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**Trust in the Machine: Exploring Customer Perceptions of
AI-Generated Brand Content on Social Platforms**

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Master Thesis

presented as partial requirement for obtaining a Master's Degree in Data-Driven Marketing

NOVA Information Management School
Instituto Superior de Estatística e Gestão de Informação

Universidade Nova de Lisboa

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TRUST IN THE MACHINE

Exploring Customer perceptions of AI-generated brand content on social media platforms

by

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Master's Thesis presented as partial requirement for obtaining the Master's degree in Data-Driven Marketing, with a specialisation in Digital Marketing & Analytics.

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STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

I hereby declare that I have conducted this academic work with integrity. I confirm that I have not used plagiarism, any form of undue use of information or falsification of results along the process leading to its elaboration. I further declare that I have fully acknowledged the Rules of Conduct and Code of Honor from the NOVA Information Management School.

Lisboa, 10th June 2025

Marta Veltman

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ABSTRACT

This research's primary aim is to examine customer perceptions of branded content generated by AI on social media in comparison to human, focusing on its impact on brand image, customer loyalty, and purchase intent, while utilising engagement as a primary measure of content quality and effectiveness. By employing a quantitative method, specifically a survey conducted in Portugal, the research investigated the first perceptions of AI compared to human content creation. The focal point of this research is a post created by Nike, a worldwide recognized sports brand. Findings show that post-engagement significantly affects purchase intent, regardless of the content's origin. These findings support the hypothesis that greater engagement enhances the brand's image, boosts loyalty, and enhances purchase intentions. Mediation analysis shows that brand image and customer loyalty serve as partial mediators in this relationship. Theoretically, this study advances our knowledge of how consumer behaviour tactics and marketing campaigns are impacted by AI adoption. From a managerial standpoint, our findings offer insightful information to companies thinking about implementing AI for content production, emphasizing how crucial it is to build a positive brand reputation with customers and encourage loyalty in order to affect their purchasing decisions. In conclusion, this study emphasizes how crucial artificial intelligence is becoming to marketing. It lays the groundwork for further research in the quickly evolving fields of artificial intelligence and digital marketing.

KEYWORDS

AI-generated content; Brand image; Customer Loyalty; Human-Generated Content; Purchase Intent

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

- AI** Artificial Intelligence
- GEN AI** Generative Artificial Intelligence

1. INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence has grown exponentially over the past years, bringing groundbreaking changes in different fields (Kshetri et al., 2024; Lu, 2019).

Artificial intelligence can be described as a field that seeks to create intelligent machines capable of replicating human-like thought and behaviour (Nagendraswamy & Amogh, 2021; Welsh, 2019).

Marketing has been the field that has gained the most from the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (Davenport et al., 2020). The development of Artificial Intelligence has changed how marketers interact with their customers, enabling them to reach them with greater precision and understanding their needs and preferences more effectively (Kumar, Rajan, Venkatesan, et al., 2019), offering more value and promoting more meaningful and productive interactions (Tiautrakul & Jindakul, 2019). This phenomenon has improved productivity and customer experiences, ultimately leading to improved marketing results (Haleem et al., 2022). There are countless applications for this technology in marketing. AI-powered tools, driven by customer profiles and data, can learn the most effective way to engage with customers, getting the message right at the right time (K. Kopalle et al., 2022).

Generative Artificial Intelligence is a crucial area within Artificial Intelligence, creating content in various forms, including images, videos, text, and music. (Wahid et al., 2023a), enabling marketers to enhance brand-consumer relationships by creating highly personalized strategies and content (Jain et al., 2024).

The applications of this technology are AI-powered Chatbots and content creation, which have become crucial tools for improving customer engagement and providing personalized experiences (S.Vishaal & M.V.Sathish, 2023). This technology fosters brand loyalty by enhancing efficiency, trust, and satisfaction (Ameen et al., 2021; Ferraro et al., 2024), ultimately helping to develop long-lasting customer-brand relationships (Yingrui & Keng, 2020).

However, the benefits brought by adopting this technology: cost reduction ((Kumar, Rajan, Venkatesan, et al., 2019), improved productivity, and increased customer loyalty (Yingrui & Keng, 2020) cannot remove the negative effect it may have on customers' mental, emotional, and behavioral reactions (Barari et al., 2024).

Many brands have been embracing this technology. For instance, Coca-Cola's Christmas campaign last year used AI to create its video ads, but this backfired, leading to criticism from customers and creatives alike. They highlighted technical flaws and a loss of authenticity (Di Placido, 2024). Another example is Heinz, which utilized customer suggestions to bring ketchup bottle ideas to life with the help of AI. The best AI-generated images of the ketchup

bottles were then used to create social media ads and outdoor campaigns. This initiative proved highly successful, increasing their social media engagement rate by 38%. (*Heinz: A.I Ketchup • Ads of the World™ | Part of The Clio Network, 2023*).

However, there's a shortage of research on how adopting Generative AI affects customer-brand relationships (Brüns & Meißner, 2024), despite the growing importance of authenticity in brand success (Uysal & Okumuş, 2022). In the study (Brüns & Meißner, 2024), They examined whether using generative artificial intelligence to create social media content affected the perceived authenticity of a brand. However, their research was conducted in spring 2023, when the use of Artificial Intelligence was still evolving. Conducting this analysis now would be beneficial and provide additional insights, as consumers are now much more familiar with the technology.

Thus, the primary goal of this research is to address this gap by providing a response to the following question: “How does the use of Generative AI for content creation on social media impact the customer perception of a brand?”

To guide me through my analysis I defined some research objectives:

- Analyze the role of post engagement in shaping brand image and customer loyalty.
- Determine the relationship between AI-generated content and the perceived authenticity of brands.
- Analyze how the brand image influences purchase intent.
- Analyze the influence of customer loyalty on purchase intent.

Regarding methods, this study employs a quantitative approach by surveying a large sample of participants. The analysis aims to illuminate and quantify people's experiences of engaging with content generated by AI. The goal of the analysis is to measure engagement, customer perception, purchase intention, brand image, and customer loyalty. Through this analysis, we will gain insight into how the use of generative AI influences a customer's opinion of a brand.

Lastly, the structure of this thesis is designed to offer a detailed examination and deep understanding of the topic. Section 2 – Literature Review I explored the main existing literature regarding Artificial Intelligence, Generative Artificial Intelligence, brand perception, and related concepts. Section 3 will include hypothesis development, allowing for the formulation of the research model. The research design and data collecting techniques will be the main topics of Section 4 - Methodology. Section 5 will involve the results of my hypotheses. The results will be discussed in Section 6, and the conclusions which include the summary of the main findings, will be presented in Section 7.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The current research on artificial intelligence in marketing, social media content production, and key consumer behavior concepts like brand image, customer loyalty, and purchase intent are all examined in this literature review. It looks into how customer perceptions and behavioral intentions are shaped by AI-generated vs human-generated content, especially in relation to social media platforms. This paper also looks at how brand-related factors could mitigate these impacts, offering a theoretical framework for further study.

With the growth of this technology, the disruption of industries has been noticeable, and the marketing field has had the most positive impact, with benefits that will continue to be realized (Kshetri et al., 2024). Research by McKinsey & Company found that most organizations using Generative Artificial Intelligence are doing so in the fields of Marketing, Sales, and Product Development (Singla et al., 2023).

There's existing literature on artificial intelligence and its impact on the marketing industry. However, research is lacking on how adopting this technology will affect customer-brand relationships (Brüns & Meißner, 2024), despite an increasing emphasis on authenticity as a key factor in achieving brand success (Uysal & Okumuş, 2022). Finally, an examination of research on how artificial intelligence affects consumer behavior will be carried out, with the main goal being to comprehend the body of knowledge already available on the subject and identifying patterns.

To find relevant academic papers for this literature review, the primary search engine used was Google Scholar, as it is widely accepted and accessible. To find research related to my field of study, I used keywords such as Artificial Intelligence, consumer behavior, content creation on social media, and brand perceptions. To validate the quality of the papers, I added an extension that categorized them (Q1, Q2) based on their level of quality and accuracy. Papers from categories Q1 and Q2 were predominantly chosen because they were considered high-impact and peer-reviewed.

2.1 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND CONTENT CREATION IN MARKETING

Artificial Intelligence was born from the need for tasks to be performed faster, smarter, and error-free, something that was not possible for humans due to the time-consuming, complex tasks and decision-making. The concept was first presented at a conference by *John McCarthy* and *Marvin Minsky*. Following this conference, Artificial Intelligence experienced a period of success before research declined due to a loss of interest and funding, until it was reborn in 1980 (Mughal et al., 2022). It is a challenging task to devise a definition for artificial intelligence because the term has been interpreted in numerous ways across various disciplines and over the years. Some definitions focus on the simulation of human mental processes, while others emphasize the machine's capacity to perform tasks that would previously have required human intelligence (Haleem et al., 2022; Huang & Rust, 2021).

It is crucial to distinguish between the main categories of artificial intelligence to have a better grasp of its scope. It is often referred to as either general AI or narrow AI, and the two differ in terms of their ability and autonomy levels. A higher-level computer with awareness, sensibility, and a mind that exhibits intelligence in many domains and can carry out a wide range of activities is known as general artificial intelligence, or strong AI. It aims to simulate human-like cognitive abilities, learn, and adapt like human's intelligence (Wirth, 2018). Conversely, narrow artificial intelligence is a much simpler system that only does a small number of jobs and functions inside a specific area. It is programmed to execute specific functions, making it incapable of learning beyond its predefined tasks. Most of the functional Artificial Intelligence we use today is weak, as seen in applications such as Amazon's Alexa and driverless cars (De Bruyn et al., 2022; Wirth, 2018). Writers recognize a third type of AI, known as Hybrid AI, which utilizes a combination of weak AI techniques to perform tasks with greater complexity (Yau et al., 2021).

The application of artificial intelligence in marketing has significantly revolutionized how brands reach consumers, enabling more precise targeting and a deeper understanding of their needs and preferences (Kumar, Rajan, Venkatesan, et al., 2019). The technological transformation enables marketers to deliver more value, resulting in more valuable and efficient interactions (Tiautrakul & Jindakul, 2019). With automated data collection and analysis, AI facilitates real-time decision-making, enhancing the personalization of communication strategies (K. Kopalle et al., 2022). Brands can therefore design more personal relationships with customers and improve overall marketing effectiveness, including greater customer loyalty (Yingrui & Keng, 2020).

AI now exists as a member of the marketing team, enabling marketers to have advanced tools for strategic planning, insight generation, and content optimization (K. Kopalle et al., 2022; V. et al., 2024). It has various applications, from generating consumer insights from behavioral data (Davenport et al., 2020) to discovering the most effective ways to deliver personalized messages through different channels. Although it has its advantages, AI implementation poses risks, including cybersecurity attacks, privacy concerns, and potential implications for jobs, which are consequential ethical and functional concerns (Du & Xie, 2021). These factors can influence consumers' cognitive (e.g., trust), affective (e.g., satisfaction), and behavior (e.g., purchase intention, loyalty) responses to AI-driven marketing (Barari et al., 2024).

Generative Artificial Intelligence is a type of AI used for content creation, characterized by the ability to generate content from data. Its creations can vary from images and text to music (Wahid et al., 2023a). It learns from large datasets and user feedback, producing new content (De Cremer et al., 2023). It has been revolutionizing content marketing by leveraging tools to generate content instantly (Wahid et al., 2023b). The ability of AI to create personalized, relevant marketing content surpasses that of earlier digital technologies, leading to higher productivity and more effective sales lead generation (Kshetri et al., 2024).

The growing capacities of Gen AI have had a significant impact on content marketing, an area crucial for businesses to stay competitive, as traditional marketing techniques have become less efficient (Alcorn State University & Forrest, 2019). Content marketing is a growing area in the marketing field, focusing on creating valuable content for consumers that is informative, problem-solving, or entertaining (Dilys et al., 2022).

Given AI's capacity to produce text, pictures, and even movies that seem to have been produced by people, its material can be more personally meaningful than that produced by previous digital technology generations. This enables marketing professionals to create distinctive, relevant content and target specific customers with a tailored message, in the appropriate context (Kshetri et al., 2024). Content created by humans and AI is now almost indistinguishable (Bubeck et al., 2023). Media on social platforms is becoming increasingly easily produced, thanks to technology that generates images, applies styles to existing ones, edits background images, or even changes elements within an image or video (Deloitte, 2024).

Comparing the efficacy of AI-generated versus human-generated content is essential as the use of generative artificial intelligence in marketing grows (Pizzi et al., 2021). In this case, the distinction is particularly significant in social media, where content plays a vital role in influencing customer attitudes, trust, and engagement in addition to acting as an advertising tool (Appel et al., 2020).

Recent studies have sought to determine whether consumers can distinguish between AI-generated content and content created by humans, and how these differences may influence their attitudes and behavior (Park et al., 2024). Several studies have analyzed the reactions to content generated by AI versus human on social media platforms. A common finding is that users had difficulty distinguishing between the source of the post, which suggests that this technology is becoming highly capable of producing content that is perceived as authentic (Brüns & Meißner, 2024; Wen & Laporte, 2025). However, research has indicated that the use of generative AI for content creation on social media platforms can compromise the perceived authenticity of the brand, even in circumstances where consumers are unable to differentiate the content (Brüns & Meißner, 2024). In the case of disclosure as AI-generated content, there is a tendency for the brand's perception to be more negative, despite the content's quality remaining constant. The followers of these accounts find brands that outsource content creation to Generative AI to be inauthentic, as this method is not preferred for engaging with their users. The implementation of this technology rises concerns regarding trust, specifically the algorithm aversion phenomenon, where people tend to be doubtful and dismiss algorithms even when they perform better than humans (Brüns & Meißner, 2024; Park et al., 2024).

2.2 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND CONTENT PERCEPTIONS

Billions of people use social media, emerging as a key technology of our time. As of 2023, 4.48 billion people used social media, this represents nearly 60% of the world's population (Azad et al., 2023). It is understood as internet-based platforms that use web 2.0 features to ease communications, interactions, and the creation and sharing of content generated by users, disrupting the way the information is spread (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Rousidis et al., 2020).

Advertisers may also use social media as a digital marketing medium to reach consumers with their campaigns. However, social media can also be viewed more widely, as digital spaces where users spend essential aspects of their lives, rather than as digital media (Appel et al., 2020). From this perspective, social media shifts its focus to what people do in these settings rather than the platforms themselves. So far, this has mainly involved sharing information, which is often referred to as a form of online word-of-mouth (WOM) in marketing terms (Appel et al., 2020; Brown et al., 2007).

Today, with the rise of digital marketing, having a strong social media presence on platforms like Instagram and TikTok is vital for building relationships and engaging with customers (Schreiner et al., 2021). By 2011, over half of social media users were following brands on social media (De Vries et al., 2012). Research suggests that by 2019, the content marketing industry would be worth \$300 billion, and just five years later, in 2024, it would have doubled its value (Schreiner et al., 2021).

The effects of artificial intelligence on brand perception and content production in digital marketing have been the subject of several research. While AI can improve efficiency, personalize offerings, and enhance customer service (West et al., 2018), its use in content creation may rise challenges to brand authenticity and consumer relationships (Brüns & Meißner, 2024; Rae, 2024).

It's worth noting that when consumers find out that artificial intelligence is used in content creation, they often view the brand more negatively, which can lead to lower satisfaction levels, even if the content quality remains the same (Rae, 2024). However, when comparing human-generated and AI-generated content there has been no significant differences in consumer perceptions when AI is used as a tool to help humans rather than a replacement (Ananthakrishnan & Arunachalam, 2022). Moreover, how consumers engage with content largely depends on its source, whether it's AI-generated or human. There's a tendency to favor human-generated content, which directly impacts their perceived quality and engagement (Y. Zhang & Gosline, 2023).

Customer engagement, including likes, shares, and comments, is increasingly being seen as a key indicator of content quality and the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, particularly in the digital space (Hollebeek et al., 2014). These reactions are not superficial; instead, the

customer's perceptions during their interaction with the content are part of a sequential process, starting with cognitive investment and evolving into emotional and behavioral dimensions (Hollebeek et al., 2014). The greater the engagement, the higher the chance that the content will create value for the company (Oliver, 1999; Wai Lai & Liu, 2020). Social media marketing, along with in-depth post engagement, plays a significant role in influencing and shaping consumers' perceptions of a brand, which ultimately affects the overall brand image (Langaro et al., 2018).

This concept has been approached in marketing with different terminologies, such as brand engagement or digital customer engagement (Van Doorn et al., 2010). They range from a behavioral perspective emphasizing customer engagement to a perspective that considers both behavioral and psychological engagement (Kumar, Rajan, Gupta, et al., 2019).

Source credibility has the potential to amplify the engagement levels since customers are more willing to engage with content they perceive as relevant and reliable (Ou & Ho, 2024). Overall, a combination of a credible source and quality content is determinant for shaping the behavior of the customers on social media platforms (Shan, 2016).

Building on this, social media content distribution and design can have a big impact on deeper behavioral outcomes, including decision-making processes, consumer trust, and purchase intent in addition to engagement metrics.

Content strategies on social media have been revealed as a crucial element in improving customers' purchase intent, since it has a direct influence in the way they perceive the brands value, emotionally connect, and engage. Research shows that authentic and relevant content, especially when created by influencers or the users themselves, strengthens trust in the brand and improves the overall purchase intention (Alnaser et al., 2024; Su, 2024). This idea has been supported by (Zahrah et al., 2024) which highlights, how user-generated content and EWOM enhance the purchase intention mediated by the customer's emotional and cognitive involvement.

Complementarily, it is clear that a combination of credible, emotionally appealing, and strategically oriented content is crucial in shaping customer behavior on digital platforms (Majeed et al., 2021).

2.3 BRAND IMAGE

What makes a brand goes beyond just its name, it's a reflection of the company's culture, values, vision, mission, and even personality (M. Guliyev, 2023). Brand perception is the mental links and emotional ties that customers create with brands. It serves a vital function in creating an emotional connection with potential customers, as it is owned by them. Moreover, when selecting among competing brands, consumers often rely on their attitudes toward those brands—proving that it is vital for the profitability of companies (Koll & von Wallpach,

2009; M. Guliyev, 2023). In the end, its consumers and not brand that decide the way brands are perceived (Bian & Moutinho, 2011).

Additionally, marketers need to recognize the significance of a positive brand image since consumers dictate and shape how brands are perceived. As posited by Keller (1993), the idea of brand image refers to how a brand is perceived, which is shaped by the associations in consumers' memories. In essence, it is the mental picture of the brand formed by the consumer's beliefs, ideas, and impressions (Malik et al., 2012), it emphasizes the connection among brand personality, user image, and the overall brand experience (Patterson, 1999). Building a strong and positive brand image helps to cultivate customer loyalty, trust, and promotion (Wei, 2024). Opposed to brand identity represents the strategic image a company seeks to establish in consumers' minds. It includes values, personality traits, visual elements, messaging, and the brand's promise. This carefully crafted perception differentiates a company from its competitors and fosters emotional connections with its audience (Wei, 2024). Using Gen AI for content creation helps maintain a consistent brand voice across all social media platforms, resulting in a streamlined brand identity (Murár et al., 2024).

All of these concepts are a part of an umbrella concept— customer perceptions, which refers to the opinions and feelings customers have regarding a brand, this plays a central role in promoting loyalty, retention and overall awareness (Sudarshan, 2023; S. Tai & Shah, 2021).

2.4 CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Customer loyalty is a fundamental aspect of customer behavior and one of the most effective indicators of a brand's success, which is why marketers focus on it so closely, given its significant importance (Nyadzayo & Khajehzadeh, 2016). Loyalty has been defined (Oliver, 1999) as a commitment to consistently purchasing a specific item or service, which leads to the consumption of the same brand repeatedly. Building and maintaining customer loyalty is a primary goal for brand managers, as it indicates a strong preference for the brand and often results in repeat purchasing behavior (Poulis et al., 2018)

Several authors have interpreted loyalty, distinguishing between loyalty and brand loyalty. The first one refers to the customer having a frequent purchase behavior from the same service provider, indicating a favorable attitude towards it (Gwinner et al., 1998). While brand loyalty is related to the customer's behavior when choosing the same brand or a group of brands in a period of time (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Gwinner et al., 1998)

According to previous research, loyalty can be examined in two key dimensions: behavioral and attitudinal, the first one translates in repeated purchasing behavioral, while the second one is more complex and reflects in a deeper commitment, sustained by specific characteristics of a brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Nyadzayo & Khajehzadeh, 2016).

The way consumers interpret AI-generated content vs Human-generated content is dependent on multiple factors. It is often known that brand image has a significant role in influencing consumer attitudes and actions. A strong brand image fosters deep connections with consumers, promoting a love for the brand, which in turn reflects in a higher degree of loyalty (Muhammad Ismuroji et al., 2023).

This emotional bond becomes relevant when consumers encounter different types of content, such as AI-generated or human-generated. In these cases, brand trust, built on previous positive interactions and the brand's reputation, leads to loyalty, being used as a criterion to evaluate the credibility of the content (Supriyanto & Dahlan, 2024).

Furthermore, customers who have a favorable perception of a brand are more likely to believe in its communication efforts, regardless of the source. Commitment and trust build strong connections between brands and customers, and this strengthens customer loyalty.

This trust often overlaps with concerns about authenticity or quality, especially with automated content, since customers value their connection to the brand more than the origin of the content (Abbas et al., 2021).

2.5 PURCHASE INTENTIONS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Researchers in various marketing disciplines have examined purchase intention as a key concept, as it provides insight into consumer behavior (Peña-García et al., 2020). According to Hower and Seth, purchase intention is described as “a cognitive state reflecting the consumer's plan to buy in a specified time” (Haines et al., 1970), emphasizing the idea that it is the final stage of the purchasing process. At that point, customers decide they want to purchase a specific brand of product (Grewal et al., 1998).

Purchase intent and actual purchase behaviors are the two main subjects; the former is usually a predictor of the latter. Through the analysis of purchase intention, brands can assess their perception among consumers and adjust their marketing strategies to increase their propensity to buy (Ramadhan et al., 2024). Research indicates that this concept is multifaceted, as it is influenced by multiple factors (Putri & Tajuddin, 2024), and stresses that digital marketing strategies play a vital role in influencing purchase behavior when it comes to local fashion goods.

One of the most generally recognized theories for comprehending consumer behavior and decision-making is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which was developed by Ajzen in 1991. His theories state that the intention to purchase is determined by three psychological factors: attitude towards the conduct, subjective standards, and perceived behavioral control. The first component is a favorable or unfavorable intention to buy. The perceived social pressure to buy or not buy is related to subjective norms. In contrast, perceived behavioral control refers to a person's beliefs about their ability to perform the behaviors, taking into

account various barriers (Ajzen, 1991). This the framework is especially relevant in the digital marketing field, where customer decisions are influenced by online content. For example, in their research, the authors applied the TPB and machine learning techniques to predict purchase behavior on social media (Azad et al., 2023). Another author, in their research, concluded that the TPB framework is a useful model for understanding consumer purchase intentions in the context of robotic products and services (Y.-H. Tai et al., 2024).

3. RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

AI has been expanding rapidly over recent years, causing revolutionary changes across various fields (Kshetri et al., 2024; Lu, 2019), it has been revolutionizing content marketing by leveraging tools to generate content instantly (Wahid et al., 2023b). The ability of AI to create personalized, relevant marketing content surpasses that of earlier digital technologies, leading to higher productivity and more effective sales lead generation (Kshetri et al., 2024).

Social media is a platform where people interact with each other, providing numerous chances for brands to target and engage with customers (Appel et al., 2020). Positive interactions on social media can have a substantial influence on the public's perception of the brand and even impact the purchase outcome (Sheriff et al., 2019).

Additionally, issues related to brand image and customer loyalty are prevalent within the scope of AI (Brüns & Meißner, 2024). The present research will therefore provide insights into this area.

Since marketing is one of the industries that stands to gain the most from this technology, this study attempts to fill a gap in the literature by examining how deploying Gen AI for content production affects purchase intent. However, while adopting this technology can bring advantages, it may also backfire due to issues such as lack of authenticity, bias, and content that is unrelated to the brand. This research will provide valuable insights into how to effectively implement this technology in social media marketing without compromising brand loyalty, which influences customer purchase behavior. The model shown below (Figure 1) will help to understand this issue by giving a general overview of how social media content affects customer-brand relationships and, ultimately, purchase behavior.

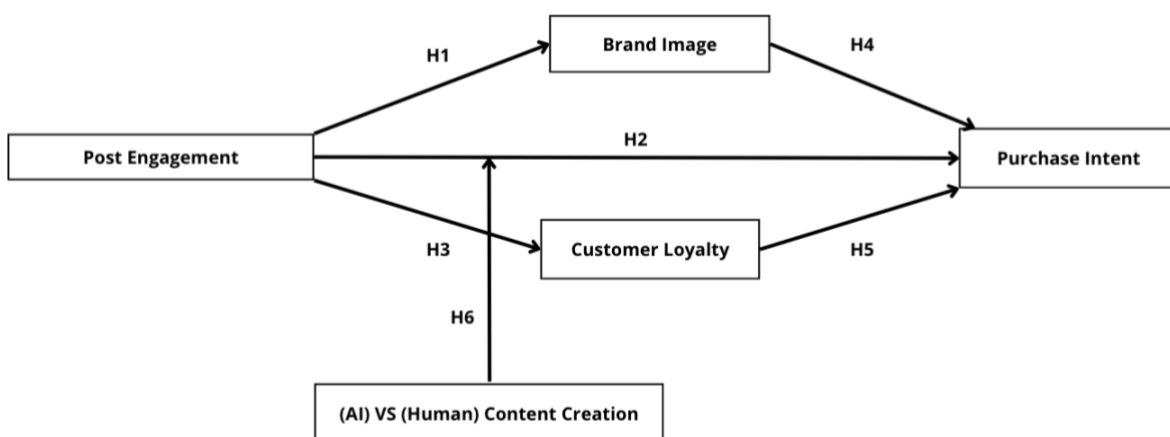


Figure 1 - Research Model

The model and the correlations between its variables will be discussed in this chapter, and it also takes into account that there is the moderation factor of GenAI .vs. Human generated content, which we introduce in the next section.

3.1 GEN AI VS HUMAN GENERATED CONTENT CREATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Brands have been leveraging Artificial Intelligence to maintain a consistent online presence in a variety of forms, by deploying Ai , using NLP to improve engagement and analyze sentiment in order to track customer satisfaction , automation of email marketing , search campaigns and social media targets , which shows that this technology is already being used to generated tailored content to specific customers (Huang & Rust, 2022).

While this technology can improve efficiency, personalized offerings, and enhance customer service (West et al., 2018). Its use in content creation may rise challenges related to brand authenticity and consumer relationships (Brüns & Meißner, 2024; Rae, 2024).

However, there have been disagreements regarding the role and impact of AI in marketing, primarily concerning the employment of AI to replace human marketers in task performance and serve as a helper to prevent replacements (Huang & Rust, 2022).

Generative AI content refers to content generated by this technology, which can create human-like text, images, and even videos. This enables marketing professionals to develop distinctive and relevant content, allowing them to target specific customers effectively by delivering the right message, at the right time, and on the right platform (Kshetri et al., 2024), such as ChatGPT, Dall-E, Steve AI and many more (Wahid et al., 2023a). Conversely, human-generated content refers to content created by professionals who have undergone extensive training and practice (J. J. Zhang et al., 2024).

To measure content quality and effectiveness in the digital landscape, customer engagement has gained recognition and significance as a key indicator (Wai Lai & Liu, 2020), indicating that a combination of a credible source and quality is crucial for shaping customer behavior on social media platforms (Ou & Ho, 2024).

In this context, it becomes relevant to analyze how customer interactions with the content influence how the customer perceives the brand. Brand image refers to how consumers perceive the brand in their minds, encompassing their mental representations of it, with a focus on the connection between the brand's personality, user image, and overall brand identity (Malik et al., 2012).

Research indicates that when consumers become aware that AI generated a piece of content, they tend to perceive the brand more negatively, resulting in diminished satisfaction levels, even if the quality of the content remains comparable (Rae, 2024). However, when comparing human-generated and AI-generated content, no significant differences have been found in consumer perceptions when AI is used as a tool to assist humans rather than as a replacement (Ananthakrishnan & Arunachalam, 2022). So, we posit that:

H1: Post Engagement positively influences brand image

Purchase intention is the probability that a consumer will make a purchase, influenced by perceived benefits, emotions, and overall experiences. It is frequently defined on social media platforms as a customer's propensity to buy after seeing recommendations or items on social networking sites. This theory is significant in marketing research since it is applied as a predictor of consumer behavior (Anas et al., 2023).

Several factors influence this idea, including consumers' sentiments towards the product, perceived price, quality, and value, availability, and overall satisfaction (Dodds et al., 1991; Huang & Rust, 2022). External factors, such as social and environmental influences, can also impact a consumer's purchase intention.

In social media marketing, purchase intention is also influenced by brand image, customer loyalty, and the type of information that businesses publish, whether it is created by humans or artificial intelligence (Huang & Rust, 2022). Numerous studies have examined how social media marketing affects purchase intent, and most of them have found that social media marketing greatly enhances purchase intents. For example, a study conducted in the GO-JEK industry in Indonesia found that social media marketing activities have an immediate impact on the intention to buy, highlighting the need for proper social media management (Anas et al., 2023).

It is important to bear in mind that firm-generated content positively influences purchase intentions as brand become increasingly present on social media sites. Furthermore, engagement on branded posts often leads to increased purchase behavior (Poulis et al., 2018). So, we posit that:

H2: Post Engagement positively influences Purchase Intentions

Customer loyalty is characterized by a strong, sustained commitment to continue making repeat purchases of a favored good or service in the future, even in the face of marketing campaigns and other external factors that could otherwise influence the customer's behavior (Oliver, 2014).

However, the adoption of this technology raises concerns that have an impact on the customer's responses, both cognitive and behavioral. Cognitive, including trust, affective, including satisfaction, and behavioral, including purchase and loyalty (Barari et al., 2024), nevertheless, some research has been done and concluded that the content generated by humans and Artificial Intelligence is almost indistinguishable (Bubeck et al., 2023).

User interaction with branded posts, known as post engagement, is often associated with outcomes such as loyalty to customers. It has been described as a predictor of consumer behavior, including loyalty (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Research suggests that engagement should be viewed as a dynamic process, leading to more concrete outcomes, such as loyalty

intentions (So et al., 2014). Earlier research has indicated that engagement acts as a predictor of loyalty, especially in digital contexts where brands use engagement strategies to foster long-term relationships with consumers (Hudson et al., 2015). So, we posit that:

H3: Post Engagement positively influences Customer Loyalty

3.2 BRAND IMAGE

How consumers perceive a brand is crucial in marketing, as a brand's image reflects their impression based on past experiences and memories (Keller, 1993). At a deeper level, it's about how consumers perceive and experience a brand, and how this influences their behavior, focusing on the interplay between brand identity, user identity, and the brand as a whole (Malik et al., 2012; Patterson, 1999). Marketing techniques aim to formulate consumers' points of view and feelings about a given brand with the purpose of creating a brand impression in their minds to trigger purchase behavior (Y. Zhang, 2015).

Research conducted in the fashion sector has shown that brand image significantly influences consumer purchasing intentions. The results consistently indicated that the quality and value of the product, from the consumer's perspective, could be enhanced with an effective brand image, thereby leading to higher purchasing intention. In addition to this, a brand with a good image not only enhances consumer confidence but directly affects purchasing behavior as well (Lee & Lee, 2018).

Other studies, (Nyadzayo & Khajehzadeh, 2016) suggest that brand image operates as a mediator, influencing the relationship between purchase intentions and customer loyalty. The implication from these results is that a powerful brand image does not only create customer loyalty but also affects the purchase decisions of consumers. So, we posit that:

H4: Brand image positively influences the purchase intent

3.3 CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Customer loyalty reflects the commitment, both emotional and behavioral, that consumers develop towards a brand over time, and in the context of a competitive and crowded digital markets, the primary objective of the brands is to foster a strong, long-term customer loyalty (Keller, 1993; Oliver, 2014).

The concept of customer loyalty relates to the customer's readiness to repurchase or engage with the brand continuously, whereas purchase intent is the possibility that a consumer would buy a product or service, which is largely driven by favorable brand associations and past experiences (Dodds et al., 1991; Oliver, 2014).

This variable has been given a lot of attention by both businesses and scholars since it is a consequence of the consumer's positive sentiment towards an organization. Loyal customers perceive the organization as providing better products and services when compared to their

competitors, leading to a higher purchase intention, and have demonstrated to be less impacted by bad information regarding about the brand (Harris & Goode, 2004; Yuan et al., 2020)

Within the context of technological advancements, including the increasing utilization of AI, research has been made regarding chatbots. The quality perceived by the customer of this technology interaction influences their perceptions, strengthening loyalty when a high-quality service is provided (Chen et al., 2023). So, we posit that:

H5: Customer loyalty positively influences purchase intent

3.4 PURCHASE INTENT

Purchase intention, which refers to the probability that a customer will buy a good or service, is a fundamental idea in consumer behavior research (Dodds et al., 1991). In social media marketing, a number of factors influence purchase intention, such as the kind of content a brand uses (human or AI-generated), brand image, customer loyalty, and brand identity (Huang & Rust, 2022).

Purchase intention can be defined as a state that provokes consumers to proceed with the buying decision through brand trust, credibility, and emotional involvement (Dodds et al., 1991).

There are numerous purchase intention determinants, hence making it a primary outcome of the consumer-brand relationship. First, customer loyalty facilitates purchase intention, since those who are repeatedly exposed to a brand are likely to have higher purchase intent (Oliver, 2014). And the brand's image increases the purchase intention by forming good perceptions in a way that good brand image supports improved purchasing decisions (Keller, 2003).

Conceptually, purchase intention is a crucial concept in consumer decision-making theories. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) proposes that attitudes, brand trust, and consumer beliefs shape purchase intention, emphasizing the significance of authenticity and engagement in marketing communications. Some findings indicate that higher customer loyalty positively influences purchase intention, (Malik et al., 2012) proving that the more authentic and reliable brands are, the more likely they are to convert interest into purchase behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Understanding the elements that drive purchase intention, the last phase of the consumer decision-making process, is critical for companies. As brand image and customer loyalty mediate this relationship, businesses must closely observe how the interplay between AI-generated efficiency and human-created authenticity affects one another to enhance consumer engagement and encourage purchase decisions. And, finally, we take into account the moderation factor, which is:

H6: (AI) VS (Human) content creation moderates the relationship between Post engagement and Purchase Intent

4. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the approach used to study the research topic, test the offered hypotheses, and make findings that support or contradict them. It begins by detailing the research approach, followed by the study design and measurement methods. Lastly, it displays the information acquired from primary and secondary sources.

4.1 STUDY DESIGN AND METHOD

With an emphasis on social media platforms, the research methodology employed in this study examines how AI-powered content creation affects customer perception. Taking purchase intention as the dependent variable and post-engagement as the independent variable. Additionally, the approach uses brand image and consumer loyalty as mediators. Reviewing existing literature and gathering secondary data on these topics has facilitated the establishment of connections between the variables, allowing for the creation of a structured conceptual model to assess the interactions between the constructs.

This research employed a between-subjects experimental design involving two distinct groups of participants. One group was assigned to an Instagram post generated by Artificial Intelligence (the experimental group), while the other group viewed Human-Generated content (the control group). One of these two groups was randomly allocated to each participant. This two-group design facilitated the testing of hypotheses by comparing the responses of both groups and by examining each group individually.

The major goal of my research is to validate whether the usage of AI, as opposed to Human input for content creation by brands affects purchase intention. More in depth since the impact of the use of AI for content creation on social media platforms has not been studied, it was concluded that the best approach to validate the proposed hypotheses would be explanatory research to comprehend the relationships concerning the use of generative AI for content creation, brand image, customer loyalty, post engagement, and customers' purchase intent (Saunders et al., 2009).

In terms of research methodology, a quantitative technique was the best option because it includes examining a sample of the population to uncover patterns. These relationships can be generalized to the entire population. The information was gathered using an online questionnaire (Kothari, 2004).

The study involved presenting two Instagram posts, one of which was AI-generated (the first one) and the other human-generated (the second one) from a real brand – Nike. This selection was made to measure loyalty towards the brand and to evaluate its image in the consumer's mind. It was concluded that Nike was a good brand to use in my study, as it is considered a neutral brand.

The questionnaire was conducted in Qualtrics, where the images where the stimuli was randomly assigned to participants (AI generated vs Human-generated content). Based on their initial impression of the displayed figure, respondents answered a series of scale-based questions, as detailed in the next sub-chapter. The full questionnaire is available in Annex A.

Two pilot surveys were conducted before submitting the actual survey to check its quality and dependability. This process allowed for the identification of potential errors in wording or technical aspects, ensuring that participants clearly understood the questions, assessing the conclusion time to reduce respondent fatigue, evaluating the effectiveness of the stimuli and measurement scale, and finally verifying translation accuracy and consistency.

The survey was conducted in Portugal for accessibility reasons and was available in both English and Portuguese, allowing a broader audience to participate. Because the goal of this research is to assess the purchase intent after viewing branded posts on social media, the questionnaire was mostly distributed via these channels to gather perceptions. The sample for my research comprises social media users aged between 18 and 65.

To examine the data and determine whether my hypotheses are supported, I employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to investigate the connections between the variables. This approach is ideal for explanatory research since it can manage complex models (F. Hair Jr et al., 2014). Given the study's focus on a new model and exploring correlations, PLS-SEM was chosen for its ability to evaluate and estimate causal relationships within the framework. Additionally, as I am conducting experimental design, this method allows me to assess measurement invariance and compare structural path coefficients within a single software environment using the Multigroup Analysis module without needing to split the sample or estimate separate models (Cheah et al., 2020).

4.2 MEASUREMENTS

The numerous assessment scales were modified from previously validated research to guarantee the validity and proper relationship between each construct. In table 1, a summary regarding the original scales and the adapted ones is provided.

Generative Artificial Intelligence versus human content creation on social media was measured through post engagement as a construct, utilizing scales adapted from (Giakoumaki & Krepapa, 2020) which comprised four items : 'I would press "like" button on these posts', 'I would leave a comment on these posts', 'I would share these posts with a friend' and lastly 'I would like to see more content from this brand'.

Brand image was measured using scales from two research papers. Three items were adapted from (Rodrigues et al., 2021): ' This brand is different from competing brands', 'This brand is interesting', 'This brand has personality'. And the other three from (Wongkitrungrueng &

Suprawan, 2024): ‘This brand is reliable’, ‘This brand is creative’, ‘This brand is trendy’, adapted from (Wongkitrungrueng & Suprawan, 2024).

To measure Customer Loyalty six items were used: ‘I consider myself to be highly loyal to this brand’, ‘This brand is my first choice’, ‘I Will not buy other brands if Nike is available at the store’ adapted from (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). And from (Harris & Goode, 2004), ‘I prefer the products of this brand than of its competitors’, ‘I will always continue to choose this brand before others’, ‘I will always continue to choose this brand before others’ and ‘I have repeatedly found this brand to be better than others’.

Lastly Purchase Intent was measured with four items adapted from (Mishra, 2019): ‘These posts makes me feel that I would prefer to buy from this brand rather than any other brand’, ‘After seeing these posts I intend to purchase this brand in the future’ and ‘After seeing these posts I intend to purchase this brand in the future’.

According to the authors of measurement scales above, a seven-point Likert scale (ordinal) with the respective values: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, and 7 = strongly agree was used to measure each item.

Table 1 - Constructs and adapted items

Constructs	Codes	items	Source
Post Engagement	PE1	I would press “like” button on these posts	(Giakoumaki & Krepapa, 2020)
	PE2	I would leave a comment on these posts	
	PE3	I would share these posts with a friend	
	PE4	I would like to see more content front this brand	
Brand Image	BI1.	This brand is different from competing brands	(Rodrigues et al., 2021; Wongkitrungrueng & Suprawan, 2024)
	BI2.	This brand is interesting	
	BI3.	This brand has personality	
	BI4.	This brand is reliable	
	BI5.	This brand is creative	
	BI6.	This brand is trendy	
Customer Loyalty	CL1.	I consider myself highly loyal to this brand	(Harris & Goode, 2004; Yoo & Donthu, 2001)
	CL2.	I Will not buy other brands if Nike is available at the store	
	CL3.	This brand is my first choice	

	CL4.	I prefer the products of this brand than of its competitors	
	CL5.	I will always continue to choose this brand before others	
	CL6.	I have repeatedly found this brand to be better than others	
Purchase Intent	PI1.	After seeing these posts I am more likely to purchase from this brand	(Mishra, 2019; Poulis et al., 2018)
	PI2.	These posts make me feel that I would prefer to buy from this brand rather than any other brand	
	PI3.	After viewing these posts, I am willing to recommend that others buy this brand	
	PI4.	After seeing these posts I intend to purchase this brand in the future	

4.3 DATA COLLECTION AND PARTICIPANTS

An online survey created and administered in Qualtrics was used to collect the data for this investigation. The study was conducted from 10th May to 18th May 2025. The concept was obtained from the participants to take part in this study voluntarily.

In the first portion of the questionnaire, the participants were presented with the stimulus and asked questions regarding purchase intentions towards the brand (“After seeing these posts I am more likely to purchase from this brand”) and possible engagement with the post (“I would leave a comment on these posts”).

In the second part, respondents answered questions regarding their opinion on the brand’s image (“This brand is interesting”) and their degree of loyalty towards the brand (“I consider myself highly loyal to this brand”). The questionnaire’s final division requested demographic information, including age, gender, and education level.

After collecting the data, a total of 355 responses was collected, after preprocessing and cleaning the data, a total of 277 valid responses was suitable for analysis. There were 136 responses from inquiries that viewed the AI-generated post and 141 from the human-generated post; while it was intended to assign them randomly and equally, the number of inquiries who saw the human-generated post was slightly higher after deleting unsuitable responses. The detailed demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented on Table 2.

Table 2 - Demographic Results of the Questionnaire

Distribution (n=277)	Answer option	Obs.	Obs. (%)
Gender	1. Female	171	61,7%
	2. Male	103	37,2%
	3. Other	3	1,1%
Education	1. Elementary School	1	0,4%
	2. High School	58	20,9%
	3. Bachelor's Degree	128	46,2%
	4. Master's Degree	78	28,2%
	5. Doctorate/PHd	12	4,3%
Age	1. 18-28 years old	120	43,3%
	2. 29-44 years old	90	32,5%
	3. 45-60 years old	49	17,7%
	4. 61-79 years old	18	6,5%

The sample is primarily composed of female respondents, representing 61.7% of the sample, while males account for 37.2%. Most of the inquiries belong to the 18-28 age group (43.3%), followed by 29-44 (32.5%), indicating a predominance of a young demographic from Generation Z and Millennials.

When analyzing education levels, it can be stated that almost half of the inquiries hold a bachelor's degree, representing 46.2% of the sample, whereas 28.2% possess the next highest educational level – a master's degree. This concludes that a significant percentage of the participants (78.7%) have advanced degrees.

The composition of this demographic aligns with that of digital content consumers, particularly younger, engaged social media users with higher education qualifications. Studies indicate that younger segments, such as Generation Z and Millennials, are the leading consumers of digital content, engaging with a diverse range of media formats (Abramovich, 2019).

5.RESULTS

5.1 MEASUREMENT MODEL

First, the measurement model must be analyzed, which includes assessing the hypothesized links (hypotheses) between the components. To achieve this, we first use validity and reliability tests to assess the measurement model's quality. This includes assessing indicator reliability, composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2011).

Each indicator should have a factor loading greater than 0.70 to be considered reliable (F. Hair Jr et al., 2014). Table 3 demonstrates that all loadings are higher than 0.80, suggesting strong indication dependability. The same is true for the coefficients of Cronbach's Alpha, where indicators range from 0.905 (Post Engagement) to 0.967 (Purchase Intent), demonstrating strong internal reliability (Adetayo, 2019). Additionally, composite reliability levels exceed the lowest advised threshold. The analysis of these three indicators concludes that the model exhibits internal reliability (Ab Hamid et al., 2017).

To determine convergent validity, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was measured. All construct AVE scores exceed the acceptable threshold of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Results showed that the AVE was more than 0.736, implying that more than half of the variation in the indicators is explained. These findings support the conclusion that the model meets the required standards of reliability and validity before proceeding to assess the structural model.

Table 3 - Constructs Reliability and Validity

Construct	Item	Mean	S.D.	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Post Engagement (PE)	PE1	4	2.23	0.863	0.905	0.933	0.778
	PE2			0.883			
	PE3			0.902			
	PE4			0.879			
Brand Image (BI)	BI1	5.21	1,60	0.807	0.928	0.944	0.736
	BI2			0.907			
	BI3			0.876			
	BI4			0.846			
	BI5			0.871			
	BI6			0.837			
Customer Loyalty (CL)	CL1	3.86	2.04	0.904	0.960	0.933	0.834
	CL2			0.865			
	CL3			0.943			
	CL4			0.923			
	CL5			0.934			
	CL6			0.908			
Purchase Intent (PI)	PI1	4.13	1.97	0.953	0.967	0.967	0.911
	PI2			0.949			
	PI3			0.957			
	PI4			0.959			

To evaluate discriminant validity, we compared the loadings and cross-loadings of all items (Appendix B), allowing to conclude that all satisfy the criteria, meaning that all loadings are greater than the corresponding cross-loadings (Henseler et al., 2015). Additionally, the Fornell-Lacker criterion was employed to assess discriminant validity. Following Fornell-Lacker's method (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) the square root of each construct's AVE should be

greater than its greatest correlation with the other constructs, which was met, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 - Fornell Lacker Criterion

	Brand Image	Customer Loyalty	Post Engagement	Purchase Intent
Brand image	0.858			
Customer Loyalty	0.713	0.913		
Post Engagement	0.655	0.740	0.882	
Purchase Intent	0.719	0.784	0.859	0.954

5.2 STRUCTURAL MODEL

After determining the robustness of the measurement model, I went on to examine the structural model. This stage involves examining the path coefficients to understand the relationships between the constructs and determine whether these relationships are statistically significant. Doing so facilitates the evaluation of the proposed hypotheses. I analyzed two groups, first providing the results for the entire sample and then comparing the two groups: participants exposed to the AI-generated post and those exposed to the human-generated post.

The structural path coefficients were estimated using bootstrapping with 5,000 resampling iterations (F. Hair Jr et al., 2014). To assess whether multicollinearity could have distorted the results, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was analyzed (Appendix C). As suggested by (Hair et al., 2011), the VIF threshold should be 5.0. Regarding the validation of the hypotheses, H1 examines whether Post Engagement (PE) has a positive impact on Brand Image (BI). The results indicate that PE has a strong, positive, and statistically significant effect on BI ($\beta = 0.655$, $t = 21.138$, $p < 0.001^{***}$), thereby validating the hypothesis.

When analyzing the relationship between PE and the independent variable (Purchase Intent) – H2, it is evident that this relationship is strong, positive, and highly significant ($\beta = 0.566$, $t = 12.358$, $p < 0.001^{***}$). Supporting the hypothesis and demonstrating that post engagement directly increases consumers' purchase intentions. H3 tests whether Post-Engagement (PE) positively influences Customer Loyalty (CL), and this hypothesis was validated ($\beta = 0.740$, $t = 25.518$, $p < 0.001^{***}$), revealing the strongest relationship among the model.

When analyzing the relationship between Brand Image (BI) and Purchase Intent (PI), I can assert that BI positively influences PI and has statistical significance, although the effect size

is weak ($\beta = 0.179, t = 4.488, p < 0.001^{***}$). Therefore, H4 is verified, although BI has a lesser impact on purchase intentions compared to other factors. Lastly, H5 was tested, which analyses the relationship concerning Customer Loyalty (CL) and Purchase Intent (PI). This hypothesis was supported, indicating that CL has a moderate, positive, and significant influence on PI ($\beta = 0.238, t = 4.425, p < 0.001^{***}$).

Between the two groups analyzed in this study (AI-generated and human-generated content), most results were coherent, with only one notable difference. All hypothesized relationships were supported across both groups except for H4, which states that brand image (BI) positively influences purchase intent (PI). In the AI group, this relationship was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.271, t = 4.651, p < 0.001$), indicating that when users interact with AI-generated posts, a brand's image has a substantial impact on their decision to make a purchase. Contrarily, this relationship was not significant in the human-generated content group ($\beta = 0.090, t = 1.692, p = 0.091$), suggesting that brand image does not influence purchase intent when humans create the content. This concludes that H4 was supported in the AI content condition but not in the human content condition.

All other hypothesized paths (H1, H2, H3, and H5) were supported across both groups, highlighting a consistent trend in which post-engagement significantly affects brand image, customer loyalty, and purchase intent, and where customer loyalty further contributes to purchase intent.

Regarding explanatory power, the analysis was conducted for both the complete sample and the groups (Table 4). The model that performed best was the AI-generated content group, which achieved higher R^2 values for Brand Image (0.451), Customer Loyalty (0.565), and Purchase Intention (0.825). In contrast, the human-generated content group had lower R^2 values—0.405, 0.528, and 0.787, respectively. Overall, the R-Squared values ranged from 0.405 to 0.825, which can be described as moderate to substantial, indicating that they all possess high explanatory power. This is particularly true for the independent variable Purchase Intention, with an R-Squared of 0.801, suggesting that BI, CL, and PE explain 81% of this variable.

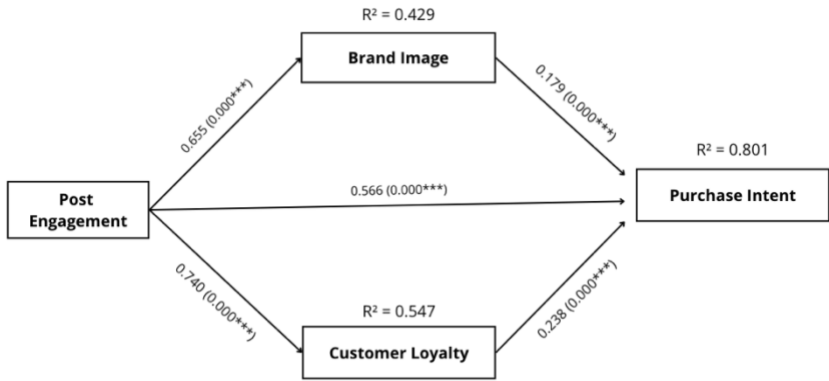


Figure 2 - Complete sample structural model with direct path coefficients

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; Dashed arrows represent non-significant relationships.

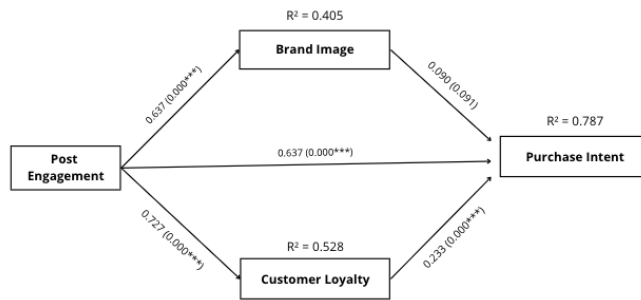


Figure 3 - Human group structural model with direct path coefficients

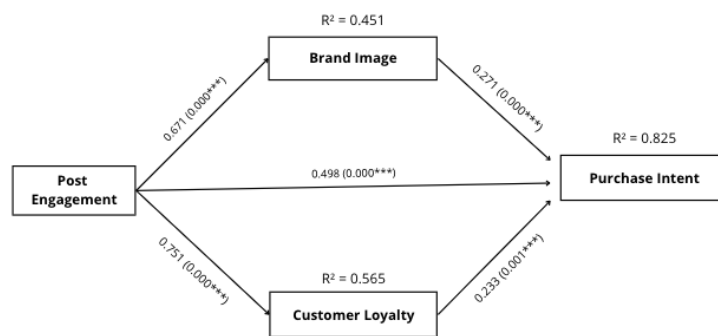


Figure 4 - AI group structural model with direct path coefficients

5.3 MEDIATION ANALYSIS

The findings from the entire sample show that both brand image and customer loyalty act as major partial mediators in the association between post-engagement and purchase intent. More specifically, the two indirect paths from post engagement to purchase intent through brand image ($\beta = 0.117$, $T = 4.351$, $p < 0.01$) and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.176$, $T = 4.256$, $p < 0.01$) were both significant. This suggests that post engagement influences purchase intent both directly and indirectly via brand image and customer loyalty. These results validate H4 and H5 in the overall model.

When comparing the results across the two groups (Table 5), the AI-generated content group also supported both mediating roles: BI ($\beta = 0.182$, $T = 4.490$, $p < 0.000$) and CL ($\beta = 0.175$, $T = 3.052$, $p < 0.002$). However, in the human-generated content group, BI does not mediate between the independent variable (PE) and the dependent variable (PI) ($\beta = 0.058$, $T = 1.664$, $p < 0.096$), thus failing to support H4.

It is also crucial to analyze the total effects (Table 6), which shows that Post Engagement significantly influences the other variables, Brand Image, Customer Loyalty, and Purchase Intent across the full sample and both groups, especially in the groups where PE has strong total effects on PI (AI: $\beta = 0,855$, Human: $\beta = 0,864$), allowing us to conclude that this variable plays a central role in driving purchase behavior.

PE also indicated strong effects on BI (AI: $\beta = 0,671$, Human: $\beta = 0,637$) and CL (AI: $\beta = 0,751$, Human: $\beta = 0,727$), reinforcing its impact on brand-related outcomes. Across all samples, CL consistently predicted PI ($\beta = 0.233$, $p = 0.000$), while Brand Image had a significant effect only in the AI group and the full sample.

5.4 MULTIGROUP ANALYSIS

To determine whether the structural relationships differ depending on the type of content, I conducted a Multi-group analysis, using multi-group permutation tests (Henseler et al., 2009). This analysis compared the path coefficients between the two experimental sets: one exposed to AI-generated content and the other to human-generated content. The purpose was to determine whether the impact of Post-Engagement on Brand Image, buy Intent, and Customer Loyalty differed depending on the mediators (Brand Image and Customer Loyalty) and buy intent. Table 7 presents an in-depth study.

The results of this study suggest that just one of the five relationships analyzed exhibited statistical significance between the two groups: Brand Image—Purchase Intent. The results from this relationship (difference = 0.181, $p = 0.010$) indicate that brand image has a stronger impact on purchase intention when the content is generated by AI compared to human-generated content.

All the other relationships showed no differences between groups, indicating a consistent pattern across both conditions. Table 8 gives a detailed description of this study hypotheses and outcome, as well as a summary of previous analysis.

Table 5 - Direct Relationships considering the complete sample and specific groups

Hypotheses	AI Stimuli				Human Stimuli				Complete			
	B	T	P	Results	B	T	P	Results	B	T	P	Results
H1: PE -> BI	0.671	16.615	0.000	Supported	0.637	13.296	0.000	Supported	0.655	21.138	0.000	Supported
H2: PE -> PI	0.498	7.525	0.000	Supported	0.637	10.267	0.000	Supported	0.566	12.358	0.000	Supported
H3: PE -> CL	0.751	19.677	0.000	Supported	0.727	16.494	0.000	Supported	0.740	25.518	0.000	Supported
H4: BI -> PI	0.271	4.651	0.000	Supported	0.090	1.692	0.091	Not Supported	0.179	4.488	0.000	Supported
H5: CL -> PI	0.233	3.205	0.001	Supported	0.233	2.902	0.000	Supported	0.238	4.425	0.000	Supported
		R-Square				R-Square				R-Square		
BI		0.451				0.405				0.429		
CL		0.565				0.528				0.547		
PI		0.825				0.787				0.801		

Table 6 - Specific Indirect Effects considering the complete sample and specific groups

Hypotheses	AI Stimuli				Human Stimuli				Complete			
	B	T	P	Results	B	T	P	Results	B	T	P	Results
H1: PE -> BI -> PI	0.182	4.490	0.000	Supported	0.058	1.664	0.096	Not Supported	0.117	4.351	0.000	Supported
H3: PE -> CL -> PI	0.175	3.052	0.002	Supported	0.169	2.807	0.000	Supported	0.176	4.256	0.000	Supported

Table 7 - Total effects considering the complete sample and specific groups

Hypotheses	AI Stimuli				Human Stimuli				Complete			
	B	T	P	Results	B	T	P	Results	B	T	P	Results
H1: PE -> BI	0.671	16.615	0.000	Supported	0.637	13.296	0.000	Supported	0.655	21.138	0.000	Supported
H2: PE -> PI	0.855	30.622	0.000	Supported	0.864	10.267	0.000	Supported	0.566	12.358	0.000	Supported
H3: PE -> CL	0.751	19.677	0.000	Supported	0.727	16.494	0.000	Supported	0.740	25.518	0.000	Supported
H4: BI -> PI	0.271	4.651	0.000	Supported	0.090	1.692	0.091	Not Supported	0.179	4.488	0.000	Supported
H5: CL -> PI	0.233	3.205	0.000	Supported	0.233	2.902	0.000	Supported	0.238	4.425	0.000	Supported

Table 8 - Multigroup Analysis

Relationships	Difference (AI stimuli – Human Stimuli)	p-value
PE -> BI	0.035	0.289
PE -> PI	-0.140	0.939
PE -> CL	0.025	0.337
BI -> PI	0.181	0.010
CL -> PI	-0.000	0.499

Note: The Differences are significant in the relationships between the two groups at $p < 0.001^{***}$, $p < 0.01^{**}$, $p < 0.05^*$; PE = Post Engagement, BI = Brand Image, CL = Customer Loyalty, PI = Purchase Intent

Table 9 - Hypothesis results

Hypotheses	Results
H1: Post Engagement positively influences brand image	Supported
H2: Post Engagement positively influences Purchase Intentions	Supported
H3: Post Engagement positively influences Customer Loyalty	Supported
H4: Brand image positively influences the purchase intent	Supported
H5: Customer loyalty positively influences purchase intent	Supported

6. DISCUSSION

6.1. FINDINGS

This study investigates how the source of marketing content affects consumer behaviors, particularly purchase intent. By using post engagement as an indicator of content effectiveness and focusing on the roles of brand image and customer loyalty as mediating variables, the study attempts to provide insights into how different forms of content influence consumer perceptions and decisions. Additionally, it seeks to answer the research question: “How does the use of Generative AI for content creation on social media impact the customer perception of a brand?”.

The first hypothesis (H1), which this research supports, proposed that post-engagement positively influences brand image. This means that content generating a greater degree of engagement (i.e., more likes, comments, and shares) contributes to consumers' perceptions of the brand, suggesting that engaging content, whether AI-generated or human-generated, can enhance the brand's image. This aligns with previous analyzed research, as social media marketing and, more specifically, post engagement play a vital part in shaping how consumers perceive the brand, impacting the overall brand image (Langaro et al., 2018). The more the customers engage with the content, the more positive and favorable the perception formed (Raji et al., 2019). It is essential to point out that engagement on social media has been gaining recognition as an indicator of the quality and the efficiency of the content and the overall marketing campaigns (Wai Lai & Liu, 2020), this allows me to conclude that the overall content creation has an impact on brand image that consumers form in their minds. Earlier research has also confirmed it, suggesting that social media content significantly and positively influences customers' perceptions, helping to establish the brand image (Raji et al., 2019).

A multigroup study of both groups revealed that there were no significant variations in the impact of post-engagement on brand image between the AI and human groups.

The second hypothesis (H2) examined whether post-engagement positively influences Purchase Intent. This impact was found to be both positive and significant, implying that consumers are more inclined to consider making a purchase when they engage with or encounter highly engaging content. These results are supported by literature, especially in the digital era we live in, where brands are becoming increasingly present on social media platforms and engagement with brand posts has led to increased purchase behavior (Poulis et al., 2018), since the greater the engagement, the bigger the chances of that content generating value for the brand (Hollebeek et al., 2014). And since post engagement is a key indicator of content quality (Wai Lai & Liu, 2020), it is safe to say that brand-generated content, regardless of the source, positively influences purchase intentions (Poulis et al., 2018). This study also drew this conclusion, as there were no significant differences in this relationship when comparing the results of AI-generated content with those generated by humans. This contradicts earlier findings that support the notion that the way consumers

interact with content is highly dependent on the source of creation, whether it's AI or Human, highlighting a tendency for human-generated content favoritism, which directly influences their perceived quality and engagement (Y. Zhang & Gosline, 2023).

The third proposed hypothesis anticipated that post-engagement positively influences customer loyalty. The findings confirmed this relationship, suggesting that engaging posts attract consumers and help retain them by building emotional connections and fostering positive experiences. This aligns with prior research that supports the view that engagement should be understood as a dynamic process, due to its capacity to lead to concrete results, such as a high level of loyalty (So et al., 2014). As content that generates a higher level of engagement is seen as more valuable and boosts customer loyalty, I can conclude that the content itself is essential for fostering customer loyalty. This relationship was consistent across both types of content (AI and Human-Generated), indicating that when customers engage with social media branded posts, it strengthens their loyalty towards the brand. Morgan & Hunt's relationship marketing theory emphasizes these findings, as their theory posits that engagement and interaction are critical for building trust in consumer relationships (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

The findings on the impact of brand image on purchase intent (H4) were varied. Brand image influenced purchase intent in the overall sample and the AI-generated content group. However, this hypothesis was rejected when analyzing the sample of human-generated content. This suggests that brand image is more significant in driving purchase intention when the content is AI-generated. This is justified by the fact that consumers might rely more on their perceptions of the brand, as this content could be perceived as less personal and authentic. This aligns with previous literature, as the use of this technology in content creation may pose issues related to brand legitimacy and overall customer relationships (Brüns & Meißner, 2024). Even when a brand discloses as AI-generated, there is a tendency for the perception of the brand to become more negative, despite the quality of the content (Park et al., 2024). When consumers have a positive impression of a brand, they trust the communication even when the content's source is AI (Abbas et al., 2021). Conversely, human-generated content retains its authenticity, reducing the importance of brand image in shaping purchase intentions. Early findings suggest a tendency for favoritism towards human-generated content (Y. Zhang & Gosline, 2023), as customers perceive creativity as a human characteristic only (Brüns & Meißner, 2024).

Therefore H4 was supported in the overall sample, and previous research in the fashion industry reveals that brand image has a significant influence on the intention to make a purchase (Lee & Lee, 2018).

Finally, the last hypothesis (H5) examines whether customer loyalty has a positive impact on purchase intent. The findings corroborated the expected relationship. Such conclusions align well with marketing theories and prior research. Customer loyalty is recognized not merely as repeated behavior but as a psychological attachment that repeatedly influences a consumer's

intention to purchase from a brand (Oliver, 1999). It is fostered from consistent positive interactions and trust in the brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Loyal customers perceive the brand as superior to competing brands, resulting in a higher purchase intention and reduced influence from external factors (Harris & Goode, 2004; Yuan et al., 2020). The findings demonstrated consistency between AI-generated and human-generated content, showing that customer loyalty is a strong predictor of purchasing behaviour. Regardless of the content's origin, a customer's loyalty to the brand significantly influences their buying decisions.

6.2. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The current study fills an important gap in previous theoretical and academic studies on the implementation of artificial intelligence in creating content, as well as how it influences user perceptions and behavior, particularly purchase intent. Previous studies have examined the implementation of Artificial Intelligence in marketing activities, as this field benefits the most from embracing this technology (Davenport et al., 2020). Few research have investigated how the implementation of AI influences customer-brand relationships (Brüns & Meißner, 2024). By analyzing this impact, I present a comprehensive framework that links content creation with brand image, purchase intent, and customer loyalty, and empirically examines their relationships, especially given the rise of social media users (Azad et al., 2023) and the progressive adoption of Artificial Intelligence (K. Koppalle et al., 2022).

First, this study emphasizes the important role of post-engagement in affecting brand image and customer loyalty, regardless of whether AI or humans created the content. These findings support previous research that suggests engaging social media content has a substantial effect on how customers view the brand. Engaging content attracts customers and helps retain them, as it builds emotional connections and positive experiences, which in turn lead to an increased level of loyalty towards the brand.

A pivotal contribution of this study concerns the impact of brand image on purchase intent in AI-generated posts. When the creator of the post is artificial intelligence, customers rely more on the image they have of a certain brand when deciding to make a purchase, demonstrating that this variable is crucial in driving purchase behavior in AI-generated content. The same does not apply to human-generated content, as this type is perceived as more authentic and personal.

This study also discovers that customer loyalty has a favorable influence on purchase intent in both types of content, highlighting the key role of loyalty in driving purchase behavior. This aligns with existing literature, which states that loyal customers perceive a certain brand as superior to its competitors, resulting in a higher intention to purchase. There were no substantial differences in the results across the two groups, allowing me to conclude that customers with high degrees of loyalty to a brand are less impacted by external influences, such as the use of AI in content creation. Overall, both content types will lead to purchase

behavior when customers have a positive brand image and a certain degree of loyalty towards the brand.

The research has effectively accomplished its primary objective of understanding how AI-generated versus human-generated content impacts consumer-brand relationships and, furthermore, purchase behavior.

6.3 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This research also gives several valuable insights for marketers and brands that want to integrate Artificial Intelligence effectively as a content creation tool in their overall marketing strategies.

To begin, this study emphasizes the important role of compelling content in determining consumer responses, regardless of whether the content is AI or human-generated. Social media content that captures customer's attention significantly contributes to developing a positive brand image. In turn, this positive perception enhances customer loyalty and strengthens purchase intentions. Thus, brands should prioritize content quality as part of their communication strategy, especially when adopting automated tools. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of customer loyalty in content creation in general. Loyal customers tend to be less influenced by external factors, such as AI-generated content, and are more likely to remain consistent in their brand choices. For this reason, marketers should invest in strategies that help retain current customers while also attracting new ones.

Regarding the adoption of AI versus human in content creation, this research found no significant differences when the brand image is positive and strong, and when consumers are loyal to the brand. Regarding the integration artificial intelligence in content creation, the research shows that an established, positive brand image plays a critical role. A favorable brand image significantly enhances purchase intention, especially when the content is AI-generated, suggesting that positive brand perceptions can compensate for potential aversion towards the machine. Furthermore, brands should prioritize brand development activities to offset the potential negative consequences of artificial intelligence.

6.4 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As predicted, this study presents some limitations that should be acknowledged and may serve as a basis for future research. As a result, this chapter addresses the study's primary limitations and makes recommendations for further research.

The first constraint is the sample size, although the number of valid responses collected was considered adequate and suitable for the PLS-SEM method, a larger sample would have improved the reliability of the model and made it more representative.

Another limitation concerns the brand choice used in the posts within the questionnaire, specifically Nike. As it is a globally recognized and trusted brand with a high brand value, participants might have been influenced by the brand itself rather than the type of content it employed. Furthermore, since it is a sports brand, the results cannot be generalized to other industries. Therefore, future research could consider choosing a brand from a different industry.

Another area for potential further investigation is the conceptual model, which only includes customer loyalty and brand image as mediators. It may also be useful to assess the influence of the content on trust, as this variable is frequently linked to the adoption of AI and technology in general (Choung et al., 2023).

7. CONCLUSION

This thesis investigates the impact of AI versus human content generation on the marketing industry, with a focus on customer perceptions and purchasing behavior. It provides empirical evidence demonstrating that social media content has a major impact on purchasing intent. The research compares AI and human sources of content, finding no notable difference in influencing buying decisions. It also emphasizes the crucial role of engagement in enhancing brand image and fostering customer loyalty. The study investigates the mediating effects of customer loyalty and brand image, highlighting their importance in driving purchase behavior.

The proposed model, which accounts for a substantial part of the variation in Purchase Intent, offers valuable insights into how different content sources, specifically AI versus human, affect customer behavior in the digital age. When content is AI-generated, brand image is vital in shaping purchase intentions, stressing the importance of a positive and strong brand identity. Conversely, for human-generated content, there is less reliance on brand image to influence buying decisions, as this content is perceived as more authentic. These findings build on existing research, providing meaningful insights for brands seeking to incorporate this technology into their marketing strategies and increase purchase intent.

In summary, this thesis provides a thorough analysis of how AI versus human content creation influences customer perceptions and behavior. The findings provide a solid basis for future study and practical applications, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a positive brand image and fostering loyalty for a brand's success.

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APPENDIX A – NOVA IMS ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL



This is to certify that

Project No.: **DDMKT2025-3-117879**

Project Title: **Trust in the Machine: AI VS Human Content creation**

Principal Researcher: **Marta Veltman**

according to the regulations of the Ethics Committee of NOVA IMS and MagIC Research Center this project was considered to meet the requirements of the NOVA IMS Internal Review Board, being considered **APPROVED** on 3/11/2025.

It is the Principal Researcher's responsibility to ensure that all researchers and stakeholders associated with this project are aware of the conditions of approval and which documents have been approved.

The Principal Researcher is required to notify the Ethics Committee, via amendment or progress report, of

- Any significant change to the project and the reason for that change;
- Any unforeseen events or unexpected developments that merit notification;
- The inability of the Principal Researcher to continue in that role or any other change in research personnel involved in the project.

Lisbon, 3/11/2025

NOVA IMS Ethics Committee
ethicscommittee@novaims.unl.pt

APPENDIX B – COPY OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear participant, my name is Marta Veltman, and this survey is being conducted as part of an academic research project at the NOVA Information Management School. The purpose of this research is to study how different types of content creation tools affect overall customer perception. Please read the following questions carefully and answer them to the best of your ability

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You are free to participate, decline to participate, or withdraw at any time without penalty. Your responses are completely anonymous, will be used solely for academic purposes, and will be kept confidential. There are no foreseeable risks associated with answering these questions.

Informed Consent Form

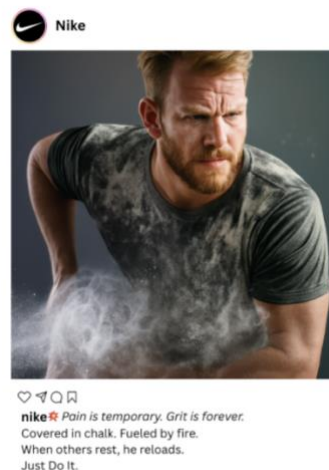
I confirm that I am 18 years of age or older and consent to participate in this research study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the survey at any time without penalty. I also understand that all data collected will be kept confidential and used for academic purposes only. I understand that this study involves evaluating responses and poses no significant risks.

- I Agree to participate
- I do not agree to participate

1. AI Stimuli

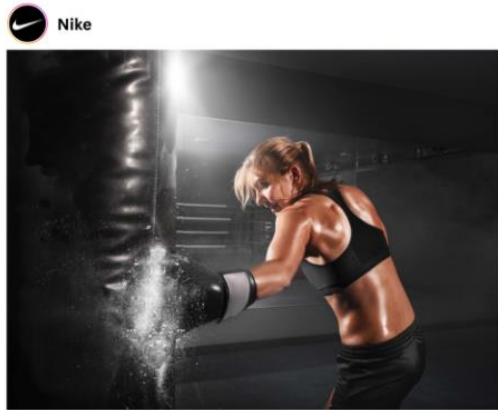
Note: This survey block has a randomized condition. Each participants only saw one of the stimuli.

Imagine you're scrolling through your Instagram feed and come across the following posts from Nike. The content, created by **Artificial Intelligence**, is part of a new inspirational campaign that reflects Nike's commitment to motivation, movement, and performance — blending simplicity, bold messaging, and the brand's iconic identity. Please keep this post in mind as you answer the following questions.



2. Human Stimuli

Imagine you're scrolling through your Instagram feed and come across the following post from Nike. The content, captured by a sports photographer and curated by a **graphic designer**, is part of a new inspirational campaign that reflects Nike's commitment to motivation, movement, and performance — blending simplicity, bold messaging, and the brand's iconic identity. Please keep this post in mind as you answer the following questions.



♥🔖👍🗨️
nike There's one guarantee in sport. You'll be told you can't do it. So do it anyway.

You can't win. So Win.



♥🔖👍🗨️
nike Champions always find a way. #justdoit

*This section covers issues related to post engagement on social media.

Considering the posts you just saw please respond to the statements provided on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree) based on your perspective.

	1. Strongly Disagree	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Strongly Agree
I would press the "like" button on these posts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would leave a comment on these posts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would share these posts with a friend	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to see more content from this brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Based on the social media posts you viewed, I would like to understand your likelihood of purchasing from this brand. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your intention to buy from this brand in the future on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

	1. Strongly Disagree	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Strongly Agree
After seeing these posts, I am more likely to purchase from this brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
These posts makes me feel that I would prefer to buy from this brand rather than any other brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After viewing these posts, I am willing to recommend that others buy from this brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After seeing these posts, I intend to purchase from this brand in the future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*The following statements aim to understand your loyalty toward this brand. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

	1. Strongly Disagree	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Strongly Agree
I consider myself highly loyal to this brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will not buy other brands if brand Nike is available at the store	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This brand is my first choice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer the products of this brand than of its competitors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will always continue to choose this brand before others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have repeatedly found this brand to be better than others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your perception of this brand? Please answer using a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree)

	1. Strongly Disagree	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Strongly Agree
This brand is different from competing brands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This brand is interesting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This brand has a personality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This brand is reliable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This brand is creative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This brand is trendy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Please indicate your age group

- 18 - 28 years old
- 29 - 44 years old
- 45 - 60 years old
- 61 - 79 years old

*What is your gender

- Male
- Female
- Other

*What is your level of education

- Elementary School
- High School
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctorate/PhD

Did you encounter any difficulties in completing this questionnaire? Do you have any questions or suggestions for improvement? If so, please list them below. If not, you may leave the space blank.

APPENDIX C – CROSSLOADINGS BETWEEN ITEMS AND CONSTRUCTS

	Post Engagement	Brand image	Customer Loyalty	Purchase Intent
PE1	0.863	0.635	0.631	0.753
PE2	0.883	0.486	0,639	0,733
PE3	0.902	0.528	0,639	0,768
PE4	0.879	0.650	0,695	0,773
BI1	0,650	0.807	0,755	0,678
BI2	0,620	0.907	0,685	0,684
BI3	0,509	0.876	0,555	0,577
BI4	0,489	0.846	0,548	0,527
BI5	0,535	0.871	0,519	0,600
BI6	0,535	0.837	0,563	0,601
CL1	0,704	0,603	0.704	0,741
CL2	0,672	0,549	0.672	0,666
CL3	0,679	0,657	0.679	0,727
CL4	0,648	0,712	0.648	0,699
CL5	0,669	0,649	0.669	0,718
CL6	0,678	0,736	0.678	0,739
PI1	0,811	0,668	0,737	0.953
PI2	0,798	0,666	0,743	0.949
PI3	0,835	0,706	0,746	0.957
PI4	0,834	0,703	0,767	0.959

APPENDIX D – VARIANCE INFLATION FACTOR (VIF)

	Brand image	Customer Loyalty	Post Engagement	Purchase Intent
Brand Image				2,197
Customer Loyalty				2,768
Post Engagement	1,000	1,000		2,383
Purchase Intent				



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