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The role of social media systems in driving marketing efficiency and business profitability: A case of the Automobile sector of the UK

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Abstract
This study investigates the role of social media in driving marketing efficiency and business profitability within the UK automotive sector. The topic addresses a gap in current literature concerning the quantitative impact of social media on key business performance indicators. The primary objectives are to quantify the relationship between social media metrics and marketing efficiency, analyse the impact of social media activities on profitability, and identify the most influential social media platforms and metrics. The study employs a quantitative design using a descriptive and correlational approach with a multiple case study of five leading automotive companies: Tesla, Renault, Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz, and Porsche. The methodology relies on collecting five years of secondary financial data and social media engagement data. The results reveal a complex and non-uniform relationship between social media engagement and business success. For brands like Tesla and Renault, expensive, high-engagement content on platforms like Instagram and YouTube showed a negative correlation with Marketing Efficiency Ratio (MER), suggesting a trade-off between short-term efficiency and long-term brand building. Conversely, premium brands like Mercedes-Benz and Porsche demonstrated that a well-aligned multi-platform strategy can positively impact profitability metrics like ROI and ROA. A unique finding was the significant positive influence of niche platforms like Tumblr on Porsche's profitability, even without a direct link to sales, highlighting the value of building brand equity and community. The study concludes that the effectiveness of social media is highly contingent on the brand, platform, and specific business goals, recommending a data-driven, strategic approach rather than a one-size-fits-all model.
Keywords: Market efficiency, Social media, Business profitability, Automotive, ROA and ROI

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The current business environment was turned upside down with the spread of social media sites, as it changed the way organisations promote their services/products and engage prospective consumers, create brand equity, and implement marketing strategy (Rapp, Beitelspacher, Grewal, & Hughes, 2013). Such a digital shift is especially strong in high-touch industries, such as the UK automotive market, where the consumer path is lengthy and complicated, and consumers are likely to learn through a lot of search and word-of-mouth (Driftrock, 2024). More channels of marketing (traditional sources, like television advertising, printed media, and so on) have been supplemented by more advanced digital marketing tools, which, at least in some cases, have replaced them (SMMT, 2021).

The change in paradigm of promotional model to a two-fold, interactive model of communication has required redefining and reconceptualising the meaning of marketing success. In this sense, it became a subject of high importance in terms of both academic research and practice to investigate the complex connection between social media activity and business performance (Nisar & Whitehead, 2016; Chen & Qasim, 2021). Car manufacturing in the UK is one of the backbones of the country, with a very competitive market where only a wide variety of market participants, both traditional luxury carmakers and new producers of electric vehicles (EVs), compete (Deloitte, 2025). The level of digital maturity in the industry

has tremendously improved, and companies no longer only use social media to generate brand awareness, but also as a platform of customer service, community development and sales (McPhillips, 2025). The strategies of automotive brands towards building strong stories and high-quality content as a way of attracting the target population go even further, as brands cease to promote products only, focusing on telling stories about how their model helps solve the problems and fits into the life of the target audience at its various stages (Camplone, Köstring, Hahn & Kerschbaumer,, 2024). Strategies such as visual storytelling, video marketing, as well as user-generated content (UGC) are a solid marker of the ubiquity of social media in the marketing enhancing industry (CarBreakers, 2024).

1.2 Problem Statement

Although social media marketing has become widespread in the industry, there is a huge gap related to the quantification of the direct influence on business essential elements in the UK automotive industry. Though there is uniformity of opinion that social media is a highly influential tool for brand building and customer engagement, there is still a consistent indistinctness on exactly how these activities can give rise to quantitative financial benefit (Kumar, Bhaskaran, Mirchandani, & Shah, 2013). Numerous attempts to quantify human-oriented aspects, like brand reputation and brand sentiment, have faced interpretative problems in linking them with objective, measurable issues related to marketing performance and profitability of a business (Srivastava & Rastogi, 2025). To the automotive companies, this is a dilemma because they feel forced to spend a lot of resources on social media, but most cases do not have an effective strategy that might measure the ROI on social media (Malik & Srivastava, 2025). The list leads to strategic planning being based on anecdotal information or vanity metrics, rather than evidence-based ideas of the things that count in terms of overall performance (Camplone, Köstring, Hahn & Kerschbaumer,, 2024; Driftrock, 2024). In addition, having an altered social media landscape characterised by the atomization of social media poses a problem for the researchers and practitioners. Platform variety of platforms-Every platform has different audience demographics and content formats and depending on the character of their needs or wants, various platforms are influential to various characterises in the purchasing experience (Camplone, Köstring, Hahn & Kerschbaumer, 2024). To illustrate, YouTube is an essential channel when it comes to long-format car reviews and even demonstrations, whereas Instagram is widely used to tell stories and promote the lifestyle brand (McPhillips, 2025). The issue is that the platform itself and isolated engagement metrics (e.g., likes, shares, comments, views) play is very hard-to-unpack to unpack determining their individual and aggregate effects on marketing efficiency and profitability of an enterprise (Srivastava & Rastogi, 2025). This issue is further compounded by the fact that performance of the automotive industry is not only affected by the plethora of external factors, such as the state of the economy, changes in regulations, and consumer trends in broader context, but it is also a complex and challenging task to isolate the impact of social media on the overall performance of automotive industry (Deloitte, 2025; SMMT, 2021).

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

This study seeks to address the identified problem by exploring the following core research questions:

1. To what extent do social media engagement metrics (e.g., follower growth, post frequency, and engagement rates) correlate with measures of marketing efficiency (e.g., Marketing Efficiency Ratio) in the UK automotive sector? (Nisar & Whitehead, 2016).

2. What is the relationship between social media presence and business profitability metrics (e.g., ROI and ROA) for major automotive manufacturers operating in the UK? (Kumar et al., 2013).
3. How do the contributions of different social media platforms (Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Reddit, and Tumblr) vary in their impact on a company's marketing efficiency and overall business profitability? (Chen & Qasim, 2021; Malik & Srivastava, 2025).

Based on these questions, the study's primary objectives are to:

- Investigate and quantify the relationship between social media metrics and marketing efficiency in the UK automotive industry.
- Analyse the impact of social media activities on the profitability of select UK automotive companies.
- Identify the most influential social media platforms and their specific metrics that contribute most significantly to a company's financial success (Camplone, Köstring, Hahn & Kerschbaumer, 2024; McPhillips, 2025).
- Provide a data-driven framework that can assist automotive marketers in allocating resources more effectively across social media channels to optimise their marketing efficiency and business profitability (Srivastava & Rastogi, 2025).

1.4 Significance of the Study

The research is significant both practically and theoretically to most stakeholders. From a theoretical point of view, the study increases the knowledge on digital marketing and the firm performance topic, which has already been the subject of numerous recent studies (Ko, Lee and Lee, 2023). By operationalising social media effectiveness, the operationalisation is hinged upon the merger between the measure of engagements and the financial ratios; it not only surpasses the other more qualitative approaches, as evident in the effectiveness measures, but also offers a platform that is more elaborate and quantifiable. These results have assisted in ratifying presently conjectural models of how the digital marketing abilities relate to performance at the firm and can even conjecture novel ones, which are offered as a background to the study of this evolving industry (Nisar & Whitehead, 2016; Srivastava & Rastogi, 2025). In a practical sense, the research provides the most valuable information to marketing managers and strategists of the UK automotive market. The outcomes have acted as a guide to devising more impactful social media winning strategies, as they point out what outlets and actions bring the highest returns (Driftrock, 2024). Putting a strategic cap on those metrics that are most strongly correlated with marketing effectiveness and profitability, the companies are able to realign their efforts into what really counts, to shift away from the scattergun to achieve a more focused and effective method to achieve marketing success. This has the possibility of resulting in an effective spending of the marketing budgets, better returns on investments and eventually, a superior competitive edge in the market. Moreover, the results do not apply to the retail sector only, and they can be extrapolated to other types of high-ticket consumer products; thus, the study may have strategic importance to the business community in general (Camplone, Köstring, Hahn & Kerschbaumer, 2024).

2 Literature Review

2.1 The Contemporary Automotive Marketing Environment

Since the start of the decade, the automotive industry has experienced a very fast and profound digital transformation, shifting away from its long-established purview involving the traditional mass media to a much more nuanced approach, based on social media (SMMT, 2021). This transformation is not just the transformation of channels of advertising, but it is the restructuring of the approach of the brands to the conversation with the consumers (Chen & Qasim, 2021). The digital environment is now the main consumer engagement battleground as a brand needs to compete through connectivity and build online communities instead of pushing out promotional messages (McPhillips, 2025). The consumer pathway has gotten more complex and unstructured, with social media platforms playing a significant role as touchpoints at the beginning as well as the end of research (Driftrock, 2024) and acting as the channel in between. The modern literature supersedes on how social media has evolved to be the main market where consumers conduct their research, connect to, and are now more than ever buying vehicles (Malik & Srivastava, 2025). This is quite contrary to the pre-2020 marketing, which revolved around visiting dealerships and the use of traditional media. Now, brands have to know how to create through visual storytelling, the use of influencers, and user-generated content (UGC) to stay relevant (CarBreakers, 2024). To give an example, video-sharing websites such as YouTube and Instagram have become a necessity when presenting cars via detailed reviews, immersive virtual tours, and breathtaking visuals, which can directly translate to consumer perception and the desire to possess it (Camplone, Köstring, Hahn & Kerschbaumer, 2024). The shift has also enabled the automotive companies to connect with newer and very targeted demographics and create brand loyalty that is stronger than the brand loyalty created by traditional advertising (Camplone, Köstring, Hahn & Kerschbaumer, 2024). The agility of social media marketing has also played a significant role in meeting the market demands, such as a shift towards electric vehicles (which are also referred to as EVs) and the growing sustainability demands of consumers (Deloitte, 2025).

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks in a Digital Context

In a bid to examine the consequences of social media critically, modern studies use and recalibrate existing theoretical frameworks. The Resource-Based View (RBV) is thus a continuation of the work of its predecessors, but at the same time, an extremely applicable view used to understand how the modern firm has a competitive advantage based on its unique capabilities. A firm involved in social media, in the context of the UK automotive industry, have the strategic capacity to engage customers on digital platforms, create content, and analyse the same in real time as a unique asset, that is, it is an asset that is unique to firms and can be discussed as valuable, rare, and inimitable to firms (Nisar & Whitehead, 2016). The recent research refines this idea, saying that it is the efficient implementation of these possibilities that enables a brand to perform better and stand out from the crowd (Srivastava & Rastogi, 2025). This outlook changes the emphasis on the superficial existence on social media to the development and strategic use of such online resources as a competence. Moreover, the application of Social Capital Theory is being increasingly used to grasp the value that is created through online communities belonging to a company. Social capital itself, which denotes the legitimacy of social networks, is developed directly on platforms such as Facebook groups and Reddit forums, where fans exchange insights and experiences (Chen & Qasim, 2021). When the automotive brands incorporate such interaction into the web, they multiply the level of believing and feeling belonging in brand promotions and eWOM (CarBreakers, 2024). This eWOM (Worlds of Mouth) is a pejorative term used to describe a form of social proof, which,

according to new studies, carries more weight in consumers' opinions than brand advertising (Srivastava & Rastogi, 2025). The capability to control and take advantage of this social capital is a distinction of successful automotive companies nowadays. The technology behind it also incorporates artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics so that companies can extract desirable insights on this social capital base, which can also improve their marketing and product strategies (McPhillips, 2025).

2.3 Social Media's Role in the Evolved Car Buying Journey

The entire journey of a modern car buyer is one of the digital kinds, with social media serving as its core and everlasting element. The available information on the topic discussed since 2020 is unanimous: the process of information gathering and making decisions by consumers is dominated by the digital medium (Camplone, Köstring, Hahn & Kerschbaumer, 2024). As an instance, a survey conducted in the UK in 2024 on car buyers revealed that 40 per cent of the potential car buyers have accepted targeted social media advertisements, which is high as compared to a few years ago (Camplone, Köstring, Hahn & Kerschbaumer, 2024). This emphasises how much the use of social media has impacted the consideration and evaluation procedures of the buying process. Video content is too significant to mention; the second most used search vehicle is YouTube, after Google, by car buyers to find their reviews, walkthroughs, and comparisons (Driftrock, 2024). Social media does not only focus on the first stage of research, but the whole customer cycle. Live events of car launchings, live questions and answers of the experts, behind the scenes, etc, have become a normal way of keeping the users involved and creating a buzz (Malik & Srivastava, 2025). In addition to this, the introduction of influencer marketing has presented another option through which brands can reach out to people. The word-of-mouth reputation of automotive influencers, specifically on platforms such as YouTube or Instagram, is beneficial because there is a sense of credibility and authenticity that brands do not receive using celebrity endorsements (Srivastava & Rastogi, 2025). The specifications, reviews, test drives, and comparisons given by these influencers make the content more emotional and usually directly translate into conversion of purchase intentions (CarBreakers, 2024). After purchase, social media continues as one of the key areas of customer service and community creation as corporations proactively enter customer dialogue to balance brand reputability against generating brand advocates out of satisfied customers (Driftrock, 2024).

2.4 The Quest to Quantify Marketing Efficiency

The key strategic issue to which the automotive marketers should address is the issue of changing the qualitative parameters of engagement to quantitatively assess the role of social media in marketing efficiency- the correlation between the marketing budgets and the concrete business results. The dilemma of attribution becomes one of the central messages of the recent literature because the consumer path is not a straightforward linear one anymore (Malik & Srivastava, 2025). It is challenging to locate the precise social media engagement that causes a particular sale in case the client has possibly been subjected to numerous online and offline contacts (Camplone, Köstring, Hahn & Kerschbaumer, 2024). However, there is some up-and-coming research that is beginning to show a more realistic portrayal. Research has begun inquiring about the relationship between certain measures of social media and the performance of businesses. One of the examples is a report that demonstrates that strategic usage of indicators of engagement, which include likes, shares, and comments, can deliver brand recognition and reduce costs per acquisition rather than using traditional vehicles (Srivastava & Rastogi, 2025). A major strength often conferred on social media is its cost-effectiveness, where the price of advertising on the platforms has been a small percentage of an advertisement

carried out on a TV, and despite that, reaching a global population can be a narrowed-down audience (Malik & Srivastava, 2025). Besides, even social media on its own is data-rich, which means very advanced analytics can be performed on it, updating and optimising the marketing strategy in real-time, and as such, streamlining the efficiency of the show marketing budget (McPhillips, 2025). This shift of a more analytical nature has been a crucial step in the past few years, which enables companies to work more informed when it comes to allocating resources.

2.5 The Impact on Business Profitability

In the end, any marketing strategy should be evaluated based on how it contributes to the profitability of the business, and such a case is well supported by the literature after 2020, pointing to the beneficial, albeit mostly secondary, effect that social media can produce. Most recently conducted studies hold the view that proper use of social media strategy could have an impact on the financial performance of a firm (Nisar & Whitehead, 2016). This is mainly through a few important mechanisms. To begin with, social media can produce brand value and brand equity that may allow setting a premium price and creating high profit margins (Srivastava & Rastogi, 2025). A good reputation, a strong, trusted brand on social media, is a more asset to the consumers, and conversion can be directly influenced. Second, an active social media aspect of the sales funnel has been created, and a lot of brands, as well as dealerships, use social media platforms to place their inventory, close deals, and even make transactions online (Camplone, Köstring, Hahn & Kerschbaumer, 2024). This has especially been more evident in the post-2020 period, when online sales channels have gained more importance than ever before. This can be used to retarget customers who have shown an interest in a vehicle online and encourages them to go through the sales process to create a quantifiable connection to revenue-generating activities (Driftrock, 2024). Lastly, the use of social media increases customer retention and loyalty, thus enhancing long-term profitability. Offering such a platform offers brands the ability to create customer service and community interaction with clients, therefore, boosting customer satisfaction, reducing churn, and establishing a group of repeat purchasers and brand champions (CarBreakers, 2024). This sustainable value cannot easily be attributed to any one post, but as is clear, it becomes a contributing factor to the sustained profitability.

2.6 Synthesis and Identification of Research Gaps

The modern literature well illustrates just how social media has become part of the automotive industry in the UK. Social media has transformed the way brands sell their products, communicate with customers and develop brand identity, and both qualitative and quantitative advantages of doing so have been named (Driftrock, 2024; SMMT, 2021). This change is properly explained by the theoretical basis of it, and the Resource-Based View or Social Capital Theory are the prominent theories that can help to comprehend how social media capabilities should be utilised to achieve a competitive advantage (Nisar & Whitehead, 2016; Chen & Qasim, 2021). The irrefutable penetrating effect of social media on the car-buying journey of the consumer, as well as the possibility of using social media to make business profitable, is equally well-documented in the most current literature. Nevertheless, there are several major research gaps. The existing body of research is all in agreement that social media in general has a very positive effect, but there is a demonstration of further, more detailed, long-term research is required to pinpoint and measure the direct financial contributions of various individual social media platforms in the UK automotive household (Malik & Srivastava, 2025). There has been a lot of research on the role of social media without a discussion of the specific activities of platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn, only to mention a few and how they correlate with certain financial performance measures. Moreover, there are no recent

and comparative case studies of various automotive manufacturers in the UK (Deloitte, 2025). This paper fills the gaps that contain minimal (or no) recommendations to contextualise social media engagement outcomes on marketing efficiency and profitability ratios by utilising a range of UK-based automotive companies as a case study to develop a multi-case analysis.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an elaboration of the methodology to be used in the research with the view of understanding the role of social media systems in the advancement of marketing efficiency and business profitability in the UK automobile industry. It gives a clear description of the proposed research design, the scope of the population and sample, the operationalisation of all the variables, the method of data collection and the research data analysis techniques to be used. The entire purpose is to have an investigation rigorous and systematic enough to yield reliable, valid, and academically significant answers to the research questions. The method is based on the services of modern scientific knowledge and coincides with the modern studies of digital marketing and performance of a firm (Nusair et al., 2025; Zeqiri et al., 2024).

3.2 Research Design

This study uses a quantitative study design, that is, a descriptive and a correlational approach. The design is very appropriate since it enables one to systematically study the interactions between the dependent and independent variables (marketing efficiency, business profitability and the social media engagement metrics). Correlational design is especially useful where there is no manipulation of the independent variables, targeting the establishment of a relationship between these variables in terms of its existence, how strong such relationships are, and the direction involved. The research takes the form of multiple case studies because it concerns five leading automotive companies that operate in the UK market. The effectiveness of this design choice is condoned by other related research studies adopting a case-based approach, their explorations of the influence of digital marketing on firm performance, and consumer behaviour (Jing, 2023).

The major strength of this approach is that it is possible to thoroughly analyse individual companies, thus retrieving rich, divergent data, on the one hand, and to conduct a comparative analysis between the cases on the other hand. After comparing the results of these five market giants, it is possible to get generalised conclusions about the entire industry. Although a correlational design permits one to generalise, the aspect of case study can be present to such an extent that the generalisations offered are buttressed by in-depth, company-specific evidence.

3.3 Population and Sample

The automobile sector in the UK is the target population since the turnover of cars in the UK relates to the time the cars were produced. Competition is keen and the usage of digital marketing is catching fast in this sector, and because of this, this study can be considered to perform well in this field. With such a huge population, it is through a purposive sampling process that a non-random sample of large automotive companies shall be selected.

The sample that was chosen consists of: Tesla, Renault SA (RNO), Volkswagen AG (VOW3), Mercedes-Benz Group AG (MBG), and Porsche. There were a few reasons why these companies were selected. First, they are quite diverse in the number of market segments they represent, including the pioneers of the electric vehicle market (Tesla), well-established premium brand manufacturers (Porsche, Mercedes-Benz) and mass-market manufacturers. (Volkswagen, Renault). This kind of diversity produces a more representative analysis of the industry. Second, the companies are all highly documented and present on social media, which

is essential in the data collection process. Third, their financial information is readily available, and this is a requirement of the study conducted using secondary data. It is also strategically chosen in tandem with studies which have particularly investigated social media marketing practices in the business activities of major industry players such as Tesla in the electric vehicle business, which therefore forms a benchmark of analysis (Jing, 2023).

3.4 Variables and Operationalisation

- Independent variables (IVs): The relationship between two broad categories of variables analysed in the study. Standing-out information includes information like A variety of quantitative measures have been collected on six popular Social Media platforms, including Facebook, X, Tumblr, Instagram, Reddit, YouTube, and LinkedIn, and are thus used to measure the operationalisation of this variable. The indicators act as a hurdle to the extent and impact of social media activities of any company.
    - Follower/Subscriber Count: This included the number of followers of those involved in both platforms, as well as displaying the increase in audience daily.
    - Post Frequency: This refers to the number of posts, videos, or updates within a specific time frame.
    - Engagement Metrics: Engagement metrics include likes, shares, comments, and views of the posts, and they are quite essential to activate the issue of engagement and content attraction (Malik & Srivastava, 2025; Socialinsider, 2025), used to come up with the average rate of engagement across all the platforms.
- Dependent Variables (DVs): Marketing Efficiency and Business Profitability.
  It is operationalised about the special and generally accepted financial indicators:
    - Marketing Efficiency has been measured, and it is computed as follows: MER=Total Sales Revenue/ Total Marketing Expenditure.
    - Business Profitability: This measure is determined based on two important measures, namely, Return on Investment (ROI) and Return on Assets (ROA). Company financial reports are used to collect the raw numbers used in these calculations, which will be figures of Internet Sales, Revenue and Net Income. These metrics are typical when analysing the performance of the marketing and business in both traditional and digital prospects and are regarded as a decent indicator of success (Improvado, 2025).

3.5 Data Collection

The secondary data collection method was purely applied in this study, and this entails a compilation of publicly available data. This is not only an economically viable strategy, but also one that allows resorting to the historical information that is solid enough and dates to a long time. To perform a thorough longitudinal analysis, the amount of data on each of the five companies was taken over a recent five-year period to enable the study to detect the trends and long-term relationships.

- **Financial Data:** The official financial reports, annual reports and investor relations reports form the major sources of financial data about the companies. They retrieved information through the websites of the companies and financial databases of good reputation. This information gives the required values of total marketing, total sales revenue, net income and total assets. This approach of utilising publicly accessible

financial data has long been a conventional procedure in the study of firm performance (Ko, Lee, & Lee, 2023).

- **Data in social media:** The public profiles of the companies were navigated to gather the social media data of the specified social media platforms systematically. It is a step-by-step process where the combination of manual data collection and the utilisation of third-party social media analytics tools is used to identify the number of followers, engagement rates, and other necessary metrics, done in regular intervals. The approach supersedes the research conducted on social media platforms where data analytics is undertaken to analyse feelings and understand customer attitudes towards products and the organisation (Chen, Wang, & Li, 2024).

3.6 Data Analysis

The acquired data have been analysed thoroughly using some of the statistical software, such as SPSS. The analysis went through two general steps as follows:

- Inferential Statistics: This is followed by using the inferential statistics to test the hypothesis of the research.
    - Correlation Analysis: Pearson correlation coefficient would then be employed to determine the extent of the relationship and direction of correlation between the parameters of social media (e.g., engagement rate) and the parameters of financial (e.g., ROI).
    - Regression Analysis: Multiple regression has been carried out to determine the relationship between the various social media platforms and their engagement measures to the dependent variables of MER, ROI and ROA. It also aids in finding out which social media systems are statistically significant to predict the efficiency of marketing and profitability of the business, which is commonly used to statistically model the sample in digital marketing research. (Ko, Lee, & Lee, 2023).

The regression tables of the results are presented as they are, with the exactness as stated in your request below in tables, along with the respective linear regression equations of each model. The regression equations are used depending on your unstandardized values (B) of independent variables.

4 Data analysis

4.1 Interpretation and Discussion of Regression Results

The next section gives the interpretation of the multiple linear regression of Tesla, Renault, Mercedes-Benz and Porsche. The analysis presents a higher emphasis on the statistical significance of the dependent variable on each of the social media platforms, such as Marketing Efficiency Ratio (MER), Return on Investment (ROI), Internet Sales, Revenue, Net Income and Return on Assets (ROA). The findings are presented within the context of modern studies to be able to present a sound and well-informed conclusion about each of the companies.

4.2 Tesla: Social Media Impact on Marketing Efficiency Ratio (MER)

The regression model that was fitted to Tesla with MER as the dependent variable has a good explanatory power. This shows that 85 per cent of the variance in the Marketing Efficiency Ratio of the Tesla company can be explained by the collective effect of its engagement in social media on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. The adjusted R-squared of .84 is also an indicator of a stable model, with the independent variables that have been chosen being strong predictors of MER.

Table 1: TESLA – Dependent Variable: MER

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	6.893	4.813	—	1.432	.225
Facebook	0.227	0.063	0.329	3.607	.023
Instagram	-0.710	0.092	-0.679	-7.706	.002
YouTube	-2.063	0.726	-0.249	-2.842	.047

$R = 0.87$, $R^2 = 0.85$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.84$

Regression Equation:

MER = 6.893 + 0.227(Facebook) – 0.710(Instagram) – 2.063(YouTube)

Facebook: The outcome reveals that the Facebook activity and MER have a positive correlation with overall statistical significance value (B=0.227, p=0.023). The unstandardized coefficient (B), which is 0.227, shows that as the engagement in Facebook increases by one unit, all the remaining social media variables held constant, MER increases by a corresponding unit. This observation is correlated to the contemporary literature that points out the ability of Facebook to promote high levels of targeted advertisement and lead generation (Camplone, Köstring, Hahn, & Kerschbaumer, 2024). In the case of a company such as Tesla that frequently utilises social media to promote any of its new products by informing consumers about them and referring to its platform, the highly differentiated targeting abilities of Facebook enable such a company to make almost optimal utilisation of marketing resources that increase the returns on its marketing activities. The potential of the platform of targeting a large and at the same time segmented audience is one of the reasons why this platform can be considered as a very important part of the marketing tools of the company Tesla, where the engagement will be linked directly to the more effective utilisation of the marketing budget.

Instagram: It is also statistically significant and is a big surprise too, as we see engagement on Instagram to be again negatively correlated with MER (B=-0.710, p=0.002). The negative value of the coefficient indicates that the more Tesla is involved in Instagram activities, the lower the ratio of marketing efficiency rises. This anti-intuitive outcome can be explained in a few ways. As much as Instagram is an effective tool of brand representation and video narration (Malik & Srivastava, 2025), its main usage might be pegged at developing brand equity and customer loyalty rather than immediate, measurable efficiency. The high costs of producing quality visual content to be delivered on Instagram in the form of professionally composed photographs and videos of advanced production quality do not turn into an adequate short-term payoff in the number of actual sales or lead conversions. This would cause dilution of the MER as the engagement tends to be expensive in comparison with direct financial contribution. This also vindicates an increasing body of literature that tends to indicate such a conclusion, that the success of a social media platform is critically dependent on the strategic aims of a brand, and that some platforms, such as Instagram, are more viable in the long-term brand-building goals rather than short-term efficiency measures (Srivastava & Rastogi, 2025).

YouTube: The regression analysis, too, indicates that there exists a negative correlation between YouTube involvement and MER because it is significant (B = -2.063, p =0.047). This coefficient is the negative value, which is the strongest among the three variables, indicating that the higher involvement on YouTube, the more significant decrease in the efficiency of the

Tesla marketing is observed. As in the case with Instagram, this observation can be explained by the fact that video content is very expensive to produce. Both in-office and outdoor or live shows of Tesla on YouTube demand high investment in personnel and filming with post-editing. Provided that such activities are not focused on the purposes of direct conversion of sales to brands but long-term education and exposure, the MER would, of course, decrease. The findings indicate a possible strategic trade in Tesla where it must invest in high-value and high-cost content on visual media such as YouTube and Instagram to support a premium brand image and to inform the customers, though this might reduce the effectiveness of marketing expenditure in the short run. This is consistent with the Camplone, Köstring, Hahn & Kerschbaumer (2024) findings, where they focused on the value of having and investing in digital content, of which the car buying process can be hard to reflect on direct ROI.

To sum up, in the case of Tesla, the model has shown the complicated and complex relationship between social media and MER. Although Facebook is such a strong force in marketing efficiency, the expensive engagement on Instagram and YouTube seems to hurt this stat. This raises the difference between marketing campaign that works towards immediate efficiency and those working towards building the brand and educating the customers over an extended period.

4.3 Renault: Social Media Impact on Marketing Efficiency Ratio (MER)

The regression model of Renault with the MER used as the dependent variable fits the data very well. R-squared (R^2) equals 0.90, which means that 90 per cent of the variation in the Renault relating to MER is clarified by the variables of local social media engagement. This is a very high figure, and it means that Twitter, Instagram and YouTube are very good predictors of the marketing efficiency of the company.

Table 2: RENAULT – Dependent Variable: MER

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	8.779	0.564	—	15.575	.000
Twitter	0.099	0.022	0.726	4.521	.011
Instagram	-0.085	0.025	-0.564	-3.386	.028
YouTube	0.105	0.201	0.087	0.521	.630

$R = 0.949$, $R^2 = 0.900$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.826$

Regression Equation:

MER = 8.779 + 0.099(Twitter) – 0.085(Instagram) + 0.105(YouTube)

Twitter. Almost a positive and significant correlation is present between the MER engagement on Twitter, as the correlation is (B = 0.099, p = 0.011). A one-unit increment in Twitter is related to a 0.099 increment in MER when other things remain equal. This is a critical observation that proves the effectiveness of communications platforms such as Twitter in contemporary business communications. Twitter is more real-time and focuses on direct communication with customers, customer service, and news delivery, which is why it is a great way of interacting with the customer audience. This is supported by the fact that Twitter or engagement in it moves at a faster and low rate, providing a good ratio of the effort put.

Instagram: The outcome presents that the relationship between the Instagram engagement and MER is negative (B = -0.085, p = 0.028). If we compare the result with that of Tesla, we could state that a greater adoption of Instagram among the Renault representatives negatively affects the efficiency of its marketing. This is not the only evidence of this kind of pattern; two, it happens in different brands of innovators, indicating a more general shift in the automobile industry. As important as Instagram is to represent the looks of a product and make a brand recognisable, expenditures on visual strategy might not show on the MER. It may also reflect the fact that the Instagram approach of Renault is more related to brand awareness and the development of the emotional connection with the brand, as opposed to the measurable sales conversions. This is not the first time this cost has been identified between brand-building and efficiency in marketing, as recent literature that looks at the social media ROI identifies the same aspect (CarBreakers, 2024).

YouTube: Weirdly enough, the video application (YouTube) has produced positive, although non-significant relationships with MER (B = 0.105, p = 0.630). The large p-value indicates that the relationship between MER and the brand of car is not strongly established and should not be a useful predictor of MER by Renault. This is in sharp contrast to that of Tesla. This is perhaps an indication of the fact that the Renault YouTube content strategy is not as effective or constant as its other social media strategies, or it is an indication of the fact that data on the influence of YouTube on MER is already being taken into consideration by other variables in the model. The insignificance of the regression indicates that a one-unit shift in YouTube engagement does not offer a stable fall in MER, which means that the current YouTube strategy of Renault is not a critical component in marketing effectiveness. This points out the fact that the success of a brand in a particular platform is not unanimous and depends on the content and engagement approach taken.

To summarise, Twitter has a relationship with the efficiency of marketing, whereas Instagram does the opposite. There was no significant finding regarding YouTube, and this implies that YouTube is either of no great value, or something needs to be done to bring more benefit to the MER through it.

4.4 Mercedes-Benz: Social Media Impact on Return on Investment (ROI)

The regression model of Mercedes-Benz with ROI as the dependent variable has a very good fit. R-squared (R^2) is 0.727, and it means that 72.7% of the variance in the ROI of Mercedes-Benz can be described by the social media activity of this company on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. This value is statistically significant, validating the model's ability to predict a crucial profit. This value passes the test of significance and confirms that this model could be used when predicting one of the vital measures of profitability.

Table 3: Mercedes-Benz – Dependent Variable: ROI

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	-166.774	59.155	—	-2.819	.048
Facebook	1.929	0.686	2.274	2.813	.048
Instagram	1.881	0.589	1.460	3.196	.033
Twitter	2.485	0.867	2.129	2.867	.046

$R = 0.852$, $R^2 = 0.727$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.522$

Regression Equation:

ROI = -166.774 + 1.929(Facebook) + 1.881(Instagram) + 2.485(Twitter)

Facebook: The result shows that the Facebook interface is positively and significantly associated with ROI (B = 1.929, p = 0.048). What it means is, an additional unit of Facebook engagement gives Mercedes-Benz an increment in ROI to the tune of 1.929 units. Such a great positive impact can be attributed to the effective advertising ecosystem created but Facebook. Mercedes-Benz is a high-end brand which can use Facebook to a greater extent through the highly granular targeting to reach a specific and high-net-worth person and generate sales leads compared to mass media (Driftrock, 2024). The impact on Facebook can go directly to purchase decisions because the technique of high-quality visuals and customised messages immediately impacts the rate of return on initial investment, and with the funds, has a measurable increase back into the business. This finding implies that profitability is determined by an effective data-driven Facebook strategy.

Instagram: There is a finding of a positive relationship between the two variables that are significant, and Instagram ROI and engagement are intercorrelated (B = 1.881, p =.033). This constitutes one of the major results since the results on MER are in a negative relationship in the Tesla and Renault models. The positive value also indicates that, in the case of a prestigious brand such as Mercedes-Benz, the use of Instagram in terms of investing in the visually oriented content is in direct relation to ROI. This is attributable to the fact that the platform is unique in creating high-quality brand stories and emotional engagement between consumers. The inspirational nature and lifestyle surroundings of Instagram enable a greater cost as it helps in proving its worth, thus reflecting more profits and eventually ROI. This is evidenced by a study by Malik & Srivastava (2025), which holds that social media has the capability of boosting brand value and, as a result, improving financial performance. The difference between other companies, with their Instagram coefficient being negative in ROI and positive in MER, is precisely because it is in their best interest to align the value strategy of their social media activity with the measure under consideration, and social media is being satisfied with.

Twitter: The result of the regression testing confirms the assumption that the degree of involvement with Twitter is related to ROI, and it has a fair and significant relationship (B = 2.485, p = 0.046). This coefficient is the most important one in the model, which indicates that Twitter has a significant influence on the ROI of Mercedes-Benz. Real-time Twitter enables a brand to not only interact with customers but also play a managerial role in controlling its image and countering market trends in real time. Such proactive involvement, especially in the areas of customer service and crisis management, is useful in safeguarding and developing brand equity, which is directly linked with long-term profitability. Such an outcome confirms the idea that social media is a vital instrument of proactive marketing as well as administrative-defensive reputation monitoring, which positively affects the bottom line (SMMT, 2021). To recapitulate, the Mercedes-Benz model shows the positive and evident effect of all three social media on ROI. In contrast to the other brands, in which Instagram and YouTube had a negative relationship with MER, it seems that Mercedes-Benz has carefully considered how it use those networks, and the use of both social media networks is effectively paying off, probably by driving home the image of the brand as premium and letting it make direct sales via the platforms.

4.5 Porsche: A Multi-faceted Analysis of Social Media Impact

Porsche's regression model is the most advanced in the sense that it has five models, with each of them exploring the impacts of social media on various business variables. The given multiple-faceted involvement allows us to investigate the diverse functions of different social media sources in proportion to the subsequent implications on diverse business outcomes.

Table 4: Porsche - Dependent Variable: MER

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	-0.252	0.077	—	-3.261	.031
Twitter	0.034	0.003	0.582	12.615	.000
Tumblr	0.438	0.024	0.836	18.108	.000
YouTube	-0.123	0.023	-0.243	-5.261	.006

$R = 0.896$, $R^2 = 0.892$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.886$

Regression Equation:

MER = -0.252 + 0.034(Twitter) + 0.438(Tumblr) – 0.123(YouTube)

4.5.1 Porsche: Social Media Impact on Marketing Efficiency Ratio (MER)

The Porsche MER model is a very good fit since the R-squared (R^2) value is 0.892, or 89.2 per cent of the variance in the MER is explained by the variables of social media engagement.

Twitter: it takes a positive and strong meaning if it is used with MER (B = 0.034, p = 0.000). This is in line with the evidence of Renault and the support of Twitter as an engine of marketing effectiveness, which was carried out in real-time at negligible cost and with real communication.

Tumblr: It is a remarkable outcome since the correlation is huge and very significant (B=0.438, p=.000) with MER. The extremely high coefficient denotes that the involvement of Porsche in Tumblr is a very powerful factor that influences the efficiency in marketing. Since this is a visually oriented platform, Tumblr could help Porsche to develop an enthusiastic, niche subculture of developers and fans. Such an active, albeit not so large, audience can be driving a massive return on the marketing spend, and therefore, this can be a highly effective channel for the brand. That is why it is so important to use niche platforms to perfection to reach very specific consumer segments.

YouTube, in which the two have a negative correlation (B = -0.123, p = 0.006). This is a conclusive experience about Tesla and Porsche, implying that in high-end automotive brands, high investment in the YouTube content has possibly not been serving the worth of MER, although it is an essential part of the brand-building strategy.

4.5.2 Porsche: Social Media Impact on Internet Sales

Close fit is also exhibited by this model as its R-squared (R^2) is .853. This helps it to understand that the selected social media variables are effective in forecasting the internet sales of Porsche. Internet sales are shown to have a very high and significant correlation with Twitter engagement (B=0.372, p=.022).

Table 5: Porsche - dependent variable: Internet Sales

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	19.651	2.976	—	6.604	.003
Twitter	0.372	0.103	0.398	3.628	.022
Tumblr	-6.387	0.931	-0.754	-6.861	.002
YouTube	2.087	0.900	0.255	2.320	.081

$R = .876$, $R^2 = .853$, Adjusted $R^2 = .818$

Regression Equation:
Internet Sales = 19.651 + 0.372(Twitter) – 6.387(Tumblr) + 2.087(YouTube)
The fact that Twitter serves as an efficiency factor is that it has a direct influence on transactional outcomes. The online sales process can be supported by the platform, as it can attract traffic to the website of the brand and deliver customer support in a short period of time. Compared to the MER model, there is a very negative, strong relationship between Tumblr and the internet sales (B = -6.387, p = 0.002). It is one of the key findings pointing out the distinction between brand-building and direct sales. Tumblr is a very effective tool when it comes to undertaking marketing activities (as shown in the MER model), but its utilisation does not come in the form of direct online sales. The likelihood is that the audience on Tumblr is more oriented towards inspirational content and community interaction, as opposed to transactional activity, which means that the social media site is not the ideal source of directly driven e-commerce.
It is also possible to note that the model shows a positive relationship between YouTube and internet sales, but this is not statistically significant (B = 2.087, p = 0.081). This implies that, as much as there may be a pattern, the impact of YouTube on online purchases does not offer a good forecast for Porsche. It may be the result of the fact that the platform serves as a source of information before purchasing, not a direct sales channel, as it has been mentioned in the literature at large (Camplone, Köstring, Hahn & Kerschbaumer, 2024).

4.5.3 Porsche: Social Media Impact on Revenue (m) and Net Income (m)

Both Revenue ($R^2 = 0.779$) and Net Income ($R^2 = 0.876$) models fit well, and this fact proves that social media engagement is an efficient predictor of important financial indicators. In both models, the four variables of social media (Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, and Facebook) are positively and statistically significantly related to the dependent variables.

Table 6: Porsche - dependent variable: Revenue

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	-396285.6	39547.77	—	-10.02	.00
Twitter	5649.41	530.612	3.804	10.647	.00
Tumblr	31173.34	3372.937	2.317	9.242	.00
Instagram	5460.33	603.627	3.331	9.046	.00
Facebook	3729.47	391.902	3.455	9.516	.00

$R = .790$, $R^2 = .779$, Adjusted $R^2 = .751$
Regression Equation:
Revenue = -396285.6 + 5649.41(Twitter) + 31173.34(Tumblr) + 5460.33(Instagram) + 3729.47(Facebook)
The data indicate that an integrated multi-platform social media strategy is the key towards helping a luxury brand like Porsche move both the top and bottom line. All the coefficients are positive, which shows that all the platforms help in enhancing the financial stability of the company.
It is important to note that Tumblr has the highest unstandardized coefficient as far as Revenue (B = 31173.34) and Net Income (B = 30910.63) are concerned. It is an impressive observation,

and this affects the internet sales in a negative way. This implies that the involved engagement at Tumblr plays a significant role in the general worth of the brand, which in turn would lead to total revenue and profitability, even though the sale is not made through e-commerce.
This reinforces the concept that social media's value is often indirect, mediated through brand equity and offline sales (Srivastava & Rastogi, 2025).

4.6 Porsche: Social Media Impact on ROI and ROA

Both the ROI (R^2 = 0.901) and ROA (R^2 = 0.824) models have a very satisfactory fit that supports the predictive nature of social media engagement concerning these two important metrics of profitability. All four variables of social media (Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, and Facebook) portray a strong and statistically significant positive association with ROA as well as ROI.
Such a universal and significant positive relationship that this study finds on all the platforms, as well as all the profitability scores of Porsches, is an immense conclusion. It means that in the case of a supremely developed social media strategy of a luxury brand, each platform of it can develop the financial well-being of the organisation.

Table 7: Porsche - dependent variable: Net Income

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	-395093.0	42166.57	—	-9.370	.003
Twitter	5641.63	565.749	3.795	9.972	.002
Tumblr	30910.63	3596.289	2.295	8.595	.003
Instagram	5421.43	643.599	3.304	8.424	.004
Facebook	3719.62	417.854	3.442	8.902	.003

$R = .888$, $R^2 = .876$, Adjusted $R^2 = .845$
Regression Equation:
Net Income = -395093.0 + 5641.63(Twitter) + 30910.63(Tumblr) + 5421.43(Instagram) + 3719.62(Facebook)

Table 8: Porsche - dependent variable: ROI

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	-862.75	205.613	—	-4.196	.025
Twitter	11.861	2.759	3.353	4.299	.023
Tumblr	78.249	17.536	2.441	4.462	.021
Instagram	12.491	3.138	3.199	3.980	.028
Facebook	7.934	2.038	3.085	3.894	.030

$R = .949$, $R^2 = .901$, Adjusted $R^2 = .768$
Regression Equation:
ROI = -862.75 + 11.861(Twitter) + 78.249(Tumblr) + 12.491(Instagram) + 7.934(Facebook)

Tumblr has an especially large unstandardized coefficient (B = 78.249 on ROI and B = 71.697 on ROA), and again, this proves Tumblr as an important factor in the profitability of Porsche, though its impact may be mediated (in the previous claim, it was due to the influence of Twitter). Such an outcome shows convincingly that the capacity of a brand to develop a strong, niche environment can lead to a significantly exaggerated influence on financial performance. This is aligned with the new views embedded in the literature application of social capital and brand equity to the long-term profitability (Chen & Qasim, 2021).

Table 9: Porsche - dependent variable: ROA

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	-765.37	138.423	—	-5.529	.012
Twitter	11.394	1.857	3.251	6.135	.009
Tumblr	71.697	11.806	2.258	6.073	.009
Instagram	11.553	2.113	2.987	5.468	.012
Facebook	6.685	1.372	2.624	4.873	.017

$R = 0.849$, $R^2 = 0.824$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.804$

Regression Equation:

ROA = -765.37 + 11.394(Twitter) + 71.697(Tumblr) + 11.553(Instagram) + 6.685(Facebook)

4.7 Conclusion and Broader Implications

- The regression outcomes present an elaborate and sophisticated description of the role that social media plays in the performance of the UK automotive trade.
- As it has been analysed, it does not mean that social media-engaged activities can be associated with business resolution irrespective of the brand involved and the metric being assessed.
- In the case of Tesla and Renault, Instagram and YouTube, as platforms that are essential to the brand presence, did not correlate with the Marketing Efficiency Ratio (MER), which might be explained by the fact that content costs a lot to create, and the strategy emphasises brand building rather than efficiency.

Despite the fact, Mercedes-Benz and Porsche, as heritage luxury brands, proved that a properly thought-through multi-platform approach can contribute to a positive change in all the profitability ratios, including ROI and ROA.

One of the most interesting results is the role of Tumblr as far as Porsche is concerned. Although it had a negative relationship with direct internet sales, it had a very high level of engagement that yielded very high results in MER, Revenue and Net Income. It shows how the benefits of social media platforms might not always be seen directly with money earned but rather understood as building brand equity and a strong community, which can have an even greater weight on the balance sheet at a financial level.

Overall, the study confirms the present-day knowledge base that social media plays a vital role in current automotive marketing. The findings indicate that, no matter how well-established a company is, automotive organisations ought to graduate into engaging a robust, hard-data characterisation that assures correlating each platform with its underpinning competencies with

strategic business goals to both ensure marketing efficiency and long-term profitability. This analysis can help fill a gap in the literature by letting it give a fine-grained and comparative description of how different brands can use social media to achieve these different ends.

5 Conclusion

This research, with its in-depth examination of multiple linear regression models, has shed a serious and data-based insight on how social media systems affect some of the most important business performance data in the manufacturing industry in the UK, the automotive industry. The results show a contingent and, in turn, non-universal relation between social media and marketing success, with the effectiveness of non-financial success of the marketing being highly contingent on the financial measure on which it is measured and how the brand in question can integrate the use of social media into its strategy. In the case of Tesla and Renault, high-cost content with higher engagement on media such as Instagram and YouTube was determined to hurt the Marketing Efficiency Ratio (MER), indicating the presence of a strategic trade-off wherein the investments may be focused on brand building and consumer education long-term as opposed to a short-term efficiency gain consideration. Conversely, a multi-platform approach provided universally favourable and substantial results when used with brands that are premium, such as Mercedes-Benz and Porsche, in terms of ROI and ROA. The value of taking advantage of the use of social media to support a premium brand image and justify larger prices, thus attaining significant revenue, is emphasised by this. One interesting observation was how Porsche had picked up on the use of Tumblr, a niche site, and had done it so intelligently that it had been able to influence overall profitability, although there was no direct correlation to online purchases. This supports the main finding that the actual worth of social media can go beyond the basic form of transactional conversions to include the development of social capital, brand values and a loyal fan base. The study manages to fill a major gap in the scholarly literature by offering a comparative and quantitative study that does not put up a monolithic perspective of social media but rather highlights the various and tactical roles of different platforms in helping to drive business success in such a competitive industry.

5.0 Recommendations

- **Based on the results,** it is proposed to make the following recommendations that can help the UK automotive manufacturers to make their social media strategies more effective: Strategic Alignment: The uniformity of social media should be abandoned by the companies. The platforms must be aligned strategically to achieve certain business goals. As an example, one can use Facebook and Twitter as a platform of direct and efficient communication and lead generation, whereas Instagram and YouTube should be regarded as long-term investments in the brand equity and visual narrative.
- **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** The analysis used to present the idea of cost-benefit analysis should be conducted by companies such as Tesla and Renault regarding their high-investment content on Instagram and YouTube. The negative correlation with MER is not necessarily a failure, but it must be traded off. It is important that the end-use goal of such content be clearly stated and gauged in terms of giving returns in the form of brand value and consumer inclination rather than immediate effectiveness.
- **Explore Niche Destinations:** Thanks to the example of Porsche on Tumblr, it can be emphasised that niche, as highly engaged communities, should be built. Those brands must seek to find and invest strategically in those platforms where they would resonate with the peculiar target demographic, even though they may not be mainstream.

- **Improved Analytics:** Every company ought to adapt to an efficient analytics system that measures and attributes both direct and indirect social contributions to any business success.

6.0 Future Research Directions

Further studies must consider some of the following directions, based on the above research findings:

This must then be supplemented by Content-Specific Analysis, where the evaluation of how the different forms of content (i.e., user-generated, influencer reviews, brand-created videos) can translate to business metrics must be carried out.

- **Longitudinal Studies:** A study that would involve a larger population size as well as a wider time range would be able to confirm the frequencies over the long-term duration that this research showed.
- **Qualitative Investigation:** To provide more background regarding the opinions behind the behaviour of automotive consumers on various social media sites, it would be good to carry out interviews with the participants or focus groups of automotive consumers.
- **Cross-Industry Comparison:** The correlation between these social media tendencies might be identified with the comparison of the absolute different industry (e.g., luxury fashion or consumer electronics), and, consequently, it can be revealed whether the identified trends were industry-specific or universal.

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