

# Branding in the Age of Generative AI: A Decade of Strategic Insights from the Literature

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<https://doi.org/10.62345/jads.2025.14.3.59>

## Abstract

*Personalised, emotive, and large-scale interactions enabled by generative AI are changing branding. Despite its technical recognition, the impact of this approach in generating trust, emotional commitment, and long-term brand value in developing regions remains unknown. This research examines trust and emotional connection as mediators in AI-powered brand-consumer interactions, drawing on theories of brand equity and social exchange. It employs surveys, interviews, structural modelling, and qualitative insights in a mixed-methods approach. AI may enhance authenticity, loyalty, and equality, but the dangers of depersonalization demand an ethical, human-centred integration.*

**Keywords:** Generative AI, Brand Strategy, Trust, Emotional Engagement, Brand Equity.

## Introduction

AI in marketing and branding has changed the way businesses communicate with customers by enabling the personalisation of messages, interaction, and the building of emotional connections—generative AI Changes Things. Generative AI machine learning models can create new text, pictures, audio, and video, making them disruptive. Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) and transformer-based language models are examples of models that can create stories, hyper-personalised ads, and experiences that brands can trust, providing customers with new experiences on a large scale. Brand value creation today places a greater emphasis on emotional connections, trust, and authentic engagement than on functional features. Customers now expect businesses to provide them with personalised experiences and consistent messaging across a single digital platform (Keller, 2013). Generative AI may enhance brand authenticity and loyalty by creating content that is relevant to the situation and emotionally resonant in real-time (Chiu et al., 2022). However, there are both pros and cons to using generative AI in branding. AI can help businesses build stronger relationships with customers, tailor marketing messages, and create collections that align with their audiences' preferences (Huang & Rust, 2021). On the other hand, its risks include the perceived loss of the human touch, excessive automation, and moral concerns such as deepfakes and data privacy breaches (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Brands that can effectively address

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these issues may see their long-term brand equity increase or decrease as a result of AI. It becomes even more challenging in emerging markets. AI is being increasingly utilised worldwide, but different cultures may have varying perspectives on automation, trust, and corporate identity (Shankar et al., 2022). In these situations, AI makers must find a balance between representing the brand globally and adapting to local values. As generative AI becomes more popular in brand strategy, both academics and professionals want to know how it can use these experiences to build trust, emotional connections, and brand value.

### **Problem Statement**

As digital ecosystems evolve and consumer expectations increase, brands should be able to provide personalised, emotional, and trust-based experiences at a large scale. Generative AI (GAI) presents an innovative concept for branding strategies, as it enables the autonomous generation of branded stories, interactive content, and conversational agents. Nevertheless, its strategic implications on trust, emotional attachment, and long-term brand equity have been under-researched, especially in the developing markets. Although literature has emphasised the effects of AI on personalisation and efficiency, it has not focused much on the relational effects, including trust and emotional attraction. GAI is a good way to make brands more relatable through dynamic storytelling, but it could also make people feel like the brand is not genuine or that they are doing something wrong. The effectiveness of GAI in various situations is further compromised by factors such as brand equity, cultural values, and trust in automation. To fill in these gaps, this paper proposes a model to assess the mediating role of trust and emotional engagement, as well as the moderating role of brand equity in AI-enabled branding.

### **Research Objectives**

The overarching objective of this research is to investigate the impact of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) on consumer-brand relationships. The study's primary purpose is to ascertain the impact of generative AI on trust, emotional engagement, and long-term brand equity within emerging market contexts. The aims are as follows:

1. To examine the manner in which generative AI is being incorporated into the brand strategy of various industries, especially in the emerging market settings.
2. To explore how generative AI can be used to impact consumer trust and emotional engagement when interacting with the brand.
3. To determine the influence of trust and emotional engagement as mediators between the usage of generative AI and brand equity outcomes.
4. To see how brand equity moderates the brand equity connection to generative AI-based interactions and consumer feedback (e.g., trust, engagement, loyalty).
5. To determine the situational, cultural, and moral parameters that influence consumers regarding brand material produced by AI.
6. To build a conceptual framework and strategic roadmap for the responsible usage of generative AI in brand-building activities.

### **Research Questions**

To reach such goals, the research is assisted by the following fundamental research questions:

*RQ1:* What key areas of branding does generative AI find applications in terms of promoting consumer engagement and personalisation?

*RQ2:* How do these effects translate into brand interactions powered by generative AI on consumer trust and emotional engagement?

*RQ3:* How much does trust and emotional engagement mediate between the use of a generative AI and brand equity?

*RQ4:* In what ways does prior brand equity affect the perceptions of consumers toward generative AI-enabled interactions (i.e., as a moderator)?

*RQ5:* Which ethical, cultural, and contextual influences affect the level of efficiency of generative AI in the creation of long-term brand value in emerging markets?

### Significance of the Study

Generative AI is transforming the way brands communicate. Still, little is known about how it fosters trust, emotional engagement, and long-term brand equity, particularly in developing markets where people are increasingly susceptible to automation. This paper seeks to fill this gap by establishing trust and emotional engagement as mediators, and brand equity as a moderator, in the context of AI application and consumer-brand relationships. It enhances branding and AI literature by incorporating these constructs into a dynamic framework. In practice, it enables marketers to use AI responsibly, promoting authenticity, trust, and ethical brand interactions. In general, the study gives scholars and practitioners useful information at the right time.

### Literature Review

Brand strategy is a long-term plan that sets, communicates, and maintains a brand's identity, which helps build long-lasting relationships with customers. Brand positioning, value proposition, and identity are all essential, crucial components in making a brand relevant in rapidly changing markets (Kapferer, 2012). Strategies must adjust to changing customer needs and new technologies in today's digital age (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Coudounaris et al., 2024).

Brand equity, defined as the additional value of a brand name (Aaker, 1991), remains an essential component of strategic branding. Models differentiate between customer-based equity (comprising awareness, associations, and loyalty) and firm-based equity (encompassing symbolic, relational, and financial aspects). Research in Pakistan's FMCG sector highlights the importance of organisational culture, social responsibility, and employee engagement in sustaining equity (Raza et al., 2024). In high-end environments, digital experiences and trust facilitate advancements in equity (Salman & Chaudhary, 2023).

Bibliometric reviews highlight word-of-mouth, engagement, and social media as current drivers of equity (Odaguiri et al., 2024). Cross-cultural evidence further emphasises the contextual significance of digital engagement, emotions, and societal value in maintaining brand equity.

**Table 1: Summary of Related Work in AI and Branding**

| Study                         | Focus Area                     | Key Contributions                                                   |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sekarini & Selvabaskar (2024) | AI-powered branding            | Focused on AI technologies enabling personalized brand experiences. |
| Varsha et al. (2021)          | Bibliometric study             | Reviewed AI branding literature (1982–2019) and emerging trends.    |
| Cunha et al. (2024)           | Strategic branding & analytics | Explored predictive analytics for decision-making in branding.      |
| Venkateswaran et al. (2023)   | Customer loyalty               | Analyzed AI's impact on marketing strategy and loyalty.             |

|                          |                         |                                                                       |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Asiabar et al. (2024)    | Emotional AI            | Measured engagement from artificial emotional intelligence (AEI).     |
| Limantara (2024)         | Generative AI           | Case studies on how GAI crafts brand experiences.                     |
| Krisprimandoyo (2024)    | CSR & AI                | Studied how AI strengthens CSR communications and branding.           |
| Musaiqer & Hamdan (2023) | AI in brand building    | Reviewed AI's role in engagement and messaging challenges.            |
| Krisprimandoyo (2023)    | Corporate branding & AI | Emphasized AI's role in consumer insight and business transformation. |

The generative AI is fueling brands to embrace it in their strategies, and the dynamic space requires a reconsideration of the existing equity theories. Remarkably, touch points supported by technology that are designed to be trustworthy and provide real experiences can improve equity. However, they can also be seen as fake or not in line with the brand identity, which can lead to dissipation.

### Emotional Involvement and the Relationship Between Brand and Customer

The emotional connection between a consumer and a brand is the most important part of the relationship. It makes people love the brand, stay loyal to it, and get involved with it. In high-end environments, brand attachment fosters brand love, which subsequently cultivates commitment; additionally, prestige and self-congruence intensify emotional connections (Choi et al., 2024). Sentimental posts that make people feel empathy, nostalgia, or happiness have a big effect on how people act, how they talk about a brand, and how they see it, but only if they are seen as real, relevant, and morally sound (Ali, 2025). Social media marketing activities enhance this effect, cultivating brand affinity and facilitating purchasing decisions through emotionally charged associations (Elhajjar & Yacoub, 2024; Fetais et al., 2023). Experiential value hedonic, social, ethical, and cognitive also drives engagement and value co-creation, with self-brand connection as a key mediator.

Cultural context is important; collectivist cultures and service settings show stronger emotional responses (Truong, 2025). Emotional storytelling, sensory activations, and real-life experiences all help to strengthen a brand's identity. This shows that coordinated emotional strategies can create loyalty, brand love, and long-lasting relationships with customers.

**Table 2: Emotional Engagement and Brand-Consumer Relationships**

| Citation (APA)          | Domain              | Key Finding (Emotion/AEI)                                                          | Branding Relevance                                   |
|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Juquelier et al. (2025) | Retail              | Empathic chatbots boost satisfaction but can backfire if perceived as inauthentic. | Calibrate empathy to context to protect brand trust. |
| Zhang et al. (2024)     | Service recovery    | Social/empathic style improves satisfaction vs. purely task-oriented style.        | Empathic recovery messaging protects brand equity.   |
| Chen et al. (2024)      | AI customer service | Anthropomorphism + empathic ability → sustained trust after failures.              | AEI helps recover brand trust post-failure.          |
| Doan et al. (2024)      | UK & Vietnam        | Interaction quality and social presence (empathy proxy) drive CX outcomes.         | AEI cues must fit cultural context for engagement.   |

|                          |                    |                                                                               |                                                           |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Park & Lee (2022)        | E-service recovery | Emotion-laden wording elevates satisfaction, repurchase, WOM.                 | Simple “emotion words” can amplify brand outcomes.        |
| Almahdi & Vázquez (2023) | Service chatbots   | Empathy and accessibility cues significantly increase trust and satisfaction. | Empathic tone strengthens brand–consumer bonds.           |
| Yalcin et al. (2022)     | Marketing AI       | Artificial empathy creates value but risks backfire if misused.               | Guidance on when/how AEI strengthens brand relationships. |
| Feine et al. (2020)      | Self-service       | Anthropomorphic (human-like) cues increase compliance with chatbot requests.  | “Human” cues can lift engagement with brand bots.         |
| Lewinski et al. (2017)   | Ads                | Stronger emotional responses predict ad effectiveness.                        | Validates measuring emotion to optimize brand stories.    |

### Trust in Digital and AI-Mediated Brand Interactions

Trust is very important for brands to be successful in today's digital market, especially when AI is involved in customer experiences. To gain the trust of customers, tools like chatbots, recommendation engines, and voice assistants must be honest, open, and dependable. Trust in AI is based on many things, such as how well it works, how it uses data ethically, and how it interacts with people. When people think of AI as caring and honest, they are more likely to engage with it and stay loyal to the brand (Chatterjee et al., 2024). Explainable AI makes recommendations clearer, which reduces user anxiety and makes people feel like things are fairer, especially in sensitive areas like finance and healthcare (Lee & Kim, 2023). AI agents that are empathetic and emotionally intelligent make people trust and stay loyal even more (Wang et al., 2024). But using data incorrectly, systems that aren't clear, or interactions with robots can hurt credibility. More and more businesses are using hybrid human-AI service models to find a balance between efficiency and emotional comfort (Mishra & Jain, 2025). Gen Z and Millennials place a high premium on AI that is ethical, open, and socially responsible (Sarkar & Devi, 2025).

**Table 3: Trust in Digital and AI-Mediated Brand Interactions**

| Author(s) & Year      | Title                                                           |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kaur & Gupta (2025)   | Is trust correlated with explainability in AI? A meta-analysis  |
| Ribeiro et al. (2025) | Effectiveness of explainable AI on trust models                 |
| Ali et al. (2025)     | User experience of voice assistants in retail                   |
| Sun et al., (2024)    | Psychological distance & algorithm aversion in service settings |
| Shneiderman (2024)    | Trust in AI: Progress, challenges, directions                   |
| Kim & Park (2024)     | Motivators/Demotivators of Smart Voice Assistants               |
| Longoni et al. (2023) | Sharing information with AI (vs. human) impairs brand trust     |
| Zhou et al. (2023)    | Exploring chatbot trust: antecedents & outcomes                 |

### Generative AI: Capabilities, Evolution, and Marketing Applications

Generative AI (GenAI) has quickly gone from being a test tool to a key part of marketing strategy, changing the way brands make, customize, and grow content. GenAI uses large language models (LLMs) and diffusion models to make text, images, audio, and video that look and sound like people. This lets brands deliver timely, personalized content across touchpoints using systems like GPT-4o, DALL·E, and Stable Diffusion (McKinsey & Company, 2024). GenAI cuts down on

production time by a lot while still being creative by quickly making product descriptions, email campaigns, and social media visuals.

Advances like prompt engineering, brand voice fine-tuning, and synthetic data generation make optimization better. Integration with CRM platforms like Salesforce supports emotionally intelligent, sentiment-aware marketing (Forrester, 2024). GenAI goes beyond making content by using user data to make recommendations, change tone, and choose images (PwC, 2025). Even with these benefits, problems with data privacy, false information, and authenticity still exist, which is why governance frameworks are needed. GenAI is a marketing revolution that encourages creativity, personalization, and scalable brand engagement.

### AI and Consumer Psychology: Persuasion, Personalization, and Authenticity

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is changing how people think, act, and react to brands by changing how they see, interact with, and respond to them. AI technologies are increasingly mediating core psychological levers such as persuasion, personalization, and authenticity. AI uses natural language processing and machine learning to change the tone, content, and timing of messages based on what each customer likes. This leads to hyper-personalization, which makes messages more relevant and satisfying (Kumar et al., 2023). For example, AI chatbots change how they talk to people by using sentiment analysis, which makes them seem empathetic and persuasive (Chatterjee et al., 2024). Recommendation algorithms that use behavioral and psychographic data to push people towards desired outcomes are similar, but they raise ethical concerns about manipulation (Tandon et al., 2024).

Still, authenticity is very important. Too much automation can make people distrustful when communication seems too robotic. Research indicates that authenticity enhances when AI recognizes its non-human characteristics and expresses warmth and transparency (Sarkar & Devi, 2025). Trust also depends on how well data is used ethically and privacy is protected (Wang et al., 2024). So, AI's ability to persuade and personalize is best used in a moral way that encourages independence, closeness, and honesty in relationships between brands and customers..

**Table 4: AI & Consumer Psychology: Persuasion, Personalization, and Authenticity**

| Authors (Year)        | Context / AI Mechanism                              | Method                  | Key Finding(s)                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Barari et al. (2025)  | VI anthropomorphism → engagement/well-being         | Survey/SEM              | Greater anthropomorphism can lift engagement but authenticity cues remain pivotal for persuasive outcomes.                            |
| Kirk & Givi (2024)    | Consumers reading AI-authored marketing text (LLMs) | Experiments             | Labeling content as AI-written lowers perceived authenticity and can trigger moral discomfort reducing persuasive impact.             |
| Aljarah et al. (2024) | Awareness of AI-generated content                   | Survey/experiments      | “In AI we do not trust”: AI content judged less sincere; disclosure and context moderate negative reactions.                          |
| Kang et al. (2024)    | Virtual influencers (VIs)                           | Empirical (social data) | VI human-likeness, operator type, and emotional expression shape authenticity and engagement; authenticity deficits limit persuasion. |

|                       |                                                                |                              |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Han (2024)            | AI-Generated Content (AIGC) & disclaimers                      | Experiments                  | Authenticity perceptions and disclosure type affect attitudes toward AIGC; hedonic vs utilitarian use moderate's effects.                                                |
| Huang & Rust (2021)   | Strategic AI in marketing (mechanical / thinking / feeling AI) | Conceptual (framework)       | Maps how AI enables personalization ("thinking AI") and relational/emotional engagement ("feeling AI"), shaping persuasive impact and perceived authenticity.            |
| Puntoni et al. (2021) | Consumers & AI across the journey                              | Theory + agenda              | Identifies AI "experiences" (data-capture, classification, delegation, social) that create benefits/risks affecting persuasion receptivity and authenticity perceptions. |
| Cloerck (2020)        | Personalization in the attention economy                       | Review                       | Sums evidence that value of tailoring is offset by privacy concerns; trust signals/disclosure are critical for persuasion.                                               |
| Longoni et al. (2019) | Medical AI decisions                                           | Experiments                  | Resistance to (even superior) AI due to perceived insensitivity signals authenticity "care" deficits that reduce compliance.                                             |
| Castelo et al. (2019) | Algorithm vs human on different tasks                          | Experiments                  | Task-dependent algorithm aversion: people prefer humans for subjective/experiential tasks implications for persuasive authenticity of AI.                                |
| Araujo (2018)         | Brand chatbots                                                 | Survey/field                 | Anthropomorphism & disclosure shape expectations/trust; over-promising "human-likeness" can harm perceived authenticity and persuasion.                                  |
| Matz et al. (2017)    | Personality-targeted ads                                       | Field experiments (Facebook) | Psychological targeting boosts ad clicks and conversions when messages match users' traits powerful persuasive uplift.                                                   |
| Kaptein et al. (2015) | Persuasion profiles                                            | Field studies                | Personalizing persuasive strategies (persuasion profiling) substantially increases compliance vs non-tailored messaging.                                                 |
| Aguirre et al. (2015) | Online ad personalization                                      | 3 Experiments                | Personalization–privacy paradox: more personalization can backfire if data collection seems covert; transparency restores effectiveness                                  |

### Prior Empirical Studies Linking AI to Brand Performance

Recent empirical studies confirm the positive influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI, on brand performance. AI-powered marketing tools help build long-term brand equity by increasing interaction rates, operational efficiency, and brand awareness. For example, Mariani et al. (2023) found a strong link between using AI to personalize digital

campaigns and higher levels of customer satisfaction, trust, and willingness to buy. Chatterjee et al. (2024) demonstrated that real-time AI personalization enhanced user satisfaction and elevated their net promoter scores. Wamba-Taguimdje et al. (2024) demonstrated that AI-driven automation enhanced the responsiveness, service quality, and support in online shopping. Generative AI also makes content more useful. Suh et al. (2025) discovered that AI-generated texts, such as blogs and product descriptions, increased user engagement and fostered a sense of connection. Kapoor et al. (2023) underscored the importance of AI in psychographic segmentation, leading to improved positioning and revenue growth. Even though AI has these benefits, researchers warn that using it wrong, especially in ways that are unethical or unclear, could hurt trust and damage a brand's reputation.

**Table 5: Empirical Studies Linking AI to Brand Performance**

| Author(s) & Year              | Title                                                                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Yuan & Zhao (2023)            | AI service impacts on brand image and customer equity                              |
| El Fawal et al. (2024)        | The impact of AI marketing activities on consumer-based brand equity               |
| Vidrih & Mayahi (2023)        | Generative AI-driven storytelling: A new era for marketing                         |
| Kong et al. (2023)            | Neural insights for digital marketing content design                               |
| Wamba et al. (2022)           | Industry experiences of artificial intelligence: Benefits and challenges           |
| Huang & Rust (2021)           | Artificial intelligence in service                                                 |
| Wamba et al. (2022)           | The impact of AI on e-commerce: A bibliometric and empirical analysis              |
| Rahman et al. (2021)          | The role of artificial intelligence in enhancing customer experience               |
| Wamba-Taguimdje et al. (2020) | Influence of AI on firm performance: The business value of AI-based transformation |
| West et al. (2018)            | "Alexa, build me a brand": An investigation into AI's impact on branding           |

## Conclusion

The paper examines how Generative AI (GenAI) is transforming brand strategy by fostering a sense of connection with the brand, lending it credibility, and enhancing its value. Traditionally, branding has been about communicating with people, but GenAI is changing that by creating new ways for brands and consumers to interact. These new ways can lead to hyper-personalised and immersive experiences that make people more loyal and relevant, as long as authenticity and ethical design are kept in mind. GenAI has considerable potential, but it also poses risks, including a lack of transparency, consumer distrust, and ethical customisation. The work is valuable both theoretically and practically as it integrates branding literature with technological innovations to guide marketers and AI developers on formulating emotionally intelligent and ethically responsible strategies. Future research should employ longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of GenAI on brand equity. It should also examine how trust and interactions vary across cultures and how psychological processes, such as anthropomorphism, differ in AI interactions. To ensure that GenAI builds consumer trust, fosters interaction, and establishes long-term brand associations, addressing ethical issues and promoting cooperation between different fields will be crucial.

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