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Unveiling the Success Stories of Artificial Intelligence Utilization Among Social Media Managers: An Appreciative Inquiry

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an essential tool for businesses and professionals in creating content, engaging audiences, and supporting strategic decision-making. This study explored the success stories of AI utilization among social media managers in Misamis Occidental, Philippines. The study utilized a qualitative research approach using Appreciative Inquiry design. The data were gathered from sixteen (16) participants who were selected through purposive sampling. In-depth interviews were conducted among the selected participants, and the data were analyzed using Cooperiders' 4D Model to come up with relevant themes. The findings revealed four major themes that explain successful AI utilization: **(**1) enhanced productivity and work efficiency; (2) AI-supported creativity and content innovation; (3) improved informed decision-making; and (4) strengthened audience engagement and business growth. The utilization of AI enables professionals to optimize workflows, generate creative outputs, make data-informed decisions, and engage audiences more meaningfully. Thus, the successful utilization of Artificial Intelligence among social media managers enhances productivity, creativity, decision-making, audience engagement, and business growth, making AI a valuable resource for more efficient and competitive social media management practices. It is recommended that AI be utilized responsibly and strategically, alongside continuous skill development and human-AI collaboration, to enhance efficiency, innovation, and meaningful engagement in professional and business contexts.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, audience engagement, creativity, informed decision-making, innovation productivity

Introduction

Digitalization has significantly transformed the global economic and business landscape which reshape organizational operations, communication effectiveness, and delivery of customers' value. Digital technologies such as cloud computing, big data analytics, mobile platforms, and online communication systems have enabled businesses to streamline operations, improve

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service delivery, and expand their reach in increasingly competitive markets (Verhoef et al., 2021). As organizations continue to embrace digital transformation, traditional business processes are redesigned to become more data-driven, interconnected, and responsive to changing consumer needs (Vial, 2021). The expansion of digital platforms, social media networks, and e-commerce ecosystems has further accelerated the shift toward a digitally integrated economy. This is evident as information flow transcended rapidly and reliance on real-time data and digital analytics are of paramount importance (Kraus et al., 2022). Additionally, digitalization has reshaped organizational structures and business models by enabling firms to adopt more agile, technology-enabled strategies that enhance innovation and operational efficiency (Warner & Wäger, 2019).

Studies have shown that digital transformation strengthens collaboration, improves knowledge sharing, and facilitates faster responses to market changes which makes the organizations remain competitive in dynamic and technology-driven environments (Bharadwaj et al., 2022). The integration of digital tools into business operations has encouraged organizations to invest in digital capabilities, digital skills, and data-driven strategies that support long-term organizational growth and sustainability (Khin & Ho, 2023). Consequently, digital transformation has become a fundamental driver of innovation, competitiveness, and strategic development in the modern digital economy.

The utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) improves operational efficiency through automation of repetitive tasks, predictive maintenance in manufacturing, intelligent customer service systems, and advanced data analytics (Patil, 2024). As businesses rely on AI-driven insights, it allows them to forecast demand with accuracy, manage risks equitably, personalize products and services, and respond more quickly to market changes (Javail et al., 2022). However, human roles will not be replaced entirely as it allows AI augments for human capabilities while allowing professionals to focus on strategic thinking, creativity, and value-added activities that could strengthen competitiveness and long-term sustainability (Ranni et al., 2025).

Globally, several business organizations invest in AI not just for automation but also for innovation and value creation. Through the seamless integration of AI, business operations improved, employee productivity increased, user engagement accelerated, and brand performance provided brand value and equity (Vidrih & Mayahi, 2023). The shift toward AI enhanced operations that is not limited to large corporations such as small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as startups achieve accessible and streamlined processes. This is evident among freelance professionals as they aim to reduce their marketing and operating costs (Lopez, 2023). In developed nations such as the United States, United Kingdom, and Singapore, the utilization of AI increased competitiveness and customer satisfaction (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020).

In the Philippines, the adoption of AI tools has begun to accelerate in the fields of social media marketing, online retail, business process outsourcing, and education (Pascua & Tutor, 2022). Filipino professionals and digital entrepreneurs leveraged AI to optimize workflows, improve

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content relevance, and enhance customer engagement (Gong & Ribiere, 2021). The utilization of AI tools in local settings enables individuals and businesses to scale marketing efforts, automate client responses, and build data-driven campaigns which expand market reach and improve businesses' return on investment (ROI) (Santos, 2023).

In the Philippine economy digital transformation help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) streamlined their business accounting operations, customer support, inventory management, fraud detection, and digital marketing (Ranni et al., 2025). These are evident in different key sectors such as Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), banking, retail, healthcare, and education. Affordable, cloud-based AI tools make advanced technologies more accessible even outside major urban centers in promoting inclusivity and innovation (Pascua & Tutor, 2022). Companies that utilize AI serve as a strategic enabler that allows Philippine industries to remain resilient, competitive, and aligned with global business trends while maintaining human oversight and ethical responsibility (Santos, 2023).

The increasing reliance on AI tools calls for deeper understanding not just of the technology itself, but how people and organizations use it effectively. In the Philippines, many digital professionals and entrepreneurs achieved noteworthy milestones with the help of AI, yet their stories are underrepresented in academic research (Rivera, 2023). Most studies in the country concentrate on AI awareness, adoption barriers, or quantitative metrics such as efficiency or output. Few have explored the human stories behind use of creative technologies, innovation, and personal or organizational growth triggered by AI utilization (Sanchez et al., 2024). Additionally, most existing literature tends to focus on challenges, limitations, or technical efficiencies of AI applications (Rivera, 2023). What is often missing are the success stories of Artificial Intelligence that unveil their positive transformations and creative breakthroughs for both individuals and organizations using AI tools to achieve remarkable outcomes. These narratives are crucial in understanding what makes AI adoption successful and sustainable in the business world. In this vein, this research sought to address the evidence gap by highlighting real-world narratives of AI tool utilization, drawing from a diverse range of users, industries, and experiences. Through the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) framework, this study sought to amplify what is working well, how did they translate success into a scaled or replicated activities in their business operations.

Thus, this research strengthens adaptability of business owners in the utilization of digital trends, supports professional growth that will contribute to their overall transformation in managing digital content and audience engagement. Through a human-centered dimension of AI utilization, especially the enabling conditions, personal adjustments, skill development processes, and positive outcomes, the utilization of this platform contributes toward sustainable success. As a result, AI continues to be studied primarily as a technological system rather than as a transformative professional tool that reshapes the roles, competencies, and innovation capacity of social media managers.

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Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on one theory which is the Theory of Acceptance Model by Davis (1989) which was expanded by (Venkatesh et al., 2003). The Technology Acceptance Model explains how and why individuals accept and use technology systems. The theory originated from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which assumes that human behavior is influenced by an individual's intention to perform a specific action. TAM specifically proposes that technology adoption is primarily determined by two major factors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Perceived usefulness refers to the degree to which an individual believes that using a particular technology will improve performance, productivity, or effectiveness, while perceived ease of use refers to the extent to which the technology is viewed as simple, understandable, and effortless to utilize. According to the theory, when users perceive a system as useful and easy to use, they are more likely to develop positive intentions toward using the technology, which eventually leads to actual system utilization.

In the context of the present study, TAM provides a foundational explanation for why social media managers adopt and continuously utilize Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT, Canva AI, Jasper, and HubSpot in their professional practices. Participants perceived these AI tools as useful because they enhanced creativity, improved workflow efficiency, optimized decision-making, and increased audience engagement. Likewise, the accessibility and user-friendly features of these AI platforms encouraged continued adoption and integration into daily social media management tasks. However, consistent with the assumptions and limitations of TAM and TRA, the study also acknowledges that actual AI utilization may still be influenced by external constraints such as organizational policies, ethical concerns, technological limitations, availability of resources, time constraints, and the need for human oversight and validation.

Recent studies further expanded the understanding of the Technology Acceptance Model by examining how individuals interpret and respond to technology-related survey constructs. Gefen and Larsen (2017) argued that the relationships among TAM constructs, such as perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, may not only emerge from actual behavioral intentions but also from the semantic similarities and wording of questionnaire items themselves. The linguistic meaning and interpretation can influence how relationships between TAM variables are statistically observed (Vidrih & Mayahi, 2023). This perspective is connected to the Semantic Theory of Survey Response, which explains that individuals answer survey questions not only based on actual experience but also through cognitive interpretation of the wording, context, and meaning of the items presented (Dwivedi et al., 2021). The technology acceptance research must carefully consider how users cognitively process and interpret questions regarding technology usefulness, usability, and behavioral intention (Berman, 2022).

Furthermore, both the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and TAM assume that when individuals form an intention to use a technology, they are generally free to act upon that intention. However, in practical settings, actual technology adoption may still be influenced by various external constraints. These include limited technological skills, lack of time,

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organizational restrictions, inadequate resources, workplace policies, environmental conditions, and unconscious habits that may prevent users from fully utilizing the technology despite having positive intentions toward it. In the context of the present study, although social media managers perceived AI tools as useful and easy to use, their actual utilization of AI was still shaped by ethical concerns, workload demands, the need for human validation, organizational expectations, and limitations in digital resources or expertise. Thus, the study demonstrates that while TAM effectively explains the acceptance and perceived benefits of AI tools, actual AI integration in professional practice remains influenced by contextual, organizational, and behavioral factors beyond individual intention alone.

Conceptual Framework

The framework of this study is based on four key themes, each representing a critical aspect of how Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools contribute to professional, organizational, and creative success. Guided by the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach, these themes focus on strengths, best practices, and positive outcomes rather than on problems or limitations (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). The four themes drawn are: Harnessing AI for Productivity, Creativity, and Informed Decision-Making; Envisioning Growth through AI-Driven Innovation and Collaboration; Purpose-Driven Integration: Aligning AI Adoption with Ethical and Strategic Goals; and Continuous Learning and Adaptation in the Age of AI. These themes provide the foundation for understanding how AI utilization enables individuals and organizations to thrive in the digital era.

Harnessing AI for Productivity, Creativity, and Informed Decision-Making

AI significantly enhances operational efficiency, streamlines workflows, and stimulates creativity by automating routine tasks and generating innovative ideas (Berman, 2022; Dwivedi et al., 2021). By taking over repetitive and time-consuming processes, AI allows professionals to devote more time and energy to strategic and high-value activities that drive growth and innovation especially in making strategic content for the businesses. Platforms such as ChatGPT, Canva AI, Jasper, and HubSpot serve as powerful allies in this transformation. These do not only provide instant content suggestions and creative prompts but also analyze vast datasets to uncover trends, patterns, and opportunities that may otherwise go unnoticed.

Through advanced capabilities in natural language processing, predictive analytics, and design automation, these tools enable users to make well-informed and evidence-based decisions. This results in outputs that are not only faster to produce but also more relevant, accurate, and impactful. When AI is strategically integrated into daily operations, it becomes more than just a tool; it evolves into a valuable business resource that improves productivity, fosters innovation, and supports the creation of high-quality, engaging content. In turn, this strategic use of AI empowers individuals and organizations to stay competitive in rapidly changing markets while continuously delivering value to their audiences.

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Envisioning Growth through AI-Driven Innovation and Collaboration

AI fosters opportunities for innovation, market expansion, and collaboration by transforming how individuals and organizations identify and act on growth possibilities. With predictive analytics, AI can anticipate business trends, uncover customer needs, and detect emerging market gaps with precision (Forrester, 2023). This foresight enables social media managers for online businesses to design forward-looking strategies, develop unique products, and position themselves ahead of competitors (Deloitte, 2023). At the same time, automation handles labor-intensive processes such as large-scale data analysis, customer feedback monitoring, and operational optimization, allowing professionals to redirect their efforts toward high-impact, strategic initiatives (Nambisan et al., 2023).

Beyond efficiency gains, AI acts as a bridge that connects stakeholders across industries and locations. Intelligent platforms integrate analytics, communication, and workflow tools, enabling seamless collaboration and knowledge sharing. These capabilities not only accelerate decision-making but also encourage partnerships that lead to innovative solutions and broader market reach. The strategic utilization of AI provides analytical insight and automation which allows individuals and organizations to address complex challenges, seize emerging opportunities, and make meaningful contributions to their industries and communities.

Purpose-Driven Integration: Aligning AI Adoption with Ethical and Strategic Goals

This theme focuses on how social media managers adopt and integrate AI responsibly which requires more than simply integrating technology into operations. It involves aligning its use with ethical principles, organizational missions, and broader societal values (Harvard Business Review, 2023). Purpose-driven integration ensures that AI supports not only operational efficiency but also transparency, fairness, inclusivity, and data privacy (Sargiotis, 2024). Organizations that approach AI adoption with this mindset strengthen trust among stakeholders and position themselves as leaders committed to responsible innovation (Bamigbade et al., 2024). Ethical considerations become a foundation for sustainable AI use, reducing risks associated with misuse or bias while fostering public confidence in technology-driven initiatives (Fu, 2025).

When AI adoption is strategically aligned with long-term goals, it becomes a catalyst for advancing both business performance and societal well-being. By embedding responsible practices into the deployment of AI such as ensuring explainability in algorithms, securing sensitive data, and applying AI to socially beneficial projects, organizations can create value that extends beyond immediate profit. This approach allows them to innovate with integrity, maintain regulatory compliance, and build a reputation for purposeful technology use that benefits communities as much as it does the bottom line.

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Continuous Learning and Adaptation in the Age of AI

The rapid pace of AI evolution demands a culture of continuous learning and adaptation to maintain relevance and effectiveness (Randstad, 2024). Professionals and organizations that embrace lifelong learning actively seek out training, explore emerging AI tools, and remain informed about best practices (Lim, 2022). This commitment to skill development allows them to experiment with new applications, refine strategies, and optimize AI integration as technology advances (Rani et al., 2025).

Adaptation is equally critical, as AI tools and market conditions evolve in an intertwined perspective. By fostering flexibility and encouraging innovation, organizations can adjust their approaches toward meeting changing demands and seize opportunities ahead of competitors. This proactive stance transforms AI adoption from a one-time upgrade into an ongoing process of improvement, ensuring that individuals and businesses alike remain agile, innovative, and well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the digital future.

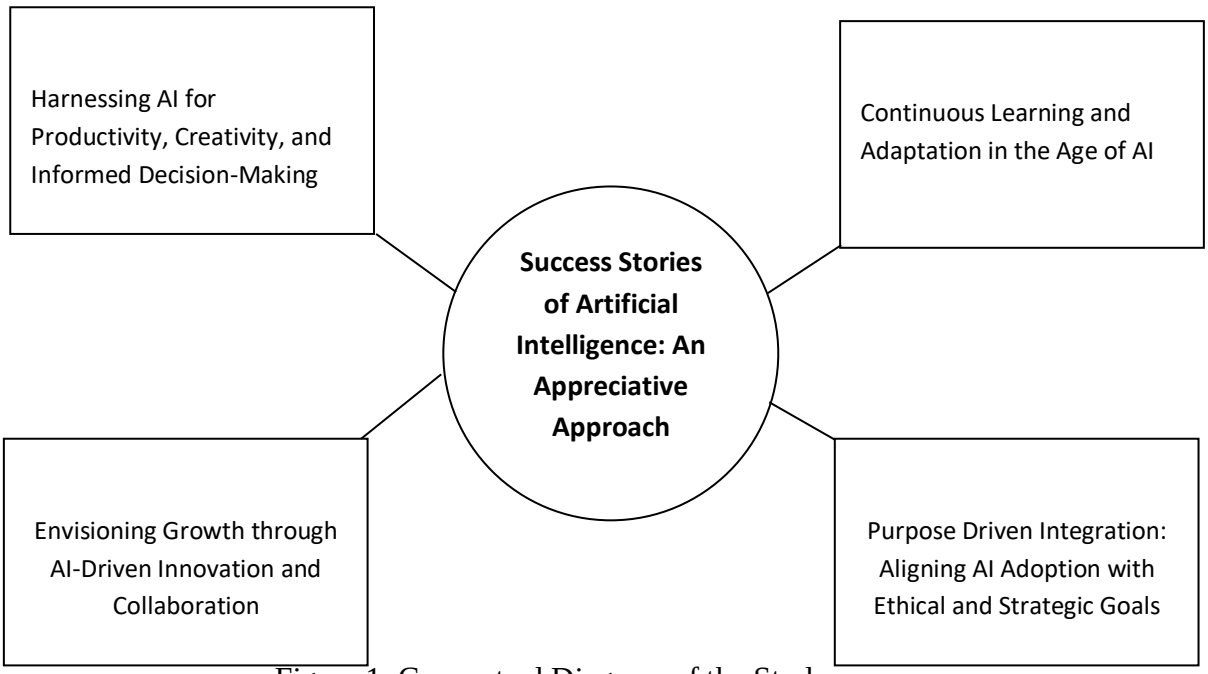

Figure 1. Conceptual Diagram of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study explored the success stories of social media managers utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, focusing on positive experiences and effective strategies that lead to outstanding results. Specifically, the study aimed to address the following research questions:

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1. What strengths, skills, or values are developed through AI tool utilization that have contributed to the success of individuals or organizations?
2. How do users envision the continued contribution of AI to their personal growth, professional advancement, or organizational development?
3. What personal strategies or decisions have helped AI users maximize the benefits of AI tools and achieve their goals?
4. What advice or guiding principles would successful AI adopters share with potential users seeking to integrate AI into their workflows?

2. Method

2.1 Design

This study utilized a qualitative research approach, specifically employing the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) design. Appreciative Inquiry is a strength-based framework that focuses on identifying and amplifying successful experiences, positive outcomes, and best practices rather than concentrating on problems or deficiencies (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). This design focuses on exploring positive experiences and successful practices through in-depth inquiry and narrative analysis. It follows the 4-D cycle—Definition, Discovery, Dream and Design, which provides a systematic process for capturing, synthesizing, and interpreting stories of success, enabling the identification of meaningful patterns and insights that inform effective and sustainable practices. This design was appropriate for the study as it aimed to explore the success stories of social media managers utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, focusing on positive experiences and effective strategies that lead to outstanding results.

2.2 Participants

This study employed purposive sampling with maximum variation to select sixteen (16) social media managers in Misamis Occidental who actively utilized Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in their professional practice. The participants included employed and freelance social media managers from private organizations, marketing agencies, educational institutions, and business enterprises who were directly involved in content creation, audience engagement, analytics monitoring, campaign optimization, and strategic decision-making across digital platforms. They regularly utilized AI tools such as ChatGPT, Canva AI, Jasper, and HubSpot to improve workflow efficiency, creativity, and social media performance. Participants were selected based on the following criteria: at least six months of social media management experience, active use of AI tools, demonstrated success associated with AI integration, and willingness to participate in an in-depth interview. Data collection concluded upon reaching thematic saturation, wherein succeeding interviews produced repetitive responses and no longer generated new themes or significant insights, indicating that sufficient depth and richness of data had been achieved.

2.3 Instruments

The primary research instrument was a semi-structured interview guide developed by the researcher. It included open-ended questions aligned with the Appreciative Inquiry framework to

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explore the five key themes of the conceptual framework. The questions were designed to encourage storytelling, reflections on personal strategies, and insights into the benefits and future potential of AI adoption. The interview guide underwent expert validation to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives. Audio recording devices were used, with participants' consent, to accurately capture responses for transcription and analysis.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Before the actual conduct of the study the researcher sought permission from the Dean of the Graduate School and was conferred with the thesis adviser. After the approval was sought, the researcher sought permission from the respective participants to participate in the scheduled interview based on their scheduled preference. Data were gathered through interviews conducted via face-to-face interactions and online conference platforms. Each interview lasted approximately five to ten minutes and followed a semi-structured format guided by the Appreciative Inquiry framework. With the participants' consent, interviews were audio recorded to ensure accuracy during transcription. Field notes were taken to capture non-verbal cues and contextual details that supported data interpretation. After each interview, the researcher promptly reviewed and transcribed the recordings, ensuring that all personal identifiers were removed to maintain anonymity. Follow-up interviews or clarifications were conducted when necessary to enrich and verify the data. All collected data were securely stored and made accessible only to authorized members of the research team, in accordance with established ethical guidelines.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Before the conduct of the study, the researcher secured formal approval from the Misamis University Research Ethics Committee (MUREC) to ensure compliance with institutional and ethical standards. This process involved the submission of the research proposal, interview protocols, informed consent forms, and data management plans for ethical review and clearance. Ethical safeguards were strictly observed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained by providing participants with a detailed information sheet outlining the study's purpose, procedures, voluntary nature, and confidentiality measures prior to the provision of written consent. Confidentiality was ensured by removing all personal identifiers from transcripts and research reports, with all data securely stored and accessible only to the research team. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Respect and transparency were upheld through the clear communication of the research objectives and methods, thereby preventing any form of deception. The researcher consistently adhered to established ethical protocols and institutional guidelines, thereby prioritizing the rights, dignity, and well-being of participants and maintaining academic integrity and research quality.

2.6 Data Analysis

The interview data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis and interpreted through the 4D Appreciative Inquiry Model to align with the study, *Unveiling the*

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Success Stories of Artificial Intelligence Utilization Among Social Media Managers: An Appreciative Inquiry. The study employed a hybrid thematic analysis approach, combining inductive and deductive coding. Inductive coding allowed themes to emerge directly from the participants' narratives, while deductive coding was guided by the 4D Appreciative Inquiry framework consisting of Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny. First, the researcher familiarized with the data by repeatedly reading and reviewing the interview transcripts to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' successful experiences in utilizing AI tools. Second, initial codes were generated from meaningful statements related to productivity, creativity, innovation, informed decision-making, ethical integration, and continuous learning. During coding, the Discovery phase was applied by identifying strengths, successful practices, and enabling conditions that supported effective AI utilization. The Dream phase guided the coding of participants' aspirations, future goals, and envisioned opportunities associated with AI integration. The Design phase focused on coding strategies, collaborative practices, workflow improvements, and ethical approaches that participants used to sustain AI adoption in social media management. Meanwhile, the Destiny phase guided the identification of statements related to long-term adaptation, continuous learning, sustainability, and ongoing innovation in professional practice. Third, the codes were grouped into broader categories and potential themes. Fourth, the themes were reviewed and refined to ensure coherence, consistency, and alignment with both the participants' narratives and the appreciative orientation of the study. Fifth, the themes were clearly defined and named according to the major patterns that emerged from the data. Lastly, participant quotations were incorporated to support the findings and preserve the authenticity of the respondents' voices. This analytical process ensured that the findings remained systematic, strength-based, and grounded in the success stories of AI utilization among social media managers.

3. Results and Discussion

From the responses generated of the participants, the following themes emerged: *Harnessing AI for Productivity, Creativity, and Informed Decision-Making; Envisioning Growth through AI-Driven Innovation and Collaboration; Purpose-Driven Integration: Aligning AI Adoption with Ethical and Strategic Goals;* and *Continuous Learning and Adaptation in the Age of AI.*

Harnessing AI for Productivity, Creativity, and Informed Decision-Making. The successful utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) contributes significantly to strengthening productivity and creativity in daily work while also supporting more informed and confident decision-making processes (Brynjolfsson et al., 2023). In addition, AI technologies enhance the efficiency, innovation, and overall quality of human work by enabling individuals and organizations to perform complex tasks more effectively and with greater accuracy. Conceptually, AI utilization involves leveraging technologies such as machine learning algorithms, natural language processing, predictive analytics, and intelligent automation to streamline repetitive tasks, generate creative solutions, and analyze large volumes of data that support evidence-based decision-making (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

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Through these capabilities, AI tools can assist professionals in reducing manual workload, improving operational efficiency, and producing more innovative outputs across different organizational functions (Kshetri, 2023). Furthermore, AI-driven systems provide analytical insights that allow users to identify patterns, forecast trends, and evaluate strategic alternatives more effectively, thereby strengthening the quality of managerial and operational decisions (Davenport & Mittal, 2022). By integrating AI into professional and operational practices, particularly in business and digital environments, individuals and organizations can optimize resource utilization, foster innovative thinking, and develop more accurate, timely, and strategic responses to evolving market demands (Doshi & Hauser, 2024). Consequently, AI adoption plays an increasingly important role in improving business performance, enhancing competitiveness, and creating sustainable value in modern organizations (Verhoef et al., 2021).

The participants' accounts show that AI is valued not only for saving time but also for improving work quality, strengthening customer outcomes, and enabling more reliable business and administrative actions. Within the context of this study, these scholarly insights provide a deeper interpretation of the participants' statements. When participants describe AI as improving work quality and strengthening customer outcomes, their accounts reflect that AI-enabled workflow optimization and evidence-based strategy development. The emphasis on time-saving is not limited to operational speed but represents enhanced cognitive efficiency, allowing social media managers to redirect effort toward creative refinement, audience engagement, and strategic oversight.

Similarly, a reliable business and administrative actions indicate a shift from intuition-based decision-making to data-supported judgment, where AI tools assist in analyzing trends, monitoring performance metrics, and reducing uncertainty in campaign planning. In the dynamic environment of social media management, where rapid response, content innovation, and analytical precision are essential, AI integration becomes a mechanism for sustaining professional competence and competitive relevance. Thus, the participants' experiences align with contemporary research showing that AI does not merely automate tasks but strengthens human capability by combining technological intelligence with professional expertise. Below are selected participants' responses:

"I think a success of AI utilization is when it improves accuracy and efficiency while still exercising professional judgment and ethical responsibility. It is when administrative processes become more organized and manageable. AI helps ensure that documents are properly formatted, records are easy to retrieve, schedules are well-coordinated, and communication with management and other departments is clearer and more timely, while still maintaining confidentiality and proper documentation standards." (P1)

"It means being able to consistently provide quality products while keeping costs under control. AI helps me strike a balance between maintaining standards and making sure the business remains profitable. I think it is when AI helps improve both the product and the customer

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experience. If customers are satisfied and the business remains stable, then AI is serving its purpose." (P3)

Based on the participants' responses, Participant 1 (P1) emphasized that the success of AI utilization is measured by its ability to enhance both accuracy and efficiency without undermining professional judgment and ethical responsibility. P1 noted that AI plays a critical role in organizing and streamlining administrative processes, making tasks such as document formatting, record retrieval, and schedule coordination more manageable and less prone to human error. Moreover, AI facilitates clearer and more timely communication with management and across departments, ensuring that operational information flows smoothly while maintaining proper documentation standards. P1 further highlighted that AI supports these improvements while safeguarding confidentiality and professional integrity, demonstrating that technology can augment human work without replacing essential ethical and judgment-based decision-making. The integration of AI in their business operations served as a supportive tool that enhances workflow efficiency while reinforcing professional accountability and organizational standards.

Meanwhile, Participant 3 (P3) framed AI success in terms of its ability to consistently deliver high-quality products while maintaining operational cost efficiency. P3 explained that AI enables businesses to strike a balance between maintaining product and service standards and ensuring profitability, effectively optimizing both internal processes and customer-facing outcomes. By supporting tasks such as quality monitoring, predictive analytics, and process automation, AI helps improve the overall customer experience, making interactions smoother, more personalized, and more reliable. For P3, the true measure of AI's success is seen when customers are satisfied, and the business remains stable and competitive, indicating that AI adoption not only enhances operational efficiency but also contributes to sustained business performance and market responsiveness. This perspective highlights AI's dual role in supporting internal process optimization and reinforcing customer-centric business strategies.

"Success in using AI is when it helps me stay organized and in control of my responsibilities. AI works well when it helps me keep track of requirements, manage multiple tasks at once, and support management smoothly, so my work feels more structured and less overwhelming. In my role as a corporate secretary, I view success in using AI as the ability to handle compliance-related responsibilities with greater structure and control. AI supports my work by improving record accuracy, organizing documentation, and helping me manage multiple deadlines more efficiently." (P6)

Participant 6 (P6) described success in AI utilization as the ability to maintain organization and control over professional responsibilities. P6 emphasized that AI tools help track requirements, manage multiple concurrent tasks, and facilitate smooth coordination with management, making work feel more structured and less overwhelming. In the context of their role as a corporate secretary, P6 highlighted that AI contributes significantly to handling compliance-related responsibilities, ensuring that documentation is well-organized and deadlines are managed efficiently. The participant noted that AI also enhances the accuracy of records, reduces the risk

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of errors, and allows for better prioritization of tasks, effectively supporting both operational efficiency and professional accountability. For P6, these improvements signify that AI serves as a practical tool for streamlining administrative workflows while reinforcing precision, control, and reliability in a role that demands meticulous attention to detail.

The next responses focuses more on informed decision-making, where AI is used to reduce uncertainty and strengthen strategic confidence:

"Using AI allows me to see the bigger picture of how the business is performing. It helps me plan ahead, make timely adjustments, and allocate my time to more strategic tasks instead of being caught up in day-to-day operational details. A successful AI utilization story is when decisions are no longer based on guesswork but on reliable information. It's being able to move forward with confidence because choices are supported by real data and clear patterns, not just personal assumptions or instinct." (P8)

"I define success in AI usage as the ability to create financial stability through data-driven decisions. By leveraging AI insights, I can reduce business risks and improve the reliability of my operational choices. It is when AI directly improves daily business operations, such as managing inventory, identifying sales trends, and adjusting strategies based on real customer behavior. It shows that AI is not just a tool for analysis, but a practical system that supports smarter business execution." (P4)

Participant 8 (P8) highlighted that successful AI utilization allows them to gain a comprehensive understanding of business performance, enabling more strategic planning and informed decision-making. P8 emphasized that AI helps shift focus from routine operational tasks to higher-level responsibilities, such as forecasting, resource allocation, and long-term strategy development. According to the participant, AI transforms decision-making from reliance on intuition or assumptions to data-driven choices, supported by accurate information and clear patterns. This capability enhances confidence in business actions, reduces uncertainty, and ensures that interventions are timely and effective. For P8, AI's success lies in its role as a decision-support system that empowers leaders to act strategically and respond proactively to emerging business challenges.

Participant 4 (P4) described success in AI usage as the ability to achieve financial stability and operational reliability through data-driven decision-making. P4 explained that leveraging AI insights helps reduce business risks and enhances the precision of day-to-day operational choices, such as inventory management, sales trend analysis, and strategy adjustments based on actual customer behavior. The participant emphasized that AI serves not only as an analytical tool but also as a practical system that actively supports smarter and more efficient business execution. By integrating AI into daily operations, P4 observed improved consistency, resource optimization, and a clearer understanding of market dynamics, demonstrating how AI contributes directly to both business performance and sustainable growth.

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The findings of the study corroborate with pieces of literature emphasizing that AI served as a tool for productivity and creativity through improved execution and structured performance (Omotosho et al., 2023). It aids in increased accuracy, efficiency, and organization in administrative processes through strengthening workflow systems and reduces time spent on repetitive tasks. In this vein, employees' productivity increases through allowing administrative work to be completed faster and with fewer errors, while also reinforcing ethical responsibility through confidentiality and proper documentation (Aithal & Aithal, 2023). Additionally, the utilization of AI helps businesses balance cost control and consistent product standards through maintaining business profitability without sacrificing customer satisfaction. In this sense, creativity is reflected in how AI supports better ways of improving the product and the customer experience innovating not necessarily by creating new products, but by refining delivery, consistency, and service outcomes (Chankseliani & McCowan, 2021). This perspective supports existing findings that AI tools contribute to competitive business execution by improving productivity and customer-centered practices.

Moreover, AI supports informed decision-making by providing patterns and clarity that improve confidence and reduce uncertainty in business management. AI enables a significant shift toward a more strategic and reflective way of thinking, which strengthens decision quality (Forrester, 2023). AI's role in guiding practical, informed actions in daily business operations reflect informed decision-making because AI improves the reliability of choices by grounding them in evidence and real-time data (Deloitte, 2023). AI strengthens decision-making by converting data into actionable insights that support smarter and more adaptive business execution (Omotosho et al., 2023).

The findings of the present study are supported by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which explains that individuals are more likely to adopt and continuously utilize technology when they perceive it as useful and easy to use. The theory is evident from the stipulated theme as participants perceived AI tools such as ChatGPT, Canva AI, Jasper, and HubSpot as highly useful in improving workflow efficiency, accelerating content creation, enhancing creativity, and supporting data-informed decision-making. The integration of AI simplified time-consuming tasks such as caption generation, content ideation, audience analysis, and campaign optimization, making their work more manageable and effective. The accessibility and user-friendly features of these AI platforms further encouraged continuous utilization in daily social media management activities.

Thus, AI utilization goes beyond automating routine tasks to support higher-order functions such as strategic planning, problem-solving, and creative decision-making in the business landscape. Its application improves operational efficiency by optimizing workflows, reducing errors, and enabling faster and more accurate execution of tasks. AI also strengthens customer engagement by providing insights that allow for personalized interactions, timely responses, and data-driven service improvements. In this vein, businesses may view AI as a complementary tool that works alongside human judgment, ethical considerations, and professional expertise rather than as a replacement for them.

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Envisioning Growth through AI-Driven Innovation and Collaboration. This theme reflects how professionals across business, education, accounting, creative industries, and technical services envision future growth through AI-driven innovation and collaborative use of artificial intelligence. The role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) serves as both a strategic tool and a catalyst for organizational and professional development. The integration of AI into core processes, organizations can foster innovation through data-driven insights, predictive analytics, and creative problem-solving which enables teams to explore new opportunities, improve products or services, and respond proactively to market demands. When collaboration is integrated in AI utilization, it facilitates seamless information sharing, coordination, and communication across departments and teams, allowing stakeholders to work together more effectively toward shared goals. AI-driven collaboration allows professionals to focus on strategic initiatives while routine or repetitive tasks are automated, resulting in increased efficiency and more time for innovative thinking. Several participants articulated a future where AI becomes deeply embedded in professional workflows to support scalability, consistency, and strategic decision-making.

"In the next 5–10 years, I see AI becoming my standard partner in accounting analysis and advisory services because it really helped me make informed and objective decisions (P1)."
"In the future, I want AI to support the expansion of my business, especially if I manage multiple branches. I see AI as a tool that can help standardize operations and maintain consistency across locations (P2)."
" In the next 5–10 years, I aspire to fully integrate AI into my technical workflow, from system design to maintenance. I want to handle larger projects such as smart solar systems, intelligent CCTV networks, and automated vending solutions that are monitored and optimized using AI (P16)."

Based on the participants' responses, Participant 1 (P1) envisioned AI as a long-term strategic partner in their accounting and advisory work. P1 highlighted that AI has already supported informed and objective decision-making, allowing for more accurate financial analysis and insightful recommendations. Meanwhile, P1 anticipates that AI will become a standard tool in their professional workflow, enhancing their ability to assess financial data efficiently, reduce human error, and provide clients with evidence-based advisory services. The recognition of AI does not merely serve as a technical tool but as a collaborator that strengthens professional judgment and decision-making capabilities over time.

Meanwhile, Participant 2 (P2) focused on AI's potential to support business expansion and operational scalability. P2 expressed a vision of using AI to standardize processes and maintain consistent quality across multiple branches, particularly as their enterprise grows. The utilization of AI serves for monitoring operations, coordinating resources, and maintaining procedural uniformity, P2 believes that the technology can enhance efficiency, reduce operational discrepancies, and facilitate smoother management of geographically distributed business units. In this vein, AI aids in promoting strategic growth, operational consistency, and scalability in expanding business contexts.

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On the other hand, Participant 16 (P16) anticipated integrating AI fully into technical workflows to manage complex projects in the next 5–10 years. Ideally the presence of smart solar systems, intelligent CCTV networks, and automated vending solutions optimize AI to monitor and maintain operations in real time. The integration of AI in project design, implementation, and maintenance let P16 handle larger, more sophisticated projects while ensuring precision, efficiency, and innovation. This forward-looking perspective illustrates how AI can extend human capacity in technical and engineering domains which transformed project management and operational execution into more intelligent and data-driven processes.

On the other hand, entrepreneurial participants highlighted AI's role in enabling data-informed growth while preserving brand identity, creativity, and customer connection. The following are some of the participants' responses:

"In the future, I hope to grow my business sustainably using AI-supported marketing strategies. I want to reach more customers while still keeping the personal and local feel of my brand (P3)."
"In the future, I want to develop more advanced AI-driven content strategies that are personalized and responsive to my audience behavior (P10)."
"In the future, I want to build an AI-assisted content production system that helps with idea generation, editing, and performance analysis, while still giving me the freedom to express creativity and maintain my own voice and style (P14)."

Participant 3 expressed a future goal of growing the business sustai
nably through AI-supported marketing while preserving the personal and local character of the brand. The balanced approach to growth and AI utilization aids in extending market reach without losing authenticity and customer connection. Participant 10 envisioned developing more advanced AI-driven content strategies that are personalized and responsive to audience behavior. This response reflects a data-informed approach to engagement, where AI is used to understand audience patterns and tailor content accordingly. Participant 14 described plans to build an AI-assisted content production system that supports ideation, editing, and performance analysis while maintaining creative freedom and personal voice. The human-centered view of AI solidifies technology utilization which enhances creative processes without diminishing originality or authorship.

Across nearly all participant groups, collaboration emerged as a critical enabler of successful AI adoption. Participants consistently cited peer networks, professional communities, mentorship programs, and cross-functional teamwork as essential in navigating AI-related challenges.

"Support from fellow entrepreneurs and social media managers played a big role in guiding me. Their shared experiences helped me avoid common mistakes and helped me stay motivated (P3)."
"Online communities and professional groups supported my learning by allowing me to exchange ideas, ask questions, and stay updated on best practices (P10)."

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"Support from cross-functional teams, leadership openness to innovation, and access to professional learning communities helped me overcome challenges. Collaboration with data analysts, developers, and business stakeholders was crucial in making AI solutions effective (P15)."

Participant 3 emphasized that support from fellow entrepreneurs played a key role in guiding their AI journey, particularly by helping them avoid common mistakes and stay motivated. P3 values peer-based learning as shared experiences provide practical insights and emotional encouragement during periods of change. Participant 10 highlighted the role of online communities and professional groups in supporting learning through idea exchange, questioning, and exposure to best practices. This response reflects how digital communities function as spaces for collective sense-making, enabling individuals to continuously update knowledge and apply innovations more effectively. Participant 15 emphasized that cross-functional collaboration, leadership openness to innovation, and access to professional learning communities were crucial in overcoming challenges and making AI solutions effective. This response postulates the importance of integrating diverse expertise, such as data analytics, development, and business perspectives, when implementing complex technologies.

The findings of the present study support existing literature emphasizing the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in enhancing strategic decision-making, creativity, engagement, and operational efficiency in digital marketing and social media management. Participants described how AI tools improved content creation, audience analysis, campaign optimization, and workflow efficiency, supporting the idea that structured analytical systems enable more objective and reflective decision-making (Kahneman, 2021). The findings also align with studies highlighting that AI expands technical capabilities, improves digital operations, and enhances organizational responsiveness and performance (Ransbotham et al., 2022). Consistent with Pine and Gilmore (2021), participants utilized AI-driven analytics and audience insights to create more personalized, engaging, and timely content strategies that strengthened customer interaction and campaign effectiveness. Similarly, AI-supported consumer data utilization enhances engagement and strategic marketing outcomes (Erevelles et al., 2025).

Moreover, the study reinforces previous findings that AI functions more effectively as a supportive and augmentative tool rather than a replacement for human creativity. Participants emphasized the importance of reviewing and refining AI-generated outputs to ensure alignment with organizational goals and brand identity, supporting the perspective that AI should enhance rather than replace human creativity and expression (Shneiderman, 2020). The findings further revealed that continuous learning, collaboration, and adaptability were essential in sustaining effective AI integration, which aligns with studies emphasizing the importance of collaborative learning and knowledge-sharing environments in promoting innovation and problem-solving (Faraj et al., 2021; Jarrahi et al., 2021).

However, while the findings generally align with existing literature, the study also revealed concerns regarding overdependence on AI-generated content, reduced originality, and the need

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for ethical oversight and human validation. This contrasts with highly technology-centered perspectives that portray AI as a predominantly autonomous solution for digital marketing operations. Instead, the successful AI utilization among social media managers depends on balancing automation with human creativity, ethical responsibility, strategic judgment, and continuous adaptation.

Similarly, the theme *Envisioning Growth through AI-Driven Innovation and Collaboration* demonstrates how social media managers perceived AI as a valuable tool for innovation, strategic growth, and collaborative improvement. AI enabled them to identify trends, generate innovative campaign ideas, analyze audience preferences, and improve communication and coordination within digital marketing environments. Because participants experienced positive outcomes from AI integration, they became more motivated to continuously adopt and explore AI technologies in their professional practices. In the context of TAM, the perceived benefits and effectiveness of AI strengthened users' intentions to integrate these technologies into long-term strategic and creative processes.

Thus, AI-driven growth is not a purely technical pursuit but a collaborative process. Whether in scaling operations, innovating markets, enhancing learning, or leading transformation, AI is most effective when integrated with human expertise and shared knowledge. In this vein, future-ready professionals view AI as a catalyst for collective progress, one that amplifies innovation and collaboration while reinforcing responsibility, inclusivity, and long-term value creation. Organizations and professionals may adopt AI as a complementary tool to enhance efficiency, support decision-making, and facilitate the scaling of operations across multiple functions or locations while responding proactively to emerging opportunities, and strengthen long-term performance.

Purpose-Driven Integration: Aligning AI Adoption with Ethical and Strategic Goals. This theme highlights that successful AI adoption is most meaningful when it is guided by clear purpose, ethical considerations, and strategic alignment with professional values and long-term goals. Rather than viewing AI as a mere technological trend or shortcut, participants emphasized the importance of integrating AI as a supportive and responsible tool that improves efficiency and confidence while preserving human judgment, accountability, and professional integrity. Across different fields in business, education, accounting, compliance, creative work, and technical services, participants consistently viewed AI as most effective when it complements expertise, reduces stress, and aligns with personal, organizational, and societal values. Below are some of the participants' responses that highlights how human oversight remains essential in AI utilization, emphasizing that technology must be guided by responsibility, ethical judgment, and clear purpose rather than blind reliance.

"*My advice is to always review AI-generated outputs carefully. While AI is helpful, human oversight remains essential, especially in compliance and legal documentation (P6).*"
"My journey with AI taught me to balance technology with purpose in a way that it teaches me how to use it wisely (P11)."

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"My journey with AI taught me that technology is most powerful when combined with experience, responsibility, and purpose. AI helped me grow not only as a technician but also as a service provider and decision-maker (P16)."

Based on the participants' responses, Participant 6 places strong emphasis on human oversight, particularly in high-stakes areas such as compliance and legal documentation, where accuracy, accountability, and ethical responsibility are critical. This response illustrates a clear understanding that while AI can streamline processes and reduce workload, it cannot replace professional judgment in contexts that demand legal and ethical precision. P6's insistence on careful review reflects a strategic alignment between AI use and professional integrity, ensuring that technology supports and not compromise regulatory compliance and trustworthiness.

Meanwhile, Participant 11 reflects a learning-oriented and values-driven experience with AI, emphasizing that effective AI use requires balancing technological capability with clear purpose. AI adoption develops over time through reflection and intentional use, rather than through technical skill alone. By framing AI as a tool that teaches the user how to apply it responsibly, P11 highlights the role of human judgment in shaping ethical and meaningful outcomes. Participant 16 emphasizes that AI reaches its greatest potential when combined with professional experience, ethical responsibility, and purposeful intent. When personal and professional growth is facilitated by AI, it will not only promote technical competence but also in service quality and decision-making ability. By recognizing AI as a complement to human expertise rather than a replacement, P16 reinforces the idea that accountability and domain knowledge remain central to effective AI integration.

The findings of the study corroborate with pieces of literature emphasizing that human-in-the-loop mechanisms serve as essential tools for mitigating risks associated with automated decision-making, especially in regulated environments (European Commission, 2020). Accordingly, AI systems should be designed to enhance human agency and support thoughtful decision-making, promoting active engagement rather than fostering passive reliance on automation (Shneiderman, 2020). Augmented intelligence stresses that AI is most effective when it enhances human roles and strengthens professional judgment in complex environments. The gradual and purposeful adoption of AI as a key strategy for aligning business and professional goals aid in streamlined business processes (Gastmann, 2025).

One business owner advised starting with simple tools and learning gradually, focusing on how AI fits specific business needs rather than adopting complex systems prematurely. AI systems without adequate understanding may lead to misuse, misinterpretation, or overconfidence in outputs. AI literacy is essential for safe, effective, and sustainable adoption, particularly in professional environments where decisions have long-term consequences (Long & Magerko, 2020). When AI outputs are interpreted correctly, it can give accuracy, compliance, and ethical accountability of the business enterprise (Kasneci et al., 2023). Moreover, AI creates the greatest value when embedded within organizational purpose and guided by human oversight rather than automation alone (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Ethical AI frameworks highlight the importance of

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transparency, accountability, and human-in-the-loop decision-making, particularly in high-stakes domains such as compliance, education, and finance (Kshetri, 2024).

The foundational professional knowledge with ethical responsibility, positioning AI as a means to enhance decision-making, efficiency, and service quality rather than an end in itself. This response reflects a holistic and purpose-driven view of AI integration, where ethical use and safety are prioritized alongside performance gains. The utilization of AI emphasizes human-centered design, professional responsibility, and safeguards against harm as essential elements of trustworthy AI adoption (Kotler et al., 2021).

One theory that supports this study is the TAM and the Theory of Reasoned Action. This illustrates that social media managers continued utilizing AI because they recognized its usefulness in supporting organizational objectives, improving efficiency, and enhancing content strategies. However, participants also emphasized that AI adoption should remain ethically guided and aligned with brand values, professional standards, and human judgment. Participants acknowledged the importance of reviewing AI-generated outputs, ensuring content accuracy, protecting audience trust, and maintaining authenticity in digital communication. While AI was perceived as beneficial and easy to integrate, actual utilization was still influenced by ethical considerations and organizational expectations, reflecting the practical limitations

Thus, AI delivers the greatest value when its adoption is guided by clear purpose and aligned with ethical and strategic objectives. As business professionals leverage AI, work efficiency is enhanced while innovation is evident, and support informed decision-making, while maintaining accountability and human-centered values. By combining AI capabilities with professional judgment and ethical oversight, organizations and individuals can use technology to strengthen confidence, reduce operational stress, and achieve sustainable outcomes.

Continuous Learning and Adaptation in the Age of AI. This theme focuses on the process of learning and adjusting as AI technologies continue to evolve. Participants described AI use as something that improves over time through repeated practice, hands-on experience, and ongoing adjustment. Instead of expecting immediate mastery, they learned by experimenting with tools, learning from mistakes, and gradually refining how AI fits into their daily work. As AI systems change and update, participants emphasized the need to stay flexible, update their skills, and remain open to new ways of working to stay effective and relevant.

Below are some of the participants' responses that highlights how humans continue to learn and adjust as AI technologies continue to evolve.:

"Learning how to use AI became easier for me because I was part of online seller communities. By seeing how other sellers experimented with AI tools, shared mistakes, and discussed what worked for them, I was able to learn at my own pace. This helped me adapt more gradually and reduced the pressure of figuring everything out on my own as AI tools continued to change. (P4)"

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"What helped me most was regularly using accounting software that already had AI features. Through constant practice, I learned how AI supports accounting tasks and where its limitations are. Over time, this hands-on experience made me more confident and helped me adjust how I use AI in real accounting situations instead of relying on it blindly. (P13)"

Based on the participants' responses, Participant 4 (4) emphasized that learning to use AI effectively is a gradual process that is strongly influenced by social interaction and shared practice. Instead of depending on formal training, the participant adapted by learning from the experiences of others and slowly becoming more comfortable with AI tools over time. By actively participating in online seller communities, participant was able to observe how others experimented with AI tools, learned from their mistakes, and continuously refined their practices over time. Consequently, learning took place at a manageable pace, which made the process of understanding and applying AI less overwhelming and more approachable.

Furthermore, Participant 4 (4) suggests that adaptation becomes more effective when individuals are not left to navigate technological changes on their own. By seeing practical and real-life examples from fellow sellers, Participant 4 was able to adjust to evolving AI tools step by step instead of feeling pressured to achieve immediate mastery. Overall, this experience reflects the central idea of the theme, emphasizing that adaptation to AI is an ongoing process supported by collaboration, peer learning, and gradual adjustment as technologies continue to evolve (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

Meanwhile, Participant 13 (13) response highlights the importance of hands-on experience and continuous practice in understanding and adapting to AI tools within a professional accounting context. By regularly using accounting software with built-in AI features, participant was able to learn not only how AI supports routine accounting tasks but also where its limitations exist. As a result, learning occurred through direct application rather than abstract instruction, allowing the participant to develop a more realistic and practical understanding of AI's role in accounting work.

Moreover, constant practice enabled the participant to build confidence over time, as repeated exposure reduced uncertainty and improved familiarity with AI-assisted processes. Through this experience, the participant learned to adjust how AI was used in real accounting situations, applying it selectively and thoughtfully rather than depending on it without question. Consequently, the response reflects the core idea of continuous learning and adaptation, showing that effective AI use develops gradually through experience, reflection, and informed judgment. This illustrates that AI becomes most valuable when professionals actively engage with it, understand its boundaries, and integrate it as a supportive tool within their expertise.

Sustainable AI adoption depends on professionals' ability to continuously learn and adapt as technologies evolve. Research suggests that AI systems deliver better outcomes when users develop experiential knowledge through repeated use and reflective practice, rather than relying solely on initial training (S. M. & von Krogh, 2023). In this context, organizations should

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promote learning-by-doing approaches and adaptive work cultures that allow professionals to gradually refine their use of AI tools in real-world situations (Huang & Rust, 2023). Continuous adaptation also helps individuals recognize the boundaries of AI capabilities, which is essential for maintaining sound judgment and avoiding blind trust in automated outputs (Baird & Maruping, 2021).

Furthermore, scholars highlight that adaptive expertise enables professionals to respond effectively to technological change while preserving accountability and decision quality in complex environments. When learning and adaptation are treated as ongoing responsibilities, AI integration becomes more resilient, context-aware, and aligned with long-term professional and organizational effectiveness (Shrestha, Ben-Menahem & von Krogh, 2023).

"User-friendly dashboards made it easier for me to understand how AI fits into my daily tasks. Because the information was shown in a clear and organized way, I could easily follow the insights and see how they applied to my work. Over time, this helped me trust the system more and use AI tools with greater confidence and consistency in my everyday operations (P2)."

"Online learning platforms, technical communities, and peer technicians played a big role. Having access to tutorials, forums, and shared experiences helped me apply AI tools more effectively. Client feedback also guided me in improving how I use AI for planning and communication (P16)."

Participant 2 (2) describe the importance of clear design and ease of use in supporting learning and confidence when adopting AI tools. The participant explained that user-friendly dashboards made AI easier to understand because information was presented in a clear and organized manner. As a result, the participant was able to follow AI-generated insights more easily and see how these insights applied directly to daily tasks and operations.

Moreover, the response shows that clarity in how information is displayed plays a key role in building trust in AI systems. Because the dashboards were easy to navigate and interpret, the participant felt more confident relying on AI tools and using them consistently in everyday work. This experience reflects the theme of continuous learning and adaptation, as it demonstrates how intuitive system design supports gradual understanding, reduces uncertainty, and encourages regular use of AI as part of normal professional routines.

On the other hand, Participant 16 (16) response highlights the importance of learning networks and feedback in adapting to AI technologies. The participant explained that online learning platforms, technical communities, and peer technicians provided access to tutorials, forums, and shared experiences, which made it easier to understand and apply AI tools in practical situations. These resources supported continuous learning by allowing the participant to learn from others, ask questions, and refine skills over time.

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Moreover, Participant 16 (16) underscored the role of online learning platforms, technical communities, and peer technicians in improving the effective use of AI tools. Access to tutorials, forums, and shared technical experiences supported skill development, while client feedback helped refine practical application in planning and communication. In addition, the participant emphasized the role of client feedback in improving AI use. By listening to client responses, the participant was able to adjust how AI was applied in planning and communication, ensuring that technology supported real needs rather than rigid processes. This response reflects the theme of continuous learning and adaptation, showing that effective AI use develops through a combination of shared learning, hands-on practice, and ongoing feedback from both peers and clients.

The effective and sustainable AI adoption is strongly shaped by system usability, learning support, and access to collaborative knowledge networks. When AI tools are designed with clear interfaces and user-centered dashboards, users are more likely to understand system outputs, develop trust, and integrate AI into everyday professional practices (Dwivedi et al., 2021). In this context, intuitive system design reduces cognitive load and supports gradual learning, enabling professionals to adapt to AI technologies with greater confidence and consistency over time. Moreover, contemporary research highlights that learning ecosystems such as online learning platforms, professional communities, and peer networks play a critical role in refining AI use through shared experiences, collaborative problem-solving, and practical guidance (Baird & Maruping, 2021). Continuous feedback, including insights from clients and stakeholders, further strengthens adaptation by allowing professionals to adjust AI-supported planning and communication based on real-world outcomes and contextual needs (Floridi et al., 2022). When usability, peer learning, and feedback mechanisms are embedded into AI adoption processes, technology use becomes more transparent, trustworthy, and aligned with professional judgment, resulting in more resilient and context-aware AI integration over time (Vial, 2021).

Participants also linked continuous learning to future-oriented growth and contribution. Several expressed plans to expand AI use in business strategy, teaching innovation, administrative efficiency, and technical services.

"I plan to use AI in more of my work to make administrative tasks easier, while still ensuring accuracy and responsibility (P6)."
"I plan to continuously innovate my teaching methods by using AI to explore new ways of presenting lessons, creating engaging activities, and responding more effectively to my students' needs (P7)."
"I plan to continue innovating by using AI insights to guide my long-term planning, while also mentoring young entrepreneurs and sharing what I have learned to help them make better, more informed decisions (P11)."

Participant 6 expressed a future-oriented intention to integrate AI into more administrative tasks while maintaining accuracy and responsibility. This response reflects a commitment to continuous improvement, where efficiency gains from AI are balanced with accountability and

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quality control. It highlights an adaptive mindset focused on using technology to support reliable and well-managed workflows rather than sacrificing standards for speed. This interpretation aligns with management research emphasizing that process innovation should enhance efficiency while preserving organizational control and responsibility.

Participant 7 emphasized plans to continuously innovate teaching methods through AI by improving lesson delivery, engagement, and responsiveness to students' needs. This response reflects a learner-centered approach, where technology is used to enhance instructional design and classroom interaction. It suggests that continuous professional learning allows educators to adapt teaching strategies while maintaining educational quality. This view is supported by educational research indicating that effective teaching innovation involves aligning tools and methods with learning objectives and student engagement.

Participant 11 highlighted the use of AI insights for long-term planning while mentoring young entrepreneurs, demonstrating a forward-looking and contributive approach to AI adoption. This response reflects strategic learning, where AI supports informed planning and knowledge-sharing beyond individual success. By mentoring others, P11 emphasizes leadership development and sustainable growth through shared experience. This interpretation is consistent with leadership and management theory, which stresses that effective leaders use knowledge and foresight to guide long-term strategy and develop future leaders.

Others emphasized mentoring the next generation whether junior accountants, young entrepreneurs, family business successors, or fellow technicians to ensure knowledge transfer and responsible AI adoption. This reflects a shift from individual learning toward collective capability-building and sustainable innovation.

"I plan to use AI more in my advisory work to provide better insights and recommendations. I also aspire to mentor junior accountants someday and guide them in using AI responsibly and effectively in their professional practice (P1)."

"I plan to continuously upgrade my skills by learning more about AI-assisted accounting and by supporting colleagues who are also transitioning to AI-based systems (P13)."
"I plan to continue learning advanced AI applications related to renewable energy, security systems, and electronics repair. I also want to help small businesses and communities adopt affordable and sustainable technology solutions by using AI for planning, education, and maintenance support (P16)."

Participant 1 expressed an intention to deepen the use of AI in advisory work while mentoring junior accountants, indicating a commitment to knowledge sharing and responsible professional development. This response reflects a knowledge-creation mindset, where expertise is continuously refined and transferred to others to strengthen collective capability and ethical practice. Such an approach aligns with knowledge management theory, which emphasizes mentoring and shared learning as drivers of sustained professional growth.

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Participant 13 emphasized continuous skill upgrading and peer support during the transition to AI-assisted accounting systems. This response highlights adaptive learning and collaborative change, where professionals learn together to reduce errors and build confidence in new technologies. This interpretation is supported by organizational learning theory, which stresses continuous improvement through reflection, feedback, and shared problem-solving.

Participant 16 demonstrated a strong future-oriented and community-focused approach by planning to learn advanced AI applications and help small businesses adopt affordable, sustainable technologies. This response reflects innovation diffusion and social impact, where technical knowledge is applied to broaden access and practical benefits for communities. This aligns with diffusion of innovations theory, which explains how new technologies gain value when adapted to local needs and shared through trusted channels.

The theme was clearly supported with Theory of Acceptance Model asserting that the ease of use and continued behavioral intention toward technology adoption requires accessibility, convenience, and evolving capabilities of AI tools. These motivated the users to continuously learn new platforms, adapt to emerging technologies, and refine their digital marketing strategies. The ease of experimenting with AI tools encouraged participants to integrate AI into their routine workflows and professional development practices. At the same time, participants acknowledged that external factors such as technological limitations, resource availability, organizational policies, workload demands, and the need for human oversight still shaped the extent of AI utilization. The perceived usefulness and ease of use encouraged AI acceptance, successful and sustainable AI integration also depended on adaptability, ethical responsibility, and contextual organizational factors.

Thus, continuous learning and adaptation are essential for effective AI use, as they learned best through hands-on experience, gradual adoption of tools, and support from peers and mentors. Participants emphasized that practicing with AI in real work situations, learning through trial and error, and sharing experiences within professional communities helped reduce uncertainty and build confidence. This reflects the idea that skills in digital environments must be continuously developed through practical engagement rather than one-time training. At the same time, the strong role of peer learning and mentorship aligns with social learning theory, which explains that people learn more effectively through observation, interaction, and shared experiences with others.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based from the participants' responses, the following conclusions and recommendations were drawn:

1. AI tools AI effectively enhances professional productivity and creativity by supporting informed, evidence-based decision-making.
2. The integration of AI in business processes fosters organizational growth by enabling innovation and strengthening collaborative problem-solving.

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3. AI is most effective when implemented with purpose, ethical guidance, and alignment to strategic goals.
4. AI strengthens professional competence and engagement by supporting skillful, efficient, and meaningful work.
5. Sustainable success with AI depends on continuous learning, flexibility, and adaptation to technological advancements.

This study focused on the successful implementation of artificial intelligence among social media managers and business professionals; to strengthen the generalizability and depth of these findings, future research is recommended to examine the long-term impacts of AI integration across a wider range of industries. Such studies may focus on investigate its influence on decision-making quality, employee engagement, and organizational growth, while also addressing emerging challenges related to ethical considerations, data privacy, and the responsible use of AI. Expanding the scope in this way would provide a more comprehensive understanding of AI's sustained value and potential risks in diverse professional contexts.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the positive findings regarding AI utilization among social media managers, the study acknowledges that the use of Artificial Intelligence also presents certain limitations, risks, and ethical concerns. Participants recognized that AI-generated outputs may sometimes produce inaccurate, biased, misleading, or overly generic content, requiring human verification and critical evaluation before publication. Concerns regarding data privacy, confidentiality, intellectual property, and algorithmic bias were likewise identified, particularly when handling audience information and automated content generation. In addition, excessive dependence on AI tools may reduce originality, human creativity, and authentic audience engagement if not balanced with professional judgment and strategic oversight. The study also acknowledges that the findings are limited to the experiences of social media managers in Misamis Occidental and may not fully represent the experiences of professionals in other industries or geographical contexts. Nevertheless, the study emphasized that responsible, ethical, and purpose-driven AI integration remains essential to ensuring that AI serves as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for human creativity, critical thinking, and decision-making.

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Appendix

Audit Trail

Appreciative Inquiry Phase	Participant Statement	Initial Code	Category	Final Theme	Audit Trail / Analytical Interpretation
Discovery	"AI helps me create captions faster and reduces my workload."	Faster content creation	Workflow efficiency	Harnessing AI for Productivity, Creativity, and Informed Decision-Making	During transcript familiarization, the researcher identified repeated narratives emphasizing efficiency and productivity gains through AI-assisted caption generation. The statement was initially coded as *Faster content creation* because it reflected operational improvement in content development workflows. Through code clustering, it was categorized under *Workflow efficiency* and later integrated into the broader theme emphasizing how AI enhances productivity, creativity, and strategic decision-making among social media managers.
Discovery	"Using ChatGPT gives me more creative ideas for campaigns."	AI-supported creativity	Content innovation	Harnessing AI for Productivity, Creativity, and Informed Decision-Making	The participant emphasized AI's role in stimulating creative thinking and campaign ideation. The researcher coded this as *AI-supported creativity* due to its focus on innovation in content planning. During thematic refinement, similar creativity-related codes were grouped under *Content innovation*, contributing to the final theme highlighting AI as a tool for enhancing creativity and informed content development.
Design	"AI analytics help me understand audience behavior and improve engagement."	Data-informed decisions	Strategic optimization	Harnessing AI for Productivity, Creativity, and Informed Decision-Making	This statement reflected the strategic application of AI analytics in improving audience engagement and campaign performance. The researcher assigned the code *Data-informed decisions* to capture the participant's use of analytics for strategic content optimization. During analysis, the code was categorized under *Strategic optimization* and linked to the broader theme of AI-driven productivity and decision-making.
Design	"I still review AI-generated content	Ethical content review	Responsible AI integration	Purpose-Driven	The participant highlighted the importance of human oversight and ethical alignment

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Appreciative Inquiry Phase	Participant Statement	Initial Code	Category	Final Theme	Audit Trail / Analytical Interpretation
	to ensure it aligns with our brand values."			Integration: Aligning AI Adoption with Ethical and Strategic Goals	when utilizing AI-generated content. The researcher coded this as *Ethical content review* because it demonstrated responsible AI usage and brand alignment practices. Similar codes concerning ethical awareness and strategic alignment were clustered into the category *Responsible AI integration*, which informed the final theme emphasizing ethical and purpose-driven AI adoption.
Destiny	"I continuously learn new AI tools because digital marketing constantly evolves."	Continuous learning	Professional adaptability	Continuous Learning and Adaptation in the Age of AI	The statement reflected long-term adaptability and the ongoing learning behaviors of social media managers in response to evolving AI technologies. It was coded as *Continuous learning* due to its emphasis on professional growth and skill enhancement. During thematic development, the code was categorized under *Professional adaptability* and ultimately contributed to the final theme highlighting continuous learning and adaptation as essential for sustainable AI integration in digital marketing practices.

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