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AI-generated Versus Human-Generated: Creative Content in Advertising

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Artificial Intelligence is an ever-growing technology, and the use of this technology has grown in people's day-to-day lives. Not only do individuals utilize AI, but organizations and companies have also implemented it within their workplaces. The advertising industry is one of those industries that has started incorporating AI. Within advertising, AI is being used in many different ways. This paper focuses on AI's impact on content creation. By analyzing AI-generated versus human-generated content, this paper reveals AI's impact on consumers' perception of the authenticity of advertisements and brands.

Keywords**:** artificial intelligence, AI, human, advertising, advertisement, authenticity

Artificial intelligence (AI) programs have improved and become more influential in many aspects of life, and research must investigate the effects that this innovation will bring. Specifically, in advertising, the use of AI-generated content has grown exponentially. So, which is more persuasive to consumers: human-created or AI-created advertisements? This literature review will provide an analysis of research regarding AI's impact on the advertising industry and consumer desires for advertising. Currently, companies are not required to indicate whether or not an advertisement is AI-created. This paper explores the role of artificial intelligence in advertising through a literature review of the current literature regarding AI's ability for personalization, consumers' desire for authenticity, and the idea of human favoritism; two studies, a survey, and interviews, on overall AI perceptions and preference over AI or human-created advertisements. This research offers a step in understanding AI's role in advertising content creation. By exploring AI's role, specifically its impact on personalization, authenticity, and consumers' preference for "human-made," advertising professionals can understand their consumers and have a preliminary insight into the impact of using artificial intelligence in advertising content creation.

Literature Review

AI Content Creation in Advertising: Personalization

Research explores the effectiveness of AI in persuading consumers via personalization. In a literature review on the usage of programmatic creatives, Chen et al. (2019) suggest that because of the uniqueness of individuals, AI has higher capabilities for personalized messaging than other ways of creation. Similarly, Senyapar (2024) provides a comprehensive review of the literature to identify and analyze the applications of AI in marketing communications, arguing that AI is an effective marketing tool due to superior personalization from data analysis. In line with these findings, Gao et al. (2023) discuss how AI technology uses algorithms to analyze consumer data, target specific audiences, and reflect customer groups' unique needs and preferences, thus achieving scientific targeting. Furthermore, Matz et al. (2024) conducted four studies with varying advertising content creation methods, and they found that personalized persuasion using the AI tool ChatGPT is effective when focusing on the Big Five Personality traits of Openness and

Extraversion. The Big Five Personality scale encompasses five broad dimensions that describe human personality: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. Openness indicates organization, dependability, and discipline, and Extraversion measures sociability, assertiveness, and enthusiasm. It can be argued that AI, as a marketing and advertising tool, has a greater effect than human content creation due to its ability to personalize content. The findings of Matz et al. (2024) are concerned with persuasion using the Big Five Personality traits but may also have applications in the context. AI's ability to personalize provides an advantage over human-generated content.

Consumer's Desire for Authenticity in Advertising

Previous research suggests that consumers often prefer authentic advertising content. A qualitative study of two-hour interviews with 21 participants discussing three brands they consider authentic and three inauthentic outlines three consumer goals of seeking authenticity to drive selection: control, connection, and virtue (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010). These goals are considered authentic when they lead to genuineness, reality, or truth. Furthermore, in a quantitative study with 513 respondents that researched the interaction between brand authenticity, brand value congruence, brand identification, and brand activism, D'Arco et al. (2024) report that the relationship between brand value and consumer brand identification was stronger when consumers perceived the brand to have a high level of authenticity. In addition, the relationship between consumer brand identification and intention to support an activist brand was stronger for consumers with high-perceived brand authenticity (D'Arco et al., 2024). Building on these findings, Yang et al. (2023) provide a quantitative study with 380 participants responding to an online survey about consumer evaluations of advertisements aired during COVID-19, ranging from financial services, fast-food chain restaurants, technology companies, fast-moving consumer goods, to automobile brands. This online survey studied the effects of ad authenticity in influencing consumer engagement. Results suggest that message authenticity influences consumers' attitudes and engagement intentions via emotion and brand warmth. Authentic ads evoke a positive emotion, which evokes brand warmth, leading to a positive attitude towards the brand and increased intentions to engage. By using authentic advertising, brands show their understanding of what people are going through, what they value, and their companionship with people during this global pandemic, eventually resulting in positive brand attitudes and higher engagement intention (Yang et al., 2023). Authenticity is a key factor consumers look for in brands when making decisions.

Consumer's View: Human Favoritism

With AI-generated content growing in usage, there is a growing body of knowledge on human favoritism, especially concerning perceptions of advertising content creation. Human favoritism is when, presented with content, humans prefer content framed as human-generated rather than created by another source. In a quantitative study with 1203 participants measuring the perceived quality and the role of AI aversion and human favoritism regarding AI-generated, human-generated, and AI-human collaboration content, Zhang and Gosline (2023) suggest that strong human favoritism is present: when people are informed about the product's creation, they prefer human-generated content over AI-generated and AI-human content. When uninformed about the creator, on average, AI-generated and AI-human content were found to have higher satisfaction than human-generated content. Contrastingly, Wu and Wen (2023) found that the direct effect of

uneasiness with robots on Al advertisement appreciation was insignificant, particularly among younger people. Wu and Wen (2023) also claim that once consumers view advertisement creation as a more objective task, they tend to appreciate AI-created advertisements more. In line with these findings, a series of studies focusing on producer identity's effect on creativity evaluation, the effort heuristic's result on creativity evaluation, and the effects of creativity evaluation on a behavioral outcome, with participants from Hong Kong and the United States, Magni et al. (2024) argue that there is no significant difference in creativity evaluation of AI-generated or human-generated content; however, Magni et al. (2024) found that effort is a key mechanism driving the effect of producer identity on creativity evaluation, and they assert that humans assess the production process as less effortful when carried out by AI rather than by humans, leading them to evaluate the creativity of AI products as lower. These findings, focusing on human favoritism and bias, demonstrate that human favoritism has yet to be found as a significant factor in determining responses. However, other possible factors connected with human favoritism could influence consumer decisions regarding human versus AI-generated content.

Overall, extant research indicates that AI has dramatically impacted the advertising industry in terms of content creation. AI brings personalization and ease to creating content, but can be lacking in authenticity, which is an important factor in purchase intention. What is missing is understanding the elements of AI-generated content that lead consumers to believe it is inauthentic, comprehending the impact of labeling AI-generated content, and continued confirmation of human favoritism. After understanding AI's impact on content creation and consumer desires for authentic advertisements, these can be combined to explore consumer responses. Through various research methods, consumers will give their insight into the factors that drive their responses to human versus AI-created advertising content.

Studies: Survey & Interviews

These studies explore the overall perceptions of AI and whether AI-created or human-created advertisements are preferred in terms of authenticity. The survey explores perceptions and perceived authenticity of the advertisements. Key themes that emerged from the interviews were identified, and the implications for the use of AI in advertising content creation were developed.

Study 1A: Survey of College Students

Study 1a tested the trustworthiness and authenticity of advertisements (Human versus AI). A survey regarding advertising and attitudes toward AI and AI in advertising was administered along with questions about a created advertisement and their direct thoughts on the advertisement.

Method

A 25-question survey received 76 responses. The sample's mean age was 19.49 years, with 84.2% of the participants being female. The sample was recruited through the snowball method and convenience sampling. In the survey, participants answered questions about an advertisement they were shown. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four groups: AI-generated (Uninformed), AI-generated (Informed), Human-generated (Uninformed), or Human-generated (Informed). The advertisement featured a "New Beverage Company" with a glass of tea surrounded by various fruits.

Results

At the end of the data collection, 76 students participated in the survey. The results show that 46.9% of respondents view advertisements as neither positive nor negative, while 32.1% reported a somewhat negative view. 47.4% of respondents also indicated that they somewhat disagree with the statement that Artificial Intelligence is trustworthy. 50% reported that AI in advertising is moderately trustworthy, while 32.9% reported that AI in advertising is slightly trustworthy. 46% of respondents also reported that AI could probably enhance creativity in advertising. Figures 1 and 2 are the advertisements shown to the participants.

Figure 1

AI-Generated Advertisement



Figure 2

Human-Generated Advertisement



The results of the participants' attitudes toward the advertisement are seen in Figures 3 and 4.

Figure 3

Groups 1 and 2: Uninformed

Unaware (Mean)		
	AI-Generated	Human Generated
Trustworthy	3.25	3.00
Realistic	3.30	2.81
Authentic	3.40	2.86
True to Life	3.60	3.10
Accurate	2.60	3.00
Exaggerated	2.95	2.43
Overstated	2.95	3.29
How would you rate this ad?	2.60	2.48
Likelihood of Purchase	3.30	3.05

Figure 4

Groups 3 and 4: Informed

Aware (Mean)		
	AI-Generated	Human Generated
Trustworthy	3.00	2.72
Realistic	3.20	3.00
Authentic	3.60	3.56
True to Life	3.40	3.11
Accurate	2.61	2.33
Exaggerated	2.33	3.00
Overstated	3.06	3.33
How would you rate this ad?	2.67	2.28
Likelihood of Purchase	3.06	2.67

The results show that there is a strongly positive correlation between respondents' views of advertisements and their attitude towards the Human Generated (Informed) Ad, and there is a strong statistically significant relationship between how trustworthy advertising created by AI and their response to the AI-Generated (Informed) Ad is trustworthy.

Discussion

Respondents' view of the trustworthiness of AI affects their perceptions of the trustworthiness of AI-generated advertisements. The AI-generated advertisements performed better than the Human-generated advertisements with regard to the authenticity scales, rating, and likelihood of purchase. Even though people found AI not trustworthy and hesitated to use AI in advertisement creation, the AI-generated advertisements performed better.

Study 1B: Interviews with College Students

These structured interviews focused on advertising as an industry, creative content in advertising, general attitudes towards AI, and AI's use in creating advertising content.

Method

These two interviews were structured with the same questions in the same order, with elaborating questions depending on the participant to accurately analyze their opinions and understandings of the subject. Conducting the interviews as structured allows data gathering to be more accurate when comparing and compiling the responses.

Results

When analyzing the data collected, these themes emerged: fear of Artificial Intelligence and a desire for authenticity in advertising.

Fear of Artificial Intelligence. After informing both interviewees about the true creator of the first advertisement, the theme of fear of Artificial Intelligence (AI) started to emerge. As soon as AI was mentioned in the interview, the language used by the participants showed unease and fear towards the use of AI. This fear of AI stems from the fact that it could lead to misrepresentation and misinformation, and its potential to guide our lives. Participant 1 stated, "It's going to take over us because it's going to become smarter than us. So that's what I'm afraid of, and that's what I'm pretty sure is going to happen." At the mention of AI, Participant 1 became passionately against the AI-generated advertisement and more for the human-generated advertisement. Participant 1's attitude towards the usage of AI affected her opinions on the AI-generated advertisement. She started with indifference toward the ad, but with the mention of AI, it turned to dislike. One of the other fears that Participant 1 had was that she believed that "AI is such a huge threat to genuine education." Participant 1 fears that using AI will bring down human intelligence, making humans dependent on AI.

Participant 2 shared similar sentiments but with less zeal than Participant 1. Participant 2 stated, "So with time, and as technology advances, I feel that everything in the world can end up being fake and AI-generated, which I don't think is good for our society." She fears a world where AI leads to a false reality. When informed of the AI-generated advertisement's creator, Participant 2 stated, "I still wouldn't purchase it because AI scares me too." Even though Participant 2 shared the same fears as Participant 1, Participant 2's attitudes towards the advertisement did not change, except that the creator being AI would give her another reason not to purchase the item advertised. She expressed that AI, while she shares a sentiment of fear, would be helpful in the future for small

tasks. She expressed that she would be fine with AI usage within beverage or item advertisements, but not with AI usage when it comes to human subjects. She thinks that "when it comes to humans and people pretending to be someone they're not. That's scary."

Desire for Authenticity. The desire for authenticity stemmed when asking the participants about what they liked and disliked in advertisements. Both participants desired genuine, real, authentic, honest advertisements and endorsements within brand advertising. When discussing what she disliked in advertising. Participant 1 stated that she did not like it when "the brand ambassadors start lying, and they give dishonest reviews." She continued, "I prefer advertising that's more genuine, that's more wholesome." When asked if she wanted to elaborate, she said, "I don't like when they fake authenticity, or they fake something to try to get people to buy it." This sentiment was reflected in her attitude towards the advertisements she reflected upon. When she was asked if knowing the advertisement was created by a human changed her opinions on the advertisement, Participant 1 said, "I think that's why it makes me happier, because if it's made by a human, I guess it feels more genuine." With the knowledge that a human created the advertisement, Participant 1 went from a slightly indifferent attitude towards the ad to a more positive attitude.

Participant 2 also shared the sentiment that authenticity was important in advertising. She stated, "I feel like a lot of the time I'll be looking on my phone, and I [think] why is this influencer promoting this company? The morals don't seem to match, [and] I feel like that's not good." Participant 2 wishes for more authenticity regarding influencer and product endorsements where the company and the influencer's morals and beliefs align. However, this sentiment is lacking when reflecting on her attitude towards the advertisements. When it came to the AI-generated ad she felt a slight dislike, and her opinions were unchanged when she was informed of the creator. With the human-generated ad, she felt great dislike because she felt that the ice wasn't realistic or genuine. Even when informed of the creator, Participant 2 kept her opinion the same. While she felt this way for these specific advertisements, Participant 2 expressed something different for general advertisements. Participant 2 believes that authenticity matters more greatly when it comes to mimicking humans or the inclusivity of humans. She states, "I think if it's just like a product, I think that's fine. But when it comes to people, and it comes it comes to diversity and trying to be inclusive, I think it can [cause problems]. It can create the wrong message."

Discussion

Based on the data gathered from this ethnography, I concluded that the level of fear and distrust of AI affects the attitudes toward AI and human-generated advertisements when participants are informed of the creator. Also, while authenticity is important to many people for advertising, the level at which it is desired varies from person to person. Each advertisement performed differently based on the participant and the participant's knowledge of advertising content.

Conclusion

Even though people expressed distrust and fear of the use of AI, AI-generated advertisements performed better against Human-generated advertisements, even when participants were informed of the creator. Consumers desire authenticity; however, it is not a factor that affects perceptions of AI-generated advertisements. This essay further examines AI usage in advertising content and further understands the perception of AI's usage and impact on an advertisement's effectiveness.

From these findings, consumers have a preference for the AI-generated ad. AI allows for more personalization toward target audiences. Advertising agencies can create more specific ads that grab the attention of consumers. Furthermore, consumers desire authenticity; however, when it comes to human versus AI-generated ads, AI usage does not affect consumers' perception of brand authenticity and consumers' preference for "human-made".

Within this topic, there is much more to explore and understand about AI usage within advertising content creation. How does using AI for products in advertising versus humans in advertising change people's attitudes toward advertisements and the advertising industry? Should companies be required to add that they used AI in the creation of their advertisements? These questions come to mind after this study and would require further research.

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