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## **AI-enhanced content in Marketing Campaigns: Analysing how AI-enhanced content can leverage Purchase Intention and Brand Advocacy**

Catarina Maurício Domingos

*Master* in Marketing

Supervisor:

PhD Ricardo Jorge Godinho Bilro, Assistant Professor with Habilitation,  
Department of Marketing, Operations and Management at ISCTE Business  
School

October, 2024





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## **Abstract**

This study investigates the influence of self-brand connection, AI-driven personalization, content relevance, and content effectiveness on online brand customer engagement. It examines how this engagement impacts purchase intention and brand advocacy within the context of marketing campaigns. As Artificial Intelligence becomes increasingly integral to marketing strategies, businesses must understand how AI-enhanced content can optimize campaigns, foster deeper customer engagement, and drive key consumer behaviours. Drawing from existing literature, the research explores how AI can strengthen consumer-brand relationships by delivering personalized, relevant, and effective content.

Data were collected through an online survey and analysed using a quantitative approach. The study tested a conceptual model examining the relationships between self-brand connection, AI-driven personalization, content relevance, content effectiveness, and online brand customer engagement, as well as how online brand customer engagement influences purchase intention and brand advocacy – two crucial outcomes for successful marketing campaigns.

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on AI in marketing and offers practical insights for marketers on how AI can be effectively implemented to optimize content strategies and marketing campaigns. The findings suggest that stronger consumer engagement, driven by AI-enhanced content, leads to improved purchase intention and brand advocacy, ultimately benefiting marketing campaigns.

**Keywords:** AI-enhanced content, AI-driven personalization, marketing campaigns, purchase intention, brand advocacy.

**JEL classification system:** M31 (Marketing and Advertising – Marketing), M37 (Marketing and Advertising – Advertising)





## **Resumo**

Este estudo investiga a influência da ligação do consumidor com a marca, da personalização impulsionada pela IA, da relevância do conteúdo e da eficácia do conteúdo no envolvimento do consumidor com a marca online. Examina também a forma como este envolvimento afeta a intenção de compra e a defesa da marca no contexto das campanhas de marketing. À medida que a Inteligência Artificial se torna cada vez mais numa parte integrante das estratégias de marketing, as empresas têm de compreender de que forma o conteúdo otimizado por IA pode otimizar as campanhas, promover um envolvimento mais profundo com o consumidor e como impulsionar os principais comportamentos do consumidor. Com base na literatura existente, a investigação explora a forma como a IA pode reforçar as relações entre o consumidor e a marca, fornecendo conteúdos personalizados, relevantes e eficazes.

Os dados foram recolhidos através de um inquérito online e analisados através de uma abordagem quantitativa. O estudo testou um modelo conceptual que examina as relações entre a ligação à própria marca, a personalização orientada para a IA, a relevância do conteúdo, a eficácia do conteúdo e o envolvimento online do cliente com a marca, bem como a forma como este influencia a intenção de compra e a defesa da marca - dois resultados cruciais para campanhas de marketing bem-sucedidas.

Este estudo contribui para o crescente corpo de conhecimento sobre IA no marketing e oferece ideias práticas para os profissionais de marketing sobre como a IA pode ser efetivamente implementada, para otimizar estratégias de conteúdo e campanhas de marketing. Os resultados sugerem que um maior envolvimento do consumidor, impulsionado por conteúdo otimizado por IA, leva a maior intenção de compra e defesa da marca, beneficiando, assim, campanhas de marketing.

**Palavras-chave:** conteúdo otimizado por IA, personalização impulsionada pela IA, campanhas de marketing, intenção de compra, defesa da marca.

**Sistema de classificação JEL:** M31 (Marketing and Advertising – Marketing), M37 (Marketing and Advertising – Advertising)



## List of Figures

Figure 1.1 – Dissertation’s Structure .....	3
Figure 3.1 – Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis .....	20
Figure 5.1 – Age Distribution .....	28
Figure 5.2 – Gender Distribution.....	28
Figure 5.3 – Education Level Distribution .....	29
Figure 5.4 – Employment Status Distribution.....	30
Figure 5.5 – Histogram – Distribution of the residuals (PI as dependent variable) .....	42
Figure 5.6 – Histogram – Distribution of the residuals (BA as dependent variable) .....	42



## List of Tables

Table 4.1 – Variables, Scale's Authors and Number of Items.....	23
Table 5.1 - Country of Residence Distribution.....	31
Table 5.2 - Descriptive statistics for SBC (Self-Brand Connection).....	32
Table 5.3 - Descriptive statistics for ADP (AI-Driven Personalization) .....	33
Table 5.4 – Descriptive Statistics for CR (Content Relevance) .....	34
Table 5.5 – Descriptive Statistics for CE (Content Effectiveness).....	35
Table 5.6 – Descriptive Statistics for OBCE (Online Brand Customer Engagement) ...	37
Table 5.7 – Descriptive Statistics for PI (Purchase Intention).....	38
Table 5.8 – Descriptive Statistics for BA (Brand Advocacy) .....	39
Table 5.9 – Reliability Analysis for All Items .....	40
Table 5.10 - Simple Regression, SBC as independent variable and OBCE as dependent variable .....	43
Table 5.11 - Simple Regression, ADP as independent variable and OBCE as dependent variable .....	44
Table 5.12 - Simple Regression, CR as independent variable and OBCE as dependent variable .....	44
Table 5.13 - Simple Regression, CE as independent variable and OBCE as dependent variable .....	45
Table 5.14 - Simple Regression, OBCE as independent variable and PI as dependent variable .....	46
Table 5.15 - Simple Regression, OBCE as independent variable and BA as dependent variable .....	46
Table 5.16 - List of Hypothesis and Validation .....	47



## Index

1.	Introduction .....	1
1.1.	Context and Relevance .....	1
1.2.	Research Aim.....	1
1.3.	Dissertation Structure .....	3
2.	Literature Review .....	5
2.1.	Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Marketing.....	5
2.2.	Content Strategy .....	6
2.2.1.	Multichannel Content Strategy .....	6
2.2.2.	Content Relevance .....	7
2.2.3.	Content Effectiveness .....	8
2.2.4.	Generative AI in Content Creation .....	9
2.3.	Consumer Engagement .....	11
2.3.1.	Online Brand Customer Engagement (OBCE).....	12
2.4.	AI-driven and mass personalisation .....	13
2.5.	Consumer-Brand Relationship and Behaviour.....	14
2.5.1.	Self-Brand Connection .....	15
2.5.2.	Brand Advocacy .....	16
2.5.3.	Purchase Intention .....	17
3.	Conceptual Model and Research Hypothesis .....	19
3.1.	Conceptual Model .....	19
3.2.	Research Hypothesis .....	19
4.	Methodology.....	21
4.1.	Research Approach.....	21
4.2.	Questionnaire .....	21
4.2.1.	Development and Data Collection.....	22
4.2.2.	Data Measurement and Scales .....	23

4.2.3. Pre-test .....	24
4.2.4. Universe and Sample .....	24
5. Results .....	27
5.1. Data Treatment .....	27
5.2. Respondents Profile.....	27
5.3. Descriptive Statistics .....	31
5.3.1. Self-Brand Connection (SBC).....	31
5.3.2. AI-Driven Personalization (ADP) .....	32
5.3.4. Content Relevance (CR).....	33
5.3.5. Content Effectiveness (CE) .....	34
5.3.6. Online Brand Customer Engagement (OBCE).....	36
5.3.7. Purchase Intention (PI) .....	37
5.3.8. Brand Advocacy (BA) .....	38
5.4. Exploratory Analysis .....	39
5.4.1. Reliability Analysis.....	39
5.4.2. Regression Analysis.....	40
6. Conclusions .....	49
6.1. Theoretical Contributions.....	49
6.2. Managerial Implications.....	52
6.3. Limitations .....	52
6.4. Future Research.....	53
References.....	55
Appendices.....	67
Appendix A – Online Survey .....	67
Appendix B – Constructs, Scales and Authors.....	76
Appendix C – Linear Regression Assumptions.....	78



## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Context and Relevance**

The general belief throughout history has been that only humans are capable of performing artistic and creative tasks like writing a novel, developing software, designing clothing, or creating music. With recent developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI), this assumption has undergone a significant shift (Davenport et al., 2019). AI is now capable of producing new content that typically requires a certain level of human artistry and intelligence (Guzman & Lewis, 2019).

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and marketing strategies has led to a paradigm shift in marketing campaigns in the era of digital transformation. The use of AI by marketers and companies is growing as a means of streamlining campaign management, improving content strategies, and creating fresh, creative interactions with audiences (Yang et al., 2021). The idea of "AI-enhanced Content in Marketing Campaigns" is central to this change. This study sets out to investigate how Artificial Intelligence is changing the field of marketing campaigns and content production.

Marketing campaigns are a recognized strategic method for distributing a consistent message through various marketing channels (Whitbeck, 2023). These campaigns have been carefully planned to guarantee consistency, increase reach, and engage audiences in a compelling and all-encompassing way. Yet, the incorporation of AI into content strategy emerges as a critical success factor in a time characterized by rapid technological advancement and data-driven decision-making (Yang et al., 2021). It gives marketers the ability to produce and share content that is highly personalized, data-driven, and optimized for a variety of digital platforms in addition to being consistent (Paschen et al., 2020).

### **1.2. Research Aim**

This study seeks to reveal the revolutionary potential of Artificial Intelligence as we explore the domain of AI-enhanced content strategy for marketing campaigns. It looks at the ways that tools driven by AI are transforming the relevance, effectiveness, and personalization of content. It also examines AI's capacity to improve online customer

engagement, establishing a consistent brand message, and, consequently, create purchase intention and brand advocacy, while supporting marketing campaigns' main goals.

In order to provide insights into the effects of AI-enhanced content strategies on purchase intention and brand advocacy, this research aims to unravel the complex web of these tactics. The examination of AI-enhanced content in marketing campaigns, in its whole, highlights the fluid and constantly changing nature of marketing techniques and provides a window into a future in which the potential of AI will revolutionize the way companies interact with their target audiences.

The decision to focus on this subject was influenced by the increasing impact of AI on changing marketing strategies. AI integration into content strategy is not a choice, but a requirement in a time when individualized user experiences and data-driven insights are critical.

As we delve into this exploration, three core research questions will guide this research:

**RQ1** – To what extent does AI-enhanced content contribute to customer engagement?

This research question examines the degree to which AI-enhanced content impacts customer engagement. It explores how AI tools enhance the relevance, personalization, and overall quality of content, thereby fostering deeper customer interactions with a brand.

**RQ2** – To what extent does customer engagement influenced by AI-enhanced content contribute to purchase intention?

This research question investigates the relationship between customer engagement and purchase intention. It explores how the level of engagement, driven by personalized and meaningful AI-enhanced content, influences a customer's likelihood to make a purchasing decision, shedding light on how engagement translates into tangible business outcomes.

**RQ3** – To what extent does customer engagement influenced by AI-enhanced content contribute to brand advocacy?

Lastly, this research question focuses on the impact of customer engagement on brand advocacy. It examines whether higher levels of engagement, resulting from more interactive and personalized experiences driven by AI-enhanced content, lead customers to actively recommend and defend a brand, and ultimately becoming loyal advocates.

**1.3. Dissertation Structure**

This Master's Thesis is presented as a dissertation and is divided into six major chapters, as outlined in Figure 1.1. The first chapter introduces the topic, provides context, and highlights its relevance. The second chapter, a literature review, lays the foundation for understanding the key concepts under study. The third chapter explains the conceptual model, detailing its variables and the rationale behind their selection. This chapter also outlines the research hypotheses. The methodology chapter describes the research design, the methods used for data collection and analysis, and the data treatment process. The results chapter presents and discusses the findings. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the main theoretical insights and managerial implications, acknowledges limitations, and suggests areas for future research.



**Figure 1.1 – Dissertation’s Structure**

Source: Author’s elaboration, 2024



## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Marketing**

The revolutionary idea of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming people's daily lives (Gao & Liu, 2022). This transformation is driven by AI's ability to perform tasks that typically require a certain level of human intelligence, as defined by Guzman & Lewis (2019). This revolutionary technology is redefining the way we approach everyday tasks, from personal interactions to business operations. Haenlein and Kaplan (2019) provide a comprehensive definition of AI, highlighting its capacity to interpret external data, learn from that data, and use those learnings to achieve specific goals and tasks through flexible adaptations. In essence, AI's ability to adapt and learn from data opens up new horizons for innovation and problem-solving.

The diverse applications of AI, including natural language processing, image recognition, speech recognition, robotics, machine learning, problem solving, and natural language and image generation, underscore its multifaceted utility (Paschen et al., 2020). These applications showcase the versatility of AI, from understanding human language and visual content to autonomous decision-making and creative content generation.

AI's impact extends beyond personal lives into the business world, where it is enabling task automation and reshaping the way businesses operate (Davenport et al., 2019). In the corporate landscape, AI is driving efficiency by automating tasks and processes, ultimately altering the traditional business model. In the realm of marketing, the value of AI is becoming increasingly evident, driving rapid changes in both the consumer market and marketing strategies (Gao & Liu, 2022). In this field, AI is heralding a new era, with shifts in consumer behaviour and marketing approaches.

These technological advancements require research into the application of artificial intelligence technology for the new marketing model. AI's evolution has not only transformed the execution of marketing activities but has also empowered marketers to attract customers more effectively. AI's potential to enhance the accuracy and personalization of marketing efforts is becoming increasingly clear (Yang et al., 2021).

One of the critical contributions of AI technology is its ability to accurately identify customer needs within vast databases, enabling the location of potential customers and the fulfilment of their requirements. This fosters the development of positive relationships

between marketers and consumers. However, the sheer volume of data generated by AI presents marketers with both new opportunities and challenges (Yang et al., 2021). The power of AI lies in its capability to process and leverage massive amounts of data, unlocking insights that can be used to create more personalized and effective marketing strategies.

## **2.2. Content Strategy**

### **2.2.1. Multichannel Content Strategy**

Rather than relying solely on one marketing channel, multichannel content marketing is an integrated marketing strategy that aims to reach your target audience at multiple touchpoints. To put it another way, a multichannel strategy is about casting a wider net; if one channel performs better than another, you can adjust the balance and concentrate on what works best (Whitbeck, 2023).

According to Statista (2023), the revenue generated from content marketing worldwide has shown significant growth over the years. In 2018, it amounted to 36.9 billion US dollars. By 2022, this figure had surged to 63 billion US dollars, indicating a substantial increase. Furthermore, estimations suggest that by the year 2026, the revenue from content marketing is expected to reach an impressive 107.5 billion US dollars, reflecting the growing importance and investment in this field.

In addition, there has been a notable increase in the share of organizations with a content marketing strategy in place worldwide. In 2019, 77% of organizations had a content marketing strategy, and this number rose to 90% by 2022. This signifies the widespread recognition of the value of content marketing as a strategic approach.

When it comes to B2B marketers, the share with a documented content marketing strategy has also experienced growth. In 2017, 37% of B2B marketers had a documented strategy, and this figure increased to 40% by 2022, indicating a gradual shift toward more structured planning and execution.

Regarding the channels used for marketing content promotion worldwide in 2022, the most commonly utilized channels include social media (organic) at 73%, email marketing at 53%, social media (paid ads) at 51%, and organic search at 33%. It's worth

noting that there are several other channels such as sponsorships, PR/media outreach, and influencer marketing that organizations leverage to promote their content.

Furthermore, in 2022, marketing professionals worldwide are employing various technologies to leverage their content marketing efforts. Some of the prominent technologies include social media posting tools (58%), website analytics tools (49%), email marketing software (48%), and SEO tools (43%). Additionally, marketing professionals use a range of other tools, including grammar checkers, content management systems, content writing and editing tools, and visual content creation tools, to enhance their content marketing strategies. These tools are crucial for optimizing content quality, distribution, and performance in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

### **2.2.2. Content Relevance**

Content relevance is a key driver of success in digital marketing, influencing both consumer engagement and business outcomes. The relevance of content refers to its alignment with the needs and expectations of the target audience, ensuring that the information provided is valuable, timely, and tailored to their specific context (Lee & Kozar, 2012). When content resonates with the audience, it increases the likelihood of achieving marketing objectives, such as brand awareness, customer loyalty, and conversions (Lee & Kozar, 2012). This highlights the importance of continuously evaluating and optimizing content relevance to maintain a competitive edge in the market.

A critical factor in ensuring content relevance is the depth and scope of information provided. Research shows that content that is both comprehensive and specific to the audience's needs enhances user satisfaction and engagement (Lee & Kozar, 2012). This comprehensive approach involves not only covering a broad range of topics but also diving deep into each subject, providing detailed and insightful information that addresses the audience's queries and concerns (Schubert & Selz, 2003). As a result, users are more likely to perceive the content as valuable and worth their time, which can lead to higher engagement rates and stronger brand loyalty.

Timeliness is another essential component of content relevance. Content that reflects the latest trends, news, and developments in the industry is more likely to capture the audience's attention and retain their interest (Lee & Kozar, 2012). Timely content positions the brand as a thought leader and keeps it top of mind for consumers.

Furthermore, content that is regularly updated to reflect new information or changing circumstances ensures that it remains relevant over time, preventing it from becoming outdated or losing its impact (Voorveld et al., 2011).

In addition to depth, scope, and timeliness, content accuracy is paramount in maintaining relevance. Accurate information builds trust with the audience and enhances the credibility of the brand (Lee & Kozar, 2012). Inaccurate or misleading content, on the other hand, can damage a brand's reputation and lead to a loss of consumer trust. Therefore, it is crucial for marketers to ensure that all content is fact-checked and sourced from reliable references before publication.

Finally, the personalization of content is a powerful tool for increasing its relevance. By tailoring content to individual users based on their preferences, behaviours, and demographics, marketers can create more meaningful connections with their audience (Lee & Kozar, 2012). Personalized content not only increases user engagement but also fosters a deeper emotional connection with the brand, leading to higher conversion rates and customer loyalty (Schubert & Selz, 2003).

### **2.2.3. Content Effectiveness**

Content effectiveness is a crucial aspect of modern marketing, shaping how organizations engage with their target audiences. In an era where traditional advertising is met with scepticism, content marketing has emerged as a powerful alternative, with its effectiveness growing steadily across various industries (Koob, 2021). Content effectiveness revolves around creating and distributing valuable, relevant content that meets the needs of specific target groups, fostering positive brand perceptions and ultimately driving strategic business objectives (Koob, 2021).

The success of content marketing hinges on several key factors, one of which is strategic clarity. A well-defined content marketing strategy that is clearly communicated and supported within the organization can significantly enhance content effectiveness (Porter & McLaughlin, 2006). By aligning content production with strategic goals and ensuring commitment from all stakeholders, organizations can focus their efforts on high-impact content initiatives. This strategic approach not only guides content creation but also helps prioritize projects that promise the highest return on investment (Koob, 2021).



Another critical determinant of content effectiveness is the quality of the content produced. High-quality content that resonates with the target audience and adheres to normative journalistic standards – such as accuracy, diversity of viewpoints, and timeliness – is more likely to engage consumers and foster brand trust (Urban & Schweiger, 2013). Uses-and-gratifications theory suggests that content meeting consumers' functional, hedonic, or authenticity needs is more effective in capturing and retaining their attention (Koob, 2021). Thus, organizations must invest in creating content that not only informs and entertains but also aligns with ethical and quality standards.

The distribution of content across multiple platforms also plays a role in its effectiveness. Research suggests that using a combination of print and digital media can enhance content reach and engagement by catering to diverse audience preferences (Voorveld et al., 2011). However, Koob's (2021) findings indicate that the effectiveness of content distribution is not necessarily tied to the number of platforms used but rather to the alignment of these platforms with the target audience's media consumption habits. This highlights the importance of a targeted distribution strategy that focuses on the most relevant platforms for the intended audience.

Ultimately, performance measurement is essential for ensuring content effectiveness. Regularly evaluating content marketing performance and using the insights gained to refine content strategies can lead to continuous improvement and better outcomes (O'Sullivan et al., 2009). Performance measurement not only provides evidence of content effectiveness but also fosters a culture of learning and adaptation within the organization, driving long-term success (Koob, 2021).

#### **2.2.4. Generative AI in Content Creation**

Generative AI can be defined as computational methods that can produce seemingly original, meaningful content — like text, images, or audio — from training data (Feuerriegel et al., 2023). This revolutionary technology has captivated the world's imagination, offering a glimpse into a future where AI can create content that is not just functional, but also creative and meaningful.

The world has been enthralled with generative AI, which was first introduced by ChatGPT and swiftly expanded upon with the release of GPT-4 and other comparable models by OpenAI's rivals (Sætra, 2023). The emergence of generative AI has set off a

race among tech giants to push the boundaries of what is possible, introducing newer and more advanced models that continually redefine the capabilities of AI. ChatGPT is an approach that generates multiple text-based output formats – it is a large language model (LLM) specifically designed for natural language processing (Sætra, 2023). It represents a significant leap in the field of natural language processing, with the capacity to generate a wide range of text-based content.

But after ChatGPT was released, other companies raced to catch up and unveiled their own fresh takes on LLMs, such as Meta's LLaMA, DeepMind's Chinchilla, and Google's Bard (Sætra, 2023). This competition has spurred innovation and further accelerated the development of generative AI, leading to a diverse ecosystem of models and approaches.

In Generative AI models, artificial intelligence is also employed in the creation of images through the use of Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) or diffusion models. Popular examples of these models are OpenAI's Dall-E, Midjourney, and Stable Diffusion, which generate different types of images based on the user's request, allowing customization of topic, style, mood, context, etc (Sætra, 2023). These models have unlocked the potential for AI to create visually stunning and contextually relevant images, offering a new dimension to generative AI. For instance, movies are currently being produced, so it's not hard to envision a time in the near future when generative AI will be able to create entire shows at our commands (Sætra, 2023). The possibilities for generative AI extend into the world of entertainment, where it could transform the way content, like movies and shows, is produced and customized. AI can also create voice and music with ease, and it can create multi-modal media by combining existing methods (Sætra, 2023). This expansion into voice, music, and multi-modal content generation highlights the versatility of generative AI, offering creative solutions for various forms of media.

In practice, Generative AI models assist in customization for specific markets, scaling ad generation, personalization of content and monitoring various channels. Its tools can analyse high-level customer trends and market forces — as well as specific customer data and historical transactions — to recommend products that meet each unique needs (Gidwani & Gidwani, 2023). Through enhanced decision making, better data analysis, and support for creative tasks, generative AI can help empower employee productivity. When workers have access to state-of-the-art tools that lower the barriers to valuable data, they can work more quickly without sacrificing the quality of their work (Caetano, 2023).

### **2.3. Consumer Engagement**

As evidenced by the topic's expanding coverage in academic and managerial literature, consumer engagement is now regarded as a significant milestone for post-modern marketing (Gambetti & Graffigna, 2010). This shift in perspective underlines the evolving nature of marketing, where the focus has shifted from traditional metrics to the nuanced concept of consumer engagement.

According to most research (Bowden, 2009; Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011), consumer engagement is a multifaceted phenomenon that includes cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects of the consumer experience. This multifaceted nature highlights the complexity of consumer engagement, encompassing various dimensions that collectively shape the consumer's interaction with a brand.

The attributes of consumer engagement pass through psychological and self-transformation, multicomponentiality, intentionality, and relationality. According to Harmeling et al. (2015), the phenomenon of engagement is characterized by the consumer's "self-transformation," where they consciously take on an active role in the relationship with the brand (Van Doorn et al., 2010). Simultaneously, consumers incorporate the brand's attributes into personal expression and determination (Sprott et al., 2009). This self-transformation underscores the dynamic and reciprocal nature of the engagement between consumers and brands.

Regarding multicomponentiality, the degree of a consumer's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural investment in particular brand interactions is known as consumer brand engagement (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014). This concept emphasizes the diverse components that contribute to the overall engagement experience, acknowledging the interplay of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects. In terms of intentionality, a deliberate positive attitude (and conduct) toward the business is frequently cited as the result of consumer engagement (Calder & Malthouse, 2006). This intentional aspect of engagement highlights the proactive role that consumers play in fostering positive relationships with brands. Lastly, regarding relationality, Verleye et al. (2013) define consumer engagement as "voluntary, discretionary customer behaviours with a firm focus...customers' interactive, co-creative experience with a firm." Kumar and Pansari (2016) further characterize consumer engagement in terms of three levels of connectedness: (1) among customers, (2) between customers and employees, and (3) of customers and employees within a firm. This relational aspect emphasizes the interactive

and co-creative nature of engagement, extending beyond individual interactions to broader relationships within and around the firm.

The consequences of consumer engagement pass through company revenue, consumers' loyalty, and word of mouth and advocacy. High levels of customer engagement are associated with higher decision-making and purchase behaviours (Kumar and Pansari, 2016), as well as higher revenue and lower costs (Fuchs & Schreier, 2010; Schmitt et al., 2011). This cascade of positive outcomes emphasizes the strategic importance of fostering consumer engagement for businesses. High levels of consumer engagement have also been linked to better satisfaction and affection in the customer-brand relationship, enhanced brand trust, and consumer commitment to the company (Hollebeek, 2011). Studies claim that increased brand equity is related to consumer engagement (Schultz & Block, 2011) and generally to high consumer retention. These outcomes underscore the enduring impact of consumer engagement on the various facets of the customer-brand relationship. An increased propensity for consumers to promote a brand in their peer networks, primarily on social media, has also been linked to consumer engagement (Brodie et al., 2013).

Along with the creation of new ideas and solutions that could lead to the development of new products and improved marketing strategies, scholars have also concentrated on consumer-to-consumer and consumer-brand interactions in online communities as sources of engagement and value co-creation (Brodie et al., 2013). This extension into the realm of social media and online communities highlights the contemporary avenues through which consumer engagement manifests and its role in co-creating value in the digital age.

### **2.3.1. Online Brand Customer Engagement (OBCE)**

Online Brand Customer Engagement (OBCE) has become a critical component of brand management in the digital age. This concept encompasses the interaction between customers and brands through various online platforms, such as social media, where engagement can be cognitive, emotional, or behavioural (Hollebeek et al., 2014). The significance of OBCE lies in its ability to build stronger consumer-brand relationships, increase brand loyalty, and even foster brand love (Siu et al., 2023). By actively

participating in online brand communities, consumers contribute to and co-create brand value, which in turn enhances their attachment to the brand (Wirtz et al., 2013).

The positive impact of OBCE is driven by the empowerment of consumers. When brands provide platforms that enable customers to share their opinions, contribute ideas, and participate in discussions, it creates a sense of psychological ownership (Acar & Puntoni, 2016). This empowerment can lead to stronger emotional bonds with the brand, as customers feel more involved in the brand's narrative and decisions (Siu et al., 2023).

However, OBCE is not without its challenges. While it can lead to positive outcomes such as increased brand love, there is also a "dark side" to consider. Intensive engagement can sometimes result in customer stress, particularly when the demands of participation become overwhelming (Siu et al., 2023). For instance, the pressure to contribute creatively or the time investment required to stay active in online communities can create tensions between the resources customers allocate to these activities and their other responsibilities (Hobfoll et al., 2018). This stress can, in turn, diminish the positive effects of engagement, potentially weakening the consumer-brand relationship (Siu et al., 2023).

Moderating factors also play a significant role in determining the effects of OBCE. Perceived brand quality can mitigate the negative impact of stress by fostering trust and reducing the need for consumers to overinvest resources in engagement activities (Siu et al., 2023). Conversely, personality traits such as extroversion can exacerbate stress, as extroverted individuals are more likely to invest heavily in social interactions, increasing the potential for resource depletion and engagement-related stress (Siu et al., 2023). Understanding these dynamics is crucial for brands aiming to maximize the benefits of OBCE while minimizing its risks.

## **2.4. AI-driven and mass personalisation**

AI-driven personalization is transforming the way digital platforms engage with users, providing tailored experiences that cater to individual preferences and behaviours. This form of personalization uses advanced algorithms to analyse vast amounts of data, delivering content that aligns with users' interests, enhancing user engagement and satisfaction (Lim & Zhang, 2022). In the context of digital news platforms, AI-driven personalization is not merely about filtering content but about creating a dynamic interaction between the platform and the user, where the system learns from user

behaviour to offer increasingly relevant recommendations (Lim & Zhang, 2022). This personalized interaction significantly influences user engagement and retention, making it a vital component of digital strategy.

The effectiveness of AI-driven personalization hinges on several key factors. One of the primary drivers is the technology acceptance model (TAM), which suggests that users' perceived usefulness and ease of use of AI-powered systems are critical in determining their adoption (Davis, 1989). Lim and Zhang (2022) extend this model by incorporating the concept of perceived contingency, which refers to how well a system's responses align with a user's inputs. This alignment, or perceived contingency, enhances user engagement by making the interaction feel more responsive and personalized, ultimately fostering a positive attitude towards the platform (Lim & Zhang, 2022).

The benefits of AI-driven personalization are not limited to user satisfaction; they also extend to business outcomes. By delivering more relevant content, platforms can increase user engagement, which in turn leads to higher retention rates and greater loyalty (Bodó, 2019). Furthermore, personalized content has been shown to drive higher conversion rates, as users are more likely to engage with and act upon content that resonates with their personal interests (Ye et al., 2019). Thus, AI-driven personalization serves as a powerful tool for both enhancing user experience and achieving business objectives.

However, the adoption of AI-driven personalization is not without challenges. Critics argue that while personalization improves user experience, it can also lead to issues such as information overload or privacy concerns (Thurman, 2012). Additionally, the reliance on algorithms to curate content can create filter bubbles, where users are only exposed to information that reinforces their existing beliefs, potentially limiting their worldview (Lim & Zhang, 2022). Therefore, it is essential for digital platforms to balance the benefits of personalization with considerations of user autonomy and ethical responsibility.

## **2.5. Consumer-Brand Relationship and Behaviour**

### **2.5.1. Self-Brand Connection**

Self-brand connection plays a vital role in consumer behaviour, as it reflects the extent to which individuals relate a brand to their own identity. When consumers perceive a brand as a reflection of themselves, their loyalty and engagement with that brand increase significantly (Escalas, 2004). The process of building a self-brand connection is driven by emotional and cognitive dimensions, wherein brands become integrated into a consumer's self-concept. This connection influences not only brand perception but also purchasing decisions and brand advocacy (Escalas, 2004).

The concept of self-brand connection is rooted in the idea that brands serve as symbolic resources that individuals use to express their identity. Brands that resonate with consumers on a personal level often exhibit stronger emotional bonds, which in turn foster higher levels of consumer engagement and loyalty (Harrigan et al., 2016). These emotional bonds are especially prevalent in industries where consumer experiences are highly personal, such as tourism, where self-brand connection is reinforced through positive interactions with the brand's community (Harrigan et al., 2016).

Self-brand connection also influences consumer behaviour through social exchange theory, which posits that consumers engage with brands when they perceive value in the relationship (Blau, 2017). In this context, value is not solely economic but also includes social and emotional benefits, such as a sense of belonging or status within a brand community (Harrigan et al., 2016). As consumers perceive greater alignment between their self-concept and the brand, their engagement deepens, leading to stronger loyalty and increased brand usage intent (Escalas, 2004).

The cognitive and affective dimensions of consumer brand engagement (CBE) are critical antecedents to self-brand connection. Cognitive engagement involves the mental processes associated with brand-related thought processing, while affective engagement pertains to the emotional connection a consumer feels towards a brand (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Research indicates that both dimensions significantly predict the strength of self-brand connection, with affective engagement often having a more substantial impact (Harrigan et al., 2016).

### **2.5.2. Brand Advocacy**

Brand advocacy represents a pivotal element in digital marketing, as it encompasses the extent to which consumers actively recommend and defend a brand. This behaviour often stems from a strong emotional connection with the brand, where consumers not only endorse the brand to others but also remain loyal even in adverse situations (Bilro et al., 2018). The emergence of online platforms and social media has amplified the importance of brand advocacy, as consumers now have more avenues to express their support and share their positive experiences with a broader audience.

One of the critical factors driving brand advocacy is online customer engagement. Engagement, which involves cognitive, emotional, and behavioural interactions with a brand, can significantly influence a consumer's likelihood to advocate for a brand (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Bilro et al. (2018) highlight that website stimuli, such as appealing design and valuable content, play a crucial role in fostering online engagement. When consumers are engaged with a brand, they are more likely to become brand advocates, recommending the brand to others and even defending it against negative feedback.

The impact of customer engagement on brand advocacy is multifaceted. Bilro et al. (2018) suggest that engagement is mediated by the positive emotions consumers experience during their interactions with a brand. These emotions, such as happiness and pride, enhance the likelihood of brand advocacy by deepening the consumer's connection to the brand. Moreover, the activation dimension of engagement—reflected in the time and effort consumers invest in interacting with the brand—also contributes to their willingness to advocate for it. Thus, both emotional and behavioural aspects of engagement are critical in driving brand advocacy.

Brand advocacy is also influenced by the quality of content and information provided by the brand. Bilro et al. (2018) emphasize that consumers are more likely to advocate for a brand when they perceive the content as reliable, relevant, and up to date. This highlights the importance of content marketing strategies that focus on delivering valuable information to consumers, thereby enhancing their engagement and likelihood to become advocates.



### **2.5.3. Purchase Intention**

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's inclination to buy a specific product or brand based on their attitudes, preferences, and previous experiences. It represents the likelihood that a consumer will make a purchase decision, influenced by various psychological, social, and economic factors (Ajzen, 1991). Research highlights the strong correlation between brand engagement, brand loyalty, and overall brand equity in driving purchase intention. These factors collectively shape a consumer's motivation to choose a particular brand over its competitors (Goyal & Verma, 2022).

Brand engagement is one of the most significant predictors of purchase intention. Consumers who are actively engaged with a brand are more likely to develop strong emotional and cognitive connections, which enhance their commitment to the brand (Hollebeek et al., 2014). This engagement fosters a sense of brand loyalty, which in turn reinforces the consumer's intent to purchase (Dwivedi, 2015). Bilro et al. (2018) emphasize that the more consumers interact with a brand, particularly through digital platforms, the more likely they are to form a positive purchase intention, driven by their accumulated experiences and perceptions of brand value.

The role of brand loyalty in influencing purchase intention is equally important. Brand loyalty reflects a consumer's long-term commitment to repurchase a preferred brand despite competitive offerings (Oliver, 2014). When consumers develop loyalty towards a brand, they exhibit a strong preference for that brand, which significantly increases their purchase intention (Souiden & Pons, 2009). This loyalty is often the result of repeated positive experiences with the brand, which builds trust and emotional attachment, leading to a higher probability of future purchases (Goyal & Verma, 2022).

Overall brand equity (OBE) also plays a crucial role in shaping purchase intention. OBE represents the perceived value and strength of a brand in the marketplace, which can directly influence consumer behaviour (Aaker, 1991). Higher brand equity is associated with stronger purchase intention because consumers perceive these brands as more trustworthy, reliable, and aligned with their personal values (Buil et al., 2013). As Goyal & Verma (2022) note, when brand engagement leads to increased brand loyalty, the resulting overall brand equity further solidifies the consumer's intention to purchase.



### **3. Conceptual Model and Research Hypothesis**

#### **3.1. Conceptual Model**

The conceptual research framework in Figure 3.1 aims to explore the influence of various factors on Online Brand Customer Engagement (OBCE), and subsequent consumer behaviours such as Purchase Intention and Brand Advocacy. Specially, this research focuses on the roles of Content Relevance, Content Effectiveness, Self-Brand Connection, and AI-Driven Personalisation in shaping customer engagement with brand online.

#### **3.2. Research Hypothesis**

With the conceptual model established, the hypotheses can now be formulated and tested to determine whether they are confirmed or refuted based on the analysis of the data collected through the questionnaire.

**H1:** Self-Brand Connection positively influences Online Brand Customer Engagement.

It is expected that when consumers feel a strong connection to the brand, they will be more likely to engage with it online.

**H2:** AI-Driven Personalization positively influences Online Brand Customer Engagement.

By offering personalized experiences through AI, it is anticipated that consumers will become more engaged with the brand online.

**H3:** Content Relevance positively influences Online Brand Customer Engagement.

When the content provided by the brand is perceived as relevant and meaningful, consumers are more likely to engage with it online.

**H4:** Content Effectiveness positively influences Online Brand Customer Engagement.

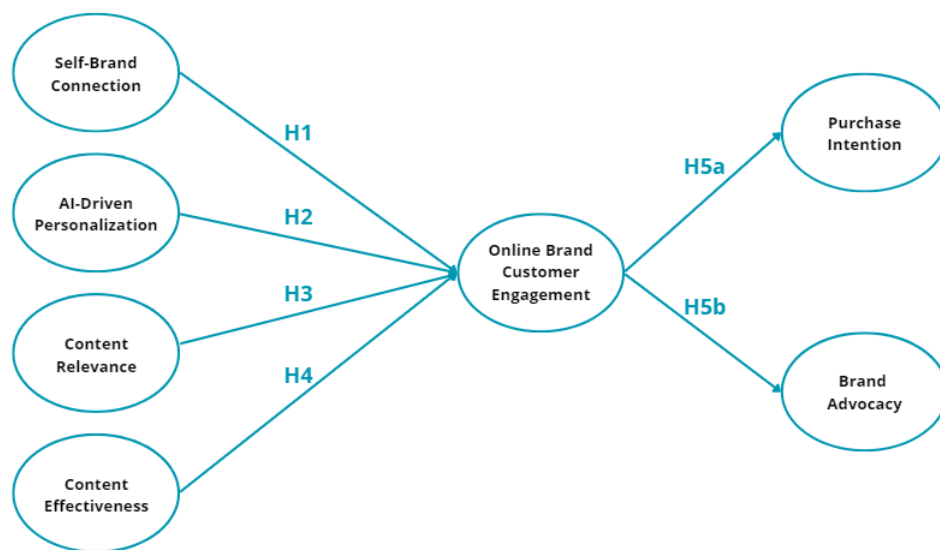
It is expected that when content is effective in delivering value and meeting consumer needs, it will lead to higher levels of online engagement.

**H5a:** Online Brand Customer Engagement positively influences Purchase Intention.

When consumers are actively engaged with a brand online, they are more likely to intend to purchase from that brand.

**H5b:** Online Brand Customer Engagement positively influences Brand Advocacy.

Engaged consumers are expected to be more likely to advocate for the brand by recommending it to others or speaking positively about it.



**Figure 3.1 – Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis**

Source: Author's elaboration, 2024

## **4. Methodology**

This chapter details the methods employed to investigate and analyse the information pertinent to the research problems of this thesis. In addition to discussing data collection, it covers the conceptual model, hypotheses, questionnaire design, data treatment, and sample design.

### **4.1. Research Approach**

The aim of this study is to explore and draw conclusions regarding the relationships between various factors such as Self-Brand Connection, AI-Driven Personalization, Content Relevance, and Content Effectiveness, and their impact on Online Brand Customer Engagement. Additionally, this research examines how Online Brand Customer Engagement influences Purchase Intention and Brand Advocacy. These hypotheses, grounded in existing literature, will be tested to validate the proposed conceptual model.

To achieve these objectives, quantitative research methods were employed, which are essential for quantifying data and conducting statistical analysis (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). Specifically, a questionnaire survey was used to gather data, allowing for the testing of hypotheses and providing a robust data set for analysis. This method is advantageous because it is easy to administer, ensures consistency in responses, and allows for broad reach, including respondents who might otherwise be inaccessible.

This research follows a descriptive structure with predefined research questions and hypotheses. The study utilizes a single cross-sectional format, collecting data from one sample of respondents. The survey, distributed online via social media platforms and email, targeted both male and female consumers who engage with brands online. The questions within the survey are based on established literature, tailored to fit the study's objectives, and include pre-defined scales. The conclusions will be derived from the gathered data through SPSS analysis, focusing on the proposed conceptual model and hypotheses.

### **4.2. Questionnaire**

#### **4.2.1. Development and Data Collection**

In the structured data collection process, a formal questionnaire was developed, where questions were presented in a predetermined order, and most were fixed-response alternatives, requiring respondents to choose from a predefined set of options (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). The questionnaire was created and distributed through Qualtrics Survey Software, utilizing fixed-response questions and pre-defined scales. This approach minimizes variability in responses and simplifies the coding, analysis, and interpretation of the data (Malhotra & Birks, 2007).

This study benefited from using an online survey in several ways, including the rapid data collection, cost efficiency, improved response quality, and the ability to reach respondents across different locations. Additionally, it helped eliminate interviewer bias, enhanced data quality, and enabled targeting specific groups, such as online brand consumers (Malhotra & Birks, 2007).

The questionnaire for this research was designed to gather insights from participants regarding the effectiveness of AI-enhanced content within integrated marketing campaigns, specifically focusing on the KitKat brand. The survey included questions that allowed for the segmentation of the sample based on their interaction frequency with AI-enhanced content and engagement with KitKat across various platforms. The primary goal was to explore how AI-driven content influences consumer engagement and purchase behaviour.

The questionnaire began with a personalized introduction explaining the purpose of the study as part of the Master dissertation in Marketing at ISCTE Business School. Respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and the voluntary nature of their participation.

Firstly, the questionnaire focused on participants' familiarity and interaction with AI-enhanced content, including a brief explanation of what AI-enhanced content entails. Respondents were also shown a KitKat advertisement video to contextualize their responses, ensuring that everyone had a clear understanding of the type of content being evaluated. Secondly, the questionnaire explored consumers' perceptions of AI in online advertising and their overall engagement with KitKat. Questions in this section assessed their attitudes toward AI-driven content, content relevance, and effectiveness. Thirdly, the questionnaire dealt with participants' intentions regarding KitKat, including their

likelihood of purchasing the product and advocating for it. Finally, the questionnaire included demographic questions regarding age, gender, educational background, employment status, and country of residence. This data was essential for analysing the results within different demographic groups.

The survey was conducted online and was available to participants across different regions, allowing for a diverse sample. This online format also facilitated data collection, ensuring a broad reach and enabling the study to capture insights from a wide range of respondents.

#### 4.2.2. Data Measurement and Scales

The questions were created using scales from existing literature to assess each variable. Table 4.1 shows the variables, the corresponding authors of the scales, and the number of items associated with each variable. The complete list is available in Appendix B.

**Table 4.1 – Variables, Scale's Authors and Number of Items**

Variables	Scale's Author	No. of Items
<b>Self-Brand Connection</b>	(Hollebeek et al., 2014)	5
<b>AI-Driven Personalization</b>	(Lim & Zhang, 2022)	6
<b>Content Relevance</b>	(Lee & Kozar, 2012)	4
<b>Content Effectiveness</b>	(Koob, 2021)	7
<b>Online Brand Consumer Engagement (OBCE)</b>	(Siu et al., 2023)	8
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	(Goyal & Verma, 2022)	3
<b>Brand Advocacy</b>	(Bilro et al., 2018)	3

Source: Author's elaboration, 2024

For most questions, the respondents were required to rate the items on a 7-point Likert-type scale, from 1 – Strongly Disagree to 7 – Strongly Agree. The questions on

consumer's age, gender, education, employment status and country of residence were used as control variables and were presented as multiple-choice questions or list. Age was measured and divided into 5 groups (18-24 years old, 25-34 years old, 35-44 years old, 45-54 years old, 55+ years old). Gender was measured between "male", "female", "non-binary/third gender", "prefer to self-describe" and "prefer not to say". Education was measured between "less than high school degree", "high school graduate", "bachelor's degree", "post-graduation", "master's degree" and "doctoral degree". Employment status was measured between "working full-time", "working part-time", "working student", "unemployed and looking for work", "student", "retired" and "other". Lastly, the country of residence was measured from the list of countries presented in Qualtrics.

#### **4.2.3. Pre-test**

Before deploying the questionnaire, a pilot test was carried out. This test helped determine if any revisions or adjustments were necessary.

The questionnaire was distributed to 10 respondents to gather feedback on aspects such as structure, flow, clarity, feasibility, concept, understandability, duration, and to identify any errors, misleading questions, or other issues. Following the pilot test, some changes were made to the wording of the questions to improve clarity and cohesion. An extended explanation of the term "AI-enhanced content" was included to assist participants who may not be familiar with or have never encountered this concept. These modifications aimed to ensure that all respondents had a clear understanding of the terms and could answer the questions accurately. Once these corrections and additions were implemented, the finalized questionnaire was released and made accessible to the public from June to August 2024.

#### **4.2.4. Universe and Sample**

The study focused on individuals aged 18 and older. To collect participants, a convenience sampling method was used, distributing the online questionnaire through various social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp groups, LinkedIn, and other channels.

A total of 327 responses were received. However, 124 of these were incomplete and therefore not included in the analysis, leaving 203 fully completed responses. The



response rate, calculated as the percentage of completed questionnaires out of the total responses, was approximately 62%. This response rate indicates the proportion of participants who completed the survey, reflecting their level of engagement and interest in the study.



## **5. Results**

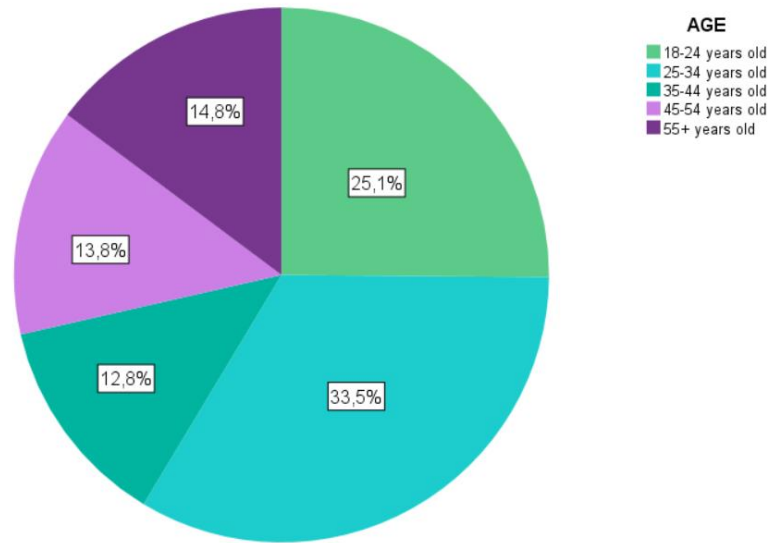
### **5.1. Data Treatment**

The initial step in the data processing involved exporting all the questionnaire data from Qualtrics into an Excel file. This data was subsequently imported into IBM SPSS Statistics 28 for analysis. Within this software, the following analyses were conducted: Descriptive Analysis and Regression Analysis. To begin, it was crucial to determine the appropriate variable type for each item under evaluation. Age was categorized as an ordinal variable, while gender, education, employment status and location were categorized as nominal variables. For the remaining items, which utilized a 7-point Likert scale, a scale variable was applied.

### **5.2. Respondents Profile**

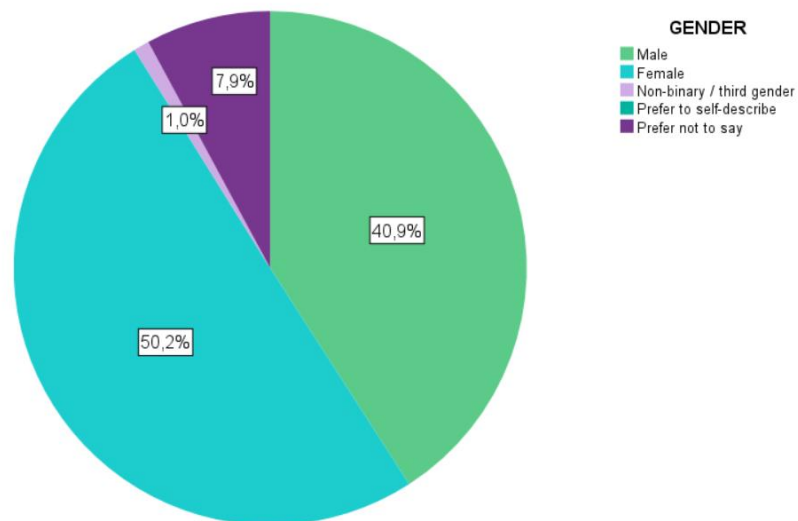
To enhance data interpretation, respondents were categorized into five distinct age groups in a multiple-choice format. The data indicates that the largest portion of the sample is composed of individuals aged 25-34 years old, representing 33,5% of respondents. This group is followed by those aged 18-24 years old, who make up 25,1% of the sample. Next, we have individuals aged 55+ years old at 14,8%, those aged 45-54 years old at 13,8%, and finally, respondents aged 35-44 years old, representing 12,8% of the sample (Figure 5.1).

In terms of gender, 50,2% of respondents identified as female, followed by 40,9% identifying as male. A small portion, 7,9% preferred not to disclose their gender, 1,0% identified as non-binary/third gender, and 0,1% preferred to self-describe (Figure 5.2).



**Figure 5.1 – Age Distribution**

Source: Author's elaboration through SPSS, 2024



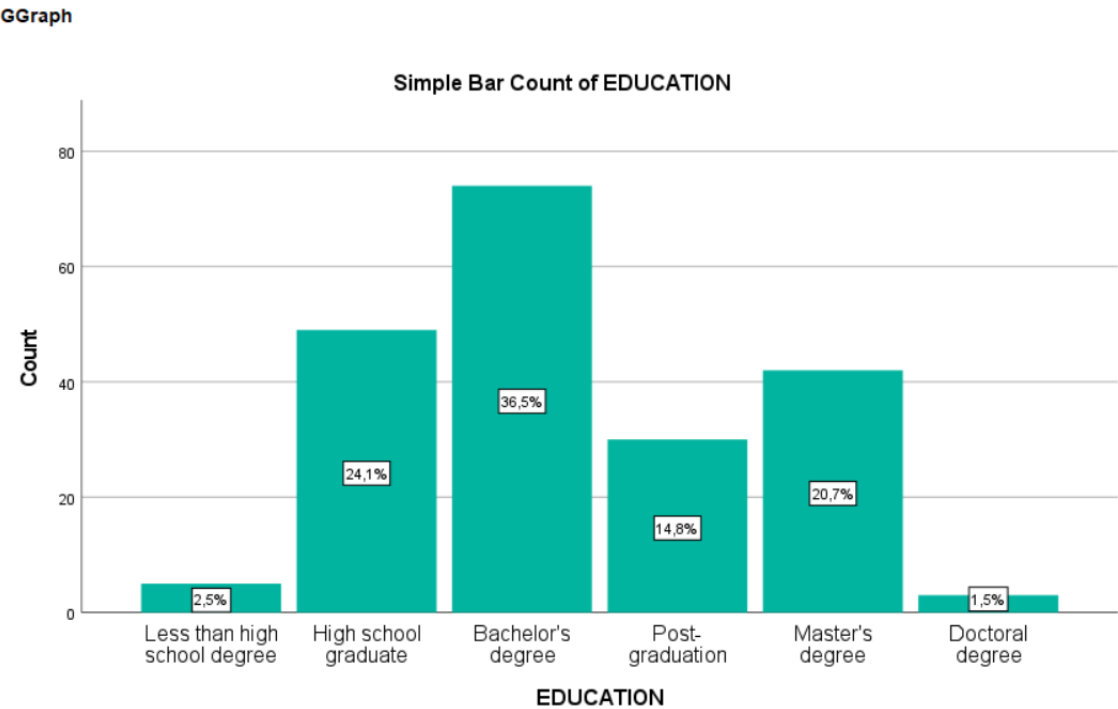
**Figure 5.2 – Gender Distribution**

Source: Author's elaboration through SPSS, 2024

The respondents' education levels were categorized into six groups. The largest group, representing 37,2% of the sample, holds a bachelor's degree. This is followed by individuals with a master's degree, accounting for 21,1% of respondents. High school

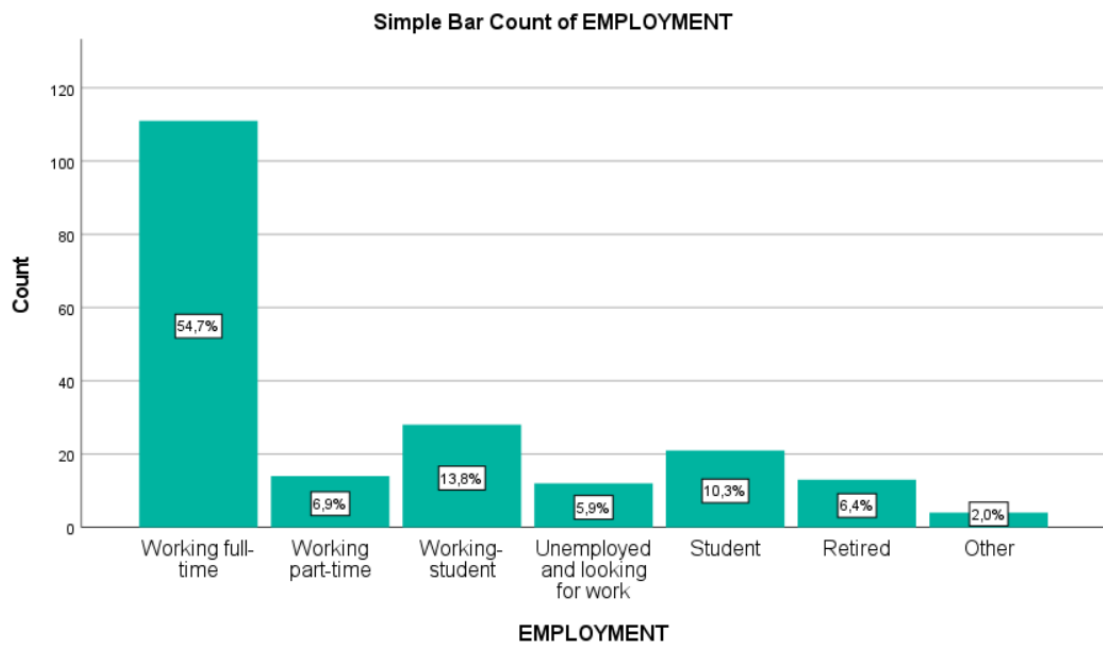
graduates make up 24,6% of the sample, while those with post-graduation level represent 15,2%. A small portion of the sample, 2,4%, has attained a Doctoral degree, and only 2,5% have less than a high school degree (Figure 5.3).

Regarding employment status, the majority of respondents, 55,5%, reported working full-time. This is followed by 14,0% who are working students, and 10,5% who are solely students. Part-time workers comprise 7,0% of the sample, while 6,0% are unemployed and actively seeking work. Retirees represent 6,5% of the respondents, and a minor 2,0% fall into other employment categories (Figure 5.4).



**Figure 5.3 – Education Level Distribution**

Source: Author’s elaboration through SPSS, 2024



**Figure 5.4 – Employment Status Distribution**

Source: Author's elaboration through SPSS, 2024

A significant majority of the respondents, 94,80%, reside in Portugal. The remaining 5,20% are dispersed across various other countries (Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1 - Country of Residence Distribution**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Czech Republic	1	0,5	0,5	0,5
France	1	0,5	0,5	1,0
Germany	2	1,0	1,0	2,1
Italy	1	0,5	0,5	2,6
Luxembourg	1	0,5	0,5	3,1
Portugal	184	90,6	94,8	97,9
Qatar	1	0,5	0,5	98,5
Spain	3	1,5	1,5	100,0
<b>Total (Valid)</b>	194	95,6	100,0	-
<b>Missing (System)</b>	9	4,4	-	-
<b>Total</b>	203	100,0	-	-

Source: Author's elaboration through SPSS, 2024

### 5.3. Descriptive Statistics

The following section presents the Descriptive Analysis conducted using SPSS 28. The Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated for all items, as well as for the newly developed subscales representing constructs. Additionally, the maximum and minimum values for each item were computed accordingly.

#### 5.3.1. Self-Brand Connection (SBC)

The construct Self-Brand Connection (SBC) was composed of five variables. The Mean and Standard Deviation values for each item are displayed in Table 5.2. SBC2 – "I can identify with KitKat" has the highest mean value of 3,74, indicating that respondents tend to slightly agree that they can identify with the brand. On the other hand, SBC5 – "I use KitKat to communicate who I am to other people" has the lowest mean value of 2,84, suggesting that respondents are less likely to use KitKat as a means of self-expression to others.

The overall construct SBC, representing the average self-brand connection across all five items, has a mean value of 3,29 and a Standard Deviation of 1,434. This suggests that respondents generally exhibit a moderate connection with the KitKat brand, with some variation in their responses, as indicated by the standard deviation.

**Table 5.2 - Descriptive statistics for SBC (Self-Brand Connection)**

<i>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your relationship with KitKat?</i>		MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
<b>SBC1</b>	<i>KitKat reflects who I am</i>	1	7	3,37	1,625
<b>SBC2</b>	<i>I can identify with KitKat</i>	1	7	3,74	1,670
<b>SBC3</b>	<i>I feel a personal connection with KitKat</i>	1	7	3,34	1,717
<b>SBC4</b>	<i>I consider KitKat to reflect who I consider myself to be</i>	1	6	3,17	1,503
<b>SBC5</b>	<i>I use KitKat to communicate who I am to other people</i>	1	7	2,84	1,528
<b>SBC</b>		1,00	6,80	3,2916	1,43412

### 5.3.2. AI-Driven Personalization (ADP)

The construct AI-Driven Personalization (ADP) comprises six variables. The Mean and Standard Deviation values for each item are displayed in Table 5.3. ADP5 – "The online ads responses are related to my earlier inputs" shows the highest mean value of 5,73, indicating that respondents tend to agree that AI-driven ads are relevant to their previous interactions. Similarly, ADP6 – "I feel the online ads deliver products or services based on my specific actions" also has a relatively high mean of 5,67, reinforcing the perception that AI tailors advertising effectively.

On the other hand, ADP1 – "AI finds personally relevant ads based on my interests" has a lower mean value of 5,29, though still reflecting agreement with the statement. This suggests that while respondents generally perceive AI as effective in personalization, there is slightly more confidence in AI's ability to respond to past actions than to identify personally relevant content.

The overall construct ADP, representing the average perception of AI-driven personalization across all six items, has a mean value of 5,52 and a Standard Deviation



of 1,16. This indicates that respondents generally agree with the effectiveness of AI in online advertising personalization, with moderate variability in their responses.

**Table 5.3 - Descriptive statistics for ADP (AI-Driven Personalization)**

<i>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding AI's role in online advertising?</i>		MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
ADP1	<i>AI finds personally relevant ads based on my interests</i>	1	7	5,29	1,431
ADP2	<i>AI finds topics that interest me</i>	1	7	5,40	1,302
ADP3	<i>AI helps me discover trending ads</i>	1	7	5,43	1,393
ADP4	<i>AI finds related stories and ads easily</i>	1	7	5,60	1,303
ADP5	<i>The online ads responses are related to my earlier inputs</i>	1	7	5,73	1,277
ADP6	<i>I feel the online ads delivers products or services based on my specific actions</i>	1	7	5,67	1,271
<b>ADP</b>		1,00	7,00	5,5197	1,16083

#### 5.3.4. Content Relevance (CR)

The construct Content Relevance (CR) comprises four variables. The Mean and Standard Deviation values for each item are displayed in Table 5.4. CR2 – "AI-enhanced content/brand provides up-to-date information" has the highest mean value of 5,18, indicating that respondents generally agree that AI-enhanced content is timely and current. CR3 – "The scope of information provided by AI-enhanced content is appropriate" closely follows with a mean value of 5,13, suggesting that respondents also find the information presented by AI-enhanced content to be adequately comprehensive.

In contrast, CR4 – "The information provided by AI-enhanced content/brand is accurate" has a slightly lower mean value of 4,84. This indicates that while respondents generally perceive AI-enhanced content as accurate, they are slightly less confident in its accuracy compared to its timeliness and scope.

The overall construct CR, representing the average perception of content relevance across all four items, has a mean value of 5,05 and a Standard Deviation of 1,34. This suggests that respondents generally agree on the relevance of AI-enhanced content, with moderate variation in their responses.

**Table 5.4 – Descriptive Statistics for CR (Content Relevance)**

<i>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding AI-enhanced content?</i>		MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
<b>CR1</b>	<i>AI-enhanced content contains in-depth information</i>	1	7	5,05	1,475
<b>CR2</b>	<i>AI-enhanced content/brand provides up-to-date information</i>	1	7	5,18	1,422
<b>CR3</b>	<i>The scope of information provided by AI-enhanced content is appropriate</i>	1	7	5,13	1,427
<b>CR4</b>	<i>The information provided by AI-enhanced content/brand is accurate</i>	1	7	4,84	1,531
<b>CR</b>		1,00	7,00	5,0505	1,33969

### 5.3.5. Content Effectiveness (CE)

The construct Content Effectiveness (CE) comprises seven variables. The Mean and Standard Deviation values for each item are displayed in Table 5.5. CE2 – "A strong content production context, characterized by efforts to optimize customer-perceived content value and to adhere to normative quality criteria, should be associated with higher content marketing effectiveness," has the highest mean value of 5,61, indicating that respondents generally agree that optimizing content value and quality is crucial for effective content marketing. CE7 – "Organizations have a stronger content marketing organization," closely follows with a mean value of 5,62, suggesting that respondents also find organizational strength to be an essential factor for content marketing effectiveness.

In contrast, CE1 – "Organizations have a stronger CM (content marketing) strategizing context characterized by strategic clarity and commitment," has a slightly lower mean value of 5,47. This suggests that while respondents generally perceive a clear and committed content marketing strategy as important, they place slightly less emphasis on it compared to content quality and organizational strength.

The overall construct CE, representing the average perception of content effectiveness across all seven items, has a mean value of 5,54 and a Standard Deviation of 1,033. This indicates that respondents generally agree on the effectiveness of content marketing strategies, with moderate variation in their responses.

**Table 5.5 – Descriptive Statistics for CE (Content Effectiveness)**

<i>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the effectiveness of content marketing when...</i>		MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
CE1	<i>Organizations have a stronger CM (content marketing) strategizing context characterized by strategic clarity and commitment</i>	1	7	5,47	1,236
CE2	<i>A strong content production context, characterized by efforts to optimize customer-perceived content value and to adhere to normative quality criteria should be associated with higher content marketing effectiveness</i>	1	7	5,61	1,148
CE3	<i>The content distribution context is characterized by the usage of an intermediate number of media platforms</i>	1	7	5,54	1,153
CE4	<i>The content distribution context is characterized by a joint deployment of print and digital media platforms</i>	1	7	5,56	1,210

CE5	<i>Organizations have a stronger content promotion context characterized by comprehensive paid content promotion measures</i>	1	7	5,50	1,196
CE6	<i>Organizations have a stronger content marketing performance measurement context</i>	1	7	5,51	1,220
CE7	<i>Organizations have a stronger content marketing organization</i>	1	7	5,62	1,143
<b>CE</b>		1,00	7,00	5,5447	1,03324

### 5.3.6. Online Brand Customer Engagement (OBCE)

The construct Online Brand Customer Engagement (OBCE) comprises eight variables. The Mean and Standard Deviation values for each item are displayed in Table 5.6. OBCE4 – "I feel good when I engage with KitKat," has the highest mean value of 3,96, indicating that respondents generally feel positive about their engagement with KitKat online. OBCE2 – "I feel very positive when I am engaging with KitKat online," follows with a mean value of 3,80, suggesting that respondents also experience positive emotions during their online interactions with the brand. OBCE3 – "Engaging with KitKat online makes me happy," has a mean value of 3,78, reflecting that respondents find happiness in their online engagement with KitKat.

In contrast, OBCE6 – "I spend much time engaging with KitKat online compared with other category brands," has a slightly lower mean value of 3,11. This indicates that while respondents generally engage with KitKat online, they spend less time compared to their engagement with other brands in the same category.

The overall construct OBCE, representing the average perception of online brand customer engagement across all eight items, has a mean value of 3,53 and a Standard Deviation of 1,36. This suggests that respondents generally exhibit moderate levels of engagement with KitKat online, with a notable variation in their responses.

**Table 5.6 – Descriptive Statistics for OBCE (Online Brand Customer Engagement)**

<i>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your engagement with KitKat online?</i>		MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
OBCE1	<i>Engagement activities online get me to think about KitKat</i>	1	7	3,31	1,655
OBCE2	<i>I feel very positive when I am engaging with KitKat online</i>	1	7	3,80	1,543
OBCE3	<i>Engaging with KitKat online makes me happy</i>	1	7	3,78	1,426
OBCE4	<i>I feel good when I engage with KitKat</i>	1	7	3,96	1,475
OBCE5	<i>I'm proud to engage with KitKat</i>	1	7	3,46	1,443
OBCE6	<i>I spend much time engaging with KitKat online compared with other category brands</i>	1	6	3,11	1,741
OBCE7	<i>Whenever I am engaging this category online, I usually engage with KitKat</i>	1	6	3,17	1,716
OBCE8	<i>KitKat is one of the brands I usually use when I use this category</i>	1	7	3,62	1,777
<b>CE</b>		1,00	6,50	3,5259	1,35788

**5.3.7. Purchase Intention (PI)**

The construct Purchase Intention (PI) comprises three variables. The Mean and Standard Deviation values for each item are displayed in Table 5.7. PI2 – "I am likely to purchase KitKat," has the highest mean value of 4,96, indicating that respondents generally express a likelihood of purchasing KitKat. PI1 – "I have strong possibility to purchase KitKat," follows with a mean value of 4,88, suggesting that respondents also feel there is a significant chance they will purchase KitKat. PI3 – "I have high intention to purchase KitKat," has a slightly lower mean value of 4,43, reflecting that while respondents have a general intention to purchase KitKat, this intention is somewhat less pronounced compared to the likelihood and possibility of purchase.

The overall construct PI, representing the average perception of purchase intention across all three items, has a mean value of 4,48 and a Standard Deviation of 1,80. This suggests that respondents generally show moderate to high intentions to purchase KitKat, with some variation in their responses.

**Table 5.7 – Descriptive Statistics for PI (Purchase Intention)**

<i>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your likelihood of purchasing KitKat?</i>		MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
PI1	<i>I have strong possibility to purchase KitKat</i>	1	7	4,88	1,827
PI2	<i>I am likely to purchase KitKat</i>	1	7	4,96	1,792
PI3	<i>I have high intention to purchase KitKat</i>	1	7	4,43	2,007
<b>PI</b>		1,00	7,00	4,47553	1,79592

### 5.3.8. Brand Advocacy (BA)

The construct Brand Advocacy (BA) comprises three variables. The Mean and Standard Deviation values for each item are displayed in Table 5.8. BA1 – "I would like to try new products introduced by KitKat," has the highest mean value of 5,12, indicating that respondents generally show a strong willingness to try new KitKat products. BA2 – "I talk favourably about KitKat to friends and family," follows with a mean value of 4,48, suggesting that respondents frequently speak positively about KitKat in their personal circles. BA3 – "If KitKat did something I didn't like, I would be willing to give it another chance," has a slightly lower mean value of 4,35, reflecting that while respondents are generally open to giving KitKat another chance despite any issues, their willingness is slightly less compared to their enthusiasm for new products and positive word-of-mouth.

The overall construct BA, representing the average perception of brand advocacy across all three items, has a mean value of 4,65 and a Standard Deviation of 1,59. This suggests that respondents generally exhibit a positive attitude towards KitKat, with moderate variation in their responses.

**Table 5.8 – Descriptive Statistics for BA (Brand Advocacy)**

<i>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your attitude towards KitKat?</i>		MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
<b>BA1</b>	<i>I would like to try new products introduced by KitKat</i>	1	7	5,12	1,765
<b>BA2</b>	<i>I talk favourably about KitKat to friends and family</i>	1	7	4,48	1,814
<b>BA3</b>	<i>If KitKat did something I didn't like, I would be willing to give it another chance</i>	1	7	4,35	1,741
<b>BA</b>		1,00	7,00	4,6519	1,59216

#### 5.4. Exploratory Analysis

In this section, SPSS 28 was utilized to conduct various tests, including reliability analysis as well as simple and multiple regression analyses. The resulting data will then be examined and interpreted to provide a statistical basis for drawing conclusions.

##### 5.4.1. Reliability Analysis

A reliability test is designed to evaluate the consistency of the sample. This analysis was performed using the SPSS 28 software. To measure the study's reliability, Cronbach's Alpha values were calculated for all items and constructs. Cronbach's Alpha assesses reliability by comparing the shared variance, or covariance, among the items within a construct to the total variance. A reliable construct will show a high degree of covariance relative to variance. This method provides a numerical indicator of data consistency, ranging from 0 to 1, with values of 0,6 or lower generally indicating poor internal consistency. Additionally, the alpha coefficient tends to increase as the number of items in the scale grows (Malhotra & Birks, 2007).

The findings are presented in Table 5.9 below. They indicate that all constructs have alpha values above 0,7, demonstrating strong reliability. The lowest alpha value is 0,880,

which corresponds to the Brand Advocacy construct, while the highest alpha value of 0,953 is observed for the Purchase Intention construct.

**Table 5.9 – Reliability Analysis for All Items**

CONSTRUCT	ITEMS	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
Self-Brand Connection	SBC1; SBC2; SBC3; SBC4; SBC5	0,935
AI-Driven Personalization	ADP1; ADP2; ADP3; ADP4; ADP5; ADP6	0,937
Content Relevance	CR1; CR2; CR3; CR4	0,935
Content Effectiveness	CE1; CE2; CE3; CE4; CE5; CE6; CE7	0,947
Online Brand Customer Engagement	OBCE1; OBCE2; OBCE3; OBCE4; OBCE5; OBCE6; OBCE7; OBCE8	0,944
Purchase Intention	PI1; PI2; PI3	0,953
Brand Advocacy	BA1; BA2; BA3	0,880

#### 5.4.2. Regression Analysis

To examine the relationships among the various constructs and to evaluate the study's conceptual model and hypotheses, both simple and multiple regression analyses were employed. A simple regression involves a model with only one independent variable, while a multiple regression analysis incorporates two or more independent variables, thus enabling the assessment of the effects of multiple variables on a single dependent variable (Malhotra & Birks, 2007).

##### 5.4.2.1. Assumption of the Multiple Regression

To determine whether the model is suitable for further statistical inference, meaning its conclusions can be generalized to the broader population, all the assumptions of linear regression must be satisfied. If these assumptions are not met, the findings can only be applied to describe the specific sample under study.

The conceptual framework of this research was examined through distinct analyses, all of which were based on the same assumptions. This consistency is ensured because the independent variables remain unchanged and valid across all configurations. Given that the current model includes two dependent variables, the assumption checks were



conducted twice: first with Purchase Intention as the dependent variable, and then with Brand Advocacy as the dependent variable. A 95% confidence level was maintained for all intervals.

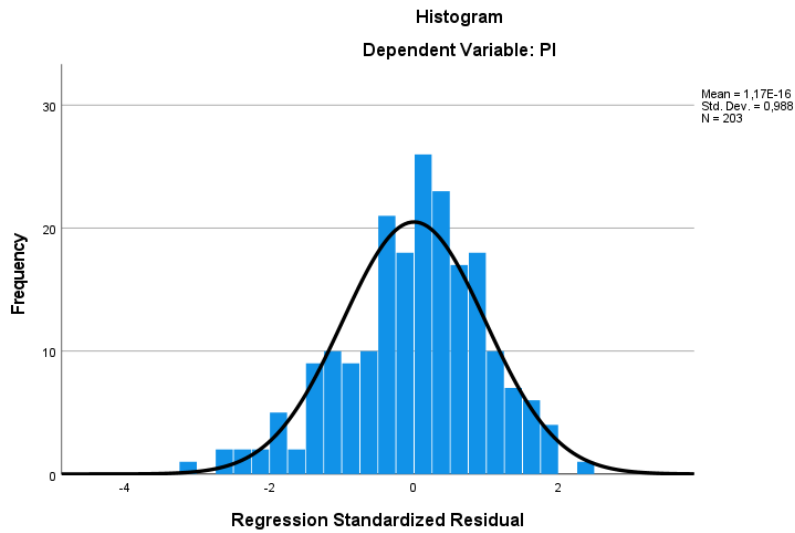
For the assumptions to be valid, the linear regression model must satisfy several conditions: linearity of the model; the mean of the residuals must equal zero; the independent variables should not be correlated with the residuals; there should be no correlation between the residuals themselves; the variance of the random term must remain constant; the residuals must follow a normal distribution; and the explanatory variables should not exhibit correlation.

The linearity of the model holds:

$$\begin{aligned} \textbf{Purchase Intention} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times \textit{Self-Brand Connection} + \beta_2 \times \textit{AI-Driven} \\ & \textit{Personalization} + \beta_3 \times \textit{Content Relevance} + \beta_4 \times \textit{Content Effectiveness} + \beta_5 \times \textit{Online} \\ & \textit{Brand Customer Engagement} + \epsilon \end{aligned}$$

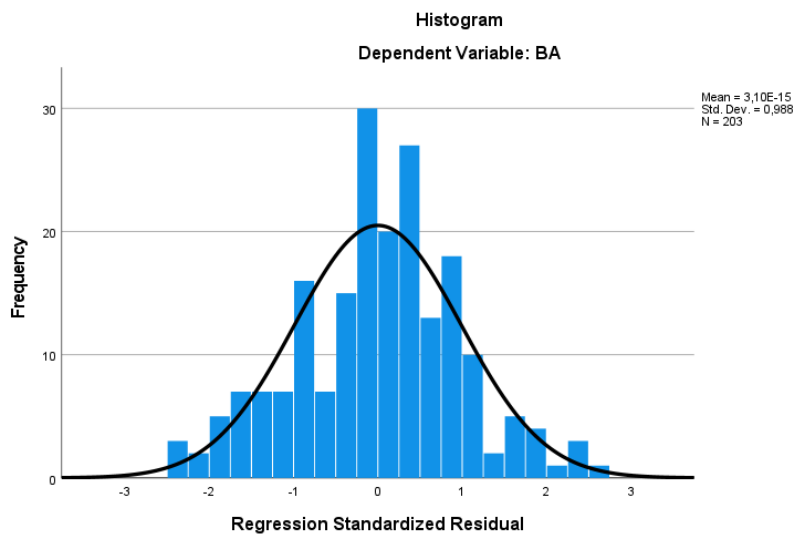
$$\begin{aligned} \textbf{Brand Advocacy} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times \textit{Self-Brand Connection} + \beta_2 \times \textit{AI-Driven} \\ & \textit{Personalization} + \beta_3 \times \textit{Content Relevance} + \beta_4 \times \textit{Content Effectiveness} + \beta_5 \times \textit{Online} \\ & \textit{Brand Customer Engagement} + \epsilon \end{aligned}$$

Additionally, all assumptions are met with one exception: the residuals do not appear to follow a normal distribution for either of the dependent variables (Figure 5.5 and Figure 5.6). The SPSS outputs for the remaining assumptions are provided in Appendix C.



**Figure 5.5 – Histogram – Distribution of the residuals (PI as dependent variable)**

Source: Author's elaboration through SPSS, 2024



**Figure 5.6 – Histogram – Distribution of the residuals (BA as dependent variable)**

Source: Author's elaboration through SPSS, 2024

As some of the earlier assumptions are not satisfied, the model is limited to describing the specific sample under study, and the conclusions cannot be generalized to the broader population.

#### 5.4.2.2. Simple Regression

To explore the relationships between the various constructs and test the conceptual model and hypotheses of this study, a simple regression analyses was performed.

**Table 5.10 - Simple Regression, SBC as independent variable and OBCE as dependent variable**

MODEL	Unstandardized		Standardized	SIG	R Square
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	B		
(Constant)	1,289	0,167		<0,001	0,515
SBC	0,679	0,047	0,718	<0,001	

Examining the regression coefficients, the adjusted regression equation can be expressed as:

$$OBCE = 1,289 + 0,679 \cdot SBC + \varepsilon$$

The construct SBC (Self-Brand Connection) has a standardized regression coefficient of 0.718. This indicates that for each unit increase in SBC, there is an associated average increase of 0,718 units in OBCE (Online Brand Customer Engagement). The significance level (sig < 0,001) suggests that this result is statistically significant, supporting the conclusion that SBC has a meaningful influence on OBCE.

The R Square value of 0,515 shows that SBC explains 51,5% of the variation in OBCE. This value indicates a moderate to strong relationship, given that the R Square value exceeds 0,5, suggesting that Self-Brand Connection is a significant predictor of Online Brand Customer Engagement.

These results support the hypothesis:

*H1: Self-Brand Connection positively influences Online Brand Customer Engagement*

**Table 5.11 - Simple Regression, ADP as independent variable and OBCE as dependent variable**

MODEL	Unstandardized		Standardized	SIG	R Square
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	B		
(Constant)	0,111	0,395		0,779	0,280
ADP	0,619	0,070	0,529	<0,001	

Examining the regression coefficients, the adjusted regression equation can be expressed as:

$$\text{OBCE} = 0,111 + 0,619 \cdot \text{ADP} + \varepsilon$$

The standardized regression coefficient for ADP (AI-Driven Personalization) is 0,529, meaning that for every 1 unit increase in ADP, OBCE (Online Brand Customer Engagement) increases by 0,529 units. This relationship is statistically significant, with  $\text{sig} < 0,001$ .

The R Square value is 0,280, indicating that ADP explains 28% of the variance in OBCE, which is a moderate effect size. This suggests that AI-Driven Personalization moderately influences Online Brand Customer Engagement.

These results support the hypothesis:

*H2: AI-Driven Personalization positively influences Online Brand Customer Engagement*

**Table 5.12 - Simple Regression, CR as independent variable and OBCE as dependent variable**

MODEL	Unstandardized		Standardized	SIG	R Square
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	B		
(Constant)	0,259	0,288		0,368	0,407
CR	0,647	0,055	0,638	<0,001	

Examining the regression coefficients, the adjusted regression equation can be expressed as:

$$OBCE = 0,259 + 0,647 \cdot CR + \varepsilon$$

The standardized regression coefficient for CR (Content Relevance) is 0,638, meaning that for every 1 unit increase in CR, OBCE increases by 0,638 units. This is a statistically significant relationship, with sig < 0,001.

The R Square value is 0,407, indicating that CR explains 40,7% of the variance in OBCE, which reflects a relatively strong influence of Content Relevance on Online Brand Customer Engagement.

These results support the hypothesis:

*H3: Content Relevance positively influences Online Brand Customer Engagement*

**Table 5.13 - Simple Regression, CE as independent variable and OBCE as dependent variable**

MODEL	Unstandardized		Standardized	SIG	R Square
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	B		
(Constant)	-0,473	0,437		0,281	0,301
CE	0,721	0,077	0,549	<0,001	

Examining the regression coefficients, the adjusted regression equation can be expressed as:

$$OBCE = -0,473 + 0,721 \cdot CE + \varepsilon$$

The standardized regression coefficient for CE (Customer Engagement) is 0,549, suggesting that a 1 unit increase in CE leads to a 0,549 unit increase in OBCE. The relationship is statistically significant, with sig < 0,001.

The R Square value is 0,301, meaning that CE explains 30,1% of the variation in OBCE, indicating that Content Effectiveness has a moderate effect on Online Brand Customer Engagement.

These results support the hypothesis:

*H4: Content Effectiveness positively influences Online Brand Customer Engagement*

**Table 5.14 - Simple Regression, OBCE as independent variable and PI as dependent variable**

MODEL	Unstandardized		Standardized	SIG	R Square
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	B		
(Constant)	1,555	0,256		<0,001	0,471
OBCE	0,908	0,068	0,686	<0,001	

Examining the regression coefficients, the adjusted regression equation can be expressed as:

$$PI = 1,555 + 0,908 \cdot OBCE + \varepsilon$$

The standardized regression coefficient for OBCE (Online Brand Customer Engagement) is 0,686, meaning that for every 1 unit increase in OBCE, PI (Purchase Intention) increases by 0,686 units. This is statistically significant, with sig < 0.001.

The R Square value is 0,471, indicating that OBCE explains 47,1% of the variance in PI, which demonstrates a strong influence of Online Brand Customer Engagement on Purchase Intention.

These results support the hypothesis:

*H5a: Online Brand Customer Engagement positively influences Purchase Intention*

**Table 5.15 - Simple Regression, OBCE as independent variable and BA as dependent variable**

MODEL	Unstandardized		Standardized	SIG	R Square
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	B		
(Constant)	2,003	0,240		<0,001	0,410

<b>OBCE</b>	0,751	0,064	0,641	<0,001
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Examining the regression coefficients, the adjusted regression equation can be expressed as:

$$BA = 2,003 + 0,751 \cdot OBCE + \varepsilon$$

The standardized regression coefficient for OBCE (Online Brand Customer Engagement) is 0,641, indicating that an increase of 1 unit in OBCE leads to an average increase of 0,641 units in BA (Brand Advocacy). The relationship is statistically significant, with sig < 0,001.

The R Square value is 0,410, meaning that OBCE explains 41% of the variance in BA. This indicates a moderate-to-strong relationship between Online Brand Customer Engagement and Brand Advocacy.

These results support the hypothesis:

*H5b: Online Brand Customer Engagement positively influences Brand Advocacy*

**Table 5.16 - List of Hypothesis and Validation**

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Validated?</b>
<b>H1:</b> Self-Brand Connection positively influences Online Brand Customer Engagement	Yes
<b>H2:</b> AI-Driven Personalization positively influences Online Brand Customer Engagement	Yes
<b>H3:</b> Content Relevance positively influences Online Brand Customer Engagement	Yes
<b>H4:</b> Content Effectiveness positively influences Online Brand Customer Engagement	Yes
<b>H5a:</b> Online Brand Customer Engagement positively influences Purchase Intention	Yes
<b>H5b:</b> Online Brand Customer Engagement positively influences Brand Advocacy	Yes

Source: Own elaboration, 2024





## **6. Conclusions**

This study investigated how AI-enhanced content impacts marketing campaigns by examining how self-brand connection, AI-driven personalization, content relevance, and content effectiveness influence online brand customer engagement, purchase intention, and brand advocacy. The research confirmed that AI plays a pivotal role in digital marketing strategies, enabling brands to deliver personalized and relevant experiences to consumers, thus driving customer engagement, which is crucial for successful marketing campaigns.

AI enhances marketing campaigns by providing the tools to create content which increases purchase intention and brand advocacy. In the context of marketing, AI-driven personalization allows campaigns to dynamically adapt to individual consumer preferences, enhancing both engagement and effectiveness. By continuously refining content, AI ensures that marketing messages remain relevant and impactful, making campaigns more successful in driving brand advocacy and long-term growth.

Furthermore, AI-enhanced content enables marketers to execute more targeted, adaptive campaigns, creating consistent and personalized touchpoints that strengthen the connection between the consumer and the brand across multiple platforms. This capacity to adjust and optimize campaigns in real-time highlights AI's critical role in shaping the future of digital marketing, where the effectiveness of campaigns will increasingly depend on delivering content that resonates emotionally and cognitively with consumers.

In summary, AI-enhanced content has emerged as a key driver of success in modern marketing campaigns, enabling brands to deliver personalized, relevant, and effective messages that resonate with consumers. As AI continues to evolve, its ability to shape more impactful, consumer-centric campaigns will be indispensable for businesses aiming to foster stronger engagement, increase purchase intention, and build lasting brand advocacy.

### **6.1. Theoretical Contributions**

This research makes contributions to the literature on AI-driven personalization, AI-enhanced content and its role in influencing online brand customer engagement, purchase intention, and brand advocacy. The study integrates several key theoretical concepts in marketing, Artificial Intelligence, and consumer behaviour, extending the knowledge on

how AI can enhance content strategies and drive consumer behaviour, purchase intention and brand advocacy in a digital environment.

One of the primary contributions is the integration of AI-driven personalization into the framework of customer engagement. Personalization has long been recognized as a crucial factor in marketing (Dwivedi, 2015), with studies demonstrating its ability to foster deeper connections between consumers and brands. This study builds on that foundation by highlighting how AI enhances the personalization process, making it more effective and scalable through automation and content adaptation. By allowing brands to tailor content to individual user preferences and behaviours, AI-driven personalization can improve engagement levels by delivering more relevant and timely experiences (Lim & Zhang, 2022).

The research also advances the literature on content relevance and content effectiveness as key drivers of online brand customer engagement. Previous studies have shown that content relevance, defined as the extent to which content meets the needs and expectations of the target audience, is crucial in digital marketing strategies (Lee & Kozar, 2012). This study empirically confirms that AI-enhanced content, by being more relevant and timelier, leads to increased consumer engagement. The findings also emphasize that AI not only ensures relevance but can dynamically adjust content to match shifting consumer preferences, thereby sustaining engagement over time. This continuous optimization of content relevance contributes to the existing body of knowledge by offering a framework in which AI and content marketing intersect, particularly in the creation of highly personalized and contextually appropriate messages (Paschen et al., 2020).

Furthermore, this study adds to the understanding of content effectiveness in marketing campaigns. Content effectiveness has traditionally been linked to the quality and timeliness of the content, as well as the ability to communicate value (Koob, 2021). By leveraging AI, marketers can now assess and refine content strategies in real time, ensuring that the information provided is not only relevant but also effective in achieving its intended purpose – whether that is driving engagement, increasing purchase intention, or fostering brand advocacy. This study reinforces the argument that high-quality, AI-enhanced content can amplify consumer engagement by meeting their functional and emotional needs (Urban & Schweiger, 2013).

Another contribution is the study's exploration of online brand customer engagement (OBCE). Customer engagement is an increasingly prominent topic in marketing literature, defined as the level of a customer's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural investment in brand-related activities (Hollebeek et al., 2014). This research confirms that OBCE plays a significant role in influencing both purchase intention and brand advocacy, with AI-enhanced content acting as a catalyst for deeper engagement. The findings align with the growing body of work that links customer engagement to favourable business outcomes, such as increased loyalty, higher conversion rates, and stronger advocacy behaviours (Brodie et al., 2011). By incorporating AI into this engagement process, the study shows that brands can deepen relationships with their consumers more effectively, as AI enables real-time adjustments to content that resonate more with individual consumers.

A further theoretical advancement comes from the cross-examination of brand advocacy and purchase intention in AI-driven environments. While brand advocacy has been widely studied as a consequence of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Bilro et al., 2018), this research introduces the role of AI as an enabler of advocacy through enhanced customer engagement. The study empirically demonstrates that AI-enhanced content and personalization not only boosts engagement but also translates into higher levels of advocacy, with consumers more likely to recommend and promote brands they feel connected to through personalized content (Hollebeek et al., 2014). This strengthens the understanding of how AI can be strategically leveraged to turn engaged customers into brand advocates, thereby extending the scope of research into how digital technologies transform consumer-brand relationships.

In conclusion, the theoretical contributions of this study lie in its ability to bridge the gap between AI technologies and consumer engagement theories. By demonstrating how AI-driven personalization, content relevance, and content effectiveness enhance engagement across digital platforms, this research provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the future of digital marketing strategies and campaigns. It not only affirms existing theories of customer engagement but also expands them by incorporating the transformative role of AI in optimizing marketing campaigns. Specifically, AI-enhanced content allows for more targeted and relevant campaigns, driving higher levels of consumer engagement, purchase intention, and brand advocacy in a digital-first world.

## **6.2. Managerial Implications**

The findings of this study offer several actionable insights for marketing managers looking to leverage AI in their content strategies and marketing campaigns. First, the study confirms that AI-driven personalization is essential for fostering stronger customer engagement. Managers should invest in AI tools that allow for real-time content personalization, ensuring that consumers receive messaging tailored to their preferences and behaviours. This will not only increase engagement but also boost purchase intention and brand advocacy, as consumers feel more connected to brands that understand their needs.

Moreover, the research highlights the importance of content relevance and effectiveness. For businesses to stay competitive, they must ensure that their AI-enhanced content strategies focus on delivering timely, accurate, and valuable information. AI can analyse vast amounts of consumer data to optimize content in real time, allowing marketers to create highly relevant experiences for their audiences. By continuously refining content based on user feedback and behavioural data, companies can maintain consumer interest and foster long-term loyalty.

Finally, this study underscores the importance of integrating AI across multiple digital platforms. As consumers interact with brands through various touchpoints, businesses must ensure that their messaging remains consistent and personalized across all channels. AI enables marketers to track consumer interactions across platforms and deliver cohesive experiences that enhance engagement and trust. Managers should focus on building a seamless, multichannel strategy powered by AI to create a unified brand experience that resonates with consumers.

## **6.3. Limitations**

While this research offers valuable insights into the role of AI-enhanced content in digital marketing, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the study's cross-sectional design limits the ability to observe how consumer engagement with AI-driven content evolves over time. As a result, the findings provide only a snapshot of consumer behaviour at a single point in time, making it difficult to determine long-term effects. Future studies should adopt a longitudinal approach to track changes in consumer engagement and purchase behaviour over time.

Another limitation is the geographic focus of the study, which concentrated primarily on Portuguese consumers. While this provides valuable insights into a specific market, the results may not be fully generalizable to other regions with different cultural, economic, and technological contexts. Consumer attitudes toward AI and digital marketing strategies can vary significantly across countries, and future research should include cross-cultural comparisons to assess how these factors influence the effectiveness of AI-enhanced content strategies in different markets.

Finally, the reliance on self-reported data introduces potential biases, such as social desirability and recall bias. While surveys are an efficient method for gathering consumer insights, respondents may provide answers that reflect what they believe is expected rather than their true experiences. To mitigate these biases, future research could incorporate a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups to gain deeper insights into consumer attitudes and behaviours.

#### **6.4. Future Research**

Building on the limitations of this study, future research should explore several key areas to deepen the understanding of AI-enhanced content in marketing campaigns. One important direction is the use of longitudinal studies to observe how consumer engagement with AI-driven personalization evolves over time. Such research would provide insights into the sustainability of AI's impact on consumer behaviour and whether its influence diminishes or strengthens with continued exposure to AI-enhanced content.

Future studies should also focus on cross-cultural comparisons to assess how different cultural and regional contexts influence the effectiveness of AI-enhanced content strategies. Expanding the geographic scope of research would offer valuable insights into how consumer attitudes toward AI vary across different markets, allowing marketers to tailor their strategies accordingly. By including diverse populations, future research can offer a more comprehensive understanding of how AI influences consumer behaviour on a global scale.

Lastly, researchers should investigate the emotional and psychological dimensions of consumer engagement with AI-enhanced content. While this study focused on the cognitive aspects of engagement, future research could explore how AI-driven

personalization affects consumers emotionally. Understanding the emotional impact of AI-enhanced content would provide deeper insights into how brands can create more meaningful and lasting connections with their audiences. Additionally, exploring the role of trust in AI technologies and how it influences consumer-brand relationships would be a valuable direction for future research.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A – Online Survey



English (United Kingdom) ▼

Dear Participant,

I am Catarina Domingos, currently pursuing my Master's in Marketing at ISCTE Business School. Your participation is invaluable for my thesis research, which focuses on exploring the **effectiveness of AI-enhanced content within Integrated Marketing Campaigns**.

Rest assured, your responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity.

Should you have any questions or require further clarification about the questionnaire or my research, please don't hesitate to contact me via email at [catarina\\_mauricio\\_domingos@iscte-iul.pt](mailto:catarina_mauricio_domingos@iscte-iul.pt).

Your contribution plays a pivotal role in the success of this study and the advancement of knowledge in the field.

Warm regards,  
Catarina Domingos

→

English (United Kingdom) ▼

Throughout this questionnaire, you will encounter the term "**AI-enhanced content**" frequently.

Please note that **AI-enhanced content** refers to **any type of content that is created, curated, or optimized with the assistance of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies**. This can include various forms of digital content such as articles, videos, images, audio, social media posts, advertisements, and more.



English (United Kingdom) ▼

Your attention is kindly requested while viewing this video. Please take the time to watch it carefully as it contains important information relevant to the questionnaire.



English (United Kingdom) ▼

In the upcoming questions, you will be presented with a series of statements. Please carefully consider each statement and indicate your level of agreement or disagreement. Your responses should reflect your honest opinions.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your relationship with KitKat?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
KitKat reflects who I am	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can identify with KitKat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel a personal connection with KitKat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I consider KitKat to reflect who I consider myself to be	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use KitKat to communicate who I am to other people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding AI's role in online advertising?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
AI finds personally relevant ads based on my interests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
AI finds topics that interest me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
AI helps me discover trending ads	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
AI finds related stories and ads easily	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The online ads responses are related to my earlier inputs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel the online ads delivers products or services based on my specific actions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding AI-enhanced content?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
AI-enhanced content contains in-depth information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
AI-enhanced content provides up-to-date information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The scope of information provided by AI-enhanced content is appropriate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The information provided by AI-enhanced content is accurate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the effectiveness of content marketing when...

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Organizations have a stronger CM (content marketing) strategizing context characterized by strategic clarity and commitment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A strong content production context, characterized by efforts to optimize customer-perceived content value and to adhere to normative quality criteria should be associated with higher content marketing effectiveness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The content distribution context is characterized by the usage of an intermediate number of media platforms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The content distribution context is characterized by a joint deployment of print and digital media platforms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organizations have a stronger content promotion context characterized by comprehensive paid content promotion measures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organizations have a stronger content marketing performance measurement context	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organizations have a stronger content marketing organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your engagement with KitKat online?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Engagement activities online get me to think about KitKat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel very positive when I am engaging with KitKat online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engaging with KitKat online makes me happy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel good when I engage with KitKat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm proud to engage with KitKat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spend much time engaging with KitKat online compared with other category brands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Whenever I am engaging this category online, I usually engage with KitKat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
KitKat is one of the brands I usually use when I use this category	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your likelihood of purchasing KitKat?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have strong possibility to purchase KitKat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am likely to purchase KitKat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have high intention to purchase KitKat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your attitude towards KitKat?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I would like to try new products introduced by KitKat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I talk favourably about KitKat to friends and family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If KitKat did something I didn't like, I would be willing to give it another chance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



English (United Kingdom) ▼

How old are you?

☐ 18-24 years old

☐ 25-34 years old

☐ 35-44 years old

☐ 45-54 years old

☐ 55+ years old

How do you describe yourself?

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Non-binary / third gender

☐ Prefer to self-describe

☐ Prefer not to say



What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

☐ Less than high school degree

☐ High school graduate

☐ Bachelor's degree

☐ Post-graduation

☐ Master's degree

☐ Doctoral degree

What best describes your employment status over the last three months?

☐ Working full-time

☐ Working part-time

☐ Working-student

☐ Unemployed and looking for work

☐ Student

☐ Retired

☐ Other

In which country do you currently reside?

## Appendix B – Constructs, Scales and Authors

Construct	Code	Subcode	Scales	Source
<b>Self-Brand Connection</b>	SBC	SBC1	<i>KitKat reflects who I am</i>	(Hollebeek et al., 2014)
		SBC2	<i>I can identify with KitKat</i>	
		SBC3	<i>I feel a personal connection with KitKat</i>	
		SBC4	<i>I consider KitKat to reflect who I consider myself to be</i>	
		SBC5	<i>I use KitKat to communicate who I am to other people</i>	
<b>AI-Driven Personalization</b>	ADP	ADP1	<i>AI finds personally relevant ads based on my interests</i>	(Lim & Zhang, 2022)
		ADP2	<i>AI finds topics that interest me</i>	
		ADP3	<i>AI helps me discover trending ads</i>	
		ADP4	<i>AI finds related stories and ads easily</i>	
		ADP5	<i>The online ads responses are related to my earlier inputs</i>	
		ADP6	<i>I feel the online ads delivers products or services based on my specific actions</i>	
<b>Content Relevance</b>	CR	CR1	<i>AI-enhanced content contains in-depth information</i>	(Lee & Kozar, 2012)
		CR2	<i>AI-enhanced content/brand provides up-to-date information</i>	
		CR3	<i>The scope of information provided by AI-enhanced content is appropriate</i>	
		CR4	<i>The information provided by AI-enhanced content/brand is accurate</i>	
<b>Content Effectiveness</b>	CE	CE1	<i>Organizations have a stronger CM (content marketing) strategizing context characterized by strategic clarity and commitment</i>	(Koob, 2021)
		CE2	<i>A strong content production context, characterized by efforts to optimize customer-perceived content value and to adhere to normative quality criteria should be associated with higher content marketing effectiveness</i>	
		CE3	<i>The content distribution context is characterized by the usage of</i>	

			<i>an intermediate number of media platforms</i>	
		CE4	<i>The content distribution context is characterized by a joint deployment of print and digital media platforms</i>	
		CE5	<i>Organizations have a stronger content promotion context characterized by comprehensive paid content promotion measures</i>	
		CE6	<i>Organizations have a stronger content marketing performance measurement context</i>	
		CE7	<i>Organizations have a stronger content marketing organization</i>	
<b>Online Brand Customer Engagement</b>	OBCE	OBCE1	<i>Engagement activities online get me to think about KitKat</i>	(Siu et al., 2023)
		OBCE2	<i>I feel very positive when I am engaging with KitKat online</i>	
		OBCE3	<i>Engaging with KitKat online makes me happy</i>	
		OBCE4	<i>I feel good when I engage with KitKat</i>	
		OBCE5	<i>I'm proud to engage with KitKat</i>	
		OBCE6	<i>I spend much time engaging with KitKat online compared with other category brands</i>	
		OBCE7	<i>Whenever I am engaging this category online, I usually engage with KitKat</i>	
		OBCE8	<i>KitKat is one of the brands I usually use when I use this category</i>	
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	PI	PI1	<i>I have strong possibility to purchase KitKat</i>	(Goyal & Verma, 2022)
		PI2	<i>I am likely to purchase KitKat</i>	
		PI3	<i>I have high intention to purchase KitKat</i>	
<b>Brand Advocacy</b>	BA	BA1	<i>I would like to try new products introduced by KitKat</i>	(Bilro et al., 2018)
		BA2	<i>I talk favourably about KitKat to friends and family</i>	
		BA3	<i>If KitKat did something I didn't like, I would be willing to give it another chance</i>	

## Appendix C – Linear Regression Assumptions

### Purchase Intention as Dependent Variable:

#### Variables Entered/Removed<sup>a</sup>

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	OBCE, ADP, SBC, CE, CR <sup>b</sup>		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: PI

b. All requested variables entered.

#### Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,722 <sup>a</sup>	,522	,510	1,25732	1,947

a. Predictors: (Constant), OBCE, ADP, SBC, CE, CR

b. Dependent Variable: PI

#### ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	340,085	5	68,017	43,025	<,001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	311,430	197	1,581		

Total	651,515	202			
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a. Dependent Variable: PI

b. Predictors: (Constant), OBCE, ADP, SBC, CE, CR

### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Collinearity Statistics		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	,107	,508		,211	,833		
	SBC	,211	,092	,169	2,283	,023	,446	2,245
	ADP	-,052	,130	-,034	-,401	,689	,344	2,904
	CR	,080	,122	,059	,650	,516	,291	3,440
	CE	,318	,148	,183	2,150	,033	,335	2,987
	OBCE	,588	,103	,445	5,705	<,001	,399	2,507

a. Dependent Variable: PI

### Collinearity Diagnostics<sup>a</sup>

Model	Dimensione	Eigenvalu	Condition Index	Variance Proportions					
				(Constant )	SBC	ADP	CR	CE	OBCE
1	1	5,798	1,000	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00
	2	,113	7,153	,06	,28	,01	,00	,01	,09

3	,041	11,921	,03	,67	,00	,02	,00	,65
4	,028	14,342	,47	,00	,04	,25	,00	,20
5	,011	22,934	,18	,04	,79	,55	,00	,06
6	,008	26,147	,26	,01	,17	,18	,99	,00

a. Dependent Variable: PI

#### Residuals Statistics<sup>a</sup>

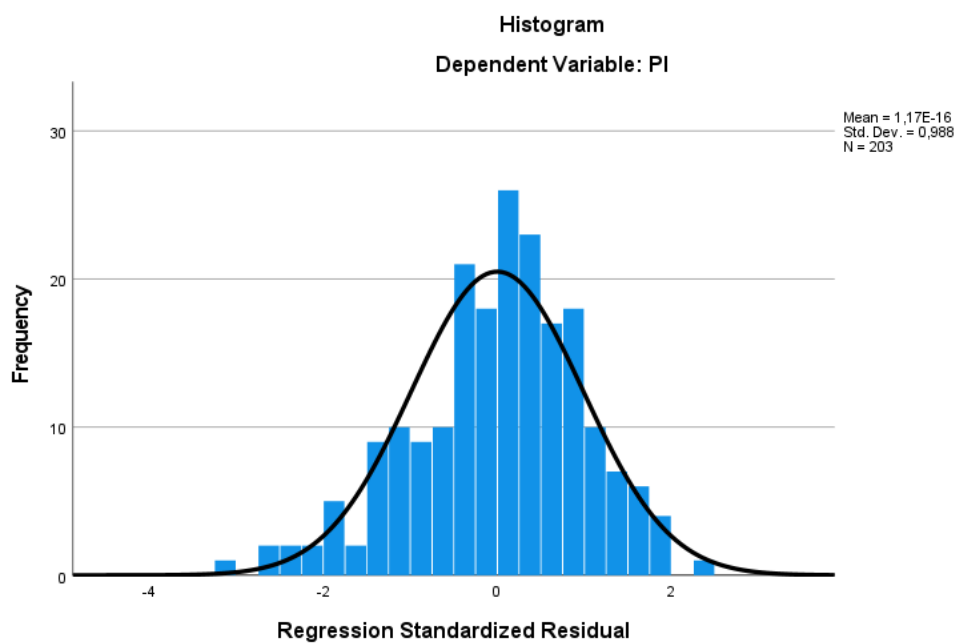
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	1,2351	7,5694	4,7553	1,29753	203
Residual	-4,01271	2,87716	,00000	1,24167	203
Std. Predicted Value	-2,713	2,169	,000	1,000	203
Std. Residual	-3,191	2,288	,000	,988	203

a. Dependent Variable: PI

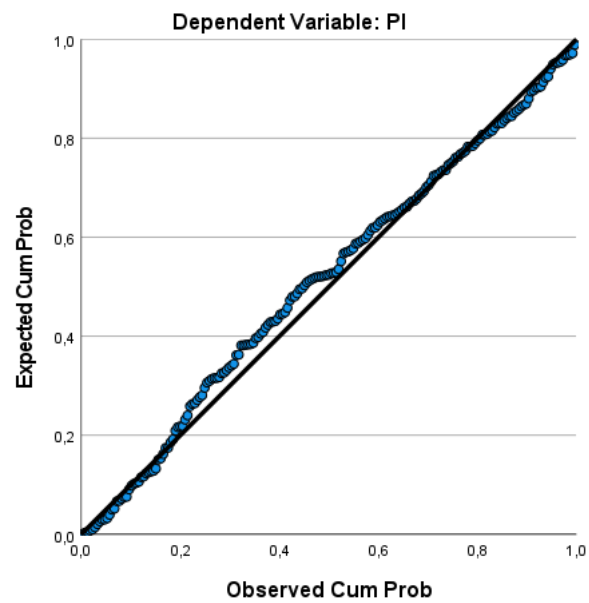
#### Correlations

	PI	SBC	ADP	CR	CE	OBCE
Pearson CorrelationPI	1,000	,601	,475	,551	,538	,686
	SBC	,601	1,000	,534	,549	,718
	ADP	,475	,534	1,000	,761	,529
	CR	,551	,549	,761	1,000	,768
					,768	,638

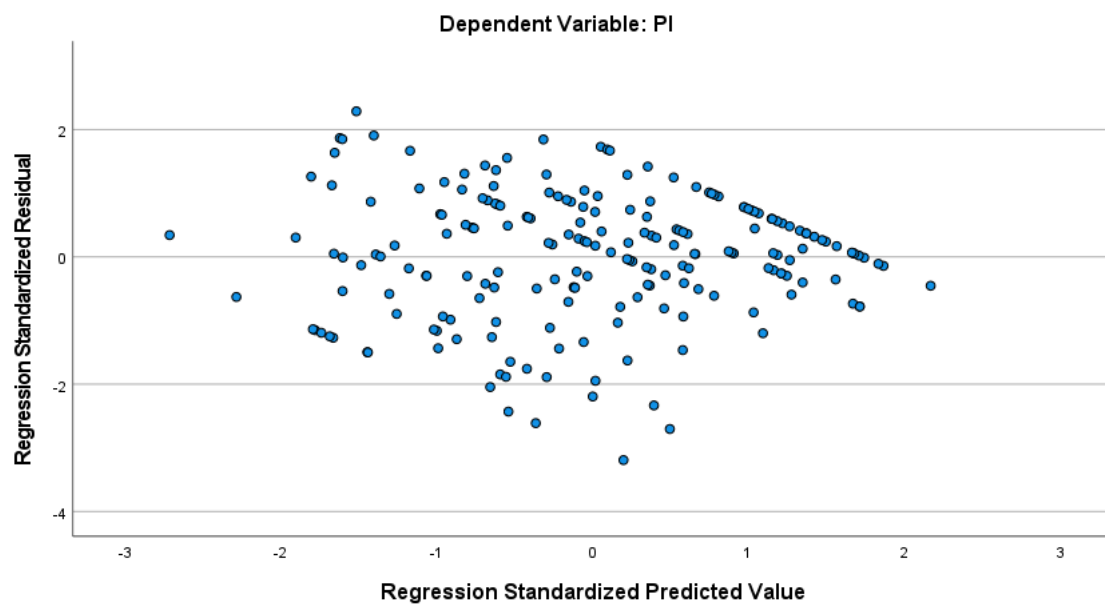
Sig. (1-tailed)	CE	,538	,540	,753	,768	1,000	,549
	OBCE	,686	,718	,529	,638	,549	1,000
	PI	.	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	SBC	,000	.	,000	,000	,000	,000
	ADP	,000	,000	.	,000	,000	,000
	CR	,000	,000	,000	.	,000	,000
	CE	,000	,000	,000	,000	.	,000
	OBCE	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	.
N	PI	203	203	203	203	203	203
	SBC	203	203	203	203	203	203
	ADP	203	203	203	203	203	203
	CR	203	203	203	203	203	203
	CE	203	203	203	203	203	203
	OBCE	203	203	203	203	203	203



Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



Scatterplot





## Brand Advocacy as Dependent Variable:

### Variables Entered/Removed<sup>a</sup>

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	OBCE, ADP, SBC, CE, CR <sup>b</sup>		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: BA

b. All requested variables entered.

### Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,710 <sup>a</sup>	,505	,492	1,13464	1,937

a. Predictors: (Constant), OBCE, ADP, SBC, CE, CR

b. Dependent Variable: BA

### ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	258,446	5	51,689	40,150	<,001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	253,621	197	1,287		
	Total	512,067	202			

a. Dependent Variable: BA

b. Predictors: (Constant), OBCE, ADP, SBC, CE, CR

### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Collinearity Statistics		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	,296	,458		,647	,519		
	SBC	,258	,083	,233	3,096	,002	,446	2,245
	ADP	,074	,117	,054	,632	,528	,344	2,904
	CR	,147	,111	,123	1,326	,187	,291	3,440
	CE	,207	,134	,134	1,548	,123	,335	2,987
	OBCE	,343	,093	,293	3,690	<,001	,399	2,507

a. Dependent Variable: BA

### Collinearity Diagnostics<sup>a</sup>

Model	Dimensione	Eigenvalu	Condition Index	Variance Proportions					
				(Constant)	SBC	ADP	CR	CE	OBCE
1	1	5,798	1,000	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00
	2	,113	7,153	,06	,28	,01	,00	,01	,09
	3	,041	11,921	,03	,67	,00	,02	,00	,65
	4	,028	14,342	,47	,00	,04	,25	,00	,20

5	,011	22,934	,18	,04	,79	,55	,00	,06
6	,008	26,147	,26	,01	,17	,18	,99	,00

a. Dependent Variable: BA

### Correlations

		BA	SBC	ADP	CR	CE	OBCE
Pearson Correlation	BA	1,000	,612	,528	,582	,556	,641
	SBC	,612	1,000	,534	,549	,540	,718
	ADP	,528	,534	1,000	,761	,753	,529
	CR	,582	,549	,761	1,000	,768	,638
	CE	,556	,540	,753	,768	1,000	,549
	OBCE	,641	,718	,529	,638	,549	1,000
Sig. (1-tailed)	BA	.	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	SBC	,000	.	,000	,000	,000	,000
	ADP	,000	,000	.	,000	,000	,000
	CR	,000	,000	,000	.	,000	,000
	CE	,000	,000	,000	,000	.	,000
	OBCE	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	.
N	BA	203	203	203	203	203	203
	SBC	203	203	203	203	203	203
	ADP	203	203	203	203	203	203
	CR	203	203	203	203	203	203

	CE	203	203	203	203	203	203
	OBCE	203	203	203	203	203	203

