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AN APPROACH TO THE CONCEPTUAL AND STRATEGIC DIMENSIONS OF MARKETING FROM HUMAN AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the perceptions of marketing concepts, strategic thinking abilities, and assessments of artificial intelligence (AI) impacts on marketing from both human experts and AI applications. Specifically, it compares the insights of marketing academics with those generated by AI systems, including ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, and DeepSeek. The primary objective is to explore how human expertise and AI approaches converge or diverge in understanding and applying fundamental marketing principles.

A qualitative methodology was employed, involving semi-structured interviews with ten marketing academics from ten universities in Türkiye, as well as structured interactions with the selected AI applications. Data were analyzed using the MAXQDA software. The study was conducted in three stages: first, participants provided single-word associations for ten key marketing concepts (needs, brand, innovation, consumer, strategy, loyalty, trust, experience, pleasure, and competition); second, they developed strategies based on a sample marketing problem; third, they shared their evaluations of AI's influence on marketing.

Results indicate that AI-generated responses were generally more consistent and limited, whereas academic responses were more diverse and contextually nuanced. Academics focused on marketing strategies, target audience analysis, sustainability, and brand perception, while AI emphasized personalization, emotional value creation, community building, and behavioral economics. Both groups concurred that AI contributes significantly to data analysis, strategic decision-making, and personalization. At the same time, they emphasized potential drawbacks, particularly ethical dilemmas, risks related to data security, the diminishing of human interaction, and constraints on consumer autonomy.

KEY WORDS

marketing, artificial intelligence, conceptual perception, strategy development, academic perspective

CLASSIFICATION

JEL: C88, L86, M31, M37

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INTRODUCTION

The digital age has brought changes to every aspect of business, including the ways in which companies communicate with their customers and the various marketing activities in which they previously engaged. In this dynamic environment, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force, providing marketers with unprecedented capabilities to understand, predict, and respond to customer needs and preferences [1].

AI is shaping every element of the marketing mix. In product design and development, AI creates customized products by filtering large volumes of customer feedback and market data [2]. In pricing strategies, businesses leverage AI's capabilities for dynamic pricing by synthesizing various data points to balance competitiveness and profitability [3]. In distribution, the impact of AI is evident in optimized supply chain operations, where it predicts consumer demand patterns and enhances the delivery experience [4]. Regarding promotion, a paradigm shift has been observed in which AI facilitates personalized campaigns targeting consumers effectively [5]. Additionally, AI's role in customer interaction through chatbots and virtual assistants encourages reflection on current AI-driven trends in marketing [6, 7].

Another aspect of AI's future in marketing is its ability to address strategic tasks. AI plays a significant role in decision-making and marketing strategy development. Moreover, AI exerts a significant influence on consumer behavior. Consumers frequently perceive AI-based personal assistants not merely as functional tools but as trusted advisors or even companions, whose recommendations shape and inform their preferences [8, 9].

AI is an object of great interest in today's world, both scientifically and practically [10]. By improving processes, accelerating growth, and transforming business, AI has revolutionized marketing by driving rapid digital transformation. Despite increasing interest in AI review studies, comprehensive analyses in the marketing field remain limited [11]. AI development is a priority for many countries, and numerous companies invest heavily in studying and advancing AI [10]. This study aims to address AI in both marketing theory and practice. Its importance can be explained not only by increasing investments in AI development but also by the growing technological trend toward AI. Additionally, the increasing volume of unstructured data collected by companies provides valuable insights for marketing, as such data reveals consumer behavior patterns. The study is expected to provide a general overview of this evolution by discussing how AI is reshaping the marketing landscape and what it implies for marketing strategy.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Emerging technologies such as the Internet of Things, big data analytics, blockchain, and AI have transformed the business world. Among these technologies, AI has the potential to revolutionize marketing. AI is defined as a concept encompassing programs, algorithms, systems, and machines that exhibit intelligence by imitating certain aspects of human cognition and intelligent human behavior [7, 12]. AI relies on various core technologies, including machine learning, natural language processing, rule-based expert systems, neural networks, deep learning, physical robots, and robotic process automation [13]. The use of these tools enables AI to accurately interpret external data, learn from it, and adapt flexibly [14]. Another perspective on AI focuses less on its technological foundations and more on its application in marketing and business processes, such as automating workflows, generating insights from data, or interacting with customers and employees [13].

Marketers worldwide explore AI-based solutions to identify the most suitable approaches for their marketing needs [15]. AI simulates human intelligence in machines, enabling them to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as learning, problem-solving, and

decision-making. This capability can be applied in predictive marketing to analyze data and anticipate future customer needs and preferences [16]. AI is recognized as one of the top five areas in marketing [17], and this recognition has driven the rapid development of predictive marketing, which uses advanced analytics and machine learning techniques to forecast customer behavior and preferences [18]. Interest in predictive marketing is increasing due to its potential benefits in revenue growth, customer retention, and personalization [19]. AI and marketing have the potential to revolutionize various aspects of business operations, including customer service, product development, marketing, and supply chain management.

AI studies in marketing and business, influenced by technology literature, focus on consumer evaluations of services/products affected by new technologies. Parasuraman [20] and Venkatesh et al. [21] investigated various aspects of adoption, including technology acceptance and readiness, to determine the market success of emerging technologies. Consumer evaluation remains a critical factor in advancing AI literature in this field.

AI has scientifically influenced marketing in a way that calls for theoretical frameworks to fully understand the consequences of urgent needs. It explains how emerging AI technologies shape strategy, consumer responses, and changes in market dynamics. Many researchers have proposed models that contribute to understanding this impact. One useful framework is Kumar et al.'s [22] concept of responsible AI, which suggests that better market performance can be achieved through cognitive engagement. This framework integrates the effects of AI-supported technologies on mediating the connection between cognitive engagement and instrumental/ultimate values, demonstrating that responsible AI has significant implications for market outcomes [22].

Despite the numerous advantages of integrating AI into marketing, there is increasing concern about its potential to dehumanize and threaten privacy [23]. Researchers need to focus on corporate privacy failures, such as data leaks, profiling, micro-targeting, surveillance, and hacking. Furthermore, service literature should address AI's role in decision-making processes [15, 23]. Grandinetti argues that AI fundamentally transforms marketing theory by enhancing firms' cognitive capabilities. This change enables organizations to better manage consumer needs and preferences, facilitating value co-creation processes [24]. The asymmetry created by AI capabilities allows firms to tailor offerings more effectively, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty.

METHOD

This study aims to comparatively examine the perceptions of human experts and AI applications (ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, and DeepSeek) regarding marketing concepts, strategic thinking abilities, and the effects of AI on marketing. A qualitative research method was used. Qualitative research is a process of analysing individuals' perceptions, thoughts, and events in their natural environment with a realistic and holistic perspective [25]. In this context, the structured interview technique, a qualitative data collection method in which prepared questions are asked to obtain participants' in-depth perceptions, thoughts, and experiences, was employed [26]. All ethical guidelines outlined in the 'Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive' were followed, and ethical approval was obtained from the relevant university.

After obtaining the necessary ethical approval, the prepared questions were sent to three academic experts in research methods for review. Based on feedback from the experts, the questions were finalized to ensure clarity and neutrality. The study sample consisted of 10 academics with at least the title of Associate Professor from various universities in Türkiye, and 4 AI programs. The AI programs used were the most widely used in Türkiye: OpenAI ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, and DeepSeek. To avoid bias from prior

searches, all AI tools were accessed on a computer where AI had not been previously used, and queries were entered without logging into any account to obtain original, unbiased responses. The AI search prompt was as follows:

> 'Hello, I am an academic researcher. We are conducting a study in which we will ask both academics and AI systems some questions regarding marketing concepts and marketing-based topics. If you are ready and willing to participate voluntarily, please let me know, and I will ask the first question'.

Interviews were conducted with 10 marketing academics and 4 AI programs. Data from academics and AI programs were collected simultaneously. The data collection process consisted of three stages:

I. Conceptual Association Analysis: In this stage, the 10 fundamental marketing concepts were provided to both academics and AI programs, and they were asked to express in one word what each concept evoked for them. The purpose of this stage was to understand whether the meanings attributed by humans and AI to these concepts appeal to common or different emotions.

II. Marketing Strategy Development: Participants were given a marketing case and asked to develop a consumer behaviour strategy. The aim was to assess the ability of humans and AI to develop strategies for potential business situations and evaluate the applicability of recommendations in both abstract and concrete contexts.

III. Perceptions of AI in Marketing: In the final stage, six questions were posed to assess academics' and AI programs' views on AI usage in marketing. This stage enabled a detailed comparison of human and AI perspectives, analysing AI's role and perception in marketing.

Collected data were analysed using the qualitative data analysis software Maxqda (Version 2020), which supports coding, theme creation, and categorization under main themes [27, 28]. To ensure coding reliability and accuracy, three qualitative research experts reviewed the coding. Texts from five participant interviews (with personal information removed) were sent to these experts for coding. The consistency of the study's coding was then calculated using the formula: Reliability = Number of Agreements / (Number of Agreements + Number of Disagreements) [29], resulting in a 92% agreement rate. A reliability rate of 80% or higher is considered acceptable.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Five female and five male marketing academics from 10 different universities in Turkey participated voluntarily. Their academic titles included 2 professors and 8 associate professors, with an average age of 43,9. Collected data were visualized after coding and sub-coding. In the visualizations, figures on the left represent responses from academics, while figures on the right show responses from AI programs.

CONCEPTUAL ASSOCIATION ANALYSIS STAGE

In the first stage, 10 fundamental marketing concepts (Need, Brand, Innovation, Consumer, Strategy, Loyalty, Trust, Experience, Pleasure, Competition) were provided to marketing academics and AI programs, and participants were asked to express what each word evoked in them in a single word. The results are as follows.

The Notion of Need

The notion of need, as articulated by academics and AI applications, was analyzed and subsequently visualized through Maxqda, with the outcomes presented in Figure 1.

Analysis of Figure 1 indicates that academics most frequently associated the notion of *need* with the concept of *obligation* (n = 5), while less frequent associations included *basic*

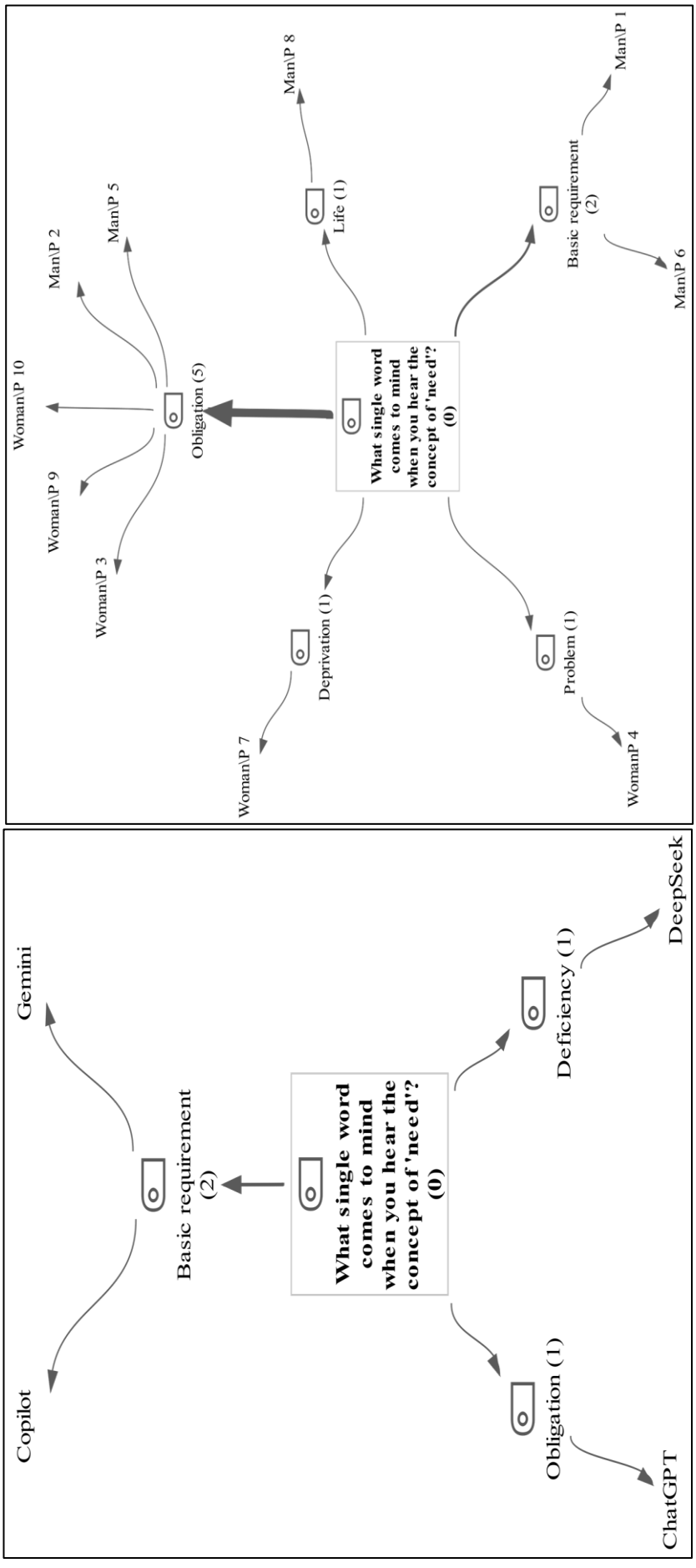

Figure 1. Model of the notion of need by academics and AI – codes, subcodes, and sections.

requirement (*n* = 2), *life* (*n* = 1), *deprivation* (*n* = 1), and *problem* (*n* = 1). In contrast, the responses generated by AI predominantly emphasized *basic requirement* (*n* = 2), followed by *obligation* (*n* = 1) and *deficiency* (*n* = 1). A comparative examination reveals that *obligation* and *basic requirement* constitute the principal shared associations across both groups.

The Notion of Brand

The responses concerning the notion of brand, derived from both academics and AI applications, were visualized through Maxqda and are presented in Figure 2.

The words associated with the concept of brand by academics were 'quality' (2), 'trust' (2), 'distinctive' (2), 'perception' (1), 'image' (1), 'identity' (1), and 'Apple' (1). In contrast, the responses obtained from AI indicate that all four AI applications associated the brand concept with the term 'identity' (4). When examining the shared perception of the two groups, it is noteworthy that the concept of 'identity,' mentioned only once by the academics, was consistently observed across all AI applications.

Concept of Innovation

The responses from academics and AI applications regarding the concept of innovation were visualized using Maxqda and are presented in Figure 3.

The concept of innovation was associated by academics with ten different responses. These words were 'fashion' 'mandatory,' 'change,' 'solution,' 'benefit,' 'development,' 'technology,' 'originality,' 'attractiveness,' and 'perceived change.' In contrast, the responses obtained from AI indicate that ChatGPT and Copilot associated the concept with 'differentiation' (2), DeepSeek with 'transformation' (1), and Gemini with 'development.' The shared association between the two groups is the term 'development,' expressed both by Gemini and one academic.

The Concept of Consumer

The responses regarding the concept of consumer, provided by academics and AI applications, were visualized using Maxqda and presented in Figure 4.

The concept of consumer was associated by academics primarily with the term 'buyers,' mentioned twice, while the other responses were distinct. These terms included 'key,' 'benefactor,' 'consumption,' 'brand-loyal,' 'emotional,' 'target,' 'individual,' and 'purchase.' In contrast, the AI responses indicate that Copilot and Gemini associated the consumer concept with the term 'focus,' ChatGPT with 'buyers,' and DeepSeek with 'target.' The shared association between the two groups was the term 'buyers,' expressed by ChatGPT and two academics.

Concept of Strategy

The responses from academics and AI applications regarding the concept of strategy were visualized using Maxqda and are presented in Figure 5.

The concept of strategy was associated by academics primarily with the term 'plan,' mentioned four times, while the other six responses were distinct. These terms included 'path,' 'horizon,' 'knowledge,' 'tactic,' 'emotional,' 'competition,' and 'thinking.' In contrast, the AI responses indicate that DeepSeek and Copilot associated the strategy concept with 'path,' ChatGPT with 'plan,' and Gemini with 'orientation.' Examining the shared associations between the two groups, the term 'plan,' expressed by four academics and ChatGPT, and the term 'path,' expressed by DeepSeek, Copilot, and one academic, emerged as common associations.

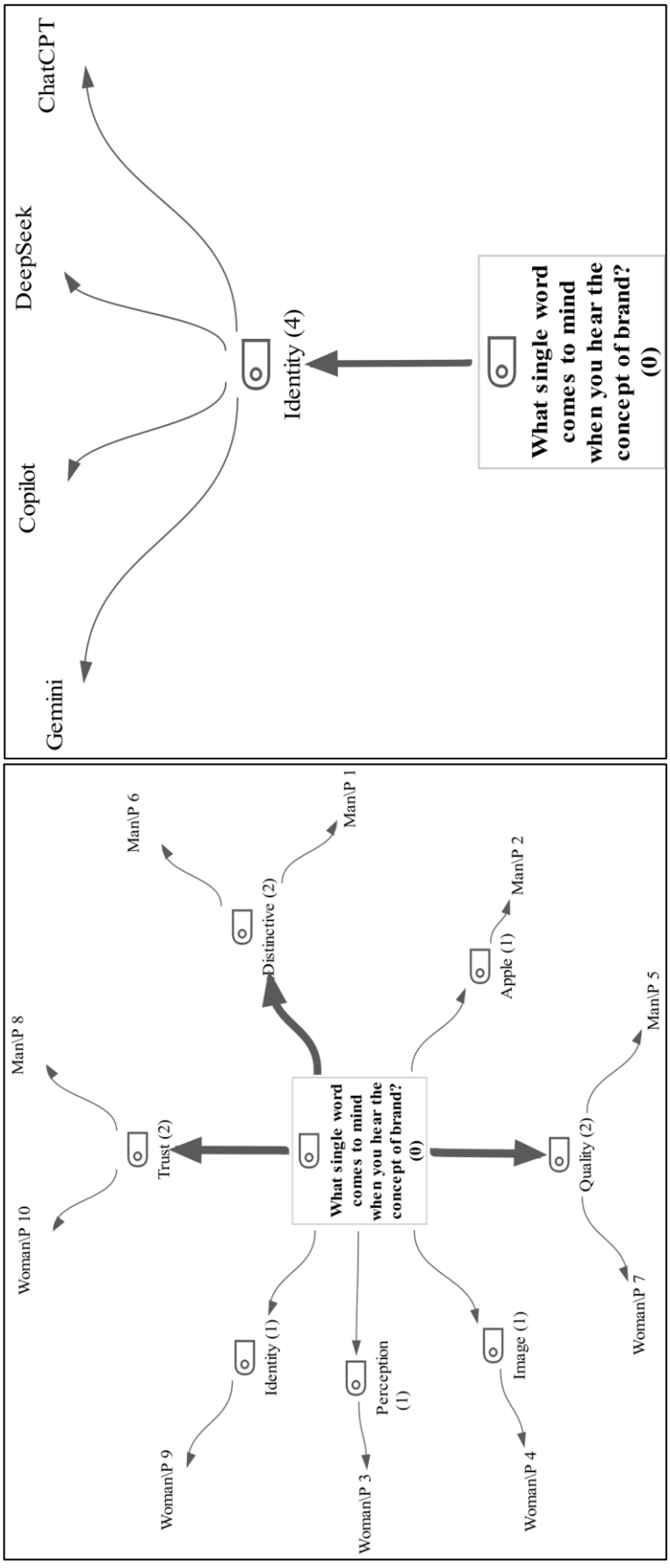

Figure 2. Academics and AI: brand concept – code-subcode-category model.

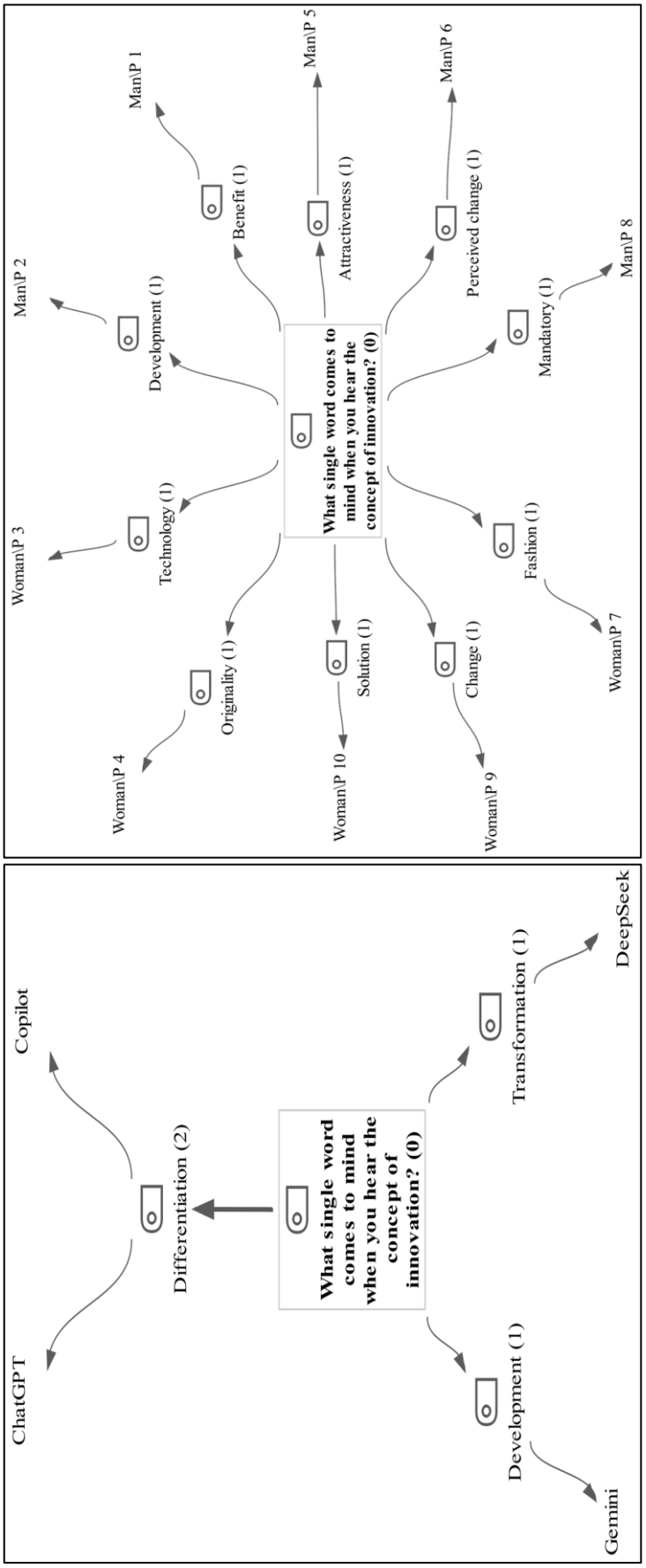

Figure 3. Academics and AI: innovation concept-code-subcode-category model.

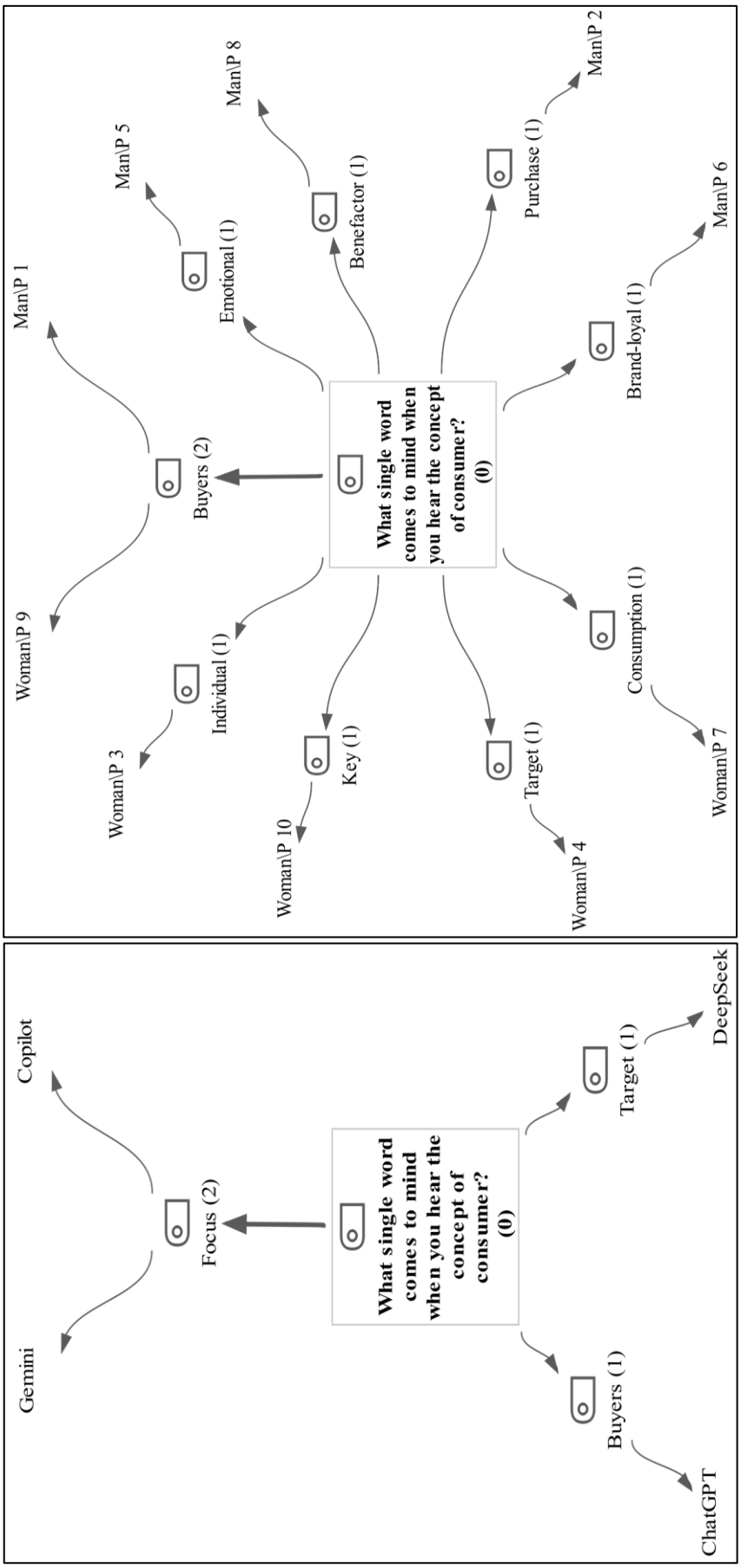

Figure 4. Academics and AI: consumer concept-code-subcode-category model.

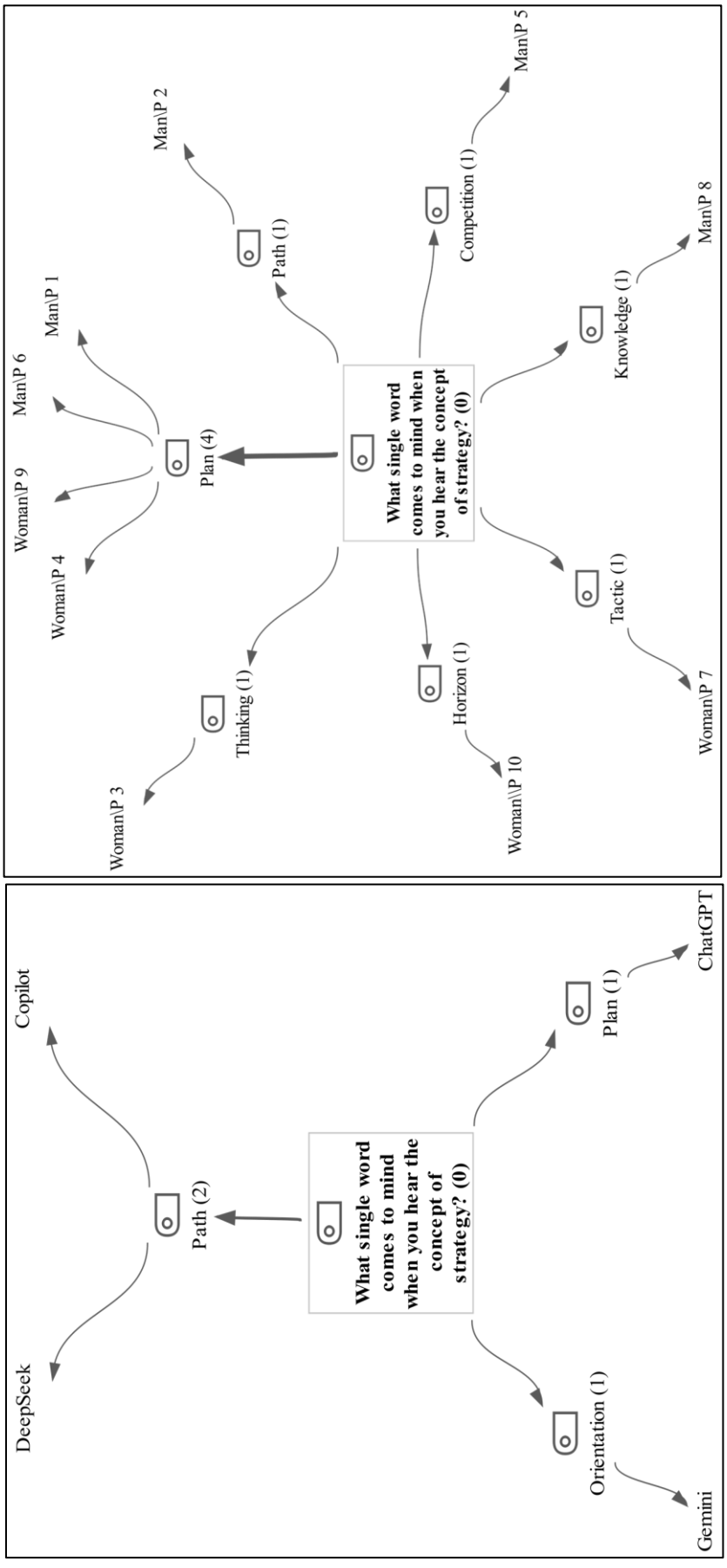

Figure 5. Academics and AI: strategy concept-code-subcode-category model.

Concept of Loyalty

The responses from academics and AI applications regarding the concept of loyalty were visualized using Maxqda and are presented in Figure 6.

The concept of loyalty was associated by academics primarily with the term ‘commitment,’ mentioned four times, and ‘trust,’ mentioned twice, while the other responses were mentioned only once. These responses included ‘value,’ ‘friend,’ ‘concistency,’ and ‘trust.’ In contrast, all AI applications associated the term ‘commitment’ with loyalty. The term ‘commitment,’ frequently expressed by both academics and AI applications, was therefore considered the primary association with the concept of loyalty.

Concept of Trust

The responses from academics and AI applications regarding the concept of trust were visualized using Maxqda and are presented in Figure 7.

The concept of trust was associated by academics primarily with the term ‘belief,’ mentioned twice, while the other eight responses were distinct. These terms included ‘performance,’ ‘communication,’ ‘brand,’ ‘compliance,’ ‘confidense’ ‘peace of mind,’ ‘success,’ and ‘sincerity.’ In contrast, ChatGPT, Gemini, and Copilot associated the concept with the term ‘reputation,’ whereas DeepSeek used the term ‘belief.’ The shared association between the two groups was the term ‘belief,’ expressed by DeepSeek and two academics. The focus of three AI applications on the term ‘reputation’ is also a noteworthy observation.

Concept of Experience

The responses from academics and AI applications regarding the concept of experience were visualized using Maxqda and are presented in Figure 8.

The concept of experience was associated by academics primarily with the terms ‘emotion’ and ‘memorability’ each mentioned twice, while the other six responses were distinct. These terms included ‘satisfaction,’ ‘life,’ ‘age,’ ‘experiencing abstract feelings’ ‘work,’ and ‘purchase.’ In contrast, Copilot and Gemini associated the concept of experience with ‘interaction,’ DeepSeek with ‘emotion,’ and ChatGPT with ‘life.’ The shared association between the two groups was the term ‘emotion,’ expressed by ChatGPT and two academics.

Concept of Pleasure

The responses from academics and AI applications regarding the concept of pleasure were visualized using Maxqda and are presented in Figure 9.

Among academics, the concept of pleasure was primarily associated with the term ‘contentment,’ mentioned three times, and ‘satisfaction,’ mentioned twice, while the other six responses were distinct. These terms included ‘acting as one pleases,’ ‘attractİveness,’ ‘moment,’ ‘transience,’ and ‘chocolate.’ In contrast, responses from AI applications linked pleasure as follows: Copilot and DeepSeek with ‘contentment,’ ChatGPT with ‘contentment,’ and Gemini with ‘emotion.’ The only term shared between the two groups was ‘contentment,’ expressed by Copilot, DeepSeek, and three academics.

Concept of Competition

The responses from academics and AI applications regarding the concept of competition were visualized using Maxqda and are presented in Figure 10.

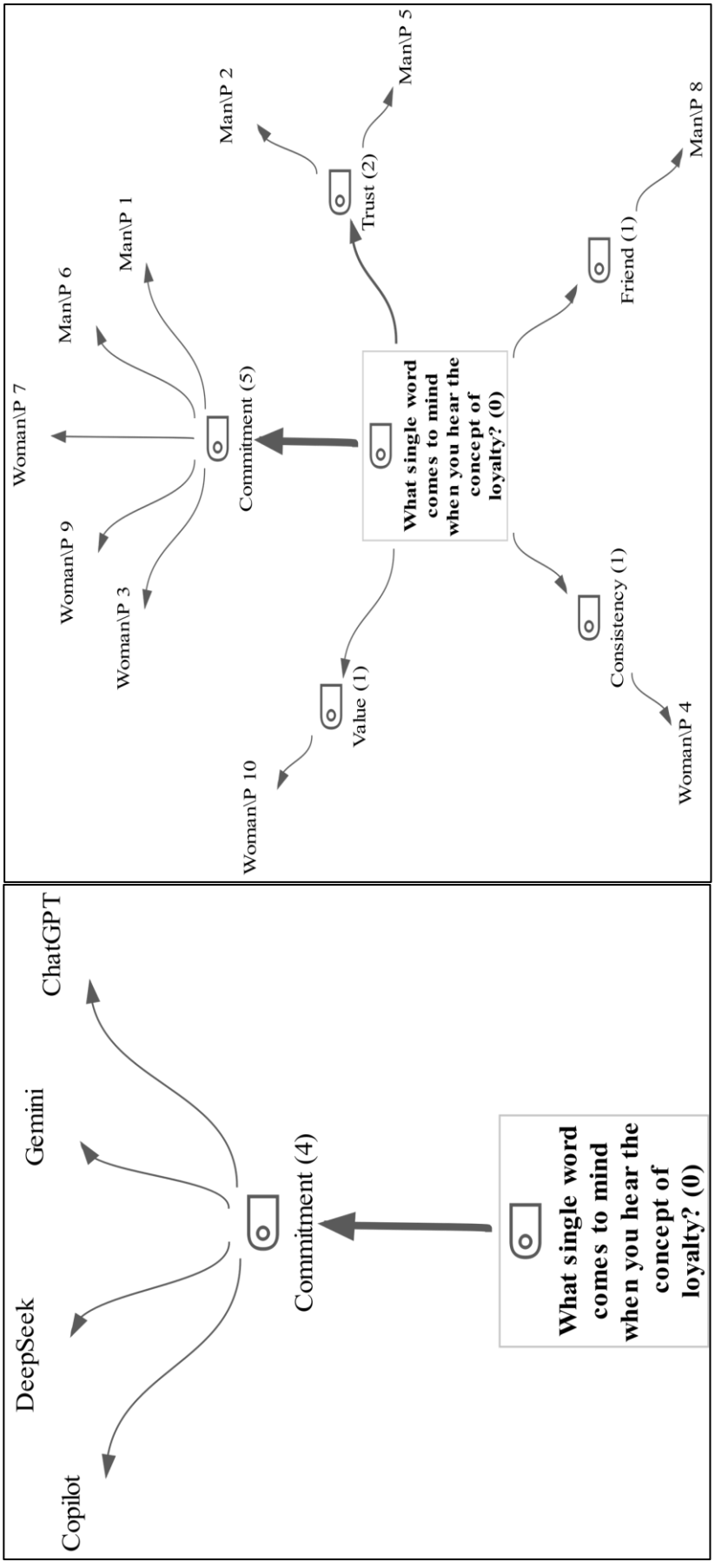

Figure 6. Academics and AI: loyalty concept – code-subcode-category model.

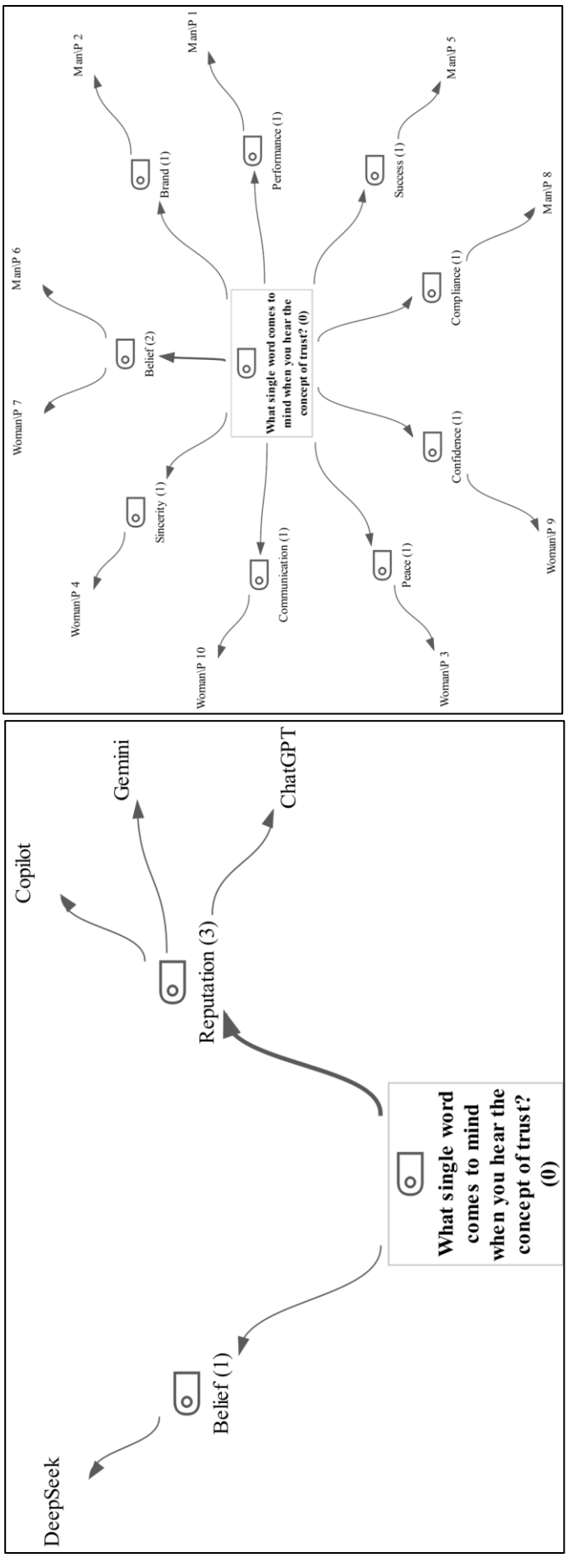

Figure 7. Academics and AI: trust concept – code-subcode-category model.

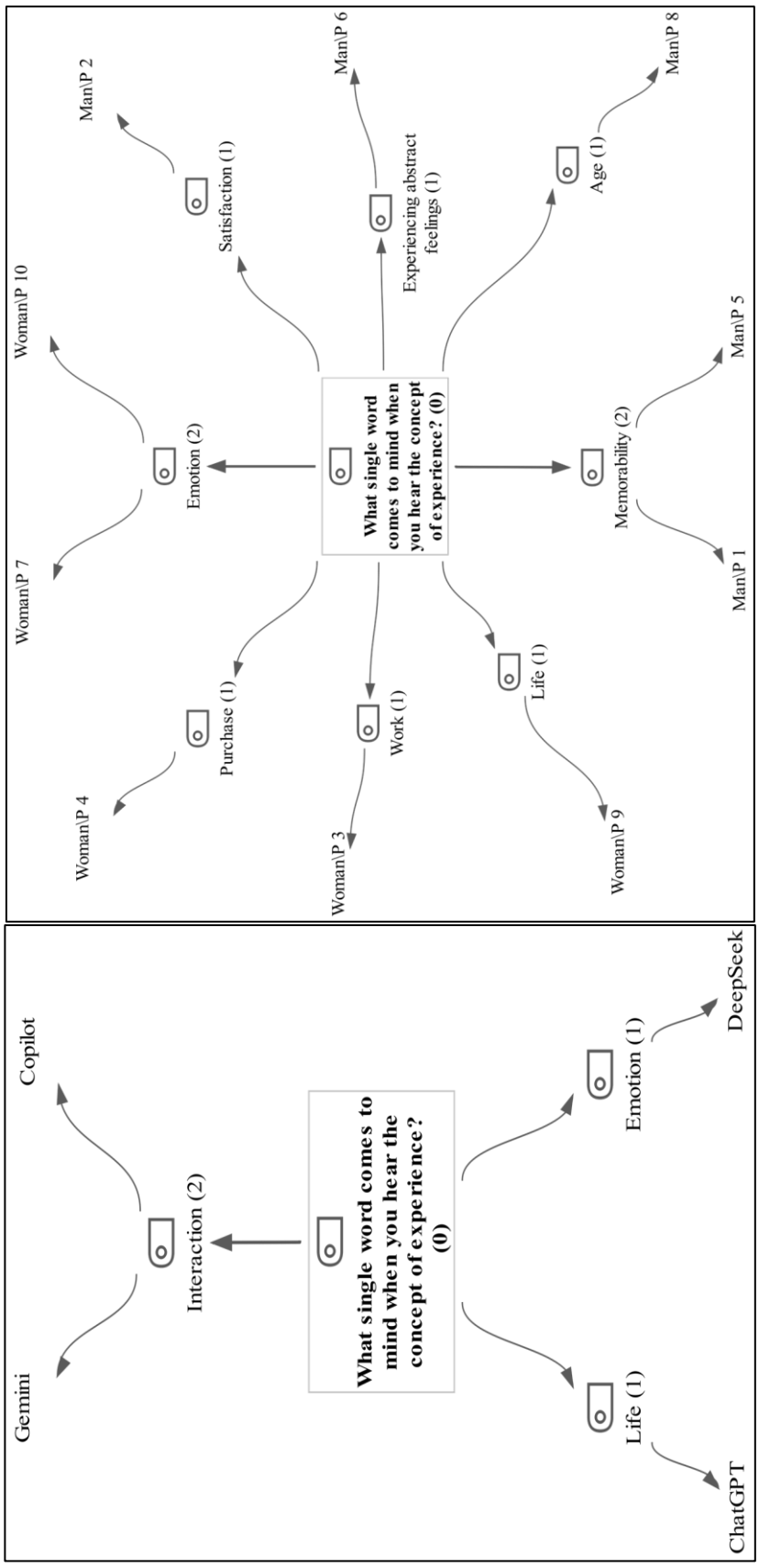

Figure 8. Academics and AI: experience concept – code-subcode-category model.

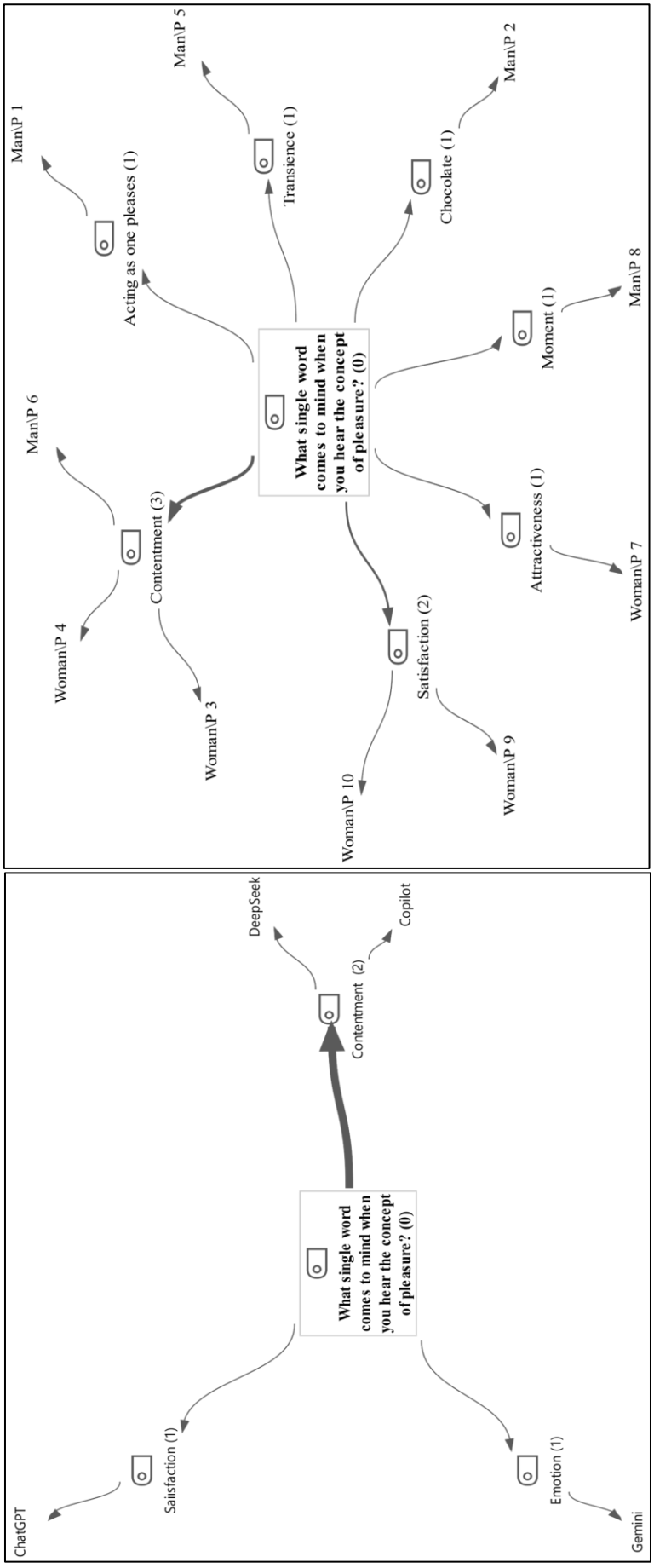

Figure 9. Academics and AI: pleasure concept – code-subcode-category model.

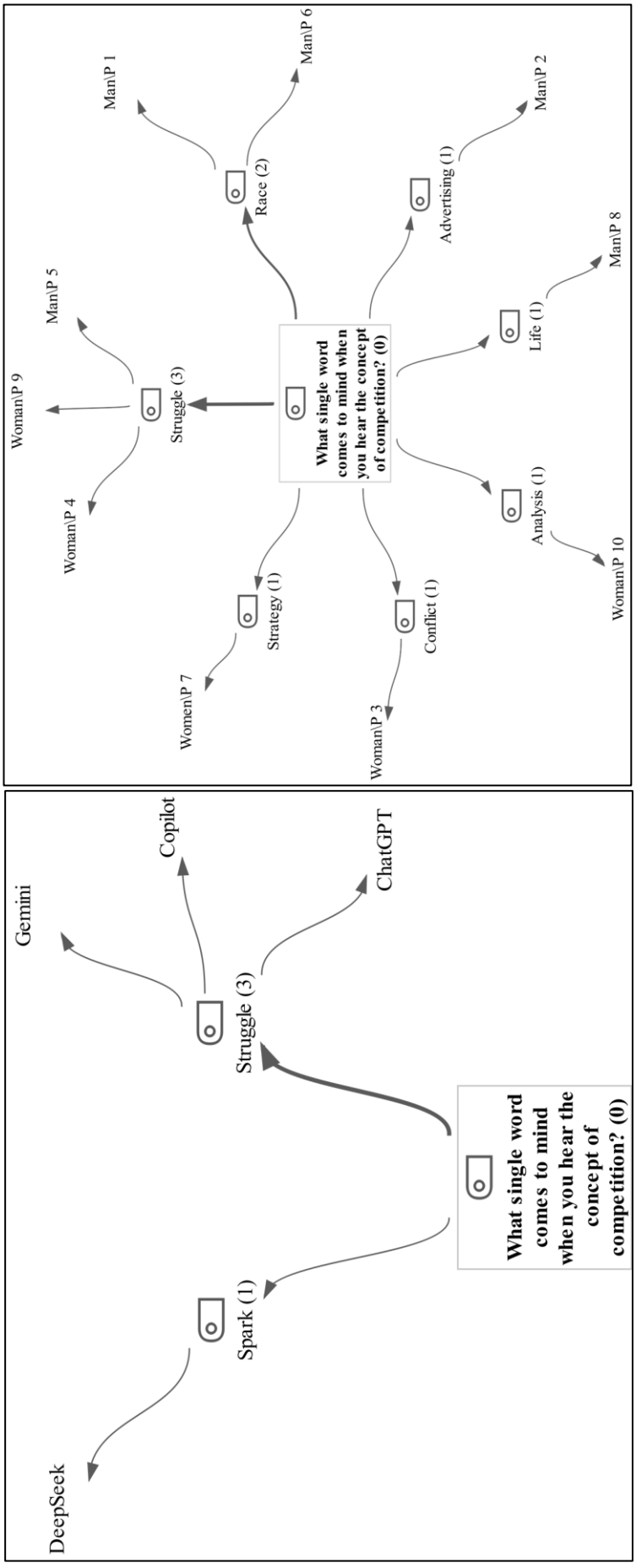

Figure 10. Academics and AI: competition concept – code-subcode-category model.

The concept of competition was associated by academics primarily with the term ‘struggle,’ mentioned three times, and ‘race,’ mentioned twice, while the other five responses were distinct. These terms included ‘life,’ ‘conflict,’ ‘analysis,’ ‘strategy,’ and ‘advertisement.’ In contrast, the AI responses associated the concept of competition as follows: ChatGPT, Gemini, and Copilot with ‘struggle,’ and DeepSeek with ‘spark.’ The shared association between the two groups was the term ‘struggle,’ expressed by ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, and three academics.

MARKETING STRATEGY PHASE

Marketing academics and AI applications were asked the following question to develop solution strategies for a case scenario.

Scenario

Brand X is a company producing eco-friendly and sustainable fashion products. Its target audience consists of young, environmentally conscious individuals. However, recently the brand has observed a decline in customer purchase frequency and loyalty. Eco-friendly products are often left in shopping carts without completing the purchase. EcoTrend aims to address this behavior by revisiting its marketing strategy.

Question

What consumer behavior strategies can be applied to resolve EcoTrend’s customer loyalty problem?

The responses from academics and AI applications regarding Brand X’s customer loyalty problem were coded and visualized using Maxqda through code, subcode, and data visualization procedures. The resulting findings are presented in Figure 11.

The coding and visualization of responses from academics revealed that strategies were suggested under five main codes. Among these, the most frequently mentioned was ‘marketing strategy’ (15), along with related recommendations. Within the subcodes of the ‘marketing strategy’ main code, ‘promotional activities’ (5), ‘influencer collaboration’ (3), and ‘storytelling’ (2) were emphasized. For the ‘target audience analysis’ (9) main code, subcodes included strategies such as ‘price perception’ (3), ‘conscious lifestyle’ (2), and ‘market research need’ (2). Under the ‘consumer behavior’ main code, strategies such as ‘engaging in digital interaction’ (3), ‘purchase mativation’ (2), and ‘altitude-behavior discrepancy’ (2) were proposed. For the ‘perception of sustainability’ (8) main code, strategies included ‘awareness of environmental contribution’ (3), ‘demonstration of tangible contribution’ (2), and ‘increasing appeal and accessibility’ (2). Finally, under the ‘brand perception’ main code, two subcodes were identified: ‘increasing brand loyalty and affiliation’ (2) and ‘sensitivity and goodwill’ strategies.

The AI applications’ responses to the customer loyalty problem were organized into eight main codes. Among these, ‘personalized marketing’ (9) was the most frequently mentioned strategy. This was followed by ‘loyalty programs’ (6), ‘value and emotional communication’ (5), ‘community building’ (4), ‘experiential marketing’ (4), ‘social proof and engagement’ (3), ‘behavioral economics’ (2), and ‘return and risk reduction’ (1).

Although both academics and AI applications identified strategies such as personalization and the demonstration of tangible contributions, the responses of both groups ultimately converged on the importance of establishing a strong, trust-based, and enduring relationship with customers as a means of addressing loyalty challenges. These insights can be conceptualized within a broader strategic framework encompassing practices such as systematic customer monitoring and satisfaction assessment, communication- and engagement-oriented marketing planning, brand image development and trust cultivation, maintenance of price-value equilibrium, and the design of targeted campaigns and loyalty programs.

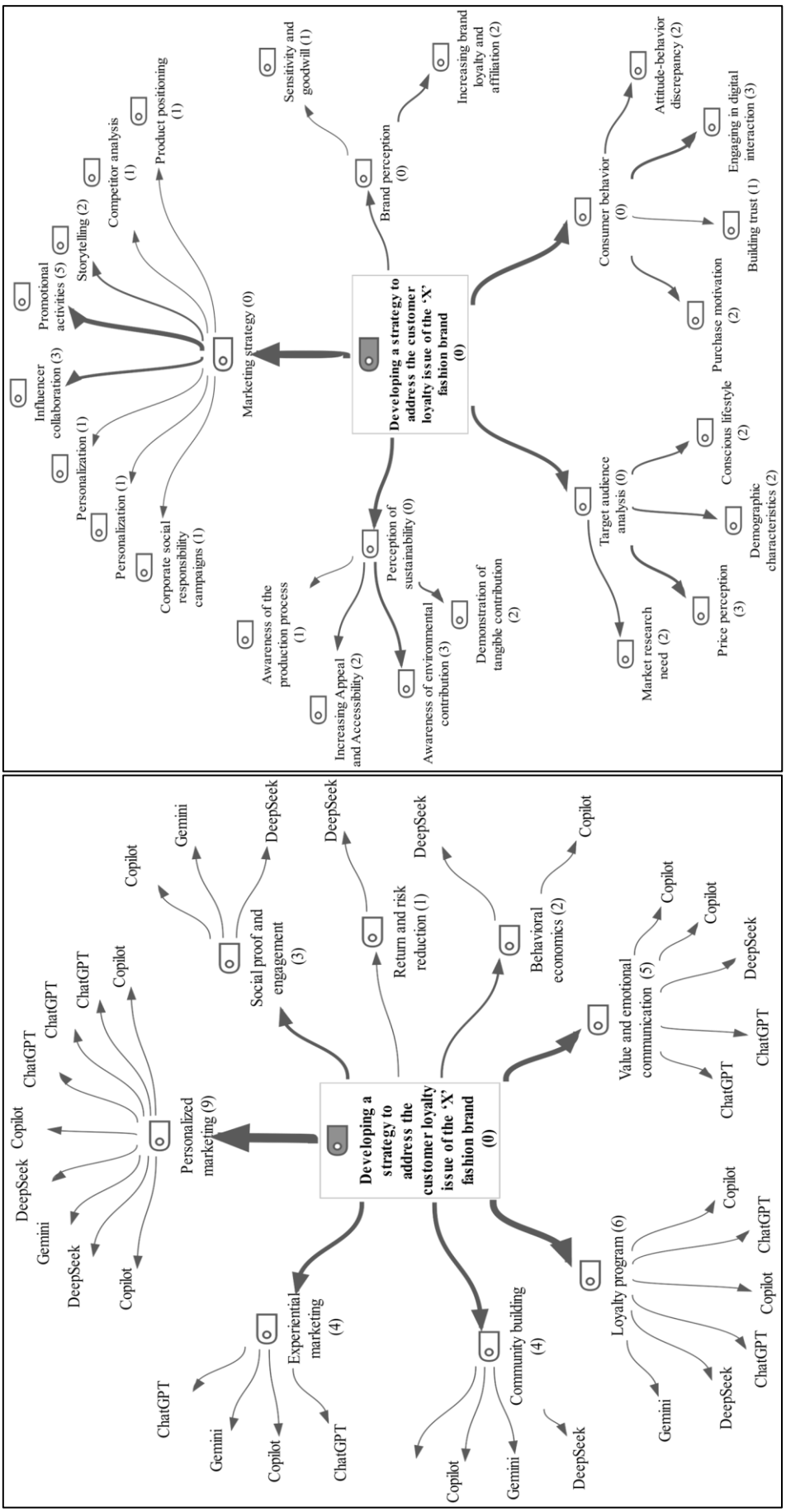

Figure 11. Customer loyalty problem solution strategies.

THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN MARKETING

Marketing academics and AI applications were asked the following questions to gather their views on the impact of AI on marketing activities and strategies, consumer preferences, customer loyalty, and the positive and negative effects of AI on marketing. The interviews were analyzed using the Maxqda program, and the results were visualized. In the visualization, positive opinions are shown in full line, while negative opinions are indicated with dashed lines.

1.) How does AI change consumers' shopping habits? Specifically, how do personalized recommendations and targeted advertisements affect consumers' decision-making processes?
2.) What are your views on the impact of AI on building customer engagement and loyalty?
3.) How does the use of AI enhance the effectiveness of marketing strategies?
4.) What potential pitfalls or challenges does AI create in the field of marketing?
5.) What are the benefits of using AI in marketing?
6.) What are your overall views on the impact of AI on marketing?

The Impact of AI on Consumers' Shopping Habits

How does AI alter consumers' shopping habits? In particular, how do personalized recommendations and targeted advertisements influence decision-making processes? The responses to this question were coded and visualized using Maxqda, as shown in Figure 12.

Academic responses (shown on the left side of Figure 12) contained both positive and negative evaluations. The most frequently coded and positively perceived response was 'Personalization with AI is convenient and enjoyable' (7). Other positive remarks, expressed once each, included 'traditional communication is intrusive,' 'AI anhances brand loyalty,' and 'AI is used as an assistant/advisor.' Negative effects noted by academics included 'Identification with AI increases consumption' (2), 'algorithmic guidance limits consumer autonomy' (1), 'AI manipulates consumer behavior' (1), and 'AI conveniences leed ton on-spending' (1).

AI application responses mirrored these trends. The most frequently coded and positive response was 'Personalization with AI is both convenient and enjoyable' (5), Another code was 'AI is fundamentally transforming shopping habits' (2). Codes reflecting potential negative impacts included 'AI conveniences can lead to non-essential spending' (3) and 'Targeted advertisements increase consumption' (2).

AI's Impact on Customer Loyalty and Engagement

What is your perspective on AI's effect in fostering customer loyalty and engagement? Responses were coded and visualized in Maxqda, as shown in Figure 13.

Academic responses contained both positive and negative perspectives. The most frequently coded and positive views were 'AI builds consumer-brand connections through personalization' (8) and 'AI fosters customer loyalty through customer relationship experiences' (4).

Other responses included 'AI fosters emotional and behavioral customer loyalty' (2), 'the use of AI in e-commerce positively impacts consumer loyalty' (2), 'Rational choice recommendations made by AI undermine brand loyalty' (2), 'AI contributes to customer loyalty but is not sufficient on its own' (2) and 'Addressing consumer uncertainties reinforces loyalty' (2).'Negative views included 'AI's rational choice recommendations may undermine brand loyalty' and 'in a competitive environments, customers may switch to other brands.

AI application responses highlighted 'AI builds consumer–brand connections through personalization' (4), 'AI fosters emotional and behavioral customer loyalty' (3), 'AI fosters customer loyalty through real-time experiences' (3), and 'AI contributes to customer loyalty but is not sufficient on its own' (1). Negative remarks included 'The lack of human interaction may weaken the emotional bond' (1) and 'Over-personalization creates privacy concerns' (1).

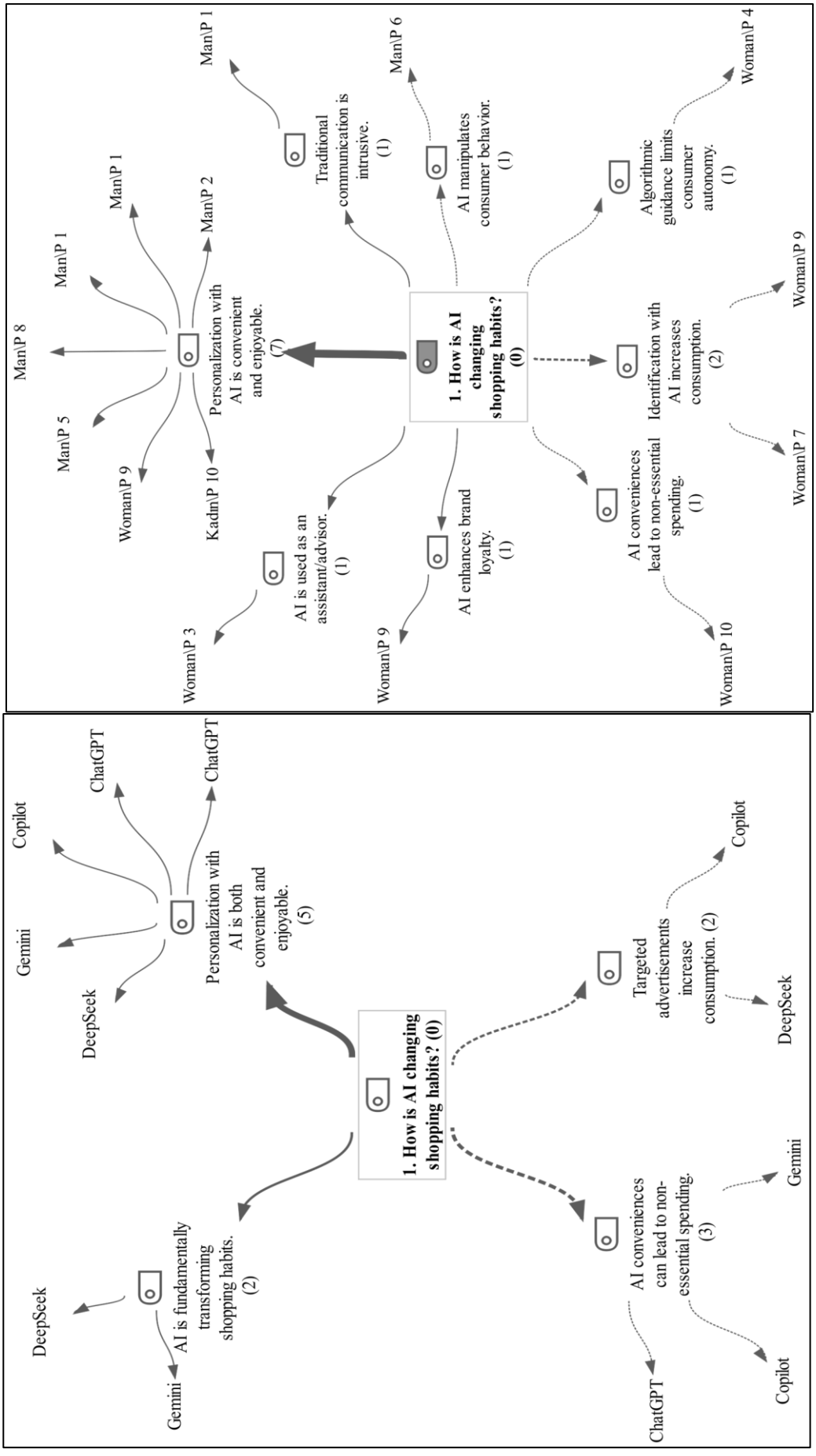

Figure 12. AI applications' impact on consumers' shopping habits – code-subcode-category model.

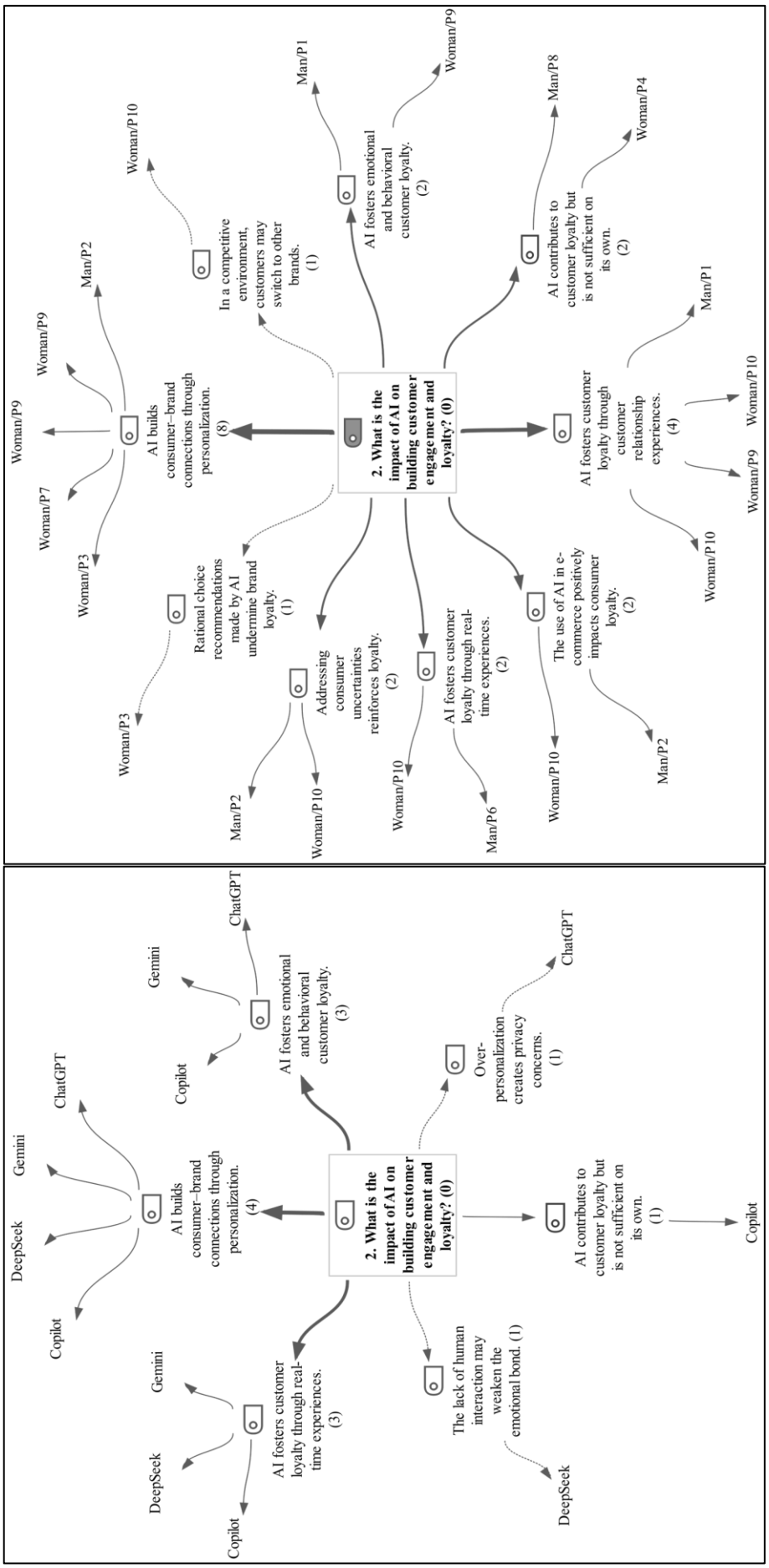

Figure 13. AI applications' impact on customer loyalty and engagement – code-subcode-category model.

Contribution of AI to Marketing Strategy Effectiveness

What potential pitfalls or challenges does AI introduce in marketing? Responses were coded and visualized using Maxqda, as shown in Figure 14.

In Figure 14, the responses of academics on the left include both positive and negative comments. The views expressed by academics regarding the contribution of AI to the effectiveness of marketing strategies are as follows: 'target audience analysis and segmentation' (6), 'personalization and content creation' (6), 'forecasting and prediction' (4), 'data analysis and decision support' (3), 'optimization and feedback' (3), 'competitive analysis' (2), 'product and packaging design' (1), and the negative opinion 'ethical and data security risks' (2).

In the context of AI's contribution to the effectiveness of marketing strategies, the responses obtained from AI applications were as follows: 'It optimizes mass campaigns' (4), 'AI enhances the effectiveness of marketing strategies.' (3), and 'AI can identify target audiences quickly and accurately through its analytical capabilities.' (3).

Potential Pitfalls or Challenges of AI

Responses regarding AI's potential pitfalls or challenges were visualized in Maxqda, Figure 15.

Academic responses highlighted: 'data privacy, security risk, and misuse' (4), 'technology access and competitive disadvantages' (4), 'ethical issues and algorithmic biases' (4), 'weakening of human skills and excessive dependence on technology' (3), 'reduction of human touch and customer relationships' (3), 'cultural standardization, loss of content originality, and creativity' (2), and 'risk of incorrect or insufficient recommendations' (1). In the same context, the views expressed by AI applications include: 'data privacy, ethics, security risks, and misuse' (4), 'algorithmic biases' (4), 'weakening of human skills and excessive dependence on technology' (2), technology access and competitive disadvantages' (1), and 'risks of incorrect or insufficient recommendations' (1).

Benefits of Using AI in Marketing

What are the benefits of using AI in marketing? Responses were coded and visualized using Maxqda, as shown in Figure 16.

In the context of the benefits of using AI in marketing, the views expressed by academics are as follows: 'Accurately identifying the target audience and increasing sales' (8), 'Decision support and development of personalized messages' (8), 'Cost reduction and fostering innovation' (6), 'Rapid access through data analysis and big data management' (6), 'Personalized recommendations and time savings through automation' (5), 'Data-driven rapid decision-making and product simulation' (4), 'Consumer research and marketing environment analysis' (2), and 'Efficiency in inventory management and sales forecasting' (1).

Regarding the same question, the responses given by AI applications are: 'Personalized recommendations and time savings through automation' (3), 'Increased operational efficiency' (3), 'Accurately identifying the target audience and increasing sales' (2), 'Consumer research and marketing environment analysis (1), 'Cost reduction' (1), 'Decision support and development of personalized messages' (1), 'Rapid access through data analysis and big data management' (1), 'Enhances customer experience and satisfaction' (1), and 'Efficiency in inventory management and sales forecasting' (1).

4.3.6. The Impact of AI on Marketing

What is your perspective on AI's impact on marketing? Responses were coded and visualized using Maxqda, as shown in Figure 17.

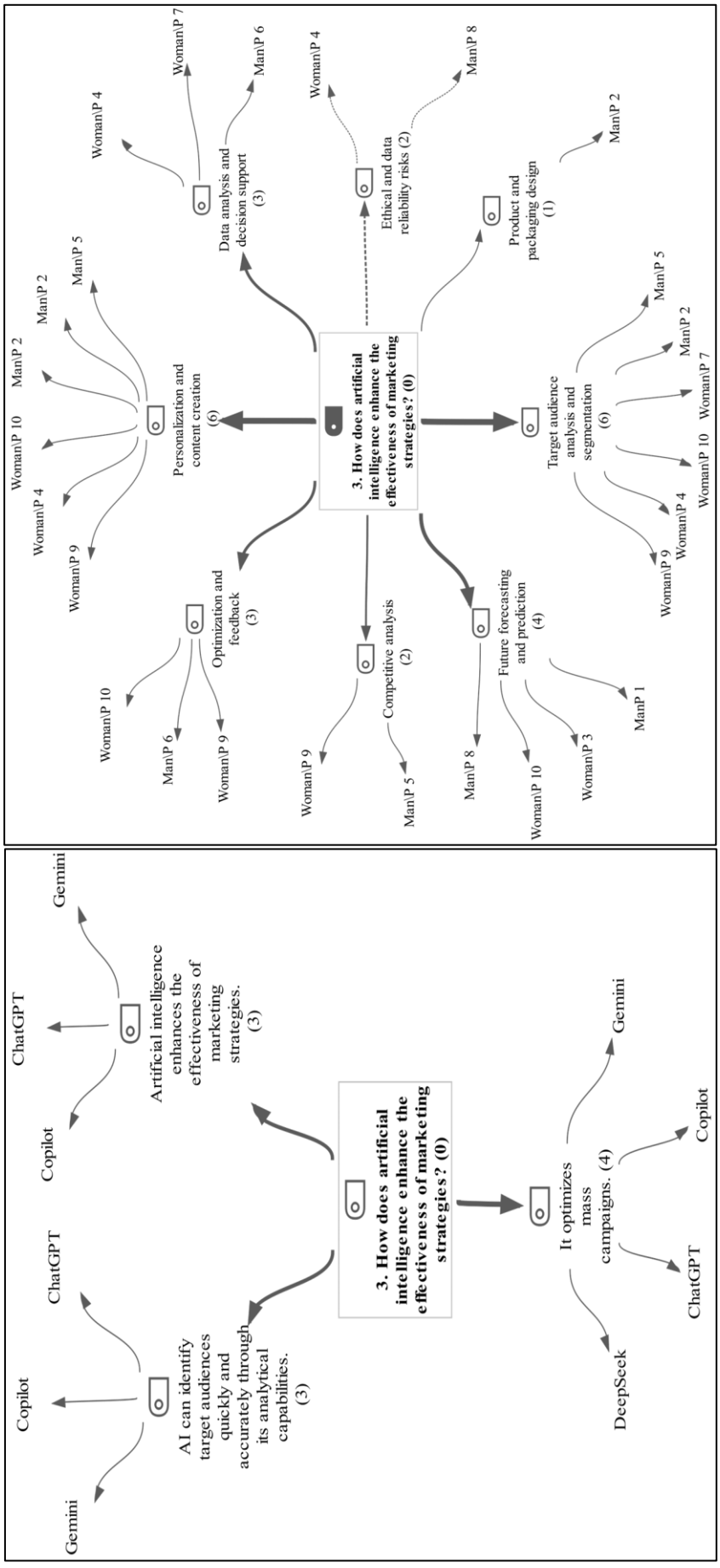

Figure 14. AI's contribution to marketing strategy effectiveness – code-subcode-category model.

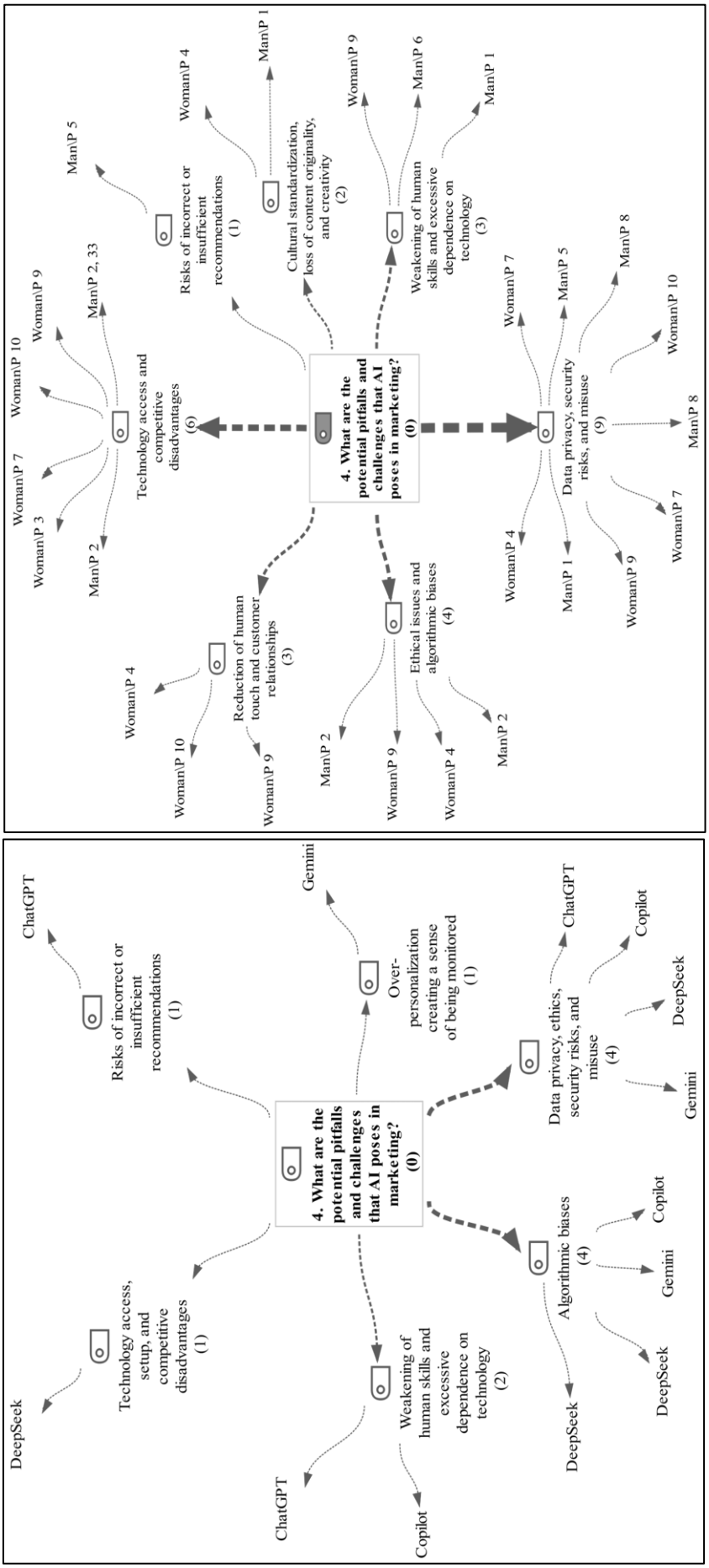

Figure 15. Potential pitfalls or challenges of AI – code-subcode-category model.

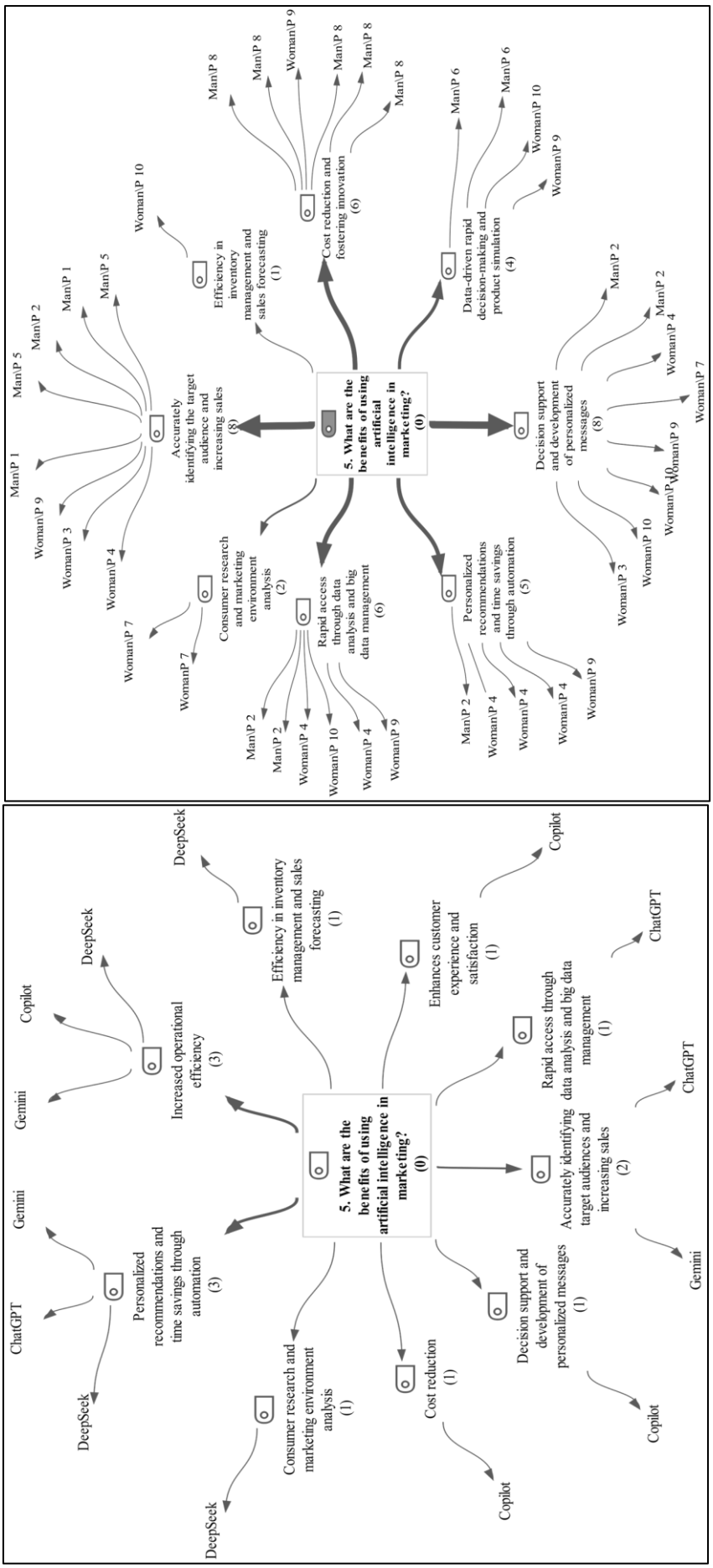

Figure 16. Benefits of AI in marketing – code-subcode-category model.

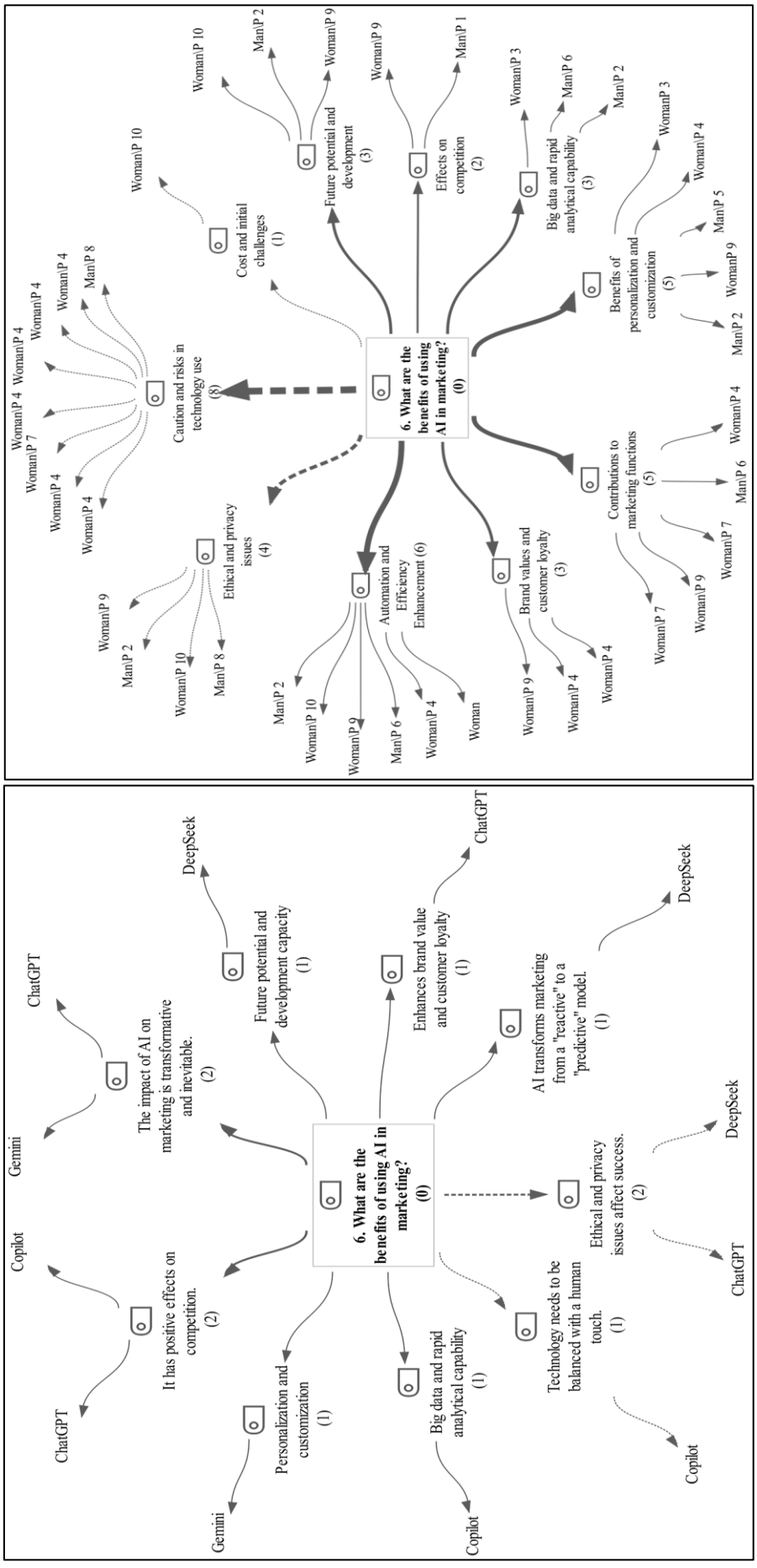

Figure 17. AI's impact on marketing – code-subcode-category model.

In the context of the impact of AI on marketing, the views expressed by academics are as follows: 'automation and efficiency enhancement' (6), 'Contributions to marketing functions' (5), 'Benefits of personalization and customization' (5), 'Big data and rapid analytical capabilities' (3), 'Future potential and development' (3), 'Brand values and customer loyalty' (3), and 'Impact on competition' (2). Although some negative views were also expressed, the most frequently mentioned concern, with eight references, was 'caution and risks in technology use' (8). Other negative views included 'ethical and privacy issues' (4) and 'Cost and initial challenges' (1).

In response to the same question, AI applications stated: 'The impact of AI on marketing is transformative and inevitable' (2), 'It has positive effects on competition' (2), 'Personalization and customization' (1), 'Big data and rapid analytical capabilities' (1), 'AI transforms marketing from a 'reactive' to a 'predictive' model' (1), 'It enhances brand value and customer loyalty' (1), and 'It holds future potential and development capacity' (1). AI applications also expressed two negative views on the use of AI: 'Ethical and privacy issues affect success.' (2) and 'Technology needs to be balanced with a human touch' (1) 'affect success' (2) and 'technology must be balanced with human touch' (1).

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study presents a comparative analysis of human and AI perspectives regarding perceptions of core marketing concepts, strategic decision-making capabilities, and the impact of AI technologies on marketing. The findings reveal how human-centered knowledge and algorithmic processing power intersect and diverge within marketing thought, providing a multidimensional understanding of this relationship.

In the first stage, the conceptual association analyses demonstrated that AI applications provided more consistent and single-focused responses, whereas the academics' interpretations were more diverse, context-specific, and creative. For instance, while both humans and AI perceived the concept of 'need' as 'necessity' and 'basic requirement,' AI associated 'brand' almost uniformly with 'identity' and 'loyalty,' whereas academics offered a more nuanced and multifaceted perspective. This indicates that AI develops a representation based primarily on semantic proximity rather than conceptual depth.

In the second stage, similar divergence was observed in the strategies developed for a sample customer loyalty problem. Academics tended to focus on abstract and long-term factors such as target audience analysis, price perception, sustainability, and brand image, whereas AI applications proposed operational strategies aimed at direct solutions, including personalization, experiential marketing, behavioral economics, social proof, and loyalty programs. Both groups, however, converged on the objective of establishing an ongoing, emotionally driven relationship with customers, though their approaches and language differed.

In the third stage, in-depth insights into the perceived effects of AI on marketing were assessed. Both academics and AI applications agreed that AI enhances personalization, data analysis, customer relationship management, and decision-making processes. Nonetheless, academics placed greater emphasis on the potential negative implications of AI, including the manipulation of consumer behavior, restriction of autonomy, ethical risks, data security, algorithmic bias, and the diminishing human touch in marketing interactions. AI applications, while acknowledging these risks, generally maintained a more technology-centric optimism. Ultimately, both groups converged on the view that AI is a powerful enabler of marketing strategies, yet its ultimate value is realized when complemented by human intuition, ethical sensitivity, and contextual intelligence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, it is recommended that marketing practitioners strategically integrate AI technologies to build more meaningful and personalized customer relationships. AI-supported applications are particularly relevant in loyalty programs, experiential marketing, and digital engagement, as highlighted by both academics and AI systems.

Moreover, businesses should position socially conscious themes such as sustainability not merely as symbolic elements but also as tools to establish emotional bonds with customers. In this regard, human-centered strategies such as storytelling, influencer collaborations, and community-building should be thoughtfully balanced with AI-driven recommendations. Higher education institutions are also encouraged to incorporate AI-based analytics, data literacy, and digital strategy development into undergraduate and graduate marketing curricula, equipping future marketing professionals with the competencies required in a technology-driven landscape.

For marketing researchers, it is recommended that conceptual associations and strategic decision-making processes be re-examined using larger and more diverse samples, as well as interdisciplinary approaches. Additional analyses framed within psychosocial theories and decision-making models could further clarify the similarities and differences between human cognition and AI-generated responses.

LIMITATIONS

This research was conducted using a qualitative method with a limited number of participants. The sample included only ten marketing academics working in Turkey and four different AI programs, which limits the generalizability of the findings. This suggests that conceptual associations and strategy-generation patterns may vary according to cultural, institutional, or individual factors. Furthermore, the responses of AI applications are subject to change depending on time, version, and prompt design, meaning that they carry an inherent degree of contextual variability.

Additionally, the interpretation of AI responses should take into account the limitations of algorithms that mimic human language. The answers provided are not the result of conscious meaning-making but of probabilistic predictions based on statistical patterns. Therefore, AI outputs should not be treated as equivalent to human thought but rather evaluated as a form of cognitive simulation.

Finally, this study focused only on a limited set of marketing concepts and a specific case scenario, which restricts the ability to make generalized conclusions for the entire field of marketing. Future research could deepen these qualitative comparisons through broader conceptual frameworks and more complex, real-world case studies.

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