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The Effect of Artificial Intelligence on Enhancing Customer Experience through the Mediation of Social Media Marketing (Case: Iranian Tourism Platforms)

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A B S T R A C T

In today's digital era, particularly within the tourism industry, the use of social media marketing tools such as chatbots, virtual influencers, and augmented reality (AR) has emerged as one of the most effective strategies for enhancing user engagement and satisfaction. This study aims to elucidate the role of Perceived Artificial Intelligence (PAI)-based technologies in improving customer experience and to examine their impact through social media marketing instruments. The research population comprises customers of Iranian tourism platforms. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire, with items explicitly designed to measure the dimensions of Perceived AI (perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, perceived intelligence, and personalization), and analyzed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique with SmartPLS software. A total of 367 questionnaires were evaluated. The findings indicate that specific dimensions of Perceived AI are significantly associated with social media marketing components (chatbots, augmented reality, and virtual influencers), which in turn show a meaningful relationship with customer experience. The results underscore the pivotal role of Perceived AI dimensions in enhancing customer experience on tourism platforms, a role that is notably amplified through the use of social media marketing tools.

Accordingly, it is recommended that platform managers strategically and intelligently integrate Perceived AI technologies alongside social media marketing instruments to optimize customer engagement and satisfaction.

Keywords:

Customer Experience; Artificial Intelligence; Social Media Marketing; Chatbots; Augmented Reality; Virtual Influencers

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1. Introduction

In Iran, several tourism platforms operate with the aim of delivering value propositions to customers by offering services such as ticket booking, hotel reservations, trip planning for domestic and (۱)known platforms include: -ious types of tours. Some of the most wellinternational travel, and var Alibaba, which is one of the largest tourism platforms in Iran, providing a wide range of services such ravel cards, travel as booking airplane, train, and bus tickets, domestic and international tours, t in the Iranian calendar), Alibaba recorded ۱۴۰۱) ۲۰۲۲insurance, visa services, and more. In significant financial transactions and was recognized as one of the main players in the Iranian tourism trillion IRR of the tourism ۲۴it accounted for approximately industry, with reports indicating that SnappTrip, a subsidiary of the Snapp Group, which in addition to flight and hotel (۲)market. reservations also offers services such as car rentals and booking of local and traditional Mrbilit, which specializes in selling different types of tickets (airplane, train, (۳)ations. accommod and bus) and provides customers with tools to compare prices and choose the best options. Other to this competitive landscape. With platforms such as Jabama, Safarmarket, and others also contribute the development of infrastructure and intense competition in this market, innovative services have .accommodations emerged, including the ability to book local hotels and traditional

platforms have experienced remarkable growth. Initially, these Over recent years, Iranian tourism platforms were limited to hotel and ticket reservations; however, they have progressively integrated ve technological and digital innovations, AI systems, and data analytics. These advancements ha enabled them to offer personalized recommendations, thereby enhancing customer experience. Moreover, competition among platforms has stimulated multiple innovations in services and tools, preferences based suggestions and offers tailored to customer-such as budget.

Many of the world's leading thinkers have debated how artificial intelligence is reshaping our lives today. Research has highlighted the promise of AI techniques such as machine learning and other Artificial .(۲۰۲۴Omeish A. K.,) sks in everyday lifemethods in tackling a wide range of complex ta including —intelligence plays an important role in supporting decisions related to the marketing mix and has been widely —product, price, distribution, promotion, and consumer purchase intention based strategies will be able -in the field of marketing. In fact, a company that develops AI examined to attract more customers and establish a mutually beneficial relationship between the firm and its ntly impacts customer experience and clients. Research findings in marketing show that AI significa .(۲۰۱۸Berg, Buffie, & Zanna,) influences the interaction between businesses and their customers Today, artificial intelligence is increasingly being adopted as a standard approach in implementing ng to its ability to manage big data, customize products and services, enable digital marketing, owi .(۲۰۱۹ ,Chen, Chiang , & Storey) making, and deliver many other advantages-timely decision

By leveraging insights derived from customer data, artificial intelligence provides personalized recommendations tailored to individual needs, thereby enhancing the overall customer experience .(۲۰۱۸Huang & Rust ,)

lligence were developed with the aim of computing consumer The earliest versions of artificial inte behavior. Later, through tools such as machine learning algorithms, AI advanced to predicting consumer preferences and behavior, thereby overcoming the limitations of classical marketing schools Deep learning has significantly enhanced the capabilities of .(۲۰۱۳Fawcett & Provost,) thought of artificial intelligence in developing social platforms. From sentiment analysis to natural language to improving performance. It has been processing and image recognition, it has greatly contributed argued that these capabilities play an important role in enabling marketers to gain a deeper Deep learning has .(۲۰۱۶Goodfellow, Bengio, & Courville,) understanding of customer emotions

engagement with audiences, which is one of the key strengths of digital marketing enabled interactive .(۲۰۱۳Cambria, Schuller, Xia, & Catherine,)

However, despite these advances, the problem of how customers of Iranian tourism platforms actually ased technologies remains insufficiently articulated in prior studies. b-perceive and experience AI Challenges such as unclear personalization, limited cultural adaptation, and inconsistent integration of portantly, existing AI tools into tourism services have created gaps in customer experience. More im research often treats AI as a single, generic construct, whereas in reality customer experience is shaped by distinct perceptual dimensions of AI. These dimensions include perceived usefulness, perceived intelligence, and personalization. Without ,perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment explicitly identifying and operationalizing these dimensions, the mechanisms through which AI .influences customer experience remain conceptually vague

f artificial intelligence in marketing reveals the A review of the existing literature on the role o presence of research gaps across various dimensions of this field. Accordingly, examining how Perceived AI influences different aspects of social media marketing, particularly within diverse nd cultural contexts, is essential. Although studies have been conducted on the geographical a functions of AI in several countries, research related to artificial intelligence and its outcomes in .limited developing economies, such as Iran, remains

focus on how these technologies interact with customer preferences and behaviors, This study seeks to offering insights into best practices for integrating artificial intelligence with social media marketing chatbots, virtual influencers, and based functions such as-strategies. It also examines the role of AI augmented reality in enhancing customer experience on tourism platforms. Specifically, it aims to answer the research gap by investigating which perceived dimensions of AI most strongly influence .mediated by social media marketing customer experience when

Consequently, given the rapid growth of tourism industry platforms in Iran and the increasing use of AI capabilities to enhance customer experience, this study investigates the impact of Perceived dimensions on customer experience through the mediation of social media Artificial Intelligence based technologies influence customer -marketing. It seeks to answer the question of whether AI .marketing experience when mediated by social media

2. Theoretical Framework

2-1. Artificial Intelligence in Social Media Marketing

With the growing development of personalized customer interactions, artificial intelligence has initiated a revolutionary stage in social media marketing and has transformed digital marketing With the advent of early computational models that .(۲۰۱۹Chiang , & Storey, ,patterns (Chen examined consumer behavior, this framework evolved to such an extent that artificial intelligence is .(۲۰۱۶ ,ell, Norvignow employed to overcome conventional barriers in customer interaction (Russ

The emergence of recommendation engines in social networks was equally instrumental in this revolution, as social media platforms began leveraging customer interactions to influence the type of impact of deep learning techniques has been fundamental in content delivered to users. Moreover, the enhancing the capabilities of social media, including sentiment analysis, image recognition, and This enables marketers to .(۲۰۱۶natural language processing (Goodfellow, Bengio, & Courville, stand customer emotions and produce more relevant content (Cambria, Schuller, Xia, & under .(۲۰۱۳Catherine,

The introduction of artificial intelligence into social media platforms has significantly transformed the customer interactions –that have reshaped business customer experience, offering diverse features

The introduction of artificial intelligence into social media platforms has significantly .(۲۰۱۸Zhao,)

customer –transformed the customer experience, offering various features that have reshaped business interactions. Interactive AI applications enable businesses to anticipate what customers are likely to do, allowing companies to understand, predict, and even shape customer behavior (Omeish, et al., inforcement of ongoing marketing strategies, Through continuous monitoring and the re .(۲۰۲۴ artificial intelligence improves performance ratios and enhances the customer experience (Nair, Intelligent algorithms enable businesses to uncover new or hidden trends, patterns, and .(۲۰۲۱ time -ot be detectable through human insight. They also facilitate realanomalies that may n optimization of current marketing strategies based on customer behavior and constantly evolving .(۲۰۲۰market conditions (Chen J. ,

intelligence to deliver even more personalized Moreover, deep learning algorithms enable artificial Such personalized relationships enhance .(۲۰۲۱content at a highly precise level (Huang & Rust, have highlighted how AI (۲۰۲۰a). Researchers such as (Khrais, ۲۰۲۰customer loyalty (Lee & Lee, omer experience, particularly on social media platforms. AI's capacity to provide can improve cust tailored interactions and instant responses to consumers is significant, as it can evaluate vast amounts h individual custome (Chen, of information to deliver highly relevant content personalized to eac r, thereby increasing engagement rates. This precise understanding of (۲۰۱۹Chiang , & Storey, consumer behavior makes it possible to create relevant and timely interactions, which advance the .(۲۰۱۸ ,overall customer experience (Zhao

2-2. Social Media and Customer Experience

In a collaborative environment, companies can strengthen their relationships with customers. Firms must strategically invest in building and enhancing absorptive capacity. By focusing on increasing the ty to absorb social media into key marketing functions, such investment may include the use of abili sharing platforms to foster a culture of continuous learning. Such -training programs and knowledge novation but also enhance firms' capacity initiatives not only facilitate organizational learning and in to support and effectively engage in the successful adoption of innovations, such as social media .(۲۰۲۱Romero, -S´anchez, & Miquel-Ros, Guerrero-marketing, within their organizations (Cruz ve support systems on social media platforms, businesses can quickly By implementing responsi address customer needs and demonstrate their commitment to them. Fast and effective support grate significantly contributes to the development of relationships. Companies can strategically inte centric approach that -social media into their product development processes by adopting a customer strengthens collaboration among key stakeholders. This approach involves engaging stakeholders in erences, and inviting them to participate in discussions, encouraging them to share ideas and pref product design. Social media is one of the innovations that businesses adopt for their marketing .(۲۰۲۴activities (Maduku,

2-3. Chatbots, Augmented Reality, Virtual Influencers, and Customer Experience

The .(۲۰۱۷act as machine agents that provide access to services and (Brandtzaeg & Følstad, Chatbots interactive mechanisms in chatbots serve as tools through which users can send messages and receive advances in artificial intelligence Due to recent .(۲۰۲۰information and content (Li, Teng, & Chen, and natural language processing, interest in chatbots has grown considerably. Chatbots are applied in personal, professional, and commercial communications, as well as across a wide range of domains Nevertheless, .(۲۰۱۷education, and workplace support (Brandtzaeg & Følstad, ,such as healthcare customer service remains one of the primary application areas, given businesses' commitment to .(۲۰۲۰ ,Følstad & ,providing affordable, immediate, and accessible services (Kvale, Sell, Hodnebrog

The personalization feature in artificial intelligence enhances customer experience by offering individualized interactions (Huang & Rust, ۲۰۱۸). This personalization is further strengthened through the implementation of AI-based chatbots that respond instantly to customer inquiries (Joulin, Grave, Bojanowski, & Mikolov, ۲۰۱۷; Azuma, ۱۹۹۷). AI has created a significant milestone in social media marketing, ushering in a new era of real-time customer engagement through unique strategies (Omeish, Al Khasawneh, & Khair, ۲۰۲۴). Nevertheless, such powerful technology requires a thoughtful strategy that combines innovation with ethics (Lee & Lee, ۲۰۲۰a; Lee J.& ,. ۲۰۲۰b). The emergence of recommendation engines in social networks was equally instrumental in this transformation, as social media platforms began to leverage user interactions to influence the type of content delivered to users. Moreover, the impact of deep learning techniques has been fundamental in enhancing the capabilities of social media, including sentiment analysis, image recognition, and natural language processing (Goodfellow, Bengio, & Courville, ۲۰۱۶). This enables marketers to understand user emotions and produce more relevant content (Cambria, Schuller, Xia, & Catherine, ۲۰۱۳).

The personalization feature enhances customer experience by offering individualized interactions, which is further strengthened through the implementation of AI-based chatbots that respond instantly to user inquiries (Huang & Rust, ۲۰۲۱). Beginning with early computational models that examined consumer behavior, the field has evolved to the point where AI is now employed to overcome interaction barriers in customer conventional (Russell, Norvig, ۲۰۱۶ ,Omeish) as such Researchers have examined how AI affects customer experience, particularly on social media platforms (A. K., ۲۰۲۴). They argue that AI can evaluate vast amounts of information to deliver highly relevant content tailored to each individual user, thereby increasing engagement and customer connection.

This precise understanding of consumer behavior makes it possible to create relevant and timely interactions, which enhance the overall customer experience (Zhao, ۲۰۱۸). In the field of communication and marketing, recent studies have shown that companies must design tools and platforms that encourage consumers to express their emotions (Pera, ۲۰۱۶) and facilitate the sharing of their interests with others (Monfort, Villagra, López-Vázquez, ۲۰۱۹).

Augmented reality (AR), as an AI-based technology, has also made its way into social media platforms to provide immersive experiences. In addition, it allows customers to view products in real-world settings before purchase, thereby increasing convenience and the quality of consultation (Zhu, M. , ۲۰۲۲a).

Similarly, the potential of AI to create and enhance customer satisfaction indices has been highlighted in recent research. AI applications contribute to improving customer satisfaction (Xie, Wang, & Cheng, ۲۰۲۲). The impact of AI on customer experience in social media channels is both extensive in scale and broad in nature, reshaping how businesses approach customer engagement (Crawford, Calo, ۲۰۱۶).

The most important innovation that stands out is its real-time capability. This reflects the trend of using AI in the form of chatbots and virtual influencers, which, through natural language processing and deep learning, provide instant services that help businesses quickly align with customers (Omeish, Al Khasawneh, & Khair, ۲۰۲۴). These are tools designed even to recommend items precisely tailored to each individual user (Wang, Wong, Yuen, & Qi, ۲۰۲۱).

Interactive AI applications enable businesses to estimate what customers are likely to do, while also shaping customer behavior. By employing mechanisms such as chatbots, natural language processing, and deep learning, AI helps deliver instant services that quickly satisfy customer needs (Omeish, Al Khasawneh, & Khair, ۲۰۲۴). Intelligent algorithms allow businesses to identify new or hidden trends and patterns that may not be

time optimization of current marketing -through human insight, and they facilitate real discoverable oreover, deep strategies based on constantly updated customer behavior and market conditions. M .(۲۰۱۸learning algorithms empower businesses to deliver more customized content (Huang & Rust , .(a۲۰۲۰The outcome of such personalized relationships is increased customer loyalty (Lee & Lee, ruptive technology. The impact of AI on AR With AI, augmented reality (AR) has become a dis In .(۲۰۲۲enables customers to experience more personalized immersive interactions (Zhu X. , time data to improve customer -addition, AI can enhance AR applications by processing real logy is still in its early stages, and AI can be leveraged to overcome engagement. In Iran, AR techno .experience technological limitations and improve the overall customer

The use of artificial intelligence has facilitated the entry of virtual influencers into new domains of AI can generate content tailored to specific subcultures, making .(۲۰۲۲ia marketing (Trim, social med customer engagement more unique. Virtual influencers are designed to mimic human interaction, more effective marketing appearing as relatable figures who connect with audiences and serve as By leveraging this technology, .(۲۰۲۱prospects (Radianti, Majchrzak, Fromm, Stieglitz, & Brocke, marketing strategies can be aligned with customer preferences and behaviors (Kleinsmith & et al., .(۲۰۲۱

w become an important part of social media marketing (Boghossian & Virtual influencers have no In terms of brand management, and even when presented as virtual personas, .(۲۰۲۱Vaidyanathan, riate they can establish emotional connections with customers in the short term, demonstrate approp .(۲۰۲۰term customer satisfaction (Jin & et al., -behavior, and lead to short

based virtual influencers impact customer experiences within digital ecosystems (Kleinsmith & et -AI helping to close gaps in ,They may serve as a bridge between AI and human interaction .(۲۰۲۱al., customer engagement while delivering personalized content. AI enhances the humanization of customer experience by understanding challenges and providing relevant and engaging contexts .(۲۰۲۲ ,Trim)

esents some of the recent studies conducted within the scope of this pr (۱The following table (Table .research domain

Table 1. Summary of Prior Research

(Authors (Year	Title of Study	Type of Research	Data Collection / Analysis Tools	Key Findings
Hegde & Shainesh,) (۲۰۱۸	Marketing Social Media	Qualitative	Library Study	Over the past decade, social media has significantly influenced consumer perceptions, customer engagement, brand building, and the creation of .viral content
van Esch & Black.,) (۲۰۲۱	:(Artificial Intelligence (AI Revolutionizing Digital Marketing	Qualitative	Literature Review	AI has brought significant changes to the the in marketing industry, and we are still practical its of stages early .application
Jami Pour,) Hosseinzadeh, & (۲۰۲۲Mansouri,	customer Experience Challenges of Management in Social Commerce: an Application of Aocial Network Analysis	Mixed Method	Survey / Factor Analysis	It is recommended to pay sufficient attention to customer issues and organizational challenges in social .commerce
Yazdanparast, Jami) (۲۰۲۲Pour, & Jafari,	dentifying and prioritizing artificial intelligence (AI) applications in online marketing	Mixed Method	Thematic Analysis; –Questionnaire, Best Worst Analysis	—Four general domains were identified icing, advertising, and product design, pr product distribution. Among these, customer sentiment analysis related to advertising was found to .hold the highest priority

Table 1. Summary of Prior Research

(Authors (Year	Title of Study	Type of Research	Collection / Data Analysis Tools	Key Findings
Yousefi, Sanaeifar, &) (۲۰۲۳Nadari,	The impact of using artificial ntelligence on integrated marketing communications and the effectiveness of marketing activities from the perspective of marketers sporting goods	Quantitative	Questionnaire / Path Analysis	AI has a significant and meaningful mpact on integrated marketing communications and the effectiveness of marketing activities, which should be taken into account for improving .marketing
Bashokouh Ajirlo &) Mohammad Khani, (۲۰۲۳	B Digital Marketing ۲Designing a B Implementation Model with an -Emphasis on Artificial Intelligence based Customer Relationship Management	Mixed Method	Interviews; Grounded Theory; Questionnaire	n implementing ,Company managers business digital marketing, -to-business based -have focused on factors such as AI CRM, while striving to weaken inhibiting factors and strengthen .positive and influential ones
Kazemi Saraskanrood &) (۲۰۲۴Safari,	Process Designing a Marketing Model Based on Artificial Intelligence: Application of Systematic Review Strategy	Qualitative	Systematic Review	Mechanical, cognitive, and emotional ypes of AI improve the marketing process. In addition, the antecedents of AI ,include technological use in marketing ,organizational and ,environmental, behavioral .individual factors
Shakib, Pourradi) Gargari, Moussa Lo, & (۲۰۲۴Ghonche Bigelow,	Investigating the impact of artificial ntelligence capabilities on company to the performance with regard mediating role of marketing capabilities (Case study: top artificial intelligence companies in (Iran	Quantitative	Questionnaire; SEM	AI enables entrepreneurs to properly manage customer feedback, build ,stronger relationships with customers improve marketing processes, increase sales and revenue, analyze market, customer, and competitor data, and enhance forecasting and marketing .performance
Karimi, khadivar, &) (۲۰۲۴Abbasi,	Classification of user Comments on Virtual Reality Technology by Topic Modeling	Quantitative	DM-CRISP methodology	In businesses, topics related to virtual reality attract more interest compared to .other subjects
(۲۰۲۴Salaji,)	of Identification of the Pattern Development of Artificial Intelligence and Smart Enhancing Technologies in Experience Urban Tourism	Qualitative	nterviews; Thematic Analysisv	The use of smart technologies is recommended for improving the tourism .experience
(۲۰۲۳Praful Bharadiya,)	The role of machine learning in business intelligence transforming	Mixed Method	Multiple Algorithms/ Case Study	The advantages of machine learning include cost reduction, improved customer experience, and competitive .advantage
Dehghani Kohneh) ,Shahri, Afshar Kazemi & (۲۰۲۴Pourebrahimi,	Based -Sentiment Analysis in the AI Social Networks	Quantitative	Factor Analysis/ Regression	Sentiment analysis in social networks using artificial intelligence and demonstrates higher accuracy .speed
Ramezani , Bodaghi) Khajeh Noubar, Feghhi & ,Farahmand (۲۰۲۴Mahmoodzadeh,	Presenting the Knowledge Extraction Model of Users' Trust in Marketing Based on Information and Social Network Data	Qualitative	nterviews / Grounded Theory	–The user trust model in social network based marketing relies on network communications and interactions to build trust. Machine learning algorithms are used to .estimate the data
Ramya & Karthikeyan,) (۲۰۲۴	A Study on the Usage of Artificial Intelligence Technology in Influencing Concumer Buying Reference Behaviour with Special to Online Shopping	Quantitative	Questionnaire / Regression	Artificial intelligence technologies improve customer experience and .increase business benefits
Peruchini, Modena da) Silva, & Monteiro (۲۰۲۴Teixeira ,	intelligence and Between artificial customer experience: a literature review on the intersection	Qualitative	Bibliometric Analysis	Artificial intelligence has an impact on .customer experience
Kshetri, Dwivedi,) Davenport, & Panteli, (۲۰۲۴	intelligence in Generative artificial ,marketing: Applications opportunities, challenges,and research agenda	Qualitative	Literature Review	AI increases sales and enhances a .pleasant customer experience
Louzri & Kheidre,) (۲۰۲۴	Artificial Intelligence In Hotel Experiences of Management Switzerland and China	Qualitative	Survey	Smart technologies have positive impacts .on customer experiences
(۲۰۲۴Johrii,)	-How does the proliferation of e commerce influence consumer	Quantitative	Big Data Analytics	marketing and Increased social media influencer support lead to higher

Table 1. Summary of Prior Research

(Authors (Year	Title of Study	Type of Research	Data Collection / Analysis Tools	Key Findings
	expenditure patterns, and what factors contribute to the commerce -effectiveness of e strategies in stimulating consumer spending the digital age			purchasing, greater engagement, and .enhanced customer value creation
Parra & Chatterjee,) (٢٠٢٤	Social Media and Artificial Intelligence: Critical Conversations ?and Where Do We Go from Here	Qualitative	Literature Review / Authors' Personal Experiences and Source Examination	Social networks and AI contribute to .improved interactions and innovation
Omeish, Al Khasawneh,) (٢٠٢٤Khair, &	of AI on Investigating the impact improving customer experience through social media marketing: An analysis of Jordanian Millennials	Mixed Method	Questionnaire / Data Analysis	Marketing through social media influencers has significant positive effects .isit intentionson destination image and v
Beyari & Hashem,) (٢٠٢٥	The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Personalizing Social Media Marketing Strategies for Enhanced Customer Experience	Quantitative	Questionnaire / SEM	based influencer marketing, marketing-AI personalization, and AI content optimization affect customer awareness. By customizing approaches to enhance significant customer experience, AI has a .impact on social media marketing
Deepika & Massand,) (٢٠٢٥	A study on reflective factors of media marketing activities social and its influence on purchase intention of gen z	Quantitative	Questionnaire / Exploratory Factor (Analysis (EFA	This study revealed that social media -marketing activities form a four .variables ٢٠dimensional structure with -The four dimensions are electronic word WOM), engagement, -mouth (e-of customization, and .advertising

2-4. Development of Hypotheses

Prior research has consistently emphasized that these perceptual dimensions shape how customers technologies and influence their overall experience in digital environments. In based-interact with AI particular, studies in marketing and tourism contexts highlight the mediating role of social media in translating the effects marketing tools such as chatbots, virtual influencers, and augmented reality of perceived AI into enhanced customer engagement and satisfaction. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are developed to explicitly link each dimension of AI to specific social media marketing impact on customer experience. Based on the theoretical applications and their subsequent (١foundations, prior research, and the research hypotheses, the conceptual research model (Figure :proposed and the following hypotheses are

AI has a significant :٢ots. Hypothesis AI has a significant relationship with Chatb :١Hypothesis .relationship with Virtual Influencers

Chatbots :٤AI has a significant relationship with Augmented Reality (AR). Hypothesis :٣Hypothesis .have a significant relationship with Customer Experience

Virtual Influencers have a significant relationship with Customer Experience. :٥Hypothesis .AR has a significant relationship with Customer Experience :٦Hypothesis

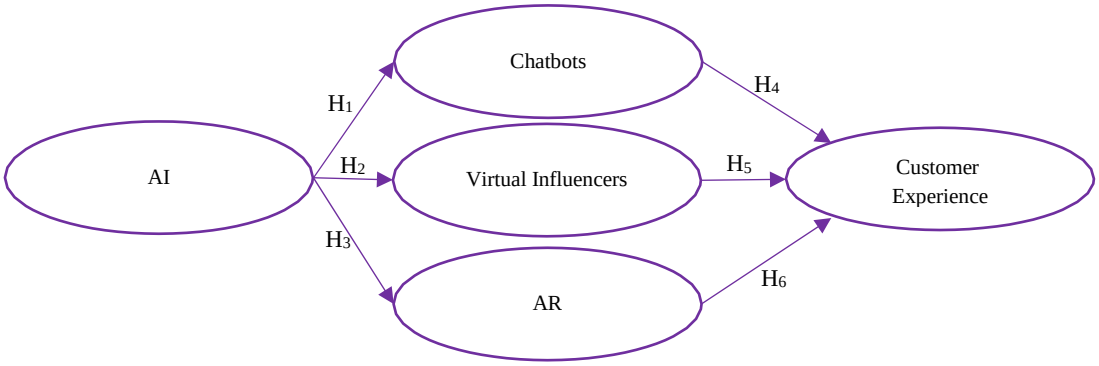

Figure 1. Conceptual Research Model

3. Research Methodology

sectional in -The research is applied in terms of purpose, descriptive in terms of method, and cross To .terms of time. The statistical population includes customers of Iranian tourism platforms table was used. According to this table, for (۱۹۷۰determine the sample size, the Krejcie and Morgan individuals. A convenience ۳۸۴infinite populations, the required sample size is considered to be were collected using a questionnaire. Out of random) sampling method was employed, and data -non) valid responses were analyzed using SPSS and Smart PLS ۳۶۷the distributed questionnaires, software, applying the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique. The demographic results of .(۲) in Table the study are presented

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents :(۲)Table

Description		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	۱۹۲	۵۲
	Female	۱۷۵	۴۸
Age	years ۳۰Up to	۱۳۴	۳۶,۵
	years ۴۰–۳۱	۱۱۷	۳۱,۸
	years ۵۰–۴۱	۱۰۵	۲۸,۶
	years ۵۰Above	۱۱	۲,۹
Education	School Diploma and below High	۱۴	۳,۸
	Associate degree	۱۶	۴,۳
	Bachelor's degree	۹۹	۲۶,۹
	Master's degree	۱۸۰	۴۹
	.Ph.D	۵۸	۱۵,۸
Tourism Platforms Used	Alibaba	۷۷	۲۱
	۲۴Eghamat	۵۱	۱۴
	Last Second	۴۴	۱۲
	Snapp Trip	۴۹	۱۳
	Ap	۵۷	۱۵
	Safar Market	۴۵	۱۲
	Fly Today	۴۵	۱۲
	Others	۵	۱
Total		۳۶۷	۱۰۰

4. Research Findings

The first stage of the research includes examining the reliability, convergent validity, discriminant confirming the validity, and stability of the model and questionnaire. The second stage involves presents the constructs and (۳)research hypotheses through conducting tests using software. Table ,(variables examined in the questionnaire. The results of Average Variance Extracted (AVE reliability

and composite reliability, and validity including discriminant and including Cronbach's alpha .convergent validity indicate that all these criteria have adopted appropriate values

Constructs and Variables Examined in the Questionnaire :(٣)Table

Construct	Factor Loading	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE	Questionnaire Items	Sample Loading	-T Value	Source
AI	٠,٦٦٧	٠,٨٨	٠,٩٠٥	٠,٥٤٧	I consider the use of AI in various areas of .life to be useful	٠,٨٠٣	٣٣,٩٢٢	Omeish, Al) & ,Khasawneh ;٢٠٢٤Khair, & Schepman (٢٠٢٠ ,Rodway
					.I find AI exciting	٠,٧٩٩	٣٢,٩١٣	
					I prefer interacting with AI over interacting .with people	٠,٧٩٣	٢٧,٣٨٠	
					.I often encounter AI tools on social media	٠,٧٣٤	١٤,٧٧٤	
					I have a positive experience working with .AI on social media	٠,٧٧٣	٣٠,٩٤٦	
					My overall attitude toward AI on social .media is positive	٠,٥٨٨	١٤,٦٥٧	
					I am concerned about the potential risks of .AI on social media	٠,٦٤٦	١٦,١٩٠	
					I have doubts about my privacy on social media artificial due to the presence of .intelligence	٠,٧٥٣	٣٢,٥٣٣	
AR	٠,٨٢٣	٠,٨٤٢	٠,٨٤٩	٠,٦٧٧	.I find AR filters on social media attractive	٠,٧٨٧	٣١,٣١٣	Omeish, Al) Khasawneh, & ;٢٠٢٤Khair, McLean & ,Wilson (٢٠١٩
					I think using and working with AR on social .media platforms is easy	٠,٨١٨	٣٤,٨١٩	
					AR allows me to access product information .at the most appropriate time	٠,٨٦٠	٥٧,٦٦٣	
					I think using AR on social media platforms is .complicated	٠,٨٢٧	٤٥,٢٥٩	
Virtual Influencers	٠,٧٧٣	٠,٨٣٣	٠,٨٨٥	٠,٦١١	I enjoy following virtual influencers .bloggers, YouTubers, etc.) on social media)	٠,٥٥٤	١١,٥٠	Omeish, Al) & ,Khasawneh ;٢٠٢٤Khair, & Kadekova (٢٠١٨ ,vonic˘
					I consider products and services promoted by credible and virtual influencers to be .trustworthy	٠,٨٣٩	٤٢,٦٣٩	
					I usually purchase services promoted by .virtual influencers	٠,٨٢٧	٣٥,٩٨٩	
					I find virtual influencers attractive because I .can connect with them	٠,٧٨٧	٣١,٦١٦	
					influencers I ignore posts related to virtual because I think they are unbelievable and .unrealistic	٠,٨٥٩	٦٢,٢٢	
Chatbot	٠,٧٢٦	٠,٧٨	٠,٨٥٠	٠,٥٣٦	Chatbot responses are understandable and .clear to me	٠,٧٦٤	٣١,٠٢٤	Omeish, Al) Khasawneh, & ;٢٠٢٤Khair, Larbi, & ,Denecke ,Gabarron (٢٠٢٠
					Chatbot responses are relevant to my .questions	٠,٨١٨	٤٧,٠٧٢	
					Chatbot responses are appropriate to my .questions	٠,٧٥٨	٢٧,٠٤٧	
					In my opinion, chatbots are sophisticated .tools	٠,٧٤٢	٢٧,٨٩٧	
					correctly recognize my Chatbots often fail to .requests	٠,٥٤٧	٩,٧٠٧	
Customer Experience	٠,٧١٧	٠,٨٣٦	٠,٨٨٤	٠,٦٠٤	Social media users usually prefer detailed instructions over simple instructions when .interacting with AI	٠,٧٨٦	٣٣,٩٣٣	Omeish, Al) & ,Khasawneh ;٢٠٢٤Khair, Waqas, & ,Hamzah (٢٠٢١Salleh,
					,AI can provide not only useful, efficient and effective experiences but also enjoyable .ones	٠,٨٠٣	٣٧,٠١٣	
					AI on social media may make some less .predictable tasks more controllable	٠,٧٥٥	٢٣,٠٧٠	
					It is likely that I will make purchases using .artificial intelligence on social media	٠,٧٣٨	٢٨,٦٩٠	
					With the help of AI, it is easier to manage social platforms (such as Instagram, Telegram, .(.etc	٠,٨٠١	٣٦,٠٧٧	

Larcker criterion was used, –discriminant validity of the constructs, the Fornell For the evaluation of .(٤and the results indicate acceptable discriminant validity for the research (Table

Larcker Criterion–Discriminant Validity Results Using the Fornell :(۴)Table

Construct	AI	AR	Virtual Influencers	Customer Experience	Chatbot
AI	۰,۷۴۰				
AR	۰,۶۳۵	۰,۸۲۳			
Virtual Influencers	۰,۶۰۸	۰,۷۶۲	۰,۷۸۱		
Customer Experience	۰,۶۳۰	۰,۸۱۹	۰,۷۰۳	۰,۷۷۷	
Chatbot	۰,۷۳۶	۰,۷۰۱	۰,۶۱۹	۰,۶۹۲	۰,۷۳۲

parametric tests, examining the normality of data distribution is of great In inferential analyses using Smirnov –importance. In this study, to assess the normality of the data distribution, the Kolmogorov -e results and the nonBased on thes .(۵)S) test was employed, and its results are reported in Table -K) parametric analysis methods or software such as SmartPLS, -normality of the data, the use of non which is based on the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach and does not require data normality, is .research ontinuing the analyses in thisconsidered an appropriate choice for c

Smirnov Test–Results of the Kolmogorov :(۵)Table

Construct	N	Mean	.Std Deviation	Absolute Value	Positive Value	Negative Value	Test Statistic	Significance Level
AI	۳۶۷	۴,۱۳۴۶	۰,۴۹۷۵۸	۰,۱۵۵	۰,۰۶۶	۰,۱۵۵-	۰,۱۵۵	۰,۰۰
AR	۳۶۷	۴,۰۳۳۰	۰,۷۶۰۳۴	۰,۱۷۳	۰,۱۰۲	۰,۱۷۳-	۰,۱۷۳	۰,۰۰
Virtual Influencers	۳۶۷	۳,۸۱۸۱	۱,۱۱۰۹۳	۰,۲۴۹	۰,۱۴۴	۰,۲۴۹-	۰,۲۴۹	۰,۰۰
Chatbot	۳۶۷	۴,۰۸۰۲	۰,۶۳۱۵۳	۰,۱۶۶	۰,۰۸۲	۰,۱۶۶-	۰,۱۶۶	۰,۰۰
Customer Experience	۳۶۷	۴,۱۹۶۲	۰,۶۶۸۶۱	۰,۱۲۴	۰,۱۱۵	۰,۱۶۴-	۰,۱۲۴	۰,۰۰

After explaining the validity and reliability of the model, the conceptual research model was tested (²using path coefficients or standardized regression weights and the coefficient of determination (R a criterion that indicates the effect of an is ²related to the endogenous (dependent) variables. R ۰,۶۷and ,۰,۳۳ ,۰,۱۹exogenous variable on an endogenous variable, with three benchmark values of ,۲۰۱۶respectively (Davari & Rezazadeh, ,²considered as weak, moderate, and strong levels of R shows that, based on these benchmark values, the appropriateness of the structural (۶)Table .(۱۴۶p. .model fit is confirmed

(²Results of the Coefficient of Determination (R :(۶)Table

Endogenous Constructs	Value ²R
AR	۰,۴۰۲
Virtual Influencers	۰,۳۶۸
Chatbot	۰,۵۴۰
Customer Experience	۰,۷۰۴

To examine the overall fit of the model, the GOF (Goodness of Fit) index was used. The obtained for ۰,۳۶and ,۰,۲۵ ,۰,۰۱)which, based on the suggested benchmarks ,۰,۵۴۷۰۷value for GOF is respectively), indicates a strong overall fit of the research model. ,weak, moderate, and strong fit Therefore, it can be concluded that the research model possesses the necessary coherence and .variables adequacy, providing a suitable foundation for analyzing the relationships among the

$$GOF = \sqrt{\overline{Communality} \times \overline{R^{2}}} = \sqrt{۰.595 \times ۰.503} = ۰.54707$$

Path analysis is considered a powerful tool for empirically testing theoretical models, and if the test relationships is the significance of the ,٣,٢٧or ,٢,٥٧ ,١,٩٦statistic exceeds the critical values of respectively. In this study, to examine the ,%٩٩,٩and ,%٩٩ ,%٩٥confirmed at confidence levels of effect of Artificial Intelligence on Customer Experience with the mediating role of Social Media s conducted. The results of the path coefficients and theMarketing, the structural model analysis wa in ,(٣and ٢)and Figures (٧)corresponding test statistics for the model paths are presented in Table .both loading and significance states

ps among the Constructs of the Research ModelSummary of the Results of Direct Relationshi :(٧)Table

.No	Relationship	(β)Path Coefficient	Value-T	Result
١	(AI → Augmented Reality (AR	٠,٦٣٥	١٩,٤٧٩	Confirmed
٢	AI → Virtual Influencers	٠,٦٠٨	١٦,١٩٠	Confirmed
٣	AI → Chatbot	٠,٧٣٦	٢٤,٣٠٢	Confirmed
٤	Customer ExperienceAR →	٠,٥٦١	١٠,٩٦٤	Confirmed
٥	Virtual Influencers → Customer Experience	٠,١٤٧	٢,٧٦٠	Confirmed
٦	Chatbot → Customer Experience	٠,٢٠٨	٥,٠٨٣	Confirmed

,١٦,١٩٠ ,١٩,٤٧٩ the effect of AI on AR, Virtual Influencers, and Chatbots is ,(٧)As shown in Table respectively. Moreover, the effect of AR, Virtual Influencers, and Chatbots on Customer ,٢٤,٣٠٢and respectively, which indicates a significant and positive ,٥,٠٨٣and ,٢,٧٦٠ ,١٠,٩٦٤Experience is .relationship

lationships and the mediating role of Social Media Marketing in the Subsequently, the indirect re AI through ,(٨)relationship between AI and Customer Experience were examined. As shown in Table I through and finally A ,٢,٧١٩AI through Virtual Influencers with ,٩,٦٧١AR with a test statistic of has a significant indirect effect on Customer Experience. Therefore, it can be ,٤,٦٦٧Chatbots with concluded that the indirect relationship between AI and Customer Experience through Social Media .Marketing is significant

he Results of Indirect Relationships among the Constructs of the Research ModelSummary of t :(٨)Table

.No	Relationship	(β)Path Coefficient	Value-T	Result
١	AI → AR → Customer Experience	٠,٣٥٦	٩,٦٧١	Confirmed
٢	AI → Virtual Influencers → Customer Experience	٠,٠٨٩	٢,٧١٩	Confirmed
٣	AI → Chatbot → Customer Experience	٠,١٥٣	٤,٦٦٧	Confirmed

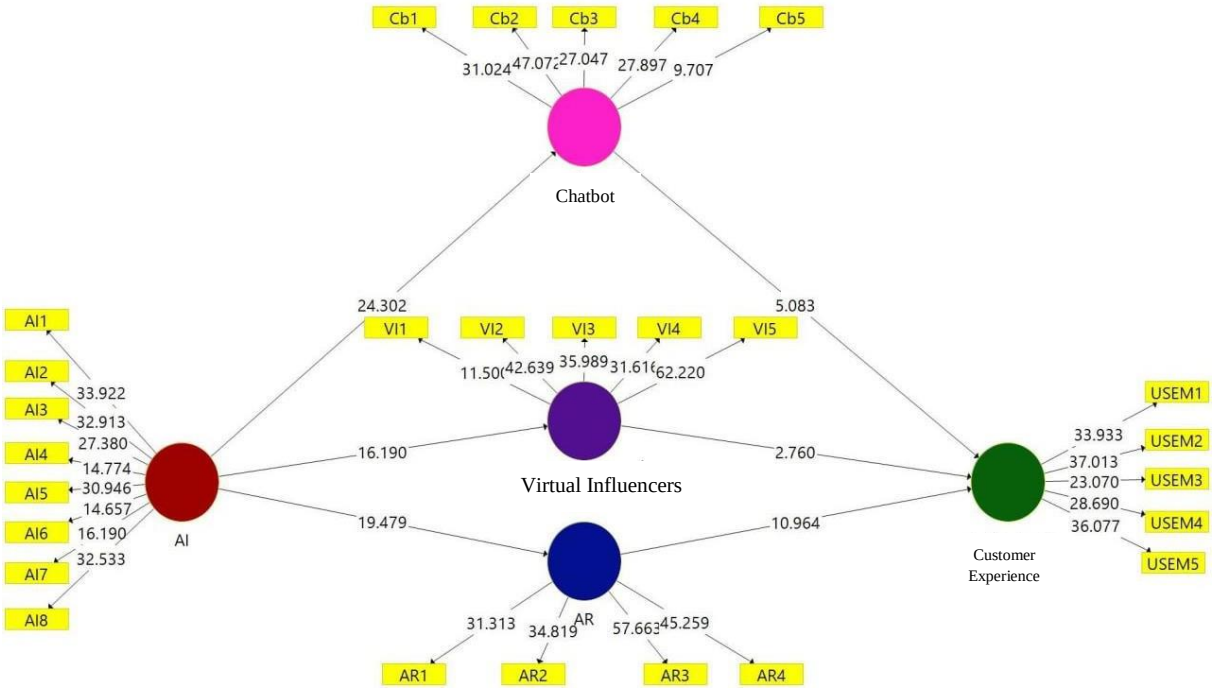

Figure 3. Final research model in the significance state

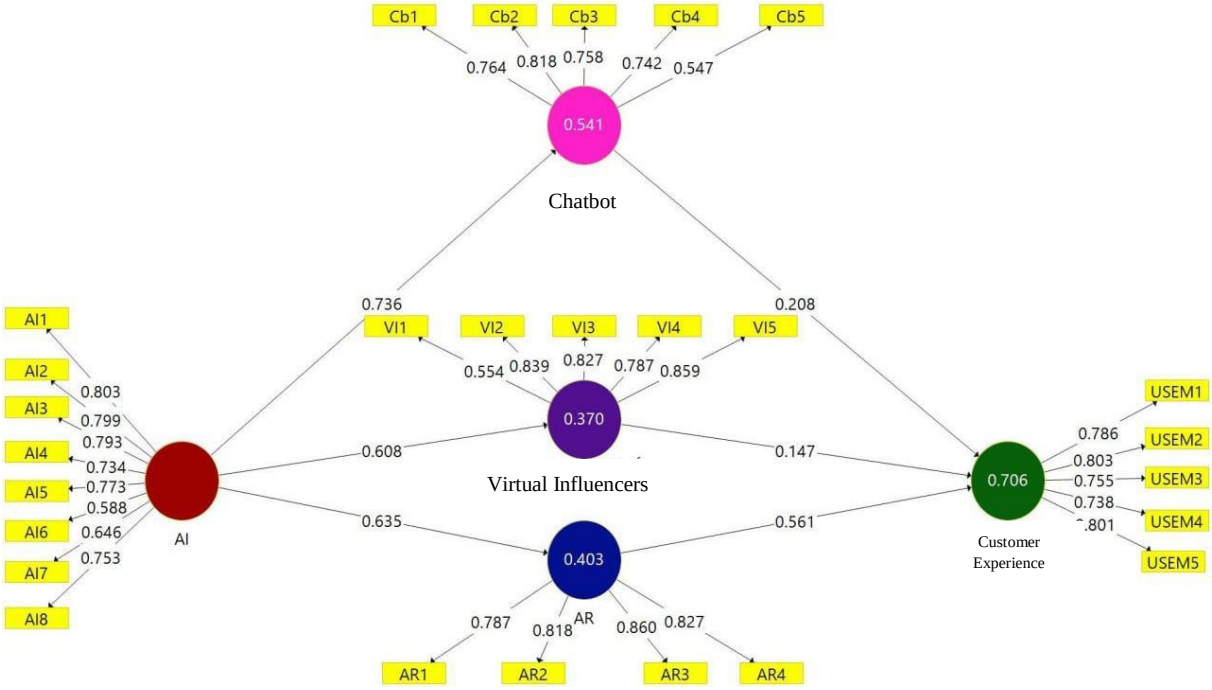

Figure 2. Final research model in the factor loading state

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study was conducted with the aim of examining the effect of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on tourism platforms. The enhancing customer experience, mediated by social media marketing in findings revealed that AI plays a key role in the development and improvement of chatbot performance, transforming them into smarter, more interactive, and more accurate tools for h the study of (Shakib, Pourradi Gargari, Moussa responding to users. These results are consistent wit which emphasized the role of intelligent chatbots in managing ,(۲۰۲۴Lo, & Ghonche Bigelow, customer feedback. Similarly, the findings of (Dehghani Kohneh Shahri, Afshar Kazemi, & based sentiment analysis in digital platforms is effective in -ed that AIconfirm (۲۰۲۴Pourebrahimi, .study improving customer communication, aligning closely with the present

The results also demonstrated that AI has had a significant presence in influencer marketing. This who argued that virtual influencers ,(۲۰۲۴s in line with (Omeish, Al Khasawneh, & Khair, finding i play an important role in shaping the image of tourism destinations. Likewise, (Ramya & r through highlighted the impact of AI on consumer purchasing behavio (۲۰۲۴Karthikeyan, .interactions with virtual influencers

Furthermore, the study showed that AI can play a crucial role in designing and implementing interactive campaigns based on Augmented Reality (AR), enriching customer experience through and (Parra & (۲۰۲۳ontent. This finding is consistent with (Praful Bharadiya, visual and immersive c who reported that AI in social media increases engagement, reduces costs, and ,(۲۰۲۴Chatterjee, customer creates unique customer experiences. In addition, chatbots were found to improve responsiveness, resolving user queries, and ۷/۲۴experience in tourism platforms by enabling and (۲۰۲۴facilitating live interactions. These results align with the studies of (Nadia & Nardjis, which emphasized the effectiveness of ,(۲۰۲۴Peruchini, Modena da Silva, & Monteiro Teixeira ,) .satisfaction based technologies in enhancing customer-AI

The findings also indicated that AR technologies in tourism platforms can create more engaging, D visual content, virtual ۳cations such as interactive, and comprehensible experiences for users. Appli time guidance were identified as effective uses of -tourism routes, simulations of attractions, and real who highlighted user ,(۲۰۲۴AR. These results are consistent with (Karimi, khadivar, & Abbasi, who considered AR ,(۲۰۲۴based topics, and with (Ramya & Karthikeyan, -rtual realityinterest in vi .an effective tool for increasing competitive advantage

In sum, the interpretation of the research hypotheses suggests that AI, both directly and through the of social media marketing (chatbots, virtual influencers, and AR), has a significant mediating role effect on improving customer experience in tourism platforms. These findings not only confirm the nment with prior empirical hypotheses of the conceptual model but also demonstrate substantial alig and theoretical studies, both domestic and international. Therefore, it can be concluded that the based technologies can serve as a key factor in enhancing the quality of digital -intelligent use of AI .tisfaction in the tourism industryinteractions and customer sa

In fact, AI alone and directly has a significant impact on customer experience; however, when it is utilized through interactive tools such as intelligent chatbots, content generated by virtual influencers, lities for marketing, this effect is further strengthened. In other words, social media and AR capabi marketing, as a mediating path, plays a vital role in transforming the technical potential of AI into a ings indicate that when AI is applied in real, meaningful, and pleasant experience for the user. The find interaction with social media to establish effective communication with customers, it can significantly enhance not only the quality of information but also user satisfaction. These results are consistent with who ,(۲۰۲۴ous studies, particularly (Peruchini, Modena da Silva, & Monteiro Teixeira , previ examined the direct impact of AI on customer experience, and (Omeish, Al Khasawneh, & Khair,

e through AI and virtual who highlighted the role of social media in shaping destination imag ,(۲۰۲۴
explicitly stated that the combination of AI and social media (۲۰۲۴influencers. (Parra & Chatterjee,
increases innovation, engagement, and the quality of marketing communications, which indirectly
.influence customer experience

nally, it can be concluded that in tourism platforms, AI not only plays a fundamental role in Fi
optimizing technical processes and automating services, but also in transforming information into
l marketing channels, thereby humanized, intelligent, and effective interactions through socia
enhancing customer experience. These intelligent interactions can strengthen the sense of
companionship, responsiveness, and brand credibility in the minds of users and turn them into loyal
.users and active platform

the results of the research, the following practical implications are suggested: Tourism Based on
platforms need to employ chatbots to respond to customers based on frequently asked questions and
pid, and personalized responses users' past behavior on the platform, in order to provide precise, ra
that go beyond customer expectations. Efforts should also be made to humanize chatbots to create
.positive feelings, build trust, and attract customer satisfaction

ual influencers that can provide based virt-Tourism platforms need to design and implement AI
personalized recommendations for tourism destinations through video content and simulated posts,
driven behavioral data analysis of users to allocate influencer advertisements to the target -and use AI
user receives content aligned with their travel interests and behavior through audience, so that each
.virtual personas

based marketing campaigns that allow users to interact -and AI -It is recommended to develop AR
el stage, and to employ AI algorithms to trav-virtually with tourism destinations, especially in the pre
intelligently analyze user reactions to AR campaigns on social media, in order to optimize visual
.content and advertising strategies

in limitations that may Every research, regardless of its rigor in design and implementation, faces certa
affect the generalizability or accuracy of its findings. The present study is no exception and
encountered several key constraints. First, the investigation was conducted exclusively within Iranian
e statistical population limited to local customers; hence, extending digital tourism platforms, with th
the results to other service industries or international users requires caution and further validation
uch as chatbots, across diverse cultural and industrial contexts. Second, many mediating variables s
virtual influencers, and augmented reality are still in their early stages of development in Iran, which
may have influenced respondents' perceptions and the depth of analysis. Third, data collection relied
tly involve subjective interpretation, honesty of responses, and varied on questionnaires, which inheren
normal data distribution, the study employed -understanding of technical concepts. Fourth, due to non
compared to normal data but lacks some analytical capabilities-SEM, which is robust for non-PLS
based models. Finally, given the emerging nature of artificial intelligence in tourism -covariance
marketing, domestic theoretical resources were limited, and reliance on foreign studies may have
n interpretation. Based on these limitations, future introduced cultural and structural differences i
research is encouraged to explore the role of advanced technologies such as deep learning, examine
n the impact of AI in other service sectors like healthcare and education, conduct longitudinal studies o
customer loyalty and trust, compare human versus virtual influencers, investigate moderating
method -variables such as trust, information security, and demographic factors, and employ mixed
into users' attitudes toward intelligent approaches (quantitative and qualitative) to gain deeper insights
.tourism technologies in travel and

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