

Beyond Ease and Usefulness: A TAM Perspective on Marketing Lecturers' Adoption of Generative AI

Abstract

Purpose

Over the years, marketing higher education has undergone a profound transformation due to advances in digital technology. Gen AI technology has progressively become more important both for teachers and students in marketing education. This study explores the use of Gen AI by marketing lecturers in the HEIs. We use the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) model as a theoretical foundation. Using TAM, this study explores how marketing lecturers perceive the Gen AI in improving the teaching effectiveness and efficiency and how easy they find it in integrating it within their teaching practices.

Methodology

The study employed Online Structured interviews to understand the adoption of Gen AI followed by a team based thematic analysis method. A total of 22 structured interviews were conducted with marketing lecturers from different UK universities. Convenience and snowball sampling was used to shortlist the interviewees. Finally, team-based thematic analysis was performed.

Findings

The results show that HEIs lecturers see Gen AI for supporting teaching, developing marketing activities and structuring content. Secondly, marketing lecturers are using Gen AI to create assignment support video guidance and to provide generic feedback. Finally, marketing lecturers use Gen AI for administrative tasks.

Originality

This study extends the literature on Gen AI and marketing higher education. This study also brings the social media data to understand the trends. Moreover, this study extends the TAM model. This study also guides the senior management in universities to invest more in the training of the marketing lecturers to effectively integrate Gen AI in education. Finally, this study explores the ethical use of Gen AI in teaching, assessments and feedback.

Keywords: Generative AI, Higher Education, Marketing Lecturers, Technology Acceptance Model, United Kingdom

Introduction

The artificial intelligence (AI) technology has innovated the marketing education sector immensely when it comes to learning and leadership. Recent developments in Gen AI have challenged the traditional models of marketing education and as a result, the academia has undergone a profound transformation due to Gen AI (Paul et al. 2023). The integration of Gen AI has emerged as a catalyst in transforming the landscape of marketing education in particular in the UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). It is perceived to change the way marketing concepts are being taught, learned, understood, and applied in higher education academic settings. Teachers and students in marketing education seem to have a high level of awareness and recognition of Gen AI tools with ChatGPT being the most recognised tool (Yusuf et al., 2024). It has introduced new dimensions to curriculum development, challenging the traditional pedagogical approaches and encouraging innovation in teaching methods. The real story is not about the developments, but the acceptance and implementation of the technology within the UK HEIs.

Generative AI models have rapidly increased recently in popularity (Fu et al., 2025) and growingly perceived as a crucial technology for students to improve their academic performance. In the age of AI, it is imperative that students learn how to use new technologies

including AI to perform several tasks. For example, to obtain right responses from Gen AI, students' need to learn the art of inserting right prompts; this concept is known as 'prompt engineering' (Ng, Tan, and Leung, 2024). Students' learning depends on the teaching, learning activities and assessments (Biggs and Tang, 2011) and students' experiences reflect the teaching practices (Arnold, 2022). Lecturers play a crucial role in sharing the student experience by providing the right experience, however, the recent advancements in Gen AI and its role in marketing education is challenging lecturers to provide industry relevant student experiences. Therefore, both lecturers and students need new skills such as prompt writing (Kasneci et al., 2023).

Going forward, the approach to marketing education by HEIs will not only be to impart fundamental and foundational marketing theories and principles but will also require equipping students with practical, up-to-date skills in using technology to address marketing challenges. Marketing programmes within HEIs are evolving to include technology-based modules, such as digital marketing, data analytics, and AI application in business, to reflect the changing demands of the industry (Elhajjar, Karam and Borna, 2021). The advancements in Gen AI might give HEIs a new purpose of training students and giving lecturers' a mindset of adopting new tools to mentor and guide students for the future (Zirar, 2023), however, the inclusion of Gen AI in marketing education is still relatively in infancy, therefore, understanding its impact on pedagogical approaches, curriculum design, and student outcomes is crucial.

Despite the growing number of research on AI in marketing and higher education, most of the research is mainly student-centric or conceptual with limited focus on lecturer-centric research from UK marketing programmes. In addition to this, previous studies mainly look at the benefits and risks however this study dives deeper into task-level analysis of assessment, feedback and teaching. This study therefore aims to explore the use of Gen AI in core tasks of marketing education and surfacing the role of ethics and trust within UK HEIs from the lens of technology acceptance model (TAM). To achieve this aim, we consider the following research questions to understand how marketing lecturers are embracing the use of the Gen AI technologies in their teaching and learning activities.

- 1) How do marketing lecturers use Gen AI for teaching, assessment and feedback?
- 2) What are the potential challenges in the adoption of Gen AI for marketing lecturers?

Literature Review

The fast development of (Gen AI) seems to have drawn everyone's attention (The Drum, 2024) and, at the same time, it poised to have one of the greatest impacts among the areas of business operations (Forbes, 2023). Gen AI, a subset of artificial intelligence, refers to technologies that can produce content such as text, images, and videos based on patterns learned from data (Martineau, 2023; Feuerriegel, et al., 2024). Gen AI can not only generate text, images, but also even entire marketing strategies independently that resonate with the target audience and inspire their action (Dilmegani, 2024). According to Capgemini (2023), 60% of organisations are using Gen AI to enhance marketing efficiency. 63% organisations think that the demand for Gen AI skills in business outstrips supply significantly and 53% organisations are planning to provide training to their teams.

Teacher acceptance Challenges

Gen AI has also transformed higher education with its potential of improving the teaching and learning (Maheswari, 2024). It is considered to provide useful information and practical solutions (Shahzad, Xu, and Asif, 2024). However, the adoption of Gen AI tools in educational settings highlight the challenges related to teacher acceptance and training.

Several studies suggest that teachers may exhibit hesitancy or resistance toward integrating Gen AI tools into their teaching practices for various reasons. Firstly, concerns about job displacement can hinder teacher acceptance of Gen AI tools. Teachers may fear that the automation of certain tasks through AI could diminish their role or lead to job loss. This fear is not unfounded, as AI technologies have the potential to automate routine tasks, such as grading assignments or creating learning materials, traditionally performed by teachers (Lindvig et.al., 2019). Secondly, a lack of familiarity with the technology can contribute to teacher hesitation.

Many lecturers may have limited exposure to Gen AI tools and may lack the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively integrate them into their teaching practices. Furthermore, Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010) highlights the importance of teacher technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK), which involves the integration of technological knowledge with pedagogical and content knowledge. Without adequate training and support, teachers may struggle to leverage Gen AI tools in ways that enhance teaching and learning. Students are also in need of the AI literacy that is found as some studies suggest (Kong et.al. 2022; NG et.al., 2022; Laupichler, et.al., 2022). Institutional barriers such as lack of

opportunities for training the lecturers as well as the students (Van den Beemt et.al., 2020) are also found as a challenge.

Validity and reliability of AI-generated educational content

Assessing the usefulness of Gen AI-generated educational content presents several challenges related to evaluating its impact on learning outcomes and determining its validity and reliability as an educational resource. One of the primary challenges is determining the impact of AI-generated content on learning outcomes. While Gen AI tools offer the potential for personalized and adaptive learning experiences, measuring their effectiveness in improving student learning and achievement can be complex. Traditional assessment metrics may not adequately capture the unique learning experiences facilitated by AI-generated content, making it challenging to assess its impact on student performance accurately (Biggs et.al., 2020). Additionally, ensuring the validity and reliability of AI-generated educational content poses further challenges. Generative AI models are trained on vast amounts of data, which may contain biases or inaccuracies that can influence the content generated. Without robust mechanisms for content validation and quality assurance, there is a risk that AI-generated educational materials may contain errors or misinformation, compromising their reliability as educational resources (Wiggins, 2011). Furthermore, the dynamic nature of AI-generated content presents challenges in maintaining its relevance and currency over time. Educational content needs to be regularly updated to reflect changes in curriculum standards, pedagogical approaches, and subject matter knowledge (Dignum, 2023). However, updating AI-generated content can be resource-intensive and may require ongoing monitoring and oversight to ensure its accuracy and alignment with educational objectives.

Gen AI for Assessment and Feedback

Teachers use AI technologies to reduce their workload and support classroom innovative activities. Gen AI is useful when used properly and for the right tasks. It has both pros and cons. Past research suggests different applications of AI in assessment and tutoring (Bond et al., 2024). Large Language models (LLMs) trained on specific data sets (Zuckerman et al., 2023) can enable Gen AI to mark certain types of assessments. It is found to be useful for students to do creative writing (Lin et al., 2025) Accuracy can vary based on the types of the assessment. For subjective assessments Gen AI can be an accurate and useful marker (Li et al., 2024). The application of Gen AI for assessments can help to standardise when generating feedback for larger cohorts, reduce unfairness and bias, and grade faster (Baidoo-Anu and

Ansah, 2023). Another study found that it is not identifiable whether it is done by humans or Gen AI (Flodén, 2024). However, there are some challenges when using Gen AI for marking assessments. Past research found that Gen AI can make more mistakes when dealing with complex assessments (Li et al., 2024) or when dealing with objective assessments (Nikolic et al., 2023).

Challenges of integrating Gen AI in Curricula

Teachers might use Gen AI to improve the curricula to make it more student-centred and relevant (Karataş, Eriçok & Tanrikulu, 2024). Studies like Bridges (2021), Rust (2020), and Nadeem (2024) identify significant gaps within current marketing curricula, emphasizing the lag in incorporating emerging technologies such as AI, VR, and big data analytics. Studies argue that the educational landscape is at a crossroads, necessitating a paradigm shift towards integrating digital tools and methodologies that reflect the realities of the modern business environment. The call for curriculum updates is not just a response to technological advancements but a recognition of the need to prepare students for the complexities of a digital-first marketplace. The transformative potential of AI in marketing education forms a central theme across several articles, with a particular emphasis on the need for ethical guidelines and responsible use. Other studies like Guha et al. (2023) and Gulati et al. (2024), amongst many, highlight AI's capacity to revolutionize teaching methods, research capabilities, and marketing strategies. However, these discussions also call attention to the challenges posed by AI technologies, advocating for a balanced approach that considers both the opportunities and ethical implications of AI integration.

Addressing these evaluation and assessment challenges requires the development of standardized frameworks and methodologies for evaluating the effectiveness and quality of AI-generated educational content. Collaborative efforts between researchers, lecturers, and AI developers are essential to establish best practices for assessing the impact of generative AI on learning outcomes and ensuring the validity and reliability of AI-generated educational materials. Additionally, ongoing research and evaluation initiatives are needed to continually assess the effectiveness of AI in education and inform the development of evidence-based practices for integrating AI-generated content into teaching and learning environments. These discussions are also applicable in the higher education (HE) setting. Although Gen AI use is increasing in teaching, research and other areas of HE works (Laupichler et al., 2022), there has still been a high level of reluctance in accepting the technology (Laupichler et al., 2022;

Yusuf et al., 2024). The reasons seem to be largely summarised as lack of appropriate AI literacy for both teachers and students (Laupichler et al., 2022; Kong et al., 2022) and clear guideline laying out ethics, governance and regulation on AI use in HE context (Barros et al., 2023).

Alongside theoretical and editorial discussions, recent empirical studies have enriched the dialogue on the role of Generative AI in marketing education by highlighting its potential to transform teaching methods, research practices, and curriculum design (e.g., Guha et al., 2024; Gulati et al., 2024). While this body of work provides valuable insights into opportunities and challenges associated with AI integration, it remains largely focused on students' behavioural intentions, conceptual frameworks, or broad curriculum implications. As a result, there is limited empirical understanding of how lecturers themselves engage with Gen AI in their everyday teaching, assessment, and feedback practices. Moreover, although technology adoption models are increasingly employed to examine AI use in educational settings, they are often applied without sufficient attention to the social and ethical contexts that shape adoption decisions. Consequently, there is a need for lecturer-centric, practice-oriented research that situates technology acceptance within the wider discursive environment surrounding Gen AI, particularly within discipline-specific contexts such as marketing in UK higher education.

Social Network Analysis of Marketing Higher Education

As part of our review of Literature, and to further our understanding of public discussions on Gen AI utilisation in marketing, we also analysed social media data using X data. This technique has been employed by researchers in the past in a similar context of studies (Cela, Sicilia, & Sánchez, 2015; Cowhitt, Butler, & Wilson, 2020). Data were retrieved using the keyword "Marketing Generative AI," which captured the broad discussions in this area. Other keywords, such as "Education Generative AI" did not yield relevant posts.

Data Analysis

Figure 1 depicts a social network visualization comprising 2,270 X users either actively discussing "Marketing Generative AI" in their recent posts on X or engaging with those discussions through replies, comments, reposts, or quotes, which are all captured in our data. Each circle represents an individual user (nodes), while the lines connecting them signify relationships within the discussion (edges). The clustering of users, as shown in Figure 1, is based on interactions between users (replies, and all forms of comments). In aggregate, this reveals patterns and shapes based on the shared interests of users. A specific range of layout

and cluster algorithms was used to produce the network visualisation clustering shown in Figure 1. The graph was generated using the Harel-Koren Fast Multiscale layout algorithm (Koren and Harel, 2004), and its vertices were grouped into clusters by applying the Clauset-Newman-Moore cluster algorithm (Clauset, Newman, and Moore, 2004). The analysis was conducted using NodeXL Pro, which also provides a word-pair analysis and insights into the topics discussed. These will be used to derive insights into the conversations taking place..

Social Network Analysis Results

Figure 1 provides a visual overview of the users conversing about Gen AI and Marketing. Group 1 is removed from the visualization to aid readability. Groups 2 to 10 are present within the figure; G represents the group, e.g., G2 represents Group 2. The words embedded in the top left-hand side of each group represent the most used words.

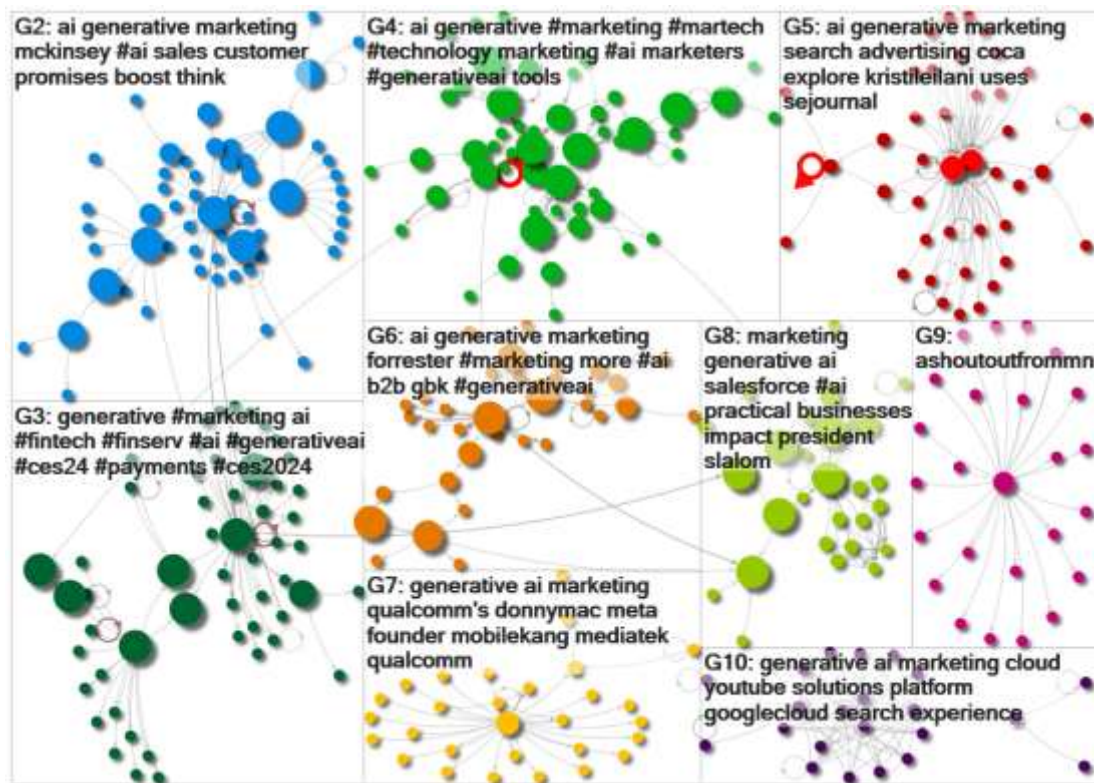


Figure 1. Social Network Visualisation of "Marketing Generative AI"

The network visual highlights that a range of conversations occur among different user groups on X. These key discussion areas are described below.

Creativity Augmentation and Efficiency Gains

There is enthusiasm for Gen AI's capacity to enhance creative processes. There are examples of AI's transformative effect on music production, content generation, and promotional activities. Discussions also highlighted how AI can mediate creativity, leading to novel forms of marketing expression.

Industry Disruption and the Evolution of Skill Sets

Posts on X also highlighted Gen AI's disruptive impact on different professions, particularly in marketing. The technology is portrayed as a promising tool at the marketer's disposal, requiring up-skilling. The discourse also includes a roadmap for acquiring expertise in AI engineering and notes that such skills will likely become pivotal within the current and future job market.

Economic Impact and Career Opportunities

Financial themes are also present within the conversation, with the emergence of Gen AI associated with lucrative career opportunities. Testimonials within posts reflect substantial economic benefits for those proficient in AI-driven design and strategy. This suggests that mastering Gen AI tools can lead to significant increases in learning potential. This economic narrative positions Gen AI expertise as a valuable commodity within the labour market.

Strategic Business Integration and Service Innovation

Incorporating Gen AI into business strategies and service offerings is also a discussion point. Companies are depicted as integrating AI capabilities to enhance their service portfolios, demonstrating how businesses are evolving to connect traditional offerings with AI innovations.

Widespread Adoption in Advertising

The use of Gen AI in advertising campaigns is also discussed and is highlighted by its application by prominent brands. This indicates a mainstreaming of AI tools in marketing efforts. This adoption is not limited to niche sectors but is evident across a spectrum of industries, reflecting expansive reach.

Risks of Over-reliance on AI

The conversation also touches on the dangers of an over-reliance on Gen AI, with concerns about the potential erosion of originality in creative roles and the broader implications for employment.

Ethical Considerations and Regulatory Needs

A recurrent theme throughout the conversation is the ethical application of GAI. Some users were apprehensive and highlighted the technology's potential misuse and the need for swift regulatory intervention. These concerns were grounded in observations of current practices that users categorized as ethically dubious.

These findings from Social Network Analysis largely support previous studies that call for more active discussion and the use of Gen AI in curriculum updates, pedagogical innovation, and ethical considerations.

Theoretical Underpinning

This study has chosen the TAM framework (Davies, 1989) as the essential foundation for Gen AI adoption, an AI tool that enhances creativity (Oxford teaching ideas, 2024). There are several reasons why TAM has been selected for this study. Since the TAM was developed to predict the acceptance of new technology by a group or organisation. This model can be very useful to provide a theoretical basis and inform practitioners about the implementation of new technology (Davis, 1989; Marikyan & Papagiannidis, 2023). Therefore, it is one of the most appropriate frameworks to analyse the adoption and use of Gen AI by marketing lecturers within the context of Gen AI ease of use, Gen AI usefulness, and Gen AI trust. Kamal et al. (2020) defines 'technology acceptance' as "the choice of an individual to voluntarily accept new technology" (p.2) and the most commonly used theory to understand the technology acceptance process is Davis et al. (1989)'s Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). TAM explains that there are two key factors which shape and determine technology users' attitudes, intention and actual use regarding the technology, namely 'Perceived usefulness' and 'Perceived Ease of Use'. These factors will affect 'Attitude towards using' and 'Behavioural intention to use' which will ultimately lead to the users' actual technology use. Indeed, this model is "the most spread and extended model for studying technology acceptance" (Murillo et al., 2021, p.618) in various contexts including the context of education.

Perceived Ease of Use in the context of Gen AI is a belief that the user thinks it reduces the effort, and it is user-friendly, for example, lecturers have technical skills and find Gen AI easy to use, which will lead them to use it more according to their skill level. Perceived Usefulness is a belief that users have on Gen AI that it will enhance the overall performance and productivity. For example, if lecturers perceive Gen AI as a useful tool to obtain formation and completion of tasks then they are more likely to use it. Another factor that can have an impact on user intention of a technology use is trust, which explains that users believe that technology they are adopting is reliable, secure, and operates with integrity (Shahzad, Xu, and Asif, 2024). For example, if lecturers perceive the information generated by Gen AI to be accurate, reliable and trustworthy they will use it more. The original focus of the TAM has been extended in later research TAM2 (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000) with social influence and job relevance and Unified theory of Acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) (Venkatesh et al., 2003) with facilitating conditions and individual differences. However, there is a dearth of studies that explores the adoption of Gen AI by marketing educators using TAM (Barakat et al., 2025). Moreover, it has been mostly used to understand the technology adoption by students. Although the use of UTAUT in Higher education has been examined in detail in a systematic review by Xue et al. (2024), this study adopts the original TAM for exploratory research due to its simplicity and ease of use. By applying TAM to an underexplored area of HE as well as by critically analysing the issues of trust and ethics in relation to Gen AI, this study contributes to and extends the body of knowledge.

Finally, this study draws on insights from Social Network Analysis (SNA) conducted as part of the literature review to contextualise the application of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). These discursive insights provide a socially embedded perspective on technology acceptance, recognising that lecturers' evaluations of Generative AI are shaped not only by individual experience but also by wider narratives concerning innovation, employability, and ethical risk. Rather than being employed as an empirical method, SNA is used to identify dominant themes and discourses surrounding Generative AI within online conversations. This approach allows the study to extend TAM conceptually by situating individual acceptance processes within a broader social environment, without modifying the model's core constructs.

Methodology

Research Design

To examine the use of Gen AI by marketing lecturers in their teaching, assessment, and feedback activities, this study employs a qualitative method. A total of 22 structured interviews were conducted with marketing lecturers from UK universities. We used structured online interviews to collect data from marketing lecturers from UK business schools. Convenience and snowball sampling were considered appropriate given the exploratory nature of the study and the need to access the marketing lecturers with direct experience of using Gen AI in their teaching practices. LinkedIn, a professional social media platform, was used to select the participants. The face validity technique of the interview guide was performed by showing it to university professors to check if all questions had appropriate language and good readability. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was reached, whereby no new themes emerged from the additional interviews. Ethical approval was obtained from University of Wolverhampton's ethics committee. All participants provided informed consent prior to the participation.

We conducted a reflexive thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach. The first stage involved one of the authors becoming familiarised with the data, and initial codes were developed in the second stage. In our team-based approach, these initial codes were reviewed and discussed among team members. The third stage involved searching for themes across the data, which involved further discussions with the broader team. In stage four, we reviewed the themes against the coded data and the wider dataset. Our final steps were to work as a team to define and name the themes and to co-create an analytic narrative presented in this paper.

To remain consistent with reflexive thematic analysis, we did not consider intercoder reliability statistics to be appropriate for our study. This is because, in a reflexive thematic analysis approach, meaning-making is iterative, interpretive, and grounded in analytic judgments rather than seeking code-by-code consensus. Instead, our author team worked collaboratively throughout the process. We held regular discussions, compared readings, challenged interpretations, and refined our themes. This helped ensure that our analyses were coherent, rigorous, and aligned across the team. We acknowledged our positions as academics and reflexive discussions were used throughout the analytic process to minimise undue bias and challenge interpretations.

Findings and Discussions

Overview

Our questions address three main areas of Gen AI used by academics who teach business and marketing modules and contribute to teaching, Assessment, Feedback, and other areas, such as research. Under the Teaching category, we asked questions about the use of Gen AI in various areas of teaching, including lectures, workshops, creating materials, and improving teaching methods. Under the Assessment category, we asked the view of academics on whether Gen AI can be incorporated in the assessment process and developing assessment tasks as well as whether they use it in marking for creating marking rubrics and providing feedback. In relation to the use of Gen AI in assessment areas, we also asked what these academics' opinions about using it in writing assessment. Other questions include whether they use Gen AI in other areas of their work and whether they are eager to use Gen AI if it can reduce their workload.

The distribution of respondents is as follows in Table 1:

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents

Gender	
Males	15
Females	5
Prefer not to say	2
Total	22
Age	
Under 30	1
31-40	12
41-50	6
50 Over	2

Prefer not to say	1
Total	22
Tenure	
Less than 3 years	3
3-5 years	3
5-10 years	9
Over 10 years	6
Prefer not to say	1
Total	22

We asked basic demographic questions, such as gender, age, and experiences, that have been found to have an impact on technology acceptance (Sherer and Teo, 2019). In our responses, there is no distinguishable pattern between gender or tenure. The one relevant finding in relation to demographic questions was that the respondents who said ‘yes’ to most of the questions on the use of Gen AI are in the under-30 and 31-40 groups.

Emerging Themes

Generative AI in teaching

The subsequent everyday use of Gen AI is for brainstorming and generating ideas for teaching or during the teaching process. Most of the answers on use of Gen AI for preparation for teaching materials mention that it is helpful to generate ideas and to structure contents. See the example quotes below:

“Ask the relevant questions to ChatGPT to create material on this selected topic.”
(Interviewee 8)

“In enhancing or improving learning materials to see if it can give me an alternative viewpoint on the materials I may already have” (Interviewee 10; interviewee 22 responded similarly)

“To proofread slides, to provide an outline of potential material to cover, and to help extract bullet points for slides from a paragraph” (Interviewee 11)

“To structure contents of teaching or find relevant materials through AI tool like elicit”
(Interviewee 13)

“I used it every week last semester for image generating for slides” (interviewee 18)

Some use it during their teaching for interactive sessions (interviewee 9, 10, 11, 12, 15). They find Gen AI useful in generating ideas, brainstorming and various activities such as *“case studies, role play games, quizzes”* (Interviewee 9) and *“to create fictional case studies ... to come up with examples of specific businesses when applying theory to reality”* (Interviewee 14). Several respondents have found in-session use of Gen AI is particularly useful *“to get the ball rolling”* (Interviewee 17) with generating questions to ask (Interviewee 14, 17 and 20).

Generating ideas is also an area that respondents find helpful in the ‘Others’ category (Interviewee 8, 12, 13 and 18)

Some respondents use Gen AI as a topic of teaching, as well as using it to aid their teaching. They *“show student how AI can be used for quick research, detailed research and idea generation”* (Interviewee 15),

“Demonstrating how LLMs produce answers to questions to illustrate how it looks to students and how this would be interpreted by lecturers. In other words, to show strengths and limitations of using the technology” (Interviewee, 17).

Respondents also highlight that it is important to address students' understanding of what is involved in the use of Gen AI such as *“the power of the technology”* (Interviewee 11).

In synthesising the findings for this category of AI use, it can be seen that lecturers use GenAI most as a low-stakes teaching companion. It helps them by speeding up preparation time through brainstorming, structuring, and proofreading. Moreover, GenAI also serves as a topic in its own right to build students' AI literacy by demonstrating how the tools work and where their limits lie.

Use of Gen AI in assessment

The category that our interviewees show the least use of Gen AI is that related to assessment. Some responded that they have used Gen AI to generate ideas on exam questions (Interviewee 10, 14), to review/correct wordings for a better clarification (Interviewee 12, 13, 20), and even to create ‘assignment support video’. However, there is clear caution on using Gen AI to develop the assignment question beyond this level or for marking. A few are using

Gen AI for providing generic feedback but even they pointed out that the technology is not developed enough to provide effective tailored feedback. Please see the quote following:

“I have tried to use it for marking but it is not good for this at the moment due to its limitations.” (Interviewee 12)

“I don’t think the technology is sophisticated enough (to prove the author of the source)” (Interviewee, 17)

In relation to this question, some respondents mentioned students' use of Gen AI in assessment. Regarding this, there are opinions that students should develop relevant skills (e.g., Interviewee 14, 15) but with caution (e.g., Interviewee 22)

“Students should use ChatGPT extremely carefully. In its current state, I believe it is great to generate ideas, but these ideas should be merely starting points for students that they should explore in much more depth (interviewee 14)

“I think the students should be allowed to use AI tool for their assignment, but they must truthfully declare anyone that they use in the assignment. By that the student can be fairly assessed” (Interviewee 22)

This includes the implications of their use of Gen AI in their assessment, what the lecturers understand about students’ use of AI and to what extent they might utilize the Gen AI appropriately.

“If they are aware that lecturers understand and use the technology, they may be less inclined to see it as a easy way to a pass (Interviewee 17)”

Not much used yet

The most notable pattern in the responses is it doesn’t seem that Gen AI is widely being used yet. One third of our respondents (Interviewee 1, 2, 3, 6, 16, 19 and 21) have very limited use of Gen AI in all the categories we asked about whilst almost half of our respondents have only used it for non-teaching/assessment purposes (categorised as ‘Others’). The use of Gen AI in ‘Others’ area that is most commonly mentioned is for editing purposes including editing emails, forms and articles etc. Please see the examples from the responses as below:

“For rewriting my articles” (Interviewee 4)

“Application forms, slide decks, letters” (Interviewee 5)

“Post graduate research purposes” (Interviewee 7)

“Getting ideas for meeting” (Interviewee 8)

“To write emails, developing module handbooks” (Interviewee 9; interviewee 20 responded similarly)

The findings are presented thematically rather than being organised directly around TAM constructs. This approach was adopted to remain close to participants’ accounts and avoid imposing a predefined theoretical structure on the data. TAM is instead used as an interpretive lens in the discussion to explain how lecturers’ experiences and perceptions relate to established dimensions of technology acceptance. We discuss our findings on the extent and scope of these academics’ use of Gen AI as a newly emerging technology through the lens of the technology acceptance process. Considering that Gen AI is still a new technology that hasn’t been adopted at the industry level (e.g., through schemes or guidance), we suggest this angle is appropriate to understand our findings. Please note that our study is not designed to test this model, but we rather try to offer exploratory insights emerging from our findings in the context of Gen AI use. Our interviewees’ responses reflect that their perception, motive and actual use of Gen AI are related in several ways to what this model assumes. Our intention here is to borrow the theoretical assumptions as an angle to interpret our findings rather than testing or proving the model based on our findings. Nonetheless, our findings on academics’ acceptance of this relatively under-explored new technology will bring useful insights for future studies which design to test TAM in Gen AI context.

Perceived usefulness

There are strong examples illustrating the relationship between ‘Perceived usefulness’ and the actual use of Gen AI, as shown in our findings. Most of the respondents apart from Interviewee 2 answered ‘yes’ to the question asking, ‘If AI Generative tools like ChatGPT could reduce your workload, would you be eager to use it?’. Once they perceive Gen AI as useful, such as something that can reduce their workload, they are willing to use it. This finding aligns with the past research (Li et al., 2024). Although we are not able to verify their causal relationship, it is also very clear that people who use Gen AI have more positive views on the technology. When looking at the answers of the interviewees who use Gen AI, there is clearly a positive view on the usefulness of the technology. Interviewees who use Gen AI at the most extensive scope have the most positive view on Gen AI such as Interviewee 7, who used the

word ‘*amazing*’ in describing his/her experience of using Gen AI in different areas. Please see his quote as below:

“I think it is great tool of AI that provide you with plenty of relevant and latest trends of marketing and precisely course specific information that can be potentially used in marketing assignments.” (Interviewee 7)

This notion of ‘usefulness’ mainly comes from ‘efficiency’ of the technology (e.g., to save time). As can be seen in the overview section, the most common use of Gen AI is to help enhance efficiency of preparing for teaching, delivery of teaching (a quick brainstorming) and other supporting tasks such as proof-reading.

“It has helped me to summarise information into shorts bursts of information matched to new waves of students who are short in attention span” (Interviewee 12)

“It definitely speeds things up” (Interviewee 18)

Views on the ‘effectiveness’ of the technology that can improve users’ task seems to be less positive even amongst those who use Gen AI. For example, the below is example responses to the Q4 on whether Gen AI has helped the respondents improve their teaching methods:

“It’s not necessarily to improve my teaching methods but I use some AI tools for efficiency in terms of structuring contents or finding materials as mentioned above” (Interviewee 13).

“I don’t use these, they tend to be generic and fairly superficial but could help inexperienced teachers with structure” (Interviewee 17)

Perceived ease of use

Examples showing the relationship between ‘Perceived ease of use’ and actual use of Gen AI from our findings are less obvious. In the original TAM model, ‘Perceived ease of use’ can either directly affect the attitude/behaviour towards use or indirectly affect the ‘Perceived usefulness’. Previous literature found that a lack of skills and knowledge can affect teachers’ decision on using technology (e.g., Ertner and Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010). This might be related to ‘perceived ease of use’ as, if one doesn’t have confidence in their skills and knowledge of technology, they will perceive use of it as difficult, requiring additional ‘work’ to learn how to use it. It is hinted in the quotes as below:

“I am not sure how to use it or where I can apply it effectively” (Interviewee 6)

“I have used AI only few times, but still learning to use it effectively” (Interviewee 7)

“Using Generative AI tool for assessment will require a high level of technical skill to be able to write instruction for carrying out assessment” (Interviewee 22)

These findings are closely in line with Laupichler et al. (2022)’s argument that AI literacy in the HE sector is important for an effective adoption of the technology.

Other factors

Sherer and Teo (2019) review the effects of moderator variables that can capture the variation of structural parameters within the TAM in the between-sample or between-study. They summarise three categories of moderators at different levels as below:

- (1) Organizational factors: participants' voluntariness to use technology, the nature of the tasks and professions in which technology is sought to be integrated.
- (2) Technological factors: the complexity of technology, the purpose of the technology use, and the type of the technology specified as individual or group technologies
- (3) Individual factors: participants' gender, age, cultural background, intellectual capabilities, experience with technology, and their perceptions about whether or not people who are important to them think that one should use technology for teaching and learning purposes (i.e., the subjective norm).

This is also closely in line with the external factors that shape the users’ ‘Perceived Usefulness’ in TAM 2 by Venkatesh and Davis (2000, see Figure 1 in p.188). As mentioned above, our paper’s purpose is not to test whether these relationships are relevant to the use of Gen AI but to show the factors that have been addressed in the previous studies on the technology acceptance and use also seem to be largely relevant to the use of Gen AI in Higher Education settings. As we already overviewed whether the individual factors such as demographic factors show any patterns in the use of Gen AI, here, we will focus on the other remaining factors.

Firstly, several respondents have some scepticism on the perceived ability/quality of the current Gen AI, which is related to **technological factors**. Although it is not directly mentioned, there are some hints that some people are delaying using Gen AI until the

technology develops better for certain activities and/or appropriate training is provided. Please see some quotes hinting this argument as below:

“Currently I find generative AI not a huge time saver tool.” (Interviewee 10)

“Perhaps ChatGPT 4.0 is better or would be better at this if you can train it to be the lecturer/ assessor.” (Interviewee 12)

“I don’t think the technology is sophisticate enough” (Interviewee 17)

Secondly, the cautious view on the use of Gen AI seems to differ depending on the tasks which are related to **organisational factors**. As discussed above, most common use of Gen AI is in the teaching area but many including those who use Gen AI proactively in teaching raise questions on the readiness of the Gen AI technology and other relevant issues such as ethical issues in relation to Gen AI. Lecturers’ accounts of GenAI readiness extend beyond individual perceptions of usefulness and ease of use to include organisational and social factors. These findings resonate with extensions of TAM, such as TAM2 and UTAUT, which emphasise the role of facilitating conditions and subjective norms in shaping technology adoption.

“I do not agree that we should be using ChatGPT. We are trained academics who can create assessments using our knowledge and knowhow. When students demand value for money, I do not believe we are catering to this, as we are using a machine to do our work.” (Interviewee 2)

The answer from Interviewee 2 comes from their moral and ethical view on the use of Gen AI, but it also hints their lack of trust in the ‘quality’ of Gen AI, which doesn’t meet the students’ value for money. Indeed, previous research has also found similar scepticism about the efficacy in achieving learning outcomes as well as concerns about the reliability and accuracy of AI-generated content (Biggs et al., 2020). Hence, some respondents think less formal areas such as creating formative feedback can be aided by Gen AI even if they don’t use it to create the assignment question.

“This (using GAI in mark rubric) is where I can see the use of AI tools to be quite useful, without any significant repercussions on the quality of the work.”, Interviewee 6

In Gen AI’s case, ethical issues seem to be a strong factor to limit the extent of academics’ use of Gen AI particularly when there are no official guidelines prepared yet.

“Other elements would need to be integrated before using ChatGPT. Where is the data being stored. Is the software using sources ethically retrieved from the web with no potential backlash of non-copyrighting. By creating assessments from ChatGPT, could this make it easier for the student to plagiarise to use ChatGPT to write their assessment for them, when the assessment has not asked for the student to use the software.” (Interviewee 2)

“Students should use ChatGPT extremely carefully. In its current state, I believe it is great to generate ideas, but these ideas should be merely starting points for students that they should explore in much more depth.” (Interviewee 14)

“I am not against it (using Gen AI for creating assessment questions) but I think there should be more guidance and training on marking scripts with input of AI” (Interviewee 16)

Triangulation with SNA data

When triangulating our SNA insights from our literature review to our semi-structured interviews, a similar commonality is noticeable, which is the view of Gen AI as a valuable tool for generating ideas and saving time.

On the platform X, users discuss faster production cycles and new creative possibilities. In our interviews, academics report using Gen AI to brainstorm, structure content, create examples, and proofread their work. In both our social media and interview data, skills are key enablers for effectively using Gen AI. Furthermore, the SNA of our social media data highlights AI knowledge as valuable in the job market. At the same time, interviewees link day-to-day use to literacy and confidence, and call for practical support to build these skills. There is also an emphasis on ethical awareness in both, with social media calling for regulation and academics urging students to use the tools carefully and transparently.

Overall, SNA reflects a market-facing conversation that celebrates adoption, strategic integration, and economic benefits, including brand usage and individual income gains. The interviews, however, show a more measured picture in higher education. Staff often use Gen AI for low-risk teaching support, but its use for assessment is less prevalent, and they are cautious about claims that it improves teaching quality. Younger staff members appear more open to using it, which aligns with the upbeat tone of the SNA. However, the university setting introduces additional constraints, such as maintaining assessment integrity and requiring

institutional guidance, which are not as prominent as concerns on social media platforms, as they involve broader commercial use cases.

Study Implications

Our main contribution comes from the rare empirical insights on using Gen AI in marketing education in the UK HEIs. This study contributes to the existing literature on Gen AI in higher education by providing insightful information about the adoption issues of Gen AI, its use, and advancement of Gen AI tools in HEIs in the UK. We used two different approaches, firstly, to understand the general view on the relationship between marketing and Gen AI, and secondly to understand what is actually happening in marketing education.

The study on social media's discourse about Gen AI highlights its role in boosting creativity and efficiency within the marketing context. We also found that discussions underlined the need for up-skilling and that users would also highlight Gen AI's economic benefits, offering significant career opportunities for those adepts in AI-driven strategies. However, our study also found that users would raise concerns about the potential downsides of over-reliance on AI, such as diminished originality and employment impacts.

Our findings on the marketing lecturers' perception and actual use also highlight that lecturers see Gen AI useful in generating ideas particularly in teaching, which is in line with the social media discourse analysis. Another similarity between the findings from these two analyses come from ethical concern towards Gen AI use. At the same time, compared to the highly positive perspective in the potential of Gen AI in economic, industry and individuals' career development in the marketing area, marketing lecturers themselves don't seem to be using Gen AI actively. Moreover, in contrast to the concerns regarding the risks of 'over-reliance' on AI in the general social media domain, several lecturers think the technology is not yet up to the standard they would rely on.

Implications for HE Leaders and Institutional Governance

At the policy and governance level, our study suggests that UK higher education institutions (HEIs) should not rely on individuals who want to adopt Gen AI. Unclear institutional and national AI frameworks increase the risk of uneven AI practices across UK universities. Some lecturers proactively embrace and embed AI in their programmes whereas others are hesitant due to ethics or workload issues. To address this issue, UK HEIs should develop formal policies and governance structures that provide clarity on the adoption and use

of AI in programmes. HEIs should have: 1) clear assessment policies that define how students should use GenAI; 2) proper training and professional development programmes in place that ensures that lecturers are trained enough to use and guide students on the use of Gen AI; 3) finally, institutional mechanism in place to avoid emerging risks such as plagiarism and data privacy issues.

Societal and Public Policy Implications

At the societal level, our study finds that HEIs have dual responsibility when it comes to the AI integration into curricula. First, proactive governance enables universities to enhance student employability by preparing them for the job market. Recent research shows that graduates who are AI literate and know how to use Gen AI responsibly and ethically are more competitive. Second, it is important to maintain the quality and credibility of UK higher education. Over reliance of Gen AI tools for teaching, assessments and feedback without safeguarding measures, there is a risk of undermining the integrity of higher education. Therefore, there is a need for national level coordination among bodies to ensure consistency.

Limitations and future direction

Regarding limitations, our study focuses on UK HEIs; therefore, the generalisability of our findings is limited. For future research, this study could be extended to other countries by examining additional national contexts such as regulatory issues. Second, this study employed qualitative interviews, and our use of convenience and snowball sampling may overrepresent highly connected or visible users, potentially introducing selection biases. Future studies can adopt other research methods, such as observations, to measure the acceptability and impact of generative AI in education. Third, this study is cross-sectional, which was conducted over a specific period. Future studies can adopt longitudinal research designs for further investigation. Future research could also explore the balance between AI and human creativity, its long-term effects, and ethical considerations in AI integration by incorporating this discussion more proactively into the marketing curriculum, as well as teaching and assessment. However, to be able to explore ‘what’ can be done in the practices of marketing lecturers, further studies also need to investigate whether personal traits such as the propensity towards technology is related to their use of Gen AI with a larger data set.

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