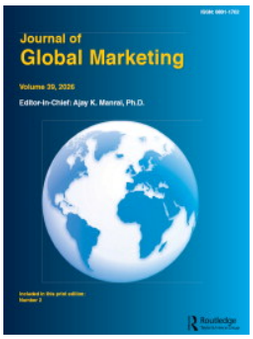

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Mapping AI's Impact on MarCom: A Multifaceted Strategic Framework Through Literature Analysis

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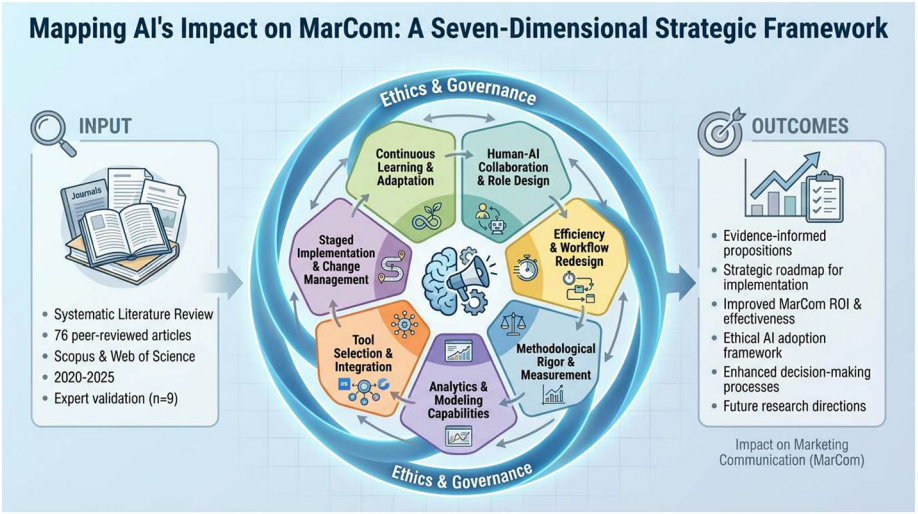
ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI), including generative AI, is transforming marketing communications (MarCom) by changing how content is created, personalized, distributed, and assessed. However, MarCom research is scattered across tool-focused streams and lacks an implementation-oriented synthesis that fits MarCom's creative and relational work. We develop a seven-dimensional strategic framework for AI integration in MarCom *via* a systematic review of 76 peer-reviewed articles indexed in Scopus and Web of Science (2020–2025), followed by structured expert validation. Using PRISMA screening, bibliometric mapping, and a hybrid deductive-inductive thematic synthesis, we identify seven interdependent dimensions: (1) human-AI collaboration design, (2) efficiency and workflow redesign, (3) methodological rigor and evaluation, (4) analytics and data readiness, (5) tool selection and integration, (6) staged implementation and change management, and (7) continuous adaptation and learning. The framework is presented as evidence-informed guidance, not a maturity benchmark; observed quantitative patterns describe the reviewed corpus rather than population adoption. We discuss MarCom-specific tensions (authenticity vs automation, personalization vs privacy, speed vs brand safety) and propose a focused agenda for testing human-AI configurations and governance in campaign settings.

KEYWORDS

artificial intelligence; marketing communications; human-machine collaboration; strategic framework; AI adoption in marketing

GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT



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Introduction

AI is increasingly embedded in marketing communications (MarCom), shaping how organizations develop content, manage audience interactions, and optimize campaigns across paid, owned, and earned channels. The recent acceleration of generative AI extends this shift beyond automation and prediction by enabling rapid production of copy, images, audio, and video, and by supporting interactive, conversational communication at scale (Grewal et al., 2025). These capabilities create operational opportunities (e.g., faster experimentation, continuous optimization) while also intensifying risks that are specifically salient for MarCom: brand voice drift, synthetic persuasion, misinformation, and reputational exposure.

Several studies confirm that AI is now essential for marketers seeking to engage customers effectively and maintain a competitive edge in the digital landscape (Bessa & Barbosa, 2025; Bormane & Blaus, 2024; Hu & Luo, 2024; Liadskyi et al., 2025). By integrating AI technologies, marketers can analyze large volumes of consumer data, create personalized content efficiently, and refine communication strategies in real time. This change is fundamental in digital marketing, where the high volume and rapid flow of data require advanced analytical capabilities that exceed those of traditional humans (Sah et al., 2024).

Despite rapid growth in AI-related MarCom research, the evidence base remains dispersed. Many studies focus on single applications (e.g., chatbots, recommendation systems, synthetic advertising) or on broader "AI in marketing" phenomena that do not adequately reflect MarCom's communicative characteristics: creative development, narrative coherence, audience meaning-making, and trust formation. As a result, practitioners and researchers often face three recurring problems:

a. Implementation guidance is tool-centric rather than system-centric: organizations adopt AI capabilities without redesigning creative and governance processes.
b. Human–AI collaboration is discussed but remains under-specified: roles, accountability, and acceptable levels of autonomy are rarely formalized for MarCom tasks.
c. Ethics is acknowledged but analytically thin: privacy, manipulation, bias, and disclosure are frequently framed as compliance checklists rather than strategic tradeoffs embedded in communication practice.

This study investigates how organizations can design and implement an evidence-informed strategic framework for integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into marketing communications (MarCom). Specifically, it asks how such a framework can reflect the creative and relational dynamics that characterize MarCom practice, define clear arrangements for human–AI collaboration and governance, and enable rigorous evaluation across stages of adoption.

This research paper makes four contributions to scholarship and practice in AI-enabled marketing communications. First, it consolidates a fragmented body of MarCom-focused AI research by organizing the literature into a coherent, implementation-oriented structure. Second, it advances a seven-dimensional framework that conceptualizes AI integration as a configuration of interdependent dimensions that jointly shape MarCom outcomes, rather than as a single organizational capability. Third, it introduces analytical restraint by foregrounding contradictions and boundary conditions within the evidence base, including cases in which AI-driven efficiency gains may coincide with diminished perceptions of authenticity. Fourth, it provides methodological clarification and validation by explicitly positioning the study as a systematic review with interpretive synthesis and detailing a structured expert validation step.

Collectively, these contributions advance the study from a predominantly technical and organizational viewpoint to a MarCom-specific perspective focused on communication quality, human accountability, and relational legitimacy.

Conceptual background: AI, MarCom, and strategic tension points

Defining AI in MarCom

In this research paper, AI refers to systems that learn from data and generate, classify, recommend, or optimize outputs, including machine learning, deep learning, and generative models. This definition excludes simple rule-based automation that lacks learning or generative capacity. Marketing

communications (MarCom) refers to coordinated brand-related messaging and interaction management across paid, owned, and earned channels, including (but not limited to) advertising.

The incorporation of AI technologies into marketing communications signifies an evolution of the traditional marketing mix, wherein digital technologies enhance and transform each component of the promotional strategy. This theoretical perspective acknowledges that AI is not intended to replace human marketing capabilities but rather to augment and extend human creative and analytical capacities (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2024).

A key distinction for MarCom is that AI is not only deployed for targeting and optimization (analytic AI) but increasingly for creative generation and interaction (generative AI), affecting message meaning, narrative consistency, and perceived authenticity (Hernández-Tamurejo et al., 2025; Grewal et al., 2025; Panda et al., 2025).

Human–AI collaboration in communicative and creative work

Human–AI collaboration is central to MarCom because AI outputs often require interpretive judgment, cultural sensitivity, and accountability for persuasive intent. Recent advertising research indicates that audiences evaluate generative AI content differently depending on whether humans are visibly involved as "gatekeepers" of human presence and intent (Madathil, 2025). Complementary research shows that consumer attitudes depend on appeal types (agentic versus communal), perceived self-efficacy, and the social positioning of AI (e.g., servant, partner) within the persuasion process (Chen et al., 2024).

Importantly, disclosure and motives for using AI can condition trust and response. Evidence suggests that when consumers learn content is AI-generated, evaluations can decline, particularly if AI is framed as cost-saving rather than purpose-aligned (Huynh & Aichner, 2025; Zhang & Hur, 2025). These findings reinforce that MarCom-specific adoption cannot be reduced to technical performance, because communicative outcomes are filtered through perceptions of trust and authenticity, as well as knowledge of persuasion.

AI systems interact with customers in marketing communications through different channels: website chatbots handling routine questions, automated messaging tools on social media and mobile platforms, recommendation engines that personalize offers or content, and triggered email or service responses based on customer actions. These systems usually combine model-generated outputs with brand guidelines, knowledge databases, and escalation protocols to produce responses efficiently. Human oversight is crucial, as staff set conversational boundaries, approve sensitive responses, ensure accuracy and appropriate tone, monitor problematic interactions, and step in for issues involving complaints, vulnerable customers, legal concerns, or reputational risks. Therefore, AI-driven customer engagement in marketing should be seen as supervised automation, not fully autonomous relationship management.

Strategic framework development and validation beyond marketing

The development of strategic frameworks for artificial intelligence marketing has advanced from early adoption studies to more sophisticated models that address implementation challenges and organizational impacts (Hicham et al., 2023; Komodromos et al., 2024). Huang and Rust's taxonomy of mechanical, thinking, and feeling AI offers a widely used baseline for categorizing AI applications in marketing and has shaped later frameworks that expand this perspective to generative AI and human–AI collaboration (Cillo & Rubera, 2025; Manis & Madhavaram, 2023; Olim et al., 2024).

Framework development in adjacent domains underscores two lessons relevant for MarCom. First, AI adoption is shaped by market structure, vendor ecosystems, and competitive dynamics, rather than by internal capability alone (Hernández-Tamurejo et al., 2025). Second, structured expert methods, such as Delphi, can strengthen framework validity by clarifying process phases and specifying human roles in which contextual judgment remains essential (Bessa & Barbosa, 2025). These insights support the inclusion and transparent reporting of an expert validation step in a MarCom framework paper.

This theoretical framework acknowledges that effective AI implementation requires careful consideration of the roles and responsibilities of both human and machine participants in the marketing

communication process (Babatunde et al., 2024). The literature indicates that successful AI integration relies on understanding the distinct strengths and limitations of each component and on designing systems that exploit these complementary capabilities.

Overall, these studies indicate that collaboration in MarCom is more than just replacing human labor with AI; it's a coordination challenge involving how tasks are assigned, ordered, and overseen. Effective setups usually keep creative tasks such as ideation, brand voice, and ethical judgment handled by humans, while delegating data-intensive activities such as multivariate testing, micro-segmentation, and real-time optimization to AI. When these roles are unclear or poorly communicated, both employees and consumers may become confused and lose trust, thereby negatively affecting campaign success.

Further research suggests that rising consumer expectations for AI-human collaboration may lead to disappointment if results fail to meet these expectations, particularly among highly optimistic users (Abhiseka et al., 2024; Nicoli et al., 2022; Rust, 2025; Tsvetkova et al., 2024). Utilizing ongoing learning systems and maintaining transparent communication can help establish realistic expectations and promote acceptance (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2024). Effective human-machine teamwork in marketing relies on clear role definitions, strong communication strategies, and systems that facilitate continuous learning and the management of expectations (Rahmawati, 2024). Finding the right balance between human creativity and machine efficiency requires careful integration, transparency, and a commitment to mutual understanding (Wang & Liu, 2025).

Ethics and regulation as a strategic tension, not an add-on

Ethical risks in AI-enabled marketing extend beyond privacy compliance. They include synthetic advertising and deepfakes, vulnerability exploitation through hyper-personalized persuasion, and consumer deception *via* conversational agents. From a consumer protection perspective, legal safeguards may provide partial coverage but still fall short in practice due to enforcement and the speed of innovation (Chen et al., 2024; Duivenvoorde, 2025; Zhang & Hur, 2025).

Trust dynamics in generative AI further indicate that perceptions of fairness, transparency, and "humanness" shape adoption and reliance (Duivenvoorde, 2025; Huynh & Aichner, 2025). At the organizational level, "AI washing" adds an additional MarCom-relevant risk: signaling responsible AI use without substantive governance, with longer-term legitimacy costs (Elsayed, 2026).

Methodology

Review design

This study follows a systematic literature review design with interpretive thematic synthesis, reported in accordance with PRISMA guidelines. The intent is to consolidate and structure evidence on AI in MarCom into an implementation-oriented framework while avoiding inappropriate aggregation of heterogeneous outcomes.

Search strategy and study selection

A structured search was conducted in Scopus and Web of Science in March 2025, covering publications from January 2020 to February 2025. The search targeted the title, abstract, and keyword fields using a Boolean string combining:

a. AI terms (e.g., "artificial intelligence", "machine learning", "generative AI");
b. MarCom terms (e.g., "marketing communication*", "marcom", "integrated marketing communication*", "brand communication"), and implementation terms (e.g., "framework", "strategy", "adoption", "integration").

The search retrieved 1,461 records (Scopus: 923; Web of Science: 538). After deduplication, 1,142 unique records remained for screening. Two reviewers independently screened titles and abstracts, then full texts, against predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria were peer-reviewed journal articles, English-language, full-text availability, an explicit focus on AI applications in marketing communications (not generic digital marketing), and a substantive discussion of implementation, adoption, strategy, or framework-related issues. On the other hand, the exclusion criteria were

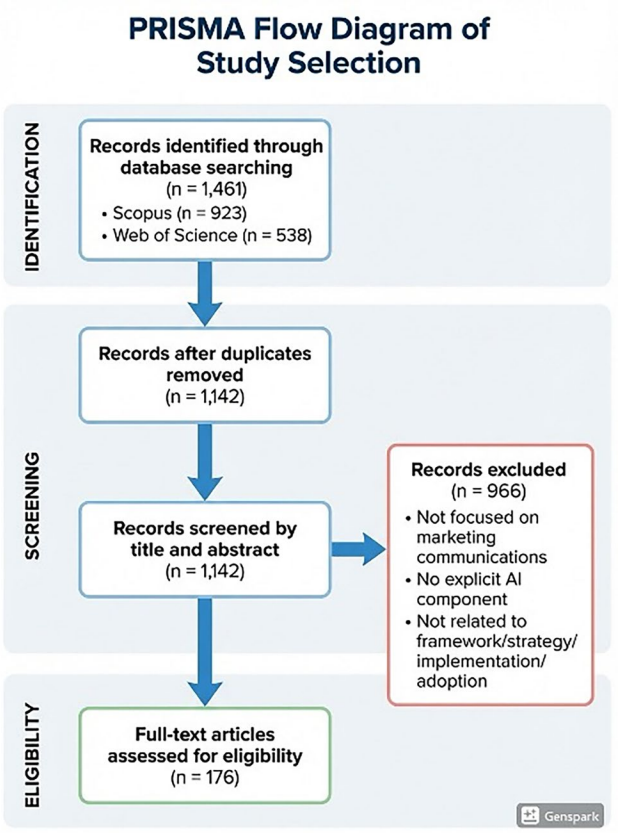

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow diagram of study selection.

grey literature (conference papers, theses, reports); purely technical AI development without a MarCom context; and articles discussing AI ethics or policy without a clear MarCom application.

Following, the final corpus comprised 76 articles. A PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 1) summarizes the selection process.

Screening process (PRISMA flow)

A structured search was performed in Scopus and Web of Science in March 2025, covering articles published between 2020 and 2025 (title, abstract, and keywords) using a Boolean string that combined AI-related terms (e.g., "artificial intelligence," "machine learning," and "generative AI") with marketing communications terms (e.g., "marketing communication*", "marcom", "integrated marketing communication*") and implementation terms (e.g., "framework", "strategy", "adoption", "integration"). The search retrieved 1,461 records (Scopus: 923; Web of Science: 538), which were deduplicated to 1,142 unique articles using reference management software.

Titles and abstracts were independently screened by two reviewers against predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, followed by full-text assessment and methodological quality evaluation using adapted CASP checklists. Inter-rater agreement was high at both stages (Cohen's kappa > 0.80), and disagreements were resolved through discussion with a third reviewer, resulting in a final set of 76 peer-reviewed journal articles.

The complete screening process is outlined in a PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 1), which details the number of records at each stage and the reasons for exclusion. This structured process demonstrates how the initial pool of 1,461 records was reduced to 76 studies through deduplication, staged screening, and quality assessment.

Data extraction and synthesis approach

A structured extraction form was used to capture study characteristics (context, method, AI capability, MarCom activity, outcomes, and governance concerns). Thematic synthesis employed a hybrid deductive–inductive approach: initial codes were informed by established AI-in-marketing concepts, and these were iteratively refined as MarCom-specific themes emerged. Intercoder reliability was assessed on a subset of studies (Krippendorff's alpha = 0.79), and an audit trail documented code definitions and revisions.

In addition, bibliometric mapping (VOSviewer) and qualitative coding support tools (NVivo) were used to triangulate thematic patterns and co-occurrences. Importantly, the review reports the prevalence of themes within the corpus (where relevant) but does not treat heterogeneous outcomes as comparable in terms of effect sizes or real-world adoption rates.

Expert validation step

To address the practical interpretability of the framework and respond to concerns about late-stage "cosmetic" consultation, the review protocol pre-specified an expert validation step focused on face validity and construct clarity. Nine experts were recruited using purposive criteria: publication/research leadership in AI and marketing communications (academics) or responsibility

for AI-enabled MarCom delivery (industry practitioners). The panel comprised five academic experts and four industry practitioners.

Experts reviewed a draft framework and provided structured feedback on the conceptual distinctiveness between dimensions. the completeness (missing constructs), the clarity (definitions and boundaries), and the feasibility of operationalization in MarCom teams.

Feedback was coded thematically and used to refine: (a) dimension labels and definitions, (b) boundary conditions, and (c) cross-cutting ethical tensions. Where experts disagreed, revisions were resolved through explicit rationale notes in the audit trail, prioritizing alignment with the reviewed evidence rather than preference-based edits.

Findings: seven dimensions of AI integration in MarCom

Overview

Marketing frameworks are designed to provide structured, practical guidance for navigating the complexities of contemporary marketing, particularly in digital and technology-driven environments. Recent studies emphasize that successful frameworks combine academic theory with empirical insights from industry practitioners, thereby ensuring their relevance and applicability to current marketing challenges (Gryshchenko & Shkoda, 2023). Frameworks frequently emphasize the importance of ongoing feedback, ethical considerations, and adaptation to emerging technologies, thereby rendering them robust tools for marketing professionals operating within dynamic market environments (Bilgihan et al., 2024).

An analysis of 76 peer-reviewed articles identified seven key themes that define the main aspects of AI usage in marketing communications. These themes were identified through detailed content analysis and provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how AI is integrated into marketing. This systematic approach ensures that the framework encompasses all key factors related to AI adoption in marketing contexts (Malthouse & Copulsky, 2023).

Across the 76 articles, AI in MarCom is consistently framed as a socio-technical change in which technical capability, organizational design, and communicative credibility interact. Human–AI collaboration appears as the most frequent theme in the corpus (68 of 76 studies), but it is rarely actionable without accompanying dimensions such as evaluation discipline, tool integration, and ongoing learning.

The seven-dimensional strategic framework

Table 1 presents the refined seven dimensions, their conceptual focus, and their implications for marketing communications (MarCom). Ethics and governance are treated as cross-cutting design constraints that condition every dimension, rather than as a stand-alone checklist.

Interdependencies and what the framework does, and does not, claim

The framework is an integrative synthesis of dominant themes in the reviewed MarCom-focused AI literature. It does not claim that any dimension

Table 1. Seven dimensions of AI integration in marketing communications.

Dimension	Concise definition	MarCom implication
Human-AI collaboration design	How tasks, decisions, and accountability are divided between people and AI.	Protects creative judgment, ethical review, and brand control.
Efficiency and workflow redesign	How AI changes the speed, sequence, and coordination of MarCom work.	Improves execution only when workflows are redesigned, not when tools are simply inserted.
Methodological rigor and evaluation	How AI use is tested, validated, and monitored.	Expands evaluation beyond performance to include trust, authenticity, and brand safety.
Analytics and data readiness	The availability, quality, accessibility, and governance of data used by AI systems.	Determines whether AI outputs are reliable, relevant, and compliant.
Tool selection and integration	How organizations choose AI tools and connect them to existing systems and channels.	Supports strategic fit, usability, and cross-channel consistency.
Staged implementation and change management	How AI is introduced, scaled, and supported through training, roles, and governance.	Reduces adoption failure and improves organizational readiness.
Continuous adaptation and learning	How AI use is refined over time through feedback, experimentation, and updating.	Helps MarCom teams respond to shifting audiences, platforms, and risks.

Note. Ethics and governance operate across all seven dimensions and should be treated as cross-cutting constraints rather than as a separate checklist item.

independently "causes" implementation success across contexts. Instead, it claims that:

a. MarCom outcomes depend on configurations of these dimensions (e.g., efficiency gains without evaluation discipline can increase reputational risk).
b. Evidence is strongest on directional relationships (e.g., more structured evaluation is associated with fewer reported failures), but comparability is limited by heterogeneous designs and outcome measures across studies.

The framework provides a structured basis for hypothesis building and field testing, rather than a universal maturity model with benchmark metrics.

Thematic interpretation of the seven dimensions

Human-Machine Collaboration. This theme was identified as the most prominent in the literature, appearing in 68 of 76 articles (89%), with 52 citing it as the primary success factor for AI implementation. The evidence highlights three main points: (1) consumer expectations for AI-human collaboration are higher than for either humans or AI working alone (Chen et al., 2025; Madathil, 2025; Ryoo et al., 2026), leading to increased performance standards but also a greater risk of disappointment if expectations are not met; (2) the best collaboration ratios are those where humans take the lead, with managers generally favoring about 70% human and 30% machine decision-making (Haesevoets et al., 2021; Zhang & Hur, 2025); and (3) a competitive-collaborative approach—where humans and machines both cooperate and compete—produces better results than models that only focus on collaboration (Ryoo et al., 2026; Wang & Liu, 2025). These findings were consistent across 14 empirical studies covering various MarCom areas (content creation $n=6$, campaign management $n=5$, customer engagement $n=3$).

The findings indicate that each theme contributes a distinct dimension to AI's role in marketing communications. Human–machine collaboration underscores that integrating human creativity with AI-driven analytics supports strategic decision-making and ethical oversight, reinforcing the view that AI augments rather than replaces human expertise. Efficiency and time optimization stress AI's capacity to automate repetitive tasks and enable real-time adjustments, showing its unique impact on operational speed and accuracy. Methodological quality enhancement adds value by underscoring the importance of systematic procedures, validation, and monitoring to ensure reliable and effective AI deployment.

The theme of Analytical Methods and Techniques uniquely emphasizes the technical foundations—such as machine learning, NLP, and predictive analytics—that enable intelligent, data-driven insights. Tool Utilization and Selection clarifies how organizations select AI tools based on strategic fit and integration needs. Implementation Stages and Processes provides insight into how phased adoption and change management support smoother transitions and organizational readiness. Finally, Dynamic Adaptation and Continuous Learning highlights the need for ongoing refinement, demonstrating how AI systems evolve with market changes and organizational capabilities, ensuring sustained value over time.

The quantitative analysis highlights notable trends in AI adoption and deployment across various marketing communication functions. The data shows a rapid increase in AI applications, with research publications rising by 340% in the last five years. This trend reflects a growing academic and practical focus on integrating AI into marketing communications. In addition, reported "success rates" (e.g., 82% for structured methodologies vs 34% for ad hoc approaches) are synthesized from a subset of empirical studies that explicitly compared AI implementation outcomes across deployment models. They should therefore be interpreted as indicative trends rather than universal benchmarks.

Discussion

MarCom-specific contributions versus general AI theory

The proposed framework, while incorporating themes evident in extensive research on AI adoption, contributes theoretically by showing that AI adoption in marketing communications extends beyond mere technology-readiness concerns. In

MarCom, adoption encompasses a communicative governance dimension, as AI outputs are subject to public interpretation, relational assessment, and reputational consequences. Adoption outcomes are influenced not solely by data quality, tool efficacy, or implementation speed, but also by message authenticity, brand voice consistency, disclosure effects, and audience trust.

The framework enhances current research in three distinct manners. Initially, it transitions the unit of analysis from singular AI tools to a dependent configuration encompassing organizational, evaluative, and relational dimensions. Secondly, it frames human-AI collaboration as a structured role architecture that designates creative judgment, ethical assessment, and accountability, rather than perceiving human participation as an ambiguous adjunct to automation. Third, it expands AI adoption theory by integrating communicative outcome criteria, including perceived authenticity, brand safety, and trust, alongside efficiency and performance. The framework elucidates why technically successful AI adoption may still falter in MarCom due to a deficiency in communicative legitimacy.

Quality in MarCom is inherently interpretive and relational: an AI model may achieve technical accuracy yet erode stakeholder trust through tonal misalignment or perceived manipulation, demanding evaluation criteria that transcend conventional metrics. In addition, brand voice functions as a critical governance object, as generative systems can yield superficially fluent content that deviates from core identity parameters, thereby necessitating expanded oversight mechanisms beyond static brand guidelines.

These features set MarCom apart from wider AI implementation contexts. The framework suggests that successful adoption depends more on aligning technical systems with communicative credibility, organizational accountability, and ongoing learning than on increasing automation. It offers a basis for future research into how different human-AI role arrangements, governance models, and evaluation strategies affect campaign outcomes.

Finally, earned media dynamics and reputational amplification further differentiate MarCom contexts, in which outputs propagate through social sharing, public scrutiny, and potential backlash—raising the stakes of errors and underscoring the indispensable role of human stewardship.

Managerial Implications

To ensure recommendations remain firmly rooted in the evidence base, the following managerial implications are articulated as evidence-informed propositions for organizations integrating AI into marketing communications (MarCom). These theoretical insights directly guide managerial practice. For organizations integrating AI into marketing communications, the main goal is not just the adoption of new tools but the development of a regulated communication process that balances automation, human oversight, and evaluation criteria. As a result, the following propositions turn the framework into evidence-based actions for MarCom teams (Table 2).

Proposition 1 (Collaboration Governance): Organizations should establish explicit human-AI accountability boundaries delineated by task and channel, with the imperative being most acute for outputs bearing high reputational risk, such as public-facing claims or communications on sensitive topics.

Table 2. Evidence-informed managerial propositions for AI integration in marketing communications.

Proposition	Managerial implication (evidence-informed)	Practical emphasis
Proposition 1 (Collaboration Governance)	Establish explicit human–AI accountability boundaries by task and channel, with heightened scrutiny for high-reputational-risk outputs (e.g., public-facing claims; sensitive topics).	Define roles, approval thresholds, and escalation paths for risk-bearing content.
Proposition 2 (Evaluation Expansion)	Expand evaluation beyond performance metrics to include communicative outcomes (e.g., perceived authenticity, brand safety, trust), especially where AI disclosure is likely or legally required.	Add MarCom outcome measures and disclosure-related checks to reporting and QA.
Proposition 3 (Workflow Redesign)	Redesign end-to-end workflows (briefing, iteration, quality assurance, publishing) rather than simply inserting AI tools, to support durable implementation over short-term experimentation.	Update SOPs, integrate review loops, and resource governance across stages.
Proposition 4 (Disclosure Strategy)	Treat AI disclosure practices and the framing of AI-use motives as core campaign design variables, since responses depend on the rationale for AI use and the clarity of human oversight.	Plan disclosure and messaging rationale alongside creative strategy and controls.

Note. The propositions are evidence-informed guidance derived from the reviewed corpus and should not be interpreted as universal benchmarks.

Organizations should implement clear escalation protocols for customer-facing AI systems to ensure that complaints, refund requests, vulnerable customer cases, and sensitive brand matters are swiftly directed to human personnel.

Proposition 2 (Evaluation Expansion): Beyond conventional performance metrics, evaluation protocols must incorporate communicative outcomes—including perceived authenticity, brand safety, and trust—particularly in contexts where disclosure of AI involvement is likely or legally required.

Proposition 3 (Workflow Redesign): AI adoption necessitates a comprehensive workflow redesign that encompasses briefing, iteration, quality assurance, and publishing stages, rather than merely inserting tools; this distinction is pivotal for distinguishing enduring implementation from transient experimentation.

Proposition 4 (Disclosure Strategy): Disclosure practices and the framing of AI utilization motives should be integrated as core campaign design variables, given that consumer responses hinge on both the rationale for AI deployment and the articulation of human oversight.

Alongside designing internal workflows, organizations need to align these practices with the external environment, where regulators, platforms, and audiences are becoming more attentive to synthetic content, disclosure practices, and AI-driven persuasion.

Policy and governance implications

Organizations must proactively anticipate escalating regulatory and normative pressures surrounding synthetic advertising, AI-driven persuasion, and consumer transparency obligations. Even when technical compliance is achieved, MarCom legitimacy remains vulnerable to perceptions of deception or unsubstantiated claims of AI efficacy (Duivenvoorde, 2025; Elsayed, 2026).

Emerging industry governance frameworks for generative AI in marketing underscore the necessity of role clarity, formalized policies, continuous monitoring, and iterative feedback mechanisms (Duivenvoorde, 2025; Grewal et al., 2025). These structures serve as valuable implementation scaffolds, provided they are calibrated against peer-reviewed empirical evidence and tailored to specific organizational risk profiles (Gu et al., 2024).

Limitations and future research directions

This research paper is constrained by four primary limitations that shape its scope and generalizability.

First, the analysis is restricted to English-language, peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, which may under-represent valuable practitioner perspectives and non-English scholarly contributions.

Second, the focal period from 2020 to 2025 encompasses rapid technological evolution; subsequent advancements in generative capabilities and associated governance practices continue to unfold beyond this timeframe.

Third, the heterogeneity of empirical studies—spanning diverse contexts, methodologies, and outcome measures—precludes robust aggregation of "success rates," necessitating a pattern-based rather than meta-analytic interpretation.

Fourth, while expert validation enhanced the framework's clarity and practical feasibility, it cannot supplant comprehensive field testing for real-world validation.

Future research directions

Future investigations should prioritize empirical advancements to address these gaps and extend the framework's applicability. Key priorities include field experiments that systematically compare human-AI role architectures in campaign production and optimization processes. Also, longitudinal case studies are needed to trace governance maturity trajectories and their impacts on brand trust over time. Efforts to develop robust measurement instruments for perceived authenticity, disclosure effects, and boundaries of AI-mediated persuasion within MarCom contexts are essential. Finally, comparative analyses across sectors (regulated versus non-regulated) and among varying audience vulnerabilities will illuminate contextual contingencies and refine implementation strategies.

Conclusion

This study consolidates a fragmented literature on AI in marketing communications into a seven-dimensional strategic framework grounded in a systematic review of 76 peer-reviewed studies and refined through structured expert validation.

The study contributes to theory by demonstrating that effective AI integration in MarCom relies on the alignment of technical capability, governance structure, and communicative legitimacy. The framework positions AI integration in MarCom as a socio-technical design challenge that requires explicit human–AI role architecture, rigorous evaluation, careful tool integration, staged change management, and continuous learning. By foregrounding boundary conditions and ethical tensions, the revised manuscript aims to support more credible theory development and more responsible, evidence-informed MarCom practice. For practitioners, the framework provides a roadmap for planning, implementing, and governing AI in marketing communications, from early pilots to advanced generative applications, and highlights the need for human-led oversight, cross-functional collaboration, and continuous learning. Beyond marketing, the framework offers transferable insights into human–machine collaboration in other professional domains that require both analytical robustness and creative judgment.

Author contributions

CRediT: **Marcos Komodromos**: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing; **Marios Vassiliou**: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Methodology; **Andreas N. Masouras**: Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Validation; **Stylianos Papalexandris**: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing; **Sofia D. Anastasiadou**: Data curation, Methodology, Software, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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