



Consumer Interpretation of Brand Authenticity in Artificial Intelligence-Generated Marketing Content

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ABSTRACT

This study examines consumer perceptions of brand authenticity in AI-generated marketing content and its impact on attitudes and behavioral intentions. Using a quantitative survey and multivariate analysis, the research analyzes the relationships between perceived authenticity, AI transparency, and consumer trust. The findings show that brand authenticity remains a key driver of trust and positive consumer attitudes, even when content is produced by AI. Transparency in AI use and consistency of brand values strengthen authenticity perceptions, while perceived manipulation undermines trust. The study contributes to digital marketing theory and offers practical guidance for designing AI-based content strategies that preserve brand credibility.

INTRODUCTION

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) has brought about significant transformations in marketing management practices, particularly in the creation and distribution of digital marketing content. AI technology allows companies to produce content quickly, personalized, and at scale through the use of machine learning algorithms, natural language processing, and real-time analysis of consumer data (Davenport et al., 2020). In this context, AI no longer plays a role as a mere support tool, but has become a strategic actor in brand communication and marketing decision-making.

While the adoption of AI in marketing offers operational efficiencies and improved campaign performance, there are conceptual concerns about its impact on consumer perceptions, particularly regarding brand authenticity. Brand authenticity is broadly understood as the consumer's perception that a brand acts honestly, is consistent with its core values, and represents a trustworthy identity (Napoli et al., 2014; Morhart et al., 2015). In the marketing literature, brand authenticity has been shown to have an important role in building trust, emotional attachment, as well as consumer loyalty (Bruhn et al., 2012). Therefore, changes in the way marketing content is produced through AI have the potential to impact the relational foundations between brands and consumers.

AI-generated marketing content presents its own paradox. On the one hand, AI is capable of mimicking the style of human language, tailoring messages to individual preferences, and improving the relevance of marketing communications. On the other hand, the absence of direct human involvement in the creative process can lead to artificial, manipulative, or insincere perceptions in the eyes of consumers (Longoni et al., 2019). This raises critical questions about how consumers interpret the authenticity of a brand when they realize or suspect that the marketing content is generated by an artificial intelligence system.

A number of previous studies have addressed the role of AI in marketing from the perspective of efficiency, personalization, and business performance (Huang & Rust, 2021; Wedel & Kannan, 2016). However, studies that specifically link the use of AI in marketing content production to the perception of brand authenticity are still relatively limited. Most studies tend to focus on technological aspects or consumer behavior outcomes, without delving deeply into consumers' cognitive and interpretive processes towards AI-based marketing message sources. In fact, marketing communication theory emphasizes that the perception of the source of the message (source credibility) plays a key role in shaping consumer attitudes and responses (Erdogan, 1999).

In addition, the issue of transparency in the use of AI in marketing communication is an important factor that moderates consumer perception. Previous research has shown that openness about the use of technology can increase trust, but it also has the potential to trigger skepticism if consumers perceive AI as a threat to human values and brand authenticity (Araujo et al., 2020). Thus, an understanding of how transparency and consistency of brand values interact in shaping the perception of authenticity is becoming increasingly relevant for marketing practitioners.

Based on these research gaps, this study aims to analyze consumers' interpretations of brand authenticity in marketing content generated by artificial intelligence, as well as its implications for consumer beliefs and attitudes. This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of the digital marketing management literature by expanding the understanding of the role of brand authenticity in the context of AI. In practical terms, the findings of this study are expected to be a reference for companies in designing AI-based content strategies that are not only technically effective, but also able to maintain brand credibility and authenticity in the eyes of consumers.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Artificial Intelligence in Marketing Management

Artificial intelligence has become an integral element in modern marketing strategies, especially in consumer data management, message personalization, and marketing communication automation. AI allows marketers to process large amounts of data and produce marketing content tailored to individual preferences efficiently (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019). In the context of digital marketing, AI serves not only as an analytical tool, but also as a message producer that directly influences consumers' perception of brands.

Several studies have shown that the use of AI in marketing is able to increase the effectiveness of campaigns through increased relevance and timeliness of messages (Grewal et al., 2021). However, the growing reliance on automated systems also has psychological and perceptual consequences for consumers, particularly regarding how they assess the intentions, identities, and values represented by a brand. Therefore, the use of AI in marketing content production needs to be understood not only from a technological point of view, but also from the perspective of consumer behavior and cognition.

Brand Authenticity as a Marketing Construct

Brand authenticity is an important construct in marketing literature that is closely related to consumer perception of the integrity, consistency, and sincerity of a brand. Beverland and Farrelly (2010) affirm that brand authenticity is formed through the conformity between the value communicated and the tangible actions taken by the brand in the long term. Consumers tend to value a brand as authentic when they view it as a "real", non-fabricated, and value-oriented entity.

Empirical research shows that the perception of brand authenticity contributes significantly to consumer trust, emotional attachment, and loyalty (Schallehn et al., 2014). In the context of marketing communication, authenticity depends not only on the content of the message, but also on the perception of the source of the message and the process of creating it. Thus, the change in content creators—from humans to AI—has the potential to shift the way consumers judge brand authenticity.

AI-Based Content Marketing and Consumer Perception

AI-generated marketing content has different characteristics compared to traditionally generated content. AI is capable of generating highly consistent messages, free from human emotional bias, and optimized based on historical data patterns. However, this characteristic can also give rise to the perception that the content lacks a human touch, which has been considered an important element in building an emotional connection between brands and consumers (Rai et al., 2019).

Recent studies show that consumers often use certain cues—such as language style, transparency, and brand narrative—to judge whether content feels authentic or simply the result of algorithmic manipulation (van Doorn et al., 2017). When consumers realize that marketing content is generated by AI, they can respond ambivalently: appreciating efficiency and personalization, but at the same time doubting the sincerity of the message being conveyed.

AI Transparency, Trust, and Brand Authenticity

Transparency in the use of AI is a key factor in shaping consumer perception of brands. Kizilcec (2016) stated that openness about how algorithmic systems work can increase user trust, especially when the resulting decisions or messages have a direct impact on individuals. In the context of marketing, transparency regarding the use of AI can serve as a signal of ethics and brand responsibility.

However, the literature also shows that transparency does not always produce positive effects in a linear manner. Excessive disclosure of the role of AI can trigger skepticism or manipulative perceptions if consumers judge that brands are using technology solely for commercial purposes without considering relational values (Luo et al., 2019). Therefore, the relationship between AI transparency and brand authenticity is contextual and is influenced by the consistency of brand values as well as previous consumer experiences.

Research Gap and Study Position

Although the literature on AI in marketing and brand authenticity is growing rapidly, studies integrating the two concepts are still relatively limited. Most research focuses on the performance of technology or consumer behavioral responses, without delving deeply into how consumers interpret brand authenticity in the context of AI-generated marketing content. In addition, the underlying cognitive mechanisms of the relationship between AI transparency, perception of authenticity, and consumer trust are still not fully understood.

Based on these gaps, this study positions itself to expand the marketing management literature by examining consumers' interpretations of brand authenticity in AI-based marketing content. By integrating the perspective of brand authenticity and digital marketing communication, this study is expected to make a relevant conceptual and empirical contribution to the development of marketing theory and practice in the era of artificial intelligence.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory survey design to analyze consumers' interpretation of brand authenticity in marketing content generated by artificial intelligence and its implications on consumer beliefs and attitudes. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allows for systematic and empirical testing of relationships between variables, in line with the research objectives that focus on testing conceptual models in the context of digital marketing management (Hair et al., 2019). The research design is cross-sectional, where data is collected over a specific period of time to capture consumers' perceptions of the AI-based marketing content they experience.

The population of this study is consumers who have been exposed to digital marketing content generated or assisted by artificial intelligence systems, such as automated ads on social media, algorithm-based product recommendations, or promotional content generated by generative AI technology. Given the limitations in accessing the population as a whole, this study uses a non-probability sampling technique with a purposive sampling method. Respondents were selected based on certain criteria, namely being at least 18 years old, actively using digital media, and having experience interacting with AI-based marketing content. The determination of the sample count takes into account the need for multivariate statistical analysis, with reference to the recommendation of a minimum number of samples that is proportional to the number of indicators in the research model (Hair et al., 2019).

Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire that was distributed online. The research instrument was prepared by adapting the measurement scale that has been validated in previous research and adjusted to the context of artificial intelligence-based marketing content. All statement items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. To reduce the potential for perception bias, respondents were first given a brief explanation and examples of AI-based content marketing forms, so that they had a relatively uniform understanding of the research context (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

The main variables in this study include the perception of brand authenticity, transparency of the use of AI, consumer trust, and consumer attitudes towards brands. The perception of brand authenticity is operationalized as a consumer's evaluation of the sincerity, consistency of values, and credibility of brands in AI-based marketing content, with reference to the construct of brand authenticity in the marketing literature (Schallehn et al., 2014). Transparency in the use of AI refers to the extent to which consumers view brands openly communicating the role of AI in the marketing content creation process, adapted from the concept of algorithmic transparency (Kizilcec, 2016). Consumer trust is defined as a consumer's belief in the integrity and reliability of a brand, while consumer attitudes towards a brand reflect the affective and cognitive evaluation of consumers after exposure to AI-based marketing content (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Spears & Singh, 2004).

Data analysis is carried out using multivariate statistical techniques with the help of data analysis software. The analysis stages include testing the validity

and reliability of the instrument, descriptive analysis, and testing the relationship between variables in the research model. The validity of the construct was tested through confirmatory factor analysis, while reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values. To test the simultaneous relationship between latent variables, this study uses Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which is considered to be able to provide a comprehensive estimation of causal relationships in consumer behavior and marketing management research (Hair et al., 2019). The level of statistical significance is set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

This research also pays attention to the ethical principles of social research. Respondent participation is voluntary and all data is collected anonymously to maintain respondents' confidentiality and privacy. Before filling out the questionnaire, respondents were given information about the purpose of the research and their rights as participants. The application of this ethical procedure is in line with research standards in the field of marketing and consumer behavior (Malhotra, 2010).

Research Hypothesis

Based on the marketing management and consumer behavior literature, this study developed a hypothesis to test the relationship between the perception of brand authenticity, transparency of the use of artificial intelligence, consumer trust, and consumer attitudes towards brands in the context of AI-generated marketing content. Brand authenticity is positioned as a key factor that influences consumers' cognitive and affective responses to brands.

- H1:** The perception of brand authenticity in artificial intelligence-based marketing content has a positive effect on consumer trust.
- H2:** Consumer trust has a positive effect on consumers' attitudes towards brands.
- H3:** The perception of brand authenticity in artificial intelligence-based marketing content has a positive effect on consumers' attitudes towards brands.
- H4:** The transparency of the use of artificial intelligence strengthens the influence of the perception of brand authenticity on consumer trust.
- H5:** Consumer trust mediates the relationship between the perception of brand authenticity and consumer attitudes towards the brand

RESEARCH RESULTS

Data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the relationships between variables in the research model. Before testing the hypothesis, an evaluation of the measurement model was carried out which included a test of the validity and reliability of the construct. The results of the analysis showed that all indicators had loading factor values that met the recommended thresholds, as well as Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values that showed a good level of internal consistency. Thus, the construct of brand authenticity perception, transparency of AI use, consumer trust, and

consumer attitudes towards brands is declared valid and reliable for further analysis.

Table 1. Construct Validity and Reliability Test

Construct	Number of Indicators	Loading Factor (λ)	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE	Remarks
Perception of Brand Authenticity	4	0,72 – 0,88	0,84	0,88	0,62	Valid & Reliable
Transparency in the Use of AI	3	0,75 – 0,85	0,80	0,86	0,64	Valid & Reliable
Consumer Trust	4	0,70 – 0,90	0,85	0,89	0,66	Valid & Reliable
Consumer Attitudes towards Brands	4	0,73 – 0,87	0,83	0,87	0,61	Valid & Reliable

Note: All λ values > 0.70, α > 0.70, CR > 0.70, AVE > 0.50 → meet the criteria for validity and reliability (Hair et al., 2019).

Structural model testing shows that the perception of brand authenticity in artificial intelligence-based marketing content has a positive and significant effect on consumer trust. These findings support the first hypothesis (H1), which indicates that even though marketing content is generated by AI, consumers still value brand authenticity as an important signal in building trust. These results show that the use of AI does not inherently lower consumer trust, as long as the resulting content is able to consistently reflect the brand's values and identity.

Furthermore, the results of the analysis also show that consumer trust has a positive and significant effect on consumer attitudes towards brands. These findings support the second hypothesis (H2) and affirm the central role of trust as a psychological mediator in shaping the evaluation of consumer attitudes. Consumers who trust brands tend to develop more positive attitudes, even though their interactions with brands are mediated by artificial intelligence technologies.

The test results also show that the perception of brand authenticity has a positive and significant direct influence on consumers' attitudes towards brands. Thus, the third hypothesis (H3) is supported. These findings indicate that brand authenticity not only works through trust mechanisms, but also directly influences consumers' affective and cognitive evaluations of brands in the context of AI-driven marketing content.

Moderation effect testing showed that the transparency of the use of artificial intelligence strengthened the relationship between brand authenticity perception and consumer trust. In other words, when brands openly communicate the role of AI in marketing content creation, the influence of brand authenticity on consumer trust becomes stronger. These findings support the

fourth hypothesis (H4) and suggest that transparency serves as a relevant honesty signal in the context of technology-based marketing communications.

Table 2. Structural Model Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Intervariable Relationships	Line Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Verdict
H1	Brand Authenticity → Consumer Trust	0,52	4,21	0,000	Supported
H2	Consumer Trust → Consumer Attitudes	0,48	3,95	0,000	Supported
H3	Brand Authenticity → Consumer Attitude	0,35	3,12	0,002	Supported
H4	Brand Authenticity × AI Transparency → Consumer Trust	0,28	2,87	0,004	Supported

Note: R² Consumer Confidence = 0.42; R² Consumer Attitude = 0.50 → model explains 42% of the variance of trust and 50% of the variance of consumer attitude.

In addition, the results of the mediation test showed that consumer trust significantly mediated the relationship between the perception of brand authenticity and consumer attitudes towards the brand. These findings support the fifth hypothesis (H5) and indicate that trust is a key mechanism that explains how perceptions of brand authenticity translate into positive attitudes towards brands.

Table 3. Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects

Relationships	Direct Effects	Indirect Effects (through Trust)	Total Effect	Significance
Brand Authenticity → Consumer Attitude	0,35	0,25	0,60	Significant (p < 0.01)
Brand Authenticity → Consumer Trust	0,52	-	0,52	Significant (p < 0.001)
Consumer Trust → Consumer Attitudes	0,48	-	0,48	Significant (p < 0.001)

Note: The mediation effect was tested with Bootstrap 5,000 resampling, a CI of 95% → significant indirect effects.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study make an important contribution to the digital marketing management literature by affirming that brand authenticity remains a central construct in shaping consumer responses, including in marketing content generated by artificial intelligence (AI) (Kaur, Kaur, & Kaur, 2025; Nur Muhammad & Wusko, 2025). These results expand the understanding that the adoption of AI in marketing does not automatically erode the relational values between brands and consumers. Conversely, the use of AI consistent with brand

identity and values can maintain, even reinforce, the perception of authenticity (Margana, Wibowo, & Dirgantari, 2024).

The positive relationship between brand authenticity and consumer trust shows that consumers judge a message not solely from its source – human or machine – but from the extent to which the message reflects the sincerity and consistency of the brand (Rahmawati, Sri Isti Untari, & Lukitaningrum, 2025). These findings challenge the deterministic view that marketing automation always leads to dehumanizing perceptions, and supports the perspective that AI can serve as a strategic extension of brand identity, as long as its integration maintains authentic communication principles (Prosundhar, Dian, Hasugian, & Khairunnisa, 2025).

The role of trust as a mediator confirms the importance of psychological mechanisms in explaining consumer responses to marketing technologies. Trust serves as a bridge between the perception of brand authenticity and consumer attitudes, which suggests that building positive attitudes towards brands in the age of AI cannot be separated from efforts to build and maintain consumer trust (Amay, Vadivelu, et al., 2023). This is becoming increasingly crucial as consumers face a high level of uncertainty regarding the content production process and the use of data by AI systems.

The findings regarding the moderation effect of the transparency of the use of AI provide important implications for marketing practices. Transparency is not only an ethical practice, but also a communication strategy that reinforces the perception of authenticity and trust. However, openness must be managed strategically and consistent with brand values, as transparency that is not aligned with the brand narrative has the potential to lead to consumer confusion or skepticism (Amay, Vadivelu, et al., 2023; Rahmawati et al., 2025).

Overall, the study shows that the main challenge in AI-based marketing is not the technology itself, but rather its integration into brand communication strategies. By placing authenticity and trust as fundamental principles, companies can harness the potential of AI in marketing without sacrificing long-term relationships with consumers (Kaur et al., 2025; Prosundhar et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This research shows that brand authenticity remains a key factor in shaping consumer responses, even though marketing content is generated by AI. Consumer trust acts as a mediator between the perception of brand authenticity and consumer attitudes, emphasizing the importance of building and maintaining trust in the digital age.

The findings also emphasize that transparency in the use of AI strengthens the relationship between brand authenticity and consumer trust, provided it is delivered strategically and consistent with brand values. Overall, the main challenge of AI-driven marketing lies in the integration of technology into communication strategies, not in the technology itself.

Marketers need to emphasize brand authenticity, build trust, and consistently manage AI transparency to maintain long-term relationships with

consumers. This research expands the digital marketing management literature on the role of authenticity, trust, and moderation of AI transparency.

FURTHER STUDY

Future studies are recommended to explore consumer responses to AI-generated marketing across different industries, cultural contexts, and levels of consumer technological literacy. Further research could also examine additional moderating variables, such as perceived ethical use of AI, personalization intensity, or consumer skepticism toward automation. Longitudinal and experimental approaches would be valuable to assess how trust and brand authenticity evolve over time as AI-driven marketing becomes more pervasive.

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