DOES THE DEPENDENCE OF BRAND VOICE ON AI RESTRICT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN SOCIAL MEDIA?

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Abstract

With the advent of social media and a unique brand voice, brand communications frequently employ artificial intelligence (AI) to facilitate timely interactions across the many channels of communication, and often integrate communications. This research seeks to investigate the influence of an AI-regulated brand voice on the freedom of expression (FOE) when communicating on social media.

A qualitative research design is implemented based on content analysis. The research gap was identified by reviewing the role of brand voice using AI, the application of AI to monitor freedom of expression, and the study of integrating FOE in brand voice generation using AI. Various case studies were used to conclude that AI-regulated brand voice has a substantial impact on the freedom of expression on social media, which is frequently governed by privacy rules.

This study establishes that a brand's communication in its social media portfolio is governed by national and international laws that regulate freedom of expression and thus have legal implications. This study suggests that AI must be fed information to prevent content such as hate speech, bullying, and so on, and produce a brand voice with checkpoints for human validation and verification to maintain general societal decorum.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Brand Voice, Freedom of Expression (FOE), Brand Communications, Social Media Human Rights

DOI: 10.37804/1691-6077-2023-14-155-165

Introduction

In today's world, AI affects how individuals access information, use devices, share personal data, and even learn foreign languages (Article19 et al., 2018, p. 2). Although AI has the potential to positively improve societies, it also has a wide range of consequences, the most serious of which are privacy, FOE, and information (Article19 et al., 2018, p. 2). AI-driven tools for media production and distribution also changes markets like European media market structures and its control (Eskens, 2020, p. 5). Technology, skills, and training data become new competitive assets, favouring new, international organisations like social networks and search engines, and creating possible barriers for smaller, less affluent newsrooms, media in developing nations, and local news media (Eskens, 2020, p. 5).

The media's role in a democracy as a source of information, platform for discourse, and critical watchdog makes FOE a key human right to consider when using AI-driven technologies in the media, along with privacy and discrimination (Eskens, 2020, p. 5). Thus, even when utilizing AI-powered tools, brand communications must adhere to human rights guidelines for FOE and privacy.

With the evolution of brand communication and the rise of social media in brand awareness, brand voice is more crucial than ever as a method to stand out in an ocean of digital noise (Chen, 2020). AI now plays a crucial role in the evolution, development, prediction, and analysis of brand voice in social media (Surikova et al., 2022, p. 74). Branding with AI in brand communication is no longer limited to dialogues or sales; rather, data is used to generate real-time solutions utilizing AI technology and predictive intelligence (Reimherr, 2018). Similarly, AI is used to forecast and analyse brand voice, which assists organizations in selecting a tone and voice that will engage users (Surikova et al., 2022, p. 87).

Sometimes, once the brand voice has been defined, AI is deployed to retain the voice across all platforms or emails when communicating. For example, Phrasee's AI optimizes email marketing subject line text to enhance not only opens, clicks, and ROI for their clients but also to maintain their brands' distinct voice and identities (Phrasee, 2018).

AI increasingly plays a crucial role in preserving brand voice. On the other hand, brand voice is an essential component of brand communications and is typically a set of marketing, linguistic, and stylistic factors that influence brand communication on social media (Surikova et al., 2022, p. 86).

Individual rights cannot be secured without the freedom to seek, receive, and transmit information or ideas, regardless of the media utilized, and this has long been regarded as a critical component in guaranteeing fundamental human rights (Slutskiy, 2020, p. 53). Access to information is increasingly related to information freedom (Slutskiy, 2020, p. 54). With social media becoming the default communicative infrastructure, the question of whether their content models support public access to information and fundamental freedoms is becoming more significant (Slutskiy, 2020, p. 54). For instance, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, Twitter, and others have been criticized for censoring user-generated content quite often (Slutskiy, 2020, p. 54). As a result, social media platforms frequently struggle with content moderation. Marketing professionals, on the other hand, struggle to understand privacy regulations and copyright infringement, making it difficult to maintain a brand voice during sensitive situations. Furthermore, not much systematic research on bibliometric analysis of brand voice in branding using AI exists yet. However, the concept of using AI to maintain brand voice while integrating FOE principles into brand communications remains unexplored.

To ensure the protection of FOE on AI-powered social media platforms, brand voice frameworks need to be developed. Understanding how to use AI in harmony with FOE for branding purposes is crucial. This study is significant as it demonstrates AI's potential in enhancing social media and helping brands create compelling brand identities on digital platforms while upholding fundamental human rights, such as FOE.

The study covers the role of brand voice using AI, the application of AI to monitor FOE, and the study of integrating FOE in Brand Voice Generation using AI. After reviewing their prior work, which only demonstrated the two-way integration model for using AI on social media platforms, the authors developed a two-way integration model with integrated human analysis. This new inference-based model includes human intervention and analysis at the entry and exit points, which is a novel method in academia.

AI helps brands understand how their voice is perceived by audiences, but it requires a deliberate strategy that balances the benefits of AI with the necessity for a human-like brand voice (Surikova et al., p. 75) based on the human rights principle of FOE. This indicates a research gap as very little study has been conducted on how brands should integrate FOE in brand communications using AI that adheres to FOE principles. However, there is far less literary assistance available on brand voice that corresponds to FOE standards.

Conceptual Background

Brand voice using AI

Consumer brand engagement is an individual's psychological state when they engage in an ongoing, dynamic engagement process that involves cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects during brand-related activities. As automated customer-to-machine brand-related interactions increase, brands may benefit from a new channel to boost customer brand experience (McLean et al., 2021). The omnipresent smartphone allows consumers to engage with AI technology differently from other technologies (Guzman, 2019). The new mobile and in-home virtual assistants use natural language processing (NLP) to let people talk to and get responses from the technology like they would with an individual (McLean et al., 2021). These days, AI analyzes data from communication channels, curates

ideas based on brand and customer behaviors, determines effective branding strategies, identifies target customers, and suggests an appropriate tone of voice for consistent brand messaging across platforms (Surikova et al., 2022, p. 85). AI simplifies strategy prediction by allowing marketers to strategically monitor users (Reimherr, 2018), and helps brands retain users by forecasting and analyzing an appropriate brand voice and tone (Surikova et al., 2022, p. 87).

Application of AI to monitor FOE

Most gadgets now have built-in, free capabilities for recording and editing material, and content creators can reach a larger audience through social media (Dias Oliva, 2020, p. 607-608). Web applications, including social media, enable users to create, publish, and distribute diverse content, enhancing FOE and access to information (Dias Oliva, 2020, p. 608). As content production and access have increased, new challenges like the spread of defamatory content, hate speech, false news, and copyright violations have emerged, putting pressure on internet platforms to improve content moderation, among other issues (Dias Oliva, 2020, p. 609). Internet platforms have turned to AI to automate the content moderation process due to the immense workload. During his testimony before the US Congress, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg stated that AI could one day remove harmful content, including violent extremism and fake news (Allan, 2017). Today, algorithms based on AI manage social media interactions (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 211), functioning as "content curators" for each user (Dias Oliva, 2020, p. 609). AI algorithms not only help users find information, but also facilitate their engagement in social and political discourse, acquaint us with our publics, and enhance our knowledge and understanding of various subjects (Gillespie, 2014, p.167).

Traditional law enforcement entails detection, prosecution, adjudication, and punishment carried out by distinct individuals, whereas algorithmic content policing incorporates these functions simultaneously, with an emphasis on early detection and prevention in a less transparent manner (Perel et al., 2016, p. 481). Most platforms reserve broad authority to remove user-posted content in their terms of service, stating that they may do so at their sole discretion or belief that it violates their policies (Perel et al., 2016, p. 483). This is done using AI algorithms to honor the FOE ethics. Sometimes, content that differs in opinion or perspective, even if it does not violate any laws or policies, can be removed, limiting FOE on the platform. It is worth noting that the categories of content that online platforms try to ban are usually related to the "legitimate aims" listed in Article 19(3) of UN (Dias Oliva, 2020, p. 618). For instance, the protection of national security or public order would be a legitimate aim to act against content that facilitates criminal activities, glorifies, or supports terrorism or organized criminal activity, and content that is part of wider disinformation campaigns aimed at destabilizing elections (Bradley & Wingfield, 2018).

La Rue identifies several categories of content that may be legitimately restricted, such as child pornography (to protect children's rights), hate speech (to protect affected communities), defamation (to protect individuals' rights and reputation), direct and public incitement to commit genocide (to protect the rights of others), and advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that amounts to incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence (La Rue, 2011, para 25).

Platforms that choose to adopt Article 19's standards must apply the necessity test to any content restrictions (Sander, 2020, p. 988). This means that they must balance conflicting rights and provide a justification for their decisions based on the analysis they have conducted (Sander, 2020, p. 988). The normative guidance of Article 19 could also assist platforms in navigating other complex issues, such as how to match local laws with their own Terms of Service and even commercial demands (Bambauer et al., 2013, p. 453). For example, European countries and the United States have vastly different perspectives on issues related to hate speech, which could pose significant challenges for platforms operating in both markets (Dias Oliva, 2020, p. 619). In the US, the Supreme Court has interpreted any potential exception to the First Amendment's speech clause (Congress.gov, n.d.) narrowly, thus, free speech restrictions aim to maintain peace and public order, and the Supreme Court requires a high threshold of speech violence before the state can interfere with expression of

hate (Dias Oliva, 2020, p. 620). Conversely, in the EU, restrictions to free speech aim to fight discrimination against minorities, and the threshold of speech violence for state interference is lower (Dias Oliva, 2020, p. 620). Although legislation varies between EU countries, they must all comply with the Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA, which establishes rules for combatting racism and xenophobia through criminal law (Dias Oliva, 2020, p. 620). Article 3 of the Framework Decision requires Member States to ensure that the behaviors listed in Article 1 are punishable by criminal penalties (Dias Oliva, 2020, p. 620). Many social media platforms have aligned their content policies with international human rights law due to the diversity in law and its enforcement (*A/HRC/38/35*, 2018). This puts them in a better position to discuss the implementation of content policies with governments, which often request that they censor speech (*A/HRC/38/35*, 2018). It is important to note that even after using content moderation AI technologies on social media platforms, organizations continue to face challenges in accurately comprehending human conversation. This often results in false flags despite recent improvements.

While AI is playing a crucial role in monitoring FOE on the internet, maintaining a brand voice that complies with FOE standards through AI presents a challenge for practitioners. Due to the lack of academic research in this area, exploring the combined impact of AI and FOE on brand voice presents significant potential. Understanding the interaction between AI and FOE in shaping brand voice is important because it could inform the development of effective strategies for maintaining brand identity while adhering to fundamental human rights. As AI becomes more prevalent in brand communications, it is critical to explore how it can be leveraged to promote FOE using brand voice rather than compromise it.

Applied Methodology

There is currently no framework for synchronizing AI-generated brand voice across digital platforms while complying with FOE. This study focuses on whether AI-dependent brand voice can adhere to FOE guidelines across social media channels or not. The following research question is addressed:

How can FOE be integrated for generating brand voice using AI in social media?

The purpose of this study is to investigate the reliance of branding communications on AI to sustain brand voice while keeping in mind the fundamentals of human rights, such as FOE. It aims to research how to produce a suitable brand voice to avoid legal consequences. Therefore, this study is exploratory in nature, employing a qualitative research approach based on content analysis. Initially, the role of brand voice using AI, the application of AI to monitor FOE, and the study of integrating FOE in Brand Voice Generation using AI were reviewed. Several case studies were used to conclude that AI-regulated brand voice has a significant impact on social media FOE, which is typically limited by privacy restrictions. By imposing the drawn inferences from revealing the common research areas, this study's main conclusion has been the dependency of AI, brand voice, and social media with the coupling of their combined scopes in establishing the FOE principles.

Results

Integrating FOE in Brand Voice Generation using AI

When using AI to generate a brand voice on social media, it is important to integrate FOE while also maintaining a safe and respectful online community. Achieving this balance can be challenging, but it is possible by using properly trained and transparent AI algorithms to monitor content for harmful or offensive language. However, it is crucial to ensure that these algorithms do not accidentally suppress legitimate expressions of FOE. Thus, integrating FOE in generating brand voice using AI in social media requires a deliberate strategy that balances the benefits of AI with the necessity for human-like brand voice. Here are some ways FOE can be integrated:

1. Use of transparent and ethical AI algorithms: AI algorithms must be transparent, and the methods used in their development and application must be ethical. This ensures that brand voice generated by AI adheres to FOE principles.
2. Use of natural language processing (NLP) technology: Current technology employs NLP and sentiment analysis to detect toxic text without depending on a predefined list of banned words or phrases (Dias Oliva, 2020, p. 628). NLP technology thus can be used to analyse and interpret user-generated content, which can then be used to generate brand voice that resonates with the target audience.
3. Monitoring of FOE: AI can be used to monitor social media platforms to identify instances of FOE violations. This helps brands to avoid such instances and maintain a positive image. Also, for better monitoring, several major social media companies have started implementing the United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGP) when faced with governmental demands that do not comply with international human rights law standards (Global Network Initiative, n.d.). These companies are members of the Global Network Initiative (GNI), a multi-stakeholder platform that offers an adaptable framework for responsible business decision-making in support of freedom of speech and privacy rights (Dias Oliva, 2020, p. 622).
4. Use of human oversight: AI-generated brand voice must be reviewed and approved by humans to ensure that it adheres to FOE principles and aligns with the brand's overall communication strategy. The use of AI tools to manage 'toxic' textual content online without human oversight may pose a threat to the exercise of FOE, as enshrined in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), putting socially vulnerable groups, such as LGBTQ individuals, at risk (Dias Oliva, 2020, p. 636). People who identify as LGBTQ may face 'limitations' when sharing content online based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, which fall under the UN Human Rights Council's umbrella term of 'other status' (Dias Oliva, 2020, p. 637).

By incorporating principles of FOE into the development and implementation of AI-generated brand voice, brands can ensure that their communication efforts on social media align with fundamental human rights. This can be further illustrated using below case studies.

Case Study 1: Facebook's 2018 algorithmic content moderation system aimed to remove objectionable content, but it was flawed and removed legitimate content that didn't violate community standards (Hern, 2018). This highlights the impact of AI-regulated brand voice on FOE, as it can limit users' rights to express their opinions and ideas. It is essential to develop AI systems for brand voice and content moderation with an understanding of FOE principles to prevent inadvertently restricting users' rights.

Case Study 2: Twitter has been using AI algorithms to identify and flag potentially problematic content for human review (Hatmaker, 2021). However, the algorithms have raised concerns about the impact on FOE. For example, the algorithms may inadvertently censor political discourse as they may not be able to distinguish between hate speech and legitimate political speech thereby affecting the latter's brand voice. Moreover, AI systems are only as unbiased as the data they are trained on, and if the training data is biased or incomplete, the algorithms may perpetuate existing biases and inaccuracies. To address these issues, Twitter has been working on improving the accuracy and fairness of its AI algorithms. They are also increasing transparency and user control over content moderation. This includes providing users with more information about why certain content is flagged and allowing them to appeal decisions. In this way, Twitter is trying to balance the promotion of FOE on its platform while combating harmful speech and misinformation.

Case Study 3: In 2020, Twitter removed several posts from the account of popular Indian actress Kangana Ranaut for violating its policies on hate speech (BBC News, 2021). While some users applauded Twitter's action, others criticized it for suppressing FOE and censoring political speech. The controversy raised questions about the role of AI in content moderation and whether its use could potentially limit FOE. It may be argued that being a machine-based technology, AI may lack the nuance and context needed to make accurate decisions about content moderation, leading to potential

errors and overreach. This case highlights the need for brands to carefully consider the implications of using AI to regulate brand voice and its potential impact on FOE on social media.

Case Study 4: TikTok Australia faced criticism for limiting FOE during the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement (Gillezeau, 2020). Users reported posts related to BLM were being flagged and removed, even if they followed community guidelines. This affected the movement's particular brand voice and led to accusations of censorship and a violation of free speech. TikTok Australia responded by pledging to support the movement and combat hate speech and misinformation. This case highlights the challenges of balancing FOE and a safe online community, and the need for transparency and accountability in the use of AI for content regulation.

Case Study 5: Twitter limited a political leader's FOE by deleting his tweet in January 2021, after permanently suspending former US President Donald Trump's account (Conger & Isaac, 2021). The suspension came after Trump made tweets claiming the 2020 presidential election was stolen and inciting his supporters to challenge the results. Initially, Twitter labeled some of Trump's tweets as containing disputed or misleading information. The suspension of his Twitter account and the deletion of his tweet limited former President Trump's ability to communicate his brand voice on the platform. However, after the January 6th Capitol insurrection, Twitter permanently suspended Trump's account due to the risk of further violence. This sparked controversy, with some arguing it constituted censorship and FOE, while others claimed Twitter had a responsibility to prevent the spread of harmful misinformation and limit the potential for real-world harm.

Thus, the reliance of brand voice on AI does not necessarily limit FOE. However, it is important to ensure that the AI-generated brand voice adheres to FOE principles. This can be achieved by designing AI systems that consider FOE principles, such as allowing for diverse perspectives and opinions and avoiding censorship. Additionally, it is important to have human oversight and intervention to ensure that the AI-generated brand voice is not violating FOE principles. Therefore, while AI may play a crucial role in maintaining brand voice, it should not be solely relied upon, and there should be a balance between AI and human involvement to ensure that the brand voice aligns with FOE principles.

Surikova (2022) defined brand voice and proposed a brand voice life cycle that aligns with the brand's marketing needs. AI is used in several phases to develop the brand voice according to her proposed life cycle. Additionally, Surikova's co-author, Siroda, provided an example of a two-way integration model for using AI on social media platforms. This model can be improved by incorporating human intervention and analysis at the model's entry and exit points. This model can be improved by incorporating human intervention and analysis at the model's entry and exit points. Prior to being fed into the automated AI systems, the initial data is cross-checked and analyzed by a business data analyst. After the system has been run, the output is then sent to an analyst for final human validation and verification. Once the field expert approves the output, it is considered finalized and ready to be used.

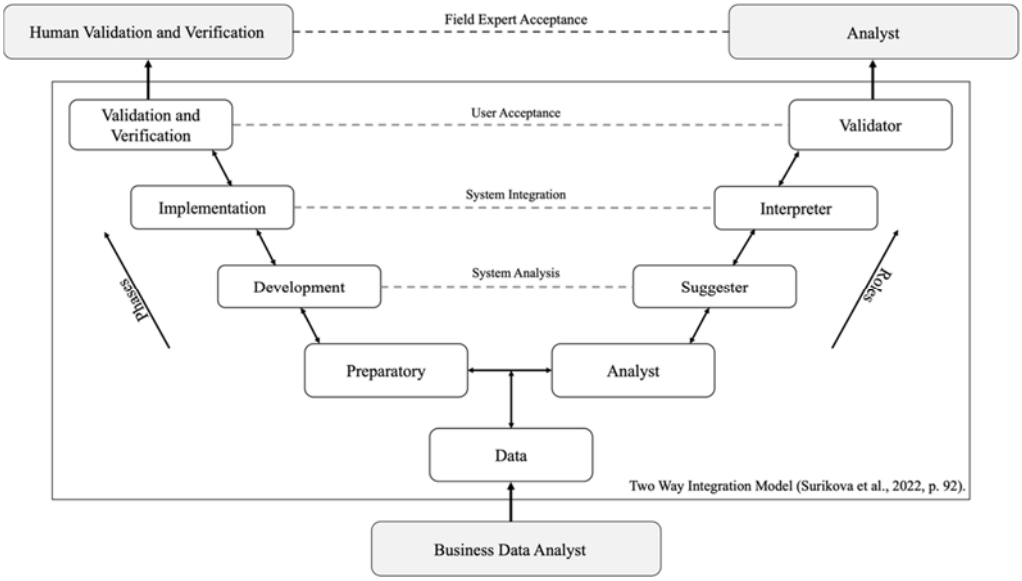


Figure 1: Two-Way Integration Model with integrated Human Analysis

This incorporation of human expertise into the model facilitates the incorporation of FOE at the outset of the model while managing the data, resulting in the development of a FOE-integrated brand voice using AI across all social media platforms.

Discussions, Contributions and Future Scope

Theoretical Discussions

This research used FOE to examine brand voice recognition and positioning using AI in social media. Similarly, the findings are centred on brand voice parameters that use AI to evaluate current competitive scenarios and FOE-based strategic planning. AI advancements enable social media platforms to provide stakeholders with customised brand identities and services based on the products they choose (Surikova et.al, 2022, p. 94). By incorporating FOE into the brand voice development process, the brand's reputation can be designed to align with and encourage values such as free expression, open discussion, and inclusiveness. This can be especially significant on social media platforms, where a variety of opinions and perspectives exist, and where the effective administration of FOE using AI can promote healthy and constructive engagement. Also, while taking measures to protect the community of users, the organizations must ensure that the removal of unlawful content does not violate users' right to FOE, thus, any automated measures must be tailored and proportionate (Jørgensen & Zuleta, 2020, p. 62). Additionally, governments should avoid delegating responsibility to organizations as content adjudicators, which empowers corporate judgement over human rights values at the expense of users (Jørgensen & Zuleta, 2020, p. 62).

Thus, integrating FOE in brand communications using AI can be a complex task, but there are several steps that brands can take to adhere to FOE principles:

1. Establishing a clear brand voice: The brand voice should be established based on the principles of FOE, ensuring that it does not violate any human rights standards.
2. Use AI tools for monitoring FOE: AI can help brands monitor social media channels to identify and respond to any issues that might arise regarding FOE.
3. Develop a policy for content moderation: This policy should clearly outline the type of content that will be allowed on social media channels and how any issues related to FOE will be addressed.

4. Train employees on FOE: It is essential to educate employees on the principles of FOE and the importance of adhering to these principles in all brand communications.
5. Collaborate with FOE experts: Brands can collaborate with FOE experts to ensure that their brand voice aligns with FOE principles and this can also provide valuable insights into how to integrate FOE into brand communications.

Once the brands have confirmed that the FOE standards are in place, they can use AI to create brand voice across various social media platforms. This paper shows how AI can be used to monitor the FOE using bibliometric analysis and case studies, as well as how non-compliance with the FOE affects brand voice. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first effort to develop a two-way integration model of brand voice using AI with legitimate human checkpoints for data validation and verification.

One aspect of human rights due diligence is ensuring that the platform's content rules are enforced in accordance with international FOE standards (O'Flaherty & Heffernan, 1995; Article 19). Thus, AI becomes an integral part of evolving, developing, predicting, and analysing brand voice in social media (Surikova et al., 2022, p. 95) with the incorporation of human assessments.

Managerial Contributions

The contribution of the correlation between brand voice, AI, and FOE in social media has several managerial implications:

1. Organisations must recognize the importance of brand voice in social media and the role of AI in shaping and maintaining it. This requires investment in AI technologies and the hiring of professionals skilled in AI and marketing to create effective and consistent brand messaging across various social media channels.
2. Organisations must also understand the importance of FOE in social media and the potential risks associated with infringing on these fundamental rights. AI can assist in monitoring and analyzing FOE-related content and provide companies with insights into how to maintain a brand voice that respects these principles.
3. Organisations must balance the benefits of AI in brand voice development with the need for human-like communication that resonates with their target audience. This requires a strategic approach that considers the nuances of each social media platform and the preferences of the audience.

Overall, the correlation between brand voice, AI, and FOE in social media highlights the need to adopt a thoughtful and intentional approach to their social media communications. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to brand voice, and practitioners must consider their brand's unique values, goals, and target audience when developing and implementing a brand voice strategy.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While AI tools can be helpful in modifying brand voice based on FOE principles, there are some limitations to keep in mind:

1. AI tools are not perfect and can make mistakes in their analysis and recommendations;
2. AI tools do not always take into account the nuances and cultural contexts of different social media platforms and their users;
3. Relying too heavily on AI tools to modify brand voice can result in a loss of authenticity and uniqueness. It is important to strike a balance between utilizing AI for data analysis and insights and maintaining a human touch in the brand voice;
4. When using AI tools for brand voice adaptation, updated privacy and data security factors must be considered on a regular basis.

Future research in this field may focus on creating AI tools and algorithms that not only retain brand voice but also adhere to FOE principles by staying up to date with the government's policy website. This could involve exploring the development of AI models that are trained on data sets that are

specifically designed to incorporate FOE principles. Additionally, research could also focus on the development of more sophisticated natural language processing tools that can better understand the nuances of language use and ensure that brand voice is appropriate for different contexts.

Another area of future research could be exploring the impact of AI-regulated brand voice on consumer perception and behavior. While the use of AI tools may help maintain brand consistency and adherence to FOE principles, it is important to understand how consumers perceive such communication and whether it influences their purchase behavior or brand loyalty.

Finally, research could also explore the ethical considerations surrounding the use of AI in brand communications. This could involve examining issues such as data privacy, bias in algorithmic decision-making, and the potential for AI to perpetuate harmful stereotypes or discriminatory practices. By exploring these issues, researchers can develop guidelines and best practices for the use of AI in brand communications that prioritize both brand consistency and the protection of fundamental human rights such as FOE.

Conclusions

According to the findings of this study, brand voice is an important aspect of brand communication, and maintaining it consistently is crucial for developing brand identity and loyalty. However, with the increasing use of AI in brand communication, it is critical to consider FOE as a basic human right when designing and implementing brand voice strategies. The use of AI can be used effectively to monitor and alter brand voice to align with FOE principles. However, the incorporation of AI must be balanced with human intervention to ensure that the brand voice retains the necessary emotional connection with the audience and adheres to the actual FOE principles. This study's main conclusion has been the dependency of AI, brand voice, and social media with the coupling of their combined scopes in establishing the FOE principles. Furthermore, this study helps academics and practitioners recognize that in today's world, these concepts have a significant impact on branding in light of human rights conventions. Thus, the novel research encourages organisations to align technological and theoretical advances with the strong recommendation of FOE principles that adhere to both national and international laws. This study aims to raise awareness and encourage scholars to begin investigating the future reliance of brand voice on AI across various social media platforms while keeping FOE and the human element in mind.

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