Generational differences in perceptions of AI-generated reviews in online textile purchases: implications for sustainable digital consumption

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ABSTRACT – REZUMAT

Generational differences in perceptions of AI-generated reviews in online textile purchases: implications for sustainable digital consumption

The digitalisation of consumer environments, fueled by artificial intelligence (AI), is reshaping how individuals interact with information and make purchasing decisions. Online reviews – especially those generated by AI – have become a key source of influence across generations. This study investigates how generational cohorts perceive AI-generated reviews and the implications for responsible digital consumption. By examining awareness, trust, and intention to use such reviews, this paper highlights how AI can both enhance transparency and risk undermining consumer trust. The findings suggest that while digital natives are more open to AI-generated content, older generations express skepticism, which has implications for fostering sustainable consumption practices in the digital age. The study calls for greater transparency, education, and ethical design of AI-driven platforms to align with Sustainable Development Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). This research focuses on online reviews related to textile products, exploring how AI-generated content influences consumer trust and sustainable choices in the textile industry.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence, AI-generated reviews, online reviews, textile industry, sustainable digital consumption*

Diferențe generaționale în percepția recenziilor generate de IA în achizițiile online de produse textile: implicații pentru consumul digital durabil

Digitalizarea mediilor de consum, alimentată de inteligența artificială (IA), remodelează modul în care indivizii interacționează cu informațiile și iau decizii de cumpărare. Recenziile online, în special cele generate de IA, au devenit o sursă cheie de influență pentru toate generațiile. Acest studiu investighează modul în care generațiile percep recenziile generate de IA și implicațiile pentru consumul digital responsabil. Prin examinarea gradului de conștientizare, a încrederii și a intenției de a utiliza astfel de recenzii, acest articol evidențiază modul în care IA poate spori transparența, dar și riscul de a submina încrederea consumatorilor. Rezultatele sugerează că, în timp ce nativii digitali sunt mai deschiși față de conținutul generat de IA, generațiile mai în vârstă exprimă scepticism, ceea ce are implicații pentru promovarea practicilor de consum durabil în era digitală. Studiul solicită o mai mare transparență, educație și proiectare etică a platformelor bazate pe IA, pentru a se alinia la Obiectivul de Dezvoltare Durabilă 12 (Consum și Producție responsabile). Acest studiu se concentrează pe recenziile online legate de produsele textile, explorând modul în care conținutul generat de IA influențează încrederea consumatorilor și alegerile durabile în industria textilă.

Cuvinte-cheie: *inteligență artificială, recenzii generate de IA, recenzii online, industria textilă, consum digital durabil*

INTRODUCTION

The dynamic process of digitalisation. In the context of accelerating digital transformation, artificial intelligence has become a powerful tool influencing how consumers access and process information. Online reviews, increasingly generated by AI, serve as decision-making aids in the textile sector, raising questions around authenticity, trust, and their impact on sustainable consumption of clothing and textile products. In the textile industry, online reviews play a critical role in guiding consumer behaviour. With the rise of AI-generated reviews, there is growing interest in how different generations perceive these reviews, particularly in the context of sustainable and ethical textile consumption. This study contributes to understanding how AI tools might support more informed and responsible purchasing decisions in the fashion and textile sectors. This paper explores how consumers from different generations engage with AI-generated content, with implications for responsible digital behaviour and sustainable economic practices. Unlike AI-based recommendation systems or virtual fashion designers that tailor purchasing suggestions to individual needs and preferences, this study does not examine personalised interaction. Instead, it focuses on the broader perception of automatically generated online reviews. These reviews are not customised but are intended to simulate genuine feedback, and this distinction allows us to assess general consumer trust and behaviour towards AI-generated content, irrespective of personalisation mechanisms. Over time, numerous studies

and systematic reviews have explored this transformation's impact and evolution. Currently, the industry is on the brink of the fourth industrial revolution (Industry 4.0), leveraging digitalisation to revolutionise business operations in industrial value chains. We are entering an era where industries are becoming increasingly "smart", mainly through the use of Internet of Things (IoT) technologies, continuous data flows, and predictive analytics. Benefits include improved productivity and profitability through process automation and optimisation, cost reduction, accelerated production, error reduction, enhanced user experiences, and improved carbon footprints for companies [1].

Most industry experts view this transformation positively [2]. Recent BCG and PwC reports anticipate Industry 4.0 will enhance process efficiency by 15–20% and contribute over 20% to revenue generation in the next five years. These outcomes demonstrate that digital technologies offer significant potential for business model innovation in the B2B context, providing new revenue generation opportunities and added value creation. Entities that capitalise on the potential of digitalisation, supplemented by big data and analytics, will outperform competitors in revenue growth and operational efficiency.

Numerous studies have highlighted digital transformation's significant potential in facilitating internationalisation. However, digital transformation can also generate negative effects on internationalisation, such as cybersecurity challenges and compliance with international legislation, negative impacts on communication and performance of different groups or individual employees in various countries, variations in the scope of firms' internationalisation, and differences in consumer interactions with technologies in other countries. Despite this, while most existing studies emphasise the positive impact of digital transformation on firms' internationalisation, its negative effects have not been explored in depth [3].

As part of these changes, online review systems have emerged as complex socio-technical systems where human behaviour and artificial intelligence interact dynamically to shape consumer decision-making processes.

Digital transformation has revolutionised how we live our lives, conduct business, and make consumer decisions [4]. Global spending on digital transformation technologies and services exceeded $216 trillion in 2023 and is projected to reach $35 trillion shortly, highlighting the emphasis on investment as a growth stimulator for organisations [5].

The literature shows that digital transformation influences managerial decisions and actions across various industries and contexts [6]. Recent challenges in the business world, especially those created by the recently concluded COVID-19 pandemic, have pushed organisations to accelerate digital transformation. Despite the lack of consensus among most digital transformation specialists on long-term approaches, it is almost unanimously accepted that as organisations confront digital technologies, they must adapt. A widely accepted definition describes digital transformation as "a process that aims to improve an entity by triggering significant changes in its properties through combinations of informational, computational, communication, and connectivity technologies" [7].

Digitalisation has profoundly transformed all economic and societal sectors, accelerating processes and facilitating access to information and services [8]. This technological revolution has improved operational efficiency, reduced costs, and opened innovation opportunities. In this extensive digitalisation context, artificial intelligence (AI) has exponentially developed and promises to further redefine the technological landscape [9].

Artificial intelligence represents the next evolutionary step in digitalisation, offering advanced analysis, prediction, and automation capabilities. While digitalisation involves transforming data and processes into a digital format, AI goes further by using this data to learn and make intelligent decisions. From machine learning algorithms to neural networks and speech and image recognition systems, AI has the potential to revolutionise entire industries, from healthcare and finance to transportation and entertainment. Understanding these dynamics is essential to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 12, which promotes responsible consumption patterns, particularly in digital contexts.

HISTORY OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The history of artificial intelligence (AI) is marked by significant developments that have shaped this field. Early AI concepts date back to ancient mythology and philosophy, but theoretical foundations were established in the 20th century. A critical turning point was the 1956 Dartmouth Conference, where the term "artificial intelligence" was officially coined, laying the groundwork for future research [10].

In the 1980s, AI experienced significant growth due to the development of deep learning techniques by John Hopfield and David Rumelhart, as well as expert systems introduced by Edward Feigenbaum. These systems mimicked human expert decision-making processes and were widely adopted in the industry [11]. A landmark moment was in 1997 when IBM's Deep Blue program defeated world chess champion Garry Kasparov, demonstrating AI's ability to make complex decisions. Subsequent technological advancements culminated in recent achievements such as Google's AlphaGo defeating world champions in the game of Go [12].

These historical developments were enabled by advances in computing power and storage, in line with Moore's law, allowing AI to learn and process large amounts of data at increasing speeds. Today, AI is ubiquitous, applied in various fields from technology and finance to marketing and entertainment [13].

Currently, AI is in a phase of rapid expansion and profound transformation, influencing numerous societal

aspects. Recent AI developments have led to significant advances in various fields, including speech recognition, image and text generation, and even robotics.

Artificial Intelligence in 2024 – Technical and Generative AI Advances: Generative technologies, such as extensive language models (LLM) and deep neural networks, have advanced considerably. Models like OpenAI's GPT-4 and Google's Gemini Ultra have demonstrated remarkable capabilities in generating high-quality text and images.

For instance, GPT-4's training cost was estimated at $78 million, reflecting the substantial resource investment required for developing such advanced technologies [14].

Industry and research impact: The industry now dominates AI model development, with many notable models resulting from collaborations between industry and academia. This is due to the need for vast data and computing power for training complex models, resources more readily accessible in the private sector. Generative AI, in particular, has attracted significant investment, with funding growing ninefold in 2023 compared to the previous year [15].

Regulation and ethics: as AI becomes increasingly integrated into daily life, ethical and responsible use concerns have become crucial. There is an urgent need for standardised responsible AI assessments due to the evident risks related to privacy and security and the use of AI to create falsifiable content such as deepfakes in electoral contexts, raising serious disinformation issues [16].

Applications in health and education: Artificial intelligence continues to play a crucial role in healthcare, contributing to drug discovery and disease diagnosis. In education, AI is used to personalise learning processes and provide support to students through virtual assistants**.** However, this statement must be contextualised. The integration of AI in education is not yet universally applicable across all disciplines or regions. While adaptive learning platforms and virtual assistants are gaining traction in certain educational contexts, their presence is limited and often experimental. Thus, generalisations about AI's role in education should be approached with caution and supported by empirical evidence. The rapid evolution of artificial intelligence is influencing various fields, generating both benefits and challenges. Technical advancements, increased investments, and integration across diverse industries highlight the enormous potential of this technology. However, addressing ethical and regulatory aspects remains essential to ensure the responsible use of AI for the benefit of society, necessitating prompt action from global regulatory entities.

In recent years, artificial intelligence has revolutionised various fields, from healthcare and finance to transportation and entertainment. This advanced technology, capable of learning and adapting, has significantly improved efficiency and precision across multiple sectors. Nevertheless, one of the most fascinating and relevant applications of AI remains the analysis and management of online reviews. These reviews, a vital form of consumer feedback, can now be processed and interpreted at an unprecedented scale and depth thanks to AI's advanced analytical capabilities [17].

Online reviews are opinions, evaluations, and comments posted by consumers on various digital platforms regarding products, services, experiences, or companies. These reviews can be found on e-commerce websites, social networks, forums, blogs, and specialised review sites. They are written by real users who share their experiences to assist other potential consumers in making informed decisions.

Online reviews have become an essential component of the consumer decision-making process. Studies indicate that most buyers read reviews before making a purchase, considering these opinions as trustworthy as personal recommendations. They provide authentic and detailed information about the performance and quality of products and services, contributing to increased market transparency.

The impact of online reviews is profound and diversified, influencing all aspects of the consumer market. For consumers, reviews offer a genuine perspective on products and services, helping them avoid unsatisfactory purchases and find the best available options. It is important to clarify that this study did not analyse AI-generated reviews extracted from specific platforms. Instead, it evaluated user perceptions regarding the presence and impact of such content in digital environments. Therefore, no content was evaluated for truthfulness or specific source credibility. The focus remains on consumer awareness and behavioural intentions regarding the concept of AI-generated reviews in general. They serve as a reliable guide based on other users' experiences, allowing consumers to make more informed decisions and have realistic expectations [18].

For companies, positive reviews can enhance reputation and credibility, attracting more customers and strengthening existing customers' loyalty. At the same time, negative reviews provide valuable feedback, highlighting areas for improvement. This feedback can be used to adjust strategies, address deficiencies, and improve overall customer experience. Companies that proactively respond to reviews demonstrate a genuine concern for customer satisfaction, which can turn criticisms into growth and innovation opportunities.

Regarding the overall market, reviews create a more competitive and transparent environment. They compel companies to continuously improve their products and services to meet consumer expectations. This feedback and adjustment cycle stimulates innovation and raises quality standards, benefiting not only individual consumers and companies but the economy as a whole. Online reviews facilitate a commercial ecosystem where quality and customer satisfaction are central priorities, leading to continuous and healthy market evolution [19, 20].

Online reviews are diverse, but from a classification perspective, we can highlight:

- E-commerce Platform Reviews: Amazon, eBay, and similar sites allow users to rate purchased products and leave detailed comments.
- Social Media Reviews: Facebook, Instagram, and other social platforms offer the possibility to post reviews and share experiences with a broad audience.
- Specialised Review Sites: Yelp, TripAdvisor, and Google Reviews are examples of dedicated review sites covering various domains such as restaurants, hotels, and local services.
- Blogs and Forums: Many consumers choose to post detailed reviews on personal blogs or discussion forums where they can engage in dialogue with other users about their experiences.

Challenges of online reviews. Online reviews' challenges are diverse and complex, affecting both consumers and companies. Fake reviews represent a major issue, as these fabricated or paid opinions can mislead consumers into making inappropriate purchases. These false reviews can distort the general perception of a product or service, undermining consumer trust in the authenticity of online reviews.

On the other hand, managing negative reviews is essential for companies. They must handle criticism carefully, using it as an opportunity to improve their products and services. Responses to negative reviews must be constructive and professional to avoid damaging the company's public image. A proactive and empathetic approach to managing negative feedback can turn a potentially problematic situation into an opportunity to demonstrate commitment to customer satisfaction [21].

Information overload. Information overload is another significant challenge. The abundance of available online reviews can be overwhelming for consumers, making it difficult to select relevant information. Consumers may feel confused or indecisive when faced with many contradictory opinions. In this context, developing algorithms for filtering and organising reviews based on relevance and authenticity becomes crucial to help consumers make informed decisions efficiently. Thus, navigating the large volume of online feedback can become simpler and more useful for users [22, 23].

Generational differences

Conceptual differences between generations represent a complex and challenging subject, including various aspects ranging from cultural values and attitudes to consumption habits and the degree of adoption of digital technologies [24, 25]. In the context of reviews and their impact, these differences become even more evident, influencing how different generations perceive and use online feedback.

- Baby Boomers Born between 1946 and 1964, the Baby Boomer generation grew up during economic prosperity and significant social transformations. This generation is characterised by a strong work ethic and a preference for personal and traditional interactions. Regarding digitalisation, Baby Boomers were initially more reluctant to adopt new technologies. However, as technology has become indispensable, many have started using the internet and digital devices to stay connected and informed.
- In the context of online reviews, Baby Boomers tend to be more cautious and selective. They prefer trusted sources and are more likely to consider reviews written by people they know personally or who are well-regarded in the field. This generation also appreciates detailed and well-argued reviews that provide concrete and relevant information.
- Generation X Born between 1965 and 1980, Generation X witnessed the transition from an industrial to a digital economy. This generation is often considered pragmatic, independent, and adaptable. Generation X grew up with the advent of the first personal computers and the internet, allowing them to quickly adapt to new technologies.
- Regarding online reviews, Generation X is quite active and influential. They frequently use digital platforms to research products and services, emphasising reviews written by authentic users. Generation X appreciates well-structured and balanced reviews that present both positive and negative aspects of a product or service. This generation is also willing to contribute their reviews, believing their feedback can help other consumers make informed decisions.
- Millennials or Generation Y, born between 1981 and 1996, are the first generation to grow up with the internet and digital technology as an integral part of daily life. They are characterised by a high degree of trust in technology and a preference for online interactions and digital mobility.
- Millennials are prolific users of online reviews, both as readers and authors. They rely on online feedback to make quick and informed decisions, preferring short reviews containing essential and authentic information. This generation tends to use multiple review sources and validate them by comparing several platforms. Millennials are also more open to using social networks to express their opinions and influence their friends and followers' consumption behaviour.
- Generation Z Born after 1997, Generation Z is the youngest and most digitalised generation. They are true digital natives accustomed to instant access to information and online interactions. Generation Z is known for its ability to navigate multiple information sources and quickly filter relevant content.
- In the context of online reviews, Generation Z highly values authenticity and transparency. They prefer video reviews or those posted on social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, where they can see other users' reactions and experiences directly and visually. This generation is also more likely to be influenced by influencers' and online personalities' reviews, which they consider authentic and trustworthy.

Generational differences in digitalisation and consumption habits. These differences are closely related to each generation's context of growing up and evolving. For example, Baby Boomers experienced the transition from analogue to digital technologies, while Millennials and Generation Z grew up in a digitalised environment from the start. These differences are reflected in how each generation adopts and uses technology in daily life.

Regarding consumption habits, Baby Boomers and Generation X are more oriented towards quality products and services, relying on personal experiences and direct recommendations. Millennials and Generation Z, on the other hand, are more open to innovation and exploring new trends, using online reviews and digital feedback to discover new products and services and make quick decisions [26].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research section focuses on investigating users' awareness and perception of AI-generated reviews, specifically in the context of online textile product purchases. To obtain concrete and relevant data, we conducted quantitative research using a questionnaire applied to a sample of 150 participants. This approach allows the collection of detailed information regarding the opinions and attitudes of various age groups towards using AI in generating online reviews.

Research methodology

This section details the methodology used to investigate users' awareness and perception of AI-generated reviews. The quantitative research was conducted by applying a structured questionnaire to a sample of 150 people representing various demographic segments.

Sample

The sample consisted of 150 participants selected to represent various age groups and education levels. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling method, but efforts were made to ensure demographic diversity. Inclusion criteria required participants to have at least occasional experience with online shopping and a basic understanding of artificial intelligence concepts. This ensured that respondents were capable of evaluating the concept of AI-generated reviews with sufficient awareness. The questionnaire used in this research was structured into several sections, each targeting a specific set of variables. The questions were formulated to be clear and easy to understand, using a five-point Likert scale (from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree").

Questionnaire sections

- Demographics: Questions regarding age, gender, and education level.
- AI Awareness: Questions about users' awareness that reviews can be generated by AI.
- AI Usage Perception: Questions about the usefulness and trustworthiness of AI-generated reviews.
- Preferences and Attitudes: Questions about users' preferences for AI-generated or human-written reviews.
- Authenticity and Ethics: Questions about concerns regarding the authenticity and ethics of AI-generated reviews.

Data collection procedure

Pre-testing the Questionnaire: The questionnaire was pre-tested on a small group of people to ensure the questions' clarity and relevance. Feedback obtained was used to adjust and optimise the final questionnaire.

Data Collection: The questionnaire was distributed online using survey platforms and completed by 150 participants. The estimated time for completing the questionnaire was approximately 10–15 minutes.

Confidentiality and Consent: Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and were asked for informed consent before participating in the study.

Through this research, we aimed for a rigorous and systematic approach, allowing us to obtain relevant and reliable data about users' awareness and perception of AI-generated reviews. This will contribute to a better understanding of this technology's impact on consumer behaviour and the adaptation of marketing strategies accordingly.

Decision problem

AI plays an increasingly important role in generating online reviews, and users' perception of these reviews significantly influences purchasing behaviour. In this context, the decision problem focuses on understanding the level of awareness and perception of AI-generated reviews and identifying age-related differences. The results of this research are essential for companies using or intending to use AI-generated reviews in their marketing strategies.

In the digital era, online reviews are a crucial component of the consumer decision-making process. Authentic reviews written by real users are considered a trustworthy source for evaluating products and services. However, automatically generating reviews through AI raises questions about authenticity, trust, and ethics.

Decision problem aspects

User Awareness: A central aspect of the decision problem is determining how aware users are that many online reviews are generated by AI rather than real people. This awareness may vary significantly by age and education level.

User Perception: Another important aspect is how users perceive AI-generated reviews regarding usefulness, detail, and impartiality. If users consider these reviews as useful and trustworthy as human-written ones, it could positively influence AI adoption in review generation.

Trust and Authenticity: User trust in online reviews is essential. A critical issue is the extent to which AI-generated reviews are perceived as authentic and

trustworthy. Concerns about authenticity can negatively impact the acceptance and use of these reviews.
Intention to Use: Determining users' intention to use AI-generated reviews in their future purchasing decisions is essential for companies. If users are willing to use these reviews, companies can invest more in AI technologies for review generation.
Understanding users' perceptions is crucial in managing the integrity and efficiency of interconnected systems where AI-generated and human-generated reviews coexist and influence consumer behaviour.
The decision problem addressed in this research focuses on evaluating users' awareness and perception of AI-generated reviews, emphasising differences across various age groups. Solving this problem will provide companies with valuable information to adapt marketing strategies and effectively use AI technologies for the benefit of consumers.

Research aim

The primary aim of this research is to evaluate users' awareness and perception of AI-generated reviews, identifying significant differences among various age groups. The research aims to provide a deep understanding of how users perceive the authenticity, usefulness, and trustworthiness of AI-generated reviews and determine their intention to use these reviews in purchasing decisions.

Specific research objectives

- Awareness evaluation: determine the level of user awareness regarding the fact that many online reviews are generated by AI, based on different age categories.
- Perception analysis: investigate how users perceive AI-generated reviews in terms of usefulness, detail, impartiality, and authenticity.
- Trust in AI reviews: evaluate users' trust in AI-generated reviews compared to those written by real people.
- Intention to use: determine users' intention to use AI-generated reviews in the future for purchasing decisions.
- Generational differences: identify significant differences in perception and awareness among various age groups (Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers).

Research importance

This research is essential for companies using or intending to use AI-generated reviews in their marketing strategies. By understanding users' awareness and perception, companies can:

- Adapt marketing and communication strategies to address users' concerns and increase acceptance of AI-generated reviews.
- Improve transparency by clearly labelling AI-generated reviews and educating users on their use.
- Develop AI technologies that better meet users' needs and expectations, thus enhancing the shopping experience.

Defining hypotheses

To structure the research and test the relationships between defined latent variables, we propose the following hypotheses, each supported by relevant literature:

- Hypothesis 1: Significant differences exist in the awareness of AI-generated reviews among different age groups [10].
- Hypothesis 2: Awareness of AI-generated reviews positively influences users' attitudes towards AI-generated reviews [4].
- Hypothesis 3: Attitude towards AI-generated reviews positively influences trust in online reviews [1].
- Hypothesis 4: Trust in online reviews positively influences the intention to use AI-generated reviews [19].
- Hypothesis 5: Awareness of AI-generated reviews directly and positively influences the intention to use AI-generated reviews [15].

Analysing the questionnaire and interpreting the results are essential steps in the data collection and decision-making process based on this data. A well-designed questionnaire can provide valuable insights into respondents' opinions, attitudes, and behaviours. Additionally, sustainable digital consumption must consider user satisfaction and perceived value, particularly in sectors like healthcare and education, where trust in digital tools can shape public acceptance and responsible usage. Prior research has shown that user satisfaction with digitally supported public services, such as healthcare education platforms, is directly linked to how these services are financed, promoted, and perceived in terms of quality and transparency [27–32].

RESULTS

The analysis of the questionnaire and the interpretation of the results are important steps in the data collection process and decision-making based on this data. A well-designed questionnaire can provide valuable insights into respondents' opinions, attitudes, and behaviours. Here are the essential steps for analysing a questionnaire and interpreting the results.
The first question in the questionnaire assesses respondents' awareness that many online reviews are generated by artificial intelligence. The results of this question are as follows: approximately 48% of respondents (Strongly Agree + Agree) are aware that many online reviews are generated by AI. This indicates a relatively high level of awareness among users, suggesting that AI is recognised as a relevant technology in review generation. 20% of respondents are neutral, which suggests that they either do not have a clear opinion or are not fully aware of the use of AI in online reviews. Notably, 32% of respondents (Disagree + Strongly Disagree) are unaware that online reviews are generated by AI. This significant percentage shows that there is still a considerable segment of the population that does not recognise AI's influence in this context (figure 1).

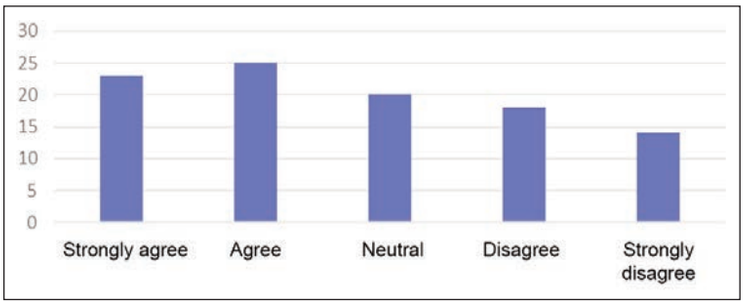

Fig. 1. Response awareness that many online reviews are generated by artificial intelligence

The results indicate a variable level of awareness among users, with nearly half being aware of the use of AI in generating online reviews. This suggests that, although AI technology is widely recognised, there is still a need to increase awareness and educate users about its use in online reviews.

The second question in the questionnaire evaluates users' perception of the usefulness of AI-generated reviews compared to those written by real people, and the results are as follows: Approximately 49% of respondents (strongly agree + agree) consider AI-generated reviews to be as useful as those written by real people. This indicates a fairly high level of acceptance of AI-generated reviews and suggests that many users view these reviews as comparable in terms of usefulness. 19% of respondents are neutral, which may indicate uncertainty or lack of direct experience with AI-generated reviews. Additionally, 32% of respondents (disagree + strongly disagree) do not consider AI-generated reviews to be as useful as those written by real people. This significant percentage suggests that there is resistance to accepting AI-generated reviews and a preference for human reviews (figure 2).

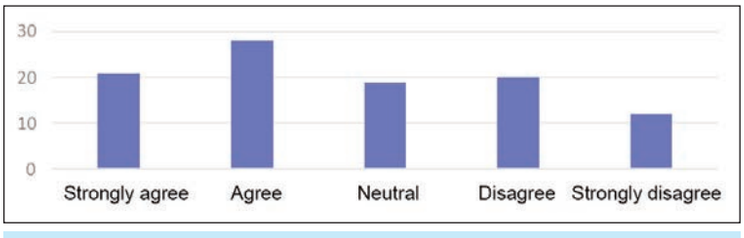

Fig. 2. Users' perception of the usefulness of AI-generated reviews compared to those written by real people

The results indicate that almost half of the respondents find AI-generated reviews as useful as human reviews, but there is still a considerable segment that does not agree with this idea. This suggests a division in the perception of the usefulness of AI-generated reviews, which could influence how these are used and promoted by companies.

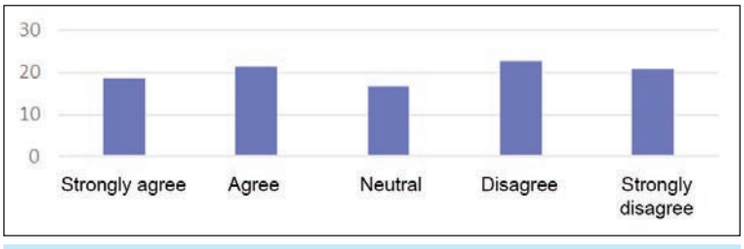

Fig. 3. The level of user trust in online reviews generated by artificial intelligence

The third question in the questionnaire evaluates the level of trust users have in online reviews generated by artificial intelligence, and the results are as follows: Approximately 43.33% of respondents (disagree + strongly disagree) do not trust AI-generated reviews. This significant percentage indicates a fairly high lack of trust in these reviews, which underscores the importance of "human authenticity" in the context of reviews. Approximately 40% of respondents (agree + strongly agree) trust AI-generated reviews. This suggests that there is a considerable segment of the population that sees AI-generated reviews as trustworthy. Additionally, 16.67% of respondents are neutral, which may indicate indecision or lack of direct experience with AI-generated reviews (figure 3).

The results of this question indicate a polarisation in the level of trust users have in AI-generated reviews. Although almost half of the respondents trust these reviews, there is an almost equal proportion that does not consider them trustworthy, reflecting the transitional period we find ourselves in during 2024. To better understand the nuances in perception, results were also disaggregated by generational cohort. Generation Z and Millennials showed a higher level of trust in AI-generated reviews (over 55% positive responses), while Generation X and Baby Boomers exhibited greater scepticism (less than 35% positive).

Furthermore, participants with higher education levels were generally more receptive to AI-generated content, suggesting that education plays a mediating role in acceptance and trust.

The fourth question analysed whether AI-generated reviews are sufficiently detailed to be useful in purchasing decisions. The responses are as follows: There is a diversity of opinions with a relatively balanced distribution between positive and negative responses.

Approximately 40% (Strongly Agree + Agree) consider AI-generated reviews sufficiently detailed, while 37.34% (Disagree + Strongly Disagree) do not agree. It should be noted that AI-generated reviews often follow examples generated by humans, and without a specific request for detail, generative reviews may be simple and sometimes inconclusive. It should also be noted that a vast review can often be hard to follow or considered unnecessary (figure 4).

The fifth question analysed whether consumers prefer to read reviews written by

real people rather than AI-generated ones.

The distribution of responses is as follows: A relative majority (46%) prefer reviews written by real people, indicating a clear preference for authenticity and human experience. However, 24.67% of respondents disagree, suggesting openness to AI-generated reviews. These respondents appreciate AI-generated reviews either out of curiosity or because the information provided by AI can index a large amount of data, much superior in quantity compared to that of a person (figure 5).

The sixth question analysed respondents' concern about the authenticity of online reviews, and the distribution of responses is as follows: The majority of respondents (48%) are not concerned about the authenticity of online reviews, while 32.66% are quite interested in the reality behind the words. This suggests a general trust in online reviews, but there is a significant segment with concerns.

It should be noted that respondents cannot always determine whether a review is authentic or not, as it has been shown over time that many consumer opinions can be influenced by various marketing strategies of the retailer. It should also be noted that globally, social media pages have been discovered that urge consumers to purchase in a favourable manner towards certain retailers (figure 6).

The seventh question analysed whether AI-generated reviews improve the online shopping experience. The distribution of responses is as follows: Opinions are quite balanced, with 39.34% (strongly agree + agree) considering that AI-generated reviews improve the shopping experience, while 38.66% (disagree + strongly disagree) do not agree. To increase acceptance and improve user experience, it is necessary to improve the quality and authenticity of AI-generated reviews, promote transparency, and conduct user education campaigns. It should also be noted that many consumer needs or interests in certain products or services are "recorded" in cookies, which facilitates highlighting favourable reviews for previous searches (figure 7).

The eighth question analysed whether AI-generated reviews are impartial. The distribution of responses is as follows: Perception of the impartiality of AI-generated reviews is divided, with 41.33% (strongly agree + agree) considering them impartial, while 41.34% (disagree + strongly disagree) do not agree. To address these concerns, entities must be transparent, implement clear labelling of AI-generated reviews, continuously monitor their quality, and conduct information campaigns to educate users. These measures can help increase trust in AI-generated reviews and improve the user shopping experience (figure 8).

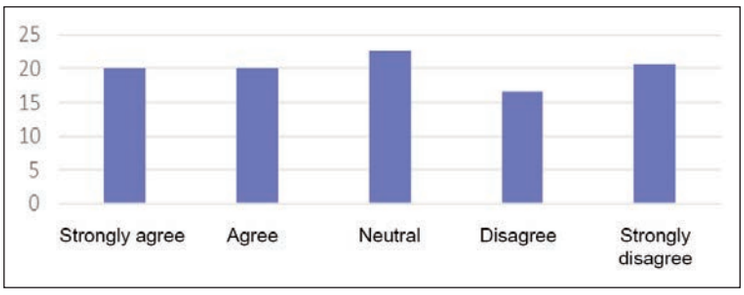

Fig. 4. AI-generated reviews are detailed enough to be useful in purchasing decisions

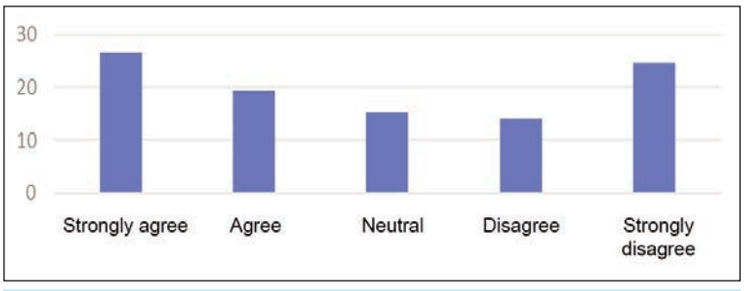

Fig. 5. Consumer preference to read reviews written by real people or generated by AI

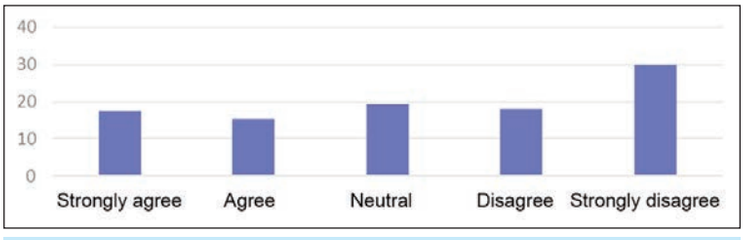

Fig. 6. Concern about the authenticity of online reviews

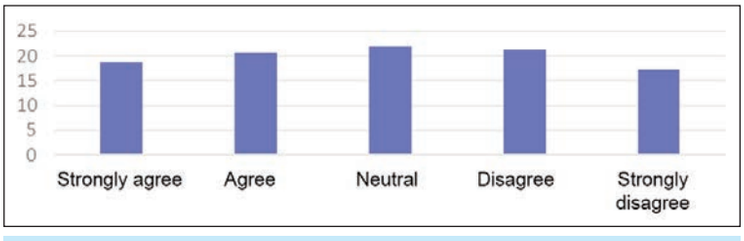

Fig. 7. The extent to which AI-generated reviews improve the online shopping experience

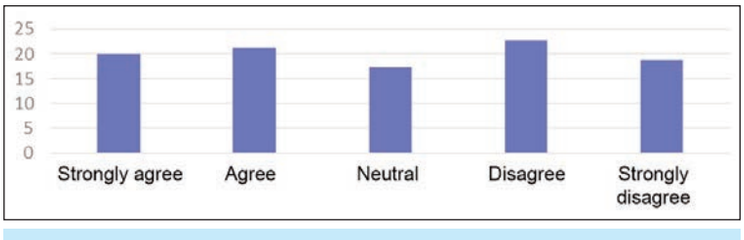

Fig. 8. Impartiality of AI-generated reviews

The ninth question analysed whether AI-generated reviews should be clearly labelled for users. The distribution of responses is as follows: The majority of respondents (44.67%) do not agree that AI-generated reviews should be clearly labelled, while 37.33% agree. This suggests a need for transparency in the use of AI for reviews. It should be noted that the entire phenomenon called "artificial intelligence" will be integrated into everyone's daily life and will function as a complementary phenomenon to human reviewing actions (figure 9).

The tenth question analysed consumers' willingness to use AI-generated reviews in their future purchasing decisions. The distribution of responses is as follows: Approximately 42% of respondents are willing to use AI-generated reviews in the future (strongly agree + agree), while 40% are not willing (disagree + strongly disagree). This question shows a polarisation among users regarding their willingness to use AI-generated reviews in the future. Approximately 42% are willing to use them, indicating an openness to this technology, while 40% are hesitant. To increase acceptance of AI-generated reviews, it is essential to improve their quality, promote transparency, and conduct user education campaigns (figure 10).

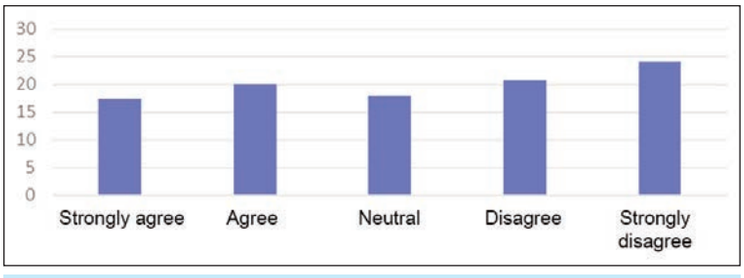

Fig. 9. Clear labelling of online reviews for users

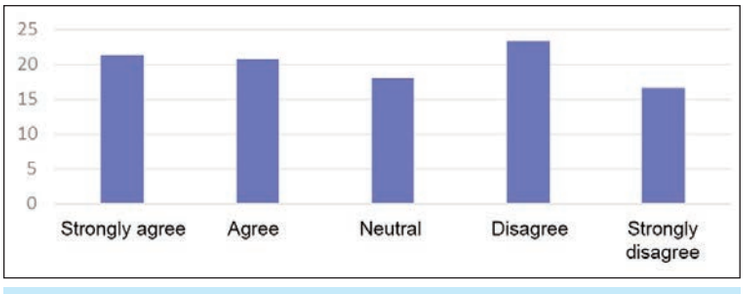

Fig. 10. Consumers' willingness to use AI-generated reviewss

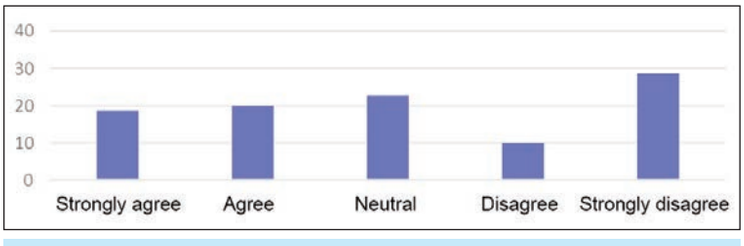

Fig. 11. The degree to which the generation trusts AI-generated reviewss

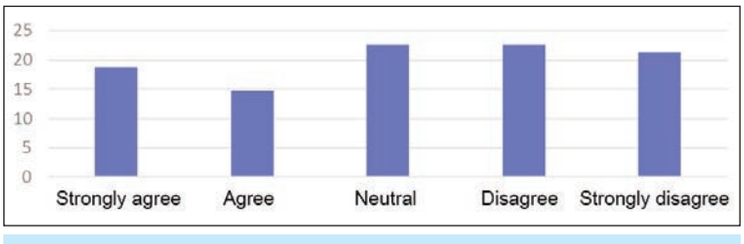

Fig. 12. The degree of coherence and argumentation of online reviews

The eleventh question analysed whether "My generation trusts AI-generated reviews". This question explored the idea that there is a direct link between age and how new technologies are interacted with. The distribution of responses is as follows: Generational trust in AI-generated reviews is variable, with 38.67% (strongly agree + agree) trusting them, while 38.67% do not trust them (strongly disagree + disagree). The question regarding generational trust in AI-generated reviews shows a clear separation between those who trust and those who do not trust these reviews. To increase acceptance and trust, it is essential to promote transparency, improve the quality of AI-generated reviews, and conduct information and education campaigns for users (figure 11).

The twelfth question explored the perception that "AI-generated reviews are well-argued and coherent". The distribution of responses is as follows: Perception of the argumentation and coherence of AI-generated reviews is divided, with 33.34% (strongly agree + agree) considering them well-argued and coherent, while 44% (disagree + strongly disagree) do not agree. The question regarding the argumentation and coherence of AI-generated reviews shows a predominantly negative perception, with a significant segment of users not considering these reviews to be well-argued and coherent. To increase acceptance and trust in AI-generated reviews, it is essential to improve their quality, collect user feedback, and conduct education and information campaigns (figure 12).

Demographic insights

The average age of respondents was approximately 40 years, predominantly women from urban areas. The age distribution was as follows: 20% under 30 years old (Generation Z), 35% between 31–45 (Millennials), 30% between 46–60 (Generation X), and 15% over 60 (Baby Boomers). Educationally, 72% held higher education degrees, and 68% were employed in sectors involving frequent interaction with digital technologies. This

demographic spread provides a representative snapshot of generational diversity relevant to technology adoption and trust in AI. Respondents are characterised by independence, adaptability, and solid education. They entered the labour market during the transition to the digital era and emphasised the balance between professional and personal life. Generation X is competent in using technology, emphasising financial stability and saving due to the economic crises they experienced, which can justify the conservative tone of many responses.

The results of the research were also used to develop an empirical model based on the previously established hypotheses. The empirical model developed in this research explores the relationships between awareness of AI-generated reviews, user attitudes towards these reviews, trust in online reviews, and the intention to use AI-generated reviews. According to the formulated hypotheses, awareness of AI-generated reviews varies significantly across different age groups and positively impacts both users' attitudes towards these reviews and directly influences their intention to use them. Additionally, a positive attitude towards AI-generated reviews enhances trust in online reviews, which in turn increases the intention to use such reviews.

For the construction of the research variables, the defining items were derived from the questions included in the administered questionnaire. The analysis and interpretation of the data were conducted using the WarpPLS software, which is suitable for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). WarpPLS allows for the estimation of complex relationships between latent variables and is frequently used in empirical research due to its ability to handle smaller datasets and relax data distribution assumptions compared to traditional SEM methods. The use of WarpPLS in this analysis enabled the evaluation of the significance of the hypotheses and the predictive power of the model, following the recommendations from the relevant literature [27, 28].

To develop a representative SEM analysis, it is essential to evaluate the accuracy of the data and the complexity of the variables used (including the quality of the items and the completeness of each analysis), as well as their consistency and validity. For this purpose, evaluation indicators such as Cronbach's alpha and average variance extracted (AVE) are employed (table 1) [29]. The Cronbach's alpha statistic is used to assess the reliability of the measurement, defined as the degree to which the results are error-free and consistent. To provide a measure of internal consistency [30], this indicator must be represented by a number between 0 and 1, as shown in the table. The WarpPLS software highlights the relationships between variables, and their validity and confirmation are assessed based on the accuracy of the items from which they were derived.

Consequently, the AVE's average validity test is applied; if it meets the coefficient classification criterion, it indicates that the measurements are of high quality and can be used to validate convergence. According to the literature, the reliability coefficient values must exceed the threshold of 0.5 and be lower than any other values provided in each column [31].

Discriminant validity was achieved, indicating that the measurements appropriately reflect the definition and application of the variables within the proposed conceptual model, as shown in table 2.

According to the guide provided by the creator of the WarpPLS software, discriminant validity is assessed through the correlation table among latent variables. In this context, the square roots of the average variances extracted (AVE) are placed on the diagonal and are used to demonstrate that the measurement instruments comply with international standards for discriminant validity testing. To meet the criteria for

Table 1

LATENT VARIABLE COEFFICIENTS					
Evaluation indicators	**Trust**	**Int_to_**	**User_aw**	**User_Pe**	**Atitude**
Cronbach's alpha	0.819	0.838	0.596	0.618	0.559
Average variances extracted	0.628	0.547	0.518	0.513	0.490
Q-squared	0.875	0.798	-	-	0.839
R squared	0.877	0.852	-	-	0.853

Table 2

CORRELATIONS AMONG LATENT VARIABLES WITH THE SQUARE ROOT OF AVES (EXTRACTED AVERAGE VARIANCE)					
Variables	**Trust**	**Int_to_**	**User_aw**	**User_Pe**	**Atitude**
Trust	(0.793)1	0.640	0.339	0.767	0.686
Int_to_	0.640	(0.740)	0.601	0.490	0.517
User_aw	0.339	0.601	(0.720)	0.133	0.409
User_Pe	0.767	0.490	0.133	(0.716)	0.565
Atitude	0.686	0.517	0.409	0.565	(0.700)

this test, the square root of the average variance extracted for each latent variable must be greater than any correlation involving that latent variable. Within the latent variable correlation table, the diagonal values of the square roots of the AVE must exceed the values above or below them in the same column. In other words, these diagonal values must be larger than any other value in the same row, whether to the left or right. Given the symmetry of the values in the correlation table, this confirms the initial assumption, namely that there is no 1:1 relationship between the latent variables analysed.

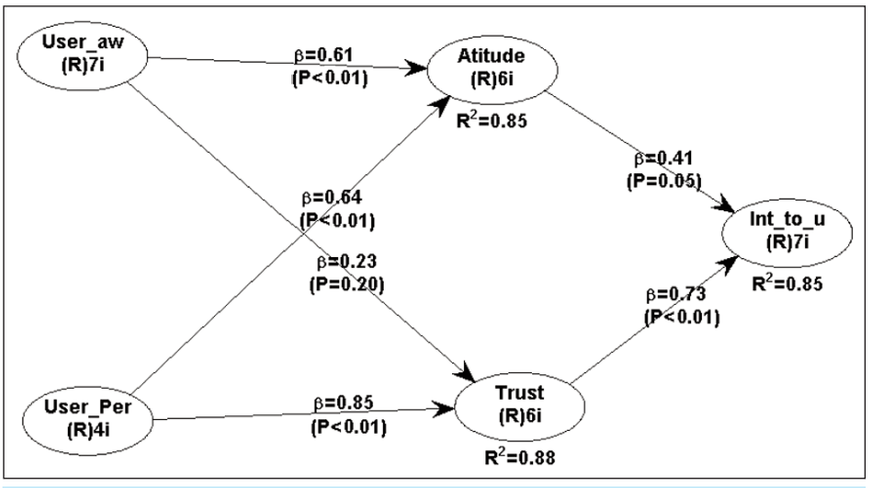

Fig. 13. The proposed conceptual model

The resulting model is presented in figure 13.

The variables are as follows: User_aw – User Awareness, User_Per – User Perception, Attitude – User Attitude, Trust – User Trust, Int_to_u – Intention to Use.

The proposed model examines the relationships between several key variables: User Awareness (User_aw), User Perception (User_Per), User Attitude (Attitude), User Trust (Trust), and Intention to Use (Int_to_u), all of which are central to understanding the adoption of AI-generated reviews. This model was evaluated using WarpPLS, a tool that provides insights through path coefficients (β) and associated p-values, allowing for the assessment of the strength and significance of the hypothesised relationships.

Starting with Hypothesis 2, which posits that awareness of AI-generated reviews positively influences users' attitudes towards these reviews, the analysis shows a significant positive relationship (β=0.61, p<0.01). This result suggests that as users become more aware of AI-generated reviews, their attitudes towards these reviews improve, confirming the hypothesis. This finding is consistent with existing literature, such as the work of Feliciano-Cestero et al. [4], which underscores the critical role that awareness plays in shaping user attitudes toward AI technologies.

Moving on to Hypothesis 3, which suggests that a positive attitude towards AI-generated reviews enhances trust in online reviews, the model provides strong support for this relationship (β=0.73, p<0.01). The significant positive path coefficient indicates that users who have favourable attitudes towards AI-generated reviews are more likely to trust online reviews in general. This aligns with previous research, like that of Porter and Heppelmann [1], which highlights the importance of positive user attitudes in building trust in AI-driven technologies.

Hypothesis 4, which examines the relationship between trust in online reviews and the intention to use AI-generated reviews, is also supported by the model (β=0.73, p<0.01). The data indicates that higher levels of trust in online reviews significantly increase users' intentions to use AI-generated reviews. This finding is corroborated by literature, such as the studies by Patil and Rane [19], which emphasise the critical role of trust in influencing behavioural intentions, particularly regarding the adoption of new technologies.

Hypothesis 5, which proposes that awareness of AI-generated reviews directly and positively influences the intention to use these reviews, receives partial support. The path coefficient for this relationship is positive (β=0.41), but the p-value (p=0.05) suggests that this relationship is only marginally significant. While awareness does have a direct effect on intention, it appears to be weaker than expected, indicating that other factors, such as trust and attitude, might play a more substantial role. This nuanced finding echoes the research of Eloundou et al. [15], which suggests that awareness alone may not be sufficient to drive intention; it must be coupled with other factors like trust.

An additional observation from the model is the strong and significant relationship between User Perception (User_Per) and Trust (β=0.85, p<0.01). Although this was not directly tied to any specific hypothesis in the model, it suggests that user perceptions significantly influence their level of trust. This relationship is well-documented in the literature, with studies like those of Patil and Rane [19] exploring how user perceptions of AI impact trust and subsequent adoption behaviours.

In summary, the model provides robust evidence that awareness, attitude, and trust are crucial factors influencing the intention to use AI-generated reviews. While awareness significantly impacts attitude and, to a lesser extent, intention, the primary drivers of trust and intention appear to be user perception and positive attitudes towards AI-generated content. These findings align with the broader body of research that emphasises the importance of trust and user perception in the adoption of new technologies,

as discussed in sources such as Kock [27] and Hair et al. [28].
The conceptual model was tested using WarpPLS and yielded statistically significant results, validating all but one hypothesis with high confidence levels ($p<0.01$). Compared to earlier models, such as those analysing electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), this research introduces the novel dimension of AI authenticity perception. While traditional models focus on user-generated content, our approach integrates generative AI's impact, offering a timely expansion in the context of Industry 4.0 digital behaviours.

DISCUSSION

This article presents a broad spectrum of awareness and perception regarding AI-generated reviews, demonstrating not only a variety of opinions but also notable demographic differences. Firstly, user awareness of AI-generated reviews is uneven, with approximately 48% recognising that many online reviews are produced by AI algorithms, while a significant 32% are unaware. This division reflects a clear need for more effective user education regarding AI's role in content generation.
In terms of perception, the study reveals a clear split in the perceived utility of AI-generated reviews. Almost half of the respondents consider these reviews as useful as human-written ones, highlighting a notable acceptance of the technology. However, a similar percentage does not share this view, indicating significant resistance to accepting AI-generated reviews as equivalent to human reviews. This divergence in perception indicates a need for adjustments in how AI reviews are presented and contextualised to improve acceptance.
Regarding trust and authenticity, user trust in AI-generated reviews remains low, with 43% expressing a lack of trust. This suggests that human authenticity is still seen as an essential factor in evaluating online reviews. Additionally, concerns about authenticity are significant, emphasising the need for greater transparency and clear labelling to assure users of these reviews' authenticity.
Generational differences reveal how AI-generated reviews are perceived and used. Older generations, such as Baby Boomers and Generation X, show greater caution and preference for human-written reviews, relying primarily on trusted sources and personal experiences. In contrast, Millennials and Generation Z, being digital natives, are much more open to technology and frequently use online reviews for quick decisions. Generation Z, in particular, prefers video reviews and those posted on social media platforms, reflecting a different level of interaction and information consumption.
Moreover, when analysing digital consumer behaviour, previous studies in online retail environments have emphasised the crucial role of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in shaping trust and purchase intentions. Structural equation modelling (SEM) analyses confirm that digital information, including AI-generated content, must be perceived as authentic to influence behaviour effectively [33]. These findings reinforce the importance of transparency and user education in platforms that integrate AI-based review systems.
The impact of AI-generated reviews on the shopping experience is also a central aspect of our study. Opinions on the utility and detail of these reviews are relatively balanced. Approximately 40% of respondents consider AI reviews sufficiently detailed for purchasing decisions, while a similar percentage disagrees, emphasising the need to improve the quality and detail provided by AI reviews to better meet user expectations.
Transparency and labelling of AI-generated reviews are crucial points of interest. Most respondents do not agree with the need for clear labelling, suggesting a gradual acceptance of AI as an integral part of the review process. However, a significant percentage believes that transparency in AI use is essential to increase trust and user acceptance.
The intention to use AI-generated reviews in the future shows a clear polarisation among respondents. Approximately 42% are willing to use these reviews in their future purchasing decisions, while 40% are reticent, indicating a need for user education and trust-building.
AI tools, such as auto-generated reviews, have the potential to encourage more eco-conscious decisions in textile consumption by improving access to relevant product information, sustainability claims, and customer experiences. For this to occur, platforms must ensure transparency, ethical AI deployment, and consumer education. Bridging generational gaps in trust and awareness is key to achieving sustainability goals in the digital commerce space.
This analysis highlights the need for clear education and transparency measures to improve user perception and trust in AI-generated reviews. Companies must conduct effective educational campaigns, implement clear labelling of AI reviews, and continuously improve their quality to meet user expectations and increase acceptance. Adapting marketing strategies based on generational preferences and enhancing the shopping experience through AI reviews are essential to fully leverage this emerging technology's potential.

CONCLUSIONS

The study provides valuable insights into the demographic characteristics, awareness, and perceptions of AI-generated reviews among respondents, predominantly from Generation X, who exhibit a cautious and balanced approach to technology. The findings indicate significant generational differences in how AI-generated reviews are perceived and used, with younger generations being more open to and reliant on technology, while older generations prefer traditional, human-written reviews. This highlights the

importance of tailoring AI technologies to meet the distinct preferences of different age groups.

The empirical model developed in this research demonstrates that awareness, attitude, and trust are critical factors influencing the intention to use AI-generated reviews. Specifically, awareness significantly impacts users' attitudes, which in turn enhances their trust in online reviews, ultimately influencing their intention to use AI-generated reviews. However, awareness alone may not be sufficient to drive intention, as indicated by the marginal significance of the direct effect of awareness on intention. This suggests that other factors, such as trust and user perception, play a more substantial role in shaping users' intentions.

The analysis also reveals that trust in AI-generated reviews remains low, with a significant portion of respondents expressing scepticism towards the authenticity of these reviews. This underscores the necessity for greater transparency and clear labelling of AI-generated content to build trust and increase user acceptance. Additionally, the polarisation in respondents' willingness to use AI-generated reviews in future purchasing decisions indicates a need for continuous user education and trust-building efforts.

Overall, the findings emphasise the need for textile companies and online retail platforms to implement effective educational campaigns, improve transparency, and enhance the credibility of AI-generated reviews as a tool to support sustainable consumption. By addressing these concerns and adapting marketing strategies to cater to generational preferences, companies can better leverage the potential of AI-generated reviews to enhance the consumer experience and drive adoption of this emerging technology.

Nonetheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that artificial intelligence cannot replace human cognitive processes, critical thinking, or emotional judgment. AI should be viewed as a supportive tool in the decision-making process, rather than a substitute. Its capacity to enhance efficiency and access to information does not equate to the depth of human perception or ethical responsibility. Responsible AI use must incorporate these limitations.

Furthermore, innovation in digital content consumption must be aligned with technological advances in other sectors. For example, nanotechnologies in healthcare have been paired with digital systems to enhance diagnosis and therapy precision [34]. Drawing a parallel, the use of AI in content generation, including reviews, should follow similar interdisciplinary innovation principles that ensure accuracy, user safety, and ethical deployment.

These actions are essential for ensuring the sustainable development of digital socio-technical systems that depend on trust, transparency, and adaptive communication between AI technologies and users. As AI becomes embedded in digital consumer ecosystems, its responsible implementation can foster more sustainable consumption. Stakeholders, developers, marketers, and regulators must ensure that AI tools like review generators are transparent, fair, and aligned with the goals of sustainable development, especially in promoting informed, responsible consumer decisions.

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