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Synergizing Digital Marketing and AI in Enhancing Sales Performance of Media Industry in Henan, China

[1]Zhao Weiguang, [2]Johar MGM, [2]Ali Khatibi, [2]Jacquline Tham, [2]S. M. Ferdous Azam
[1]Office of International Exchange, Shangqiu Normal University, No.55, Pingyuan Middle Road, Shangqiu, Henan, China
[2]Postgraduate Centre, Management and Science University (MSU), University Drive, Off Persiaran Olahraga, 40100 Shah Alam, Selangor

ABSTRACT
This study investigates the roles of digital marketing and artificial intelligence (AI) in improving sales performance within the media industry in Henan Province, China. With the rapid digitalization of the market, understanding how these technologies impact sales is crucial for maintaining competitiveness. The research focuses on three key areas: the effect of digital marketing and AI on sales performance, employee perspectives on using these technologies, and the relationship between digital marketing and AI in driving sales. Data was collected from 240 respondents via a structured questionnaire distributed through JotForm and Chinese social media platforms. The demographic analysis showed that most respondents were female (74.2%) and aged between 30-39 years (48.3%). Various statistical tests were employed to ensure data validity and reliability, including normality tests, descriptive analysis, T-tests, and bivariate correlation. The normality test confirmed that the data was well-distributed, while descriptive analysis showed high mean scores, indicating respondents' understanding of the survey items. The T-test revealed no significant difference in the impact of digital marketing and AI on sales performance, suggesting that both technologies contribute equally. A bivariate correlation test showed a moderate positive relationship between digital marketing and AI, highlighting their complementary roles in enhancing sales. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.94 confirmed high internal consistency in the data. The study concludes that integrating digital marketing and AI into a cohesive strategy is essential for media organizations to maximize their sales performance. It emphasizes the importance of fostering innovation and constructive competition within media networks to encourage digital transformation. Future research should explore the link between innovative marketing and sales performance, particularly in non-Western contexts.

Keywords: Digital marketing, Artificial intelligence, Sales performance, Media industry, China

INTRODUCTION

The media industry, as an integral part of the social system, plays a vital role in disseminating information and shaping public discourse. However, the rapid technological advancements driving societal evolution have necessitated continuous adaptation within the media phenomena. To remain relevant and effective in this dynamic environment, media organizations must embrace innovative communication methods and evolve their strategies to align with changing societal needs and technological innovations (Tham et al., 2017; Pambreni et al., 2019; Herath et al., 2023). One notable trend in the current media phenomena is media convergence, characterized by the integration of multiple platforms, such as newspapers, radio, television, mobile phones, and the Internet. This trend reflects a shift from competitive relationships towards collaborative alliances (Udriyah et al., 2019; Horani et al., 2023). Media convergence represents a significant transformation in the production, distribution, and consumption of information, transcending traditional boundaries and reshaping the media ecosystem.

Before media convergence became a widely recognized concept, its foundational elements were already emerging in various countries and industries. Today, media convergence has moved from theoretical discussions to practical implementation, becoming a cornerstone of modern media development (Wulandari et al., 2023; Ranawaka et al., 2023). From the transformation of traditional platforms like newspapers, radio, and television to the proliferation of digital platforms such as the Internet and smartphones, media convergence has become a defining characteristic of the contemporary media phenomena. Despite its growing prevalence, the media industry faces challenges related to the effective management and integration of diverse platforms and technologies (Zheng et al., 2023; Sudha et al., 2023). Media organizations must navigate complex technological ecosystems and seamlessly integrate various communication channels to provide cohesive and engaging content experiences to their audiences. Additionally, as media convergence blurs the boundaries between different forms of media, questions regarding the preservation of journalistic integrity and media ethics have emerged. With

information now being disseminated rapidly across multiple platforms, ensuring accuracy, objectivity, and accountability becomes increasingly challenging. This situation necessitates detailed frameworks and standards to uphold journalistic principles in the digital age.

Moreover, the rise of digital technologies has democratized media production and consumption, empowering individuals to actively participate in shaping media narratives (Rajapakse et al., 2022; Zhou & Azam, 2024). While this democratization presents opportunities for more inclusive media production, it also challenges traditional media organizations to adapt their strategies to engage and retain increasingly empowered audiences in a saturated information phenomenon. Media convergence, therefore, presents both opportunities and challenges. While it has the potential to enhance communication efficiency and audience reach, media organizations must also navigate the complexities of technological integration, maintain journalistic standards, and evolve their strategies to meet changing audience expectations (Abeywardana et al., 2023; Rasheed et al., 2024; Nordin et al., 2024). Addressing these challenges while leveraging the opportunities offered by media convergence will be crucial for media organizations seeking to sustain their relevance and success in an ever-evolving media phenomena.

In the age of the Internet, traditional media have undergone significant transformations, evolving from print media to radio broadcasts and television. This evolution has led to a shift from competition to collaborative development between traditional and new media platforms. With the accelerated growth of media and supportive government policies, media integration has become a strategic national priority. Media integration in the digital era encompasses both technological convergence and the merging of the media and capital industries, providing multi-level development across culture, communication, technology, and art. Against this backdrop, this study aims to explore the significance of digital marketing and artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing sales performance within China's media industry. Despite the growing importance of these technologies, gaps remain in understanding among some customers and employees, who may not fully appreciate the impact of these technological advancements. However, research suggests that the adoption of digital marketing and AI strategies can significantly enhance customer relationships, build trust, and improve sales performance in the media industry.

As highlighted by Indriasari, Gaol, and Matsuo (2019), customer loyalty is a critical factor for the survival and success of service organizations, including media entities. Gaining insights into how digital marketing and AI contribute to improved sales performance can provide valuable guidance for media organizations looking to strengthen customer relationships and drive business growth. Additionally, the study seeks to investigate the effects of AI-consumer interactions on firm performance, as noted by Payne, Dahl, and Peltier (2021). Understanding the relationships between customers, media industry players, and fintech companies within the service ecosystem is essential to identifying how value is co-created among multiple stakeholders. Moreover, insights from research conducted by Aladayleh (2020) emphasize the challenges faced by certain demographics, such as Jordanian citizens, in accessing media services and offerings. Addressing these challenges requires innovative approaches, including the adoption of AI technologies to overcome technical barriers and reach underserved populations.

This study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by examining the role of digital marketing and AI in enhancing sales performance within China's media industry. By exploring the relationships between customers, media players, and fintech companies, as well as investigating the potential of AI to address accessibility challenges, this research provides valuable insights for industry practitioners, policymakers, and researchers. Through a deeper understanding of these dynamics, media organizations can better navigate the complexities of the digital phenomena and drive sustainable growth in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have explored the significance of digital marketing and artificial intelligence (AI) within the media industry, emphasizing their transformative potential and strategies for effective implementation. Boateng, Damptey, and Otu-Larbi (2020) highlighted the increasing importance of digital marketing capabilities in this industry, arguing that its adoption is crucial amid growing competition. They advocated for implementing digital marketing strategies not only at the organizational level but also within individual branches to better engage diverse customer segments. Such strategies could enhance customer outreach and foster stronger relationships, ultimately contributing to improved business performance.

Similarly, Prokopis and Theodoridis (2019) underscored the role of effective data management and AI-driven marketing strategies in ensuring successful digital marketing efforts. They

emphasized how AI can facilitate personalized content, targeted audience segmentation, and adaptive services through timely and relevant delivery, all of which enhance consumer engagement. Emeh, Ahaiwe, and Okoro (2017) also suggested incorporating diverse social media platforms like Twitter, LinkedIn, and Sina Weibo into marketing strategies, highlighting that utilizing multiple channels can expand a brand's visibility and audience engagement. In an era where consumer preferences are increasingly diverse, the ability to leverage a variety of social platforms can position media companies for success.

The transformative potential of digital marketing technologies is further supported by Banon, Alamsjah, and Elidjen (2021), who emphasized that digital marketing and AI talents can enhance business performance. They advocated for innovative approaches that integrate digital technologies with customer interactions, noting that the digital transformation of media organizations should extend beyond online and mobile services. Instead, a holistic approach to customer engagement and service delivery should be adopted. Additionally, Sceulovs and Lorencs (2017) pointed out the economic efficiency of digital marketing channels, arguing that businesses must analyze the cost-effectiveness of these channels to make informed, strategic decisions. By doing so, media organizations can allocate resources efficiently and optimize their marketing efforts, thereby enhancing overall performance.

Pradhan, Nigam, and Ck (2018) echoed the multifaceted benefits of digital marketing, particularly its ability to streamline operations, improve campaign effectiveness, and drive sales with minimal effort. They highlighted the role of digital technologies in achieving operational efficiency across various business functions, underscoring their importance for modern enterprises. On the other hand, Amelda, Alamsjah, and Elidjen (2021) emphasized that providing online and mobile services is just one aspect of digital transformation. To remain competitive, media companies must use digital tools not only for transactions but also to innovate in customer engagement, ensuring sustained relevance in the rapidly changing digital phenomena.

Together, these studies highlight the transformative impact of digital marketing and AI on the media industry. As the digital phenomena evolves, businesses must remain agile in adopting emerging technologies to meet the changing demands and preferences of consumers. AI, as a key driver of transformation across industries, allows machines to learn from data using sophisticated algorithms and to make autonomous decisions, thus enhancing productivity and efficiency (Rouhiainen, 2018). AI's ability to process vast amounts of data quickly and continuously enhances decision-making processes, thereby improving the performance of marketing initiatives. Crittenden, Biel, and Lovely III (2019) highlighted AI's role in performing tasks traditionally requiring human intelligence, including machine learning, robotics, and human-like interaction. In the context of media organizations, these AI-driven capabilities can be harnessed to deliver more personalized and targeted content, increasing engagement and audience retention.

Digital marketing, which Pradhan, Nigam, and Ck (2018) defined as the use of technology to promote goods, services, and ideas via electronic media, is crucial in today's business environment. According to Gkikas and Theodoridis (2019), digital marketing encompasses all marketing efforts that use the internet or electronic devices to present, promote, or sell products. This growing reliance on digital channels highlights the need for organizations to adapt their marketing strategies to remain competitive. The significance of brand reputation is also critical in shaping consumer perceptions, with Che, Katayama, and Lee (2020) noting that it influences consumers' willingness to pay for products and services. In this context, digital marketing serves as a vital tool for building and maintaining a positive brand reputation, which, as CommSights (2019) pointed out, enhances customer confidence, loyalty, and trust.

The convergence of AI and digital marketing represents a vital development for businesses. AI-driven technologies enable companies to harness data for personalized marketing campaigns, predictive analytics, and improved customer experiences. In tandem, digital marketing platforms provide multiple channels, social media, search engines, email marketing, through which businesses can reach and engage their target audiences. This relationship between AI and digital marketing creates new opportunities for businesses to build brand loyalty and strengthen customer relationships. For instance, by leveraging AI-powered analytics, companies can gain insights into consumer behavior and sentiment, allowing them to tailor marketing efforts to meet customer needs and preferences more effectively.

Additionally, AI and digital marketing are essential tools for driving organizational growth in today's competitive marketplace. Dimitrieska, Stankovska, and Efremova (2018) predicted that AI bots would soon handle conversational functions and direct-to-

consumer interactions, leading to significant time and cost savings for businesses. Wirtz (2019) reinforced this idea, emphasizing that the cost-effectiveness of AI technologies contributes to superior financial performance by reducing costs and increasing productivity.

Conversion rates, defined by Zumstein and Kotowski (2020) as the percentage of website visitors who complete a purchase within a specified timeframe, are a critical focus for businesses, particularly in e-commerce. Davide Di Fatta, Patton, and Viglia (2018) emphasized the importance of optimizing conversion rates to drive sales, while Zohra and Barman (2019) proposed techniques like page optimization to improve these rates. AI and machine learning tools, such as Sales Qualified Leads (SQL) and Marketing Qualified Leads (MQL), allow marketers to measure real-time impacts on revenue growth, providing insights that can lead to faster, more effective customer service (Columbus, 2018). Shane Barker (2021) also emphasized AI's ability to attract new customers, increase revenue, and enhance customer retention through strategies like chatbots, personalized recommendations, and AI-powered website builders.

The integration of AI and digital marketing is reshaping modern marketing practices. As Kaur (2017) emphasized, leveraging digital marketing insights enables companies to align their strategies with business goals more effectively. By utilizing AI-driven technologies and digital marketing platforms, businesses can adapt to evolving consumer needs, driving growth and success in today's highly competitive environment. AI and digital marketing offer diverse strategies for engaging target audiences, including email marketing, social media marketing, and search engine optimization (Saura, Palos-Sánchez, & Cerdá Suárez, 2017). These tools provide opportunities for businesses to enhance customer interaction, improve sales, and ultimately achieve sustainable success in the digital age.

Brand reputation significantly influences customer purchasing decisions, as customers are more inclined to buy products or services from brands with a strong reputation. This enhances their social status and perceived wealth, as highlighted by Agmeka, Wathoni, and Santoso (2019). Companies that invest in building and maintaining a positive brand reputation are more likely to attract customers and achieve higher sales performance. This reflects the growing importance of brand perception in today's competitive business environment, where consumer trust and loyalty are critical for success.

One key advantage of digital marketing and artificial intelligence (AI) is their cost-saving potential. Compared to traditional marketing methods such as billboards and print media, digital marketing offers a more cost-effective way to reach a broader audience. Additionally, AI-powered tools can automate various tasks, reducing the need for manual labor and saving businesses both time and resources (Bala & Verma, 2018). This efficiency allows businesses to allocate their marketing budgets more effectively, maximizing their return on investment. Personalization in digital marketing is another major factor in improving sales performance. Research shows that personalized marketing efforts are more likely to resonate with target audiences, leading to higher conversion rates (Behera et al., 2020). Personalization enables businesses to tailor their messages and products to individual customer needs, increasing the likelihood of converting leads into sales. As a result, businesses that adopt personalized digital marketing strategies tend to experience greater success in achieving their sales objectives.

The theoretical underpinning of digital marketing and AI adoption can be understood through several models, including the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). According to Mutoni (2018), TAM explains the process by which individuals adopt new technologies, emphasizing the roles of perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). TAM posits that users are more likely to adopt a technology if they believe it will improve their performance and if the technology is easy to use. This model has been widely used to understand consumer behavior toward digital marketing and AI technologies, providing valuable insights into adoption trends. TAM also helps businesses identify factors that might hinder the widespread acceptance of new technologies, offering a framework for designing interventions that address these barriers.

In addition to TAM, the Innovation-Decision Process Model offers another perspective on technology adoption. As described by Mutoni (2018), this model outlines five stages through which innovations are communicated and adopted: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. This model provides a deeper understanding of how digital marketing and AI technologies are integrated within organizations. It underscores the importance of information dissemination in persuading individuals to adopt new technologies and highlights the social dynamics that influence these decisions. Both the TAM and Innovation-Decision Process Model emphasize that successful technology adoption depends on

addressing both individual perceptions and broader organizational factors.

The Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework is also instrumental in exploring the challenges associated with AI adoption in the media industry. According to Thowfeek, Nawaz, and Sanjeetha (2020), the TOE framework examines the relationship between technological, organizational, and environmental factors in determining technology adoption. Mariemuthu (2019) also notes that the TOE framework is highly effective for understanding IT innovations across industries. This framework allows researchers to identify organizational barriers to AI adoption, such as structural rigidity or resistance to change, and environmental factors like market conditions or regulatory constraints. By applying the TOE framework, researchers and practitioners can develop more comprehensive strategies for integrating AI into media companies, ensuring that both internal and external factors are taken into account.

Theoretical frameworks such as TAM, the Innovation-Decision Process Model, and the TOE framework provide a valuable foundation for empirical research on digital marketing and AI. These models offer insights into the factors that influence technology adoption and implementation, helping businesses overcome obstacles and leverage technology for competitive advantage. For instance, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis (1985) remains one of the most influential frameworks for predicting user behavior toward new information systems. Rooted in psychological theories, TAM identifies perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as the key variables determining user acceptance of technology (Davis, 1989). The Fishbein model, which focuses on human attitudes and beliefs, served as a precursor to the TAM, offering a broader understanding of behavioral intention in the context of technology (Davis, 1985). Together, these models help explain why users may be reluctant to adopt certain technologies and offer ways to enhance user engagement through improved design and communication strategies.

Similarly, the Innovation-Decision Process Model, introduced by Rogers (2003), outlines the stages of innovation adoption. This model helps explain how individuals or organizations decide to adopt a new technology and emphasizes the role of knowledge and persuasion in shaping those decisions. The five stages, knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation, serve as a roadmap for understanding the complexities of technology adoption, particularly in fast-paced industries like media and marketing. Organizations can use this model to tailor their communication strategies to effectively introduce new technologies and facilitate their adoption.

The TOE framework, introduced by Tornatzky and Fleischer (1990), provides a more organizational perspective on technology adoption. By analyzing the technological, organizational, and environmental factors at play, the TOE framework enables businesses to understand the conditions under which new technologies are likely to be adopted. This framework is particularly useful in identifying structural and external barriers to innovation, such as regulatory restrictions or market volatility (Baker, 2012). By addressing these challenges, businesses can more effectively implement AI and digital marketing strategies, ensuring that they remain competitive in an ever-evolving technological phenomena.

Therefore, digital marketing and AI offer powerful tools for businesses seeking to enhance their efficiency, improve customer engagement, and boost sales performance. The theoretical models discussed, TAM, the Innovation-Decision Process Model, and the TOE framework, provide essential insights into how these technologies can be adopted and integrated into organizational practices. By understanding the factors that drive or hinder technology adoption, businesses can craft more effective strategies for implementing digital marketing and AI, ultimately ensuring their long-term success in the digital age. These technologies not only streamline operations but also enable personalized marketing efforts that resonate with today's consumers, leading to improved conversion rates and overall business performance.

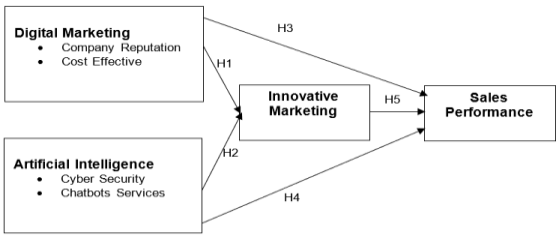

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

H1: Digital Marketing (DM) is positively related to Innovative Marketing (IM)

H2: Artificial Intelligence (AI) is positively related to Innovative Marketing (IM)

H3: Digital Marketing (DM) is positively related to Sales Performance (SP)

H4: Innovative Marketing (IM) is positively related to Sales Performance (SP)
H5: Artificial Intelligence (AI) is positively related to Sales Performance (SP)
H6: There is a Reciprocal Relationship between Digital Marketing (DM) and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In research, the concept of "population" refers to the entire group of individuals or entities relevant to the study, characterized by certain traits such as demographics, preferences, or behaviors. As Azam et al. (2021) suggest, understanding the population is vital for developing hypotheses and drawing conclusions. For this study, the population includes employees of media companies and customers in Henan province, China. This focus aligns with the research's aim of exploring how digital marketing and artificial intelligence influence sales performance within the media sector. By targeting employees and consumers, the study examines both the internal and external dynamics of the media industry. Employees in various roles, such as journalists, editors, and marketers, are included to capture insights from those directly involved in media operations, while customers represent the external audience engaging with media content.

The selection of Henan province as the geographical focus adds contextual relevance. Henan, one of China's most populous provinces, offers a diverse media phenomena, allowing the research to explore local media trends and practices that may reflect broader industry patterns. The unit of analysis for this study is individual employees and customers, providing a detailed examination of perceptions, behaviors, and interactions within the media ecosystem. This focus on individuals facilitates an understanding of how employees' activities impact customer behavior, helping to uncover the mechanisms driving sales performance when digital marketing and artificial intelligence are applied. Tailoring the research to individual perspectives allows for a more nuanced analysis of each respondent's experience.

To ensure that the study's findings are generalizable, probability sampling will be employed. This method provides every member of the population with a known, nonzero chance of being selected, thus increasing the representativeness of the sample (Azam et al., 2023). Techniques such as simple random sampling or systematic sampling will be used, depending on the study's needs. A comprehensive sampling frame will include a complete list of employees and customers. A sample size of 300 employees and 250 customers will be selected to ensure sufficient statistical power. This sample size strikes a balance between practicality and the ability to detect significant relationships between variables. Surveys will be developed as the primary data collection tool, with steps taken to ensure their validity and reliability through expert review, pilot testing, and reliability checks. This approach enables meaningful analysis of the impact of digital marketing and artificial intelligence on sales performance in the media industry.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The demographic analysis of this study offers key insights into the gender composition of the 240 respondents, highlighting the differences between male and female participants. Gender distribution is crucial as it may influence interpretations in areas where gender shapes opinions, behaviors, or opportunities. Of the total respondents, 62 were male (25.8%), while a larger proportion, 178 respondents (74.2%), were female. This notable gender difference is important in understanding the overall demographic dynamics of the study. The age distribution is also categorized into four groups: 18-29 years, 30-39 years, 40-49 years, and 50 years and above. The largest group, aged 30-39 years, makes up 48.3% of the sample (116 respondents), followed by the 18-29 age group, which comprises 31.3% (75 respondents). The 40-49 years group represents 15% (36 respondents), likely offering perspectives from those with substantial career experience.

The study further examines factor loadings from the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation, which provides clarity on how questionnaire items align with key constructs such as Digital Marketing, Artificial Intelligence, Innovative Marketing, and Sales Performance. High loadings within each dimension demonstrate strong correlations between the observed variables and the latent constructs, validating the theoretical framework. These results highlight the media industry's reliance on digital and innovative marketing strategies, supported by AI tools, to enhance sales performance in China. This finding reflects a modern, data-driven approach to marketing in a competitive environment. Additionally, internal consistency was confirmed through the computation of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the four extracted factors retained by the PCA, indicating reliable measures across the study's dimensions. In view of the guidelines by researchers (Cronbach, 1951; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010), Cronbach's Alpha was employed to estimate the reliability of the extracted factors as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Digital Marketing (DM)	.909	11
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	.833	5
Innovative Marketing (IM)	.827	7
Sales Performance (SP)	.833	6
Overall	**.897**	**29**

In quantitative research, construct reliability is essential to ensure the consistency and validity of measurements. This study employed Cronbach's Alpha to assess the reliability of four factors extracted through Principal Component Analysis (PCA): Digital Marketing (DM), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Innovative Marketing (IM), and Sales Performance (SP). These factors are central to the investigation, and their reliability is critical to the validity of the research findings.

Cronbach's Alpha is a widely used metric in social sciences to measure internal consistency, indicating how well the items in a scale measure the same construct. The coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater reliability. As noted by Cronbach (1951) and later by Sekaran and Bougie (2010), an alpha value above 0.70 is considered acceptable, with values above 0.80 signifying good reliability and those above 0.90 reflecting excellent internal consistency. By assessing internal consistency, researchers can ensure that items within each factor consistently measure the intended construct, thereby strengthening the study's overall credibility.

In this study, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for the four key factors, DM, AI, IM, and SP. The results, as shown in Table 1, indicate high reliability across all constructs, with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.827 to 0.909. These values demonstrate strong internal consistency, confirming that the items within each factor reliably measure the constructs they were designed to assess. The high reliability of the constructs supports the validity of the scales used and enhances the credibility of the research findings.

The reliability analysis of this study employed Cronbach's Alpha to assess the internal consistency of four key factors: Digital Marketing (DM), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Innovative Marketing (IM), and Sales Performance (SP). The DM factor, comprising 11 items, achieved a high Cronbach's Alpha of 0.909, indicating excellent consistency in measuring digital marketing strategies, effectiveness, and tools. This strong reliability is crucial, given the significant role digital marketing plays in contemporary business practices, particularly in the media industry.

The AI factor, with 5 items, yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.833, demonstrating good internal consistency. This result affirms that the items effectively capture AI's role in personalizing marketing efforts and analyzing data, which is increasingly essential in modern marketing strategies. Similarly, the IM factor, consisting of 7 items, recorded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.827, reflecting consistent measurement of innovation in marketing strategies, adaptability, and feedback mechanisms. This is particularly important as innovation is a competitive advantage in dynamic markets.

For the SP factor, which includes 6 items, a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.833 was obtained, signifying strong internal consistency. This factor measures the success of marketing strategies in achieving sales targets and contributing to overall business performance. Given the financial implications of sales performance, the reliability of this construct is vital.

The overall Cronbach's Alpha for the 29 items across the four factors was 0.897, reflecting a high level of internal consistency across the entire scale. This strong reliability supports the study's findings, indicating that the scales used for DM, AI, IM, and SP are reliable and valid. The consistent measurement of these constructs reinforces the study's objective of exploring their impact on marketing strategies and business outcomes within China's media industry.

Table 2: Correlations among the Constructs

Construct	Correlation	Construct	Estimate
Digital Marketing	<-->	Artificial Intelligence	.220
Digital Marketing	<-->	Innovative Marketing	.361
Digital Marketing	<-->	Sales Performance	.272
Artificial Intelligence	<-->	Innovative Marketing	.487

Construct	Correlation	Construct	Estimate
Artificial Intelligence	<-->	Sales Performance	.334
Innovative Marketing	<-->	Sales Performance	.487

The table provides correlation estimates among the key constructs in the study: Digital Marketing (DM), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Innovative Marketing (IM), and Sales Performance (SP). These correlations offer valuable insights into the relationships between the constructs and clarify their interconnectedness within the broader marketing framework. The correlation between DM and AI is 0.220, indicating a weak but positive relationship. This suggests that while there is some alignment between digital marketing efforts and AI implementation, they function independently, each contributing uniquely to the overall strategy. The correlation between DM and IM is 0.361, reflecting a moderate positive relationship, implying some overlap in digital and innovative marketing practices, particularly in creative digital platform usage. DM and SP show a moderate positive correlation of 0.272, indicating that digital marketing initiatives are associated with improved sales performance, though other factors also influence this outcome. AI and IM exhibit a stronger correlation of 0.487, suggesting that AI technologies significantly drive innovative marketing strategies. The correlation between AI and SP is 0.334, indicating AI's positive contribution to sales performance. Lastly, IM and SP share a correlation of 0.487, suggesting that innovative marketing approaches enhance sales performance through increased customer engagement. Overall, these moderate correlations confirm the distinctiveness of the constructs and support the discriminant validity of the study.

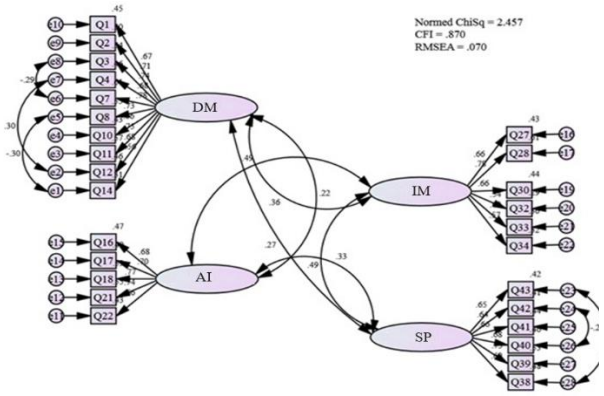

Figure 2: Examine Discriminant Validity between Constructs Revision

The revised measurement model, illustrated in Figure 2, shows significant enhancements in its fitness indices. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), an Absolute Fit Index, is reported at .070, indicating a moderate fit according to conventional standards (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The Comparative Fit Index (CFI), representing the Incremental Fit Index, is at .870, suggesting a relatively good fit compared to a null model (Bentler, 1990). Additionally, the Parsimonious Fit Index, reflected by the Chi-Square divided by degrees of freedom (ChiSq/df), is calculated at 2.457, which is within the acceptable range for parsimony in model fit (Kline, 2016).

These improvements reflect the effectiveness of the modifications made to the model, as the observed values align more closely with recommended thresholds for good model fit. As a result, no further modifications are deemed necessary. These findings confirm that the revised model satisfactorily represents the data, meeting the criteria for evaluating model fit in structural equation modeling (SEM) (Byrne, 2010). Moreover, SEM offers a comprehensive approach to analyzing complex relationships among multiple variables, ensuring that the model is both statistically and conceptually sound. The complete path model, depicted in Figure 3, encapsulates this rigorous evaluation process, providing a robust framework for understanding the relationships among the constructs.

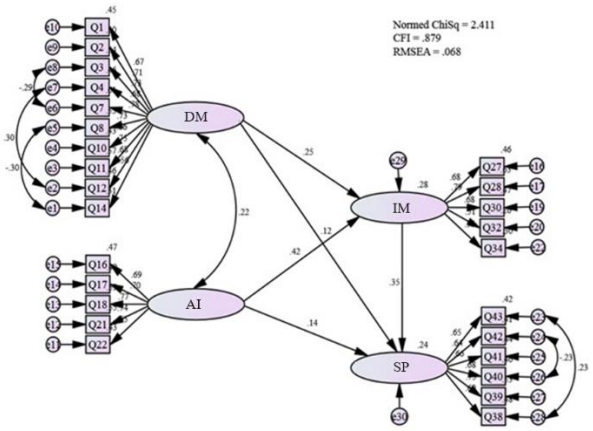

Figure 3: Fit Indexes and Parameter Estimates of the Revised Hypothesized Model

After identifying issues with the initial hypothesized model, the structural model was revised and re-evaluated using AMOS (Version 21.0). These revisions aimed to address the statistical discrepancies observed between the sample data and the model's implied covariance matrix. The following discussion highlights the improved

goodness-of-fit indices following the revisions and their implications for overall model fit.

The revised model exhibited significant improvements in several key goodness-of-fit indices, which are essential for evaluating the adequacy of the model in representing the observed data. These indices include the Normed Chi-square (CMIN/DF), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI). One of the most notable improvements in the revised model was in the Normed Chi-square, which is the Chi-square statistic divided by the degrees of freedom (χ^2/df). The CMIN/DF for the revised model was 2.411, which is below the commonly supported threshold of 3.0, indicating a good fit (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). This value suggests that the revised model aligns well with the observed data, with an appropriate complexity relative to the sample size. The fact that this index is below 3.0 further supports the conclusion that the revised model is statistically robust and consistent with the underlying data structure.

The RMSEA for the revised model was 0.068, falling below the recommended cut-off of 0.08 for complex models (Hair et al., 2010). RMSEA is an absolute measure of fit that assesses how well the model approximates the population covariance matrix with its specific parameters. A value of 0.068 indicates that the model fits well, suggesting there is no significant difference between the sample's covariance matrix and that of the population implied by the revised model. This finding implies that the revised model adequately captures the relationships among the variables without overfitting or underfitting the data. Furthermore, the CFI for the revised model was 0.879, which, while still below the ideal benchmark of 0.90, represents an improvement over the initial hypothesized model (Byrne, 2010). The CFI measures the relative improvement in fit between the proposed model and an independent (null) model that assumes no relationships among the variables. A value closer to 1.0 signifies a better fit. Although the CFI of 0.879 indicates that model fit could still be enhanced, it suggests that the revisions have brought it closer to an acceptable level of fit, particularly given the model's complexity and the large sample size.

The statistical significance of the Chi-square statistic in the revised model may be influenced by the large sample size (n = 240). Chi-square is known to be sensitive to sample size, often resulting in significant results even when the model fits the data reasonably well (Byrne, 2010). In such scenarios, researchers tend to rely more on indices like RMSEA and CFI to assess model fit, as these indices are less affected by sample size and provide a more nuanced understanding of how well the model represents the observed data.

The improvements in the goodness-of-fit indices, particularly in CMIN/DF and RMSEA, suggest that the revisions effectively addressed the discrepancies observed in the initial analysis. The reduction in the Normed Chi-square value indicates that the revised model offers better parsimony, achieving a balance between model complexity and fit. This balance is crucial, as overly complex models can lead to overfitting, where the model fits the sample data too closely, failing to generalize well to other samples. The RMSEA value of 0.068 further supports the adequacy of the model fit, indicating that it closely approximates the population covariance matrix. This low RMSEA value holds particular significance in social science research, where models must account for complex relationships among variables. The improvement in RMSEA from the initial hypothesized model indicates that the revisions reduced the error of approximation, resulting in a model that more accurately reflects the underlying data structure.

The CFI of 0.879, although slightly below the ideal threshold, provides additional evidence that the revised model is a better fit than the initial hypothesized model. While the CFI did not reach the 0.90 mark, it is essential to consider the overall context of the model, including the complexity of the constructs and sample size. In some cases, especially with complex models, a CFI slightly below 0.90 may still be deemed adequate if other fit indices are within acceptable ranges (Hair et al., 2010).

Following the revisions, the AMOS (Version 21.0) text output did not suggest any further modifications, indicating that the revised model had reached a point where additional adjustments were unnecessary. This finding suggests that the revised model has achieved a level of fit consistent with the observed data, both statistically and theoretically. The absence of further modification suggestions implies model stability, indicating that additional changes could potentially overfit the model to the sample data. The improvements in model fit indices following the revisions underscore the importance of iterative model testing and refinement in SEM. The process of revising and re-estimating the model enabled the identification and correction of issues not apparent in the initial hypothesized model. This iterative process is crucial in SEM, ensuring the final model is both statistically robust and theoretically sound.

Overall, the revised structural model demonstrated significant improvements in goodness-of-fit indices compared to the initial hypothesized model, indicating better alignment with the observed data. Improvements in CMIN/DF, RMSEA, and CFI suggest that the revisions effectively addressed initial discrepancies and enhanced overall model fit. The revised model, with its improved fit indices, offers a more accurate and reliable representation of the relationships among the study's constructs, highlighting the critical role of model revision and re-evaluation in SEM. This iterative process ensures that the final model is both methodologically rigorous and theoretically meaningful.

Hypothesis testing is a crucial method in statistical analysis, often referred to as confirmatory data analysis. It involves formulating a testable hypothesis based on observed data, modeled through a set of random variables. The primary aim of hypothesis testing is to ascertain whether sufficient evidence exists in a data sample to infer that a specific condition holds true for the entire population. A typical hypothesis test compares two data sets: one derived from sampling and the other generated from an idealized model. The hypothesis posits a statistical relationship between these data sets, which is then assessed against a null hypothesis that asserts no such relationship exists. If the observed data significantly deviates from expectations under the null hypothesis, it is not supported. This decision hinges on a pre-determined significance level, often set at 0.05, representing the threshold probability for null hypothesis rejection (Hair et al., 2010).

In this study, hypothesis testing was conducted using Maximum Likelihood Estimates (MLE) in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to evaluate the relationships among the constructs of Digital Marketing (DM), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Innovative Marketing (IM), and Sales Performance (SP). The results of these tests, summarized in Tables 3 and 4, present estimates, standard errors, critical ratios, and p-values for each hypothesized relationship. The first hypothesis, which tested whether Digital Marketing significantly impacts Innovative Marketing, yielded an estimate of 0.440, a standard error of 0.119, and a critical ratio of 3.713 ($p < 0.001$), indicating a positive influence of DM on IM. The second hypothesis examined the effect of AI on Innovative Marketing, yielding an estimate of 0.468, a standard error of 0.084, and a critical ratio of 5.603 ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that AI significantly enhances the implementation of innovative marketing strategies.

The third hypothesis, focusing on the impact of Innovative Marketing on Sales Performance, provided an estimate of 0.286, a standard error of 0.075, and a critical ratio of 3.823 ($p < 0.001$), supporting the notion that innovative marketing practices contribute to improved sales performance. The fourth hypothesis tested the direct effect of Digital Marketing on Sales Performance, resulting in an estimate of 0.176 ($p = 0.067$), indicating a marginally non-significant relationship. Similarly, the fifth hypothesis examined AI's direct influence on Sales Performance, yielding an estimate of 0.129 ($p = 0.065$), suggesting a modest direct effect. Lastly, the study tested the correlation between Digital Marketing and Artificial Intelligence, which returned an estimate of 0.045 ($p = 0.002$), indicating a significant correlation and a moderate positive relationship between these two constructs.

Table 3: Hypothesis Testing (Maximum Likelihood Estimates)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Innovative Marketing	<---	Digital Marketing	.440	.119	3.713	***
Innovative Marketing	<---	Artificial Intelligence	.468	.084	5.603	***
Sales Performance	<---	Innovative Marketing	.286	.075	3.823	***
Sales Performance	<---	Digital Marketing	.176	.096	1.831	.067
Sales Performance	<---	Artificial Intelligence	.129	.070	1.842	.065
Digital Marketing	<-->	Artificial Intelligence	.045	.015	3.052	.002

The hypothesis testing results reveal significant relationships among the constructs in this study. Notably, both Digital Marketing and Artificial Intelligence positively impact Innovative Marketing, emphasizing the role of these technologies in enhancing marketing strategies. Organizations that utilize digital marketing tools and AI are better equipped to implement innovative marketing practices that distinguish them from competitors. Additionally, Innovative Marketing significantly affects Sales Performance, indicating that creative marketing approaches can improve sales outcomes, which aligns with existing literature on the importance of innovation for competitive advantage (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Byrne, 2010). However, the direct effects of Digital Marketing and AI on Sales Performance were not statistically significant, suggesting that their value

lies in indirectly influencing sales through Innovative Marketing. Finally, the significant correlation between Digital Marketing and AI highlights their complementary nature, as organizations skilled in digital marketing are likely to adopt AI tools, enhancing overall marketing effectiveness.

Table 4: Standardized Regression Weights: (Default model)

Variable	Relationship	Variable	Estimate
Innovative Marketing	<---	Digital Marketing	.250
Innovative Marketing	<---	Artificial Intelligence	.419
Sales Performance	<---	Innovative Marketing	.350
Sales Performance	<---	Digital Marketing	.122
Sales Performance	<---	Artificial Intelligence	.141
Digital Marketing	<-->	Artificial Intelligence	.220

The hypothesis testing in this study offers significant insights into the relationships between Digital Marketing, Artificial Intelligence, Innovative Marketing, and Sales Performance. While both Digital Marketing and AI have a substantial impact on Innovative Marketing, their direct effects on Sales Performance are less pronounced, suggesting that their influence operates primarily through innovative marketing practices. These findings underscore the importance of integrating digital and AI technologies into marketing strategies to enhance innovation and improve sales performance. Additionally, the chapter outlines the study's results within the context of the Chinese media industry, confirming that Digital Marketing and AI significantly influence Innovative Marketing. However, the results did not support the hypotheses regarding the direct influence of Digital Marketing and AI on Sales Performance. Notably, a significant positive reciprocal relationship between Digital Marketing and AI was identified, indicating their complementary roles in driving business outcomes. The main findings are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: Summary of the Main Findings of the Study

H(x)	Hypothesis	Finding
H1	Digital Marketing (DM) is positively related to Innovative Marketing (IM)	Supported
H2	Artificial Intelligence (AI) is positively related to Innovative Marketing (IM)	Supported
H3	Digital Marketing (DM) is positively related to Sales Performance (SP)	Not Supported
H4	Innovative Marketing (IM) is positively related to Sales Performance (SP)	Supported
H5	Artificial Intelligence (AI) is positively related to Sales Performance (SP)	Not Supported
H6	There is a Reciprocal Relationship between Digital Marketing (DM) and Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Supported

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study focuses on examining the significance of digital marketing and artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing sales performance within the media industry, specifically in Henan Province, China. In an increasingly digital phenomena, digital marketing and AI are critical tools for media organizations seeking to maintain their competitive edge. To achieve the study's objectives, three aspects were explored: the role of digital marketing and AI in improving sales performance, employee perspectives on these technologies, and the relationship between digital marketing and AI in contributing to sales outcomes.

A survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire distributed to 240 respondents via JotForm and popular Chinese social media platforms, including WeChat, Weibo, and Sina Weibo. The demographic profile of the respondents revealed that 74.2% were female and 25.8% were male, with a majority aged between 30 and 39 years (48.3%), followed by those aged 18-29 (31.3%), 40-49 (15%), and 50 years and above (5.4%). This diverse demographic provides valuable insights into different perspectives within the media industry in Henan Province, contributing to a well-rounded analysis. To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, the study employed several statistical tests. A normality test was conducted, revealing that the data were normally distributed, as the skewness values of the items fell within acceptable limits. Skewness measures the asymmetry of data distribution, and values within the normal range indicate a balanced dataset. Although a few outliers were detected, which could potentially skew the results, these were

removed from the analysis to ensure that the dataset remained accurate and reliable.

The study further employed descriptive analysis and T-tests to assess the survey results. Descriptive analysis compared the mean scores of the survey items, revealing high mean scores that indicated respondents understood the questions well and that the collected data were both valid and reliable. High mean scores typically reflect consistent responses from participants, reinforcing the credibility of the data. The T-test evaluated whether significant differences existed between digital marketing and AI in their impact on sales performance. The results showed no significant difference between the two, with both digital marketing and AI exhibiting values above the p-value threshold of 0.05. This finding suggests that digital marketing and AI contribute equally to improving sales performance, indicating that these technologies should be integrated into a cohesive strategy rather than treated separately.

The analysis findings highlight the critical role that digital marketing and AI play in the media industry. The validation of the data through normality tests, descriptive analysis, and T-tests ensures that the results are robust and reliable. The equal contribution of digital marketing and AI to sales performance suggests that media organizations should focus on integrating these technologies to maximize their effectiveness. Furthermore, the demographic analysis provides insights into the diversity within the media industry, enabling organizations to tailor their digital marketing and AI strategies to better address the preferences of different demographic groups, thereby improving the effectiveness of their marketing efforts and driving better sales outcomes.

Additionally, the study conducted a bivariate correlation test to explore the relationship between digital marketing and AI. The results indicated a moderate correlation between the two variables, signifying that while they are related, they each play unique roles in enhancing sales performance. This finding underscores the complementary nature of digital marketing and AI, as both are essential yet distinct in their contributions to sales performance. A reliability test was also employed to assess the consistency of the survey items. The Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.94, well above the recommended threshold of 0.7, indicating a high level of internal consistency and confirming that the items reliably measured the constructs they were intended to assess (Djakasaputra et al., 2021).

The research is significant for its contribution to understanding the role of digital marketing and AI in media sales performance and for its broader implications within China's media industry. The study provides empirical evidence on how these technologies can enhance organizational performance, adding to the existing body of knowledge in the field of knowledge management, which has predominantly focused on Western contexts (Gherardi, 2009a; Gherardi, 2009b; Swan, 2007; Tsoukas, 2005). Conducted in China, this research offers a fresh perspective on how digital marketing and AI can influence the performance of media entities in a non-Western context.

Considering the study's findings, it is recommended that media organizations and policymakers pay significant attention to digital marketing and AI when designing business strategies. The results suggest that these technologies are crucial for driving sales performance and should be integrated into strategic frameworks. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of constructive competition within media networks, indicating that organizations should foster an environment that encourages constructive competition to optimize the effectiveness of their digital marketing strategies.

Moreover, the study emphasizes the need for future research to explore the relationship between innovative marketing and sales performance, particularly within China's media entities. By examining this relationship, the study addresses a notable knowledge gap and provides insights into how innovative marketing strategies can enhance sales outcomes. This contribution is essential given the growing importance of innovation in the media industry, where organizations must continuously adapt to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving digital phenomenon.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the role of digital marketing and AI in enhancing sales performance within China's media industry. The empirical evidence gathered supports the integration of these technologies into a cohesive strategy to drive business success. The findings underscore the need for continued research, particularly in exploring how digital marketing and AI can be optimized in various cultural and economic contexts. For policymakers and business leaders in China, this study serves as a guide to designing effective strategies that leverage digital tools for long-term success in an increasingly competitive market.

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