

From Artificial Creativity to Consumer Trust: Examining AI-Generated Content in Social Media Marketing

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the relationship between the disclosure of AI-generated content, perceived content authenticity, and consumer trust in social media marketing, while also evaluating the moderating role of consumer skepticism toward AI. Grounded in Signaling Theory and the Persuasion Knowledge Model, the study conceptualizes consumer trust as an outcome of transparency regarding technological origins and the assessment of content authenticity, wherein skepticism shapes how consumers interpret disclosure signals. Employing a quantitative cross-sectional research design, data were collected via a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire from 385 active social media users in Vietnam who had encountered AI-generated or AI-assisted marketing content. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 26 for reliability assessment, exploratory factor analysis, and multiple linear regression, while Model 1 of the PROCESS Macro (developed by Hayes) was applied to test the moderating effect. The results indicate that both the disclosure of AI-generated content ($\beta = 0.625$) and perceived content authenticity ($\beta = 0.576$) significantly contribute to strengthening consumer trust in social media marketing. Disclosure exerts a slightly stronger direct impact, highlighting the importance of clearly communicating AI's involvement in the content creation process. Furthermore, consumer skepticism toward AI significantly weakens the positive relationship between AI content disclosure and consumer trust, as evidenced by a negative interaction coefficient of -0.499. These findings confirm that mere disclosure is insufficient to build trust among highly skeptical consumers. Brands must combine genuine transparency with authentic content, information verification, clear accountability, and human oversight to maintain trust in social media marketing that utilizes AI-generated content.

KEYWORDS: Consumer trust in social media marketing; AI generated content disclosure; perceived content authenticity; consumer AI skepticism; AI generated marketing content.

1. INTRODUCTION

Consumer trust in social media marketing describes the readiness of people to view brand messages on these platforms as believable honest and reliable. This trust grows more vulnerable as generative artificial intelligence creates convincing material in large volumes while obscuring who produced it what purpose it serves and whether the details hold true. The issue demands attention since trust encourages people to accept marketing statements and remain loyal customers yet any sense of being misled harms interaction and the connection with the brand. Studies reveal that material from generative artificial intelligence may lower the sense of brand genuineness and provoke negative reactions especially when machines take over instead of supporting human work (Brüns & Meißner, 2024). Transparency offers no straightforward solution. Sharing that content comes from artificial intelligence can show openness yet it may also stir dislike of algorithms and reduce believability. Grigsby et al. (2025) show that the impact of such sharing changes according to how intangible the service is while Bui et al. (2024) report that a genuine feel in artificial intelligence created images builds trust. These mixed results highlight a key limiting factor. Scholars therefore need to examine if disclosure strengthens or weakens trust how authenticity carries credibility and if consumer doubt about artificial intelligence heightens unfavorable views.

Prior research generally shows that involving artificial intelligence tends to lower how consumers judge brands even though the results stay mixed. Brüns & Meißner (2024) observed that generative artificial intelligence material decreased the sense of brand genuineness especially when people thought machines had taken the place of human makers. Bui et al. (2024) by contrast demonstrated that visuals created by artificial intelligence could bolster trust and buying intent once viewers saw the material as fresh and true to life. Work on disclosure reveals a parallel conflict. Grigsby et al. (2025) noted that revealing artificial intelligence

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use reduced trust in ads for services that lack physical form while Wortel et al. (2024) detected no clear direct influence on source believability and only mild influence from aversion toward artificial intelligence. These investigations supply useful insights yet they mostly rely on single ads laboratory conditions limited sectors or short term attitude measures. As a result they give little insight into lasting consumer trust within dynamic social media settings. In addition disclosure authenticity and personal doubt seldom appear together in a single explanatory framework. Such separation leaves open the question of whether disclosure on its own builds openness or instead sparks suspicion among doubtful consumers. The current study aims to close this gap through joint analysis of disclosure and perceived content authenticity as drivers of consumer trust while checking consumer artificial intelligence skepticism as a factor that shapes the disclosure impact. This combined method can explain why the same disclosure practices produce differing trust reactions.

Then, the study is guided by the following three research questions:

- (1) To what extent does AI generated content disclosure influence consumer trust in social media marketing?
- (2) How does perceived content authenticity affect consumer trust in social media marketing?
- (3) How does consumer AI skepticism moderate the relationship between AI generated content disclosure and consumer trust in social media marketing?

This study sets out three research objectives. First, it seeks to gauge how far AI powered financial forecasting capability shapes strategic decision quality among emerging market manufacturing firms. Second, it aims to assess the impact of data analytics maturity on strategic decision quality by checking whether solid data infrastructure analytical expertise governance practices and evidence based routines help manufacturers reach more informed timely and strategically aligned decisions. Third, the work explores whether the AI governance framework positively moderates the link between AI powered financial forecasting capability and strategic decision quality especially by lifting the transparency accountability validation and responsible managerial use of AI generated forecasts. The research supplies academic and practical worth by weaving AI powered financial forecasting capability data analytics maturity AI governance and strategic decision quality into one coherent framework suited to emerging market manufacturing firms. Academically, it broadens AI capability and organizational decision making inquiry by clarifying both the direct roles of forecasting and analytics maturity and the contingent part played by governance. It further fills the sparse evidence on how these organizational capabilities together mold decision quality in emerging markets. On the practical side, the results assist manufacturing executives in deciding whether outlays should favor forecasting technologies analytics maturity or governance mechanisms. The study also offers direction for building dependable data systems analytical skills model validation steps accountability arrangements and human oversight practices that turn AI generated financial forecasts into informed timely and strategically aligned decisions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Consumer Trust

Consumer trust describes the conviction that an exchange partner proves reliable truthful skilled and able to meet expected duties (Hajli et al., 2017). Within marketing this trust lessens felt uncertainty and lets consumers depend on information while building attitudes connections and buying choices. The role grows stronger on social media where people judge material from brands influencers peers and automated tools without any direct check. Hajli et al. (2017) indicate that trust encourages information search familiarity social presence and purchase intent in social commerce. In the same way Lou & Yuan (2019) show that informative worth and source believability build trust toward branded social media material. Trust further links sensed expertise and genuineness to loyalty and wider marketing results which affirms its key relational place (Kim & Kim, 2021). Still consumer trust in social media marketing stays fragile since persuasive aims commercial backing false details and unclear origins can lower content credibility. Chen and Cheng (2020) uncover that persuasion knowledge guides how consumers judge false brand details and then revise brand trust. Generative artificial intelligence intensifies the issue by hiding human roles and sparking questions about originality and responsibility. Consumer trust must therefore be seen as a conditional assessment formed by openness sensed genuineness and consumer doubt rather than a simple result of ongoing digital contact.

2.2. Critical Analysis of Theoretical Frameworks

2.2.1. Signaling Theory

Signaling Theory introduced by Michael Spence (1973) accounts for the way an informed party conveys visible information to another under information asymmetry. Signals allow receivers to judge qualities that stay hidden yet their impact hinges on clarity, consistency, credibility and match with later actions. Current marketing studies draw on this logic for settings where consumers cannot fully confirm brand motives production methods or message truth. Shahid et al. (2024) establish that signaling processes matter strongly in marketing as firms deploy communication cues to ease uncertainty and shape consumer judgments across varied

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markets. Within social media marketing, the asymmetry grows large when audiences face persuasive material without knowing if employees influencers automated tools or generative artificial intelligence produced it. Disclosure of artificial intelligence generated content can thus serve as a visible transparency signal that shows the technological source of the marketing message. When consumers read disclosure as chosen honesty, it may convey openness, accountability and regard for informed choice. Cambier & Poncin (2020) show that transparency signals can raise views of brand integrity by letting consumers conclude that a firm chooses to share details that might otherwise stay hidden. This process supplies theoretical backing for a favorable link between disclosure of artificial intelligence generated content and consumer trust in social media marketing. Still, the sense of a signal rests on how receivers decode it rather than solely on sender aims. Disclosure may point to honesty, yet it can also spotlight uncertainty about human control, emotional truth, originality and duty. Koning & Voorveld (2025) observed that artificial intelligence disclosure raised consumer awareness that persuasion used artificial intelligence while lowering trust in ads. Signaling Theory thus frames disclosure as an informative cue without assuming its trust impact stays positive. Perceived content authenticity acts as a further signal through which consumers judge whether marketing material truly mirrors the identity values and aims of its source. Material seen as original, sincere and consistent with prior brand conduct offers clear evidence that the message merits trust. Lou & Yuan (2019) indicate that message worth and source credibility build consumer trust in branded social media material showing how visible message traits guide views of otherwise uncertain sources. In the suggested model, authenticity adds real substance to the disclosure signal. Open disclosure paired with authentic material may display careful artificial intelligence use while disclosure joined to formulaic or emotionally hollow material may heighten doubt. Signaling Theory therefore links disclosure of artificial intelligence generated content and perceived content authenticity to consumer trust by casting both as informational cues that ease or heighten uncertainty. Consumer artificial intelligence skepticism further guides how disclosure is read. Highly skeptical consumers tend to view artificial intelligence involvement as proof of manipulation limited human effort or doubtful authorship whereas less skeptical ones may treat it as a neutral production approach. The theory thus underpins the proposed moderation by clarifying why identical disclosure signals can yield varied trust judgments among consumers.

This study assumes that consumers hold incomplete knowledge about the creation of social media marketing content and whether its claims mirror true brand aims. Disclosure of artificial intelligence generated content and perceived authenticity supply visible signals through which consumers judge honesty accountability and credibility. Consumers actively decode these signals instead of reacting in the same way. Their artificial intelligence skepticism shapes the meaning of the signal so that disclosure builds trust when seen as openness or reduces trust when read as proof of manipulation.

2.2.2. The Persuasion Knowledge Model

The Persuasion Knowledge Model, developed by Marian Friestad and Peter Wright, (1994) accounts for the manner in which people notice, interpret, judge and respond to efforts aimed at influencing them. Over time, consumers build understanding of persuasive agents, tactics and their personal coping strategies through repeated marketplace encounters. When a message cue highlights commercial aims or a persuasive method, consumers may call up this knowledge and revise their views of both the message and its origin. The framework fits social media marketing especially well since commercial content often sits inside entertainment personal stories influencer posts and everyday conversation. Such forms can hide persuasive aims and turn disclosure into a key recognition signal. Waltenrath (2024) notes that advertising disclosures can heighten awareness of commercial persuasion while creating varied effects on current and later social media involvement. In this research, disclosure of artificial intelligence generated content tells consumers that artificial intelligence took part in crafting the message. The detail can trigger conceptual persuasion knowledge by helping consumers spot the production method and attitudinal persuasion knowledge by prompting views on whether that method seems fitting believable or manipulative. Wortel et al. (2024) indicate that artificial intelligence disclosures in Instagram advertising can shape advertising attitudes and spark assessments tied to persuasive aims though the impact differs across marketing results. The model thus clarifies why disclosure may lower consumer trust even as it raises transparency. After consumers realize a marketing message arose through artificial intelligence, they may wonder whether personalization, emotional wording images or seeming creativity shows true brand expression or deliberate calculation. Koning & Voorveld (2025) offer clear proof that artificial intelligence disclosures can raise persuasion knowledge and then lower trust in advertisements and organizations. Additionally, perceived content authenticity gains theoretical weight because consumers handle persuasive communication by more than simply spotting its production approach. They also judge whether the message seems sincere original truthful and consistent with the communicator identity. Authentic material can lessen defensive reactions by reassuring consumers that technological help has not replaced genuine human purpose. By contrast, material viewed as artificial or carefully staged may heighten persuasion knowledge and foster resistance. This logic backs the direct impact of perceived content authenticity on consumer trust in social media marketing. The model further supplies a clear account of the moderating part played by consumer

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artificial intelligence skepticism. Skepticism signals a tendency to question the skill motives or reliability of artificial intelligence in persuasive settings. Consumers with higher skepticism more readily read artificial intelligence disclosure as a caution that the message has been automated, manipulated or stripped of human responsibility. Those with lower skepticism may notice the same tactic without viewing it as unsuitable. Studies of advertising disclosure show that consumers can read transparency cues in mixed ways since disclosure may at once signal honesty and reveal persuasive pressure (Waltenrath, 2024). Consumer artificial intelligence skepticism therefore guides the coping reaction that follows recognition. The suggested framework extends the model beyond conventional advertising recognition to AI-driven social media persuasion. It treats disclosure as the initial cue, authenticity as the basis for message acceptance, skepticism as a limiting factor, and consumer trust as the resulting relational assessment. These processes together account for how knowledge of artificial intelligence involvement can yield differing trust results even under matching disclosure practices.

This study assumes that consumers have formed knowledge of persuasive tactics and can call it up once artificial intelligence involvement is disclosed. Disclosure renders the technological origin and persuasive approach more noticeable which prompts appraisal of message authenticity and brand aims. Consumers then choose acceptance or resistance reactions that shape trust. Artificial intelligence skepticism influences this process because skeptical consumers interpret disclosures more critically, infer stronger manipulative intentions, and become less willing to rely on social media marketing communications.

2.3. The Impact of Artificial Intelligence Generated Content Disclosure

Artificial intelligence generated content disclosure means a clear statement or label that tells audiences artificial intelligence took part in creating modifying or showing marketing text images audio or video. It makes technological authorship plain and shows how far nonhuman effort entered content production (Kirkby et al., 2023). Conceptually, disclosure works as an informational tool that lessens the gap between marketers who know the production method and consumers who cannot see that process directly. Signaling Theory indicates that freely sharing details that might stay hidden can convey honesty and accountability. Organizational transparency likewise builds sensed trustworthiness when the shared details stay clear accurate and open to key stakeholders (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016). In social media, marketing disclosure safeguards consumers ability to separate synthetic messages from human expression and to form informed views about credibility. This function has grown especially vital because generative artificial intelligence can copy persuasive wording realistic pictures and emotional signals without audiences noticing its role. Kirkby et al. (2023) observed that revealing an artificial intelligence source left perceived brand voice authenticity and brand attitude unchanged suggesting audiences may accept technological authorship when the material stays true to brand identity. Wang & Qiu (2024) likewise show that artificial intelligence transparency can yield positive consumer reactions by lifting views of the disclosed digital agent. From a normative philosophical standpoint, disclosure shows respect for consumer autonomy since it allows informed reading rather than hiding key production facts. From an interpretivist standpoint, however, disclosure carries no fixed social sense. Consumers form its meaning through earlier experiences cultural norms technological familiarity and views on creative duty. Higher artificial intelligence generated content disclosure may lift consumer trust in social media marketing when audiences read openness as proof that a brand hides nothing. Clear disclosure can mark ethical duty lessen doubt about content source and let consumers judge marketing claims with more assurance. This view matches a critical realist stance. Disclosure stands as a visible marketing act yet its impact arises through deeper psychological processes such as sensed honesty accountability authenticity and skepticism. The favorable impact may prove strongest when disclosure stays noticeable easy to grasp and joined by signs of human supervision. Schnackenberg et al. (2019) maintain that transparency gains trustworthiness when the shared information aids stakeholder judgments of organizational behavior. Still empirical work shows ongoing disagreement. Marked negative impacts appear in Schilke & Reimann (2025) whose thirteen experiments revealed that parties disclosing artificial intelligence use gained less trust because observers credited them with lower effort and skill. Grigsby et al. (2025) also found that artificial intelligence disclosure cut trust and advertising attitudes especially when services stressed intangible traits. Baek et al. (2026) note that disclosure lessened prosocial advertising judgments through lower credibility and sensed empathy. By contrast Kirkby et al. (2023) reported a neutral outcome since an artificial intelligence source did not notably weaken brand voice authenticity or brand attitude. These mixed findings show that disclosure is neither automatically trustworthy nor automatically harmful. A postpositivist view therefore treats its impact as probabilistic and open to empirical test rather than fixed in every case. In this research the positive forecast stays theoretically sound because transparent disclosure can display honesty aid informed judgment and ease worries about hidden technological influence. When applied in a steady and responsible manner stronger artificial intelligence generated content disclosure should thus raise consumer confidence in the integrity of social media marketing communication. Therefore, the following hypothesis is advanced:

H1: AI generated content disclosure has a positive impact on consumer trust in social media marketing.

2.4. The Impact of Perceived Content Authenticity

Perceived content authenticity refers to a consumer's subjective assessment that marketing content is genuine, unique, honest, and consistent with the source's identity, values, and intentions (Pérez, 2019; Lee & Eastin, 2021). In the context of AI-generated communications, authenticity also hinges on whether the synthetic content faithfully reflects the people, products, experiences, or brand realities it depicts. Bui et al. (2024) distinguish between uniqueness and representational fidelity, demonstrating that audiences can perceive AI-generated images as authentic even when they lack traditional, direct human creativity. Consequently, authenticity is a matter of perception rather than an objective attribute defined solely by the production origin. From a Signaling theory, authentic content provides observable evidence that allows consumers to infer sincerity, integrity, and consistency amidst information asymmetry. It enables audiences to differentiate between meaningful brand expressions and calculated, imitative, or technologically simulated persuasive behaviors. Audrezet et al. (2020) indicate that passion and transparent communication help social media influencers maintain authenticity when commercial partnerships threaten their credibility. Similarly, Liao & Chen (2024) demonstrate that managing authenticity through information disclosure and the expression of passion shapes engagement levels with sponsored videos. Perceived content authenticity is particularly crucial in social media marketing, as brand messages often appear alongside personal stories, peer-to-peer communication, and user-generated content. Consequently, consumers evaluate not only factual accuracy but also whether the message conveys sincerity and consistency, and aligns with the social context. An interpretivist perspective views authenticity as a meaning constructed through the interplay of content characteristics, audience expectations, platform norms, and cultural understanding. However, a critical realist perspective acknowledges that underlying factors, such as factual consistency, source transparency, human oversight, and brand alignment can shape these perceptions, even if audiences experience and interpret them in diverse ways.

A high level of perceived content authenticity reinforces consumer trust in social media marketing; content perceived as sincere and honest reduces uncertainty regarding the communicator's motives and the message's credibility. Authenticity signals that a brand is demonstrating genuine commitment rather than merely manufacturing emotional appeal to manipulate consumer behavior. This fosters trust in marketing claims, mitigates feelings of manipulation, and strengthens long-term confidence in the source. Kim & Kim (2021) demonstrated that influencer authenticity bolsters trust, thereby driving loyalty and yielding positive marketing outcomes. Similarly, Bui et al. (2024) found that perceived authenticity in AI-generated visual content increases purchase and advocacy intentions, indicating that a synthetic origin does not preclude positive responses when the content conveys a sense of uniqueness and honesty. Further compelling evidence is provided by Liao & Chen (2024); they demonstrate that authenticity management strategies significantly enhance engagement with sponsored content, particularly when supported by influencer competence and brand fit.

However, this relationship remains a subject of debate. Andonopoulos et al. (2023) found that authenticity boosts purchase intentions via perceived trustworthiness but does not significantly influence non-purchase-related behaviors. Their experiments also revealed that influencers with lower levels of authenticity could still drive purchasing behavior by evoking inspiration. This neutral or compensatory impact model suggests that factors such as entertainment value, novelty, aspirational appeal, and visual attractiveness can sometimes outweigh authenticity. Consequently, from a post-positivist perspective, the proposed relationship is probabilistic rather than a universal law. Perceived authenticity is expected to foster consumer trust, although the magnitude of this effect may vary depending on content type, technological perceptions, and platform context. From a practical standpoint, authenticity remains valuable because consumer responses are driven by a combination of honesty, relevance, and consistency. Therefore the following hypothesis is advanced:

H2: Perceived content authenticity has a positive impact on consumer trust in social media marketing.

2.5 The Moderating Role of Consumer AI Skepticism

Consumer AI skepticism refers to the tendency of consumers to question the competence, reliability, authenticity, persuasive motives, and ethical acceptability of artificial intelligence when it contributes to marketing communications (Castelo et al., 2019; Puntoni et al., 2021; Kirkby et al., 2023). It reflects critical doubt rather than outright rejection, as skeptical consumers may still accept AI when its contributions are accurate, useful, verifiable, and supported by meaningful human oversight. Pierre et al. (2026) conceptualize consumer aversion to AI in marketing communications as discomfort with its involvement in both communication strategy and content execution, which subsequently influences brand perceptions and purchase intentions. Consumer skepticism toward AI is closely related to algorithmic aversion but is conceptually broader. Algorithmic aversion describes a reluctance to rely on algorithmic judgments, particularly after observing algorithmic errors, even when those algorithms perform more accurately than human decision-makers (Dietvorst et al., 2015). Consumer AI skepticism also encompasses doubts regarding synthetic authorship, emotional sincerity, content authenticity, commercial manipulation, data practices, and accountability. Castelo et al. (2019) demonstrate that consumers are particularly hesitant to trust algorithms in subjective tasks requiring creativity, intuition,

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and emotional understanding. These findings are directly relevant to social media marketing, as its effectiveness often hinges on creative expression, perceived human connection, and authentic communication.

Consumer skepticism toward AI serves a vital protective function by encouraging consumers to verify claims, question the technology's authorship, and resist the automatic acceptance of fabricated images, misinformation, covert persuasion, or emotionally simulated messages. Pelau et al. (2021) highlight distinct consumer segments based on their levels of AI acceptance, perceptions of social media information, and the need to verify received information. The Persuasion Knowledge Model also explains why skepticism becomes significant when AI involvement is disclosed. Such disclosure makes the production tactic transparent, allowing consumers to evaluate whether the use of AI represents ethical transparency or a calculated persuasion strategy. Qiu et al. (2025) demonstrate that AI disclosure triggers persuasion knowledge and consumer skepticism, thereby influencing advertising attitudes and purchase intentions. From a critical realist perspective, consumer AI skepticism reflects an underlying psychological disposition; while not directly observable, it generates measurable differences in trust levels, resistance, and behavioral intentions. This interpretation is supported by evidence indicating that consumer aversion to AI predicts brand perceptions and purchasing responses (Pierre et al., 2026). From an interpretivist perspective, skepticism is socially constructed, as consumers form perceptions of AI through personal experiences, cultural expectations, media narratives, technological knowledge, and beliefs regarding human creativity. The diversity of consumer segments identified by Pelau et al. (2021) also supports this context-dependent interpretation. From a post-positivist perspective, the moderating impact of skepticism must be viewed probabilistically; although it generally diminishes positive responses to AI, the magnitude of this effect varies depending on the task, consumer segment, and communication context (Castelo et al., 2019; Zehnle et al., 2025).

Consumer skepticism toward AI is expected to negatively moderate the relationship between the disclosure of AI-generated content and consumer trust in social media marketing. When skepticism is low, disclosure can serve as a signal of transparency, demonstrating honesty, accountability, and respect for the consumer's informed judgment. However, when skepticism is high, the same disclosure may highlight automation, reduced human effort, artificial emotion, questionable originality, and uncertain accountability. Consequently, the positive impact of disclosure on trust diminishes as skepticism rises. Wortel et al. (2024) found that AI disclosure reduced positive brand attitudes among consumers with high levels of AI aversion, indicating that prior attitudes toward artificial intelligence shape reactions to disclosure. Similarly, Qiu et al. (2025) found that AI aversion heightened skepticism arising from AI disclosure while exerting conditional negative effects on consumer responses to advertising. Strong supporting evidence was also provided by Schilke & Reimann (2025); across thirteen experiments, they consistently demonstrated that disclosing AI usage reduced trust, as observers perceived lower levels of effort and execution competence.

However, empirical evidence remains mixed. Wortel et al. (2024) found no significant moderating effect of AI aversion on attitudes toward advertising or source credibility, suggesting a neutral moderating role regarding certain outcomes. Zehnle et al. (2025) further demonstrated that consumer aversion varies significantly depending on the type of AI and the consumption context. From a practical standpoint, skepticism may be mitigated when AI delivers proven accuracy, useful personalization, clear human oversight, and content aligned with brand identity. Despite these conditional findings, social media marketing inherently involves subjective creativity and persuasive intent; consequently, skeptical consumers are particularly prone to viewing AI involvement negatively. On this basis, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Consumer AI skepticism negatively moderates the relationship between AI generated content disclosure and consumer trust in social media marketing.

Building on established theoretical foundations, this study extends existing knowledge through the conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1:

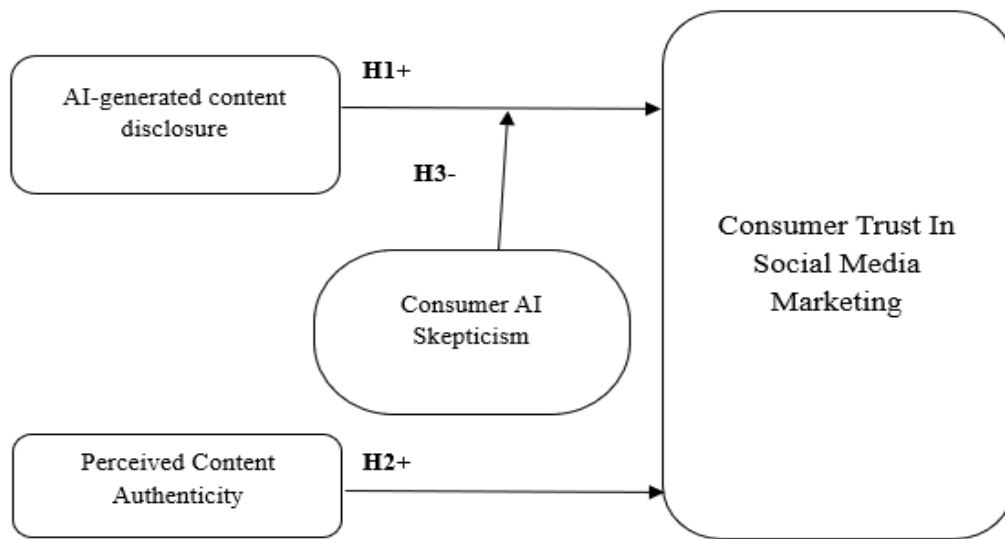


Figure 1: The Paper Conceptual Framework

3. METHODS

3.1. Sampling Strategy

This research employed a quantitative cross-sectional design to investigate how AI generated content disclosure and perceived content authenticity influence consumer trust in social media marketing while examining the moderating effect of consumer AI skepticism. Vietnam was chosen given its consumers' active engagement with social media and growing exposure to marketing material created or altered by generative artificial intelligence. The quantitative method enabled rigorous hypothesis testing and statistical assessment of both direct and interaction effects through standardized survey data. The cross-sectional approach allowed efficient capture of consumer views on AI disclosure, content authenticity, AI skepticism, and trust at one moment in time (Bryman, 2016). Individual social media users formed the unit of analysis. Purposive sampling recruited participants with relevant experience who could evaluate AI generated marketing content meaningfully. Eligible respondents were at least 18 years old, living in Vietnam, actively used at least one social media platform, and had encountered advertising or branded material identified as created, modified, or assisted by artificial intelligence within the prior six months. Screening covered users of Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and other widely adopted platforms. Participants were drawn from varied age groups, occupations, educational backgrounds, regions, and levels of social media experience to promote sample diversity.

Data collection relied on a structured self-administered questionnaire built from established academic scales. AI generated content disclosure measured the degree to which consumers perceived that social media marketing clearly, visibly, understandably, and honestly signaled artificial intelligence involvement in content creation, drawing on studies of disclosure recognition and responses to AI in digital advertising (Wortel et al., 2024; Koning & Voorveld, 2025). Perceived content authenticity assessed whether respondents viewed AI generated marketing material as genuine, truthful, original, sincere, and aligned with the brand's identity and values, with items adapted from authenticity research in social media and AI communication (Lee & Eastin, 2021; Bui et al., 2024). Consumer AI skepticism captured the tendency to doubt the competence, reliability, authenticity, ethical standing, and persuasive intent of artificial intelligence in marketing, reflecting work on skepticism toward social media information, algorithm aversion, and resistance to AI in marketing (Pelau et al., 2021; Pierre et al., 2026). Consumer trust in social media marketing evaluated whether branded social media messages were seen as credible, honest, reliable, dependable, and worthy of confidence, adapted from research on trust in branded social media content and social commerce (Hajli et al., 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019). All items employed a five point Likert scale from 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree. Academic experts in marketing, consumer behavior, artificial intelligence, and quantitative methods reviewed the instrument for content relevance and clarity of wording. Marketing practitioners and experienced social media users further checked whether items mirrored realistic encounters with AI generated content.

Because the questionnaire was administered in Vietnamese, translation followed by independent back translation ensured conceptual equivalence with the original English measures. The final online questionnaire was shared through universities, professional networks, consumer communities, social media groups, and digital channels. Participation remained voluntary and anonymous. Respondents received details on the academic purpose, confidentiality safeguards, and the right to withdraw.

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Screening questions and attention checks enhanced data quality. After removal of incomplete, duplicate, patterned, unusually fast, and disengaged responses, 385 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis.

3.2. Data analysis

Analysis of the data relied on SPSS version 26 together with Hayes' Process macro. Descriptive statistics first outlined the respondents' demographic profiles, patterns of social media use, and encounters with AI generated marketing content. Reliability of the scales was checked through Cronbach's alpha, where coefficients of 0.70 or above and corrected item total correlations greater than 0.30 confirmed adequate internal consistency (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Exploratory factor analysis followed, employing principal component extraction and Varimax rotation. Items were kept only when their loadings surpassed 0.50 and displayed no notable cross loadings (Hair et al., 2009). Multiple linear regression then assessed the direct influences of AI generated content disclosure and perceived content authenticity on consumer trust in social media marketing, with significance judged at the conventional level of p below 0.05. Hayes' Process Model 1 was applied last to test whether consumer AI skepticism moderated the link between ai generated content disclosure and consumer trust in social media marketing (Hayes, 2022).

4. RESULTS

4.1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Active social media users drawn from Vietnam's main geographical regions made up the sample, with 43.9% living in the south, 32.2% in the north, and 23.9% in the central region. Participants aged 25 to 34 formed the largest age group at 34.8%, followed by those aged 18 to 24 at 29.6%, respondents aged 35 to 44 at 21.3%, and individuals aged 45 or older at 14.3%. Private sector employees constituted the biggest occupational category at 29.9%, university students accounted for 23.6%, public sector workers for 17.9%, business owners or self employed persons for 15.1%, and members of other occupational groups for 13.5%. On daily social media use, 35.6% spent two to three hours, 27.5% spent three to four hours, 18.7% spent less than two hours, and 18.2% spent more than four hours. High familiarity with AI generated marketing content was reported by 36.9% and very high familiarity by 20.5%, while moderate familiarity reached 31.4% and limited familiarity only 11.2%. Taken together, these figures show that the sample encompassed varied demographic and usage profiles and that most respondents held enough exposure and familiarity to evaluate AI generated content disclosure, perceived content authenticity, consumer AI skepticism, and consumer trust in social media marketing.

4.2. Reliability analysis

Table 1 summarizes the measurement items employed to operationalize the study constructs. Each construct was assessed through four items adapted from established academic sources to maintain theoretical relevance and sufficiently represent its underlying dimensions. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree.

Table 1: Measurement Items

Code	Survey item	Theoretical source
AI Generated Content Disclosure		
CD1	The social media marketing content clearly indicates when artificial intelligence was involved in its creation.	Wortel et al. (2024) and Schilke & Reimann (2025)
CD2	The disclosure makes the involvement of artificial intelligence easy to recognize.	Wortel et al. (2024) and Koning & Voorveld (2025)
CD3	The disclosure provides understandable information about the role of artificial intelligence in creating the content.	Koning & Voorveld (2025) and Pierre et al. (2026)
CD4	The disclosure adequately communicates the extent to which artificial intelligence contributed to the content.	Pierre et al. (2026) and Schilke & Reimann (2025)
Perceived Content Authenticity		
PCA1	The social media marketing content appears genuine.	Lee & Eastin (2021) & Bui et al. (2024)
PCA2	The content appears to represent the promoted brand truthfully.	Lee & Eastin (2021) & Bui et al. (2024)
PCA3	The content appears consistent with the identity	Audrezet et al. (2020) & Lee &

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	and values of the promoted brand.	Eastin (2021)
PCA4	The content appears original rather than merely imitating existing marketing material.	Lee & Eastin (2021) & Bui et al. (2024)
Consumer Skepticism		
CS1	I question whether artificial intelligence can create reliable social media marketing content.	Castelo et al. (2019) & Pierre et al. (2026)
CS2	I am cautious about accepting claims presented in social media marketing content created with artificial intelligence.	Pelau et al. (2021) & Qiu et al. (2025)
CS3	I question whether AI generated marketing content reflects genuine human or brand intentions.	Qiu et al. (2025) & Pierre et al. (2026)
CS4	I am concerned that artificial intelligence may be used to make social media marketing content appear more convincing than it really is.	Wortel et al. (2024) & Pierre et al. (2026)
Consumer Trust in Social Media Marketing		
CT1	I consider the social media marketing content I encounter to be credible.	Lou & Yuan (2019) & Koning & Voorveld (2025)
CT2	I consider the claims presented in social media marketing content to be reliable.	Hajli et al. (2017) & Lou & Yuan (2019)
CT3	I believe that social media marketing content communicates honestly with consumers.	Lou & Yuan (2019) & Koning & Voorveld (2025)
CT4	Overall, I feel confident relying on social media marketing content when evaluating promoted products or brands.	Hajli et al. (2017) & Lou & Yuan (2019)

Table 2: Reliability analysis of “Consumer Trust in Social Media Marketing”.

Reliability Statistics				
Cronbach's Alpha		N of Items		
.701		4		
Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
CT1	11.100	5.508	0.496	0.683
CT2	11.170	5.351	0.538	0.659
CT3	11.130	5.396	0.526	0.666
CT4	11.150	5.422	0.519	0.670

Source: (The authors, 2026)

As presented in Table 2, all items recorded corrected item total correlation values ranging from 0.496 to 0.538, which exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.30. The overall scale achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.730, surpassing the minimum acceptable level of 0.70 and confirming satisfactory internal consistency. Moreover, the Cronbach's alpha values obtained after deleting individual items ranged from 0.659 to 0.683, all of which were lower than the overall alpha. This result indicates that removing any item would weaken the reliability of the scale. Therefore, all four items contributed meaningfully to the measurement of consumer trust in social media marketing and were retained for subsequent analyses. Comparable levels of reliability were also observed across the other measurement scales included in the study (Hair et al., 2009; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

4.3. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Table 3: Factor Loading Matrix.

Rotated Component Matrix ^a

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Component with loading factors							
1		2		3		4	
CD1	0.782	PCA1	0.754	CS1	0.769	CT1	0.738
CD2	0.815	PCA2	0.803	CS2	0.811	CT2	0.701
CD3	0.754	PCA3	0.729	CS3	0.746	CT3	0.776
CD4	0.697	PCA4	0.684	CS4	0.693	CT4	0.722
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.							
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.							
a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.							

Source: (The authors, 2026)

Table 3 presents the exploratory factor analysis results, which identified four distinct factors corresponding to the dependent variable, two independent variables, and the moderating variable. All 16 items loaded strongly on their intended factors, with coefficients ranging from 0.684 to 0.815, thereby exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2009). The Varimax rotation converged after seven iterations, indicating a stable factor solution. Therefore, no items were removed, and all 16 indicators were retained for subsequent analysis. These findings provide satisfactory support for the proposed four factor structure and the construct validity of the measurement model.

4.4. Multiple linear regression model

Table 4: Coefficients^a.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	0.186	0.105		1.771	0.000
CD	0.512	0.020	0.625	25.600	0.000
PCA	0.473	0.020	0.576	23.650	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: CT					

Source: (The authors, 2026)

Where CD represents the mean of CD1 to CD4, PCA represents the mean of PCA1 to PCA4, and CT represents the mean of CT1 to CT4.

As shown in Table 4, the significance values for the relationships between AI generated content disclosure and consumer trust in social media marketing and between perceived content authenticity and consumer trust in social media marketing were both 0.000, which is well below the 0.05 threshold. AI generated content disclosure had a significant positive effect on consumer trust in social media marketing with $\beta = 0.625$, $t = 25.600$, and $p < 0.001$. Perceived content authenticity also exerted a significant positive effect with $\beta = 0.576$, $t = 23.650$, and $p < 0.001$. These findings provide strong empirical support for accepting H1 and H2.

4.5. Moderator analysis

Table 5: Results analysis of "Consumer AI Skepticism".

Model: 1 Y: CT X: CD W: CS Sample Size: 385

OUTCOME VARIABLE: CT Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	dl1	dl2	p
.570	.563	0.240	163.649	3.000	381.000	.000

Model

	Coeff.	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	0.284	0.098	2.898	0.004	0.091	0.477
CD	0.573	0.040	14.325	0.000	0.494	0.652
CS	0.625	0.042	14.881	0.000	0.542	0.708
Int_1	-0.499	0.038	-13.132	0.000	-0.574	-0.424

Source: (The authors, 2026)

Where CAIS was calculated as the mean score of items CAIS1 to CAIS4.

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The negative interaction coefficient ($B = -0.499$) indicates that greater consumer AI skepticism weakens the positive influence of AI generated content disclosure on consumer trust in social media marketing. In other words, although clear disclosure may communicate transparency, honesty, and accountability, its contribution to consumer trust becomes less pronounced when consumers hold stronger doubts about the competence, reliability, authenticity, motives, and ethical acceptability of artificial intelligence. Highly skeptical consumers may interpret disclosed AI involvement as evidence of reduced human creativity, synthetic persuasion, possible manipulation, or uncertain accountability. Consequently, they are less likely to translate disclosure transparency into confidence in social media marketing content. Furthermore, the confidence interval for the interaction effect, ranging from $LLCI = -0.574$ to $ULCI = -0.424$, does not include zero, confirming the significance and stability of the negative moderating effect. Overall, the findings establish consumer AI skepticism as an important boundary condition that diminishes the positive influence of AI generated content disclosure on consumer trust in social media marketing. Therefore, Hypothesis H3 is empirically supported.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Result Summary

AI-generated content disclosure and the perceived authenticity of that content both demonstrate a significant positive impact on consumer trust in social media marketing, with standardized regression coefficients of 0.625 and 0.576, respectively. These findings indicate that clearly communicating the involvement of artificial intelligence in content creation and presenting marketing content perceived as genuine, truthful, original, and consistent with brand identity significantly enhance consumer trust. Furthermore, consumer AI skepticism acts as a significant negative moderator, weakening the relationship between AI content disclosure and consumer trust; this is evidenced by an interaction coefficient of -0.499 and a confidence interval ranging from -0.574 to -0.424. These findings suggest that the impact of disclosure on trust diminishes when consumers question the competence, reliability, authenticity, motives, and ethical standards of AI. Overall, the research results provide robust empirical support for all three hypotheses and validate the theoretical framework linking AI content disclosure, perceived content authenticity, consumer skepticism toward AI, and consumer trust in social media marketing.

Regarding the research questions, the findings address the first question by confirming that disclosing information about AI-generated content significantly strengthens consumer trust in social media marketing. The study also addresses the second research question by demonstrating that the perceived authenticity of content exerts a significant positive impact, although the standardized effect size of this factor is slightly lower than that of information disclosure. The third research question is answered by showing that high consumer skepticism toward AI significantly diminishes the positive impact of disclosing AI-generated content on consumer trust. Collectively, these findings confirm that brands need to combine transparent disclosure with authentic content, while recognizing that disclosure alone may be insufficient to build trust among highly skeptical consumers. Consequently, effective social media marketing requires clearly explaining the role of AI, ensuring content credibility, maintaining rigorous and meaningful human oversight, and employing communication strategies that alleviate consumer concerns regarding issues such as information manipulation, the nature of artificial creativity, and accountability.

5.2. Theoretical Implications

The empirical findings strongly support H1 because AI generated content disclosure significantly increases consumer trust in social media marketing with $\beta = 0.625$. This outcome aligns with Cambier & Poncin (2020), who argue that transparent communication functions as an observable signal of brand integrity, and with Schnackenberg & Tomlinson (2016), who associate transparency with stronger stakeholder trust. It also complements Kirkby et al. (2023), whose findings indicate that revealing AI authorship does not necessarily damage perceived authenticity or brand attitudes. However, the result contrasts with Schilke & Reimann (2025), Koning & Voorveld (2025), and Grigsby et al. (2025), who report that AI disclosure can reduce trust by highlighting limited human effort, manipulative potential, or weak emotional capability. The strong positive coefficient found here suggests that consumers may interpret clear disclosure primarily as evidence of honesty and accountability when evaluating social media marketing. Nevertheless, the finding does not support a purely deterministic view that disclosure universally produces trust, because its meaning depends on consumer interpretation and contextual conditions. Theoretically, the study extends Signaling Theory by conceptualizing AI disclosure as a potentially credible transparency signal that reduces information asymmetry between marketers and consumers regarding technological authorship.

The findings also support H2 because perceived content authenticity positively affects consumer trust in social media marketing with $\beta = 0.576$. This result agrees with Kim & Kim (2021), who demonstrate that authenticity strengthens trust and subsequent marketing outcomes, and with Audrezet et al. (2020), who emphasize sincerity, transparency, and genuine commitment as foundations of authenticity in social media communication. It also supports Bui et al. (2024), whose concept of AI authenticity

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indicates that consumers may regard AI generated content as authentic when it appears original and faithfully represents its subject. Similarly, Liao & Chen (2024) show that effective authenticity management improves audience responses to sponsored social media content. However, the finding only partly corresponds with Andonopoulos et al. (2023), who find that authenticity supports purchase intention through trustworthiness but does not significantly influence certain nonpurchase responses. Although inspirational or entertaining content may compensate for limited authenticity in some situations, the substantial direct coefficient confirms that authenticity retains independent explanatory value for trust. Theoretically, the study advances authenticity research by demonstrating that authenticity is not restricted to human authorship. Instead, it represents a consumer judgment concerning genuineness, truthfulness, originality, and consistency that remains relevant when marketing content is generated or assisted by artificial intelligence.

The empirical findings further support H3 because the negative interaction coefficient of -0.499 shows that Consumer AI skepticism weakens the positive relationship between AI generated content disclosure and consumer trust in social media marketing. This result aligns with Wortel et al. (2024), who find that AI disclosure produces less favorable brand attitudes among consumers with strong AI aversion. It also supports Qiu et al. (2025), who demonstrate that AI disclosure can activate persuasion knowledge and skepticism, particularly among consumers predisposed to resist artificial intelligence. Castelo et al. (2019) provide further theoretical support by showing that consumers distrust algorithms more strongly when tasks involve subjective qualities such as creativity, intuition, and emotional understanding. Nevertheless, the result differs from evidence of neutral moderation reported by Wortel et al. (2024) for source credibility and advertising attitude. It also qualifies Logg et al. (2019), who show that consumers may sometimes prefer algorithmic judgment over human judgment. The strong negative interaction observed in this study suggests that social media creativity represents a context in which technological skepticism remains especially influential. Theoretically, the research extends the Persuasion Knowledge Model by positioning consumer AI skepticism as a boundary condition that determines how disclosure cues are interpreted. Disclosure may signal honesty to consumers with low skepticism but may emphasize synthetic persuasion, diminished human contribution, and uncertain accountability to highly skeptical consumers. Accordingly, consumer AI skepticism explains why identical transparency practices generate divergent trust outcomes.

5.3. Practical Implications

First, the empirical findings strongly support H1 and demonstrate that AI generated content disclosure significantly strengthens consumer trust in social media marketing with $\beta = 0.625$. This result indicates that brands should regard disclosure as a substantive communication practice rather than a minimal compliance label. Marketers should clearly indicate whether AI created, modified, or assisted the text, images, audio, or video and explain the degree of human involvement. Detailed disclosure can reduce information asymmetry and communicate accountability, whereas vague labels may create further uncertainty. Cambier & Poncin (2020) demonstrate that transparent marketing communication can strengthen perceived brand integrity. Pierre et al. (2026) similarly indicate that detailed disclosure may reduce perceived manipulation more effectively than superficial disclosure. Nevertheless, managers should not assume that disclosure automatically creates trust because consumers may interpret it as evidence of reduced human effort or capability (Schilke & Reimann, 2025). Brands should therefore combine disclosure with factual verification, editorial review, creative supervision, and clear responsibility for errors.

Second, the empirical findings support H2 and show that perceived content authenticity positively affects consumer trust in social media marketing with $\beta = 0.576$. Brands must therefore ensure that AI generated content remains genuine, truthful, original, and consistent with their identity and values. Marketing teams should avoid generic content, unrealistic imagery, fabricated testimonials, and emotionally artificial narratives. Instead, AI should support human creativity and production efficiency without replacing meaningful brand judgment. Audrezet et al. (2020) emphasize that genuine commitment and transparent communication help preserve authenticity in commercial social media relationships. Bui et al. (2024) also show that AI generated visual content can produce favorable consumer responses when it appears original and faithfully represents its subject. Firms should establish review procedures covering factual accuracy, visual realism, cultural appropriateness, emotional credibility, and brand consistency. Social listening and consumer feedback should also identify content perceived as artificial, misleading, or inconsistent before widespread publication.

Finally, the empirical findings firmly support H3 and reveal that consumer AI skepticism significantly weakens the positive relationship between AI generated content disclosure and consumer trust in social media marketing, as demonstrated by the interaction coefficient of -0.499 . A uniform disclosure strategy is therefore unlikely to influence all consumers equally. Brands should segment audiences according to AI familiarity, perceived technological risk, and skepticism. Concise disclosure may be sufficient for consumers with low skepticism. Highly skeptical consumers require further explanation of why AI was used, how humans supervised the process, how claims were verified, and who remains accountable. Castelo et al. (2019) show that consumers resist algorithms more strongly when tasks involve subjective creativity and emotional judgment. Wortel et al. (2024)

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similarly find that negative responses to AI disclosure become more evident among consumers with strong AI aversion. Brands should therefore preserve visible human involvement, offer accessible correction channels, and provide verifiable evidence supporting AI generated claims. The practical objective should not be to suppress skepticism but to address it through meaningful transparency, consumer control, and accountable human oversight.

5.4. Limitations

This study has a few limitations. The cross-sectional design captures perceptions at a single point in time and cannot determine how trust levels evolve with repeated exposure to AI-generated marketing content. The use of purposive sampling and a focus on social media users in Vietnam may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultures, platforms, and consumer groups. Self-reported responses may also be subject to recall bias, social desirability bias, and variations in participants' ability to identify AI-generated content. The study measures information disclosure as a perception-based variable rather than experimentally manipulating the format, level of detail, or placement of such information. Furthermore, the model considers only two direct predictors and one moderator, thereby excluding other potential mechanisms from the empirical scope, such as perceptions of manipulation, AI literacy, human oversight, content type, brand familiarity, and privacy concerns.

5.5. Future Research Directions

Future studies should employ longitudinal and experimental designs to determine whether the impact of AI disclosure and authenticity remains stable over repeated exposures. Experiments could compare concise labels, detailed explanations, platform-generated notifications, and brand-initiated disclosures across text, image, audio, and video formats. Cross-cultural studies should examine whether this model differs between emerging and developed markets or between collectivist and individualist societies. Researchers should also consider perceived manipulative intent, brand integrity, and emotional trustworthiness as mediating factors. AI knowledge, brand familiarity, content engagement levels, platform type, and perceived human oversight could serve as additional moderating factors. The use of probability sampling and behavioral outcomes, such as clicks, shares, purchases, or unfollowing, would strengthen external validity. Future research could also distinguish skepticism from AI-related anxiety, aversion, perceived risk, and general advertising skepticism.

5.6. Conclusion

This study examined how AI generated content disclosure and perceived content authenticity shape consumer trust in social media marketing and whether consumer AI skepticism conditions the disclosure effect. Both predictors significantly increased trust, with disclosure producing the stronger standardized effect. However, consumer AI skepticism negatively moderated the disclosure and trust relationship, indicating that transparency becomes less effective among consumers who strongly question AI competence, authenticity, motives, and accountability. The findings integrate Signaling Theory and the Persuasion Knowledge Model by showing that disclosure can communicate honesty while simultaneously activating critical resistance. Overall, brands cannot build trust through labeling alone. Trustworthy AI generated marketing requires clear disclosure, authentic content, factual verification, visible human oversight, and communication strategies responsive to differing levels of consumer skepticism.

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