

The Creator Effect: Consumer Reactions to Misrepresentative AI vs. Human Advertising

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Abstract

As brands increasingly use generative AI in advertising, ethical and perceptual challenges emerge when ads misrepresent communities. Across three experiments, including LGBTQIA+ participants, consumers were found to be less forgiving of AI- than humancreated misrepresentative ads. This effect occurs because AI ads are seen as requiring less effort, lowering ad attitudes and forgiveness. Strong brand reputation buffers this effect, restoring forgiveness to human-ad levels. Findings highlight the role of perceived effort in shaping consumer responses to AI marketing and provide guidance for managing brand reputation and ethical risk. Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Consumer Forgiveness, Perceived Effort

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