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The Impact of AI-Powered Advertising on Webroomers' Brand Equity and Purchase Intentions: Evidence from Tunisia

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of artificial intelligence (AI)-powered advertising on brand equity and purchase intentions among Tunisian webroomers. Drawing on flow theory and the theory of reasoned action, we develop a conceptual model linking AI-based advertising to consumer responses. A survey of 350 Tunisian students was conducted after exposing participants to an AI-powered advertising campaign, and the data were analyzed using structural equation modelling (SEM). The findings confirm that AI-powered advertising significantly enhances both brand equity and webroomers' purchase intentions. Reliability and validity tests further support the robustness of the measurement model. By addressing an underexplored context in North Africa, this research contributes to the literature on AI in digital marketing and consumer behaviour. The results also provide meaningful managerial implications for companies seeking to leverage AI-based advertising to strengthen brand equity and stimulate purchase intentions.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the impact of new technologies, consumers' evolving needs, and their implementation in the digital marketing sector are considered important by academics and practitioners. In this context, it is crucial for companies to quickly reach consumers who actively participate in digital environments. Many firms aiming to differentiate themselves from competitors and gain a competitive advantage increasingly use different digital marketing methods. One of the evolving trends in interactive communications is artificial intelligence (AI)-based marketing. In response, companies are increasingly adopting AI-based intelligent communication methods, which allow them to deliver personalized and optimized advertising messages to web users. They also seek effective ways to develop favorable attitudes toward AI-based intelligent advertising. AI-based advertising involves persuading people to purchase products and services by delivering more targeted and immersive messages and can engage online consumers with a brand. The main objective of this study is to demonstrate the impact of AI-powered intelligent advertising on webroomers' brand value and behavioral intentions.

To ensure the originality of this study, a systematic literature review was conducted using Scopus and Google Scholar to identify existing research on AI-powered advertising, brand equity, and webroomers' purchase intentions (Misra et al.,2024; Branca et al., 2023; Fan et al., 2020; Varsha et al., 2021). While similar studies have been conducted in other countries and regions, very few have focused on Tunisia, highlighting the novelty and local relevance of this research.

Marketing research suggests that product trials influence webroomers because they can better judge product qualities (Branca et al., 2023; Hamilton & Thompson, 2007). Online, the inability to physically try products is considered one of the major barriers to purchasing them (Ebrahimabad et al., 2024). To address this issue, companies have started exploring technological solutions to bring the virtual experience closer to the real-life experience (Halim et al.,2023). Artificial intelligence (AI) is an innovative technology that allows users to virtually try on products. According to Fan et al. (2020), AI represents an emerging technological advancement in the field of marketing, creating a closer connection between the user's physical environment and virtual elements. Thus, the user experience becomes more immersive, dynamic, interactive, and realistic (Branca et al., 2023).

The importance of AI-based advertising lies in its ability to help companies effectively promote their products or services to potential customers, accelerate the sales process, and strengthen brand awareness. AI technology plays a key role in advertising effectiveness, enabling accurate ad delivery, improving click-through and conversion rates, and analyzing user interests, preferences, and behavior. Despite its significant potential, virtual try-on remains a relatively new concept in the global e-commerce space. Research on this topic focuses primarily on the emotional aspects of the user experience, while few studies have explored its role as a tool to facilitate webroomers' decision-making (Bakly et al., 2024; Bretos et al., 2024; Herliana et al., 2024). Varsha et al. (2021) state that "despite the growing importance of AI in marketing, research on its application in branding remains limited and poorly defined," leaving many unanswered questions regarding the effects of AI on webroomers' responses.

To address this gap, the study aims to answer the following central question: How does AI-based advertising affect webroomers' brand equity and purchase intentions? Grounded in Flow Theory, which explains how personalized and immersive AI-generated ads can capture consumers' attention and engage them in an optimized experience (Rodgers & Nguyen, 2022), and the Theory of Reasoned Action (TAR) developed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1975), which examines how attitudes influence intentions and behavior, we develop a conceptual model linking AI-based advertising to webroomers' brand equity and behavioral intentions.

A quantitative study was conducted using an online questionnaire distributed to 350 Tunisian students, who were invited to try a "virtual fitting" site as part of an AI-powered advertising campaign before completing the survey. Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM). This methodology allows for the evaluation of hypothesized relationships between AI-based advertising, brand equity, and purchase intentions while ensuring reliability and validity. This research contributes to the literature by extending the understanding of AI applications in digital marketing and consumer behavior in North Africa. It addresses a clear knowledge gap by focusing on the Tunisian context, where few studies have examined the impact of AI-powered advertising on webroomers' brand equity and purchase intentions. Furthermore, the findings have practical significance for companies and policymakers, providing evidence to optimize advertising strategies, enhance consumer engagement, and promote digital innovation in emerging markets. The remainder of the paper presents the theoretical background and hypotheses, methodology, results, and implications.

2. Theoretical context

2.1 Flow Theory

In this research, the author presented the Flow Theory, which represents a mental state in which a person is completely persuaded by artificial intelligence (AI). This theory provides a relevant framework for understanding how personalized and immersive AI-generated ads can capture consumers' attention and engage them in an optimized experience. In this case, AI is positioned as a facilitator of flow by personalizing ads and reducing interruptions. Therefore, when webroomers are in a state of flow thanks to immersive ads, they develop a positive attitude toward the brand, thus increasing its perceived value and strengthening their behavioral intentions. Recent studies, such as those conducted by Rodgers & Nguyen (2022), have highlighted the importance of advertising as a field of marketing in which AI-based algorithms can help formulate improvements in planning and strategy.

2.2 Theory of Reasoned Action (TAR)

The theory of reasoned action (TAR) is a theoretical framework that explores the nature and role of consumer experiences in the purchasing process. Developed by Ajzen and Fishbein in 1975, the theory of reasoned action is part of social psychology and maintains that individuals' attitudes toward an object or situation directly influence their intentions, which in turn shape their behavior. This theory is widely used in various fields of study, particularly in consumer behavior analysis, where it allows for the examination of purchase intentions and associated behaviors. According to this theory, individuals consciously evaluate the consequences of alternative behaviors and choose the most desirable action among the available alternatives. This research draws on this theory to understand webroomers' behavioral intentions.

2.3 Research hypotheses

This research expands the literature by simultaneously integrating the effect of AI-powered advertising on brand value and webroomers' behavioral responses. As a developing Arab country, Tunisia is notable for a lack of studies devoted to artificial intelligence, which emphasizes the relevance of this study. The conceptual model (Figure 1) will be detailed in the following sections.

2.3.1 The Impact of AI-Powered Advertising on Brand Equity

Most research demonstrates a consensus highlighting the ability of artificial intelligence (AI) advertising to enhance brand equity, such as the study by Tadimarri et al. (2024), which explores the positive and significant relationship between these two constructs. They state that "AI enables the creation of personalized advertising campaigns that strengthen consumer brand engagement." According to Viswanath et al. (2023), the use of AI helps personalize customer interactions, thus increasing advertising effectiveness and contributing to building brand equity. They add that AI helps maintain innovative advertising, which improves brand recognition and loyalty. Sadiku et al. (2021) state that AI enables better audience insights and more precise content targeting, thereby strengthening brand equity. Therefore, the hypothesis is formulated:

H1: AI-based advertising has an effect on brand value.

2.3.2 The Impact of AI-Powered Advertising on Webroomers' Purchase Intentions

AI-powered advertising content creation allows advertisers to effectively respond to webroomers' expectations and preferences in real time, driving engagement and purchase intentions. Research has shown that AI significantly improves the webroomer experience, influencing their purchasing behaviors (Ariffin, et al.,2020). For example, we cite the study by Ho Nguyen et al. (2022), which explores the importance of AI in making advertising more relevant and less intrusive. This leads to an improvement in webroomers'

attitudes toward ads, which, in turn, positively influences their purchase intentions. Similarly, Huang (2024), Weismueller et al. (2020) and Xia & Bechwati (2008) have highlighted the positive impact of AI-powered advertising on webroomers' purchase intentions.

H1: AI-based advertising has an effect on webroomers' purchase intentions.

Based on the above description and analysis of various models, Figure1 shows the research model.

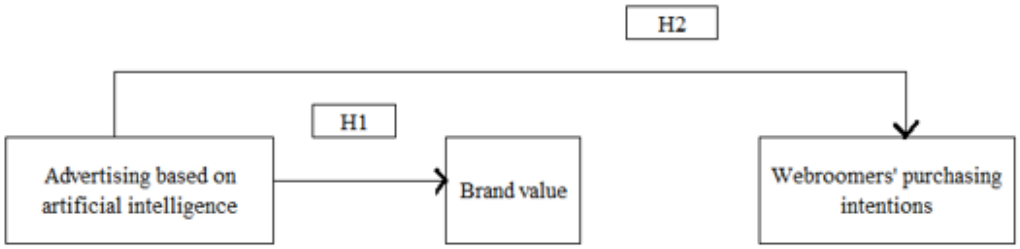


Figure 1. The research model

3. Research Methodology

A quantitative study was conducted using an online questionnaire distributed to 350 students. Before completing the survey, participants were asked to engage with a "virtual fitting" site and follow a link as part of an AI-powered advertising campaign. This procedure was designed to provide participants with a clearer understanding of the study's context.

The sample was drawn using a probabilistic random sampling approach and aimed to represent the Tunisian student population. Efforts were made to ensure diversity by including participants from different educational levels, professional backgrounds, and with varying experiences of AI-powered virtual tools. Students were considered particularly relevant for this research because of their strong engagement with social media, frequent use of online platforms, and ability to interact easily with virtual fitting sites. Their profile thus offered both relevance to the study and efficiency in data collection. The survey was conducted via Google Forms beginning in November 2024. Each participant received two links: one leading to an AI-powered advertising campaign—*Gary & Bary's Peanut Butter: The World's First AI-Generated Ad* and another leading to the online questionnaire. Data collection extended over three months, with participants spending an average of 22 minutes to complete the survey.

The design of the questionnaire followed three guiding principles: clear conceptualization of each variable, alignment with the study's objectives, and the use of reliable measurement scales. Interval-type scales in Likert format (five points) were adopted. The questionnaire contained 11 items, which were refined through a pre-testing process. In total, 450 students were invited, yielding 350 valid responses, resulting in a 77% response rate. This rate was sufficient to support a robust quantitative analysis, though generalization is limited to Tunisian students. For data analysis, exploratory factor analysis was first applied to examine relationships among measured variables and refine the scales (Carricano & Poujol, 2010). Confirmatory factor analysis was then employed to validate the measurement model and the instruments used to evaluate the study's constructs (Akrout, 2018).

4. Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive characteristics of the study sample. Out of 450 individuals initially contacted, 350 valid responses were obtained, resulting in a response rate of 77%. The sample consisted of 42.8% male respondents (n = 150) and 57.2% female respondents (n = 200). In terms of age distribution, the largest group was under 25 years old (44.2%), followed by those aged 25–30 (28.6%) and participants over 30 years old (27.2%). Regarding educational attainment, 34.3% of respondents held a bachelor's

degree, while the majority (65.7%) possessed a master's degree. These demographic patterns suggest that the sample was both diverse and reflective of the targeted student population.

Table 1. Descriptive characteristics of the sample

Description		N	%
Number of individuals contacted		450	-
Final sample size		350	-
Response rate		-	77.0
Gender	Male	150	42.8
	Female	200	57.2
	Total	350	100.0
Age	<25	155	44.2
	25 – 30	100	28.6
	>30	95	27.2
	Total	350	100.0
Education level	Bachelor's Degree	120	34.3
	Master's Degree	230	65.7
	Total	350	100.0

The collected data were analyzed using AMOS 21 software and the analysis will be carried out in several key steps. First, the critical coefficient (cr) for each hypothesized relationship is calculated, which must be greater than 1.96, using a significance test "p" less than 0.05 to verify the existence of an effect between the tested variables. Then, the standardized regression coefficient must be greater than 0.7. The analysis, verified that all variables have standardized regression coefficients greater than 0.7 and are statistically significant (see Table 2).

Table 2. Measurement Model Results

Constructs	Items	Contributions Factorielles	SMC	Cronbach's α	AVE	Error variance
AI-Powered Advertising	PUBIA1	0.799	0.666	0.766	0.846	0.055
	PUBIA2	0.774	0.638			0.057
	PUBIA3	0.777	0.653			0.064
	PUBIA4	0.740	0.633			0.051
Brand value	VM1	0.400	0.644	0.782	0.826	0.050
	VM2	0.788	0.490			0.055
	VM3	0.796	0.633			0.056
	VM4	0.744	0.650			0.052
Webroomers' purchasing intentions	IAW1	0.530	0.645	0.755	0.895	0.045
	IAW2	0.814	0.650			0.049
	IAW3	0.865	0.685			0.043

Next, the reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which is considered acceptable when the value exceeds 0.70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Following this analysis, convergent and discriminant validity were examined in line with the criteria established by Fornell and Larcker (1981). For convergent validity,

the average variance extracted (AVE) was confirmed to exceed the recommended threshold of 0.50, indicating strong construct consistency. In addition, the square root values of the AVE were all greater than the inter-construct correlations, as shown in Table 3. Regarding discriminant validity, the t-test results (critical ratio, CR) were significant and above 1.96, while the AVE values also exceeded 0.50. Together, these findings confirm the internal consistency and validity of all constructs.

Table 3. Correlations and Square Root of AVE

	PUBIA	VM	IAW
PUBIA	0.845		
VM	0.455	0.984	
IAW	0.589	0.289	0.955

4.1 Structural Model Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated a satisfactory fit between the measurement model and the data. The results showed that all fit indices met established conventional thresholds. Fit indices such as GFI (Goodness of Fit) and AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit) range between 0 and 1. The closer these values to 1, the better the model fit (Akrout, 2018). The RMR (Root Mean Square Residual) must be less than or equal to 0.05 to indicate a satisfactory fit, reflecting low residuals. Similarly, an RMSEA ≤ 0.05 indicates an excellent fit, while a value between 0.05 and 0.08 indicates a good fit. Furthermore, the NFI, TLI, and CFI indices should ideally exceed 0.90 (Akrout, 2018). Finally, the Chi-square ratio (χ^2/df) must be less than 5 to ensure a suitable model. Furthermore, the results comply with these recommendations (see Table 4). The values of the various model fit indices are detailed there.

Table 4. Structural Model Fit Indices

	GFI	AGFI	RMR	RMSEA	NFI	TLI	CFI	Chi-square
Acceptable limits	>0.90	>0.90	≥ 0.05	≤ 0.08	> 0.90	> 0.90	> 0.90	< 5.00
Value measures	0.755	0.43	0.054	0.087	0.633	0.751	0.753	2.563

4.2 Hypotheses Testing

All research hypotheses H1 and H2 were supported. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) show that artificial intelligence (AI)-based advertising positively affects brand value (H1) ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.005$) and webroomers' purchase intentions (H2) ($\beta = 0.49$, $p < 0.005$). Table 5 summarizes all the hypotheses supported in the estimated structural model.

Table 5. Structural Model Results

Hypotheses	Coefficient	"p" value	Result
H1: AI-based advertising has a positive effect on brand equity	0.45	0.002	Validated
H2: AI-based advertising has a positive effect on webroomers' purchase intentions	0.32	0.015	Validated

5. Theoretical and Managerial Implications

5.1 Theoretical Implications

The study has made significant contributions to understanding the consequences of artificial intelligence (AI)-based advertising and to studying its effects on webroomers' brand equity and purchase intentions. The theoretical contributions of this study are consistent with previous research that has sought to explore the inherent consequences of using artificial intelligence (AI) (Alkaied et al., 2024; Chap, 2022; Febriani et al., 2022; McCarthy, 2007; Fetzer, 1990).

This study contributes to the literature by integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into the field of advertising and examining its effects on webroomers' brand equity and purchase intentions within a unified conceptual framework. In doing so, it highlights the relevance of these constructs in the specific context of webrooming. This conceptual clarification establishes a coherent foundation for understanding webroomers' behaviors and offers a framework that can support more in-depth analyses in future research. It also enables both researchers and practitioners to approach webrooming in a more systematic and rigorous way. By grounding the study in established theories, this work further enhances the understanding of webroomers' online behaviors and points to strategies that can strengthen trust and security in the digital environment.

5.2 Managerial Implications

From a practical perspective, this research provides evidence-based recommendations to companies, advertisers, and marketing managers seeking to optimize their advertising campaigns by integrating artificial intelligence (AI). The study highlights the positive impact of AI-powered advertising on brand equity and web roomers' purchase intentions, thus offering strategic levers for brands seeking to strengthen their competitiveness in the digital market.

More broadly, these findings underscore the importance of AI in designing advertising strategies. Indeed, AI enables refined targeting, improved content personalization, and increased marketing campaign effectiveness. In this context, brand equity management is becoming an essential tool for companies, enabling them to maximize the exposure and economic impact of their advertising campaigns.

Marketing managers must pay particular attention to creating engaging advertising content, leveraging AI capabilities to generate personalized and interactive messages. For companies looking to strengthen their brand equity among webroomers, effective online communication is crucial, fostering emotional engagement and recognition of perceived benefits. Adopting a variety of formats (videos, infographics, personalized recommendations, interactive chatbots) as well as leveraging geofencing and behavioral data can optimize the reach and impact of AI-powered advertising campaigns. By integrating these strategies, companies can not only increase brand awareness but also boost purchase intentions and loyalty among webroomers in a constantly evolving digital environment.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although this study has made significant advances in understanding the effects of AI on webroomers' brand value and purchase intentions, particularly in the Tunisian context, certain limitations must be considered in future research. First, this study focuses exclusively on the Tunisian context. While this choice provides valuable insights, it limits the generalizability of the results to other contexts. Indeed, Tunisian consumers often have specific perceptions of AI-based advertising, which may differ from those in other countries.

This study focused exclusively on Tunisian students who use AI, which may limit the representativeness of the findings for the broader population of webroomers. Student behavior can differ from that of other consumer groups, particularly in terms of age, purchasing power, and digital experience. In addition, the

analysis concentrated on only two variables—brand value and webroomers' purchase intention—without accounting for other factors that might moderate or reinforce these relationships. Variables such as trust in AI or concerns about privacy protection could provide valuable insights and should be examined in future research.

6. Conclusion

Artificial intelligence (AI)-powered advertising has reshaped how online brands interact with webroomers. By generating personalized advertising messages, AI enhances the user experience (UX) and fosters stronger consumer engagement. This study highlights the importance of content relevance in intelligent advertising, showing that personalized, relevant messages have a significant and positive influence on webroomers' attitudes and purchase intentions.

The findings suggest that AI is a central pillar for strengthening branding and brand equity. The first hypothesis confirmed the impact of AI-powered advertising on brand equity ($\beta = 0.45$). This result is consistent with the role of AI in optimizing advertising and consumer targeting, while simultaneously improving user experience. Advances in AI, such as voice search and recommendation algorithms, also contribute to more seamless brand discovery. As Alqasa (2023) notes, the analytical, learning, and simulation capabilities of AI significantly influence brand value by enabling brands to create deeper emotional and social connections with consumers. These results align with Suraña-Sánchez and Aramendia-Muneta (2024), who demonstrate AI's effectiveness in boosting customer and advertising engagement, as well as Sadiku et al. (2021), who also reported a significant relationship between AI and branding outcomes.

The second hypothesis confirmed the positive and significant effect of AI-based advertising on webroomers' purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.32$). This finding supports earlier studies such as Chowdhury et al. (2024), who emphasized AI's role in transforming the purchasing journey into a more interactive, personalized, and fluid process that enhances engagement and trust. Dwivedi et al. (2021) also underlined the importance of investigating AI in advertising to better understand its impact on consumer perception. Similarly, studies by Hagen et al. (2020), Mariani and Borghi (2021), Miao et al. (2022), and Perez-Vega et al. (2021) confirm AI's ability to reinforce purchase intentions among digital consumers.

The analysis further suggests that content relevance, conversion rates, and return on investment (ROI) are key indicators for assessing the effectiveness of AI-powered advertising. However, the literature still lacks clear and validated measures for these variables, with most research focusing on general aspects of digital advertising. This methodological gap points to an opportunity for future research to design robust measurement scales adapted to the AI context.

Overall, the findings indicate that AI-powered advertising holds significant promise for enhancing webroomer engagement and improving campaign performance. Greater attention, however, must be given to how the effectiveness of AI advertising is measured. Collaboration between researchers and practitioners will be crucial in developing accurate measurement tools that can optimize advertising strategies and enrich the user experience. Future studies could also explore how personalization and content relevance interact to shape webroomers' purchasing behaviors in a rapidly evolving digital environment.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest in conducting or publishing this research.

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