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The Impact of Observability and Compatibility on Consumers' Attitudes Towards AI-Generated Sports Marketing Content and Its Effect on Purchase Intent

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) across various industries has significantly transformed traditional practices, particularly in marketing. As sports marketing increasingly turns to AI-generated content, understanding the factors that influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions becomes crucial for the effective utilization of this innovative technology. This article examines the impact of two key factors— observability and compatibility—of AI-generated sports marketing content on consumer attitudes and their purchase intentions. In today's competitive world, understanding how this novel technology affects consumer behavior and how they interact with marketing content is of particular importance. Data was collected through a questionnaire using simple random sampling from sports consumers (n=300). A quantitative research method and structural equation modeling were employed, and the data were analyzed using SEM-Smart PLS ™3 software. The results indicated that observability and compatibility significantly influence consumer attitudes, which in turn affect purchase intentions. The robustness of the research model was confirmed through R^2 and β values, emphasizing the importance of using innovative technologies in sports marketing. This article is one of the few studies focusing on the effects of AI-generated content in the sports industry and offers suggestions for improving sports marketing strategies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, customers are inundated with numerous sports marketing messages, prompting businesses to adopt data-driven marketing strategies to minimize dissatisfaction and engage customers on a deeper level (Pashaie et al., 2024). With the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) technology, its application across various industries, including sports marketing, has significantly expanded (Karimi et al., 2025; Mohammadi et al., 2025; Nalbant & Aydın, 2022), notably altering consumer behavior (Jain et al., 2024). AI enables more accurate predictions through the analysis of big data, allows for the creation of personalized content, and enhances the consumer experience (Davenport & Ronanki, 2018). Nowadays, all companies, regardless of their industry, utilize digital marketing strategies to attract their customers (Sbrighi, 2024). In the realm of sports marketing, the use of content generated by this technology can have diverse effects on consumer attitudes (CA) and ultimately on their purchase intentions (PI) (Yang & Hu, 2022).

However, understanding consumer attitudes towards the use of AI in sports marketing (Ghasemian & Mortazavi Yusufabad, 2023; Pourzarnegar, 2022) and its impact on their purchasing decisions (Pticek & Dobrinic, 2019) remains one of the primary challenges in this field. Consumer attitudes towards marketing content play a crucial role in their purchasing decisions (Kabiri et al., 2020; Shuqair et al., 2016), making it essential to investigate the factors that influence these attitudes. Previous studies have shown that the observability and compatibility of AI-generated content with consumer needs and expectations are vital for its acceptance and effectiveness (Eickhoff & Zhevak, 2023). Therefore, examining the impact of these two factors on consumer attitudes and ultimately their purchase intentions is the focus of this research.

Observability, defined as the degree to which an innovation or the capabilities of members within a social system can be observed, is considered an aspect of social influence (Rogers et al., 2014). Previous research has indicated that observability can have a positive impact on users' attitudes towards innovations (Lee et al., 2021; Park & Chen, 2007). However, some recent studies have shown that observability may not have a significant effect on attitudes, such as in the cases of virtual reality usage (Al Breiki et al., 2023) or in the realm of sustainable transportation (Ahn & Park, 2022). Regarding artificial intelligence, evidence suggests that observability can have a notable and positive impact on individuals' attitudes (Lund et al., 2020).

Compatibility, in the theory of innovation diffusion, refers to the alignment of a new idea, product, or technology with the existing values, beliefs, experiences, and social needs of potential users (Rogers Everett, 1995). This compatibility reduces uncertainty and increases the likelihood of adoption of the innovation by potential users (Zilberman et al., 2012). Research has shown that compatibility positively influences behavioral intention (Nordhoff et al., 2021), and most people tend to accept innovations that they perceive as compatible with their social systems (Ahn & Park, 2022; Lee & Kozar, 2008). However, in some cases, compatibility has not had a significant impact on attitudes, such as in the context of information technology usage (Taylor & Todd, 1995).

Sports marketing content is considered one of the key factors in attracting and retaining customers, as well as in developing sports-related businesses (Kavand et al., 2023). Research indicates that the more appealing the marketing content, the greater its impact on consumers (Kajtazi & Zeqiri, 2020). This type of content should not only provide information about sports products and services but also establish an effective connection with customers and deeply understand their emotions and values (Williams & Chinn, 2010). Therefore, sports marketing content must effectively and engagingly attract audiences through images, videos, textual content, and other digital tools, stimulating them to make purchases (Fetchko et al., 2018). Evidence

highlights the significant importance of the quality of social media content in marketing (McClure & Seock, 2020).

However, recent research indicates that for consumers seeking innovation and new experiences, there is no significant difference between the impact of AI-generated content and human-generated content on their purchase intentions (Gao et al., 2024). Consequently, numerous studies have examined the influence of AI in the sports marketing industry both domestically (Abolghasemi Atany et al., 2024; Yousefi et al., 2023) and internationally (Glebova et al., 2024; Mohammadi & Salem Hasan, 2024; Nadikattu, 2020; Pottala, 2018), yielding varied results. These studies suggest that there remains a gap in this field, particularly concerning consumer attitudes towards AI as a decision-making factor in purchasing (Al-Ababneh, 2020). Therefore, this topic requires further investigation (Du & Xie, 2021; Khan et al., 2022; Li, 2019).

Given that the development of innovation in products and services is recognized as a highly effective strategy for gaining a competitive advantage in the sports industry (Pashaie & Golmohammadi, 2024), the use of AI-generated content in sports marketing can have diverse effects on consumer attitudes and ultimately their purchase intentions. However, the observability and compatibility of this content with consumer needs and expectations play a crucial role in its acceptance and effectiveness. The significance of this research is observable in several aspects. First, considering the growing trend of AI utilization in marketing, understanding how AI-generated content impacts consumer attitudes and purchase intentions can enhance marketing strategies. Second, in light of the intense competition in sports markets, identifying factors that can strengthen consumers' positive attitudes towards marketing content may lead to increased sales and commercial success. Third, this research can contribute to the development of marketing theories and provide new frameworks for utilizing AI in sports marketing.

The main objective of this research is to examine the impact of observability and compatibility of AI-generated sports marketing content on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. This study aims to address the following questions: Do observability and compatibility of sports marketing content significantly affect consumers' attitudes towards that content? And does consumers' attitude towards AI-generated sports marketing content influence their purchase intentions?

Ultimately, the findings of this research can provide practical guidance for marketing managers and decision-makers in the sports industry to optimize the use of new technologies. The hypotheses of the study have been formulated based on the presented concepts and structured within a conceptual model.

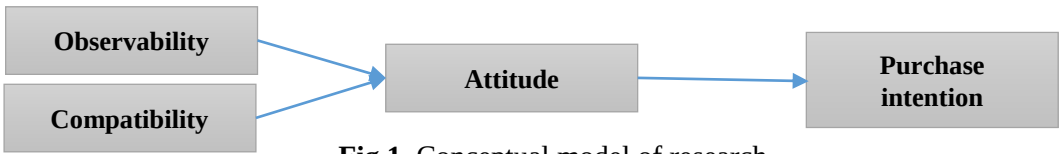

Fig 1. Conceptual model of research
Source: (Eickhoff & Zhevak, 2023)

2. Methodology

This research is an applied and descriptive-survey study that examines the impact of observability and compatibility of AI-generated sports marketing content on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. The statistical population of this study in 2024 in Iran includes individuals who have internet access and use digital platforms to receive sports content. The sports content comprises information, news, analyses, images, and related videos that are presented to users through various

platforms such as sports websites, social media, live streaming platforms, video streaming services, and applications (Hutchins & Rowe, 2012).

In this study, 300 individuals were selected using simple random sampling from a list that included contact information (such as email, phone numbers, and social media accounts). Due to time and resource constraints, this sample size was chosen. However, this sample size is sufficiently representative of the statistical population and can provide reliable and valid results. Analyses and evaluations indicated that this sample size is appropriate for the research objectives and questions and is capable of yielding valid and trustworthy findings. The questionnaires were distributed online via email or direct messages on social media platforms (such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and Instagram), and the data were collected electronically. Cronbach's alpha was used to ensure the stability and reliability of the questionnaire, with alpha values for each section exceeding 0.7, indicating good reliability. Content validity was also assessed using feedback from experts and specialists in the fields of sports marketing and artificial intelligence.

The primary measurement tool used in this research was a structured questionnaire designed to assess the various constructs of the study. This questionnaire consisted of several sections, each dedicated to measuring one of the research constructs, including observability (4 questions) and compatibility (3 questions) of artificial intelligence technology, adapted from Moore and Benbasat (1991), attitudes towards AI-generated content (5 questions) from Schepman and Rodway (2020), and a questionnaire to measure consumers' purchase intentions (4 questions). Responses were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

After data collection, statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS® TM26 and Smart PLS TM3 software. Initially, the data were prepared for analysis, which included data cleansing, managing missing data, and ensuring there were no outliers. Partial Least Squares (PLS) modeling was then used to analyze the relationships between the variables. The estimated model was evaluated using various model assessment criteria. This model consisted of two components: the measurement model and the structural model. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was employed to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement instruments. To evaluate the structural component of the model, path coefficients (β) and the predictive relevance index (Q^2) were used. Additionally, to simultaneously examine the fit of both the structural and measurement models, the Goodness of Fit (GoF) index and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) index were utilized.

3. Findings of the Research

Demographic Description

All participants accessed sports content through digital platforms, and therefore, attention was paid to gender diversity in the sample to ensure a proper representation of both genders. Descriptive statistics of the demographic variables indicate that the largest age group among the participants was between 21 and 25 years old, with most of them holding a bachelor's degree (B.Sc). Additionally, the majority of the participants were male and had a moderate economic status.

Table1. Participate

Variable		Frequency	%
Age	<20	19	6
	21-25	114	38
	26-30	81	27
	31-35	50	17
	36<	36	12
Education	Associates'	28	9

	B.Sc	145	48
	M.Sc	104	35
	Ph.D	23	8
Gender	Man	185	62
	Female	115	38
Economic situation	Weak (W)	11	4
	Average (M)	186	62
	Good (G)	88	29
	Excellent (E)	15	5

Evaluation of Psychometric Properties of the Measures and Measurement Model

Table 2 presents the psychometric characteristics of the measurement scales for the four main constructs of the study: observability, compatibility, attitude towards AI-generated content, and consumers' purchase intention. Each construct comprises several items evaluated using factor loadings (λ), Cronbach's alpha (α), composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and the Rho_A reliability index. The results indicate that all constructs possess factor loadings exceeding 0.75 and Cronbach's alpha values above 0.84, demonstrating high reliability of the scales. Both CR and AVE are also satisfactory for all constructs, confirming the convergent validity of the measures. To test the internal validity of the constructs using Partial Least Squares (PLS), the Rho_A criterion was applied. In this study, the average Rho_A index was reported at 0.85, indicating a high level of internal validity for the examined constructs. This value exceeds the minimum standard of 0.7, suggesting that the scales utilized in this research exhibit a high degree of reliability.

Table 2. Psychometric Properties of the Measure

Variable	Questions	λ	α	CR	AVA	Rho_A
Observability	A1: I feel that many people around me believe that artificial intelligence is used in sports marketing.	.79	.84	.70	.68	.84
	A2: I have used artificial intelligence in sports marketing in many cases.	.85				
	A3: I feel that artificial intelligence is largely used in sports marketing in my environment.	.80				
	A4: As far as I know, artificial intelligence is not widely used in sports marketing.	.85				
Compatibility	A5: The use of artificial intelligence in sports marketing is contrary to my values.	.85	.84	.71	.76	.85
	A6: The use of artificial intelligence in sports marketing does not align with my worldview.	.88				
	A7: I don't think artificial intelligence is used for marketing purposes.	.89				
Attitude towards content generated by AI	A8: I believe that AI-generated content can perform better than humans.	.75	.90	.80	.72	.88
	A9: I believe that AI-generated content can replace human creativity.	.85				
	A10: I trust AI-generated content for important decision-making.	.84				
	A11: I believe that platforms benefit more from AI-generated content.	.89				

Variable	Questions	λ	α	CR	AVA	Rho_A
Purchase intention	A12: Artificial intelligence can provide new economic opportunities for this country.	.88	.86	.70	.70	.86
	A13: I have a positive experience from viewing AI-generated content that encourages me to purchase sports products.	.81				
	A14: It is likely that after viewing AI-generated content, I will purchase the advertised products.	.84				
	A15: I trust the purchasing suggestions provided by AI-generated content and make decisions based on them.	.87				
	A16: After viewing AI-generated content, my likelihood of purchasing sports products increases.	.83				

The results in Table 2 indicate that the scales used in this research have adequate reliability and validity.

Fit of the Structural Model

After evaluating the fit of the measurement model, the next step is to assess the fit of the structural model. Several criteria are used to evaluate the adequacy of the structural model in the research. The first and fundamental criteria include the beta coefficient (β) and significance coefficients (t). For the assessment of the structural model, the t-values should be greater than 1.96 to confirm their significance at a 95% confidence level. Additionally, for the beta coefficient (β), if its value is less than 0.3, it is considered a weak relationship; between 0.3 and 0.6, it is considered moderate; and above 0.6, it is considered strong. The results obtained for the β and t coefficients are presented in Figures 2 and 3.

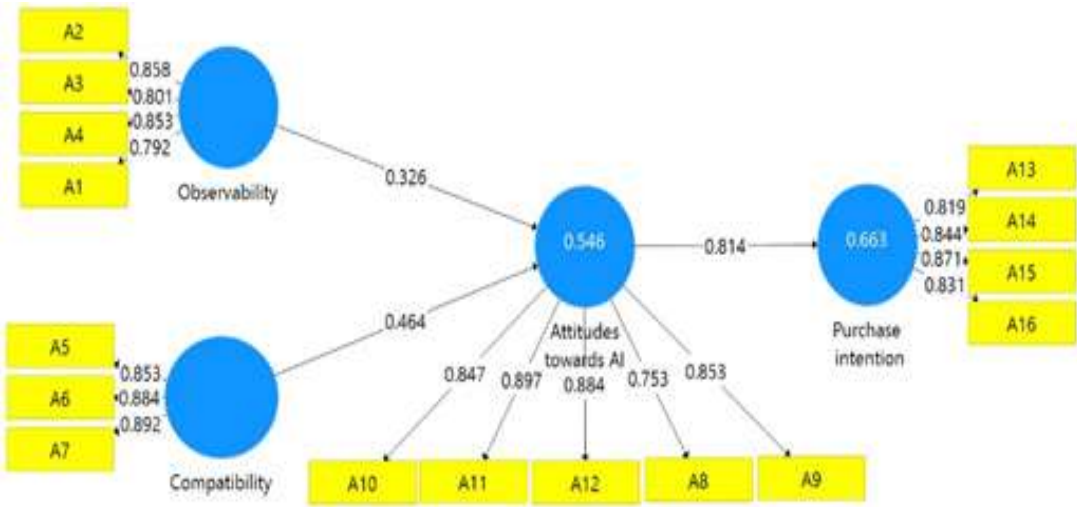

Fig 2. Paths of the beta coefficient (β)

Based on the results shown in Figure 1, the beta coefficient (β) in this study ranges from 0.32 to 0.81, indicating a moderate to strong relationship among the constructs of the research.

The t-statistic is essentially the main criterion for confirming or rejecting hypotheses. According to the results obtained, as shown in Figure 3, this value is higher than 2.58. Therefore, we conclude that all hypotheses are confirmed at the 95% confidence level.

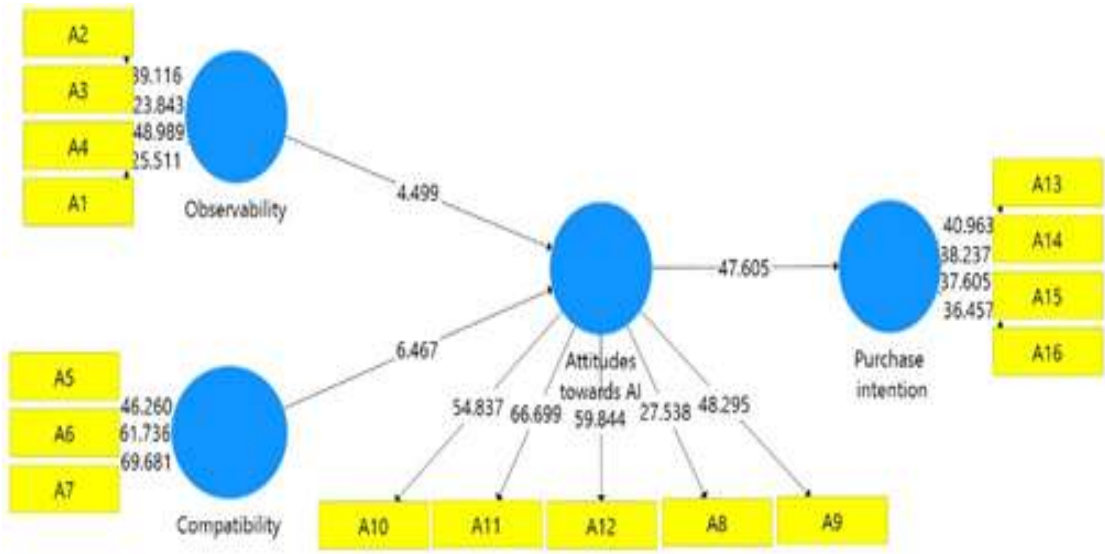

Fig 3. Structural equation model in standard and significance mode-t

Next, it is necessary to report the most important indices for evaluating the structural model in the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is used to indicate the explanatory power of the model, and the Q^2 index is used to demonstrate the predictive power of the model. The values of 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 are introduced as weak, moderate, and strong values for R^2 (Chin, 1998). According to Purwanto (2021), the Q^2 index values are 0.01 (weak), 0.25 (moderate), and 0.36 (strong).

Table 3. Evaluation indicators of the structural part of the model

Variable	Q^2	R^2
Observability		
Compatibility		
Attitude	.36	.54
Purchase intention	.43	.66

According to the information in the above table, the obtained values for the Q^2 index fall within the strong range (greater than 0.35). For the constructs of attitude and purchase intention, the R^2 values are reported as 0.54 and 0.66, respectively, indicating high explanatory power for these constructs. These indices suggest that the structural model of the research has a good fit and has effectively elucidated the relationships among the constructs.

Overall Model Fit

Since the use of multiple fit indices to evaluate structural models is common in many reputable scientific studies, this research also employs various indices for a more comprehensive assessment of the model's quality. The GOF index is utilized to examine the overall adequacy of the model and is calculated using the geometric mean of the R^2 index and the mean of the shared indices. The GOF index simultaneously evaluates the fit of both the structural and measurement components and serves as one of the criteria for the overall assessment of the model. In addition, the SRMR index is used to assess the differences between the observed and predicted correlation matrices. If the SRMR value is less than 0.1, it indicates a good fit for the model.

Table 4. Structural model fit indices

Variable	GOF	SRMR
Observability Compatibility Attitude Purchase intention	.43	.07

Considering that the GOF value obtained in this study is 0.43, this indicates that the research model has a good fit, and the combination of shared indices and the coefficient of determination has effectively explained the model structure. Additionally, the SRMR value, reported as 0.07, suggests a good fit for the model. The simultaneous reporting of these indices aims to provide a more comprehensive picture of the model's quality and strengthen the credibility of the results.

Now, considering the significance of the relationships among the constructs of the research, we can proceed to test the hypotheses of the study. The results of the hypothesis testing based on structural equation modeling, along with the causal paths, beta coefficients (β), and corresponding significance coefficients (t), are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Values of beta coefficient (β) and significance coefficients (t)

Hypotheses	β	t	Sig	Relationship Intensity	Result
Observability ⟶ Attitude towards content generated by AI	.32	4.49	.000	Medium	✓
Compatibility ⟶ Attitude towards content generated by AI	.46	6.46	.000	Medium	✓
Attitude towards content generated by AI ⟶ Purchase intention	.81	47.60	.000	Strong	✓

Table 5 presents the results of the β and t for the causal paths in the structural model of the study. This table illustrates how each independent variable (hypothesis paths) affects the dependent variables (outcomes) and whether these effects are statistically significant. The first path, which connects observability to attitudes towards AI-generated content, has a β coefficient of 0.32, indicating a moderate effect of this variable on attitudes toward the content. This effect is statistically significant with a t value of 4.49 and a p-value of .000. The second path, linking compatibility to attitudes towards AI-generated content, has a β coefficient of 0.46, also reflecting a moderate influence of this variable on attitudes towards the content, and is significant with a t value of 6.46 and a p-value of .000. Finally, the third path, which relates attitudes towards AI-generated content to consumers' purchase intentions, has a strong beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.81$), indicating a strong effect of this variable on purchase intentions. This effect is highly significant with a t value of 47.60 and a p-value of .000. Therefore, Table 5 shows that all hypotheses of the study are confirmed at a 95% confidence level using structural equation modeling, and the relationships between the constructs are significantly explained.

4. DISCUSSION

Considering the increasing use of AI in sports marketing, understanding how this technology impacts consumer behavior is essential. The current study provides compelling evidence supporting the

positive effects of observability (H1) and compatibility (H2) on consumers' attitudes towards AI-generated sports marketing content, as well as the influence of these attitudes on purchase intentions (H3). The results of the tests indicated that the robustness of the Smart PLS model was confirmed through significant values of the coefficient of determination (R^2) and path coefficients (β), thereby validating the research hypotheses. Based on these findings, the results from the hypothesis testing derived from the extracted model are as follows:

The first hypothesis was supported, demonstrating that observability positively influences consumers' attitudes towards AI-generated sports marketing content. This finding aligns with previous research (Eickhoff & Zhevak, 2023; Fathi, Askaryan & Rayner, 2022 and Mohammadi et al., 2025). For instance, Lee et al. (2021) also emphasize that the observability of new technologies can enhance consumers' positive attitudes. These results indicate that when consumers have a clear understanding of AI's functionality and can observe it effectively, the likelihood of their acceptance and enthusiasm towards it increases. However, this finding contrasts with the research by (Forgas et al., 2011), which suggests that consumers' attitudes towards new technologies may be negatively affected by security concerns, including issues related to privacy, data security, and potential misuse of personal information. These connections are significant because consumers may pay closer attention to the opinions and experiences related to AI during their decision-making process for purchasing sports products. Thus, enhancing the observability of AI can not only improve consumers' positive attitudes but also increase their trust and confidence. This is particularly important in sports marketing, as consumers may be more inclined to consider AI-generated experiences and recommendations when purchasing sports products.

The second hypothesis posited that compatibility influences consumers' attitudes towards AI-generated sports marketing content, and the findings of this study supported this assertion. Previous research emphasizes the pivotal role of AI compatibility in shaping consumer attitudes, which is consistent with the results of this investigation (Eickhoff & Zhevak, 2023). For instance, a study by Chen et al. (2010) demonstrated that the alignment of technology with consumers' personal values can enhance their positive attitudes towards that technology. These findings confirm that when technology aligns with consumers' values and expectations, the likelihood of acceptance and enthusiasm increases. In contrast, the findings are inconsistent with research by Kavand et al. (2023), which indicates that if technology is incompatible with consumers' values and concerns, a negative attitude may emerge. This negative attitude can lead to diminished consumer trust and ultimately a reduction in purchase intentions. This suggests that the compatibility of technology is crucial not only for fostering positive attitudes but also for maintaining trust and increasing the likelihood of purchases. These findings underscore the importance of understanding and aligning AI with consumers' values and needs. Specifically, marketers must pay special attention to ensuring that AI technologies used in sports marketing resonate with consumers' values and needs. Technologies that do not align with consumers' values and concerns may negatively impact their attitudes and purchasing behavior, rather than enhancing positive perceptions. Therefore, to mitigate these negative effects and enhance consumer trust and acceptance, it is essential to prioritize the compatibility of technology with consumers' values and needs in the design and implementation of marketing strategies.

Hypothesis three was supported and provides compelling evidence that a positive attitude towards AI-generated sports marketing content has a direct and positive impact on consumers' purchase intentions. This finding aligns with recent research indicating that purchase intention, as a sign of consumers' readiness to buy products or services,

plays a significant role in consumer behavior (Seifollahi & Naghavi, 2023; Vuong & Khanh Giao, 2020; Yang et al., 2022). This intention helps sellers better identify their customers' buying patterns (Chen et al., 2010). Furthermore, the results of this section are consistent with Ajzen (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior and previous research in marketing and consumer behavior (Eickhoff & Zhevak, 2023). For instance, studies (Forgas et al., 2011; George, 2004; Kajtazi & Zeqiri, 2020; Safkhani et al., 2021)have shown that a positive attitude towards a product or service can enhance consumers' purchase intentions. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, individuals' attitudes towards a specific behavior directly influence their intentions and willingness to engage in that behavior. The findings of this study confirm that consumers' positive attitudes towards AI-generated sports marketing content lead to an increase in their purchase intentions. This indicates that if consumers evaluate AI-generated content positively, the likelihood of purchasing related sports products also increases. On the other hand, the results of this section contrast with the research by Khan et al. (2022), which suggests that negative attitudes stemming from security and privacy concerns can diminish consumers' purchase intentions. These findings highlight the importance of addressing security and privacy concerns in the development and use of AI in marketing. In other words, to fully leverage the benefits of AI in sports marketing, it is essential not only to enhance consumers' positive attitudes but also to carefully manage concerns related to security and privacy.

5. Conclusion

The results indicate that the observability and compatibility of AI-generated sports marketing content have a positive impact on consumers' attitudes and their purchase intentions. These findings suggest that utilizing advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence in sports marketing can lead to increased consumer engagement with the content and a greater willingness to purchase. To capitalize on these results, sports marketing managers should leverage multimedia platforms (such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok) and search engine optimization (SEO) techniques to enhance content visibility, align their content with consumers' needs and interests, and utilize advanced technologies like AI for content personalization. Implementing interactive campaigns, responding promptly to feedback, incorporating virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), and producing live content—especially live broadcasts of sports events, behind-the-scenes footage, and interviews with athletes—can significantly capture audience attention and foster greater engagement. Additionally, continuous evaluation and optimization of campaign performance, along with ongoing training for the marketing team, are practical strategies that can increase consumer engagement and purchasing intent. These actions will contribute to improving consumers' attitudes towards the content and enhancing their likelihood of making purchases.

Despite the significant findings, this study has limitations that should be considered. First, the sampling was conducted exclusively among consumers of sports marketing content in a specific region, which may limit the generalizability of these results to other areas. Second, the study focused on only two factors— observability and compatibility—while other influential factors affecting consumer attitudes and purchase intentions were not examined. Finally, the results of this research may be impacted by rapid changes in marketing technologies and consumer behavior, making it essential to repeat and update sports marketing research in the future.

6. Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work the authors used ChatGPT, and Grammarly in order to improve language and readability of certain parts of the article.

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