

Comparative Analysis of Brand Copywriting in the Generative AI Advertising Era

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ABSTRACT

The rapid diffusion of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed digital advertising practices, particularly within social media environments where brand communication increasingly relies on concise and engagement-oriented copywriting. While existing research has predominantly examined consumer perceptions of AI-generated content, limited attention has been directed toward understanding how advertising copy itself has evolved within AI-assisted marketing contexts. This study aims to examine changes in persuasive and linguistic characteristics of brand advertising copywriting in contemporary digital advertising environments following the diffusion of generative AI technologies. A quantitative content analysis was conducted on 240 Instagram advertising captions published by six Malaysian fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands across two temporal phases: the pre-generative AI diffusion period (2020–2022) and the generative AI adoption period (2023–2025). Captions were analysed using a structured coding framework capturing emotional appeal, informational content, conversational tone, cultural localisation, engagement prompts, and narrative framing. The findings indicate that conversational tone and emotional appeal represent dominant persuasive strategies across FMCG advertising copy, with increased use of engagement-oriented and narrative-driven communication observed during the generative AI adoption period. These results suggest an evolution toward more relatable and interaction-focused brand messaging within algorithm-driven platforms. These patterns reflect broader changes in digital advertising communication practices rather than direct evidence of AI-generated content. The study concludes that contemporary advertising copy reflects hybrid human–AI communication practices shaped by technological advancement and platform engagement demands. The findings contribute theoretically by extending AI advertising research toward message-level analysis and offer practical implications for marketers seeking to develop culturally resonant and conversational social media copywriting strategies in AI-assisted communication environments.

Keywords: Advertising Copywriting, Generative Artificial Intelligence; Instagram Advertising; FMCG Marketing; Social Media Communication

INTRODUCTION

Digital Advertising in Social Media Environments

Digital advertising environments have undergone substantial transformation with the rapid expansion of social media platforms that facilitate continuous interaction between brands and consumers. Unlike traditional advertising channels characterised by one-directional message delivery, social media enables participatory communication in which audiences actively interpret, respond to, and redistribute branded content. Within algorithm-driven environments, communication effectiveness increasingly depends on concise, engaging, and contextually relevant messaging capable of attracting attention within highly competitive digital feeds (Voorveld, 2022; Tafesse & Wien, 2018).

Among contemporary platforms, Instagram has emerged as a dominant promotional environment integrating visual storytelling with caption-based communication. While visual imagery often captures initial user attention,

advertising captions function as interpretive mechanisms that provide narrative meaning, emotional framing, and behavioural guidance. Prior research demonstrates that caption design significantly influences engagement outcomes by encouraging interaction through conversational language and relatable storytelling structures (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). Consequently, advertising copywriting has evolved into a strategic component of digital brand communication rather than serving merely as supplementary descriptive text.

Within fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) marketing, effective copywriting is particularly critical due to the routine and low-involvement nature of consumption decisions. Consumers interacting with FMCG advertising frequently rely on emotional familiarity and situational relevance rather than extensive cognitive evaluation when engaging with branded messages (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). As social media communication increasingly prioritises immediacy and interaction, brands adopt conversational and narrative-driven messaging strategies that simulate interpersonal dialogue between brand and audience.

Parallel to these platform transformations, recent advancements in generative artificial intelligence (AI) have introduced significant changes to marketing communication practices. Generative AI systems capable of producing human-like textual content are increasingly integrated into advertising workflows to support ideation, message optimisation, and scalable content production (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Davenport et al., 2020). The public release of conversational AI systems such as ChatGPT in November 2022 accelerated accessibility of AI-assisted content creation, enabling marketers to experiment with tone variation, linguistic simplification, and engagement-oriented messaging at unprecedented speed.

Emerging scholarship suggests that AI adoption within marketing contexts operates primarily through augmentation rather than replacement of human creativity. Hybrid human–AI collaboration models allow automated systems to assist drafting and optimisation processes while human practitioners retain responsibility for strategic judgement, cultural sensitivity, and brand identity management (Raisch & Krakowski, 2021). These developments indicate that technological innovation increasingly influences how advertising communication is constructed and refined within digital environments.

Despite growing scholarly attention toward artificial intelligence in marketing, existing research has largely focused on consumer perceptions of AI-generated communication, including trust formation, authenticity evaluation, and acceptance of automated messaging (Longoni et al., 2019; Castelo et al., 2019). Comparatively limited empirical attention has been directed toward examining how advertising messages themselves evolve within AI-assisted communication environments. Understanding audience response without analysing message construction provides only partial insight into contemporary advertising transformation.

Furthermore, message-level investigation of advertising copywriting remains underexplored within Southeast Asian digital marketing contexts, where linguistic hybridity and cultural localisation significantly influence communication effectiveness. Examining observable characteristics of brand-generated captions therefore provides an opportunity to understand how persuasive strategies manifest within real-world advertising practice.

Accordingly, this study examines persuasive and linguistic characteristics of Instagram advertising captions published by Malaysian FMCG brands across two temporal phases representing the pre-generative AI diffusion period (2020–2022) and the generative AI adoption period (2023–2025). Through quantitative content analysis, the study seeks to identify dominant copywriting strategies and explore how advertising language practices evolve within increasingly AI-mediated digital marketing environments.

Emergence of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Advertising Practice

Recent advancements in generative artificial intelligence (AI) have introduced significant transformation within marketing communication practices. Generative AI systems capable of producing human-like textual content are increasingly incorporated into advertising workflows to support content ideation and message optimisation (Dwivedi et al., 2023). The public release of generative conversational AI tools, most notably ChatGPT in November 2022, marked a critical turning point by substantially increasing accessibility of AI-assisted content creation across industries.

Following this technological diffusion, marketers gained enhanced capability to generate and refine advertising messages rapidly while adapting communication to platform analytics and audience engagement patterns (Huang & Rust, 2020). Rather than replacing human creativity, emerging evidence suggests the development of hybrid human–AI collaboration in which automated systems assist drafting processes while human practitioners maintain strategic oversight and brand authenticity (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

Research Gap and Study Objective

Despite expanding academic attention toward artificial intelligence in marketing, existing studies have predominantly focused on consumer perceptions of AI-generated communication, including trust formation and perceived authenticity (Longoni et al., 2019; Castelo et al., 2019). Comparatively limited research has examined how advertising messages themselves have evolved within AI-assisted communication environments. Analysing audience reactions without investigating message construction provides only a partial understanding of digital advertising transformation, particularly as persuasive effectiveness is fundamentally embedded within linguistic framing and communication strategy.

Furthermore, empirical investigation of advertising copywriting at the message level remains limited within social media advertising research, especially in Southeast Asian contexts where cultural and linguistic adaptation plays a significant role in brand communication practices. Accordingly, this study examines persuasive and linguistic characteristics of Instagram advertising captions published by Malaysian FMCG brands across two temporal phases representing the pre-generative AI diffusion period (2020–2022) and the generative AI adoption period (2023–2025). Through systematic content analysis, the study aims to identify dominant copywriting strategies and explore how advertising language practices may have evolved alongside increasing integration of generative AI technologies within digital marketing environments. The term “generative AI advertising era” is used in this study to denote the broader technological context following the widespread accessibility of AI-assisted content creation tools, rather than to imply direct measurement of AI-generated advertising content.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Generative Artificial Intelligence in Marketing Communication

The emergence of generative artificial intelligence (AI) represents one of the most significant technological developments influencing contemporary marketing communication practices. Generative AI systems are capable of producing human-like textual, visual, and multimodal content, enabling organisations to automate aspects of creative production while maintaining responsiveness to rapidly evolving digital environments. Recent marketing scholarship highlights that AI adoption enhances scalability, personalisation, and adaptive communication strategies, allowing brands to produce large volumes of platform-specific content efficiently (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Davenport et al., 2020).

Unlike earlier marketing automation technologies primarily focused on data analytics and recommendation systems, generative AI introduces capabilities directly associated with creative communication processes. The public release of conversational AI systems such as ChatGPT in late 2022 marked a turning point in organisational accessibility to AI-assisted content creation tools. Since then, marketing practitioners have increasingly incorporated generative AI into advertising workflows to support idea generation, linguistic refinement, and rapid development of promotional messaging aligned with audience engagement metrics.

Recent studies emphasise that AI integration within marketing should be understood as augmentation of human capability rather than technological substitution. Human–AI collaboration models enable automated systems to assist repetitive or exploratory creative tasks while human practitioners retain responsibility for strategic decision-making, contextual interpretation, and ethical judgement. This collaborative perspective reflects growing consensus that AI reshapes creative workflows by enhancing efficiency and experimentation without eliminating the need for human creativity and cultural sensitivity.

From a communication perspective, generative AI adoption also contributes to evolving expectations regarding clarity, readability, and engagement optimisation in digital advertising environments. Social media platforms

increasingly reward content capable of generating rapid interaction, encouraging marketers to produce concise and conversational communication aligned with algorithmic visibility mechanisms. AI-assisted tools enable iterative testing of alternative messaging structures, supporting refinement of tone, emotional framing, and persuasive positioning across campaigns (Huang & Rust, 2020; Verhoef et al., 2021).

Recent interdisciplinary research further suggests that technological innovation influences not only organisational productivity but also broader patterns of mediated communication. Studies published within humanities and social science domains demonstrate that digital technologies reshape how meaning is constructed, circulated, and interpreted within online social environments. As communication practices become increasingly mediated by intelligent systems, examining advertising messages themselves provides important insight into how technological diffusion manifests within everyday brand communication.

Despite rapidly expanding scholarly attention toward generative AI, existing research has predominantly examined consumer attitudes toward AI-generated content, focusing on trust perception, authenticity evaluation, and ethical concerns surrounding automation (Puntoni et al., 2020; Luo et al., 2019). Recent empirical research further highlights this focus by demonstrating how Generation Z consumers evaluate differences between AI-generated and human-written advertising copy, particularly in terms of perceived authenticity and message effectiveness (Chuah Hui Yi & Mohammad Bashir, 2026). Comparatively limited empirical work has analysed observable linguistic outcomes within real advertising communication produced during the generative AI era. Consequently, investigating advertising copywriting characteristics across temporal phases offers an opportunity to understand how persuasive communication practices evolve within AI-assisted marketing environments.

Taken together, contemporary scholarship indicates that generative AI adoption represents not merely a technological innovation but a communicative transformation influencing how advertising messages are conceptualised, constructed, and optimised within digital platforms. Building on this perspective, the present study examines how such transformations may be reflected in observable copywriting strategies embedded within Instagram brand advertising.

Social Media Advertising and Brand Copywriting

Social media platforms have fundamentally reshaped advertising communication by transforming audiences from passive recipients of promotional messages into active participants within interactive communication environments. Contemporary digital platforms enable users to comment, share, and reinterpret branded content, thereby shifting advertising effectiveness from message exposure toward engagement-based interaction outcomes (Voorveld, 2019). Within such environments, brands increasingly adopt communication strategies designed to stimulate dialogue and relational connection rather than relying solely on persuasive repetition.

Instagram represents a particularly significant context for examining contemporary advertising practices due to its integration of visual storytelling and caption-based interaction. While visual imagery functions as an attention-triggering mechanism, accompanying captions provide interpretive context that shapes audience understanding and emotional response. Recent studies demonstrate that caption structure plays a critical role in guiding engagement behaviour by encouraging conversational participation and reinforcing brand personality expression (Lou & Yuan, 2019). As platform algorithms increasingly prioritise interaction metrics, captions serve as strategic tools influencing visibility and audience reach.

Brand copywriting within social media environments has therefore evolved toward informal, conversational, and narrative-driven communication styles aligned with everyday digital interaction norms. Research indicates that conversational tone enhances perceived authenticity and social presence, enabling brands to reduce psychological distance between commercial entities and consumers (Tafesse & Wien, 2018; Schivinski et al., 2023). Such communication approaches contribute to stronger engagement outcomes by positioning brands as socially relatable actors rather than traditional advertisers.

In fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) marketing contexts, copywriting assumes heightened importance due to the routine and low-involvement nature of purchase behaviour. Consumers interacting with FMCG advertising typically rely on affective cues and situational relevance rather than extensive cognitive evaluation when

engaging with promotional content. Consequently, brands frequently employ short-form narratives linking products to daily routines, lifestyle experiences, and shared consumption moments to sustain relevance within rapidly scrolling social media feeds (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021).

Regional research further highlights that communication effectiveness within Asian social media environments is strongly influenced by linguistic adaptation and cultural contextualisation. Multilingual expression, colloquial phrasing, and locally embedded cultural references contribute to audience familiarity and perceived authenticity, particularly in culturally diverse markets such as Malaysia. These findings suggest that persuasive success in social media advertising depends not only on message structure but also on socio-cultural alignment between brand communication and audience communication norms.

As social media ecosystems continue to evolve, advertising copywriting increasingly functions as a mechanism for sustaining relational engagement within digitally mediated communication environments. Examining linguistic and persuasive characteristics embedded within Instagram captions therefore provides valuable insight into how brands operationalise engagement-oriented communication strategies within contemporary digital advertising practice.

Persuasive Communication and Multimodal Copywriting Strategies

Persuasive communication within contemporary digital advertising environments increasingly operates through integrated multimodal message structures combining textual, visual, and contextual elements. Unlike traditional advertising formats that relied on extended informational persuasion, social media communication occurs within constrained attention environments where audiences rapidly evaluate content while scrolling through algorithmically curated feeds. As a result, persuasive effectiveness depends on concise communication capable of conveying emotional meaning, informational value, and behavioural cues simultaneously (Voorveld, 2019).

Advertising copywriting plays a central role in shaping persuasive interpretation by guiding how audiences understand and emotionally respond to visual content. Within Instagram environments, captions function as micro-narratives that contextualise imagery, reinforce brand personality, and encourage audience interaction. Recent research demonstrates that narrative-based and emotionally framed messaging enhances engagement outcomes by facilitating experiential processing rather than purely cognitive evaluation of advertising information (Schivinski et al., 2023; Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Contemporary persuasion research further suggests that emotional and informational appeals increasingly operate in complementary rather than opposing roles within digital advertising. Emotional framing attracts attention and stimulates affective response, while informational cues provide justification supporting consumer decision-making. The integration of these persuasive elements enables brands to communicate product value efficiently without disrupting conversational communication flow, which is essential within social media environments characterised by limited user attention.

The growing dominance of visually oriented platforms has reinforced the importance of multimodal advertising strategies in which textual copy interacts dynamically with visual design elements. Multimodal communication theory emphasises that meaning construction emerges through interaction between linguistic and visual components rather than through isolated message elements. Lim and Mohammad Bashir (2025) demonstrate that effective digital advertising occurs when textual copy amplifies visual storytelling, enabling cohesive communication experiences that enhance memorability and audience engagement. This perspective highlights the continued strategic relevance of copywriting despite increasing emphasis on visual content within social media marketing.

Recent scholarship also indicates that persuasive communication strategies evolve alongside technological conditions influencing content production practices. As marketers increasingly employ digital tools to refine readability, tone consistency, and engagement performance, advertising copy reflects adaptation toward clarity, conversational fluency, and audience-centred messaging structures. These developments suggest that persuasive communication within digital advertising cannot be understood solely through audience response but must also be examined through observable characteristics embedded within advertising messages themselves.

Accordingly, analysing linguistic and persuasive features of Instagram advertising captions provides an empirically grounded approach for understanding how contemporary copywriting strategies operate within technologically mediated communication environments. Building on multimodal and persuasive communication perspectives, the present study examines how emotional appeal, informational framing, conversational tone, cultural localisation, and engagement-oriented messaging manifest within FMCG brand advertising during the generative AI era.

Theoretical Framework and Research Questions

This study is grounded in multimodal and persuasive communication theories, which emphasise that meaning in digital advertising emerges from the interaction of textual and visual elements, as well as from affective and informational message framing. Within social media environments, persuasion increasingly operates through conversational, emotionally engaging, and contextually relevant communication structures that align with platform-specific interaction norms (Voorveld, 2019; Schivinski et al., 2023).

In addition, the study is informed by perspectives on human–AI collaborative communication, which conceptualise generative AI as an augmentative tool that supports content optimisation rather than replacing human creativity (Raisch & Krakowski, 2021). This perspective is particularly relevant in understanding how advertising copywriting may evolve within technologically mediated environments.

Based on these theoretical perspectives, the study is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the dominant persuasive and linguistic characteristics in Instagram advertising copy produced by Malaysian FMCG brands?

RQ2: How do these copywriting characteristics differ between the pre-generative AI period (2020–2022) and the generative AI period (2023–2025)?

RQ3: To what extent do observed changes reflect a shift toward interaction-oriented and conversational communication strategies?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative content analysis to examine persuasive and linguistic characteristics embedded within brand advertising copy published on Instagram. Content analysis enables systematic and replicable examination of communication messages through objective classification of textual features and recurring communication patterns. The method is widely applied in advertising and media research to analyse naturally occurring communication content without researcher intervention (Krippendorff, 2018; Neuendorf, 2017).

Content analysis is particularly appropriate for investigating digital advertising environments where brand communication is publicly accessible and continuously produced across social media platforms. Rather than determining whether advertising copy was generated exclusively by artificial intelligence or human writers, the present study focuses on observable message characteristics emerging within contemporary marketing environments shaped by increasing adoption of generative AI technologies. This approach allows examination of communication outcomes reflected in real-world advertising practice while avoiding speculative attribution of authorship.

Research Context and Sampling Strategy

The research focuses on fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands operating within the Malaysian market. FMCG advertising provides an appropriate context for analysing social media copywriting due to its reliance on frequent promotional messaging, emotionally relatable communication, and short-form persuasive language targeting routine consumption behaviour. Social media platforms play a central role in FMCG marketing strategies, where sustained audience engagement contributes to brand visibility and consumer recall.

A purposive sampling strategy was adopted to ensure analytical relevance to the study objectives. Six nationally recognised FMCG brands with an active and sustained Instagram presence were selected based on their consistent advertising activity and reliance on caption-based promotional communication. FMCG brands provide an appropriate context for this study due to their high-frequency messaging, strong emphasis on audience engagement, and use of short-form persuasive communication aligned with routine consumption behaviour.

The selected brands represent diverse product categories, including food, beverages, and dairy, while maintaining comparability in communication objectives and platform usage. This allows for cross-brand analysis of copywriting strategies while minimising variability arising from industry-specific differences. The focus on established brands with active digital communication ensures that the dataset reflects stable and strategically developed advertising practices rather than sporadic or experimental content.

While the sample is not intended to be statistically representative of all brands, it provides analytically meaningful insight into dominant communication patterns within a key sector of digital advertising in Malaysia.

The inclusion criteria required that:

- (1) posts were published by official brand Instagram accounts;
- (2) posts promoted products, campaigns, or consumption-related messages;
- (3) captions contained persuasive or descriptive advertising copy;
- (4) posts represented brand-generated communication, excluding influencer collaborations or reposted user-generated content;
- (5) captions were written in English, Malay, or mixed Malaysian colloquial language; and
- (6) posts remained publicly accessible at the time of data collection.

All analysed materials were obtained from publicly accessible brand accounts and did not involve private or personal user data.

Sample Selection

Based on the established criteria, six FMCG brands representing diverse product categories were selected to ensure industry comparability while maintaining variation in advertising communication practices. The selected brands and corresponding product categories are presented in Table 1. This selection approach ensures that the dataset captures consistent and comparable advertising communication practices across brands operating within similar market conditions.

Table 1: Selected FMCG Brands for Content Analysis.

Brand	Product Category	Instagram Account
Maggi Malaysia	Instant Food	@maggimy
Milo Malaysia	Beverage	@milomalaysia
Nescafé Malaysia	Beverage	@nescafemy
Mamee Malaysia	Snack Food	@mameemy
Gardenia Malaysia	Bakery	@gardenia_kl
Dutch Lady Malaysia	Dairy Products	@dutchladymy

To provide contextual illustration of the advertising materials analysed, selected examples of Instagram advertisements are presented in Figure 1, demonstrating typical promotional posts containing brand-generated captions representative of the dataset.

Pre-AI Period Sample (2020-2022)	AI-Era Example (2023-2025)
 <p>Tak boleh jumpa. Boleh kongsi resipi jer...</p> <p>maggi.malaysia Tak jumpa tak bermakna kita dah lupa. Telefonlah.. sambil kongsi-kongsi resipi MAGGI® untuk dicuba together-gather. 🥰</p> <p>Cari idea nak masak? Banyak resipi di www.maggi.my</p> <p>#MasakBersamaMAGGI #DudukRumah 21 January 2021 · See Translation</p>	 <p>Bila MAGGI SYIOK baru restock kat opis</p> <p>maggi.malaysia Lari sekencang boleh bila opis baru restock MAGGI® SYIOK tauuu.. 🥰🥰🥰</p> <p>Lagi-lagi ada MAGGI® SYIOK Shoyu Daging Kaw BAHARU! Jom rasa SYIOK sekarang! #CamniBaruSYIOK #MAGGISYIOK 10 December 2025 · See Translation</p>
 <p>CERTIFIED GENG MILO®</p> <p>Liked by juinkok225 and others</p> <p>milo_malaysia Tak kisah lah MILO® panas 🥵, ais 🥶 atau MILO® lori 🚚, janji anda certified Geng MILO® 🍋💚</p> <p>#MILOMalaysia #TimeforMILO 9 September 2021 · See Translation</p>	 <p>MILO MENGUCAPKAN SELAMAT HARI MALAYSIA DULU, KINI DAN SELAMANYA</p> <p>milo_malaysia Hari ini kita meraikan semangat perpaduan, kebersamaan dan kepelbagaian budaya yang menjadikan Malaysia begitu istimewa. Setiap langkah yang diambil bersama, MILO® akan terus di sisi anda. Semangat perpaduan yang kita bina sejak dulu, kini dan selamanya akan terus menggerakkan langkah kita menuju Malaysia yang lebih gemilang.</p> <p>#HariMalaysia #MalaysiaBoleh #MILOMalaysia #JomMinumMILO #MILO75Tahun 16 September 2025 · See Translation</p>

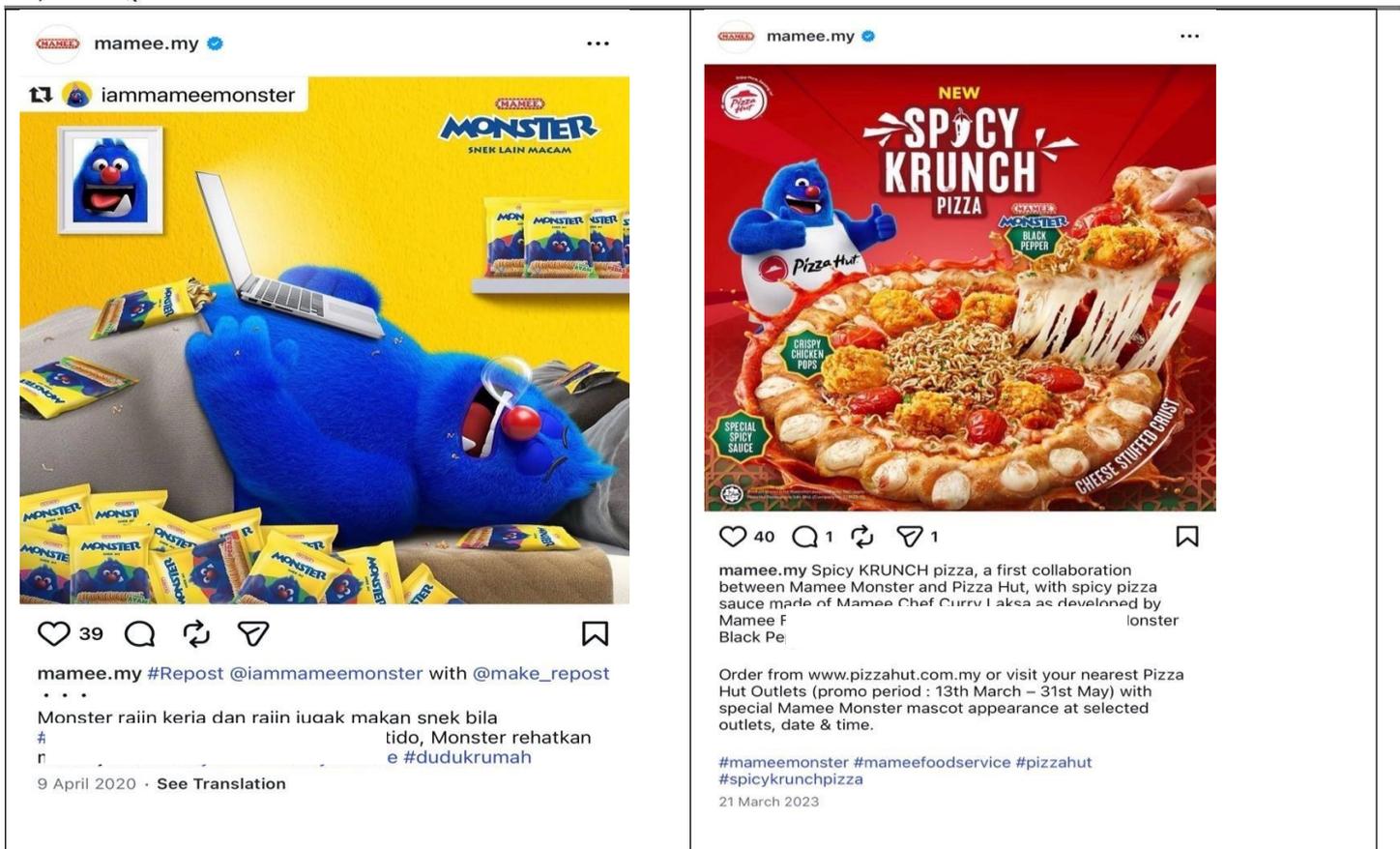


Figure 1: Sample Instagram Advertisements from Selected FMCG Brands

Note. Images extracted from official brand Instagram accounts for academic research and illustrative purposes under fair use.

Unit of Analysis and Temporal Framework

The unit of analysis in this study is an individual Instagram advertising caption accompanying a brand promotional post. Captions were selected as they represent the primary textual component through which persuasive messaging, emotional framing, and engagement prompts are communicated within Instagram advertising environments.

To examine potential evolution in advertising copywriting practices associated with generative AI diffusion, captions were collected across two temporal phases. The first phase represents the pre-generative AI diffusion period (January 2020 to December 2022), prior to widespread accessibility of generative AI content creation tools. The second phase represents the generative AI adoption period (January 2023 to December 2025), following the public release of generative conversational AI systems such as ChatGPT in November 2022, which accelerated the adoption of AI-assisted content creation within marketing practice (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

A total of 240 advertising captions were analysed, comprising approximately forty captions from each brand distributed evenly across both temporal periods.

Coding Scheme Development

A structured coding framework was developed to identify persuasive and linguistic characteristics commonly employed in social media advertising copy. Coding categories were derived from contemporary advertising and digital communication literature addressing emotional appeal, engagement-oriented messaging, and conversational persuasion strategies (Schivinski et al., 2023).

Each variable was coded using binary classification, indicating the presence (1) or absence (0) of the identified characteristic.

Table 2: Coding Framework for Advertising Copywriting Analysis

Dimension	Operational Definition	Example Indicator
Emotional Appeal	Expression of affective response or mood	comfort, enjoyment, excitement
Informational Appeal	Functional or product-related information	preparation time, benefits
Conversational Tone	Informal or dialogue-based wording	questions, casual phrasing
Culture Localisation	Use of Malaysian linguistic expressions	lah, jom try, makan,
Engagement Prompt	Invitation for audience interaction	comment or share requests
Call-to-Action	Encouragement of behavioural response	try now, get yours
Narrative Framing	Everyday situational storytelling	daily routines
Sensory Language	Description of experiential qualities	creamy, spicy

Coding Procedure

All captions were manually coded using predefined operational definitions. Before full analysis, a pilot coding exercise involving twenty captions was conducted to refine coding clarity and ensure consistent interpretation of variables. Coding guidelines were subsequently standardised before analysing the full dataset.

Intercoder Reliability

To ensure coding consistency, intercoder reliability was assessed following the pilot stage. An independent coder trained using the established coding framework independently coded approximately 10% of the dataset. Agreement between coders was evaluated using Cohen’s Kappa coefficient (κ), which accounts for agreement beyond chance (Cohen, 1960).

The overall Cohen’s Kappa value obtained across coding categories was $\kappa = 0.82$, indicating substantial agreement according to established reliability benchmarks (Landis & Koch, 1977). Minor discrepancies were discussed and resolved before the completion of full dataset coding.

Data Analysis

The coded dataset was analysed using descriptive statistical analysis to identify dominant persuasive characteristics within FMCG advertising copy. Comparative analysis was subsequently conducted to examine variations in copywriting strategies between the pre-generative AI diffusion period (2020–2022) and the generative AI adoption period (2023–2025). This analytical approach enables systematic identification of evolving advertising communication patterns within contemporary AI-assisted marketing environments. In addition to descriptive statistical analysis, inferential analysis was conducted using chi-square (χ^2) tests of independence to examine whether differences in copywriting characteristics between the two temporal periods were statistically significant. The chi-square test is appropriate for categorical data and allows assessment of whether the distribution of coded variables differs across groups. Statistical significance was evaluated at the $p < .05$ level.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Overview of the Analysed Advertising Dataset

A total of 240 Instagram advertising captions published by six Malaysian fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands were analysed in this study. The dataset comprised brand-generated promotional posts distributed across two temporal phases representing differing levels of generative AI diffusion within marketing practice. The pre-generative AI diffusion period (2020–2022) included captions published prior to widespread accessibility of generative AI tools, while the generative AI adoption period (2023–2025) reflected advertising communication produced following increased integration of AI-assisted content development.

Table 3 presents the distribution of analysed captions across brands and temporal phases.

Brand	2020-2022	2023-2025	Total
Maggi Malaysia	20	20	40
Milo Malaysia	20	20	40
Nescafe Malaysia	20	20	40
Mamee Malaysia	20	20	40
Gardenia Malaysia	20	20	40
Dutch Lady Malaysia	20	20	40
Total	120	120	240

The balanced distribution across brands and time periods ensured comparability when examining potential variations in advertising copywriting characteristics.

Table 3: Distribution of Analysed Instagram Advertising Captions

Dominant Copywriting Characteristics in FMCG Advertising

Frequency analysis revealed that conversational tone and emotional appeal were the most dominant persuasive characteristics observed across the analysed captions. FMCG brands consistently adopted informal and relatable language to simulate interpersonal communication between brands and audiences within Instagram environments. This finding reflects broader transformation in social media advertising where brands increasingly shift from transactional promotion toward relationship-oriented communication strategies designed to encourage interaction and sustained engagement.

The prominence of conversational tone supports recent social media communication research suggesting that audiences respond more favourably to brand messages that resemble peer-to-peer interaction rather than formal advertising discourse (Voorveld, 2019). Within algorithm-driven platforms, conversational messaging enhances perceived authenticity and reduces psychological distance between brand and consumer, thereby increasing engagement likelihood. The adoption of informal phrasing, direct audience address, and question-based captions observed across FMCG brands indicates strategic alignment with platform communication norms prioritising immediacy and social presence.

Emotional appeal similarly emerged as a central persuasive mechanism embedded within advertising captions. Rather than emphasising product functionality alone, brands frequently associate consumption with positive emotional experiences such as comfort, enjoyment, or shared social moments. This pattern aligns with contemporary digital advertising scholarship, demonstrating that emotionally framed content improves message

recall and interaction outcomes within environments characterised by information overload and limited attention spans.

From a contemporary digital perspective, the dominance of conversational and emotionally oriented messaging may reflect broader shifts toward data-informed optimisation practices within social media environments. These changes coincide with the increasing availability of AI-assisted marketing tools, although the present study does not directly measure AI usage in content production. Generative AI systems are commonly used to refine tone clarity and engagement effectiveness, encouraging communication styles that prioritise accessibility and relatability. Consequently, observed copywriting characteristics may represent adaptation to digitally optimised communication environments rather than purely stylistic preference. This observation aligns with prior research indicating that conversational and emotionally oriented communication enhances engagement effectiveness within social media advertising environments (Voorveld, 2019; Schivinski et al., 2023).

Table 4: Overall Frequency of Copywriting Characteristics

Copywriting Dimension	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Emotional Appeal	198	82.5
Informational Appeal	165	68.8
Conversational Tone	210	87.5
Culture Localisation	142	59.2
Engagement Prompt	176	73.3
Call-to-Action	189	78.8
Narrative Framing	154	64.2
Sensory Language	133	55.4

The dominance of conversational tone suggests that contemporary brand communication increasingly mirrors everyday social interaction rather than traditional promotional discourse. Emotional appeal frequently appeared alongside engagement prompts, reinforcing prior findings that affective messaging enhances interaction outcomes within social media advertising contexts (Voorveld, 2019). These findings indicate that advertising copywriting within FMCG marketing prioritises relational engagement over purely informational persuasion.

Emotional and Informational Appeals in Brand Communication

Analysis further demonstrated that emotional appeal was frequently embedded within everyday consumption narratives, emphasising comfort, enjoyment, convenience, and shared social experiences. Rather than presenting product attributes through direct promotional claims, FMCG brands commonly integrated informational cues within emotionally framed storytelling. Product benefits such as taste, preparation ease, or nutritional value were often communicated indirectly through relatable consumption situations, allowing informational content to remain persuasive without disrupting conversational flow.

The integration of emotional and informational appeals supports contemporary advertising research suggesting that affective messaging improves message memorability while maintaining persuasive clarity in digital environments. This integration reflects evolving persuasion strategies within social media environments where audiences demonstrate reduced tolerance toward overt advertising messages. Prior research indicates that emotionally framed communication enhances audience engagement by activating experiential rather than purely cognitive processing pathways, thereby increasing message memorability and interaction behaviour (Voorveld,

2019). The findings suggest that FMCG advertising copy increasingly balances informational clarity with emotional resonance to maintain effectiveness within attention-constrained digital contexts.

Importantly, informational appeal did not disappear within contemporary advertising copy but instead appeared strategically moderated through conversational language structures. This observation supports recent advertising scholarship arguing that social media persuasion relies on subtle integration of functional information within narrative-based communication rather than traditional feature-focused promotion. Such adaptation enables brands to communicate product value while preserving authenticity and platform appropriateness.

From the perspective of generative AI diffusion, this blending of emotional and informational appeals may also reflect optimisation practices supported by AI-assisted content generation systems. Marketing practitioners increasingly utilise AI tools to refine message readability, tone consistency, and engagement performance, encouraging simplified yet emotionally engaging communication structures. Consequently, advertising copy produced during the generative AI adoption period demonstrates characteristics aligned with scalable communication strategies capable of maintaining persuasive effectiveness across diverse audience segments.

These findings indicate that contemporary brand copywriting operates through integrated persuasive framing in which emotional engagement functions as an entry point for delivering informational value, reinforcing the continued relevance of copywriting strategy within technologically mediated advertising environments.

Conversational Tone and Cultural Localisation

Conversational tone emerged as the most prevalent linguistic characteristic across the analysed advertising captions, indicating a strong preference for informal and dialogue-oriented communication within FMCG social media advertising. Brands frequently employed direct audience address, rhetorical questions, and casual expressions designed to simulate everyday interpersonal interaction. Such communication strategies reduce perceived formality and position brands as socially approachable participants within digital conversations rather than distant commercial entities.

The dominance of conversational language reflects broader shifts in social media advertising where persuasive effectiveness increasingly depends on perceived authenticity and relational proximity. Prior studies suggest that audiences demonstrate higher engagement levels when brand communication mirrors peer-to-peer interaction styles commonly observed in online social environments (Voorveld, 2019). Within Instagram contexts, conversational copywriting enables brands to align promotional messaging with platform norms that prioritise immediacy, responsiveness, and social presence.

In addition to conversational tone, cultural localisation was consistently observed through the incorporation of Malaysian linguistic expressions and mixed-language usage combining English and Malay colloquial phrases. Expressions such as “jom,” “makan,” and informal bilingual phrasing functioned as cultural markers that reinforced familiarity and shared social identity between brands and local audiences. The integration of culturally specific language suggests that persuasive communication effectiveness is influenced not only by message structure but also by socio-cultural relevance embedded within advertising discourse. Similar findings have been reported in regional digital communication studies demonstrating that culturally localised language strengthens perceived authenticity and audience resonance within Asian social media contexts.

These findings support regional communication research highlighting the importance of localisation strategies in enhancing audience resonance within Asian digital communication environments. Local linguistic adaptation allows brands to signal cultural awareness and contextual sensitivity, thereby strengthening trust and emotional connection with consumers.

From the perspective of generative AI diffusion, increased conversational clarity and simplified linguistic structures observed during the later temporal phase may also reflect optimisation tendencies associated with AI-assisted content development tools. Generative AI systems are frequently utilised to refine readability and engagement effectiveness, encouraging communication styles characterised by clarity, accessibility, and conversational fluency. Consequently, contemporary advertising copywriting appears increasingly shaped by

interaction-oriented communication principles compatible with both human creative intention and AI-supported message optimisation processes.

Overall, the findings indicate that conversational tone and cultural localisation function as complementary persuasive mechanisms through which FMCG brands maintain relevance within digitally mediated and culturally diverse communication environments.

Comparison Across Temporal Phases

Comparative analysis across temporal phases revealed observable variation in advertising copywriting characteristics between the pre-generative AI diffusion period (2020–2022) and the generative AI adoption period (2023–2025). As presented in Table 5, increased prevalence of conversational tone, emotional appeal, engagement prompts, and narrative framing was identified during the generative AI adoption phase. These findings indicate a gradual shift toward interaction-oriented and audience-centred communication strategies within FMCG social media advertising. The observed shift toward interaction-oriented messaging corresponds with broader digital marketing trends emphasising engagement optimisation within technologically mediated communication ecosystems.

The increased use of conversational tone suggests that brand communication has become progressively aligned with platform-native interaction styles emphasising accessibility and immediacy. Social media environments reward content that encourages participation and dialogue, leading brands to adopt messaging structures that minimise promotional distance and enhance perceived authenticity. The observed rise in engagement prompts further reflects growing emphasis on stimulating measurable interaction outcomes such as commenting, sharing, and user participation, which are closely associated with algorithmic visibility within Instagram ecosystems.

The expansion of emotional appeal and narrative framing during the later temporal phase also indicates movement toward experiential storytelling approaches linking products with everyday consumer situations. Rather than presenting isolated product benefits, brands increasingly embed promotional messages within relatable consumption narratives that facilitate emotional connection. This evolution corresponds with contemporary digital marketing practices that prioritise engagement optimisation and audience relevance over traditional persuasive repetition.

Importantly, these changes should not be interpreted as direct evidence that generative AI independently produces specific advertising styles. Instead, the findings reflect observable changes in advertising communication practices across time, which occur within a broader digital environment increasingly characterised by automation, optimisation, and scalable content production. Following the widespread accessibility of generative AI tools after late 2022, marketing practitioners gained enhanced capability to experiment with tone variation, message clarity, and scalable content adaptation, potentially contributing to the increased consistency of conversational and engagement-focused messaging observed in the dataset.

The results therefore support the interpretation that contemporary advertising communication reflects hybrid human–AI creative ecosystems in which technological assistance complements human strategic judgement. Generative AI appears to facilitate refinement of communication efficiency and readability rather than replacing creative intent. This perspective aligns with emerging scholarship suggesting that AI adoption reshapes creative workflows by augmenting rather than substituting human marketing expertise (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

Overall, temporal comparison demonstrates that advertising copywriting within FMCG social media marketing exhibits adaptive evolution consistent with changing technological and platform conditions. The increasing prominence of emotionally engaging and conversational messaging highlights how persuasive communication strategies continue to evolve alongside digital transformation while remaining grounded in human-centred communication principles.

Table 5: Comparison of Copywriting Characteristics Across Temporal Periods

Variable	2020-2022 (%)	2023-2025 (%)
Emotional Appeal	75	90
Conversational Tone	80	95
Culture Localisation	52	66
Engagement Prompt	68	79
Narrative Framing	58	70

To further assess whether observed differences between temporal periods were statistically significant, chi-square (χ^2) tests of independence were conducted for selected key variables. The results indicated that differences in conversational tone ($\chi^2 = 12.34, p < .001$) and emotional appeal ($\chi^2 = 9.35, p < .01$) were statistically significant across the two periods, suggesting that the observed increases are unlikely to be due to random variation. In contrast, the increase in engagement prompts was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 3.64, p > .05$). These findings provide additional support for the presence of measurable shifts in selected advertising communication practices across time.

The period of generative AI adoption was characterised by increased use of conversational engagement cues, emotional framing, and narrative-based messaging. These patterns suggest an evolution toward clearer, more interaction-oriented communication consistent with contemporary digital marketing environments increasingly supported by data analytics and AI-assisted content optimisation tools. Importantly, the findings do not indicate replacement of human creativity but rather reflect adaptation of advertising language practices within hybrid human–AI communication ecosystems. The observed shift toward simplified, relatable, and engagement-driven messaging aligns with the broader industry movement toward scalable yet personalised communication strategies facilitated by generative AI technologies.

These findings extend emerging scholarship on AI-assisted marketing by demonstrating how technological diffusion may be reflected through gradual evolution of observable advertising communication practices (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study investigated how brand advertising copywriting practices evolve within the generative AI communication era through a quantitative content analysis of Instagram captions published by Malaysian fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands. Specifically, the study identified dominant persuasive and linguistic characteristics embedded within social media advertising copy and compared communication patterns across the pre-generative AI diffusion period (2020–2022) and the generative AI adoption period (2023–2025). The findings demonstrate that contemporary FMCG advertising increasingly relies on conversational, emotionally oriented, and culturally localised messaging strategies that prioritise audience interaction within algorithm-driven social media environments.

The findings reveal that conversational tone and emotional appeal constitute dominant persuasive strategies within contemporary FMCG advertising copy. Brands consistently employ informal language, narrative framing, and engagement-oriented messaging to strengthen interaction within social media platforms characterised by limited attention spans and algorithm-driven visibility. The increased presence of culturally localised expressions further demonstrates the importance of contextual adaptation in enhancing audience relatability and communication effectiveness.

Comparative analysis across temporal phases indicates an observable shift toward more interaction-focused and emotionally framed messaging during the generative AI adoption period. The inclusion of inferential analysis

further confirms that observed increases in conversational tone and emotional appeal are statistically significant, reinforcing the interpretation that these changes reflect systematic shifts in advertising communication practices rather than random variation. These findings suggest that advertising copywriting practices increasingly reflect digitally mediated communication environments characterised by optimisation, scalability, and interaction-oriented messaging. While these patterns coincide with the growing availability of AI-assisted tools, the present study does not directly examine or verify the use of AI in content production. Rather than indicating a replacement of human creativity, the findings suggest that contemporary advertising communication reflects ongoing adaptation to platform dynamics and optimisation-driven content strategies within digital environments.

The study contributes theoretically by extending existing AI marketing scholarship beyond consumer perception toward message-level analysis of advertising communication. Methodologically, the research demonstrates the applicability of quantitative content analysis in examining evolving persuasive strategies within real-world social media environments. Practically, the findings highlight the importance for marketers to prioritise conversational authenticity and culturally resonant language when developing advertising copy within AI-assisted communication ecosystems.

Despite these contributions, the study is limited to FMCG brands operating within the Malaysian context and focuses solely on observable message characteristics rather than organisational content production processes. Future research may incorporate consumer perception analysis or practitioner perspectives to further examine how human creativity and artificial intelligence jointly influence advertising development across industries and cultural settings.

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