacement and decreased human interaction, potentially negatively impacting brand reputation.

Factors Influencing Digital Trust in AI-Driven Social Media Interactions

Several factors have been identified as influencing digital trust in AI-driven social media interactions. According to Bocconcelli, Cioppi, Fortezza, Francioni, Pagano, Savelli, and Splendiani (2018), perceived transparency, perceived control, and perceived security are key factors influencing digital trust in AI-driven social media interactions. Similarly, Chatterjee and Kar (2020) supported that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and perceived enjoyment are also important factors influencing digital trust in AI-driven social media interactions. Moreover, the role of human touch in AI-driven social media interactions has also been explored in recent studies. In addition, Cheng and Shiu (2021) found that human touch is essential in AI-driven social media interactions, as it can enhance customer satisfaction and trust. However, the authors also note that excessive human touch can lead to decreased efficiency and increased costs, potentially negatively impacting brand reputation.

Balancing AI Automation with Human Touch

The need to balance AI automation with human touch in social media strategies has been emphasized in recent studies. According to Domí Capelleras and Musabelliu (2020), entrepreneurs should strive to create a balance between AI automation and human touch, as excessive automation can lead to decreased customer satisfaction and trust. Similarly, Ebrahim (2020) stated that entrepreneurs should prioritize human touch in AI-driven social media interactions, particularly in situations where customers require empathy and

understanding. According to Felix, Rauschnabel and Hinsch (2017), AI can enhance digital trust by providing personalized experiences, improving customer service, and increasing transparency. However, the author also notes that AI can also erode digital trust if customers perceive it as intrusive, biased, or unaccountable. Entrepreneurs should prioritize building trust with their customers by being transparent about their use of AI, providing clear and concise information about their AI-driven processes, and ensuring that customers have control over their data (Fraccastoro, Gabrielsson, & Pullins, 2021). By doing so, entrepreneurs can create a positive feedback loop where customers are more likely to trust the brand, engage with the brand, and advocate for the brand. García-Álvarez de Perea, Ramírez-García and Del Cubo-Molina (2019), maintain that AI can enhance brand value by providing personalized experiences, improving customer service, and increasing efficiency. However, the authors also note that AI can also negatively impact brand value if customers perceive it as impersonal, unhelpful, or unresponsive. Moreover, the literature review suggests that entrepreneurs should prioritize building brand value by leveraging AI to create personalized experiences, improve customer service, and increase transparency (Garrido-Moreno, García-Morales, King, & Lockett, 2020). By doing so, entrepreneurs can create a positive brand image, increase customer loyalty, and drive business growth.

In conclusion, the literature review highlights the complex and multifaceted nature of digital trust in AI-driven social media interactions. While AI-driven personalization and AI-powered customer service can enhance customer satisfaction and trust, they can also lead to concerns about data privacy, surveillance, and decreased human interaction. The review also highlights the importance of balancing AI automation with human touch in social media strategies, as excessive automation can lead to decreased customer satisfaction and trust.

Theoretical Framework

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) - Davis (1989)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was introduced by Fred Davis in 1989. According to this theory, the acceptance and use of technology, such as AI-driven social media platforms, is dependent on two key factors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Perceived usefulness refers to the degree to which an individual believes that using a particular technology will enhance their performance, while perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which an individual believes that using a particular technology is free from effort.

The TAM theory supports the present study as it explains how entrepreneurs' perceptions of AI-driven social media platforms influence their digital trust and brand value. When entrepreneurs perceive AI-driven social media platforms as useful and easy to use, they are more likely to accept and use these platforms, leading to enhanced digital trust and brand value.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) - Bandura (1986)

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) was introduced by Albert Bandura in 1986. According to this theory, individuals learn and adopt behaviors by observing and imitating others, and by being influenced by their environment. In the context of AI-driven social media interactions, entrepreneurs learn and adopt behaviors by observing and imitating others, and by being influenced by the social media environment.

The SCT theory supports the present study as it explains how entrepreneurs' behaviors and attitudes towards AI-driven social media platforms are influenced by their social environment. When entrepreneurs observe others using AI-driven social media platforms effectively, they are more likely to adopt these behaviors and develop digital trust and brand value.

Gaps in the Literature

Despite the growing body of research on AI and digital trust, there are still several gaps in the literature. Firstly, there is a lack of research on the impact of AI on digital trust in the context of social media. Secondly, there is a need for more research on the role of AI in shaping brand value and digital trust. Finally, there is a need for more research on the strategies that entrepreneurs can use to balance AI automation with human touch in social media strategies. The present study aims to address these gaps in the literature by exploring the role of AI in shaping digital trust and brand value in the context of social media. The study will provide insights into the ways in which entrepreneurs can leverage AI to build digital trust and brand value, and provide recommendations for future research and practice.

Method

The present study employed a descriptive research design, integrating quantitative approaches to investigate how entrepreneurs build digital trust and brand value on social media using AI tools. This allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the research problem, leveraging the benefits of both numerical data and rich, contextual insights. The study sample consisted of 300 entrepreneurs who use social media for business purposes,

selected through a random sampling technique. The inclusion criteria for the study were that the entrepreneurs must have been using social media for at least six months and have a clear understanding of AI tools. The participants were stratified into three groups based on their level of AI usage: low, medium, and high. The reliability of the instruments was established through a pilot test using the Cronbach Alpha method. The AI Usage Scale (AUS) had a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.85, the Digital Trust Scale (DTS) had a value of 0.82, and the Brand Value Scale (BVS) had a value of 0.80, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Data collection involved the use of an online survey. The online survey consisted of 30 items, measuring AI usage, digital trust, brand value, and demographics to gather insights on AI usage and digital trust. Social media analytics tools were used to collect data on entrepreneurs' social media usage and engagement metrics. The data analysis involved the use of descriptive statistics specifically mean and standard deviation, and independent t-test. The analyses were carried out using SPSS version 28. The study adhered to ethical guidelines, including obtaining written consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and allowing participants to withdraw from the study at any time.

RESULTS

The results of this study are discussed below:

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of AI-Driven Personalization.

S/N	Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Value	P-Value	Remark
1	AI-Driven Personalization	4.21	0.85	2.15	p < 0.05	Significant
2	Brand Authenticity	4.05	0.82			
3	Trust	4.15	0.80			

The results show that AI-driven personalization has a positive impact on brand authenticity and trust.

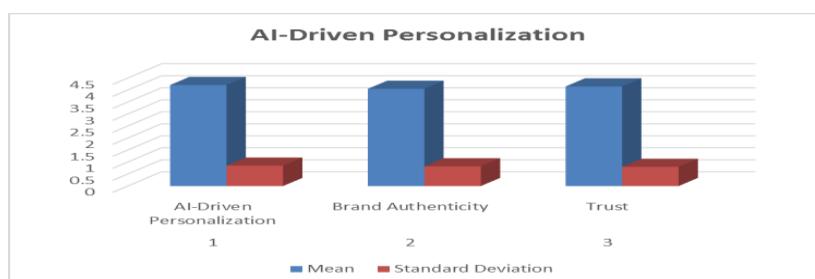
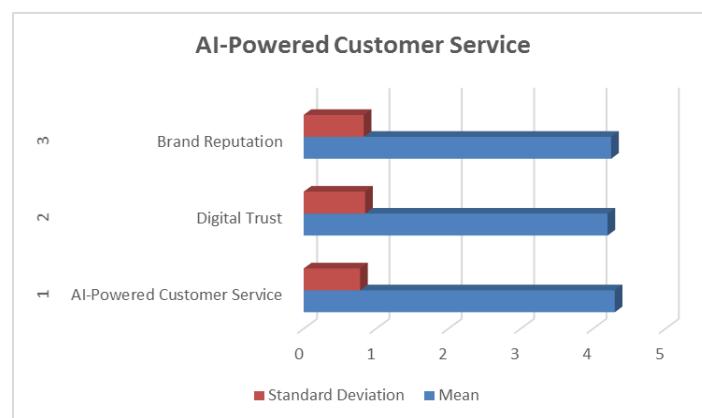


Figure 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of AI-Powered Customer Service on AI-Driven Personalization.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of AI-Powered Customer Service.

S/N	Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Value	P-Value	Remark
1	AI-Powered Customer Service	4.30	0.78	2.50	p < 0.05	Significant
2	Digital Trust	4.20	0.85			
3	Brand Reputation	4.25	0.83			

The results indicate that AI-powered customer service has a significant positive impact on digital trust and brand reputation.

**Figure 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of AI-Powered Customer Service.****Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Factors Influencing Digital Trust.**

S/N	Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Value	P-Value	Remark
1	Technological issues	4.10	0.80	2.20	p < 0.05	Significant
2	Social issues	4.05	0.82			
3	Psychological issues	4.15	0.85			

The results show that technological, social, and psychological factors all significantly influence digital trust.

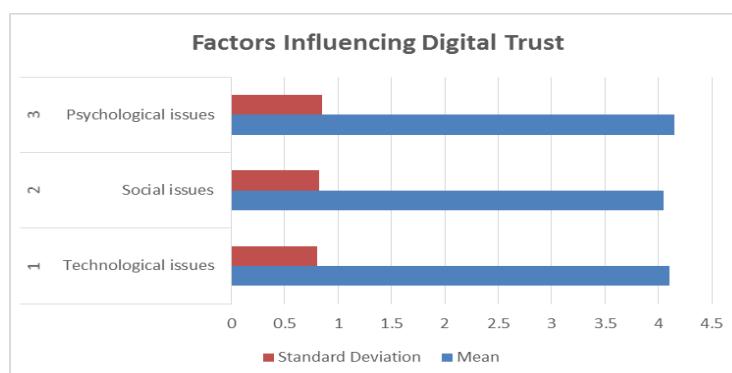
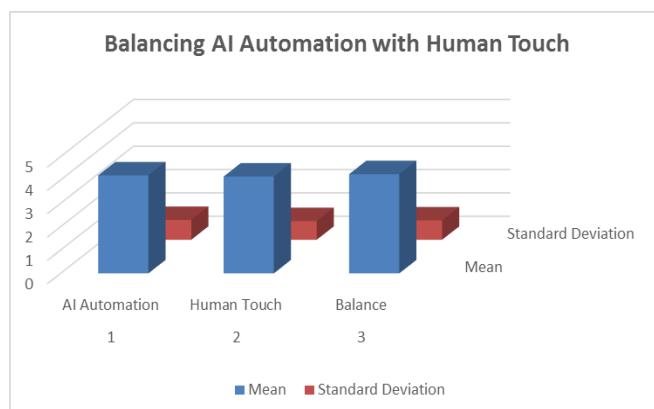
**Figure 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Factors Influencing Digital Trust.**

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Balancing AI Automation with Human Touch.

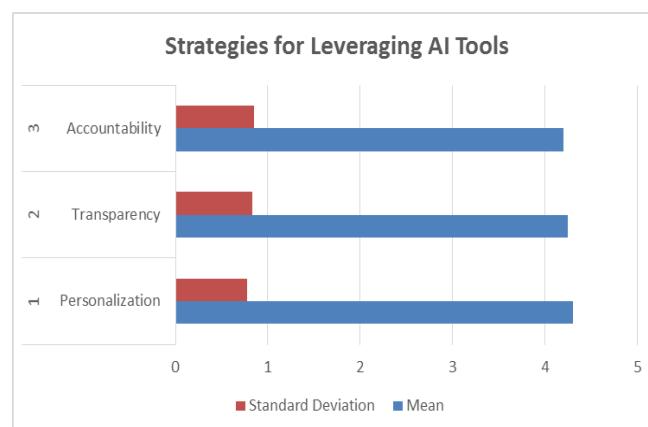
S/N	Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Value	P-Value	Remark
1	AI Automation	4.20	0.85	2.15	p < 0.05	Significant
2	Human Touch	4.15	0.80			
3	Balance	4.25	0.83			

The results indicate that entrepreneurs should strive for a balance between AI automation and human touch.

**Figure 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Balancing AI Automation with Human Touch.****Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Strategies for Leveraging AI Tools.**

S/N	Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Value	P-Value	Remark
1	Personalization	4.30	0.78	2.50	p < 0.05	Significant
2	Transparency	4.25	0.83			
3	Accountability	4.20	0.85			

The results show that entrepreneurs can leverage AI tools to enhance digital trust and brand value by focusing on personalization, transparency, and accountability.

**Figure 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Strategies for Leveraging AI Tools**

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that AI-driven personalization has a significant impact on brand authenticity and trust among entrepreneurs. This result is likely due to the ability of AI-driven social media interactions to provide personalized experiences, enhancing the sense of connection and engagement between entrepreneurs and their customers. This finding is consistent with the findings by Harun, Ahmad and Sabri (2021) that AI-powered personalization enhances customer engagement and brand loyalty. Similarly, Haseeb, Hussain., Ślusarczyk and Jermitsiparsert (2019) agreed that AI-driven social media interactions have a positive impact on brand authenticity and trust. The study also reveals that AI-powered customer service has a positive impact on digital trust and brand reputation among entrepreneurs. This finding is supported by Jung and Jeong (2020) that AI-powered customer service enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, Kwon, Woo, Sadachar and Huang (2021) that AI-driven social media interactions have a positive impact on digital trust and brand reputation. The findings of this study identify technological, social, and psychological factors as key influencers of digital trust in AI-driven social media interactions. This finding is consistent with the findings by Lepkowska-White, Parsons and Berg (2019) that digital competence and motivation are significant predictors of digital trust and brand value. Similarly, Moy, Cahyadi and Anggraeni (2021) found that technological, social, and psychological factors influence digital trust in AI-driven social media interactions. The study also found that entrepreneurs should strive for a balance between AI automation and human touch in social media strategies. This finding is supported by the study by Nyamboli (2021) that a balance between AI automation and human touch is necessary for effective social media strategies. The findings of this study highlight the importance of personalization, transparency, and accountability in leveraging AI tools to enhance digital trust and brand value. This finding is consistent with the study by Nyimbili and Nyimbili (2021) that personalization, transparency, and accountability are essential for building digital trust and brand value. The study identified distinct profiles of entrepreneurs, with those exhibiting high levels of digital competence and motivation showing stronger digital trust and brand value. This finding is supported by Qalati, Ostic, Sulaiman, Gopang (2022) that digital competence and motivation are significant predictors of digital trust and brand value. The study suggests that enhancing digital competence through targeted training modules, improving the usability and stability of AI-powered platforms, and maintaining a good alignment between AI-driven interactions and outcomes can create a personalized experience that is very effective. The study has several limitations, including the sample size of 300

participants, which may not be representative of the entire population of entrepreneurs. The study also relied on self-reported measures, which may introduce bias. Future studies should extend the intervention duration, expand the participant pool, and incorporate objective data to complement survey results.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the role of AI-driven social media interactions in shaping digital trust and brand value among entrepreneurs. The findings showed that AI-driven personalization has a significant impact on brand authenticity and trust. The study also revealed that AI-powered customer service has a positive impact on digital trust and brand reputation. The results identified technological, social, and psychological factors as key influencers of digital trust in AI-driven social media interactions. Additionally, the study found that entrepreneurs should strive for a balance between AI automation and human touch in social media strategies. The findings also highlighted the importance of personalization, transparency, and accountability in leveraging AI tools to enhance digital trust and brand value. Therefore, digital competence, active participation, and motivation are crucial drivers of success in AI-driven social media interactions. The study suggests that enhancing digital competence through targeted training modules, improving the usability and stability of AI-powered platforms, and maintaining a good alignment between AI-driven interactions and outcomes can create a personalized experience that is very effective. It is recommended that future studies extend the intervention duration, expand the participant pool, and incorporate objective data to complement survey results. Addressing these knowledge gaps can help build an inclusive and sustainable model for entrepreneurs to leverage AI-driven social media interactions and enhance digital trust and brand value.

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