

Generation Z Perception Towards Ai and Human Copywriting in Maggi Advertisements

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ABSTRACT

The increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) in advertising has intensified scholarly debate regarding the effectiveness of AI-generated versus human-generated copywriting. This study examines how Malaysian Generation Z consumers perceive AI- and human-generated advertising copy in terms of emotional engagement, perceived trustworthiness, and information quality, and how these perceptions influence purchase intention for Maggi products. A qualitative research design was employed, involving semi-structured interviews with six Malaysian Generation Z participants. Data were analysed using thematic analysis supported by NVivo software. The findings indicate that Generation Z consumers demonstrate a stronger preference for AI-generated copy, particularly in relation to emotional engagement and perceived information quality. AI-generated copy was perceived as emotionally resonant due to its alignment with relatable everyday experiences, while also being clearer, more concise, and more informative. Trust was attributed to both AI- and human-generated copy when messages were perceived as authentic, realistic, and aligned with a familiar brand. Importantly, AI-generated copy exerted a stronger influence on purchase intention, driven by its emotional appeal and practical informational value, which enhanced consumer confidence. This study contributes to advertising and copywriting scholarship by offering empirical insights into Generation Z responses to AI-driven advertising within the Malaysian fast-moving consumer goods context, with implications for strategic advertising practice.

Keywords: Generation Z, AI copywriting, human-generated copywriting, perception, Maggi advertisements

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been increasingly integrated into human daily life. It is defined as a computer-based systems that imitate human intelligence to execute complicated tasks (Zhang et al., 2025). Nowadays, AI is even embedded in content creation, including advertisements and social media posts, where it has a better understanding through the analyzed data (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Within content creation, advertising copy is one of the areas where AI technology can be helpful. For instance, research found that AI tools help to reduce the time and effort required for copywriting (Kavgić, 2024). Therefore, these technological advancements demonstrate that AI copywriting could play a transformative role in the advertising field.

Even though AI technology provides many benefits, human copywriting is still significant for its irreplaceable value in human creativity, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking (Larsson, 2025). Navío-Inglés et al. (2024) found that although AI-generated writings were rated as high quality, most believed human-generated texts are more emotional. The same study also mentioned that some struggled to distinguish AI and human-generated text, emphasising the need to prepare people to understand AI's role in writing. Therefore, this has raised the concern that the emotional engagement and information quality of the AI-generated and human-generated ad copy remain uncertain in the current market. Apart from that, trust is also one of the factors that may affect consumer interpretation of the ad copy. For instance, recent research shows that individuals' perceptions of AI, such as its benefits, risks, and privacy concerns, influence their trust in AI technologies (Lim et al., 2025). Accordingly, this suggests that trust plays a significant role not only in how creative professionals use AI, but also in how consumers view AI-generated advertising messages like copy. Thus, this paper

demonstrated the importance of exploring how consumers perceive AI-generated versus human-generated copywriting in terms of trust, emotional engagement, and quality of information in the Malaysian FMCG sector.

On the other hand, the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector represents a relevant context for this study. The FMCG products are typically low-involvement and highly in-demand since consumers use them daily (CFI, 2024). Hence, this research focuses on the FMCG sector, where advertising and copywriting have a strong influence on purchase decisions (Dr. G & Roxia, 2024). In Malaysia, the FMCG industry is also expanding due to urbanisation, lifestyle changes, and a growing middle class (Majikan, 2025). In this case, Kantar is a leading global marketing data and analytics company that provides insights to help brands understand consumers (Kantar, 2019). According to Kantar (2024) and Worldpanel by Numerator (2025b), Maggi is among the top global FMCG brands and the most chosen FMCG brand in Malaysia. Under the Maggi brand, Maggi Kari is one of the most popular instant noodles in Malaysia (The Star, 2022), which makes it a meaningful test case for examining engagement with advertising copy in the FMCG sector.

Furthermore, the research focuses on Generation Z consumers due to their rising purchasing power, as they are the world's largest and most powerful consumer segment (Li & Hassan, 2023). A study by K S & Massand (2025) found that advertising has a great impact on Gen Z's purchase decisions. As a result, Instagram is selected as the advertising medium, as it is a key platform influencing Gen Z consumers' buying behavior (Walk-Morris, 2023). Overall, this research contributes to existing research by examining how Gen Z consumers perceive AI versus human-generated copywriting within the FMCG sector in Maggi brand. Moreover, provide valuable insight into the consumer response of both types of copywriting by analyzing their responses in terms of emotional engagement, trust, and quality of information. Above all, this study also helps analyze how AI and human-generated copywriting affect their purchase intention for Maggi products.

Figure 1. Ranking of 2024 Most Chosen Brand in Global

KANTAR
Select market: Global
Select sector: FMCG

2024 Most Chosen Brand Rankings:

Global / FMCG

Rank	Change in Rank	Brand	CRPs (M)	CRP % change	Penetration		Consumer Choice	
					2023	2024	2023	2024
1	0	Coca-Cola	8297.4	-0.5	49.1	48.5	12.8	12.7
2	2	Omo	4623.9	13.5	38.0	39.3	8.1	8.7
3	-1	Colgate	4424.4	-0.4	56.3	55.6	5.9	5.9
4	-1	Maggi	4034.3	-5.3	35.6	35.2	9.0	8.5
5	1	Lay's	3417.1	2.4	35.1	36.3	7.1	7.0

Figure 2. Ranking of the Top 20 FMCG brands in Malaysia

Worldpanel by Numerator

Most Chosen Brands in Malaysia

Top 20 Brands in FMCG

Rank	Brand	CRP (M)	Rank	Brand	CRP (M)
1	Maggi	49.9	11	Mr. Potato	19.3
2	Dutch Lady	33.6	12	Kara	17.8
3	Adabi	30.6	13	Bobas	17.3
4	Munchy's	26.1	14	Hup Seng	17.1
5	Milo	23.7	15	Safi	16.9
6	Marigold	23.0	16	Kimball	16.1
7	Mamee	22.1	17	F&N	15.4
8	Ayam	22.0	18	Prego	14.9
9	Prai	21.1	19	Fernleaf	14.9
10	Saji	20.2	20	Farm Fresh	14.3

Explore the full ranking here

Problem Statement

Artificial intelligence has rapidly grown in humans' everyday lives, including social relations, everyday events, and education and work (Han et al., 2025). Meanwhile, this rapid advancement of AI has also been integrated into the advertising industry, which allows brands to enhance creativity, personalization, and even create content using AI-generated content in the advertising field (Gao et al., 2023). However, most existing studies have focused on AI in advertising or marketing, but little research has been conducted on AI-generated copywriting specifically. Despite there being related research on emotional reaction to AI-generated ad copy (Sallaku et al., 2025), the concerns regarding consumer perception toward AI-generated versus human-generated ad copy in terms of trust, emotional engagement, and information quality are still underexplored.

Moreover, the prior studies have discussed copywriting in sectors such as the automobile (Guo & Jiang, 2023) and health (Youngmann et al., 2021), but left a research gap for exploring the Malaysian Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) context. In recent years, few studies have been conducted within the Malaysian FMCG context regarding the copywriting aspect of advertising, even though this sector relies heavily on persuasive advertising (Dr. G & Roxia, 2024). Consequently, this paper seeks to cover the lack of research within the Malaysian FMCG context, especially on daily consumer products like Maggi.

Meanwhile, Generation Z may respond to AI-generated copy differently from human-created copy since they are native in a digital environment, particularly active in online shopping (Bunea et al., 2024), but their insights on these two types of copywriting still remain underexplored. Accordingly, this study aims to address these gaps by comparing how Generation Z consumers in Malaysia perceive AI-generated and human-created advertising copy in the FMCG sector, with the chosen Maggi brand advertisement. The consumer responses will be analysed in terms of trust, emotional engagement, and information quality. The findings are also expected to contribute to how each of the copywriting type affect their purchase intention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review focuses on Generation Z's consumer behaviour and emphasises their social media behaviour and purchase intention. In this case, the study uses Instagram advertisements as the research context, while the discussion is situated within the Malaysian Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) market with Maggi brand. As a result, this review is important to understand current understandings and limitations in advertising research, specifically towards AI-generated versus human-generated advertising copy.

Copywriting in Advertising

Copywriting is an important element in advertising, where it strengthens the relationship between customers and the company while capturing the audience using persuasive messages (Söilen, 2024). It involves transforming ideas, observations, and messages into written content or audiovisual forms that align with brand objectives (Lim & Mohammad Bashir, 2025). Moreover, a study by Seidekhanov and Dossanova (2024) also reveals that copywriting is significant in market discourse as it contributes to search engine tasks and user engagement. As digitalisation has transformed creative advertising practices, copywriting has evolved in how persuasive messages are conceptualised and executed (Akmeraner-Kökät & Pellandini-Simányi, 2025). However, fewer studies have examined how this transformation affects Gen Z's audience perception of emotional response, trust, and information quality. Under these circumstances, the following sections will further distinguish between AI-generated and human-generated copywriting.

Artificial Intelligence Copywriting

The rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has essentially changed how brands create content as well as persuasive messages in digital communication, especially advertising content creation. In recent years, AI advertising is defined as brand communication that uses machine functions capable of learning to perform tasks to persuade people, with input from humans, machines, or both (Rodgers, 2021). In this case, Kim (2025) explains that agentic AI systems are capable of autonomously integrating data, generating content, and executing campaigns. In the copywriting sector, a previous study mentioned that AI is applied in content creation, including tasks such

as generating advertising copy based on predefined templates, brand recommendations, and consumer insights (Vijai, 2025). Furthermore, research from Vicsek et al. (2024) also found that copywriters actually perceived AI as an efficiency enhancer rather than a radical disruptor, which confirmed the ability of AI. Meanwhile, McAlister et al. (2023) stated that AI is able to offer personalized marketing messages, which can improve customer engagement. Nevertheless, the same study highlighted the disadvantage of AI in its lack of contextual understanding, which may affect the interaction between brands and customers. Similarly, Sands et al. (2025) emphasized that transparent communication and ethical leadership can reduce negative reactions and make trust a crucial factor in AI-generated advertising acceptance. Hence, although AI copywriting enhances efficiency and personalization, its limited contextual weakness may challenge Gen Z's trust, emotion and perception of information quality in advertising messages.

Human Copywriting

Although generative AI is growing in this environment, human copywriting remains central to the advertising field. To support this point, scholars found that human input is essential in driving brand strategy and emotional connections (Demsar et al., 2025). Similarly, Vitellaro et al. (2025) found that marketing professionals believe empathy and nuance are essential elements of persuasive communication, and emphasize that human creativity and sensitivity are still important in areas such as copywriting. In addition, Cui et al. (2025) also revealed that human expertise is still necessary in the creative process even though AI capabilities are growing. Thus, it underscores the human role in creative processes.

Apart from that, previous research also supports the effectiveness of human writing. For instance, Hu (2025) mentioned that AI writing is less credible and vaguer compared to human writing in the marketing context. Therefore, this suggests that the key traits of human skills remain vital in producing advertisement copy. Simultaneously, existing literature further revealed that human writing conveys more emotion and richer style, which can enhance reader engagement (Culda et al., 2025; Navío-Ingles et al., 2024). Collectively, the reviewed literature affirms that human copywriting is indispensable for its clarity and emotional depth, even though AI advancements contribute to efficient and generic text generation.

Emotional Engagement, Trust, and Quality of Information as Perceptual Factors

In previous studies, perception is defined as an individual's predictive processing that is shaped by their previous experiences within their environment, which influences their attention and behavior toward specific actions (Abbasianchavari & Block, 2022). Thus, perceptual factors are described as subjective evaluations that influence how individuals react to various stimuli. Therefore, in this study, emotional engagement, trust, and quality of information are viewed as perceptual factors, as they determine how individuals form cognitive and affective responses toward systems or messages (Tucker & Marsh, 2021; Hopko et al., 2023).

First and foremost, emotional engagement represents the capacity of a story to evoke strong emotions and establish a deep connection with the audience, thereby indicating a meaningful brand connection (Ahmed et al., 2024). Therefore, it can reflect audiences' affective responses to the advertising message. Other than that, studies have shown that brands that successfully stimulate emotional engagement can effectively drive Generation Z consumers through the purchase process (Wardana, 2025). Thus, these reviews portray the importance of emotional engagement as perceptual factor in this study in influencing consumer responses.

Secondly, trust is one of the important elements in consumer decision-making, especially in Generation Z consumers. Previous research indicates that Generation Z consumers prioritize authenticity when evaluating products and services, and look to establish trust from the brand and understand its value (Tata et al., 2023). Furthermore, a study from Prasetyani et al. (2024) in the context of financial technology application shows that perceived trust positively influences Gen Z's intention to use digital services. In consequence, trust serves as a factor of purchase intention and acts as a link between how consumers perceive ad copy and how they respond.

Thirdly, information quality is about the clarity, accuracy, and usefulness of the message content. In this case, high-quality information can improve perceived usefulness and enhance the purchase intention of consumers. Similarly, a study also suggests that perceived usefulness possesses a positive effect on Generation Z consumers'

purchase intention (Prasetyani et al., 2024). Hence, information quality served as an important perceptual factor strengthens the cognitive aspect while portraying how the ad copy impacts Generation Z's decision-making process.

All in all, these perceptual factors shape the conceptual framework of this study and provide a way to understand how Generation Z views AI-generated versus human-generated copywriting. Also, these three perceptual factors helps explore how AI and human-generated copywriting affect Generation Z consumers' purchase intention.

Gen Z's Consumer Behavior and Purchase Intention

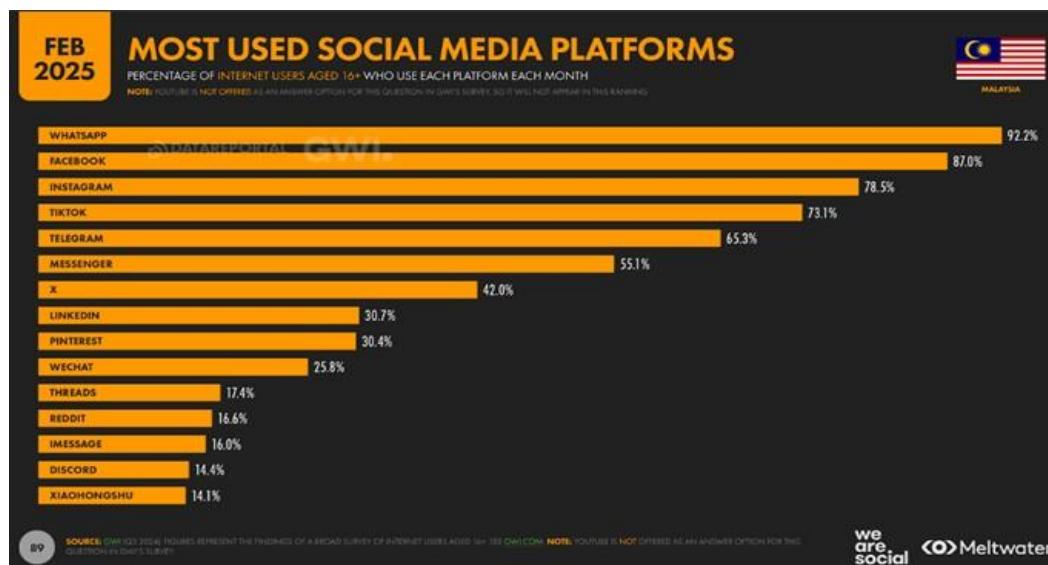
Generation Z is a generation that was born between 1997 and 2012 (Slepian et al., 2024), and also known for its digital savvy (Seyfi et al., 2024). For instance, studies discover that Generation Z consumers' purchase intentions are highly influenced by social presence and virtual interactions, such as virtual and social media influencers (Li,

2025; Dang et al., 2025). Furthermore, research has shown that consumer knowledge and perceived value each positively affect the purchase intention of Gen Z (Shen et al., 2025). Thus, these findings highlight the importance of information quality and emotional interaction in advertising copy, as it can influence consumer knowledge, perceived value, and their buying intentions.

Gen Z's Social Media Behavior

In recent years, social media has played a significant part in Gen Z's life, as it supports self-definition and social connectivity (Stahl & Literat, 2022). It also serves as a highly interactive space where Gen Z can fulfill emotional and social needs, such as proving themselves and self-expression (Workman et al., 2022). As a result, social media plays a pivotal role in shaping their behaviors. In this case, Instagram stands out as one of the top social media choices in the Malaysian market, which reaches 78.5% internet users among other social media platforms (Kemp, 2025). Apart from that, Gen Z's shopping behavior is increasingly shaped by media-driven engagement, and Instagram appears to be a platform that offers strong visual storytelling (Yu et al., 2025). Consequently, Instagram becomes a platform that can attract Gen Z's attention. Past literature shows that social media engagement has a positive effect on Gen Z consumers' purchase intention through likes, shares, and comments (Wardana, 2025). A related study also finds that the use of captions can increase engagement on Instagram, which draws the importance and connection between copywriting and social media (Jones & Lee, 2021). Given these characteristics, Instagram is an ideal platform to understand Gen Z's perceptions of copywriting in this study. In other word, it provides a suitable context to analyse how Gen Z perceives AI-generated versus human-generated advertising messages in terms of the perceptual factors.

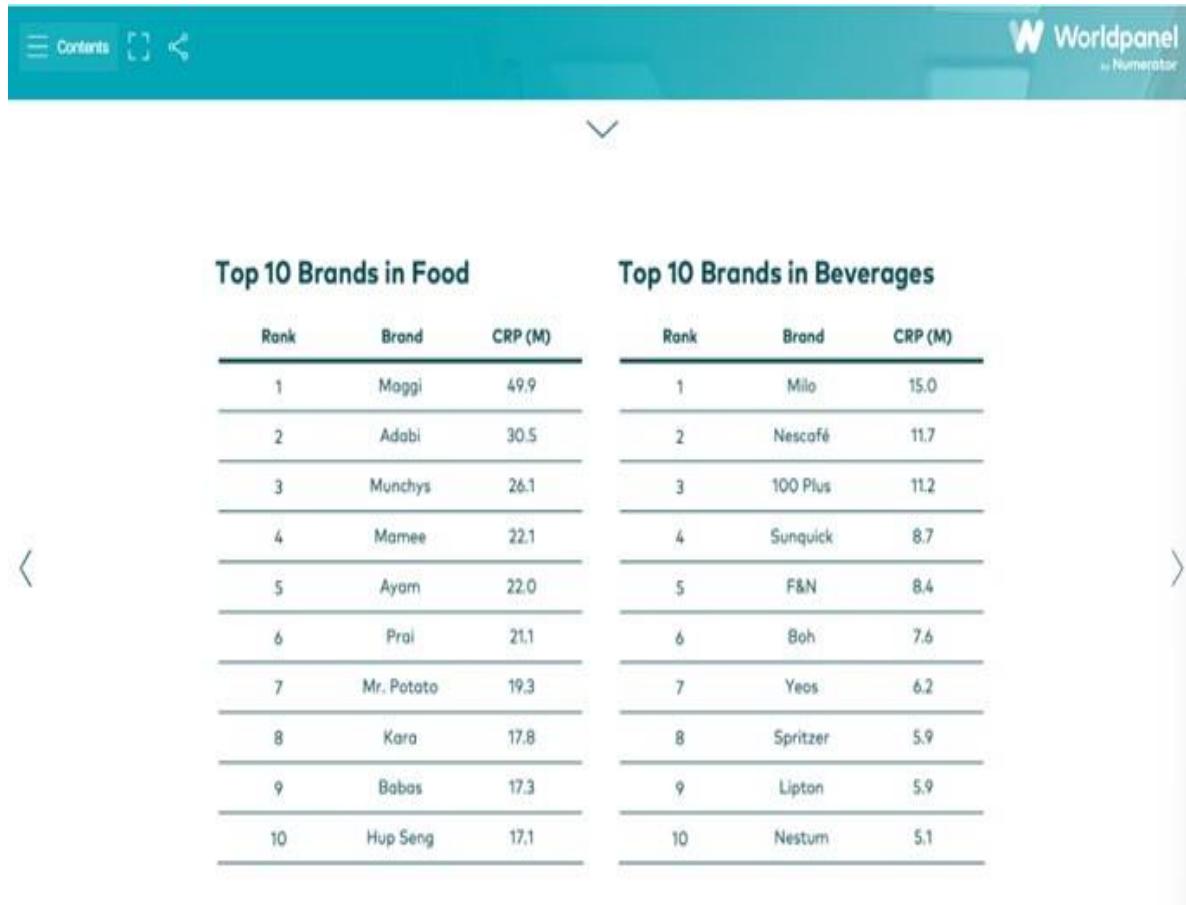
Figure 3. Most used social media platforms in Malaysia



FMCG Market in Malaysia

The fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry is crucial as it supplies a wide range of items that people consume and use regularly (Rashid et al., 2025). In Malaysia, this sector holds a vital position as research indicates that Malaysian households dedicate around one-fifth of their total consumption expenses to FMCG products (Siddharta, 2024). Apart from that, Maggi is ranked as the top brand in both the food industry and the FMCG sector in Malaysia (Worldpanel by Numerator, 2025c). As the most chosen food brand in Malaysia, Maggi continues to reach the majority of consumers, making it a relatable and meaningful choice for this case study.

Figure 4. Ranking of Maggi in Top 10 brands in Food



Maggi Advertisement in Malaysia

As mentioned in the previous section, Maggi is recognized as one of Malaysia's most popular brands and is widely known as a household name in Malaysia (Maggi, n.d.). According to Nestlé Malaysia (2023), Maggi's influence has driven the brand to be present in 9 out of 10 households. Hence, this underscores Maggi's strong market influence and brand recognition in Malaysia. On social media platforms like Instagram, Maggi often connects with Gen Z consumers with influencer marketing, as Gen Z always view influencers as role models and seek ideas from their lifestyle (Jeena et al., 2024). Apart from that, the content in Maggi's advertisements on Instagram also resonates with consumers via popular trends, challenges, and interactive campaigns such as the Maggi Kari-Lah campaign. This is also aligned with Gen Z's characteristics, as studies indicate that creating interactive campaigns and encouraging user-generated content can enhance Gen Z's purchase intentions (Wardana, 2025). Moreover, the copywriting in the promotional social media posts also plays a unique role in promoting their campaign. For instance, they have used different dialects of copywriting according to each state for the Maggi Kari-Lah campaign in their Instagram posts to engage with their targeted audience. All in all, their advertising style offers an effective context and ideal setting to discuss how Gen Z perceives AI-generated versus human-generated ad copy.

Figure 5-7. Maggi's advertisement on Instagram

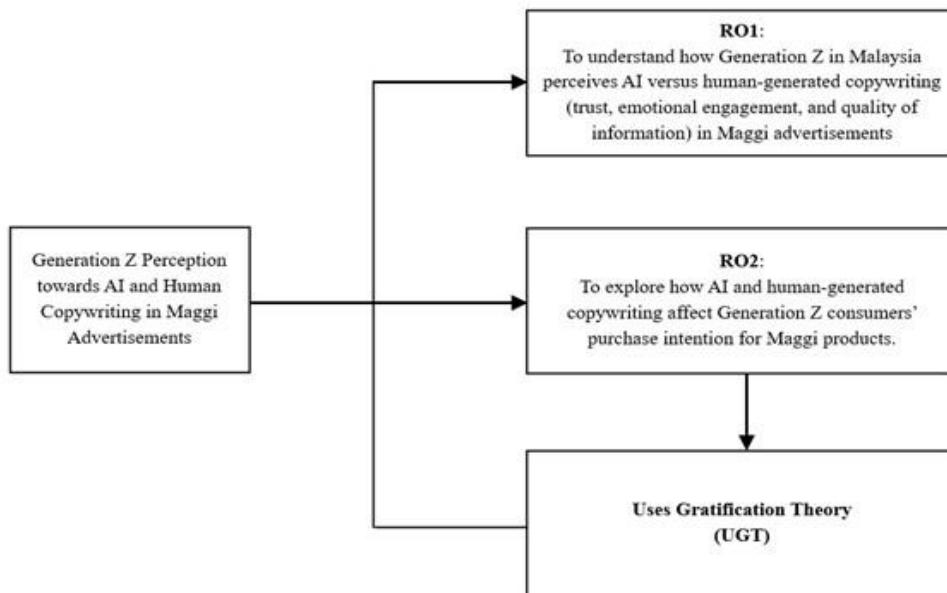


Figure 8-10. Maggi Kari-Lah campaign Instagram post



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 11. Conceptual Framework Diagram



This study utilized a conceptual framework that uses Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) that explains how individuals use communication and other resources within their environment to satisfy their needs and achieve their goals (Katz et al., 1973). Furthermore, UGT views audiences as active participants who use media to satisfy their needs and goals, and the audiences have much initiative in media choice that meet their own needs rather than being controlled by media (Katz et al., 1973). Under UGT, individuals utilize media to fulfill four types of needs, which are cognitive, affective, personal integrative, and social integrative needs. Cognitive needs involve gaining information and knowledge, affective needs refer to emotional stimulation, personal integrative needs focus on the needs that strengthen confidence or credibility, and social integrative needs mean the need for relationship and maintaining social interaction like family and friends (Vinney, 2024).

Furthermore, UGT has been used to examine various studies, including social media and traditional media advertisement (Jibril & Adzovie, 2022). For instance, UGT has been applied in research from Chen et al. (2021) to examine how the gratifications that consumers gain from WeChat content shape their brand identity and influence their purchase intention towards South Korean brands. In this study, UGT is applied to examine how Gen Z consumers in Malaysia perceive AI-generated versus human-generated copywriting in Maggi advertisements. According to a recent paper, Gen Z consumers are influenced by social media and demonstrate specific preferences and clear choices (Matušić et al., 2024). Therefore, this emphasizes the relevance of UGT and Gen Z's consumer behavior in purchasing products.

The conceptual framework proposes that Gen Z evaluates advertising messages also based on three key gratifications: cognitive needs, affective needs, and personal integrative needs. These gratifications are connected with the perceptual factors in this framework, which are trust, emotional engagement, and information quality. Moreover, the consumer responses will be analysed based on each gratification: cognitive needs (clear and quality product information), affective needs (emotional engagement and resonance), and personal integrative needs (credibility and trust). All in all, the framework explains how Gen Z's perceptions lead to different levels of purchase intention using the application of UGT.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study applies a qualitative research design to explore Gen Z consumers' perceptions of AI-generated and human-generated copywriting in Maggi advertisements. A qualitative approach is chosen as it allows researchers to connect with the audience's subjective experiences (Lim, 2024), which can include trust, emotional engagement, and information quality. The data are collected via semi-structured interview guided by Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). The collected data will then be transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis to identify deeper insights for the research outcomes (Naeem et al., 2023). Hence, this approach ensures that the findings are based on authentic participant experiences, while contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of Gen Z's responses and purchase intention toward AI-generated versus human-generated advertising copy.

Qualitative Research

The qualitative research method is applied to answer questions related to experience, meaning, and perspective from the participants' standpoint (Hammarberg et al., 2016). It focuses on addressing questions about the 'what', 'how', and 'why' of a phenomenon (Berk et al., 2015). Therefore, it is also particularly valuable for studying subjective topics such as perception, trust, and emotional engagement. This is because qualitative research enables researchers to explore the complex nature of human thoughts and emotions (Lim, 2024). Accordingly, this study employs a qualitative method to understand how Gen Z consumers in Malaysia perceive and interpret AI-generated versus human-generated copywriting in Maggi advertisements.

Semi-structured Interview

In general, semi-structured interview is one of the qualitative data collection methods. It is one-on-one sessions that are guided by open-ended questions about specific topics (Bazen et al., 2021). In qualitative research, interviews can be used to generate factual information about the world, typically for things that researchers cannot observe effectively using other methods (Lindlof & Taylor, 2019). It also helps create a comfortable environment for participants to share their opinions and elaborate more deeply on their perspectives, as a semistructured interview allows for new idea discovery as the conversation develops (Magaldi & Berler, 2020). Thus, a semi-structured interview can fit the research objective in exploring how copywriting types influence consumers' purchase intention through open and flexible discussion. In summary, this study adopts semistructured interviews with questions to gain a richer understanding of Gen Z consumers' perceptions in Malaysia toward AI-generated and human-generated copywriting.

Data Collection

Interviewee Selection

In data collection, interviewee selection is essential as it can increase the quality of qualitative research (Dahal et al., 2024). The criteria for selected interviewees in this study are as follows:

- Generation Z Malaysians born between 1997 and 2012 who use Instagram.
- Have previously purchased Maggi products.
- Have been influenced by Maggi advertisements in their purchase decisions or shown awareness of its advertising content.
- Individuals who pay attention to advertising copy or have made purchase decisions based on the persuasive elements of copywriting are a bonus.

Participant selection was aligned with the research objectives of examining how Generation Z consumers perceive AI-generated and human-generated copywriting in Maggi advertisements and how both influence purchase intention. Therefore, the selected participants are Malaysian Generation Z consumers born between 1997 and 2012 (Slepian et al., 2024). This generation is chosen as they are the digital natives who are active users of Instagram and grew up in a world that encounters AI technology (Gross-Gołacka et al., 2025). The selected Gen Z is also required as an Instagram user, as the advertisement we are referring to in this paper is an ad copy on Instagram.

Participants were also required to have prior experience purchasing Maggi products and awareness of Maggi advertisements to ensure meaningful and authentic evaluations of the brand's copywriting. Moreover, the individuals who pay attention to advertising copy or have made purchase decisions based on the persuasive elements of copywriting are considered a valuable addition to the sample, as they can provide more valuable insights into this research. However, this criterion is treated as a bonus criterion, as not all consumers will intensively reflect on ad copy when making a purchase.

Lastly, a Google Form was created to screen potential interviewees who meet the criteria by collecting potential interviewees' basic demographic details, Instagram usage, purchase experience with Maggi products, and their awareness of Maggi's advertising. Hence, it helps to select the interviewees more effectively.

Sampling Method

This study adopts purposive sampling, which refers to the intentional selection of participants according to their ability to provide valuable insights into a specific concept, theme, or phenomenon (Robinson, 2024). Similarly, interviewees in this study were selected according to criteria. As a result, the rationale of using the purposive sampling method in this study is to match the sample to the research objective better, and so, it can enhance the study's rigour and trustworthiness of the data (Campbell et al., 2020). Apart from that, the sample size of this study ranges from 6 to 12 participants until it fulfils the data saturation, as research found that saturation was reached within the first twelve interviews, while basic elements for meta-themes were present at six interviews (Guest et al., 2006). However, the exact sample size depends on data saturation, which occurs when additional data no longer contribute significant information or substance to the concepts that have already been established (Lindlof & Taylor, 2019).

Selecting AI-generated versus Human-generated Ad Copy

The interviews begin by presenting participants with three AI-generated and three human-generated ad copies for 2-Minute MAGGI Curry Instant Noodles. The 2-Minute MAGGI Curry Instant Noodle is the selected product, as it is one of the popular products of Maggi (The Star, 2022). Furthermore, the copy is specifically

targeted at Gen Z and will be posted as copy in Instagram social media posts' captions, while the copies were labelled as Type A and Type B during the interviews to minimise potential bias and stereotypes.

Table 1. Selected ad copy for interview

Product	
Figure 12. 2-Minute MAGGI Curry Instant Noodle	
	
AI-generated Ad Copy (Type A)	Human-generated Ad Copy (Type B)
Headline: 2 Minutes Only, Settle Your Hunger Jor! Subheadline: Busy scrolling or gaming also can makan — Maggi Curry so fast, so shiok one!	Headline: Menari with Maggie Kari Subheadline: Our Kari broth keeps your tongue dancing with satisfaction ↗
Headline: Midnight Hungry Again Ah? Subheadline: No worries lah, Maggi Curry come save you — spicy enough to wake you up, ready in 2 minutes only!	Headline: Lagi-Lagi Kari! Subheadline: Of course! Because one packet is never enough
Headline: One Slurp, Wah... So Comforting Lah! Subheadline: Rainy day, broke day, any day also can — Maggi Curry always taste like home.	Headline: Kari-up! Subheadline: That's right. No time to waste with our 2-minute ready Kari goodness

Thematic Analysis

This paper uses thematic analysis, which is a method that is used to identify, analyse, and interpret the patterns or themes within qualitative data (Clarke & Braun, 2017). It is also a method that is commonly used in analysing interviews (Lindlof & Taylor, 2019). Meanwhile, thematic analysis is valued for its flexibility, where it can be applied to identify patterns of both within and across data regarding participants' lived experience, perspectives, and behavior, which focus on understanding how they think, feel, and do (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Hence, thematic analysis is significant in this study because it helps to explore how participants perceive both AI-generated copywriting and human-generated copywriting through analysing the interview transcripts.

According to Braun & Clarke (2006), there are six key phases of thematic analysis that consist of familiarising with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes after coding all the initial codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming the themes, and finally, producing the report. To sum up, the six-phase process of thematic analysis provides a systematic and comprehensive framework that can assist in this study to derive meaningful interpretations from participants. It also offers a thorough and detailed method to delve into how Gen Z perceives both copywriting types using interviews and helps to analyse the transcripts.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Qualitative Data Collection

The present study adopted a purposive sampling approach, with six respondents selected with certain criteria through a Google Form. Three interviews were conducted via Google Meet call, while the other three interviews

were face-to-face sessions. The informed consent was obtained through the Google Form before conducting the interviews. All interviews are also recorded with participants' consent to support accurate transcription, translation, and analysis. Moreover, the audio recordings from the interviews were transcribed verbatim and formatted consistently, while each participant was anonymized with codes to maintain confidentiality.

The Table 3 presents the information of each respondent with the summary of their code names, age, Instagram user, and purchase experience of Maggi. Furthermore, they are also Instagram users who have seen the Maggi advertisement. Based on the information, all the participants are Generation Z and have purchased Maggi products before, which aligns with the sampling criteria mentioned in the previous chapter. Therefore, this ensures that the selected participants are suitable to provide valuable and meaningful insights for the research.

Table 3. Respondents' information

Code Name	Age	Instagram User	Maggi Purchase Experience (Yes / No)
Respondent 1	22	Yes	Yes
Respondent 2	21	Yes	Yes
Respondent 3	21	Yes	Yes
Respondent 4	22	Yes	Yes
Respondent 5	21	Yes	Yes
Respondent 6	21	Yes	Yes

Coding Procedure

An inductive thematic analysis approach was applied in this paper to enable research findings to emerge naturally from frequent, dominant, and meaningful themes in the original data, without restraint from structured methodologies (Thomas, 2006). In this case, the NVivo qualitative data analysis software is used to support systematic coding, organisation, and theme development. With the use of NVivo, initial codes were generated and grouped into five key themes that aligned with the research objectives. Hence, Table 4 summarises the six themes and their associated codes to illustrate respondents' perceptions of different aspects of the copies and provide a strong basis for further discussion.

Table 4. Themes and codes from data collected

Theme	Code	
Emotional resonance and cultural familiarity	•	Relatable daily experience
	•	Emotional and nostalgic appeal
	•	Malaysian language tone
Informational clarity and usefulness	•	Clarity of the message
	•	Emphasis on product benefits and value
Brand authenticity and trustworthiness	•	Brand familiarity of Maggi
	•	Genuineness and realistic message

Emotional influence on purchase intention	•	Emotional impact
	•	Relatability situation
	•	Local language use
Perceived usefulness and decision support	•	Informational support for decisions

Data Analysis

Theme 1: Emotional Resonance and Cultural Familiarity

Relatable Daily Experience

Based on the collected data, the participants consistently described how the copywriting related to their daily life and lived experience. Among the respondents, three respondents highlighted that the copywriting caught their attention by giving relatable daily experiences and scenarios. They frequently described the situations where the copywriting can relate to their routines, such as late-night hunger, gaming sessions, and completing assignments. In other words, the respondents referred to these scenarios as closely aligned with their lifestyles.

Second is “midnight hungry again,” because that relates to us, university students who stay up late. (R2) So it immediately draws me into this the Maggi Curry advertisement and it also described the real life situation like being busy gaming or feeling hungry at the midnight, which make me think about my university life because I always feeling hungry suddenly at midnight when I'm doing the assignment, and also make the advertisement feel like very relevant to my daily life, make me like it more. That's all. (R3)

I prefer the first one. It's because it fits my lifestyle. So first, everyone has been hungry at midnight before, and you want a food that is quite easy to make and prepare within a couple of minutes. So this copy shows that Maggi is can be done in two minutes, which is very fast, it also shows a situation where we can do it at midnight, during long-hour gaming sessions, so it's quite relatable to my situation right now. (R5)

One participant also focused specifically on the “slurp” eating sound in the copy as resembling the actual sound when eating Maggi, which made the copy feel relatable. Thus, it shows that sensory wording can link with relatability by reflecting real eating experiences.

I prefer left hand side one. It's more relatable to me, maybe like the “slurp” is the sound I make when eating the Maggi. The, and also the subheadline, such as “Rainy day, broke day, any day,” is also quite related to my daily life. (R4)

Emotional and Nostalgic Appeal

Three respondents mentioned that the copy evoked their emotions of nostalgia and made them think of home. R1 mentioned that the phrase “taste like home” gave a feeling of personal connection while giving nostalgic and comforting feelings. Apart from that, R3 described that seeing the message about Maggi after a long time can trigger the memories of a younger experience. Therefore, this suggested a nostalgic emotional appeal to past consumption.

Yes. Erm, like the phrase “taste like home”, it catches my attention as it immediately gives a sense of like, nostalgia and comfort, which makes me connect with it personally. (R1)

If I long time no try the Maggi curry, and then suddenly I see this message, is very nostalgia, it make me feel like I want to go back on my younger experience, so maybe I will try it again if I no longer to buy it before. (R3)

Additionally, R1 and R2 noted that the copy also brings out the warm emotional tone and comforting feeling, which reminded them of the experience of eating Maggi. Therefore, these responses demonstrated that nostalgic and comforting tones were recognised by the participants.

Em, so for me, I prefer the “One Slurp, Wah... So Comforting Lah!”, the copy. Because it feels like very warm and relatable with myself. And, it reminds me one of the comfort of eating Maggi on a rainy day or stressful day, so that the emotional tone attracts me more. (R1)

For Type A, the “one slurp” part attracts me. It makes me think of how comfortable the food feels when you eat it. It’s hot and comforting for your stomach. (R2)

Malaysian Language Tone

All six respondents stated that the use of Malaysian local slang and language tone in the copy makes it more relatable and creates a sense of friendliness. There are five respondents who preferred Type A (AI-generated copy), while the remaining one respondent preferred Type B (human-generated copy). In this case, they preferred Type A (AI-generated copy), as it sounded closer to Malaysians local slang, which makes them feel familiar and friendly. Meanwhile, R6 mentioned that the tone gave the impression that the brand was in tune with local culture.

Therefore, these responses highlighted the use of local language tone created a playful and conversational tone. As a result, the Malaysian language tone enhances the perceived friendliness of the brand message.

And then the other one is the “midnight hungry again ah”, because they use the local Malaysian slang and the tone is sounds like playful, casual and relatable. And, make me feel like how I am talking with my friends. (R1)

I prefer Type A. Because it sounds more like how Malaysians speak. It’s mixed. They use things like “en, oh, ah, jor, wa.” So I feel like it’s closer to Malaysian language. It feels more familiar and friendly. (R2)

So for me, I personally prefer the type A because the type A, the tone feels more relatable and reflect, you know, the everyday Malaysian language words, words like the “settle your hunger jor” and the “Busy scrolling or gaming also can makan”. Some very natural and match the way the young Malaysian Gen Z talking, so it matched my attention more quickly lah, compare with the type B and it feels like more friendly and down to earth to me. (R3)

Ok, so for me, I think it is the Malaysian language. So, the use of Malaysian English language make it more related to my daily life, because like, I am a Malaysian. (R4)

Sounds relatable, yes. Also the Malaysian tone la, feels very friendly. (R5)

Yeah. Okay, because it just makes me smile and like feel interesting. Like, also feels like the brand actually gets our culture. (R6)

To sum up, the findings for this theme found that the respondents felt more emotionally engaged with the copy that reflects their daily routines, evokes their nostalgic feelings, uses local language tone, and familiar scenarios, mostly in the AI-generated copy. In other words, these elements enhance the personal relevance and emotional connection between the consumer and the brand, as the copy feels related and resonates.

Theme 2: Informational Clarity and Usefulness

Clarity of the Message

Three respondents gave feedback on their preference for Type A (AI-generated copy) as the copies provide clearer and more direct information. They noted that the copy highlighted the key points like the speed and convenience of Maggi, which helped them to quickly get the product’s main function.

I think the left hand side one will be more directly and more information because like also like within two minutes and we can, maybe like the broke day or rainy day, when we having the meal this weekend, so whenever, whatever, and any situation. (R4)

Yeah, but overall I think the type A is clearer and easy to understand. (R3)

I think is the copy that got highlight the “two minutes” one because it clearly talk about the main function of the Maggi, which is the speed and the conveniency. (R1)

Notably, one respondent also mentioned that receiving more information increased trust in the product. In a nutshell, clear messaging was perceived as a factor that can gain consumers’ preference.

Because like for me, the more information that I get, I will like more trusted to them. (R4)

Emphasis on Product Benefits and Value

According to the collected data, three respondents emphasized that the copy communicated the benefits and value of Maggi in terms of speed, taste, and convenience. They mentioned the information in the copy is useful, such as the 2 minutes of preparation time, the curry taste, and the convenience in various situations.

So, for me that I think I know this Maggi is affordable and very convenient, because it's got mentioned like within 2 minutes you can cook the Maggi. (R4)

Based on situation, the copy did provide me some useful information, like how fast I can cook the Maggi, what is the taste. So, I can expect it is a spicy taste, a curry taste, can be prepared within two minutes, can be due in various situations, for example, on midnight or any days, where I don't feel like doing my own food, or maybe go out to grab my food. (R5)

One respondent also specifically stated that the 2-minute cooking time is memorable as it was simple, repeated, and emphasized the convenience of Maggi.

I think the 2 minutes only. This idea is the most memorable because it is simple, repeated, and highlight the Maggi convenient. (R3)

In a nutshell, these responses show that the clear and useful product information in the AI-generated copy increases trust and confidence of respondents in the product. In other words, the information quality is crucial in shaping consumers' perception of the copy in terms of clear, relevant, and useful information. Therefore, the copy with quality information in terms of clear, direct, and detailed, can support more positive consumer responses.

Theme 3: Brand Authenticity and Trustworthiness

Brand Familiarity of Maggi

Three out of six respondents highlighted that their trust in the copy was influenced by the brand familiarity of Maggi in Malaysia. R1 and R2 mentioned that the copy was trustworthy as Maggi is a famous and familiar brand in Malaysia. Meanwhile, R4 also noted that the copy felt relatable, as Maggi is a brand that is familiar among Malaysians. Thus, these response shows that brand familiarity of Maggi contributed to the trust of respondents in the copy.

I think yes because I trust the copy as Maggi is a very familiar brand. (R1)

Mainly because Maggi is a big company. Maggi is very famous in Malaysia. (R2)

And then the overall that I think can be more related to Malaysian because like Maggi is a brand that is very familiar in Malaysia. (R4)

Genuineness and Realistic Message

Three respondents noted that they trust the copy as the message felt genuine and believable in the copy. They stated that the scenarios and situations described in the AI-generated copy were realistic and aligned with their past experience. Hence, this results in making the message believable. Moreover, the participants also indicated that the message did not overpromise and oversell in the copy, which makes the copy more honest and credible when compared to advertisements with exaggerated claims.

I think yes because the plans that I mentioned just now are realistic and also match my past experience. (R1)

And the copy also focus on the familiar experience using the realistic, believable scenarios, like nothing let me feel like a fake and exaggerated. (R3)

I would keep my trust on the copy is that the copy it feels very realistic in the message. It doesn't overpromise. I don't like those advertisements that try to overpromise anything. (R5)

Besides, two respondents described the copy as sounding genuine, as the brand communicates in a real person instead of hard-selling. In particular, R6 also feels connected and a sense of honesty when the human-generated copy uses the Malaysian slang and tone correctly.

And the tone matches how Malaysians usually talk about instant noodle and it feels like not over-hard sell. (R1)

I think I will also choose the second one because it sounds so genuine. Okay. And when a brand talks like a real person and uses our slang correctly, it feels more honest and makes a connection with the Malaysian. (R6)

The responses show the findings that the respondents will trust more in copy that is genuine, realistic, and from a familiar brand. In this case, AI and human-generated copy are both trusted as they use local Malaysian slang correctly. In simple terms, many of them stated that they will trust more if the copy is from a well-known brand, and the message in the copy reflects a realistic local tone and experience without exaggerated claims.

Theme 4: Emotional Influence on Purchase Intention

Emotional Impact

Respondents highlighted that emotional impact in the copy can affect their attitudes toward the product. R6 mentioned that the copy led to the feeling of cravings for Maggi curry, while showing that emotional responses could override logical considerations in purchase decisions. Therefore, it demonstrates the emotional impact in a copy that can influence buying intention.

Because it actually makes me feel the craving for Maggi curry when you are deciding what to buy, that feeling is what usually wins, and it is not about the logic. (R6)

Nevertheless, R2 perceived Type B as "too dry", which means less engagement in emotional impact and uniqueness across the samples, while R5 mentioned that Type B (human-generated copy) is less personal to relate with. Hence, this response has highlighted the importance of emotional appeal in a copy.

But Type B feels like... too dry. Too dry. It says "kari-up." But when I see it, it's just curry. And looking at all three (samples), they feel like the same thing. (R2)

For Type B, it feels more like a playful and catchy phrase. It's more like a slogan, but less personal. (R5)

Relatable Situation

Four respondents indicated that the copy that is relatable to daily life situations increases their likelihood to buy the product. In this case, the copies that match daily routines and habits are perceived as relatable and relevant, such as having Maggi while gaming or staying up late at night. Therefore, based on their response, the relatability of the message in the copy can trigger them to buy or repurchase the Maggi product.

For me, I think it is A, the “midnight hungry again ah”. The copy, ya, the copy like this makes me feel more likely to buy the product as it directly matches my habit of eating Maggi late at night. (R1)

I think type A because the type A tone matches real everyday situations, and being busy gaming and staying up late. Ya, it feels like a product I would actually reach for when I meet this situation or moments. (R3)

For me, I think, so the copywriting that is more related to my daily life or my daily routine, I will be more into it and just let me spend more time purchasing again. (R4)

If you are going to specify one, for example, type A, the impression it gives me is that, it's just so relatable that I would like to buy that to feel my tummy at night. (R5)

Local Language Use

One respondent said the use of local language and cultural expressions can strengthen the memorability of the message and increase the likelihood of buying the product. In such a case, R2 highlighted that the copy that use Malaysian language can let Malaysian to remember it more and hence, are more likely to purchase the product.

As a result, it shows that relevant use of local language can connect the memory and influence purchase intention.

Because when people read it, for example, “one slurp, wah so syiok”—if it’s short, it’s easier to remember. And if it uses Malaysian language, Malaysians will remember it even more and will be more likely to buy it. (R2)

The findings from the responses indicate that advertising copy that consists of an emotional appeal, a relatable situation, or uses local language can enhance consumers’ purchase intention. With these circumstances, most of the respondents preferred the AI-generated copy that relates to real life situation and uses familiar language, as they feel relevant and related.

Theme 5: Perceived Usefulness and Decision Support

Informational Support for Decisions

Two respondents said the copy that provided detailed information was useful in support and influenced their purchase decision about the product. With this circumstance, R1 highlighted the situational cues in the copy referring to preparing a meal at midnight or rainy day, which make the product feel practically useful. As a result, the response indicates that relevant and various information can enhance the usefulness of the copy and guide the purchase decision of the respondents.

Like the late night ah, at the rainy day, something like this. So, it make the product can feel highly relatable and useful for me. (R1)

This theme highlights the findings that copy with useful and situational cues can enhance product understanding and reinforce consumers’ purchase intention. The participants find that AI-generated copy provides relevant and practical information and is able to motivate them more to buy a product.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion Of Findings

RO1: To Understand How Generation Z in Malaysia Perceives AI Versus Human-Generated Copywriting (Emotional Engagement, Trust, and Quality of Information) in Maggi Advertisements Emotional Resonance and Cultural Familiarity

According to the collected data in the previous chapter, the findings reveal that the Gen Z consumers are more emotionally engaged to copy that relate with their daily life and use a local language tone. In this case, the Gen Z consumers value the copy based on how it captures their lived experience and resonates with their emotions,

rather than creative expression. Most of the participants also gave positive responses to the copy that relates to their daily life scenarios and evokes nostalgic emotions, especially on the AI-generated copy. Therefore, this shows that AI-generated copy can effectively engage with Gen Z by fulfilling their emotional needs.

According to Uses and Gratifications Theory, it proposes that audiences actively seek media, including text, genre, or content, that can provide them gratification and satisfy their needs (Reinhard & Dervin, 2009). Therefore, this finding matches with one of the users' needs, which is affective needs that provide emotional experience needs (Vinney, 2024). In other words, the relatable scenario, nostalgic appeal, and local familiar language satisfied the Gen Z consumers' emotional needs. As a result, these aspects make the AI-generated copy satisfy their emotional needs and thus increase the attention and relatability to them.

Apart from that, the finding also addresses the RO1 by showing that the Malaysian Generation Z perceives copywriting as more attractive when it relates emotionally and culturally with them. This also portrays that AI-generated copy was preferred over human-generated copywriting due to its emotional and cultural resonance in shaping Gen Z perception in terms of emotional engagement.

Informational Clarity and Usefulness

The findings demonstrate that Gen Z consumers are more likely to trust a copy that is perceived as clear, useful, and detailed. In this context, the AI-generated copy provides the participants with a clear and useful information product, which reflects the information quality in terms of clarity, relevance, and practical value. As a result, it allows consumers to understand the benefits and functions of the product in a short time. The participants also perceived that the AI-generated copy is more direct and easier to understand about the product, therefore enhancing the quality of product information.

With the explanation of the Uses and Gratifications Theory, cognitive need is one of the gratifications that motivates people to actively consume media content that helps them gain information and knowledge. Hence, this explains that the copy enables consumers to process and get the important information immediately, such as the speed and convenience when using the product. As a result, the clarity and usefulness of information also helped them to understand the product more quickly and let them feel more confident about it, which satisfies their need for informative content.

To relate with RO1, these findings revealed that Generation Z consumers perceive information clarity and usefulness as a pivotal element as well in a copy. Therefore, the AI-generated copy in this study is also seen as clearer in delivering the product information to them than human-generated copy.

Brand Authenticity and Trustworthiness

Another finding that was found in the collected data is that the authenticity and familiarity of a brand are strongly associated with Gen Z's trustworthiness in a copy. During the interviews, the participants stated that Maggi is a familiar and well-known brand in Malaysia, which makes them feel more trust to the copy. Therefore, it depicted the importance of how familiar and famous a brand is to influence Gen Z consumers' trust in the copy. With these circumstances, AI and human-generated copy are both perceived as trusted as the message felt realistic, using local tone, and matched their expectations with the brand. They also emphasized that they would trust the message if it conveys a sense of honesty and genuineness, like not overselling and overpromising.

Accordingly, this aligns with the Uses and Gratifications Theory, where people use media look for information, entertainment, and also messages that feel reliable and trustworthy. Meanwhile, the authentic and genuine message in the copy can satisfy the audience's need for personal integration, which helps them create a sense of trust and credibility towards the brand (Vinney, 2024).

On the other hand, the findings are also related to the RO1, where Generation Z consumers perceive that trust is built on the genuineness, brand familiarity, and realistic in the message, regardless of AI-generated or human-generated copy. In a nutshell, the findings stated that authenticity and brand familiarity are essential in shaping the trust of Generation Z consumers towards the advertising copy.

RO2: To Explore How AI and Human-Generated Copywriting Affect Generation Z Consumers' Purchase Intention for Maggi Products Emotional Influence on Purchase Intention

The next finding from the collected data is that copywriting that brings emotional impact, relates to daily experience, and uses local language has an impact on Generation Z's purchase intention for the Maggi product. A few participants noted that a copy that describes relatable situations and uses Malaysian slang in the AI-generated copy can make the product feel relevant and enhance the purchase intention. Thus, this also aligns with the previous research where emotional appeal impacts Gen Z consumers' purchase intention (Chan et al., 2025). Overall, these responses highlight the importance of emotional resonance in influencing purchase intention.

In addition, this finding can be related to the Uses Gratification Theory, as consumers will be actively attracted by content that satisfies their affective needs. This can be explained as affective needs focus on emotional needs (Vinney, 2024). To further discuss this, the copy provides affective gratification by conveying the feeling of craving, relatable and positive emotions to the consumer. Consequently, the copy made the product feel relevant and resonated, and hence, motivated Gen Z consumers in purchase intention.

Other than that, the finding also explains the RO2, where it is shown that AI-generated copy is more influential than human-generated content when it comes to purchase intention, as it tightly holds onto the emotional relatability in the copy.

Perceived Usefulness and Decision Support

Lastly, the findings also indicated that copies that provide detailed and useful information can enhance the purchase intention of Generation Z consumers. In this case, the participants preferred the AI-generated copy as it presented more information, including its usefulness and situational cues. Therefore, this helped them to understand the benefits of the product better and enhance their purchase intention. Moreover, it also made them feel more confident in deciding to buy the product due to the perceived usefulness of the product.

Apart from that, this also aligns with the cognitive needs related to the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). In this circumstance, cognitive needs are the gratifications that come from gaining information from the media content. With the support of useful information quality, the AI-generated copy can fulfill consumers' satisfaction in knowing the function of the product. Finally, foster the intention of purchasing the particular product.

To answer the RO2, these findings portray that AI-generated copy successfully affects consumers' intention to buy the product due to the perceived usefulness and information amount in the copy.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings discussed in the previous section, provide various insights into how Generation Z perceives AI and human-generated copywriting in Maggi advertisements and how both types of copy affect their purchase intention.

To sum up for RO1, the findings discovered that Malaysian Generation Z consumers value emotional engagement, information quality, and trust in advertising copy. Overall, they perceive AI-generated copy as stronger than human-generated content in terms of emotional engagement. In this case, they responded positively to the AI-generated copy that relates to their daily life, feelings, and local language in the copy. Apart from that, they also perceive the information quality of AI-generated copy as more useful, clearer, and detailed than human-generated copy, as the AI-generated copy conveys the product information in a relevant way. On the other hand, brand authenticity and trustworthiness are important in shaping the Gen Z consumers' trust in AI and human-generated copy. The Gen Z consumers value genuine, realistic, and familiar brands when it comes to trusting a copy, whether it is an AI-generated copy or a human-generated copy.

As for RO2, the findings note that both emotional resonance and informational support is essential in affecting purchase intention. With these circumstances, the copies that relate to emotions can enhance the engagement

and motivation to purchase Maggi products. Meanwhile, the perceived usefulness can also determine Gen Z consumers' purchase intention, as it can build their confidence in buying the product. All in all, these findings are supported by Uses and Gratifications Theory to explain the gratification of these responses. All in all, these findings provide valuable insights into the research and implications for marketers who seek to optimize AI tools in advertising strategies.

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