

Implementation Models of Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education Marketing

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Abstract

As a result of increasing global competition and rapid technological progress, higher education institutions are adopting innovative strategies to increase their visibility and attract potential students. This paper aims to explore how artificial intelligence (AI) is shaping university marketing through an integrative analysis of the practices used and the academic literature. The research uses a qualitative methodology based on a comprehensive review of the specialized literature that analyzes the implementation of AI in higher education marketing. Chatbots, predictive analytics and personalized content delivery systems are among the most widely used AI technologies, and the benefits they offer are numerous: they significantly increase student engagement, improve administrative processes and provide institutional branding strategies. At the same time, generative AI manages to provide personalized educational experiences, thus supporting inclusion and facilitating access to high-quality education, even in the case of universities with limited resources. The study identifies key indicators for assessing the adoption of artificial intelligence in higher education, such as student satisfaction, academic performance, and international collaboration. The paper addresses an important gap in the specialized literature, namely the absence of a systematic and integrated set of indicators that would allow for the objective assessment of how prestigious universities adopt artificial intelligence. The conclusions highlight the transformative potential of AI in educational marketing and recommend a balanced integration between digital innovation and traditional methods to ensure the relevance and competitiveness of institutions. The original contribution consists in proposing a synthetic framework for understanding university marketing based on AI, offering practical solutions.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, university marketing, digital, higher education branding, personalized communication, social media.

JEL classification: I23, M31, O33.

Introduction

Currently, higher education marketing is increasingly oriented towards digitalization, personalization and strategic relationships with prospective students. In a global environment marked by increased competition, higher education institutions are implementing innovative promotional methods to attract both national and international students. These efforts are supported by the extensive use of digital platforms and tools, emphasizing the need to consolidate a solid institutional brand and direct and effective communication with the target audience.

Hence, in the field of university education, as in other fields of activity, brand marketing can create a good reputation and image of the institution, so that it is recognized by beneficiaries as a provider of quality products and services (Liu & Chen, 2021). From an academic point of view, innovation in education is an important component in university management, which is reflected in the implementation of work models capable of integrating new trends in the various fields of knowledge, so that the university responds to social demands (Rodríguez-Hoyos et al., 2021).

In this context, the rapid progress of artificial intelligence has revolutionized the labor market and society, having significant applications in various sectors such as health, industry, but also education (Qian, et al., 2024). Moreover, generative artificial intelligence finds its

utility in various ways, including in the generation of text, images, videos, codes, sound, as well as other types of created content. (Banh and Strobel, 2023).

The paper examines the opportunity for integrating artificial intelligence at the university level, considering the multiple components of academic activities, from teaching and research to administrative support processes. The present research brings together essential indicators regarding the adoption of AI in prestigious higher education institutions and provides an overview of how these emerging technologies are integrated into the academic environment.

1. Review of the literature

1.1. Branches of Artificial Intelligence

According to Ulloa (2024), Artificial Intelligence can be divided into two main branches, depending on the size of the data sets and the purpose pursued:

- **Predictive Artificial Intelligence**, based on algorithms that analyze historical data from small or medium sets to predict future outcomes and which includes technologies such as machine learning, deep learning and cognitive learning.
- **Generative Artificial Intelligence**, based on large linguistic models (LLM) and massive data sets, mainly unlabeled, to create new content (texts, images, music, code, etc.) based on learned patterns.

Artificial intelligence, both predictive and generative, is changing the way marketers understand consumer behavior and target their audiences. The influence of digital marketing is growing, and the analysis of big data is possible thanks to technological advances, while also offering new solutions for achieving sustainability goals (Grewal et al., 2024).

Due to AI's ability to deeply analyze consumer behavior and preferences, brands can increase their engagement levels and create personalized marketing campaigns tailored to each individual customer (Labib, 2024). Blending predictive AI with generative AI enables the rapid creation of optimized options, models, and concepts in areas such as marketing and design: generative AI produces variants, while predictive AI evaluates them based on cost, performance, or consumer behavior. But at the beginning and end of the process, humans set the constraints and make the final decision on the best solution (Ulloa, 2024).

1.2. The role of branding and innovation in higher education

According to Bolshakova et al. (2020), university marketing involves a strategic approach, which involves the application of marketing principles in the management of higher education institutions. Moreover, the addition of the term “educational” to the term “marketing” generates a specialized field, which involves the application of marketing methods, policies and strategies in the field of education (Manea & Purcaru, 2017).

Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown (2012) argue that, currently, educational marketing represents an indispensable side for competitive educational institutions, which must be efficient in relation to the interests of all beneficiaries of their services. The marketing strategies used by educational institutions are based on elements of social marketing and service marketing, given that higher education is shaped by the dynamics of social demands (Schidolski et al, 2023) and education is presented as a marketable service. In addition, higher education institutions apply elements of consumer psychology by capitalizing on the university brand they own (Liang, 2022).

From a social marketing perspective, the objectives include increasing the level of education, acquiring fundamental knowledge and developing the skills necessary for social integration and adapting to the standards required by the labor market (Schidolski et al, 2023). Although educational marketing focuses on identifying competitive advantages, meeting student needs and adapting to demographic changes, the finality is represented by the planning

of educational products, implementing flexible pricing strategies and developing effective communication channels with various stakeholders (Bolshakova et al., 2020). Thus, artificial intelligence offers educational institutions valuable tools to strengthen their positioning in the educational market and facilitate their organizational processes (Bhardwaj et al., 2024). The development of artificial intelligence (AI) in recent years has reshaped educational marketing, so that educational institutions can address potential students through marketing strategies integrated with AI, while ensuring their competence, responsibility and adaptability in the digital environment (Richter et al., 2024). Moreover, generative artificial intelligence has the potential to revolutionize educational marketing by both improving the learning experience and empowering institutions with limited resources to provide the highest quality education, all these benefits, however, also impose a series of measures capable of mitigating the implicit risks of integrating AI into university marketing (Acar, 2024).

1.3. Current trends in university marketing

In an increasingly competitive and constantly changing academic environment, universities must align their strategies with new directions in branding and digital marketing (Gómez-Bayona et al., 2024). Accordingly, the main trends in university marketing can be summarized as follows:

a. Digital and social media marketing. Universities are making intensive use of social media platforms. Almost all higher education institutions in the US are integrating them into their promotional strategies. Among the methods used are collaboration with influencers, video marketing, and user-generated content, to increase engagement and expand reach (Pawar, 2024; Karpova & Burukina, 2019).

b. Personalization and data-driven strategies. Email marketing continues to be an effective tool, especially through list segmentation and message personalization, which contributes to the creation of individualized experiences for candidates (Karpova & Burukina, 2019). Data analysis and decision-making based on this data are becoming essential for evaluating the effectiveness of campaigns and optimizing them (Na et al., 2025; Karpova & Burukina, 2019).

c. Innovative content and active engagement. Video content, especially on platforms such as YouTube, is increasingly having an impact on prospective students' decisions regarding their study choices. Creative social media campaigns and mobile-centric approaches are being used to attract young people in an innovative way (Karpova & Burukina, 2019).

d. Strategic positioning and brand building. Higher education institutions are increasingly paying attention to developing a strong brand through well-defined marketing strategies, often coordinated by executive-level specialists (Zinkan, 2017). The use of new media and digital networks is becoming an essential contemporary tool for positioning universities in a competitive environment (Buyanza-Mwidima & Nkeni, 2021).

e. Marketing and differentiation. Universities are adopting commercial practices to differentiate themselves and attract students. This process involves highlighting the particularities of the study conditions (programs, partnerships, modern campus,) and the purpose of the educational process, which resides both in the employability of graduate students and in the student experience (Chapleo & O'Sullivan, 2017; Kovalchuk et al., 2021).

f. Integrated marketing strategies. Institutions develop long-term marketing strategies that integrate systematic analysis and careful planning, aiming to adapt to the constantly changing needs of students and ensure sustainable and competitive growth (Kovalchuk et al., 2021).

g. Digital and innovative marketing tools. The use of digital marketing tools is becoming indispensable, offering increased opportunities for student engagement and developing the skills needed for their future careers (Choez et al., 2024; Mammadova, 2023). Emerging

strategies include the use of new media, student lifecycle management, and academic networking (Buyanza-Mwidima & Nkeni, 2021).

h. Globalization and internationalization. Internationalization strategies aim to attract international students, while balancing commercial objectives with sustainable educational development (Zhou et al., 2024). In a context where higher education is perceived as a global product, universities are looking for creative ways to respond to the diversity of student demands (Buyanza-Mwidima & Nkeni, 2021).

i. Brand and reputation management. Universities invest in strengthening brand equity both nationally and internationally, which requires a clear understanding of the target market and effective communication with it (Mammadova, 2023).

Hence, in the spirit of increasing the efficiency of universities from different perspectives of specific activities, marketing practice proposes a new approach to it from the perspective of integrating artificial intelligence, highlighting the fact that educational services should focus more on managing consumer needs than on directly satisfying these needs (Grandinetti, 2020).

2. Methodology

A systematic literature analysis was applied using the Rayyan platform, through a rigorous search in academic databases (Web of Science, Scopus, ProQuest, Google Scholar) with terms such as “Artificial Intelligence” or “AI” and “university marketing” or “higher education marketing”. For the systematic analysis of the specialized literature on the use of AI in university marketing, two research questions were formulated: how is AI used in university marketing strategies and which AI technologies are most frequently used in academic marketing.

The article selection strategy included five stages:

1. *Initial search in databases (Web of Science, Scopus, ProQuest, SpringerLink, IEEE Xplore, etc.) using Boolean operators – and, or*
2. *Elimination of duplicates and screening of the title/abstract.*
3. *Full text review based on inclusion/exclusion criteria.*
4. *Evaluation of the quality of the articles using the CASP (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme-checklist for critical evaluation of different types of studies: qualitative, randomized, observational, etc.) technique, with the help of which the quality of the research questions, the methodology, and the possibility of generalizing the results were assessed.*

For the selection and evaluation of the quality of the studies, a PRISMA flow was built in which the following were included (**Figure 1**): Number of initial articles from each database; Number of articles eliminated after screening of the title and abstract; Number of articles excluded after full reading; Number of studies included in the final analysis.

5. Data extraction and analysis

Thematic synthesis and narrative analysis techniques were used to structure the data into relevant categories:

- Types of AI used (chatbots, machine learning, data analysis).
- Areas of application (branding, social media marketing, personalization).
- Impact on academic institutions (increasing enrollment, improving student experience).

In addition, AI-assisted documentation was used, through the Gemini platform (a large-scale linguistic model developed by Google). Gemini (Google, 2025) was used as a support tool for identifying and organizing information on the applicability of AI in universities, contributing to the generation of thematic syntheses and preliminary hypotheses. The data generated by artificial intelligence was verified by comparing key statements with academic sources and adjusting the results to ensure accuracy and methodological consistency. It is

emphasized that the data generated by artificial intelligence was verified, supplemented and adapted to meet academic requirements.

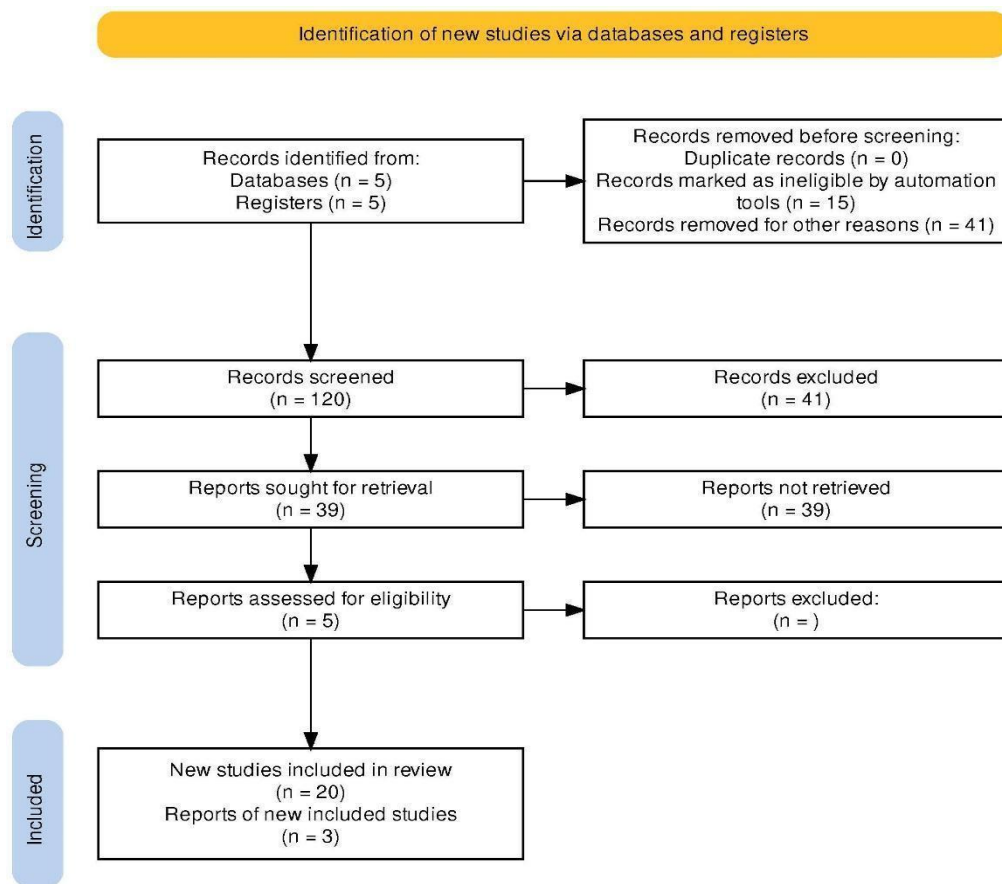


Figure.1. Identification of articles related to the topic in databases

3. AI Implementation Models in University Marketing

AI technologies, such as chatbots, predictive analytics, and personalized content delivery, are being used to improve the reach and resonance of marketing strategies in the university environment. Owoc et al. (2021) reveals a substantial increase in student inquiries, application rates, and enrollment numbers after implementing AI tools in higher education institutions. Moreover, AI has the potential to revolutionize the learning process by making it more efficient, personalized, and accessible (Chervona et al., 2023). Thus, artificial intelligence offers the opportunity to overcome the traditional constraints of education related to time and space, not only by developing students' digital skills, but also by stimulating their creativity and collaboration, and a recent study (Akinwalere & Ivanov, 2022) analyzed how universities use this technology, as shown in the table below (*Table 1*).

Table 1. Applications of AI in the university environment

University name	Applications of artificial intelligence (AI)
MIP Politecnico di Milano Graduate School of Business	Development of the FLEXA platform for assessing students' professional skills and providing personalized content
University of New South Wales (UNSW)	Implementation of a chatbot (QBot) to answer students' questions, create a knowledge base and use facial recognition technology to monitor course attendance

Pearson Group	Developing AI-powered language learning apps, such as LongWen Xiaoying, that offer personalized learning and automated assessment
Washington State University	Using the Cialfo platform to attract international students and ease the enrollment process
Georgia State University	Implementing the Pounce chatbot to answer students' frequently asked questions and reduce dropout rates after enrollment.
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	Using a 360-degree immersive language learning lab and monitoring student participation through facial recognition

Source: Akinwalere & Ivanov, 2022.

Leaving the realm of scientific research and specialized literature, we generated with the help of Gemini, a multimodal artificial intelligence model developed by Google AI, a list of educational institutions that use such tools, as we can see in the table below (**Table 2**), addressing the following request: *Give me some university websites that use AI, specifying also the ways of use for each educational institution.*

Table 2. AI applications in educational institutions

University	Official Website	Use of AI
University of Oxford, UK	www.ox.ac.uk	Uses AI chatbots to assist students and personalize the experience on the website
Georgia State University, SUA	www.gsu.edu	Uses the “Pounce” chatbot for information about courses and financial aid
University of Edinburgh, UK	www.ed.ac.uk	Integrates AI for personalized recommendations based on users' behavior on the website.
Technical University of Munich (TUM), Germany	www.tum.de	Uses AI algorithms to analyze student data and personalize available information.
Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania	www.ubbcluj.ro	Implemented AI solutions to support administrative processes and course management.
Imperial College London, UK	www.imperial.ac.uk	Uses AI to analyze student feedback and improve educational programs.

Source: Google, 2025

Also, with the help of the artificial intelligence model developed by Google AI, Gemini, we requested a centralization of indicators that allow for the objective assessment of trends in the integration of artificial intelligence in prestigious universities. In a recent analysis, specialists from the renowned audit firm Deloitte, guide higher education leaders to cultivate a culture of change and embrace the transformative power of generative artificial intelligence in academia, presenting the advantages of this new technology. They highlight the major advantages of new technologies, and the merged results are shown in the table below (**Table 3**).

Table 3. AI Integration Metrics and Application Domains in Higher Education

Domain/ Indicator	Category/ Description	Examples of AI Uses/ Purpose
Extent of AI Utilization	Percentage of university programs and services that integrate AI (e.g. chatbots, data analytics).	Measuring the adoption of AI technologies in the institution.
Student satisfaction	Evaluating student feedback on the use of AI technologies in educational processes.	Determining the efficiency and impact of AI on students.
Academic performance	Comparing the academic results of students who use AI resources with those who do not.	Assessing the effect of AI on educational performance.
Number of research projects	Number of research projects that use AI, including international collaborations.	Measuring involvement in advanced research in the field of AI.
Investments in technology	Amounts invested in the development and implementation of AI solutions in the university.	Assessing the institution's commitment to innovation.
External collaborations	Number of partnerships with industry or other institutions for the development of AI technologies.	Measuring inter-institutional and industrial collaboration. IT infrastructure Assessment of IT infrastructure required to implement AI solutions (e.g. servers, software).
IT infrastructure	Assessment of IT infrastructure required to implement AI solutions (e.g. servers, software).	Ensuring technical support for AI integration.
Training programs	Number of courses or workshops dedicated to training staff and students in the use of AI	Promoting the skills required for the use of AI.
Operational excellence	Streamlining Administration Transforming the Employee Experience Accelerating Financial Perspectives	Automate document processing for expense reporting and procurement management. Conduct initial screening of job candidates, assist with onboarding, skills inventory, and sourced training. Verify financial policy compliance, improve forecasting and budgeting.
Student Success	Personalizing Learning Supporting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Improving Financial Accessibility	Improving the admissions process, creating virtual tutors to provide individualized learning plans and personalized career guidance. Translating teaching materials, recruiting students from diverse backgrounds, using sign language and AAC systems, creating accessible campus maps. Automating FAFSA renewal notifications, matching students with scholarships and financial aid, personalizing loan repayment processes.
Research	Identifying opportunities Accelerate grant responses Support research administration	Identifying research trends and synthesizing emerging insights to uncover research opportunities and improve collaboration. Reduce the workload for literature reviews

		and generate faster grant responses, increasing their quality and quantity. Accelerate policy reviews and responses, by using virtual assistants
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Source: Google Gemini & Deloitte analysis, 2024.

In order to achieve its purpose for which it was created, ARACIS - Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education has as its main mission the external evaluation of the quality of education offered by higher education institutions and other organizations providing specific higher education study programs, operating in Romania. Thus, ARACIS annually develops a methodology through which it establishes performance indicators in the higher education system, as found in **Table 4**.

Table 4. ARACIS 2024 Performance Indicators

Indicator	Description
Quality of study programs	Evaluation of the content, structure and updating of study programs according to market requirements.
Student satisfaction	Measuring the degree of student satisfaction with the quality of teaching, available resources and academic support.
Academic performance	Analyzing the academic results of students, including the promotion and completion rate of studies.
Research and innovation	Evaluation of research activities carried out by faculties, including publications, projects and international collaborations.
Human resources	Analysis of the qualifications and experience of teaching staff, including the proportion of staff with advanced academic titles.
Infrastructure	Evaluation of the physical and technological facilities available to students and teaching staff, including laboratories and libraries.
Internationalization	Measuring the degree of internationalization of programs, including international partnerships and academic mobility.
Community involvement	Evaluation of collaboration with the local socio-economic environment, including community projects and internships for students.

Source: ARACIS, 2024.

Conclusions, limits and future directions

University marketing is evolving towards a strategic, digitalized and internationalized approach, with a focus on differentiation, student engagement and effective brand management. These trends reflect institutions' response to global competition and the need for sustainable development in an ever-changing educational environment.

While digital marketing and personalization are the main directions in promoting higher education, institutions still face challenges such as budget constraints, the difficulty of demonstrating return on investment (ROI) and the effective management of digital platforms. At the same time, the emphasis on local SEO (search engine optimization helps universities to be easily found online by potential students) and adapting to new market conditions highlight the need for universities to remain flexible and responsive to changes in the educational environment.

Applying artificial intelligence (AI) to university marketing can significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of promotional strategies by leveraging advanced technologies to better understand and interact with potential students. AI-based tools can analyze large volumes of data, personalize marketing messages, and optimize campaigns, thus contributing to increasing student recruitment and retention rates. The role of AI in university marketing is complex, including data analysis, personalization, and automation, all of which support more targeted and sustainable communication. The thematic analysis also shows that AI-based tools can improve analysis and measurement capabilities in university marketing.

While AI offers multiple advantages in the field of academic marketing, it also raises a number of challenges. These include ensuring data protection and confidentiality, managing possible algorithmic biases, and maintaining a balance between automation and the human component in marketing communication. It is also essential that higher education institutions consider the ethical implications of using AI, especially regarding transparency and fairness in the process of targeting and formulating messages.

As university marketing continues to transform, it is essential for institutions to find a balance between innovative digital strategies and traditional methods of engagement, in order to reach their target audiences effectively and sustainably.

In conclusion, AI has the potential to transform university marketing by providing deeper insights, increasing personalization, and optimizing campaigns. However, to fully benefit from these benefits, universities must adopt a strategic approach to implementing AI, considering both the opportunities and challenges associated with it. This way, they can build more effective and sustainable marketing strategies that resonate with the expectations and needs of future students.

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