

# How AI-Generated Images Impact Consumer Perceptions and Brand Identity

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## ABSTRACT

*This conceptual paper explores the impact of AI-generated images on consumer perceptions and brand identity within the advertising sector. Leveraging a comprehensive review of recent literature and theoretical frameworks, the study synthesizes insights on the advantages and challenges associated with AI-generated visuals. Findings indicate that while AI-generated images offer significant opportunities for personalization and creativity, they also present challenges related to authenticity, emotional engagement, and brand consistency. Specifically, AI-generated imagery can enhance visual appeal but may undermine perceived authenticity, affecting consumer trust. Emotional engagement with AI-generated content varies, with some consumers experiencing a disconnect due to the artificial nature of the visuals. Additionally, maintaining brand identity is critical, as AI-generated images can either support or disrupt brand coherence depending on their alignment with established brand values. The paper applies theories such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to understand consumer attitudes towards AI technology. The discussion provides recommendations for advertisers to balance innovation with authenticity, enhance emotional resonance, and ensure consistency in brand messaging. Future research is suggested to empirically validate these conceptual insights and further explore the impact of AI-generated imagery on consumer behavior and brand performance.*

**Keywords:** AI-generated, TAM, TPB, Consumer behavior, Brand



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has made significant strides in various domains, including photography and advertising. AI-generated images, created through advanced algorithms and machine learning techniques, have become increasingly prevalent in marketing campaigns. These images range from hyper-realistic portrayals to imaginative and surreal visuals that were once beyond the reach of traditional photography.

The ability of AI to produce high-quality images rapidly and at scale presents both opportunities and challenges for advertisers. On one hand, AI-generated imagery allows for unprecedented customization and personalization, enabling brands to tailor visuals to specific consumer segments with precision. On the other hand, it raises questions about authenticity, creativity, and the potential impact on consumer trust (B. Gao et al., 2023).

Consumer perceptions are deeply influenced by visual content, which plays a crucial role in shaping brand identity. As AI-generated images become more common, understanding their effect on consumer attitudes and brand perception is essential. Brands must navigate the balance between leveraging innovative technology and maintaining genuine, relatable connections with their audience.

This research aims to explore how AI-generated images influence consumer perceptions and brand identity, investigating the implications for advertising strategies and the future of visual communication in marketing.

## 1.1 Problem Statement

As AI technology increasingly integrates into the realm of advertising, it introduces transformative changes in how visual content is created and perceived. AI-generated images, created through sophisticated algorithms, offer brands novel opportunities for personalization and creativity. However, this technological advancement raises critical questions about its impact on consumer perceptions and brand identity. Specifically, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding how these AI-generated images affect consumer trust, emotional engagement, and brand loyalty. Do these images enhance or undermine the perceived authenticity and creativity of a brand? How do they influence consumer attitudes compared to traditional, human-created photography?

Furthermore, the proliferation of AI-generated imagery presents potential challenges for brand differentiation and identity. Brands must navigate the fine line between leveraging AI's capabilities and maintaining genuine, relatable connections with their audience. The ultimate problem lies in assessing whether AI-generated visuals align with consumer expectations and contribute positively to brand perception or if they risk eroding the authenticity and emotional resonance of brand messaging. This study aims to fill these gaps by systematically exploring the impact of AI-generated images on consumer perceptions and brand identity, offering valuable insights for marketers in optimizing their advertising strategies in the digital age.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

As artificial intelligence transforms visual content creation in advertising, understanding its impact on consumer perceptions and brand identity becomes crucial. This study focuses on two primary objectives to provide a clear and targeted analysis of AI-generated imagery:

1. **Evaluate the Impact of AI-Generated Images on Consumer Trust and Emotional Engagement:** Examine how AI-generated visuals affect consumer perceptions of authenticity and credibility, as well as their emotional responses and engagement with brands. Assess whether these images enhance or undermine trust and emotional connection compared to traditional photographic content.
2. **Explore the Effect on Brand Identity:** Investigate how AI-generated imagery influences the perception of brand identity, including consistency and alignment with brand values. Determine if these images contribute to a coherent and effective brand representation or create potential challenges in maintaining a strong brand identity.

These objectives aim to provide a focused understanding of how AI-generated imagery influences key aspects of consumer perception and brand representation, offering valuable insights for effective advertising strategies.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and advertising is a burgeoning area of research, particularly concerning how AI-generated images influence consumer perceptions and brand identity. This review synthesizes recent studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of these impacts.

### 2.1 AI in Visual Content Creation

AI technologies, particularly generative adversarial networks (GANs) and other deep learning techniques, have revolutionized the creation of visual content. Recent advancements have enabled the production of hyper-realistic and highly customized images, which have significant implications for advertising. A study by Karras et al. (2021) discusses the capabilities of GANs in generating high-quality images and explores their potential applications in various fields, including advertising. The research highlights how AI-generated visuals can achieve a level of detail and personalization that traditional methods may struggle to match (Karras et al., 2021).

### 2.2 Consumer Trust and Authenticity

The impact of AI-generated images on consumer trust and perceived authenticity is a critical area of study. Recent research indicates that while AI can enhance visual appeal, it may also challenge perceptions of authenticity. For instance, Zhang et al. (2023) find that consumers often perceive AI-generated images as less authentic compared to traditional photography, which can affect their trust in the brand. Their study suggests that transparency about the use of AI in image creation is crucial for maintaining consumer trust (Zhang et al., 2023).

### 2.3 Emotional Engagement with AI-Generated Images

Emotional engagement is another critical factor influenced by AI-generated images. A study by Lee et al (2022) explores how AI-generated images impact emotional responses and engagement levels among consumers. They found that while AI-generated content can evoke strong emotional responses, these responses may differ significantly from those elicited by traditional photography. The study suggests that the novelty of AI-generated images can sometimes lead to enhanced emotional engagement, but this effect is not uniform across all consumer segments (Lee et al., 2022).

### 2.4 Brand Identity and Consistency

The influence of AI-generated images on brand identity and consistency is a growing concern. A study by Kim et al. (2023) examines how the use of AI-generated visuals impacts brand coherence and consumer perception of brand values. Their research highlights that while AI can create visually striking content, it can sometimes lead to inconsistencies in brand messaging if not carefully managed. They emphasize the need for brands to maintain a clear strategy to ensure that AI-generated imagery aligns with their overall brand identity (Kim et al., 2023).

The literature reveals that AI-generated images hold significant potential for enhancing visual content in advertising, but they also pose challenges related to authenticity, consumer trust, emotional engagement, and brand consistency. As AI technology continues to advance, ongoing research will be essential to understanding and addressing these issues, ensuring that brands can effectively leverage AI while maintaining a strong connection with their audience.

## 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For this conceptual paper, the methodology will focus on a theoretical exploration of how AI-generated images impact consumer perceptions and brand identity. Rather than empirical data

collection, this paper will utilize a review and synthesis of existing literature, case studies, and theoretical frameworks to address the research objectives.

A comprehensive review of recent academic and industry literature will be conducted to gather insights on the role of AI-generated images in advertising. This will include studies on AI technology, consumer trust, emotional engagement, and brand identity. The review will focus on identifying key themes, trends, and gaps in the current research.

Based on the literature review, a conceptual framework will be developed to illustrate the relationships between AI-generated imagery, consumer perceptions, and brand identity. This framework will be used to structure the analysis and discussion of how AI-generated images influence these variables.

Relevant case studies of brands that have implemented AI-generated imagery in their advertising campaigns will be analysed. These case studies will provide practical examples of how AI technology has been applied and its impact on consumer reactions and brand positioning.

The selected case studies will be examined to identify patterns and insights regarding the effectiveness of AI-generated images in different contexts. The analysis will focus on how these images affect consumer trust, emotional engagement, and brand identity.

The paper will apply relevant theories from marketing, psychology, and technology to analyse the impact of AI-generated images. Theoretical perspectives such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) will be used to interpret how AI-generated imagery influences consumer attitudes and brand perception.

The paper will synthesize findings from the literature review, case studies, and theoretical analysis to provide a cohesive understanding of the impact of AI-generated images on consumer perceptions and brand identity.

The discussion will explore the implications of the synthesized findings for advertising strategies and brand management. It will address the potential benefits and challenges associated with using AI-generated imagery and offer recommendations for brands to effectively leverage this technology.

## **4 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

**Limitations:** The conceptual nature of the paper means that it does not involve original empirical research, which limits the ability to provide new quantitative or qualitative data. The findings are based on existing literature and case studies, which may not capture all current developments in AI-generated imagery.

**Future Research:** Suggestions for future research will be provided, focusing on empirical studies that could validate and expand upon the conceptual insights discussed in the paper.

This methodology aims to provide a theoretical understanding of the impact of AI-generated images on consumer perceptions and brand identity, offering a foundation for future empirical research and practical applications.

## **5 RESULTS**

Given that this is a conceptual paper based on literature review and theoretical analysis, the "results" section will synthesize insights derived from the reviewed literature, case studies, and theoretical frameworks. Here's a summary of the key findings based on the conceptual exploration.

## 5.1 Impact on Consumer Trust and Authenticity

The literature suggests that AI-generated images have a nuanced impact on consumer trust and perceived authenticity. Research indicates that while AI technology can produce visually impressive and highly personalized content, it often struggles to match the perceived authenticity of traditional photography. Studies such as Zhang et al. (2023) highlight that consumers may view AI-generated images as less authentic, which can undermine trust in the brand. This lack of authenticity can be attributed to the perception that AI-generated images are less “real” or emotionally resonant compared to images created by human photographers.

## 5.2 Emotional Engagement

AI-generated images can evoke varying levels of emotional engagement, depending on their execution and context. Theoretical analysis reveals that the novelty and creativity of AI-generated visuals can lead to heightened emotional responses, as noted by Lee et al (2022). However, this engagement is not universally positive; the emotional impact of AI-generated images can be inconsistent, with some consumers feeling disconnected due to the images' artificial nature. This finding underscores the need for brands to carefully balance creativity with authenticity to effectively engage their audience.

## 5.3 Brand Identity and Consistency

The review of case studies and theoretical frameworks suggests that AI-generated imagery can both support and challenge brand identity. On one hand, AI's capability for customization allows brands to tailor visuals to specific consumer segments, potentially enhancing brand relevance. On the other hand, inconsistency in visual style or messaging can arise if AI-generated images do not align with the brand's established identity. Kim et al. (2023) emphasize that maintaining brand coherence is crucial, as deviations from the brand's core values or aesthetics can dilute brand identity and confuse consumers.

## 5.4 Theoretical Insights

Applying theories such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) reveals that consumer attitudes towards AI-generated images are influenced by perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and perceived behavioral control. These theories suggest that positive consumer attitudes towards AI technology can enhance engagement and trust, provided that the technology is integrated thoughtfully and transparently (Jiao & Cao, 2024).

## 5.5 Summary of Results

In summary, the conceptual analysis reveals that AI-generated images have a complex impact on consumer perceptions and brand identity. While they offer opportunities for creativity and personalization, they also pose challenges related to authenticity, emotional engagement, and brand consistency. Brands must navigate these factors carefully to leverage AI-generated imagery effectively while maintaining trust and coherence in their brand messaging. These results provide a foundation for further empirical research and offer practical insights for brands seeking to utilize AI technology in their advertising strategies.

# 6 DISCUSSION

The findings from this conceptual paper reveal important implications for how AI-generated images affect consumer perceptions and brand identity, highlighting both opportunities and challenges for advertisers.

## 6.1 Authenticity and Consumer Trust

AI-generated images present a double-edged sword for brand authenticity and consumer trust. On one hand, the advanced capabilities of AI can create visually stunning and highly tailored content that appeals to specific consumer preferences. However, as noted by Zhang et al. (2023), these images often struggle to achieve the same level of perceived authenticity as traditional photographs. This perception of inauthenticity can erode consumer trust, which is crucial for building and maintaining strong brand relationships. Brands must address this challenge by being transparent about their use of AI and ensuring that their AI-generated content aligns with the genuine values and narrative of their brand (Jesse, T et al, 2025).

## 6.2 Emotional Engagement

The impact of AI-generated images on emotional engagement is complex. As Lee et al (2022) highlight, while AI-generated content can evoke strong emotional responses due to its novelty and creativity, this engagement may vary among different consumer segments. The artificial nature of AI-generated visuals may result in mixed emotional responses, with some consumers feeling a disconnect. Brands should consider incorporating elements of human touch or storytelling in AI-generated imagery to enhance emotional resonance and build deeper connections with their audience.

## 6.3 Brand Identity and Consistency

Maintaining brand identity amidst the use of AI-generated images poses a significant challenge. AI technology allows for high levels of customization, which can enhance brand relevance by tailoring visuals to specific audiences. However, as Kim et al. (2023) point out, there is a risk of inconsistency if AI-generated images deviate from established brand aesthetics and values. Brands must develop clear guidelines for integrating AI-generated visuals into their overall marketing strategy to ensure that these images support and reinforce their brand identity rather than dilute it.

## 6.4 Theoretical Implications

The application of theories such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides valuable insights into consumer attitudes towards AI-generated images. Positive attitudes towards AI technology can enhance engagement and trust, provided that the technology is perceived as useful and easy to use (Mustofa et al., 2025). Brands should focus on these aspects to foster favorable consumer perceptions and leverage AI-generated content effectively.

# 7 IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVERTISING STRATEGIES

Based on the discussion, several recommendations for advertising strategies emerge:

- 1 Transparency and Authenticity is one. Brands should clearly communicate their use of AI in imagery to build trust and address potential concerns about authenticity.
- 2 Next is to enhance emotional resonance. Incorporating elements that reflect human creativity and emotional depth can enhance the impact of AI-generated images.
- 3 Lastly, to have consistency in brand messaging. Establishing guidelines for AI-generated content to ensure alignment with brand identity is crucial for maintaining coherence and consumer trust.

## 8 FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future empirical research is needed to validate the conceptual findings and explore the impact of AI-generated images in different contexts and consumer segments. Studies could examine the effectiveness of various strategies for integrating AI-generated content and measure its direct impact on consumer behavior and brand performance.

In conclusion, while AI-generated images offer innovative opportunities for enhancing visual content in advertising, they also present challenges related to authenticity, emotional engagement, and brand consistency. By addressing these challenges thoughtfully, brands can effectively harness the power of AI technology to engage consumers and reinforce their brand identity.

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## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Nizar Nazrin as the main author played a role in collecting information, literature review, methodology, analysis of literature and conclusion, while Farah Merican as the corresponding author is responsible for references, formatting and language review. In addition, Nurul Shima and Nor Idayu act as sourcing the primary point of contact during the manuscript submission, peer review, publication process and communication tasks.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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