

How AI-Generated ADS Influence Purchase Intent: A Study Among Generation X and Generation Z in Romania

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Abstract

The rapid evolution of artificial intelligence in recent years and its expansion beyond internal organizational processes has completely transformed the way marketing communications are created, from their production to the moment they are exposed to the public. In today's landscape, it is essential to understand how new forms of marketing deliverables influence consumer perception, but especially their relationship with brands. This study was conducted to address the new paradigms generated by artificial intelligence, by understanding how AI-generated advertising can reshape brand-consumer dynamics. The research was conducted through an experiment involving two groups from Generation X and two groups from Generation Z, each group having both an experimental and a control group. After viewing the advertisement, participants completed a specially designed questionnaire to measure brand trust, emotional attachment, loyalty, and perceived risk, all of which served as independent variables for the dependent variable of purchase intention

Keywords: *AI-generated advertising, brand-consumer relationship, Generation X, Generation Z.*

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1. Introduction

In recent years, artificial intelligence has transformed the way marketing communications are created and delivered, bringing AI-generated content to the forefront through its rapid development. These innovations have enabled the

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production of increasingly sophisticated synthetic materials, affecting both how consumers engage with brands and the dynamics of creative processes within the advertising sector. Whereas in the past advertising visuals were mainly altered through aesthetic tweaks such as retouching physical features, lighting, or makeup, today synthetic manipulation enables the automatic generation of entirely new, virtually nonexistent human models (Campbell et al., 2021). Whether we're discussing static AI-generated ads, videos, or audio, delivered both online and on television or radio, this new approach enables us to further examine how the relationship between brands and consumers evolves when AI-generated adverts are utilised in campaigns.

Since people differ in their ability to adapt to new technologies, it is important to examine how different generations respond to these changes. Building on this idea, the main goal of this paper is to investigate the real impact of AI-generated advertising in a rapidly changing marketplace. In an increasingly competitive environment, where consumers are continually and intensely exposed to marketing messages, the way advertising content is created and communicated can influence their perceptions, attitudes, and even purchase intentions more than ever before. Moreover, exposure to AI-generated promotional materials may provoke different behavioural responses, especially when comparing different generational groups. For example, Generation Z is among those most exposed to recent changes, including the rapid development of artificial intelligence. As a digital-native generation, they are highly receptive to new technologies and often willing to share personal data in exchange for relevance, provided that transparency is maintained and privacy is respected. Additionally, for Generation Z, engagement and satisfaction are vital in turning digital interactions into actual purchase intentions (Hoang et al., 2026).

On the other hand, studies show that members of Generation X acknowledge experiencing a sense of anxiety when it comes to modern technologies (Karanfiloğlu et al., 2022). Furthermore, Generation X tends to approach AI technologies with caution, prioritising aspects such as ethics and fairness in their interactions with technology. In this context, trust plays a crucial role in the adoption of AI, being shaped by generational differences and perceptions of risk (Zubair et al., 2025).

In the literature review on this subject, research on the use of artificial intelligence in advertising approaches the phenomenon from multiple perspectives, examining both its impact on the relationship between brands and consumers and offering a more focused view of how the creative process behind advertising materials should be reconsidered. A study conducted by Yang (2025) takes a more specific approach. It examines how certain types of AI-generated content can lead to different levels of brand engagement, emphasising that AI-generated marketing materials, like any other advertisements, need to be guided by the campaign's objectives, with careful attention in the creative process, particularly regarding how consumers will perceive the content.

The study conducted by Chen et al. (2024) further demonstrates that the creative process behind marketing communications must follow the objectives set by brands' campaigns along with the consumer trust in modern technologies. In the current context, consumer trust in AI is higher regarding its ability to perform complex analyses and deliver high-level performance, making AI-generated messages more effective when consumers are focused on achieving goals or completing tasks efficiently, for example learning a foreign language. In contrast, consumers perceive AI as having limited capacity to deeply understand emotional experiences or social relationships. Therefore, advertisements that emphasise social elements, interpersonal relationships, or empathy are better received when created with human input. Essentially, the decision to use or not use artificial intelligence in the creative process, and consequently in marketing communications, should be guided by the consumer's purpose. When consumers aim to enhance performance, AI-generated ads can be more effective, whereas when consumers are motivated by social connections or the need for relationship-building, human-created ads tend to have a greater impact, and the message is perceived more positively (Chen et al., 2024).

The academic literature details how the use of AI-generated content in marketing communications impacts both the creative process and consumer behaviour. In the current landscape, choosing the form and type of advertising first requires a clear understanding of consumer perceptions of AI, as well as their intentions and motivations during decision-making. Adopting a generational perspective, the present study aims to explore how consumers perceive and respond to advertisements generated by artificial intelligence in comparison to those created through traditional methods. The research specifically seeks to identify potential differences in effectiveness and consumer reactions between Generation X and Generation Z, providing insight into how generational characteristics may shape responses to AI-generated versus human-created marketing content.

2. Literature review

The rapid and remarkable evolution of artificial intelligence has led to its integration into content creation for brand marketing communications. This transformation has created numerous opportunities for brands due to the efficiency with which they can deliver content, but it has also presented challenges related to authenticity, consumer relationships, and maintaining a consistent brand image. The literature covers topics such as the effectiveness and performance of synthetic ads, as well as details on how these changes influence the way consumers relate to brands and interact with ads generated using artificial intelligence.

According to a study conducted by Dimitrieska (2024), the development of artificial intelligence has gone through several distinct stages. It began with the initial theoretical concepts as early as the 1950s, followed by the introduction of the term "artificial intelligence" for the first time in 1956. Four years later, the evolution of artificial intelligence saw the creation of the first system capable of

simulating human conversation, Eliza. In the 1970s and 1980s, AI development was marked by periods of stagnation and notable progress, including the advent of neural networks and RNN and LSTM models (Dimitrieska, 2024). The 2000s experienced the rise of virtual assistants such as Siri and Alexa, and the development of Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) in 2014 represented a significant milestone in automation and content creation. The most recent phase is defined by the rise of generative artificial intelligence, exemplified by GPT-type models. The launch of systems such as GPT-3, DALL-E, and later ChatGPT (2022) has enabled the automatic generation of text, images, and multimedia content with high coherence and personalisation. Simultaneously, models like Midjourney, Stable Diffusion, and GPT-4 have vastly expanded AI's capacity to create and manipulate visual and textual content from simple inputs.

Generative artificial intelligence has not only transformed contemporary society but also significantly impacted marketing and advertising. This evolution has brought numerous opportunities alongside challenges. A study by Gujar and Panyam (2024) highlights advantages such as stimulating creativity, enhancing process efficiency, and enabling content personalisation. Conversely, the use of generative artificial intelligence presents challenges, including maintaining brand identity consistency and managing security and privacy concerns. Therefore, this new range of opportunities should be approached with a careful balance between innovation and authenticity. Integrating this balance into marketing strategies will be essential to fully harness the potential of generative artificial intelligence, as brands must remain both innovative and true to core values that resonate with consumers. Similarly, according to Panda et al. (2026), Generative AI (GenAI) is redefining how brands engage with consumers, influencing their experiences and decisions beyond mere process automation. In this context, the success of AI-generated advertising content depends on agencies' ability to preserve message authenticity and relevance by blending new technology with human judgment and creativity. The use of AI in marketing should be guided by values, emotional engagement, and ethical responsibility—factors that will foster consumer trust and loyalty.

2.1 AI Advertising and consumer behaviour

Although artificial intelligence excels at generating efficient, optimised content and is associated with performance, the literature shows that communal dimensions remain essential for building trust and the relationship between brands and consumers. According to Hryniewicz (2020), communal content can emphasise values such as trust, care, and authenticity in the brand-consumer relationship, as consumers appreciate these values more than agentic ones. In contrast, agency-based content highlights the performance, efficiency, and functional superiority of certain products or services. These aspects open the discussion on the application and impact of artificial intelligence in ad creation, where technological efficiency and message authenticity must be balanced. Zafar

and Hussain (2025) argue that the use of artificial intelligence in advertising offers marketing agencies significant opportunities to increase efficiency and performance, such as the rapid and optimised generation of content. However, the real impact of AI-generated ads extends beyond productivity alone, and their success depends on meeting consumer standards and maintaining an authentic connection with the audience. The same author believes that to create credible, engaging, and relevant ads for the public, agencies must combine the power of AI with human creativity and judgement, integrating new technologies in a way that amplifies rather than replaces human input. Furthermore, special attention should be paid to the content promoted in advertisements, as well as to consumers' existing perceptions and expectations. For example, consumers tend to associate artificial intelligence with performance and efficiency, so ads focused on agency-oriented goals, such as productivity or innovation, may be well-received if they use AI (Chen et al., 2024).

At the same time, studies show that a balance between artificial and human input is essential to maintaining authenticity and an emotional connection with the audience. Supporting this idea, the results of the study conducted by Yin, Ma, and Pan (2024) showed that consumer attitudes toward advertising content generated by artificial intelligence are influenced not only by its technological characteristics, but especially by how AI is integrated into the creative process. It is important for consumers to perceive AI as a collaborative tool rather than a replacement for human creativity in order to lead to more favorable evaluations and greater openness on the part of consumers. The study's findings showed that using a first-person narrative perspective contributes to increasing the sense of connection, suggesting that the humanizing elements of the content remain relevant even in the context of AI use. At the same time, content that focuses directly on the promoted product is more favorably received than content that integrates other external elements, indicating that clear, direct, and relevant messages resonate more with consumers.

To better understand consumers' reactions when interacting with AI-generated ads, it is important to approach this field with a consumer-centric perspective. Argan et al. (2022) outline the complex process consumers go through, consisting of stages of reception and active engagement, followed by the final decision-making stage. Thus, during the reception stage, the consumer's attention can be drawn both positively and negatively, and they are influenced by factors such as FOMO, personal interests, or the desire for new experiences. In the next stage, that of active engagement, consumers explore, compare, and make intuitive decisions, and the final stage represents the final opinion on the advertisement. This analysis highlights that both psychological and impulsive factors determine how consumers perceive and interact with AI ads, which ultimately influence the relationship between brands and consumers, as well as purchasing decisions. Brands should adopt a perspective that places the consumer at the center of their campaigns to ensure the effectiveness of their advertising messages.

Furthermore, in their analysis of consumer behavior when interacting with AI-generated ads, Gu et al. (2024) identify the characteristics of ads that influence how consumers perceive and accept artificial advertising content. Elements such as realism, vitality, and visual creativity contribute to the impression that the ads are authentic, while images with an obviously artificial visual quality are more easily rejected. This perception, which consumers form upon their first encounter with the advertising materials, directly affects their willingness to accept the ads. To increase the likelihood of consumer acceptance, the same study recommends using artificial images that are as natural as possible and encourages post-production adjustments to improve perceived quality and make the content more relatable to consumers.

Ratta et al. (2024) suggests that AI-generated ads are viewed positively by consumers due to factors such as their visual appeal, the emotional connection they establish with the audience, content tailored to their needs and desires, their attractiveness, and the ease with which the message can be understood. In addition, the use of artificial intelligence in advertising can bring practical benefits to brands by saving time and resources. Therefore, ads created with the help of artificial intelligence, which place the consumer at the center of the creative process, can represent an innovative direction for the advertising industry, with favorable effects on the consumer experience.

According to Guerra-Tamez et al. (2024), how consumers react to AI-generated ads also depends on their past interactions with AI. This aspect plays an essential role in shaping brand trust and, implicitly, in purchasing decisions. Previous exposure to AI, attitudes toward it, and perceptions of its accuracy contribute significantly to building trust and can influence purchasing behavior. These effects are particularly pronounced among Generation Z, for whom interactions with technology are intuitive and frequent, which, for such an audience, makes the integration of AI into marketing strategies not only effective but also essential for maintaining brand relevance. (Guerra-Tamez et al., 2024). The same author argues that focusing on the consumer experience provides a useful framework for exploring how different generations perceive and respond to content generated by artificial intelligence. However, the literature still offers limited insights into how AI-generated ads influence the brand-consumer relationship and purchase intent from a generational perspective. In this framework, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature by conducting a comparative analysis of how two distinct generations perceive and react to advertising content generated by artificial intelligence, as well as its long-term impact on brand relationships and purchase intent. From a practical perspective, the current research can provide marketing agencies with guidelines for adapting communication strategies based on the target audience, and, above all, based on the extent to which that audience accepts artificial intelligence in advertising.

Consequently, the evolution of artificial intelligence has gone beyond the simple creation of advertising materials, bringing with it numerous advantages, but also disadvantages that brands should take into account when executing creative

processes. Advertisements generated using artificial intelligence can elicit positive reactions from consumers as long as they align with their perceptions and expectations and remain as authentic and realistic as possible. The balance between effective execution and alignment with consumer expectations forms the foundation of an effective advertising strategy (Stoica, Vegheş & Orzan, 2015).

3. Methodology

This study aims to address new challenges raised by the modern era, in which artificial intelligence is transforming the way marketing is approached on a daily basis. In a world where AI-generated ads are becoming increasingly common in interactions between brands and consumers, the authentic relationship between them remains a challenge that requires a deep understanding of how generative content influences consumer perceptions, which have long-term impacts, including on their purchase intent. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to analyze the impact that AI-generated ads have on the brand-consumer relationship, but especially on purchase intent, incorporating a comparative perspective on generational differences. Given that generations are different in terms of familiarity with and acceptance of AI, as well as their level of trust and expectations regarding marketing communications, the study highlights the extent to which these new dynamics influence the perception and evaluation of AI-generated advertising content.

In this regard, the study is structured around the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent do consumer-brand relationship variables influence purchase intention in the context of exposure to AI-generated advertisements?

RQ2: Are there significant generational differences in the perception and evaluation of AI-generated advertisements? The results of the study can contribute to the development of the specialized literature on the part, and on the other part, it can contribute to the development of strategies well-suited to the current dynamics of consumer behavior.

Given the research questions and objectives formulated, the research methodology adopts a quantitative approach, based on a controlled experiment, which aims to analyze how variables specific to the consumer-brand relationship influence purchase intention in the context of exposure to advertisements generated by artificial intelligence. At the same time, the research design allows for the exploration of generational differences, depending on the type of advertising content analyzed. Thus, the experiment was structured into four distinct groups, corresponding to two different generational groups, namely Generation Z and Generation X, each of which was divided into two subgroups: a group exposed to a traditional advertisement, referred to as the control group, and a group exposed to an advertisement generated using artificial intelligence. Data collection was conducted via an online questionnaire distributed using the Google Forms platform. The research instrument was designed to assess the variables relevant to

the consumer–brand relationship, as found in the specialized literature, namely brand trust (Wang et al., 2023), brand attachment (Gilal et al., 2021), loyalty (Türkeş et al, 2024), and perceived risk (Phamthi et al., 2024), which are analyzed in relation to purchase intention, considered the dependent variable. The sample consists of 200 respondents, distributed equally among four groups, with 50 participants per group. To ensure data validity, response filtering and verification mechanisms were applied. In this way, membership in the analyzed generation was verified through a filter question, and respondents’ attention was monitored by introducing an attention check item. In case of an incorrect answer, participants had the opportunity to review the advertising material, but a second incorrect answer led to automatic exclusion from the study. Given the variables selected for the study, to reduce the influence of external factors and ensure the comparability of experimental conditions, a relatively unknown brand was selected, thereby avoiding biases generated by familiarity or pre-existing brand loyalty.

At the same time, AI-generated advertising was designed to preserve, as much as possible, the same visual elements as traditional advertising, ensuring consistency in the message and the visual experience. The AI-generated ad was created using the Adobe Firefly platform with a structured prompt, by segmenting the original material into five scenes and using visual reference elements to achieve a result as close as possible to the traditional version. The goal was to maintain visual and narrative consistency between the two types of content, facilitating a highly relevant comparison between them and creating synthetic elements as close to the real ones as possible.

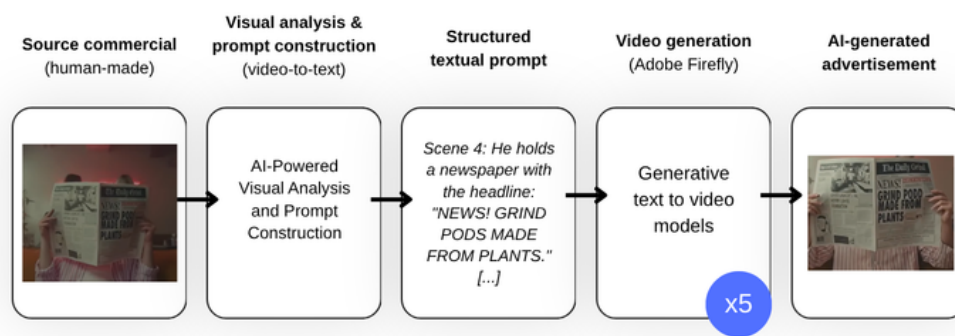


Figure 1. AI advertisement generation process

Source: Author’s own adaptation based on Hartmann, Exner and Domdey (2025)

For data analysis, a regression analysis method was used to examine the relationship between variables relevant to consumer behavior in the context of exposure to advertisements generated by artificial intelligence. In this regard, purchase intention was treated as the dependent variable, while brand trust, brand attachment, brand loyalty, and perceived risk were considered independent variables.

This approach allows us to assess how factors specific to the consumer–brand relationship contribute to the formation of purchase intent, as well as to identify the influence of each variable in the context of using artificial intelligence in advertising. At the same time, the analysis provides an appropriate framework for testing the hypotheses formulated in the study, as follows:

H1: Brand trust positively influences purchase intention, regardless of ad type or generation;

H2: Brand attachment positively influences purchase intention, regardless of ad type or generation;

H3: Brand loyalty positively influences purchase intention, regardless of ad type or generation;

H4: Perceived risk negatively influences purchase intention, regardless of ad type or generation.

4. Findings

4.1 Compilation and interpretation of the results provided by the descriptive analysis

After excluding invalid responses, the descriptive analysis of the questionnaires can be summarised using the table below, based on the final total of 200 respondents with valid entries:

Summary of responses from descriptive analysis

Table 1

Item	Gen Z (traditional advertising)	Gen Z (AI ad)	Generation X (traditional advertising)	Gen X (AI ad)
Appeal	Most respondents (48%) found the ad interesting, and 36% found it very interesting. Furthermore, only 2% said they found the ad uninteresting.	More than half of the respondents found the ad interesting or very interesting.	While most respondents find the ad interesting or very interesting, 36% find it uninteresting.	56.9% of respondents find the ad interesting, and 23.5% find it very interesting.
Credibility	38% of respondents are neutral regarding the ad's credibility,	Majority of respondents consider the advertisement to be credible	32% of respondents consider the ad to be somewhat	The ad is very credible to 11.8% of respondents, credible to

Item	Gen Z (traditional advertising)	Gen Z (AI ad)	Generation X (traditional advertising)	Gen X (AI ad)
	34% consider it credible, and 22% consider it very credible.	(40%) and very credible (24%).	credible, while 40% consider it credible. Among the respondents, 12% consider the ad to be very credible, and another 12% remain neutral.	43.1%, neutral to 17.6%, and not very credible to 25.5%. It is considered not credible at all by 2% of respondents.
Perceptions of AI Use	More than half of the respondents (80%) consider the ad they watched to be traditional (human-made), while 12% consider it a traditional ad.	Over half of the respondents (70%) believe the ad they watched was generated using AI, while 14% believe it was created using traditional methods. Meanwhile, 16% are unsure.	66% of respondents believe that the ad was not created using AI, while 26% believe it was.	Nearly half of the respondents identify the ad as not being created using traditional methods, while 35.3% believe it was created using AI. 19.6% of the respondents are unable to form an opinion on this item.
Familiarity with AI ads	More than half of the respondents have seen ads created using artificial intelligence (80%), while 14% have not. Only 6% are unsure whether they have seen such ads.	More than half of the respondents have seen ads created using artificial intelligence (80%), while 16% have not. Only 4% are unsure whether they have seen such ads.	Most respondents (56%) have seen ads generated using artificial intelligence, while 22% of respondents have not seen such ads. Another 22% of respondents are unsure whether they have seen AI ads.	39.2% of respondents are not familiar with such advertisements, 41.2% have seen them before, and 19.6% are unaware of this issue.
Attitude towards AI ads	44% of respondents view AI ads positively,	38% have a positive attitude, 28% are undecided, 18%	Nearly half of respondents (48%) view AI-powered	37.3% view the ads negatively, 11.8% very negatively,

Item	Gen Z (traditional advertising)	Gen Z (AI ad)	Generation X (traditional advertising)	Gen X (AI ad)
	while 30% of them have not formed an opinion. 12% view them very positively, and 14% negatively.	have a negative opinion, 14% have a very positive opinion, and only 2% have a very negative opinion.	ads as negative, 20% as very negative, and 16% have not yet formed an opinion. Only 12% view AI-powered ads as positive, and 4% as very positive.	21.6% did not express an opinion, and 13.7% very positively. AI ads are viewed positively by only 15.7% of respondents.
Acceptability of AI ads	With more than half of the respondents (70%) considering the use of artificial intelligence to be acceptable, 18% did not express an opinion, and 12% do not consider it acceptable.	More than half of the respondents (66%) consider the use of artificial intelligence to be acceptable, 18% did not express an opinion, and 16% do not consider it acceptable.	Most respondents (58%) consider the use of AI in advertising to be acceptable, 30% do not approve of it, and 12% did not express an opinion.	More than half of the respondents (68.6%) consider the use of artificial intelligence to be acceptable, 13.7% did not express an opinion, and 17.6% do not consider it acceptable.
Level of purchase comfort following exposure to an AI advertisement	The distribution of responses is balanced, with a tendency toward the middle and higher values of the scale, and 0% for "not at all comfortable."	The responses are relatively evenly distributed, with medium and high scores predominating.	Respondents tend to express a relatively high level of comfort regarding purchasing after being exposed to AI ads, with a concentration of responses around level 4 (46%)	Respondents predominantly reported high scores, with a significant concentration at level 4 (54.9%) and a substantial proportion at level 5 (21.6%).

Source: Authors' own contribution

The most common educational qualifications among Generation Z are bachelor's and master's degrees, while those among Generation X include bachelor's, master's, and high school diplomas. For all four groups, the gender

distribution is relatively balanced, with no significant differences among respondents. In contrast, when it comes to place of residence, respondents from urban areas predominate.

A comparative analysis of the four groups shown in the table reveals a number of significant differences in the perception and evaluation of advertisements. Specifically, in terms of appeal, Generation Z tends to express more positive views than Generation X, which appears to be more reserved in its positive assessments of AI-generated advertisements.

When it comes to perceived credibility, Generation Z assigns higher levels of credibility, even to AI-generated ads, suggesting a greater openness to new forms of marketing communication. Generation X stands out for a distribution of responses concentrated on neutral and low ratings. Perceptions of AI usage show that Generation Z demonstrates a greater ability to correctly identify AI-generated ads, while Generation X exhibits a higher degree of uncertainty and misinterpretations.

Regarding familiarity with AI-generated ads, Generation Z reports a higher level of exposure, confirming their status as digital natives. As for Generation X, we see a larger proportion of respondents who are unfamiliar with this new type of advertising content and are unsure whether or not they are exposed to such materials. When it comes to attitudes toward AI-generated ads, Generation Z generally tends to be more favorable, while Generation X takes a cautious, even slightly negative stance toward ads created using artificial intelligence. However, regarding the acceptability of using artificial intelligence in advertising, both generations have relatively high levels of acceptance. Finally, regarding the level of comfort with purchasing after exposure to AI ads, respondents across all groups tend to report average to high scores, suggesting a generally moderate to high level of acceptance of the influence of AI ads on purchasing behaviour.

In conclusion, it can be said that, although there are intergenerational differences in attitudes and openness toward AI-powered ads, particularly in favor of Gen Z, the overall perception remains predominantly positive or neutral, and the integration of artificial intelligence into advertising does not generate significant rejection, but rather a gradual acceptance, accompanied by a moderate level of trust and comfort regarding the purchasing decision-making process.

4.2 Regression analysis conducted using questionnaire responses regarding the relationship between brand and consumer and purchase intention in the context of traditional and AI-driven advertisements

To analyze how purchase intent is influenced by determining factors when comparing traditionally produced advertisements with those created using AI, a regression analysis was conducted, and we will test hypotheses H1–H4 for each generation and type of advertisement.

4.2.1 Testing hypotheses about generation Z and traditional advertising

Representative coefficients for the regression analysis of determinants for Generation Z regarding traditionally produced advertisements

Table 2

	Regression coefficient (B)	Standard error (SE)	T-test	Statistical significance (p)
Intercept	0,2387	0,3759	0,6349	0,5287
Average brand trust	-0,1919	0,1728	-1,1102	0,2728
Average brand attachment	0,5192	0,1511	3,4352	0,0013
Average brand loyalty	0,0217	0,1406	0,1546	0,8778
Average perceived risk	0,5138	0,1181	4,3495	0,0001
R= 0,7875; R ² = 0,6202; F _(4,50) = 18,3750; p = 0,0000				

Source: Authors' own contribution

Regression analysis was used to highlight the influence of brand trust, brand attachment, brand loyalty, and perceived risk on purchase intention among Generation Z. The results showed that the relationship between these determinants and purchase intention in this case is of moderate strength ($R = 0.7875$), and 62.02% of purchase intention is influenced by these factors ($R^2 = 0.6202$), with the model being statistically valid ($p = 0.0000$). In the context of traditionally produced advertisements, brand trust negatively influences purchase intention and is not statistically significant ($B = -0.1919$; $p = 0.2728 > 0.05$), while brand loyalty positively influences purchase intention but is not statistically significant ($B = 0.0217$; $p = 0.8778 > 0.05$). Brand attachment ($B = 0.5192$; $p = 0.013 < 0.05$) and perceived risk ($B = 0.5138$; $p = 0.0001 < 0.05$) positively influence the dependent variable and are statistically significant. Thus, we can conclude that the only hypothesis that holds is H2: brand attachment has a positive impact on purchase intention among Generation Z for traditional advertisements. Although perceived risk is statistically significant, it represents a positive coefficient, which contradicts the initial hypothesis; therefore, hypothesis H4 is rejected. We can observe that for a one-unit increase in the level of attachment, purchase intention increases by 0.5192, representing a moderate to strong impact. In practice, a one-unit change in the level of attachment, assuming all other variables remain constant, results in an increase of approximately half a unit in purchase intention. Perceived risk has the same influence, with purchase intention increasing by 0.5138 for a one-unit change in risk.

According to the table presented above and the interpretation, the regression equation for Generation Z in the context of traditionally produced advertisements is:

$$Y = 0.2387 + (0.5192 \times \text{Brand attachment}) + (0.5138 \times \text{Perceived risk})$$

4.2.2 Testing hypotheses about Generation Z and AI advertising

Representative coefficients for the regression analysis of determinants for Generation Z regarding advertisements created using artificial intelligence

Table 3

	Regression coefficient (B)	Standard error (SE)	T-test	Statistical significance (p)
Intercept	1,4236	0,2929	4,8598	0,0000
Average brand trust	0,5072	0,1358	3,7340	0,0005
Average brand attachment	-0,4477	0,1393	-3,2128	0,0024
Average brand loyalty	0,0873	0,1133	0,7705	0,4451
Average perceived risk	0,3936	0,1278	3,0801	0,0035

$R = 0,7711$; $R^2 = 0,5947$; $F_{(4,50)} = 16,5090$; $p = 0,0000$

Source: Authors' own contribution

Regression analysis was used to highlight the influence of brand trust, brand attachment, brand loyalty, and perceived risk on purchase intention among Generation Z. The results showed that the relationship between the determinants and purchase intention in this case is strong ($R = 0.7711$), and 59.47% of purchase intention is influenced by these factors ($R^2 = 0.5947$), with the model being statistically valid ($p = 0.0000$). In the context of Generation Z, brand loyalty positively influences purchase intention, but is not statistically significant ($B = 0.0873$; $p = 0.4451 > 0.05$). Brand trust ($B = 0.5072$; $p = 0.0005 < 0.05$), brand attachment ($B = -0.4477$; $p = 0.0024 < 0.05$), and perceived risk ($B = 0.3936$; $p = 0.0035 < 0.05$) influence the dependent variable and are statistically significant. Thus, we can conclude that the only hypothesis that holds true is hypothesis H1, regarding brand trust, which has a positive impact on purchase intention among Generation Z. Although brand loyalty is statistically significant, it has a negative coefficient, which contradicts the initial hypothesis; therefore, hypothesis H2 is rejected. Similarly, although perceived risk is statistically significant, it has a positive coefficient, which contradicts the initial hypothesis; therefore, hypothesis H4 is rejected. We can observe that for a one-unit increase in the level of trust, purchase intention increases by 0.5072, representing a moderate to strong impact. In practice, a one-unit change in the level of trust, assuming all other variables remain constant, results in an increase of approximately half a unit in purchase intention. As for brand attachment, it has a negative influence, and a one-unit increase reduces purchase intention by 0.4477, representing a moderate impact. A one-unit change in perceived risk influences the purchase intention variable by 0.3936, representing a moderate impact.

According to the table presented above and the interpretation, the regression equation for the Generation Z group in the context of advertisements created using artificial intelligence is:

$$Y = 1.4236 + (0.5072 \times \text{Brand trust}) + (-0.4477 \times \text{Brand attachment}) + (0.3936 \times \text{Perceived risk})$$

4.2.3 Testing Hypotheses about Generation X and Traditional Advertising

Representative coefficients for the regression analysis of determinants for Generation X regarding traditionally produced advertisements

Table 4

	Regression coefficient (B)	Standard error (SE)	T-test	Statistical significance (p)
Intercept	0,3095	0,2994	1,0338	0,3067
Average brand trust	0,0919	0,0858	1,0715	0,2896
Average brand attachment	0,2548	0,0976	2,6108	0,0122
Average brand loyalty	0,2445	0,1068	2,2900	0,0268
Average perceived risk	0,3449	0,1145	3,0127	0,0042
R = 0,8408; R ² = 0,7070; F _(4,50) = 27,1503; p = 0,0000				

Source: Authors' own contribution

Regression analysis was used to highlight the influence of brand trust, brand attachment, brand loyalty, and perceived risk on purchase intention among Generation X. The results showed that the relationship between the determinants and purchase intention in this case is strong ($R = 0.8408$), and 70.70% of purchase intention is influenced by these factors ($R^2 = 0.7070$), with the model being statistically valid ($p = 0.0000$). In the context of Generation X, brand trust positively influences purchase intention, but is not statistically significant ($B = 0.0919$; $p = 0.2896 > 0.05$). Brand attachment ($B = 0.2548$; $p = 0.0122 < 0.05$), brand loyalty ($B = 0.2445$; $p = 0.0268 < 0.05$), and perceived risk ($B = 0.3449$; $p = 0.0042 < 0.05$) influence the dependent variable and are statistically significant. Thus, we can conclude that the only hypotheses that hold true are those regarding brand attachment and brand loyalty, which have a positive impact on purchase intention among Generation X. Although the perceived risk is statistically significant, it is a positive coefficient, which contradicts the initial hypothesis; therefore, hypothesis H4 is rejected. We can observe that for a one-unit increase in the level of attachment, purchase intention increases by 0.2548, representing a weak to moderate impact. In practice, a one-unit change in the attachment level, assuming all other variables remain constant, results in a one-quarter-unit increase in purchase intention. As for brand loyalty, it influences purchase intention by a quarter of a unit, and perceived risk by 0.3449, having a moderate impact.

According to the table presented above and the interpretation, the regression equation for the Generation X group, in the context of traditional advertising, is:

$$Y = 0,3095 + (0,2548 \times \text{Brand attachment}) + (0,2445 \times \text{Brand loyalty}) + (0,3449 \times \text{Perceived risk})$$

4.2.4 Testing hypotheses about Generation X and AI advertising

Representative coefficients for the regression analysis of determinants for Generation X regarding advertisements created using artificial intelligence

Table 5

	Regression coefficient (B)	Standard error (SE)	T-test	Statistical significance (p)
Intercept	0,4242	0,4085	1,0382	0,3047
Average brand trust	0,0842	0,1499	0,5614	0,5773
Average brand attachment	0,4994	0,1845	2,7068	0,0096
Average brand loyalty	-0,2676	0,1738	-1,5398	0,1306
Average perceived risk	0,5467	0,1539	3,5527	0,0009
R= 0,7484; R ² = 0,5601; F _(4,50) = 14,3261; p = 0,0000				

Source: Authors' own contribution

Regression analysis was used to highlight the influence of brand trust, brand attachment, brand loyalty, and perceived risk on purchase intention among Generation X. The results showed that the relationship between the determinants and purchase intention in this case is strong ($R = 0.7484$), and 56.01% of purchase intention is influenced by these factors ($R^2 = 0.5601$), with the model being statistically valid ($p = 0.0000$). In the context of the analysis, brand trust positively influences purchase intention, but is not statistically significant ($B = 0.0842$; $p = 0.5773 > 0.05$), and brand loyalty negatively influences purchase intention and is not statistically significant ($B = -0.2676$; $p = 0.1306 > 0.05$). Brand attachment ($B = 0.4994$; $p = 0.0096 < 0.05$) and perceived risk ($B = 0.5467$; $p = 0.0009 < 0.05$) influence the dependent variable and are statistically significant. Thus, we can conclude that the only hypothesis that holds true is the one regarding brand attachment, which has a positive impact on purchase intention. Although the perceived risk is statistically significant, it is a positive coefficient, which contradicts the initial hypothesis; therefore, hypothesis H4 is rejected. We can observe that for a one-unit increase in the level of attachment, purchase intention increases by 0.4994, representing a moderate impact. In practice, a one-unit change in the level of attachment, assuming the other variables remain unchanged, results in an increase of approximately half a unit in purchase intention. At the same time, a one-unit change in perceived risk, under the same conditions described above, results in an increase in purchase intention of approximately half a unit.

According to the table presented above and the interpretation, the regression equation for the Generation X group in the context of advertisements created using artificial intelligence is:

$$Y = 0,4242 + (0,4994 \times \text{Brand attachment}) + (0,5467 \times \text{Perceived risk})$$

To summarize the results obtained from the regression analyses, the evaluation of the research hypotheses is summarized in the table below:

Summary of the testing of research hypotheses

Table 6

	H1: Brand trust positively influences purchase intention, regardless of ad type or generation	H2: Brand attachment positively influences purchase intention, regardless of ad type or generation	H3: Brand loyalty positively influences purchase intention, regardless of ad type or generation	H4: Perceived risk negatively influences purchase intention, regardless of ad type or generation
Gen Z, traditional ad	Not supported	Supported	Not supported	Not supported
Gen Z, AI ad	Supported	Not supported	Infirmată	Not supported
Gen X, traditional ad	Not supported	Supported	Supported	Not supported
Gen X, AI ad	Not supported	Supported	Not supported	Not supported

Source: Authors' own contribution

Looking at the four regression analyses conducted for Generations Z and X in different contexts as a whole, we can draw a solid conclusion about the factors that truly determine purchase intent. The results demonstrate that the regression models obtained indicate values of the coefficient of determination (R^2) ranging from 56% to 70%, which shows that the variables included in the analysis are well-chosen and successfully capture the factors influencing purchase intention. The central pillar of all the models analyzed is brand attachment, which consistently emerged as a significant factor, confirming that the emotional connection remains the strongest driver of influence, regardless of the age segment or type of advertisement analyzed. However, an interesting nuance is observed among Generation X, where brand loyalty in traditionally produced advertisements also becomes a critical factor, suggesting that this segment places a higher value on the history of the relationship with the brand than the more open and spontaneous young people of Generation Z. A surprising and recurring theme in all the analyses is the role of perceived risk. Although the initial hypothesis assumed that risk would inhibit purchase intent, the data consistently contradicted this assumption, regardless of the type of advertisement analyzed, showing a positive and significant correlation. This suggests that, in the current market context, risk no longer acts as a barrier but may stimulate consumer curiosity rather than discouraging them. This mechanism reminds us of the psychology of curiosity, as explained by Loewenstein's theory (1994), according to which curiosity arises as a form of

“cognitive deprivation” generated by the perception of an information gap, which leads individuals to actively search for ways to reduce uncertainty and to engage in exploratory behaviors.

Furthermore, recent literature supports this reinterpretation of uncertainty, showing that it can function as an emotional and cognitive stimulus, increasing curiosity and purchase intention, particularly in contexts of hedonic or impulsive consumption. For example, research on the “blind box” phenomenon conducted by Zhang, Zhou, and Qin (2022) highlights that the perception of uncertainty has a significant impact on impulsive purchase intention, an effect mediated by variables such as curiosity and the perception of luck. In this regard, uncertainty is often reinterpreted by consumers as a challenge or an experience that is “worth trying” rather than as a purely negative risk, which explains the positive relationship observed in the present analysis.

On the other hand, brand trust has played a fluctuating role, proving decisive only in certain contexts, which suggests that, although necessary, it is not always sufficient to trigger a purchase in the absence of an emotional connection, that is, in the absence of brand attachment. In conclusion, marketing strategies should prioritize building brand attachment and strategically managing risk perception, as these are the factors that most effectively stimulate purchase intent among both generations studied.

5. Conclusions

Returning to the starting point of the entire study, with regard to the first research question, the results indicate that consumer–brand relationship variables play a significant role in explaining purchase intention in the context of exposure to AI-generated advertisements. The regression models demonstrate high explanatory power, with between 56% and 70% of the variation in purchase intention explained by these factors. Among these, brand attachment stands out as the strongest and most consistent predictor, confirming the importance of the emotional dimension in the purchase decision, even in a technologically advanced context.

In addition, brand loyalty is more important to Generation X, while Generation Z is more influenced by the immediate experience and the innovative nature of advertisements. An important finding is the positive relationship between perceived risk and purchase intention, contrary to initial assumptions, suggesting that uncertainty can be reinterpreted as an element of novelty and a stimulus for curiosity. With regard to the second research question, the results confirm clear generational differences: Generation Z shows greater familiarity with and openness toward AI-generated ads, while Generation X remains more reserved, placing greater emphasis on trust and loyalty. In terms of hypotheses, the study reveals both confirmations and rejections. Specifically, the hypothesis regarding the negative effect of perceived risk on purchase intention is rejected, as the results indicate a positive and significant effect of perceived risk in all the models analyzed.

In terms of its contributions, the study integrates the technological perspective with the relational one, demonstrating that, although artificial intelligence is transforming the way advertising content is created, the fundamental mechanisms of consumer behavior remain rooted in emotional and relational dimensions. Thus, technology does not replace the relationship between brand and consumer, but rather reconfigures it.

From a methodological standpoint, the study employs an experimental design with a control group, however, it is limited by the sample size, which calls for caution when generalizing the results. Nevertheless, the findings provide a relevant picture of the urban environment and active digital consumers.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide relevant insights for marketing strategies. The use of AI-generated ads can be leveraged differently depending on the target segment: for Generation Z, they can stimulate interest and engagement through their innovative nature, while for Generation X, it is essential to integrate them into a framework that maintains brand consistency and credibility.

Finally, the study opens up new research directions, suggesting the need for long-term exploration of the ethical impact of synthetic advertising and how “technological risk” can be transformed into a tool for strategic positioning. It is recommended that future analyses include larger samples and control variables related to product categories to verify whether these psychological mechanisms hold true for purchases involving high financial implications. It would also be relevant to investigate how different types of products or services influence consumer reactions to AI-generated advertisements, as well as to expand the analysis to digital consumer behavior in online environments, particularly on social media platforms. At the same time, given the research findings, future studies could address the perceived risk in AI-generated ads by analyzing how it changes consumer behavior through a more detailed analysis. Overall, this study highlights the fact that the future of marketing will not be defined solely by the technological capabilities of artificial intelligence, but by how it is integrated into building authentic and relevant relationships with consumers, in line with the expectations and characteristics of each generation.

During the preparation of this research, the author used Adobe Firefly to generate the visual stimuli presented in the experiment questionnaire, meaning the advertisement used for the AI-generated commercial. In addition, ChatGPT was used to assist in structuring scene descriptions into prompt format suitable for content generation, as well as to support the review of analyses, translations and interpretations. After using this support, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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