LUISS

Department of Business and Management

Course of Marketing Metrics

The New Era of Luxury Fashion: How Synthetic Media Shapes Perceived Brand Authenticity

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Introduction

Over the last decade Artificial Intelligence (AI) has demonstrated to be the most disruptive innovation for the work environment, as it has been able of deeply transforming organizational processes and, also, the way in which individuals handle their daily workflow. (Beierschoder, M., 2024)

As time goes by, the topic of how AI is being included in work environment is becoming crucial. As explained in the lates McKinsey report from March 2025, where 1149 companies were interviewed, 78% of companies claimed the use of AI in at least one of their functions, while 45% of respondents claimed they use AI in more than 3 functions. (Singla, A. et al., 2025)

These results explain how AI is rapidly entering corporate reality, reshaping some organizational functions. Indeed, marketing results to be one of the most impacted areas, where AI is supporting the way companies develop their strategies and interact with customers. Majority of tasks are now automated and there is a higher level of data-driven decision-making processes. Moreover, AI is increasing efficiency and accuracy of contents created, developing different kind of them, such as engaging emails, banners and creative claims, in shorter times (Meester, A., 2025) Therefore, AI has shifted from a mere automation tool to a co-creator, able to redefine how brands engage and interact with consumers. (Singla, A. et al., 2025)

Therefore, these developments explain how AI has shifted from a simple functional tool, to support daily activities, to a real strategic support while shaping marketing strategies, with the aim of redefining both processes and customer engagement. In such broader landscape, one specific AI tool emerges and has the potential of disrupt content creation, Generative AI (Gen AI). It constitutes a real advancement, as it is able to create original and personalized contents, it could reshape how brands interact with customers, straightening customer engagement and appearing as innovative. (Edelman, D., C, et al., 2023) Finally, this could support companies to structure an innovative customer journey, aimed at increasing customer loyalty. (Meester, A., 2025)

Moreover, one of the branches of Gen AI are deepfakes, which are synthetic media that consist of hyper realistic images or videos digitally created by AI in order to generate a content output that looks authentic, even if, in reality, it is artifact. Deepfakes are fundamental and can potentially transform marketing, allowing brands to design innovative and cost efficient campaigns.

Moreover, an essential aspect to take in consideration when discussing deepfakes implementation in marketing strategies is transparency, because disclosing whether the content is AI generated could be a key factor in shaping consumer trust and therefore, protect brand authenticity. The main reason is, without any disclosure, people might feel mislead from that content and the brand will not result credible. (Mustak, M. et al., 2023)

The decision to focus on this topic and to understand its implications in the luxury industry arises from the fact that such industry is undergoing a digital transformation, where AI tools are being included in companies' strategies, to ensure an increased customer engagement. Despite such managerial interest and increasing use of such technology, academic literature has not widely addressed the implications of including deepfakes in marketing campaign, in the luxury industry.

Moreover, the industry is always associated with values such as craftsmanship, heritage and authenticity, which of course are characteristics opposite to what deepfakes are. Indeed, as it is true that synthetic media can really foster innovation and efficiency of corporations, they also might threaten such unique values rooted in luxury brands. This duality makes it fundamental to investigate how consumers perceive the implementation of deepfakes in luxury context and whether transparency can protect brand authenticity.

Finally, the objective of this thesis is to shed a first light on this untapped topic, understanding highs and lows of the use of deepfakes in marketing domain and, what is the potential impact that it could have on consumers.

Building on the above mentioned topics, the final aim of the thesis is to understand how the use of deepfakes in luxury marketing campaigns is perceived by consumers. Especially, core focus of the research will be to understand whether transparency can moderate the impact of perception on consumer brand authenticity. Indeed, the research question developed for the study is as it follows:

How are deepfakes perceived by consumers in luxury fashion marketing, and to what extent does transparency moderate their impact on brand authenticity?

Furthermore, to address such question, Chapter 2 will be fundamental, as it presents a comprehensive analysis of prior research on the use of synthetic media in marketing, while balanced with crucial insights on brand authenticity. The study integrates all these insights to

provide a comprehensive framework aimed at investigating the effects of deepfakes in luxury advertising.

Other analysis has highlighted how deepfakes can offer major opportunities for personalization of contents and customer engagement, because they could allow brands to tailor their contents to individual preferences and adapt them to different consumer needs, enhancing overall consumer experience. (Campbell, C. et al., 2022) Indeed, thanks to deepfakes, companies could really develop stronger connections with consumers and, most importantly, deepfakes could foster positive attitudes toward the brand and an increased willingness to engage with it.

On the other hand, previous literature identified also several challenges associated with the implementation of synthetic media, especially concerning consumers' deception, perceived authenticity and ethical considerations. The risk of misleading consumers is concrete because the hyper realistic nature of deepfakes makes it complicated for individuals to distinguish human and synthetic content. (Mustak, M et al., 2023) This of course, raises concerns on the level of credibility of brand communications, resulting in a real challenge when coming to the creative potential of deepfakes, that must be leveraged with maintained ethical standards, to avoid occurring in consumers deception.

Moreover, when it comes to the luxury sector, additional challenges are implied, as consumers expectations are higher and focused on craftsmanship and exclusivity. In this context, AI is used for product design (Xu, L. et al., 2022), but there is still a lack of empirical research on how synthetic models in advertising could impact perceived brand authenticity. Furthermore, previous research underlined that disclosure of AI generated content might have a crucial role in moderating consumers' perceptions in such context (Whittaker, L. et al., 2025), therefore it must be taken in account, as it is essential to determine if it could be winning brand strategy. Understanding how deepfakes in the luxury industry are perceived is crucial for companies, as there is a seek for balancing innovation with preservation of perceived brand authenticity. Finally, these insights justify the focus of this thesis, providing a strong rationale for the experimental approach.

Moving on, based on these assumptions, in Chapter 3, an experimental study was conducted to empirically investigate how the use of deepfake models affects consumers' perception of brand authenticity. Four experimental conditions were created where model type (*Human vs. AI*) and disclosure (*not present vs. present*) were combined and every participant to the study was

presented one out of these four conditions, ensuring maximum consistency across styling, clothing and environment of the visuals.

Preliminary results highlighted that, overall, AI generated contents were perceived positively, showing opportunity of enhancing brand authenticity, compared to the human model, supporting the hypothesis that synthetic media can positively influence consumer evaluations in luxury industry. Instead, transparency did not play any significant role in altering perceptions, suggesting that disclosure is not either a strength or a weakness for perceived brand authenticity, therefore it should be up to companies decide whether to include it or not.

These initial findings can offer first evidence that deepfakes are indeed a valuable tool for innovation and more details on such implications will be presented in this thesis.

Overall, it can be said that this study provides both theoretical and managerial insights on the adoption of synthetic media in luxury marketing, demonstrating its true potential to foster innovation, without necessarily compromising brand authenticity.

Chapter 1 - Introduction to AI in Fashion Marketing

The aim of this chapter is to provide a general overview of how Artificial Intelligence (AI) and, specifically Generative AI (Gen AI) function. Such technologies are reshaping the fashion marketing landscape. Across the chapter, it will be analyzed how AI is now being included in organizations' daily tasks, highlighting the radical transformation and additional value it is bringing to business operations. Moving forward, it will explore how AI is being implemented in marketing functions, and how this new technology is revolutionizing processes, such as content creation, personalization, and customer engagement.

The chapter will then delve and describe which is the added value Gen AI is bringing to marketing functions. A typical example could be its strong ability to generate new content autonomously. We will then examine its applications in the fashion industry and here, special attention will be given to *deepfakes*, which is one of the most disruptive innovations across all Gen AI tools. In order to have a broader overview of such new topic, it will be analyzed deepfakes' potential in advertising, understanding how they could benefit organizations, but at the same time, some of the ethical challenges they pose will be identified.

Finally, the chapter will reflect on the implications of these technologies for luxury fashion brands, where the tension between innovation and authenticity is especially relevant. Through this analysis, the aim is to understand whether AI generated content can potentially enhance customer experience without compromising brand identity and trust.

1.1 The rise of AI in organizations

In the past few years, a new technology has emerged and has significantly disrupted the way many business processes are conducted. AI is considered as one of the most transformative innovations, capable to offer notable benefits across companies in different industries by simplifying and accelerating a wide range of operations. Indeed, AI applications are rapidly expanding, from manufacturing and logistics to marketing and customer service. (Beierschoder, M., 2024) That is why more and more businesses are willing to adopt and include AI tools in their daily workflows.

Artificial Intelligence is rapidly changing the way individuals communicate and, more importantly, how businesses strategies are developed, as it can support organizations in becoming more and more productive and capable to quickly react to changes. The impact of

this new branch of technology could make a difference in the work environment, as it can be easily integrated in industrial processes, and could bring several benefits to its employees, as their daily workload will be reduced. (Beierschoder, M., 2024)

Indeed, from a managerial perspective, understanding how companies are integrating AI tools and Generative AI, is fundamental to grasp the scale and pace of digital transformation companies are undertaking.

As it is reported in the latest Mc Kinsey survey (March 2025) aimed at investigating how companies are implementing AI (1,491 respondents), 78% of companies claimed that they are using AI in at least one of their functions, while 71% of respondents, claimed that their organization uses regularly Gen AI in one business function at least. Finally, only 45% of respondents claimed they use AI in more than 3 functions. (Singla, A. et al., 2025)
These numbers demonstrate that AI is not just an opportunity for the future, but is already making its way in the core of business operations and is becoming a key driver of how companies are completing their daily tasks today.

Additionally, it is also important to make a distinction between what AI and Generative AI are, as those terms are often considered as the same, while they are two different concepts. AI represents a broader category that includes a wide range of technologies that give machines the capability to perform specific tasks that, otherwise, would have typically needed human intelligence (language translation, decision making processes, etc..). Instead, Gen AI is a unique branch of AI able to generate new content, as images, that are similar to data already existent, and the main difference is that Gen AI does not require human inputs to create new data, while AI is specifically trained to analyze existing data and make additional predictions out of it. (Beierschoder, M., 2024)

This increasing implementation of such new technologies suggests that AI and Gen AI are not just a *hype*, but a structural shift, that is becoming more and more common among organizations.

Ai's ability to gather and analyze wide amount of data, makes it a crucial tool for companies, as it could help in improving functions efficiency, through an automation of all the repetitive tasks. Companies that delay this adoption may find themselves falling behind competitors who are already restructuring their workflows and decision-making processes around what AI is capable of doing.

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Furthermore, Gen AI deployment also varies by company size. Mc Kinsey research highlights that companies with more than $500 million in annual revenues are more likely to be using Gen AI in different functions of their organizations (and it is already happening), than smaller companies would do. (Singla, A. et al., 2025)

1.2 Implementation of AI tools in marketing

As AI is progressing swiftly and is now reshaping some organizational functions, marketing and sales result to be the main areas impacted and, therefore, are changing radically. In fact, AI is helping marketing to revolutionize the way companies develop their strategies and interact with customers.

The strategy to include AI in marketing is strongly ameliorating work, as now majority of tasks are automated and there is a higher level of data-driven decision making processes. AI tools are also a good way to increase efficiency and accuracy of contents created, as they are capable of developing different kind of contents, such as engaging emails, banners and creative claims, in notable reduced timings. (Meester, A., 2025) Therefore, AI has shifted from a mere automation tool to a co-creator, able to redefine how brands engage and interact with consumers. (Singla, A. et al., 2025)

Additionally, to accelerate the process of content creation, AI is now capable of analyzing existing contents from a company and create new ones that are aligned with its brand tone of voice or target audience. (Beierschoder, M., 2024) This is made possible through NLP (Natural Language Processing), a useful support in content creation. NLP is a subfield of AI that allows machines to comprehend and produce human language by capturing its meaning, tone, and context. This is a real innovation, as it allows marketers to reproduce core message and structure of brand's communication, generating a whole new format (e.g. Email campaigns, social media posts). (Stryker, C. et al., 2024) NLP significantly enhances content consistency, while allowing employees to focus on more strategic or creative tasks.

Another great strength of AI is the capability of providing hyper-personalized experience to customers. Thanks to well-trained algorithms, AI can examine vast database to gain as much insights as possible on consumer preferences and their behaviors. Indeed, AI could be used by companies to develop an innovative customer journey and increase conversion rates, ensuring that each customer gets in contact with unique and personalized contents. (Meester, A., 2025)

When it comes to the implementation of AI tools in marketing strategy, it becomes fundamental to evaluate their effectiveness through using some dedicated performance metrics, which are crucial for evaluating financial return coming from campaigns, while guiding strategic decision making. Some metrics are:

- **Customer Lifetime Value (CLV):** represents the total value of proficiency coming from a customer during their entire relationship with a specific brand. Such metric is crucial to evaluate customer experience and their level of loyalty, considering all potential transactions that a consumer could make during the full time the individual is a customer for the brand; (Finn, T. Et al., 2024)

- **Return on Marketing Investment (ROMI):** it explains the return on investment an organization gets from the marketing activities and explains how the marketing function is performing, explaining which are the most performing channels and, also most performing campaigns, to ensure focusing on the right aspects and reach more customers; (Salesforce, n.d)

- **Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC):** it represents the cost of acquiring new customers, it is composed but all resources and costs undertaken to get a customer and it is useful to measure the specific value that a new customer will create; (CFI, n.d)

At the same time though, it has to be discussed that, while AI gives companies a good number of benefits, at the same time it must be reminded that is important to balance AI and human interaction, as human element in marketing is crucial too. Marketing experts are still able to provide, of course, better emotional and creative contents than what could be generated by AI. (Meester, A., 2025) Therefore, the best way to obtain and implement an effective marketing strategy, is to adopt a hybrid approach, where AI gives a first glimpse of potential content, but then the human marketer steps in with his emotional intelligence and intuition to provide an effective and more likely successful content.

1.3 Gen AI and its added value

Among all AI tools, **Generative AI** *(Gen AI)* is the one with the greatest potential of becoming the most powerful innovation in the marketing landscape.

Indeed, Gen AI is capable of generating entirely new content, stemming from images, sounds, text or even codes by relying only on user inputs and contextual data, coming from deep learning models trained on vast datasets. (Edelman, D., C, et al., 2023) Such technology is even

transforming software, by making it far more adaptive, and personalized, as now users will be able to simply express what they want to achieve, and Gen AI will deliver the required output, instead of having to navigate through rigid interfaces. (Edelman, D., C, et al., 2023) Gen AI could be then considered as a key enabler of a more intuitive and customer-centric software experiences. (Edelman, D., C, et al., 2023)

In this new landscape, digital interaction becomes a core competitive differentiator, urging organizations, and brands, to rethink their customer journey strategies, leveraging on Gen AI strong potential to build personalized and responsive touchpoints and experiences, to meet customers real time needs, in order to remain relevant in the market.

The reason behind it is the fact that Gen AI is poised to revolutionize the way consumers interact with different software, and, by extension, how they engage with brands. It can be said then that Gen AI is being capable of reshaping competitive dynamics, as several companies are increasingly relying on digital platforms to connect with their audiences. This shift allows companies to meet users' broader needs, such as supporting in planning a trip, redesigning a space, by offering solutions that go beyond traditional product boundaries. (Edelman, D., C, et al., 2023)

Gen AI' strong potential is already being noted by various companies, which are already trying to give these new tools an opportunity. For instance, Unilever decided to implement a Gen AI tool to deal with customer service interactions. This application can generate initial responses to a customer message, and the innovation behind it is that thanks to AI, this tool crafts a dedicated response to the customer, by analyzing the raised issue, but also the sentiment that arises from the typed message, all in order to give final customer, the best solution to the problem presented and so, the best post purchase experience possible. Additionally, this initiative registered a 90% reduction in time spent by customer agents on responding to individuals' inquiries, demonstrating potential of Gen AI to simply employees workload too. (Grewal D. et al., 2025)

Additional insights on how Gen AI is perceived by organizations, come from a recent Amazon Web Services (AWS) survey, where over 300 Chief Data Officers (CDOs) where inquired, and results show that:

- **80%** of respondents strongly believe that Gen AI will fundamentally transform their business environments. (Davenport, T. H., 2025)

- More than **50%** plan to increase investment in Gen AI in the near future. (Davenport, T. H., 2025)
- Less than **20%** report to have started Gen AI experimentation at organizational level. In fact, the majority of respondents is still testing these tools at an individual employee level. (Davenport, T. H., 2025)

Such findings highly denote how Gen AI is both rapidly diffusing in companies, but also how organizations are not 100% ready to implement such tools in their strategies, being in an exploratory phase of it. At this point, it is fundamental to try and embrace Gen AI implementing it in everyday workflows, but at the same time, ensure outputs are reviewed by human professionals. This approach could be defined, as previously said, *hybrid*, where technology supports in accelerating task execution and, at the same time, humans can ensure the relevance, accuracy and ethical standards of such outputs. Adopting this approach would unlock Gen AI full potential, especially in marketing functions. Indeed, as AI continues to evolve, adopting and investing on such technology in marketing, will help companies to keep being competitive and meet the increasingly dynamic expectations of their customers. (Davenport, T. H., 2025)

1.4 Gen AI in the fashion industry

Generative AI is still a rising phenomenon, but it has the potential to support fashion businesses increasing their overall productivity and serve customers better.

Thanks to its capability to generate new content, such as realistic virtual models *(Deepfakes)* or 3D designs, Gen AI could have a significant impact on the industry. According to McKinsey, the adoption of such technology has the potential to increase revenues in the garment, fashion, and luxury sectors by $150 to $275 billion within the next three years.. (Harreis, H., et al., 2023)

Indeed, Gen AI is rapidly becoming a solid part of business strategies. In the fashion industry companies are already using chatbots or personalized recommendations, that are essential to ensure the most efficient customer service to clients. (Sahne et al., 2024).

Additionally, Marketing and product innovation would be the sectors to benefit the most from this new technology, but overall, Gen AI could be game changer across the whole fashion value chain, touching different functions:

- **Product creation and Merchandising:** bring to life hyper realistic designs, via 3d models, starting from sketches. Additionally, Gen AI would support in generating new

ideas for product creation, via analysis of data (such as apparel from the past, or mood boards); (Harreis, H., et al., 2023)

- **Marketing:** swift support for planning new campaign strategies, content, and, most importantly, generate virtual avatars (*Deepfakes*) to use in such campaigns, depending on the marketing channel; (Harreis, H., et al., 2023)

- **Supply chain and logistics:** increase robotic automation for warehouse operations and inventory control using real time data; (Harreis, H., et al., 2023)

- **Digital consumer experience:** offer a personalized online experience through a virtual product try-on, unique for each consumer (e.g. clothing try-on, styling recommendations). (Harreis, H., et al., 2023)

Concerning product creation, research have focused on the impact of AI in product design for luxury fashion and its potential impact on consumers perception of brand authenticity and purchase intentions. The findings indicate that while AI might increase a product's functional worth, such as improving design efficiency and technical performance, it can decrease its emotional value, which is mostly associated with the product's craftsmanship and tradition, that is what typically makes premium companies appealing. Therefore, although AI presents notable functional advantages for the fashion industry, luxury brands must carefully consider the impact on symbolic dimensions that underpin their authenticity and desirability. (Xu et al., 2022).

Additionally, Generative AI offers valuable potential for marketing functions, as it supports smooth and rapid content/communication creation. This tool can identify viral recurrent trends, across platforms, and then produce new engaging formats. In this way, organizations could increase their visibility and performances, while not having to rely on any external agency, reducing costs. Plus, another advantage is that Gen AI enables brands to generate large volumes of content in a short time. However, while this approach enhances efficiency, it also poses the risk of standardizing content, potentially undermining the brand's unique identity and core values. (McKinsey, 2023)

1.5 Deepfakes: new synthetic models

After having identified main business areas where Gen AI is creating value in the fashion industry and, therefore, should be implemented, it's important to highlight one of Gen AI's emerging branches, that will revolutionize how campaign contents are created: ***deepfakes***.

The term *deepfake,* which has been seen for the first time back in 2017, comes from the combination of two terms "*deep learning*" and "*fake*". (Cellan-Jone, R., 2019)

What are exactly *deepfakes*? Deepfakes are videos or images that are digitally manipulated to showcase people saying or doing something that never happened in the reality (Mustak et al., 2023). Moreover, deepfakes are developed through a machine learning technique, the deep learning, that trains deep neutral networks (DDNs), that are able to replace or combine images, videos and audios over a specific input, in order to create a fake content, which is, instead, super authentic and resembles the reality. (J. Kietzmanna et al., 2021)

Deepfakes are nothing more than a hyper realistic synthetic media, a representation of the reality. They can be used in marketing campaigns or advertising, and they have the capability of transforming real Celebrities, Models or Actors in virtual models that could completely replace the human presence in an advertisement. (Chitrakorn, K., 2021)

Indeed, advertising has experienced a profound evolution over the years, from traditional and digital manipulation to the rise of *synthetic advertising.* This new branch of advertising which implements technologies like deepfakes, or GANs (Generative Adversarial Networks)[1], can generate or alter a content in a way, that makes undetectable that it is not human generated. Deepfakes are useful for marketers, as they help modifying human elements, such as faces, clothing, or voices, (for videos), while instead GANs create a new model, without the need for relying on any real world elements. (Campbell et al., 2022)

This new wave of content creation represents the third major stage in the evolution, over time, of advertising manipulation. After analog (e.g., makeup, lighting), digital (e.g., Photoshop and

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[1] A Generative Adversarial Network (GAN) is a deep learning architecture that trains twoneural networks to compete against each other to generate new, realistic data based on a given training dataset. One network, called the generator, creates fake data by modifying samples from the original dataset. The other network, the discriminator, tries to distinguish between real and fake data. (AWS. (n.d.). *Cos'è una GAN*. Accessed on June 14th from: https://aws.amazon.com/what-is/gan/

CGI), synthetic advertising brings fully automated and scalable manipulation that can be layered with those prior techniques. (Campbell et al., 2022)

Nowadays deepfakes are becoming more and more popular since they are able to spread rapidly through social media. The main characteristic of deepfakes is that they are a blend of authentic and artificial content and, therefore, it becomes extremely difficult for consumers who are browsing on internet, to differentiate between what is real and what is artefact. (Mustak et al., 2023).

One striking example of synthetic manipulation is the deepfake created in the Dior *"J'adore parfum"* commercial, where Charlize Theron, iconic face of the fragrance, is replaced by Rowan Atkinson aka Mr. Bean.

This result was achieved using a specific Deep Neutral Network (DNN) able to extract facial features, called the *autoencoder* and able to reconstruct them on the target face. In particular, *"an autoencoder is a type of neural network architecture designed to efficiently compress input data down to its essential features, then reconstruct the original input"*. (Bergmann, D: et al., 2023) This process generated an ultra-realistic video of that advertising featuring Mr. Bean appearance over Charlize Theron's original gestures. (Campbell et al., 2022) This demonstrates the strong power of deepfakes and their ability to alter contents, proposing always new advertisings.

Image 1: Side-by-side comparison of the original ad with Charlize Theron on the left and the deepfake version with Rowan Atkinson, Mr. Bean on the right. (Campbell et al., 2022) [2]

Furthermore, as the main key feature of deepfakes advertising is their hyper personalization, brands are now able to create real time ads, that are specifically tailored for their audience, reasoning on a personal level with each viewer of the ad, leveraging on consumer data (e. psychographic, behavioral or demographic). (Mustak, M et al., 2023)

Indeed, deepfakes might be quite advantageous for businesses, offering convenient opportunities in advertising and brand storytelling, if used in ethical manner. The implementation of deepfakes in marketing campaigns, could be beneficial to remove language barriers, through the modification of facial expressions in videos, to create a match between speaking voice and lip movement (Mustak, M et al., 2023). Being able to create multilingual campaigns, could give companies the opportunity to directly speak to a unique target audience, in a cost-effective way, just through language readaptation of the content.

Furthermore, it has been analyzed how users perceive deepfake personas and how their use could potentially enhance (or not) user experience, comparing deepfake avatars with human personas. Findings reveal that realism and emotional expressions can significantly and positively impact users' acceptance of deepfakes. Indeed, such deepfakes could really enhance consumers experience, especially in terms of customer service and virtual assistance, by providing more immersive and personalized digital experience. At the same time, is

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[2] Campbell, C., Kietzmann, J., Sands, S., & Plangger, K. (2022). Preparing for an Era of Deepfakes and AI-Generated Ads: A Framework for Understanding Responses to Manipulated Advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, *51*(1), 22–38. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2021.1909515

fundamental that brands only implement deepfakes equipped with realistic and emotional expressions, in order to foster trust, and avoid discomfort of individuals, as excessive human-likeness without emotional connection could create confusion. (Kaate et al., 2023).

Anyhow, this hyper customization can potentially increase consumer engagement, enhancing positive sentiment towards a brand and improving purchase intentions. However, it has to be said that this topic is also raising critical concerns about brand authenticity, especially if implementation of deepfakes is not explicitly disclosed and so, users are not aware of the manipulation of such content. (Campbell et al., 2022)

To sum up, synthetic advertising offers exciting opportunities for organizations, in terms of creativity, cost efficiency and tailored communication. At the same time, this topic arises some ethical and psychological challenges that are related to consumer trust and brand authenticity, which must be highly taken in consideration in an era where AI is rapidly spreading.

1.5.1 Deepfake models used in fashion campaigns

Deepfakes have the potential of disrupting the fashion and luxury sector since it gives corporation the possibility of developing fast, innovative and low-cost marketing campaigns aimed at increasing customer engagement. Anyhow the adoption of deepfakes raise several concerns and dilemmas between on the one hand the willingness of corporations to innovate and on the other hand ethical as well as authenticity issues. (The Economist, 2025)

In the fashion context, brands are implementing deepfakes to enhance digital storytelling, launching campaigns where virtual brand ambassadors are featured. Indeed, many renewed fashion brand have already implemented some sort of AI generated contents into their latest marketing campaigns, such as Puma, Levi's, or Mango, eagering to develop more innovating contents. (Lu, Y., 2024)

In particular the Spanish company Mango, which is one of the most renewed fast fashion brands, decided to develop a campaign showcasing deepfakes. This strategy was not only to differentiate from its main competitors (such as Zara or H&M), but it was also to obtain quality contents rapidly and reducing costs, as it was confirmed by the CEO Toni Ruiz, which said: *"It's all about faster content creation,"*. (Fanzeres , J., et al., 2024)

Mango's first Gen AI campaign was launched in July 2024, and it was for the limited-edition *Sunset Dream collection* of their teen line. Garnments that virtual models were wearing were available in store for purchase, so AI provided an identical replica of clothes. (Mango, 2024)

Image 2: *Sunset Dream Summer 2024 limited edition collection* of Mango's teen line [3]

More recently, during Autumn season 2024, Mango launched another AI-generated advertising campaign, which again is teen focused, but is a sport line. This time, all images presented AI disclosure, to make consumers aware that such visuals were AI generated.
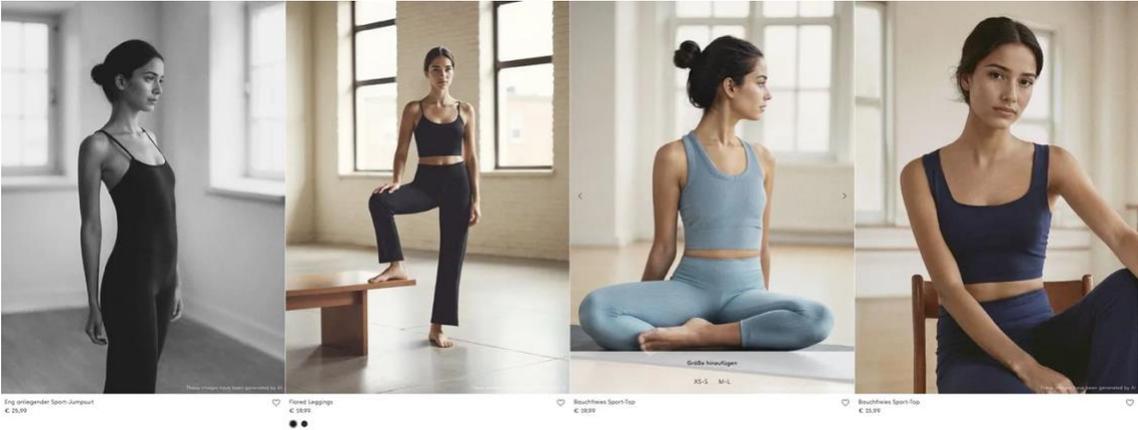
Image 3: Autumn 2024 Mango's collection with AI disclosure on bottom right side of each image [4]

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[3] Mango Press. (2024, July 10). Mango Fashion Group. Accessed on June 14th from:
https://www.mangofashiongroup.com/en/w/mango-crea-la-primera-campaña-generada-con-inteligencia-artificial-para-su-línea-teen

[4] Campos, P. (2024, November 19). *#7 | Quem se importa se uma marca usa IA?*. Marketing de Ponta a Ponta .
Accessed on June 14th from: https://marketingpap.substack.com/p/marca-ia

Other than Levi's or Mango, another fashion brand is willing to experiment with Gen AI models, H&M. The company plans to start including *digital twins*, which are clones made by AI of human models, in their campaigns. (Truman, I, 2025)

The variety of fashion brands trying to launch such kind of campaigns shows the capacity of deepfakes to be used by both companies operating in the high end or luxurious industry as well as fast fashion companies.

However, it must be said that this trend is raising several concerns in the industry, as it could lead to job losses for both models and all creative professionals (e.g. Stylists, photographers.), which now are at the core of campaign development and realization. (Truman, I, 2025) Other than that, some ethical apprehensions are arising. The main one is related to the potential loss of authenticity, especially if such digital models are manipulated to fit some narrow and almost unrealistic beauty standards.

As times goes by, many more companies are experimenting with virtual models in their campaign. Last fashion company that did so is the American brand Guess that was featured on the August 2025 issue of Vogue America. The magazine showcased a campaign with AI generated models. Such visuals were created by the British agency *Seraphinne Vallora*, after being directly contacted by Paul Marciano, co-founder of Guess, which asked them to generate different virtual models to use for this campaign. (Chitrakorn, K., 2025)

The Summer '25 campaign raised some concerns across the internet and sentiment of people was not positive. Individuals lamented that such perfectly styled and flawless models were highly reinforcing unreachable beauty standards. As a matter of fact, people on social media also expressed their concerns about topics such as lack of body positivity, enhanced stereotypes and most importantly, the risk of putting aside human models and all creatives that work behind fashion shootings (photographers, stylists etc..). (Chitrakorn, K., 2025)

Image 4: Guess AI Generated campaign featured on Vogue America August 2025 issue [5]

What the agency tried to defend is the idea that AI generated models are supposed to be an additional option and not a replacement to "real" models. Indeed, AI could be beneficial for companies in terms of efficiency of the campaign, but also to brand innovation. Additionally, in order to create the perfect AI generated shots, human creativity of both models and photographers is still needed in the creation process of the photoshoot, in order to understand better how to portrait products on a virtual model. (Chitrakorn, K., 2025)

As AI becomes more popular and more considered by companies, it is crucial to balance innovation of processes with ethical and transparent disclosure of AI generated contents. Indeed, transparency results to be essential for brands' credibility over consumers and, most importantly, to enhance sustainability of marketing in the fashion industry over time. (Hauser, C., 2025)

Nevertheless, in the high-end fashion sector, where one of main pillars is generally uniqueness of products, followed by craftmanship, the use of deepfakes, could be seen as a way to de-

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[5] Chitrakorn, K. (2025, July 31). *Your favorite model? Thanks to AI, they might not be real*. CNN. Accessed on August 17th from: https://edition.cnn.com/2025/07/31/style/vogue-ai-models-guess-campaign

humanize not only brand narratives, but also to undermine the personalized experience that customers are usually expecting by high end fashion brands, resulting in faded customer loyalty towards the brand.

In the next paragraph, an overview of this industry will be given, to better understand its implications, and how (or if) deepfakes could potentially make a positive impact there.

1.6 Deepfakes in the luxury fashion industry

After having discussed what synthetic media and deepfakes are, and how they can be implemented in advertising, especially in the fashion industry, it is also important to consider how, and if, these new technologies can coexist within a specific branch of the fashion sector: the Luxury industry. Therefore, it is necessary to give a bit more context to such reality.

As years are passing by, the luxury market has been characterized by the presence of a significant number of corporate groups that holds the highest market share and, therefore, dominate the industry. Such groups are respectively LVMH, Kering and Richemont. Each group holds in its portfolio a wide range of well-known brands. To have a broader overview:

- **LVMH:** It is the biggest luxury corporate group, with a portfolio of over 75 brands, from different sectors, such as clothing, make up and perfumes, wine and spirits and many more. It has brands such as Louis Vuitton, Dior, Fendi, Givenchy, Celine and Bulgari; (LVMH, 2025)
- **Kering:** the second biggest French group which owns brands such as Gucci, Bottega Veneta or Yves Saint Laurent; (Kering, 2025)
- **Richemont:** The Swisse group is manly known for watches and Jewelry and it holds brands such as Cartier and Van Cleef & Arpeels. (Richemont, 2025)
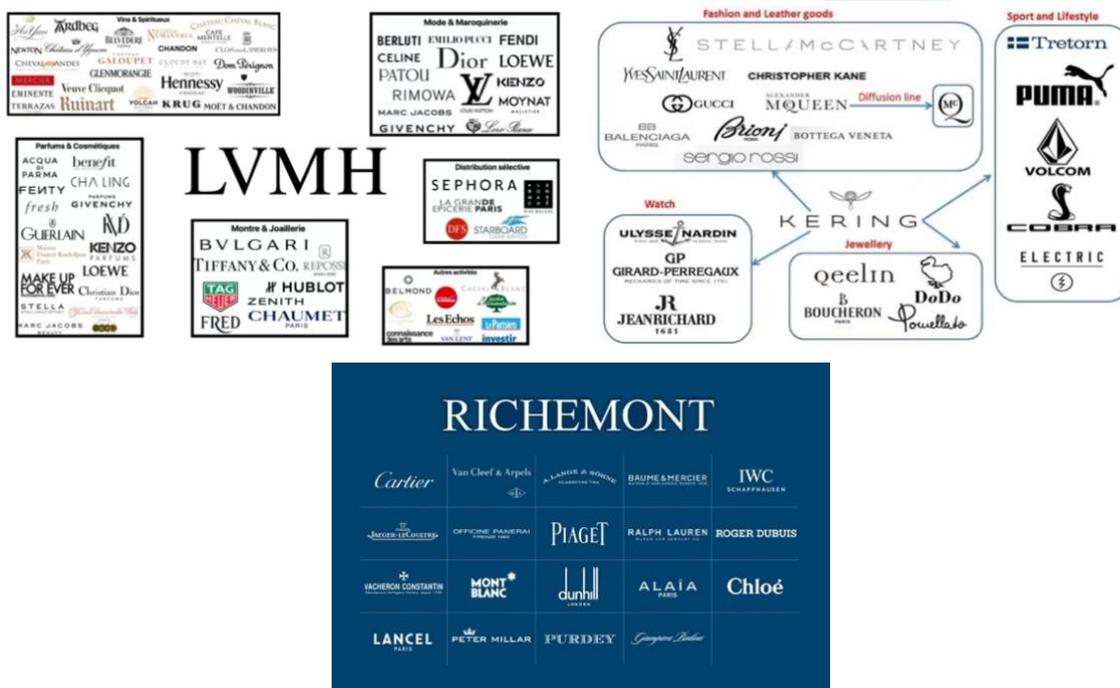
Image 5: Brief overview of the three main groups on the market and the brands they own

Over the last few years, from 2019 and until late 2023, luxury brands have been experiencing a remarkable growth and value creation, as they reached a collective sale of over $340 billion, a level of profitability highly exceeding sales generated during the pre pandemic period. (Faccioli, G. et al., 2023) Ther luxury fashion industry outperformed the global market, reaching total new levels of profitability. (D'Auria, G., 2025)

After this rapid expansion, from 2024, value creation has slowed down a little bit and, in fact, the industry is expected to grow only by just 2% to 4% annually, starting from 2025 to 2027. (Ahmed, I. et al., 2025) This recession in profitability could be attributed to a variety of factors, in particular:

- **Price increase:** The significant growth that the industry experienced over the last few years led to a massive price increase of luxury products for over 80%. Even though across years more and more individuals have been willing to buy luxury goods, this enormous price weakened the demand from such aspirational consumers. (Ahmed, I. et al., 2025)

- **Overexposure:** Massive growth led to an overexpansion of the brands, which has led to a reduced feeling of exclusiveness, key aspect of luxury. Such brand dilution is harming craftmanship and storytelling aspects. Therefore, it is fundamental to restore

core values, via a client segments prioritization, in order to restore exclusivity and client intimacy. Ahmed, I. et al., 2025)

Luxury industry is now at a pivotal moment, as the industry has to win clients back. The industry must restore their unique values, and overall customer perception. One way to do so could be to offer differentiated experience to customers, to enhance engagement. Indeed, in this context, synthetic advertising and AI driven personalization, can support conquering again client trust. (D'Auria, G., 2025)

That is why luxury brands are staring to invest in Gen AI aiming at such innovation, to support storytelling content creation. Of course, as said before, luxury industry has always been synonym with craftsmanship, innovation, exclusivity and authenticity, and this new approach would change the whole customer journey, giving clients innovative experiences. (Faccioli, G. et al., 2023)

Studies show that AI is able to significantly enhance customer loyalty in the luxury fashion sector, specifically in the online shopping environment, influencing trust, satisfaction and engagement. This means that AI driven experiences have the potential to foster strong customer loyalty. (Sahne S. S. K. et al., 2025).

Luxury brands such as Dior or Lous Vuitton are starting to rely on technologies such as chatbots and virtual try-ons to elevate customer experience. As said before, such tools offer organizations the possibility to offer a personalized experience, in particular chatbots can easily address customer needs, enhancing loyalty towards the brand, while virtual try-on are useful to give customers a more immersive and unique shopping experience. (Sahne S. S. K. et al., 2025).

If luxury companies have already introduced some sort of Gen AI they still haven't invested much in the introduction of deepfakes which is why the aim of this research is to answer a series of questions since on the one hand technology could be so captivating and beneficial for companies, but on the other hand it introduces a new kind of distance between the customer and the luxury company since it is yet to prove if such innovative and automative touchpoints could really replicate the heritage transmitted by the craftmanship, traditionality and exclusivity which have always been attributed to luxury industry. Yet, AI has the potential to enhance customer satisfaction, but it also brings on doubts: can such hyper personalized contents and experiences preserve the emotional depth and authenticity perception that are root to Luxury?

Also, could deepfake campaigns, as the ones developed by Mango, be accepted by luxury fashion consumers too, or will they harm overall consumer trust and authenticity perception towards the brand?

1.7 Authenticity or innovation: that's the dilemma

Recently, the concept of authenticity has emerged and is now being considered as a central pillar in branding. Indeed, as consumers are increasingly seeking for meaning and emotional reasoning behind their purchases, authenticity becomes a strategic need. As authenticity is a very wide topic, it is important to understand how it is constructed and why it holds such power to be a need to differentiate consumer-brand relationship.

Generally, authenticity is a term that is used to indicate something original, genuine, true and sincere, crafted or aligned with tradition. Other than that, when speaking of brand authenticity, the topic is very subjective, as it is also leveraged by how consumers perceive the sincerity of a brand, and that might vary from person to person. To leverage this effect, one key aspect that could help companies result is *heritage.* (Napoli, J. et al., 2014)

Indeed, brands that are possessing a strong heritage, will gain some cultural values that gives them a symbolic meaning, which is fundamental to establish a sense of belonging and authenticity among the desired target group of customers. A typical example of this could be Harley Davidson, which has been able to construct a brand image deeply rooted in freedom and rebellion, transforming its motorcycles in real cultural icons that go far beyond the functional value of the product itself. (Napoli, J. et al., 2014)

Today, authenticity is considered a crucial differentiator for brands, as it is capable of impacting on consumer positive perception towards a specific brand. That happens because now over 90% of customers do care about authenticity when choosing which brand prefer. To add on what has been previously mentioned, being considered authentic for brands means acting transparently, emphasizing emotional storytelling over transactional messaging. Brand authenticity has the capacity to strengthen completive advantage on the market, as developing a unique value proposition could make a company distinguish on the market. Plus, all of these efforts have the aim to build an authentic brand that can resonate with today's value driven consumers, that are increasing day by day. (Meester, A., 2023)

Nowadays, companies are experimenting with AI tools to strengthen their marketing strategies. As said in previous paragraphs, Gen AI has the potential to streamline marketing, leading to enormous advantages in terms of efficiency when coming to content production. However, at the same time, this scalability comes with a cost, because as campaigns become more and more automated, brands might risk losing their emotional value, which is what generally fosters consumer trust. Particularly, in luxury industry, where authenticity of a brand is generally associated with tradition, symbolic meaning and craftmanship, Gen AI content might harm brand authenticity, as consumers could perceive such contents lacking emotional value and sincerity. (Harreis, H., 2023)

Some AI generated campaigns are now circulating in the luxury fashion industry. A typical example would be the case of Sybille de Saint Louvent, which is a French independent creative consultant for several brands and an AI artist, who has recently gained the spotlight thanks to her creation of some hyper realistic AI generated fashion campaigns. Her works features synthetic models (deepfakes), AI generated garments and locations, which are all constructed to resemble the style of some of the most renewed luxury brands, such as Gucci, Prada or Jil Sander, without any direct involvement of the brands. (Bain, M., 2025)

The artist said that she sees *"the AI situation as an amazing tool to work with"* and that is why several months ago she started experimenting with it. Sybille Saint Louvent still does traditional photoshoots and creative directions, but she considers AI useful to "*pre-validate an idea*" with the client, before realizing it, resulting in a cost-saving tool. (Bain, M., 2025)

Image 6: Examples Of Deepfakes Campaigns by Sybille de Saint Louvent [6]

Yet, while these images are a precise representation of reality, they also raise fundamental questions concerning the topic of authenticity in marketing. Such campaigns are devoid of any real connection with brand's heritage, creative vision or artisanality. Instead, they are a mere simulation of the luxury aesthetic of such brands, and this might deceive or confuse consumers, appearing as lacking emotions, or even misleading, blurring the line between what is real and what is synthetic.

At the same time, it has to be noted that Sybille de Saint Louvent, didn't intend to deceive while creating such images. In fact, she included clear disclosure within her visuals, to hint that such imaged are all AI generated. Examples of disclosure she included are: *"AI Playground"* and *"Imaginary campaign crafted with AI by Sybille de Saint Louvent"*. Including these messages, raises the topic of **transparency**, and if standardized AI labelling should be needed or not in

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[6] Bain, M. (2025, March 5). *The Fake Fashion Campaigns That Show AI's Future in Marketing*. Business of Fashion. https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/technology/the-fake-fashion-campaigns-that-show-ais-future-in-marketing/

marketing campaigns to preserve the brand authenticity and customer perception towards that brand. (Bain, M., 2025)

Following up on this topic, research done until now have shown that deepfake advertisings are able to influence individuals online shopping intentions. It has been proven that, thanks to high quality content, also featuring celebrities or virtual influencers, deepfakes could enhance willingness to buy and customer engagement towards a brand. It also resulted that it is important to provide consumers with realistic and coherent content, favorizing essential product information, rather than misleading visuals, in order to avoid misinformation and deceiving consumers. (Sivathanu, B. et al., 2023) This study could be considered as a starting point for understanding how deepfakes are able to influence individuals' shopping intentions, and authenticity perception. Additionally, an interesting analysis could be developed with the aim of identifying if, labelling AI product contents, will still be able to enhance willingness to buy and positive perception towards a luxury brand.

Deepfake advertising emerged relatively recently and remains underexplored. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the shift toward digital content creation, increasing interest in deepfake technologies. However, current academic research focuses mainly on the risks and ethical concerns, with limited attention to how consumers perceive and respond to deepfake content. This gap, particularly in the context of marketing and advertising, motivates the need for deeper investigation in this field.

Therefore, the next chapter, thanks to a comprehensive analysis of the previous literature, will set the basis to develop new research, aimed at investigating the impact of AI on customer perception of AI-generated marketing campaigns, to understand if such new approach could have a positive impact on fashion luxury customers, without risking to damage brand image.

Chapter 2 - Research Framework and Theoretical Background

In Chapter 1, the rise and impact of synthetic media in marketing communication has been presented. Indeed, deepfakes allow brands to develop hyper realistic and hyper personalized contents thanks to such new technology. As this innovation could be a real game changer for companies, potentially boosting consumers positive perception of the brand, it is also debated on how, and if, such tools might revolutionize the luxury industry too.

Fashion industry is renewed for its emotional appeal and some players in the market have already started experimenting with AI generated campaigns, as Mango in 2024. When referring to the luxury industry, in specific, some companies are starting to experiment with such innovative tools, showcasing their great potential. At the same time, it remains unexplored the impact on perceived brand authenticity, specifically in an industry rooted in heritage, craftmanship and credibility.

Another crucial assumption has been developed across Chapter 1, because, to assess whether synthetic media might harm perceived brand authenticity in the luxury industry, it needs to be studied if disclosure of such synthetic campaigns might moderate any negative attitude toward the brand, or when attitude toward AI is positive, if disclosing the use of AI will, eventually, increase appreciation of consumers and, most importantly, perceived brand authenticity. Transparency might indeed play a fundamental role in shaping consumers' perception of the brand.

Based on these considerations, the research question of this study serves as a starting point for the development of the theoretical framework and the hypotheses of the study:

RQ: *How are deepfakes perceived by consumers in luxury fashion marketing, and to what extent does transparency moderate their impact on brand authenticity?*

This chapter will set the basis of the research, presenting all the variables of the model, reviewing preexisting literature on the use of deepfakes in marketing communication. The objective is to present a clear rationale on how both hypotheses were selected. Finally, at the end of the chapter, the experimental design to test both hypotheses will be illustrated.

2.1 Deepfake and synthetic medias across marketing communication

Deepfake and synthetic media are becoming more and more popular across the years, as they let people create fake images or videos, that will appear as authentic to individuals. What distincts deepfake advertising from traditional advertising is the fact that it can provide personalized contents based off people' shopping habits.

Indeed, as previously mentioned in Chapter 1 deepfakes are created through AI, which is able to replace, transform and overlap images audios or videos, to create new contents from scratch. Furthermore, this new technology helps companies in generating new contents to promote their product or services, in order to make them more interesting to consumers. Therefore, it can be said that this new advertising technique is able to impact companies marketing strategies, as, of course they will revert results on customer interest, concerting in purchase habits. (Sivathanu, B. et al., 2023)

Advertising and campaign creation have always had content manipulation, as part of the whole process, as it is fundamental to shape consumer perceptions and encouraging purchase of sponsored product. Manipulation has spanned across makeup and ad hoc lightning on set, to digital enhancements (e.g. CGI), to what is now AI generated contents and synthetic media. (Campbell, C. et al., 2022)

Techniques designed for content manipulation have evolved thanks to innovative tools, which helped in making advertising creation and marketing strategies a lot easier. Content manipulation in advertising could be therefore grouped in different phases, analog, digital and synthetic, where every stage reflects innovative processes for the time, and each of them has contributed to how marketing campaigns are now developed and, most importantly, perceived by consumers. It can be said that individuals are nowadays offered real and captivating contents, which increased customer engagement over time and all of this was possible thanks to all these technological innovations. (Campbell, C. et al., 2022)

To sum up, the three stages of content manipulation are:

1. **Analog:** It is the common method historically used in advertising. Traditional and manual techniques are used to ameliorate elements of a campaign. A typical example could be use of makeup or lighting setups during pre-production of the advertising, to eliminate imperfections and enhance appeal of products displayed. Analog techniques

are unfortunately time consuming and not scalable, therefore not suitable for mass tailored content. (Campbell, C. et al., 2022)

2. **Digital:** related to computer based tools, such as photoshop, which allows easier amelioration of images and videos. Over time, new technologies have emerged, such as CGI, which makes possible including complex visuals, such as animated features, in the campaign. This step significantly enhanced speed and quality of content manipulation. (Campbell, C. et al., 2022)

3. **Synthetic:** latest innovation, it allows to use AI to generate brand new contents. Indeed, deepfakes are highly realistic synthetic contents, new media showcasing virtual models, or even fashion designs, all generated from scratch. This last evolution is now allowing marketeers to produce scalable and hyper-realistic contents. (Campbell, C. et al., 2022)

As this new synthetic technology arises, it results to have great potential for companies, thanks to its hyper personalization, as content can easily be adapted to individual's needs, in real time, thanks to data extraction coming from social media. This could be a unique revolution as it could give brands, for example in fashion industry, opportunities to propose to specific individuals, virtual models matching their ethnicity, but also their clothing style, based on previous purchase history, increasing the value of user experience. (Campbell, C. et al., 2022)

This personalized contents, could really enhance customer engagement and loyalty toward that specific brand. Indeed, being able to generate original contents, allows advertisers to create manipulated visuals while displaying garments actually on sale, making the user experience more and more personal.

As a matter of fact, such personalized vertising strategy could improve consumers attitudes and willingness to buy, as consumers might feel better understood by such brand. At the same time, this opportunity might evolve and become a risk, as it can make consumers more aware, and maybe even uncomfortable, of being monitored by organizations. This awareness span across how personal data is collected, stored and used by companies to generate personalized outputs. Such aspect might trigger one's concerns about privacy, or make it feel more vulnerable, this of course depend on personal attitude towards data collection, which differs from one individual to another. (Campbell, C. et al., 2022)

In the modern society, where everything can be easily and rapidly shared through social media, risk of visual disinformation gets higher and higher, as majority or contents are altered and therefore people should not assume every image or video seen online is authentic. Yet,

awareness on this topic is already spread, but it is crucial to understand what visual disinformation is. This term refers to every action undertaken aimed at manipulating or change the context in a determined image or video and are generally used by people that intend to influence society attitude or opinions towards a specific topic. (Jin, X et al., 2023)

On the other hand, it has been analyzed how users perceive deepfake models and how their use could potentially enhance (or not) user experience. It has been studied how users interact with deepfake avatars, compared to human personas. Findings reveal that realism and emotional expressions can significantly and positively impact users' acceptance of deepfakes. (Kaate, I. et al., 2023)

Indeed, such deepfakes could really enhance consumers experience, especially in terms of customer service and virtual assistance, by providing more immersive and personalized digital experience. Therefore, it is fundamental that brands implement deepfakes equipped with realistic and emotional expressions, to foster trust, avoiding discomfort of individuals, as excessive human-likeness without emotional connection could create confusion. (Kaate, I. et al., 2023)

To have a better understanding on how the presence of deepfakes in marketing campaigns is perceived by consumers, future research could focus on analyzing how virtual influencers based on deepfakes are able to impact brand authenticity.

2.1.2 Luxury vs. technology, innovation or a risk?

As previously highlighted in Chapter 1, what defines luxury brands is their high quality, exclusivity and emotional appeal. As time moves on and new technologies arise, AI could really help company strengthen their potential and customer appeal.

As for now, companies in the Luxury industry are starting to experiment, increasing their adoption of AI tools, such as chatbots, virtual reality and augmented reality. Studies conducted until now demonstrates that AI can significally enhance brand loyalty, specifically in the online shopping environment, influencing trust, satisfaction and engagement. (Sahne, S. S. K., et al. 2025)

Although, it must be said that luxury industry is an environment where customer relationship is highly taken in consideration, and it represents a challenge to implement those technology without ruining the exclusivity or even the authenticity of the brand, so some leveraging

between the two aspects is needed, without disappointing consumers. (Sahne, S. S. K., et al. 2025)

Indeed, it is important for luxury brands to stay ahead with time, to also attract Millennials and Gen Z, which are generations that care a lot about customized experience while completing a purchase and, therefore, expect innovative and digital services. Thanks to data collection, brands could better understand consumer behaviors, and AI could really enhance trend forecasting, product recommendations and generation of tailored shopping experiences, both online and offline. Indeed, such tools could develop emotional connection within brands and customers, supporting in building loyalty, thanks to an immersive and personalized approach. (Sahne, S. S. K., et al. 2025)

It must be said that analysis haven't focused yet on how virtual models are able to impact brand authenticity. This topic might help to have a better understanding on how the presence of deepfakes in marketing campaigns is perceived by consumers. Additionally, researchers have focused on how AI in product design for luxury fashion industry works and what potential impact might have on consumers perception of the brand and on their purchase intentions.

The findings indicate that while AI might increase a product's functional worth, it can decrease its emotional value, which is mostly associated with the product's craftsmanship and tradition and is typically what makes premium companies appealing (Xu L. et al., 2022). One way to leverage this aspect is by making consumers aware of the use of AI in the design process. This strategy could help managing consumer expectations and foster more positive attitudes toward AI-driven luxury products and overall use of AI among the industry. Therefore, the topic of disclosure will be discussed more in detail later in this chapter.

What has not been addressed from this research, is how the use of virtual models in marketing campaigns would affect brand authenticity and how they would be perceived by the customers of luxury brands.

Overall, from what is emerging, the use of deepfakes could be mainly considered as a winning and innovative strategy. Indeed, if used properly, deepfake technology could be a successful opportunity to foster customer loyalty toward a brand. (Whittaker et al, 2021)

However, limited research has been done until now to explore the impact of deepfake incorporations in marketing, in particular its implications in the luxury industry and, at the same

time, customer perception of such strategy. Therefore, further investigation in this field is required to understand effects of AI in the luxury fashion industry.

As deepfake advertisement could reshape marketing communication, as it is known now (Campbell et al., 2022), it is fundamental to conduct a comprehensive analysis on what is the consequence of using such new AI tool.

Therefore, primary objective of this thesis, is to develop a detailed research and shed a light on the potential impact of deepfake in marketing campaigns for the luxury industry. Main scope would be to understand if such disruptive technology is capable of affecting positively perceived brand authenticity in customers.

This is therefore a starting point to consolidate the first hypothesis of this research, which is:

H1: *AI-generated content (Deepfake) positively affects perceived brand authenticity*

2.2 Deepfakes and perceived brand authenticity

Building up on the above mentioned hypothesis (H1), aim of the research is to prove that AI generated content can positively influence perceived brand authenticity. This main assumption is rooted in the idea that brand authenticity is a subjective topic to consumers, and they evaluate it by focusing on the level of genuineness interpreted of contents. Generally, consumers tend to consider a brand as authentic when their overall communication results credible and aligned with what they were expecting from the brand. Indeed, Perceived brand authenticity is considered a subjective variable because not everyone feels the same about heritage or nostalgia, therefore it is not always based on objective reality. (Napoli, J. et al., 2014)

Indeed, this idea is perfectly aligned with the Media Richness Theory (MRT), a conceptual framework that explains how different communication channels deliver effectively information to the audience , in a way that is tailored to the receiver. To be considered *rich*, a medium should provide several cues, enabling the audience to deliver immediate feedback, while offering a more personalized content. In the marketing context, high level of perceived media richness has been associated with higher willingness to buy of consumers and, also more interactive experiences between consumers and the brand. The MRT framework is relevant when discussing perceived brand authenticity as, the richer the communication, the most credible the brand message will appear to consumers, fostering emotions and genuine attitude toward a brand and reducing any potential information uncertainty. (Sivathanu, B. et. Al, 2022)

As a matter of fact, as deepfake advertisements offer highly realistic visuals and hyper personalization, they are indeed a highly rich medium. Deepfake richness might enhance the sense of engagement, reinforcing authentic brand perception, resulting more authentic and capable of addressing different consumer needs.

Despite promising advantages for marketing advertising, companies should be very conscious while implementing this new tool, as synthetic media opens the door to significant risks and concerns related to deception and misleading of consumers.

That is because individuals generally tend to believe to what they see, even in an era where is so easy to manipulate images or videos. Indeed, innovation in technology has made extremely real deepfake contents. A typical example could be the Jim Carrey deepfake, where his face is overlapped on actress Alison Brie. This example shows how convincingly videos can be manipulated with AI, without any obvious signs of such manipulation. (Kietzmann, J., L. et. Al, 2020)

Original video portraying Alison Brie   Deepfake with Jim Carrey instead of Alison Brie

Image 7: The Jim Carrey GLOWS (Kietzmann, J., L. et. Al, 2020) [7]

Therefore, it can be said that deepfake creation is becoming more and more accessible and they are also spreading rapidly through social media. This set the basis to the potential risk of spreading misinformation, manipulating recipients and creating a sense of general confusion among individuals. (Kietzmann, J., L. et. Al, 2020)

Overall, the increasing sophistication and accessibility of synthetic media have enormously increased the potential risk of deception in the marketplace. Traditionally, when referring to

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[7] Kietzmann, J., Lee , L. W., McCarthy , I. P., & Kietzmann , T. C. (2020). Deepfakes: Trick or Treat? *Kelley School of Business*, *63*(2), 135–146. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2019.11.006

marketplace deception, topic addressed is the intentional act aimed at misleading consumers, through practices as false advertising, manipulated product claims or artifact reviews. Such acts are specifically designed from companies to create false expectations and influence consumer purchase intentions, in order to increase their profits. (Mustak, M. et al., 2023)

Therefore, the introduction of synthetic media in marketing and communications has escalated this issue as deepfakes because, if used improperly, companies risk creating deceptive, but hyper realistic messages, thanks to all the previously mentioned capabilities. Indeed, deceptive deepfakes can mislead consumers about product quality, resulting in negative impact on brand reputation. (Mustak, M. et al., 2023)

Consequently, consumers might have issues in distinguishing between what is an authentic brand communication and a manipulated content. This vulnerability could threaten individual decision making processes and willingness to buy, but at the same time, it risks eroding the overall trust in advertising, and in general it might harm brand positive perception, as consumers might think that every content developed by a specific brand is no longer authentic, but instead that the company is trying to always manipulate recipients. (Mustak, M. et al., 2023)

That is why companies are facing challenges in balancing benefits of richer and personalized communication with the capability of remaining honest and ensuring that brand authenticity is preserved rather than compromised, when deciding if and how include synthetic media in their advertising strategies. (Mustak, M. et al., 2023)

Indeed, this duality shows how deepfakes can be both a great opportunity for brands, but a threat at the same time, as it is important to be cautious and avoid misleading content. (Sivathanu, B. et al., 2022)

Over the years, many researchers have attempted to develop a conceptual model aimed at measuring individuals' perceived brand authenticity, in a systematic way. This objective was achieved via the creation of validated scales to capture the real and multidimensional essence of brand authenticity.

One valuable contribution, aimed at simplifying the measurement of brand authenticity, is the one developed by Morhart and other fellow colleagues in 2015. They developed a comprehensive scale, aimed at gathering different aspects of brand authenticity, highlighting 4 dimensions, which are respectively:

- **Continuity:** this aspect refers to a brand's capability to stay consistent over time, keeping its identity rooted to its heritage. (Morhart, F. et al., 2015)

- **Credibility:** captures the brand's reliability of its claims. (Morhart, F. et al., 2015)

- **Integrity:** it reflects the brand's commitment to moral values and joining the right causes. (Morhart, F. et al., 2015)

- **Symbolism:** brand's ability to be a meaningful symbol that consumers refer to express their personal identity, or even values. (Morhart, F. et al., 2015)

This pre validated scale integrates both cognitive and emotional elements of brand authenticity, giving the audience a holistic view of how consumers are perceiving a specific brand. This study is fundamental and applicable in several industries, as for example in luxury where such topics are crucial to drive consumer trust and long term customer engagement.

Continuity
A brand with history
A timeless brand
A brand that survives times
A brand that survives trends

Credility
A brand that will not betray you
A brand that accomplishes its value promise
An honest brand

Integrity
A brand that gives back to its consumers
A brand with moral principles
A brand true to a set of moral values
A brand that cares about its consumers

Sincerity
A brand that adds meaning to people's lives
A brand that reflects important values people care about
A brand that connects people with their real selves
A brand that connects people with what is really important

Image 8: Pre validated scale on Perceived Brand Authenticity (Morhart, F. et al., 2015) [8]

Another example of scale developed to analyze perceived brand authenticity, is the one from Julie Napoli, and other researchers, which in 2014, have developed a scale that roots around three dimensions of brand authenticity: **quality commitment, heritage** and **sincerity.** The items associated with this scale cover specific aspects of the brand, such as artisanality (quality

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[8] Morhart, F., Malär , L., Guèvremont , A., Girardin , F., & Grohmann, B. (2015). Research Article Brand authenticity: An integrative framework and measurement scale. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *25*(2), 200–218. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2014.11.006

commitment), timeless designs (heritage) and coherence with founding values (sincerity). (Napoli, J. al., 2014)

Quality
Quality is central to the brand.
Only the finest ingredients/materials are used in the manufacture of this brand.
The brand is made to the most exacting standards, where everything the firm does is aimed at improving quality.
The brand is manufactured to the most stringent quality standards.
It feels like artisan skills and customized manufacturing processes have been retained in the production of this brand.
The brand is a potent symbol of continued quality.
The brand is made by a master craftsman who pays attention to detail and is involved throughout the production process.
The firm is committed to retaining long-held quality standards for the brand.
The brand has a mark of distinction that signifies quality.

Heritage
The brand has a strong connection to an historical period in time, culture and/or specific region.
The brand has a strong link to the past, which is still perpetuated and celebrated to this day.
The brand reminds me of a golden age.
The brand exudes a sense of tradition.
The brand reinforces and builds on long-held traditions.
The brand reflects a timeless design.

Sincerity
The brand remains true to its espoused values.
The brand refuses to compromise the values upon which it was founded.
The brand has stuck to its principles.
The brand builds on traditions that began with its founder.

Image 9: Pre validated scale on Perceived Brand Authenticity (Napoli, J. et al., 2014) [9]

Such characteristics of this scale are able to provide a valuable framework, useful for evaluating if consumers are perceiving the brand as authentic. Indeed, this might be revolutionary especially for the luxury industry, where topics as tradition, high quality and sincerity are rooted in every company's brand identity. That is why Napoli's scale can offer a solid basis for analyzing how deepfakes may influence perceived brand authenticity to luxury fashion consumers, especially for this study.

2.2.1 How deepfakes could impact brand authenticity in the luxury industry

The retail industry is undergoing on a notable transformation driven by innovation of AI, where one of the most promising areas is the fashion industry. As for now, other than chatbots, AI in the fashion industry has been implemented to design new products. AI generated designs allow to create new styles inspired by fashion trends predicted by AI. Also, AI allows to create new and unique outputs, in an efficient way and, most importantly, tailored to consumer needs.

Although implementation of AI in fashion industry is starting to develop, research done until now shows that consumers tend to have better attitudes and higher willingness to buy toward

products that hare human designed, due to a higher perception of the brand authenticity. This could be explained by consumer's preexisting schemas, which are mental frameworks that individuals use to interpret and evaluate products. (Lee G., et al., 2023)

In particular, in the fashion domain, majority of people hold a precise schema which defines that clothing design is strictly linked to specific human traits, such as creativity, passion, emotions and personal stylist touch. Therefore, when consumers understands that an item has been designed and entirely developed by AI, and not by a human, the information will get in conflict with such pre-established b schema, reducing their positive attitude towards the brand. Indeed, AI is not typically associated with passion, emotions and personal touch, leading also to a reduced perception of authenticity of that specific brand, risking to harm purchase intention too. (Lee G., et al., 2023)

On the other hand, developing fashion products with AI, could really enhance the functional value of luxury products enabling the creation of more sophisticated and innovative designs, increasing the appeal to the audience.

However, research done until now have primarily focused on consumers' reaction to AI-generated products rather than the impact of the implementation of synthetic models in marketing campaigns. This leaves a significant gap in understanding how digital models might impact perceived brand authenticity.

Additionally, another query remains unaddressed, because it is unclear if explicit disclosure could mitigate potential negative effects or even increasing positive reactions. Therefore, while previous studies focused on how AI generated products influences perceived brand authenticity, an opportunity remains untapped. A potential way to prevent possible negative effects might be the disclosure, by openly declaring whether AI has been used, or not, for a specific campaign.

Indeed, transparency might be revolutionary and support in reframing consumers 'AI perception, from a potential threat to craftmanship and creativity, to an element of innovation, potentially even enhancing brand appeal.

2.3 The role of transparency (Disclosure) as moderator in the luxury industry

The implementation of synthetic models in marketing campaigns of the luxury industry brings indeed both challenges and opportunities. While it is true that deepfakes might initially impact negatively consumers perception and expectations, there is still room to change this perception and reverse feeling, in positive.

Indeed, what seems very promising to address consumers concerns about authenticity, could be found in transparency. It has to be said that openly disclosing the use of AI generated content in a fashion campaign, could be a changing factor in mitigating the potential negative effects on perceive brand authenticity. Transparency could then serve as a reframing tool, aimed at making customers reinterpret the presence of AI, not as deceptive and misleading, but instead as a conscious and innovative brand strategy.

All these topics will be addressed along this paragraph, which will be exploring how disclosure could serve as a moderating variable in this study, and how it might help preserve authenticity in the context of marketing advertising in the luxury industry.

Research done until now on AI generated contents and disclosure have shown mixed results on how transparency affects consumers perceptions. It can be discussed that disclosure can generate very different effects on perceived brand authenticity, depending on the context it is used. Indeed, transparency might be fundamental to support trust and authenticity of brands in specific occasion, but at the same time, harm the brand in other contexts. Therefore, disclosure can either mitigate or aggravate consumers' perceptions, depending on how it meets, or not customers' expectations and, also the context of the specific marketing strategy disclosure is included in. (Kirkby, A. et al., 2023)

Recent studies demonstrated that generally consumers define a content as more authentic when they have the feeling it has been produced by a human (even if is AI). A typical example could be journalism, because while AI generated articles results to be perceived as more objective and reliable, individuals will always prefer to read and trust articles that are believed to be human written.

Instead, in chatbot context, transparency and AI disclosure is appreciated, increasing overall consumer trust, especially if the virtual assistant risks to fail in providing appropriate assistance,

the negative reactions of individuals, might be mitigated, as this possibility of mistake resembles a bit more human nature. (Kirkby, A. et al., 2023)

Another relevant example of how the context plays a crucial role on how AI is perceived by individuals, comes from advertising strategies in the service industry. Developing a campaign for service industry is difficult for companies, as services are intangible, so is up to marketers transforming the advertising in something tangible, including cues useful for individuals to imagine and think about the experience. Indeed, in this industry, when AI is implemented, and disclosed, the perception of consumers shifts, lowering both trust and attitudes, compared to ads without AI labels. Also, when AI is used to emphasize intangible attributes of the service (e.g. the service provider and its attitude) disclosure makes communication less credible and effective. Instead, when AI is implied to generate tangible elements (e.g. office interiors and background of the campaign), while including a real service provider, trust and effectiveness are indeed preserved and mitigated, thanks to disclosure. (Grigsbya, J. L., et al., 2025)

These results highlight how for individuals is harder to mentally simulate an experience or figure a service provider which doesn't exist. Indeed, this demonstrates how much human connections are essentials to consumers, and looking at an advertising that is AI disclosed, might harm brand authenticity. (Grigsbya, J. L., et al., 2025) Insights of these research raise questions on what the impact of AI disclosure in an industry as luxury would be, where presence of craftmanship is highly appreciated and expected, especially in an industry that gives its consumers tangible products.

Disclosure could help in moderating the sentiment toward AI generated campaigns as other recent studies have demonstrated that disclosing is fundamental in determining how positive, or negative, consumer reactions will be. (Whittaker, L., et al, 2025)

As deepfakes are becoming more and more realistic over time and companies are experimenting with them for advertising, the issue remains to decide whether is better to picture deepfakes as something real or openly declare that the whole campaign is all a fantasy as what is presented is not real.

On this topic, research was conducted with the aim of understanding the sentiment of consumers with or without AI disclosure in marketing campaigns. Results show that when disclosure is absent people will feel manipulated and this, of course, will negatively impact perceived brand

authenticity. Instead, thanks to disclosure, customers will not feel deceived and therefore their perception of the brand will increase, picturing it as more authentic. (Whittaker, L., et al, 2025)

Indeed, this study demonstrates how transparency and disclosure of deepfakes in marketing campaigns can moderate the effects of consumer response to AI. Such findings suggest that brands should experiment more with deepfake advertising, but caution is highly advised, as it is fundamental to include disclosure and be transparent about use of AI, to preserve brand reputation and brand authenticity. (Whittaker, L., et al, 2025) In a world where consumers are more and more conscious and request transparency from brands, deepfakes could really be beneficial for companies, showing innovation, but they need to be used wisely.

As not much studies have been developed on how AI disclosure impacts brand perception in the luxury industry, it is possible to build up on all previous assumptions, to develop the second hypothesis of this study.

H2: Transparency (AI disclosure) moderates the effect of AI- generated content on perceived brand authenticity. Specifically, the positive impact of AI-generated content (Deepfake) on perceived brand authenticity is more likely to occur when the content includes an AI disclosure

Therefore, the main assumption behind H2 is that the positive impact of AI-generated content on perceived brand authenticity (H1) is more likely to occur when the campaign presents AI disclosure, clearly pointing out that the model of the campaign is not Human, but AI.

2.4 Presenting the conceptual framework and research methodology

Building up on H1 and H2, previously presented, it is required to address the final model of this research, where the three variables are:

- **Independent variable:** Advertising models (human vs deepfakes)
- **Dependent variable:** Perceived brand authenticity
- **Moderator:** Transparency (label vs. no label)
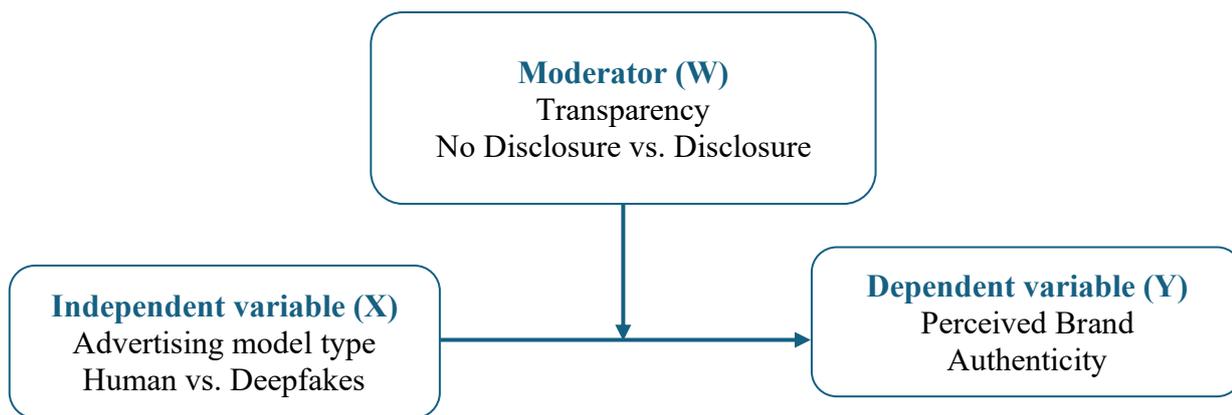
Image 10: Conceptual model of the research

In order to address the two hypotheses of this research, a survey will be used for data collection. Therefore, the survey will present questions specifically designed to measure consumers' attitudes toward deepfakes, and their perceptions of brand authenticity, particularly when transparency about the use of AI is disclosed. Target of this research, which will respond to the survey are fashion and technology enthusiasts across Italy.

To investigate the moderating role of transparency, the study adopts a 2 x 2 factorial experimental design. The survey that will be proposed to recipients, will include different scenarios, with campaigns with either human models or deepfakes, and the type of disclosure (label vs. no label). Participants will be randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions, where individuals will see advertisements either with human content or synthetic content. Instead, transparency will be tested by explicitly labelling the campaign content as "The model of this campaign is human" or "The model of this campaign is AI generated", depending on the condition.

In particular:

- **Condition 1:** Human content and no disclosure
- **Condition 2:** Deepfake content and no disclosure
- **Condition 3:** Human content and "The model of this campaign is human" disclosure
- **Condition 4:** Deepfake content and "The model of this campaign is AI generated" disclosure

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This kind of design allows to conduct a systematic analysis of how both contents and transparency interact together to influence consumers' perception of brand authenticity, within the context of the luxury fashion advertising. Finally, for this study the campaign chosen to create the 4 condition is a visual from the Bottega Veneta Summer '25 campaign.

2.5 Overview of the brand under analysis: Bottega Veneta

Bottega Veneta is an Italian brand born in Vicenza in 1966, from the idea of Michele Taddei and Renzo Zengiaro. From the beginning until now, Bottega Veneta has always distinguished itself trying to establish new standards of craftmanship for the luxury industry. Indeed, the brand's idea of fashion is rooted in concepts such as style, innovation and Luxury. (Kering, 2025) Therefore, the *Maison* tries to keep up with the highest quality standards possibles, ensuring their customers products made with noble materials that will last for a lifetime.

Bottega Veneta is now celebrating, in 2025, 50 years anniversary of *"Intrecciato",* the signature filling of the company. This working is very appreciated from consumers, as it reflects the artisanality and craftmanship of the company. Thanks to the use of leather strips diagonally intertwined, they were able to create this unique pattern. Plus, it is a very innovative design that disrupted the fashion industry in the 60s, where market was full of heavy and rigid bags, *Intrecciato* was able to provide individuals a soft, fluid and unique creation, resembling a tissue. Reaching 50 years of this pattern is a unique milestone for the brand, as it allowed Bottega Veneta to distinguish from its competitor, being the first brand with recognizable bags, without the need of using a logo. (Garcia-Furtado, L., 2025)

Image 11: First *Intrecciato* announcement featured on Vogue March 1975 issue[10]

As an additional symbol of their focus on craftmanship and high standards of Quality, Bottega Veneta, with every purchase, gives its customers the *Certificate of Craft,* a gold card that allows customers to receive assistance on the purchased products and repair them, if needed.

Additionally, the *Maison* is committed to promote craftmanship among newer generations and that is why in 2023 the company opened the *Labor et Ingenium Academy,* a school where masters artisans teach to 50 students per year the unique savoir faire of Bottega Veneta, with the promise to be hired by the company at the end of this path. (Bottega Veneta, 2025)

Therefore, Bottega Veneta has been selected as the brand to use for the creation of the different stimuli in this study. Thanks to its distinctive position among the market and for being globally recognized as a symbol of craftmanship, innovation and quiet luxury, with extremely rooted values as authenticity, such brand is extremely relevant to be included in this research to investigate how consumers respond to synthetic advertising.

2.5.1 Brand attitude as a control variable of the study

Brand attitude is typically considered, in the marketing field, as consumers' overall evaluations and beliefs of a specific brand, serving as a solid way to forecast consumer behaviors (Mitchell A. A. et al., 1981). Indeed, brand attitude represents the way individuals are predisposed to react to a specific brand, which could be either positive or negative and that is why it is

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[10] Garcia-Furtado, L. (2025, May 30). *Bottega Veneta celebra i 50 anni dell'Intrecciato, la lavorazione simbolo delle sue iconiche e rivoluzionarie borse*. Vogue Italia. Accessed on August 12 from: https://www.vogue.it/article/bottega-veneta-50-anni-intrecciato-borse

considered a valid way of measuring and predicting consumers' purchase intentions and brand loyalty. (Spears N. et al., 2004). Thanks to its capabilities, it is a great and stable indicator of how consumers react to marketing stimuli, resulting a valuable variable to include in this new study.

Therefore, brand attitude is an important evaluator in the context of luxury industry, as such brands new well known for bounding their strategies around values as heritage, exclusivity and craftsmanship. As a matter of fact, individuals having a strong positive attitude toward a brand might consider innovations in a favorable way, perceiving such new ideas as part of the brand's identity. In contrast, when consumers tend to have a negative or neutral attitude toward a specific band, any innovation risks to be perceived as not authentic. (Keller, K. L., 1993)

For the above mentioned reasons, brand attitude has been integrated in this study as a control variable, as it supports in isolating the effect of model nature (human vs. deepfake) on perceived brand authenticity while taking in account participants preexisting evaluations of the brand.

Finally, this chapter has set the basis for the theoretical framework of this research with a focus on the role of deepfakes in marketing communication and what their potential impact on perceived brand authenticity could be while, at the same time, discussing the role transparency might have in the context of luxury fashion.

After having developed the two hypotheses of the study and having presented the conceptual model, the following chapter will therefore discuss the research design, describing the methodology adopted to conduct the study, focusing on experimental procedures. The aim of the chapter will then be to present the results of the research, highlighting any managerial implications and present future recommendations to further consolidate analysis on this topic.

Chapter 3 - Experimental Study and Presentation of Results

The objective of this chapter is to present the results of the experimental study that was designed to empirically test the two hypotheses previously developed in chapter 2, in the theoretical framework.

While the previous chapter set the basis to the conceptual framework and design of the research, this chapter mainly focuses on the methodological approach followed to develop the study and, also, the structure and procedures followed to structure the survey that was shared with recipients, in order to test the impact of deepfakes in marketing contents for the luxury industry. The study focuses on how the use of synthetic models can influence consumers' perception of brand authenticity, while, at the same time, exploring if the presence of a disclosure phrase can interact, in some way, in how consumers evaluations are shaped.

Furthermore, the research design is especially relevant as in these recent times the implementation of AI in corporate environment is exponentially increasing and, also luxury brands are already moving their first steps in this new era, while keeping an eye on creativity and authenticity, as their key values. To address the research question, a survey was conducted, exposing participants to different advertising scenarios, specifically created for this study.

The chapter is structured by first delving into the methodology followed to conduct the different phases of the study, followed by a detailed description of the survey structure, with a particular attention to the design of experimental stimuli and, also, all pre validated scales implemented to measure consumers' evaluations. Moving forward the section about data collection procedures also explains how participants were recruited and how the sample was composed.

Then, the analysis of results is presented with regards to the hypotheses previously presented in chapter 2, to understand if they can be validated or not. Finally, this chapter ends with the discussion of the study's theoretical contributions, managerial implications and limitations of the study are analyzed, providing insights about the debate on the use of AI in luxury marketing.

3.1 Methodology of the research

This paragraph will illustrate the methodology designed to test the hypothesis developed in the previous chapters. The aim of this experimental study is to test if the appearance of the models in luxury fashion advertising (Human vs. AI generated) can increase consumers' perceived brand authenticity. Indeed, this effect is particularly emphasized in the case of AI generated models (H1), as in this historical moment, companies are increasing their use of AI to appear as more innovative and keep up with evolving consumers' needs.

Then, the goal of the study is to test the moderating effect, previously expressed in H2, that is the moderating role of disclosure related to the advertising models used in luxury campaigns on consumers' perceived brand authenticity.

As a matter of fact, four different scenarios were created specifically for this study, where two scenarios presented a visual of the Bottega Veneta Summer '25 campaign [11], with either a human or an AI generated model. The other two scenarios presented again the same visual of the Bottega Veneta Summer '25 campaign, with either a human or an AI generated model, but with the addition of a little label in the lower right part of the image disclosing the nature of the model (Human vs. AI). As an additional note, the deepfake image of the campaign, was created with ChatGPT, giving the tool a specific prompt where it was asked to transform the real picture into a similar version that was, of course, AI generated.

What is fundamental to point out was that everything needed to be identical to the original version, such as model features (color of the eyes or hair, skin tone, etc.), but also clothes worn (especially in terms of colors and shapes). This decision was taken to make sure each individual that took part in this study was subjected to the same stimuli, ensuring coherence across all responses. This is the main reason why the deepfake image is not invented from scratch by AI, in terms of environment, styling of clothing, and also features of the model, but it can somewhat be considered as an *AI generated replica* of the original campaign.

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[11] The visual of Bottega Veneta Summer 2025 campaign was taken from Bottega Veneta's Instagram page (@newbottega) where the visuals of the campaign were presented in a carousel of pictures.
https://www.instagram.com/p/DFujROHO7rv/?img_index=5&igsh=cGdydXJ3ajdpMDc=

Image 12: visuals of the four conditions presented in the survey

All of respondents were randomly selected by the contacts of the investigator and then, they were randomly assigned to one out of the four experimental conditions. The sample was composed of fashion and technology enthusiast, both males and females, ranging from 16 to 70 years, across Italy.

3.2 Survey structure and procedures

To develop a comprehensive and coherent study, it was developed a survey made up of 19 questions, where 17 were specifically related to the study itself, and the last two were about demographic information.

The survey opens with a brief introduction where it is explained the academic scope of this experimental study, ensuring the anonym status and the total respect of recipients' privacy will be kept. The survey continues with a randomizer block including all four scenarios, where every recipient will only see one out of the four manipulations. Moving on there are 4 questions aimed at understanding if the manipulation was successful (*manipulation check*) through questions related to the nature of the model (Human vs. AI) and if there was any disclosure in the image just saw. To rate the extent to which both manipulations were perceived correctly, a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree/fortemente in disaccordo, 7 = strongly agree/fortemente d'accordo) was used.

Moving on the following 8 questions are related to the dependent variable, the Perceived Brand Authenticity and it was asked to recipients to rate each item on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree/fortemente in disaccordo, 7 = strongly agree/fortemente d'accordo). All questions implied in the table are extrapolated from a pre validated scale, to ensure academic relevance. (Napoli J. et al., 2014). A reliability analysis was conducted to make sure of the reliability of the scale, where results showed a Cronbach's Alpha $\alpha = 0.919$, therefore it was considered valid.

Quality
La qualità è un element centrale per il brand
Il brand realizza i prodotti seguendo standard molto rigorosi e ogni attività dell'azienda è mirata a migliorare la qualità
Il brand è un forte simbolo di qualità costante nel tempo
L'azienda si impegna a mantenere gli standard di qualità storicamente consolidate per il brand
Il brand ha un marchio distintivo che rappresenta la qualità

Heritage
Il brand rafforza e si basa su tradizioni consolidate nel tempo
Il brand riflette un design senza tempo

Sincerity
Il brand rimane Fedele ai valori che dichiara

Image 13: Items for Perceived Brand Authenticity translated in Italian

Such items were meticulously selected among all the items of the scale, to avoid excessive repetitions and to ensure they were all comprehensible for individuals. Each of the three

dimensions is important to address how consumers perceive the luxury brands, therefore, specific items from the three topics were selected to ensure to focus on:

- **Quality:** this dimension is important to assess the brand's ability to be perceived as a symbol of excellence. Each of the items included in the study is aimed at understanding if consumers are associating the brand as something superior and reliable. This is ensured through questions related to how strict quality standards are followed by the company;

- **Heritage:** this second dimension is important as it reflects the brand's connection to history and tradition. These two items selected ensures that the brand is giving to consumers a sense of timelessness, going beyond temporary trends, which is something that is rooted into Bottega Veneta's core values.

- **Sincerity:** it focuses on the extent to which the brand is capable of remaining faithful to their practices compared to what has been declared, o understand consumers perceptions of transparency and trustworthiness of the brand.

A control variable was also added, the brand attitude (Spears N. et al., 2004), in order to consider recipients' preexisting evaluations of the specific brand considered in in this study, as it could influence their perceived brand authenticity independently. Again, recipiens were asked to reply rating their opinions toward Bottega Veneta rating each couple of adjectives on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree/fortemente in disaccordo, 7 = strongly agree/fortemente d'accordo). After compilation, a reliability analysis was conducted to make sure the scale was both valid and reliable giving a result of Cronbach's Alpha equal to α = 0.906.

Poco Attraente/ Attraente
Negativo/ Positivo
Spiacevole/ Piacevole
Sfavorevole/ Favorevole
Indesiderabile/ Desiderabile

Image 14: Items for Brand Attitude translated in Italian

It has to be noted that all pre validated scales have been readapted to properly fit in this study, as the different items were meticulously selected and then translated from English to Italian.

Finally, the last block of the survey contains 2 questions related to demographic information, specifically age and gender of recipients, then participants were debriefed and thanked for their participation.

3.3 Results

One hundred and thirty participants (94 females and 36 males, M_{age} = 30.07, SD_{age} = 13), were recruited for this study. The respondents were randomly assigned to one of the four scenarios created four cells between- subjects experiment in which the model nature and the disclosure condition were manipulated. Then the effectiveness of the manipulation of the sample was checked, having four conditions, namely:

- **Condition 1:** Human content and no disclosure
- **Condition 2:** Deepfake content and no disclosure
- **Condition 3:** Human content and "The model of this campaign is human" disclosure
- **Condition 4:** Deepfake content and "The model of this campaign is AI generated" disclosure

Concerning the manipulation check, thirty five participants (24 females and 11 males, M_{age} = 31.57, SD_{age} = 13.808) did not pass it. Specifically, it was recorded that the 45.7% of them was exposed to Condition 2 (*AI without disclosure*) and therefore perceived the deepfake model as a human instead. Moreover, 20% of such thirty five participants were exposed to Condition 1 (*Human without disclosure*) and misclassified the human model, considering her as AI, which may partly be explained by the structure of the manipulation check questions, which might have led to some biases.

After eliminating those who failed the manipulation check, the sample was composed of ninety five participants (70 females and 25 males, M_{age} = 29.52, SD_{age} = 12.733).

Then, a Two-Way ANOVA was conducted on brand authenticity perception in order to provide first evidence to the study conceptualization, namely that AI generated models have positive effect on perceived brand authenticity. Results revealed a significant effect of the model nature (M_{human} = 5.02, SD = 0.68 vs $M_{deepfake}$ = 5.67, SD = 1.04; F (95) = 13.805, p < 0.001), meaning that participants evaluate the deepfake model condition significantly more positive than the human model condition, supporting H1 of the study. Instead, transparency (Disclosure condition) showed a non-significant effect ($M_{no\ disclosure}$ = 5.18, SD = 0.80 vs. $M_{disclosure}$

= 5.39, SD = 0.99; F (95) = 0.551, p = 0.460) showing that individuals evaluations during the survey did not differ between the two transparency conditions. In addition, there was no significant interaction between the two independent variables (F (95) = 1.412, p = 0.238) meaning that the positive effect of deepfake model over human model happened and was consistent regardless of whether disclosure was present.

Moving forward, a Two-Way ANCOVA was conducted to examine the effect of model nature on perceived brand authenticity, while at the same time considering the brand attitude of recipients towards the brand used in this study. Results showed that the covariate (brand attitude) has a significant effect on perceived brand authenticity (F (95) = 32.268, p < 0.001, indicating that participants' prior attitudes and ideas toward the brand influenced their evaluations of the campaign. Moreover, the effect of model nature remained significant (M_{human} = 5.02, SD = 0.68 vs. $M_{deepfake}$ = 5.67, SD = 1.04; F (95) = 12.754, p < 0.001), showing that participants evaluated the deepfake model condition more positively than the human condition, supporting H1. At the same time, transparency (*disclosure condition*) did not show a significant effect ($M_{no\ disclosure}$ = 5.18, SD = 0.80 vs. $M_{disclosure}$ = 5.39, SD = 0.99; F (95) = 1.230, p = 0.270) meaning that individuals' evaluations did not differ between the two conditions. Also, the interaction between model nature and transparency was not significant (F (95) = 0.012, p = 0.912), again showing that positive effect of deepfake model over the human model was consistent regardless of whether disclosure was present or not.

3.4 Theoretical and academic contribution

This research offers both academic and theoretical contributions to the literature related to AI implementation in advertising, which is growing over time.

From a theoretical perspective, this study challenges the findings emerged from previous research where it was explained that AI generated content could undermine consumers perceptions. Instead, the study highlights how synthetic models can enhance perceived brand authenticity, expanding preexisting theories on how people perceive authenticity through brand communication.

Indeed, as it was also addressed in a previous research, the use of deepfakes, could be mainly considered as a winning and innovative strategy because, if properly implemented, deepfake technology could be a successful opportunity to foster customer loyalty toward a brand. (Whittaker et al, 2021)

Additionally, the non-significant role of transparency brought up a particular insight, because it suggests that disclosure could not always be the reason why consumer trust is stronger, as instead was proved by previous research. (Whittaker, L., et al, 2025)

Moreover, brand attitude as control variable revealed a significant result and highlights how important it is to always consider consumers' preexisting evaluations and opinions of a brand, when making additional theories about perception of authenticity as, in this case, such considerations might have impacted reactions of recipients on what they saw in the survey.

Moving forward, from an academic perspective, the study makes a step forward in the methodological investigation of effects of AI in the luxury industry. In this case, a four-cell experiment design was used to test brand authenticity via an already validated scale, but in a different industry as previous studies (luxury).

Also, the manipulation check results highlighted that a significant part of participants (26%) didn't distinguish properly the deepfake model from the human model. This result provides fundamental guidance for future researchers when they will come to design stimuli and define measurement tools, to ensure that such failure will not happen again.

Overall, these contributions are enriching the constant debate that rounds around the topic of AI and authenticity, while at the same time offering a replicable framework for future investigations.

3.5 Managerial implications of the study

The results obtained from this study provide valuable insights for the luxury and fashion industry and for managers who are considering to adopt AI generated models in their marketing and advertising strategies.

First thing first, the findings revealed that the deepfake model was perceived as more authentic than the human one. Indeed, this insight is crucial for companies because it supports the idea that use of synthetic media will not harm so much brand authenticity, but it will probably enhance it. Main explanation of this results could be attributed to how the sample was composed, as it included a large portion of individuals of younger respondents from Gen Z (77.9% of the sample). Generally, Gen Z tends to be less skeptic toward technology innovation and, therefore, results to be more open to the use of AI in creative contexts, as it could be seen as a sign of progress and innovation.

Therefore, from a managerial perspective this is a crucial finding, as it means that companies can try and explore the world of deepfakes for their strategic advertising, not only to reduce costs, but most importantly to reinforce their positioning on the market, to increase opportunities of resulting an innovative and relevant brand and, also, attracting younger segments of customers. Moreover, deepfakes give companies the possibility to create rapidly hyper personalized contents, giving the opportunity to tailor campaigns to specific customer segments, or markets. This strategy is fundamental to foster inclusivity, personalization and innovation without harming authenticity.

As there are still different opinions and sentiments toward the use of AI in marketing campaigns in the luxury industry, it is important to acknowledge the critical side of the debate. First concern individuals have is that AI could mislead people. Indeed, the result of the manipulation check reinforced this specific point, as half of the participants who failed the manipulation check (45.7%) were exposed to the AI stimuli without disclosure and wrongly perceived it as human. This insight suggests that consumers may not always be capable of distinguishing deepfake models from human ones, especially when such campaigns are made from high quality visuals. While this could be seen as a positive side because it allows easy integration in brand communications, it raises ethical concerns because, if used improperly, AI generated campaigns could deceive consumers making them think they are interacting with a real model while they're not. Indeed, this topic highlights a crucial aspect of carefully managing the transparency while using such synthetic media, even if disclosure didn't show a direct effect on perceived brand authenticity in the study, it remains a very important tool to prevent risks of manipulating or misleading consumers.

Another concern raised by this topic is the potential impact that using synthetic media would have on employment in the fashion and luxury sector, as it can significantly reduce the need for professionals (e.g. models, photographers, make up artists…). This, of course, raises questions on social responsibility, as brands might be accused of undermining the creative industry while prioritizing cost efficiency over human talent, increasing negative perceptions among customers who typically value craftsmanship and artistry, which are typically associated with luxury. Again, while AI is a great opportunity for innovation, efficiency and creative flexibility, an ethical and transparent use of AI should be considered as a main communication strategy.

At the same time, brands can consider including AI while still investing in human creativity, as it was done with the most recent Summer 2025 Guess campaign. In this way, AI could be a great advantage, without risking losing consumer trust.

Moving forward, transparency (*Disclosure*) regarding the use of AI did not show a significant effect on consumer evaluations of brand authenticity. In contrast to what was consolidated in H2, transparency did not significantly moderate the positive effect of the model type on perceived brand authenticity, showing no difference between disclosure and no disclosure conditions. Therefore, from a managerial perspective, this finding is still considerable as it demonstrates that openly disclosing the nature of the model in a campaign will not impact much consumer perceptions. Therefore, disclosing the content nature should be a practice embraced by managers in their communication strategies, depending on brand positioning, generating ethical communication practices, Indeed, even if transparency did not enhance perceived authenticity, it wasn't reduced either, allowing brands to adopt the disclosure as a way to align with consumers expectations of corporate responsibility, without encountering any reputational risk.

Also, the non-significant interactions between model nature and disclosure shows that the positive effect of AI generated model is consistent, regardless of the presence of any disclosure. This means that is up to companies decide to use it or not, even if it would be better to do so, giving companies the opportunity to decide to use AI as a communication tool in the long term.

As a final remark, the results of the Two-Way ANCOVA demonstrated that brand attitude influenced strongly the perceived brand authenticity. This insight is crucial, as it denotes that the effectiveness of deepfakes is not only determined by technology in the first place, but most importantly by the strength of preexistent consumers' relationship with the brand. For companies, this result is important, as it means that, while making investment for AI generated campaigns, managers should put efforts to nurture brand equity fostering customer engagement, through consistent storytelling and cultural engagement, as, in the end, the foundation of authenticity is extremely linked to brand reputation and consumer trust.

3.6 Limitations and future implications

The study could still be considered relevant to contribute, as said before, to the academic discussion related to the role that deepfakes could have in advertising, giving insights on which elements can contribute to a positive sentiment toward the implementation of such innovative marketing campaigns for luxury industry and what is the impact on consumer perception. Furthermore, the study contributes to fostering knowledge in the importance of transparency of specific marketing campaigns, because it is important to consider wisely whether include disclosure, to avoid misperception of consumers.

With these premises, the study highlights also some limitations that must be addressed. The first crucial point that must be discussed is the sample limitation of this study, both in geographical and demographical terms. Indeed, the study was conducted only for the Italian market segment, reflecting cultural and market specific dynamics that might not be generalizable to other countries. Additionally, the sample was relatively young ($M_{age} = 29.52$), meaning that the Gen Z, the younger generation may be more open to AI technologies than older consumers. This could be an explanation of why deepfake model were perceived positively in the study. Moreover, it has to be considered that luxury and fashion are topics that tend to be highly cultural, meaning that such sentiments towards AI could be different for the same generations in U.S. or in Asian markets. Therefore, future research could both test generational differences, to understand if older consumers perceive AI as a threat, compared to younger generations, but also extend the study to different markets to explore cross-cultural differences on how luxury is perceived. Therefore, future research could both test generational differences, to understand if older consumers perceive AI as a threat, compared to younger generations, but also extend the study to different markets to explore cross-cultural differences on how luxury is perceived in other geographical areas.

Moreover, the sample of the study was not enormous as, overall, only 130 participants were recruited to respond to the survey. Future research should consider of expanding the sample size, to gain additional insights.

Moving forward, this study focused only on a single visual stimulus for each condition, limiting actual validity, as in reality marketing campaigns are structured differently. Indeed it is typical for consumers to be exposed to multiple images, videos and cross-channel contents. To address this specific limit, future research could replicate this study but using multiple campaign visuals

or videos. Indeed, findings from previous studies revealed that realism and emotional expressions can significantly and positively impact users' acceptance of deepfakes, so developing new research including videos could foster emotional expressions and the related sentiment of recipients toward AI-generated videos.

Additionally, a way to enhance research validity would be to further develop the present findings by testing additional factors. As the study was focused only on a stimulus from a specific brand, it would be interesting to replicate the study with multiple brands and visuals of specific campaigns. In this way, an additional and very interesting insight would arise, as the effect of how deepfake models versus human models are perceived by individuals will be analyzed. Moreover, considering brand type and including consumers' brand attitude, transforming it from a mere control variable to the moderator of the study could provide more detailed insights on how preexisting perceptions of individuals can shape their acceptance towards the use of AI in the luxury fashion.

The study measured perceived brand authenticity using a pre validated scale (Napoli J. Et al., 2014) and it provided reliability of the items included in the survey but, at the same time it focused only on some aspects of brand authenticity (quality acceptance, heritage and sincerity). Previous analysis have consolidated additional scales aimed at measuring perceived brand authenticity (Morhart et al., 2015) proposing different areas to measure (continuity, credibility and integrity), so future research could implement new items from both scales to check robustness of results.

As in this study only two variables have been included, namely perceived brand authenticity and brand attitude, future research could integrate additional variables to better analyze if there is any physiological mechanism behind how consumers respond to the question posed in the survey. One topic in particular that could be interesting to test is the technology acceptance (Davis, F. D., 1989), as it could explain clearly how much technology is perceived and considered easy to understand by individuals. The only issue with this variable is that none of the related pre validated scales available could properly fit in a study focused on the use of AI in marketing campaigns, resulting in a need to alter the items of the scale for the sake of a coherent analysis. Such dimension could help in capturing additional reactions toward deepfake models, especially to understand if any generational difference exists. Inded, generally, younger generations might consider AI innovative and an exciting tool, while older consumers could focus more on their risks.

Furthermore, the disclosure used in the two conditions of this study was textual and tested in a static context (photo). However, future research could focus on analyzing how and if different types of disclosure, such as labels, symbols, hashtags (#AIgenerated), or even narrative descriptions, are perceived by consumers and if different disclosures could impact their opinions towards brand authenticity. At the same time, it would be interesting to test different communication channels and dynamic formats with disclosure (e.g. short videos with vocal disclosure to post on different social media), as it might work differently and deliver different results from a static content.

Concerning again the disclosure, future analysis could also try to position it in different areas of the page. Findings from this study revealed that, out of the 35 people that failed the manipulation check, 34.2% didn't correctly perceive the two conditions with disclosure (Condition 3 and 4), meaning that, the disclosure was not seen properly, as it was positioned in the bottom right side of the image. Indeed, it is possible that partecipants, when observing the stimulus, focused on other visual elements (e.g. color of the shoes, purse, haircut of the model…), rather than the key element under analysis, which in this case, was the disclosure. Next studies could then test if putting the disclosure in other angles of the campaign visual might change this effect.

Finally, this study provided significant evidence on the impact of deepfakes in luxury marketing communication, explaining how AI could positively impact and influence consumers' perception of brand authenticity. Findings arising from this study open new perspectives for both future research, but also recommendations for managers, as it offers foundations on how to investigate future academic research and build new potential corporate strategies.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to explain and analyze the role of AI in luxury marketing, highlighting which is the role of deepfakes, as they can influence consumers perceptions both in positive and, potentially, in negative ways. The need for this research was motivated by the increasing presence and use of AI in corporate environment and, at the same time, the lack of empirical evidence about how synthetic media were perceived in the luxury industry. Indeed, from its starting point, this study aimed at understanding whether deepfakes, which have always been considered as a controversial topic, could coexist with luxury brand values, such as authenticity, heritage and craftsmanship.

Building up on the experimental design presented, the study attempted to develop a first response to such questions. Results demonstrated that deepfake models could enhance perceived band authenticity, challenging more traditional assumptions that synthetic content might undermine consumer trust and engagement. Therefore, as participants responded more positively to conditions where the deepfake model was present, such findings suggest that, in this moment, innovation and authenticity can coexist in the luxury industry.

This result is particularly relevant, as it supports the first hypothesis, but it also highlights that the effectiveness of an AI generated campaigns, is also driven by preexisting consumers' positive attitude toward the brand. Indeed, as in this study a visual from Bottega Veneta Summer 2025 campaign was used, it was important to add questions in the survey to understand recipients' preexisting schemas toward this brand. Findings revealed that overall, opinions toward Bottega Veneta were positive, reinforcing partecipants' positive evaluation of brand authenticity. It resulted to be a crucial finding to highlight, as it demonstrates that companies should continue to invest a lot in brand storytelling to keep the consumer-brand relationship stronger.

At the same time, transparency, presented as a text that directly disclosed the nature of the model, did not hold a significant impact on consumer evaluations. This insight means that disclosure might not be always a need to foster and maintain consumer trust, though, at the same time, some ethical considerations remain fundamental, as disclosure could ensure that consumers will not be deceived and confused by an AI generated advertising.

The insights carry both theoretical and practical implications as on the one hand, the study contributes to the emerging debate on synthetic media in marketing, offering a first glimpse and

evidence that innovation is not always going to be undermining authenticity, but that contextual factors (e.g. brand attitude) can shape perceptions. On the other hand, from a managerial perspective, it suggests that luxury brands can experiment with AI generated contents without harming their identity, as they offer valuable and unique opportunities for innovation, efficiency and personalization. However, managers must be careful while designing the strategy, to make sure synthetic marketing campaigns align correctly with brand values and, most importantly, with consumers expectations, while remaining conscious of ethical risks of deepfakes.

Moreover, the study identifies some limitations and areas for future research and improvements. In particular, the sample was relatively small (130 participants), limited to the Italian market segment and, most importantly, mainly composed of Gen Z population. These limitations of the sample could explain such general positive attitude and perception of deepfakes, as younger population tend to be more open to AI than older consumers. Therefore, future research should expand the sample in terms of sizing, generational differences, and, finally, extend the study to other markets (e.g U.S., Asia…).

As an additional step, future research should consider testing more nuanced forms of disclosure (e.g. label, logo, hashtags: *#AIGenerated*) as these could provide deeper insights on how consumers interact with AI generated contents. Moreover, among the participants who failed the manipulation check (35 in total), 34.2% didn't perceive correctly the stimuli with disclosure, indicating that the message was not sufficiently noticeable in its current format and location in the image. Future analysis could experiment with alternative placements for the disclosure within the campaign visuals, to test whether its positioning will change perceptions.

Moving forward, additional variables could be tested to understand recipients preexisting schemas toward AI generated contents, such as technology acceptance (Davis, F. D., 1989). Also, considering different brands with different positioning would help understanding whether deepfakes interact differently with different levels of consumer attachment toward a specific brand. To make a step further, bran attitude could then be used as a moderator and not a control variable, to shed a light on how prior perceptions would shape the acceptance of synthetic media.

Finally, beyond these findings, the thesis aims to shed a light on a broader topic because, while AI can be beneficial and a powerful tool for content creations and can support organizations in many ways, managers must remain aware of their impact and act responsible while using it,

because is easy for consumers to be deceived, especially if AI generated contents are in high quality and resemble reality. Transparency, ethical reasoning and a conscious integration, depending on the context, are fundamental to ensure that innovation supports and does not damage brand authenticity of luxury brands.

In conclusion, this thesis discusses that integrating deepfakes in luxury marketing campaigns should not be viewed only as a threat to authenticity, but rather as a challenge to rethink what authenticity really means, especially in a time that is shaped by technology. It is important to use AI generated contents wisely because, if managed ethically, AI can definitely serve as a complement for heritage, as it could determine how luxury brands communicate and build trust of consumers, even reaching younger generations. In such rapidly evolving digital landscape, luxury brands must therefore learn how to balance tradition and innovation, to ensure that consumer trust and brand storytelling remain their core purpose, even when dealing with such innovative and disruptive technologies.

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Appendix

Frequencies of participants of the survey

Statistics

		Età:	Genere
N	Valid	130	130
	Missing	0	0
Mean		30,07	1,28
Std. Deviation		13,009	,449

Età:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16	1	,8	,8	,8
	17	1	,8	,8	1,5
	18	3	2,3	2,3	3,8
	19	2	1,5	1,5	5,4
	20	7	5,4	5,4	10,8
	21	1	,8	,8	11,5
	22	10	7,7	7,7	19,2
	23	25	19,2	19,2	38,5
	24	24	18,5	18,5	56,9
	25	11	8,5	8,5	65,4
	26	7	5,4	5,4	70,8
	27	3	2,3	2,3	73,1
	28	2	1,5	1,5	74,6
	30	4	3,1	3,1	77,7
	34	1	,8	,8	78,5
	36	1	,8	,8	79,2
	44	1	,8	,8	80,0
	47	1	,8	,8	80,8
	48	1	,8	,8	81,5
	49	1	,8	,8	82,3
	50	3	2,3	2,3	84,6
	51	1	,8	,8	85,4
	52	1	,8	,8	86,2
	54	5	3,8	3,8	90,0
	55	7	5,4	5,4	95,4
	56	1	,8	,8	96,2
	59	1	,8	,8	96,9
	61	1	,8	,8	97,7
	62	1	,8	,8	98,5
	64	1	,8	,8	99,2
	70	1	,8	,8	100,0
	Total	130	100,0	100,0	

Genere

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Donna	94	72,3	72,3	72,3
	Uomo	36	27,7	27,7	100,0
	Total	130	100,0	100,0	

Bar Chart

Età:

Età:
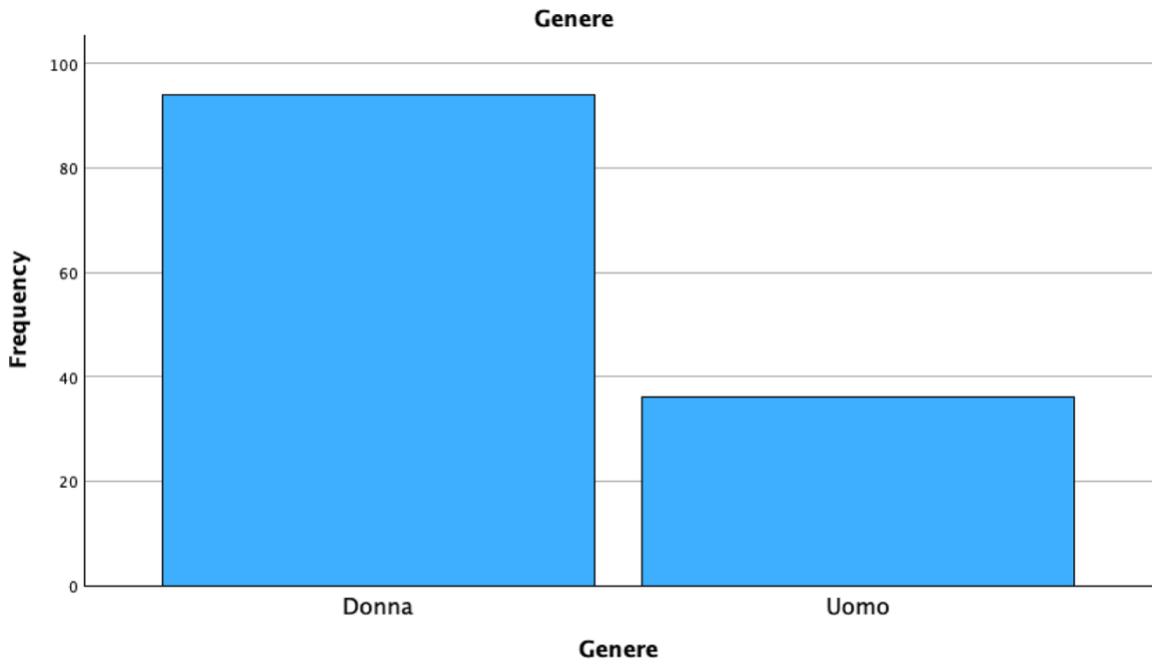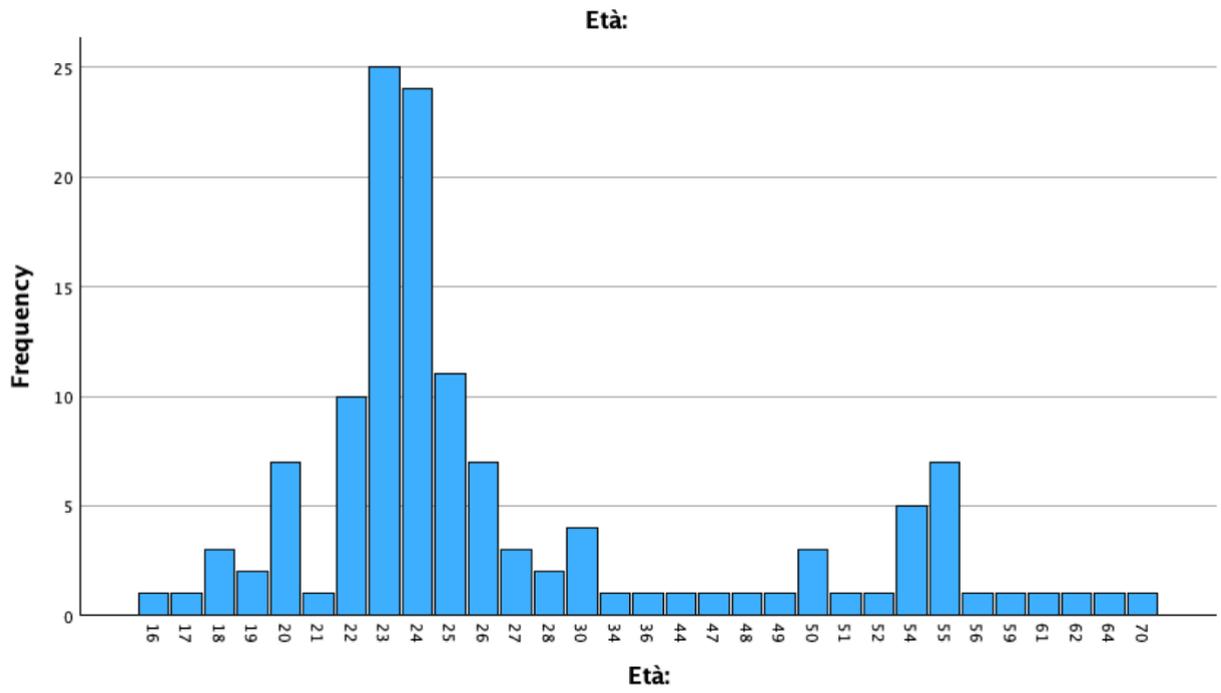
Genere

Genere

Frequencies after successfully perceiving manipulation check

Statistics

		Età:	Genere
N	Valid	95	95
	Missing	0	0
Mean		29,52	1,26
Std. Deviation		12,733	,443

Età:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16	1	1,1	1,1	1,1
	17	1	1,1	1,1	2,1
	18	2	2,1	2,1	4,2
	19	2	2,1	2,1	6,3
	20	6	6,3	6,3	12,6
	22	9	9,5	9,5	22,1
	23	16	16,8	16,8	38,9
	24	18	18,9	18,9	57,9
	25	9	9,5	9,5	67,4
	26	5	5,3	5,3	72,6
	27	3	3,2	3,2	75,8
	28	2	2,1	2,1	77,9
	30	2	2,1	2,1	80,0
	47	1	1,1	1,1	81,1
	48	1	1,1	1,1	82,1
	50	3	3,2	3,2	85,3
	52	1	1,1	1,1	86,3
	54	5	5,3	5,3	91,6
	55	5	5,3	5,3	96,8
	56	1	1,1	1,1	97,9
	59	1	1,1	1,1	98,9
	70	1	1,1	1,1	100,0
	Total	95	100,0	100,0	

Genere

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Donna	70	73,7	73,7	73,7
	Uomo	25	26,3	26,3	100,0
	Total	95	100,0	100,0	

Bar Chart

Età:

Genere
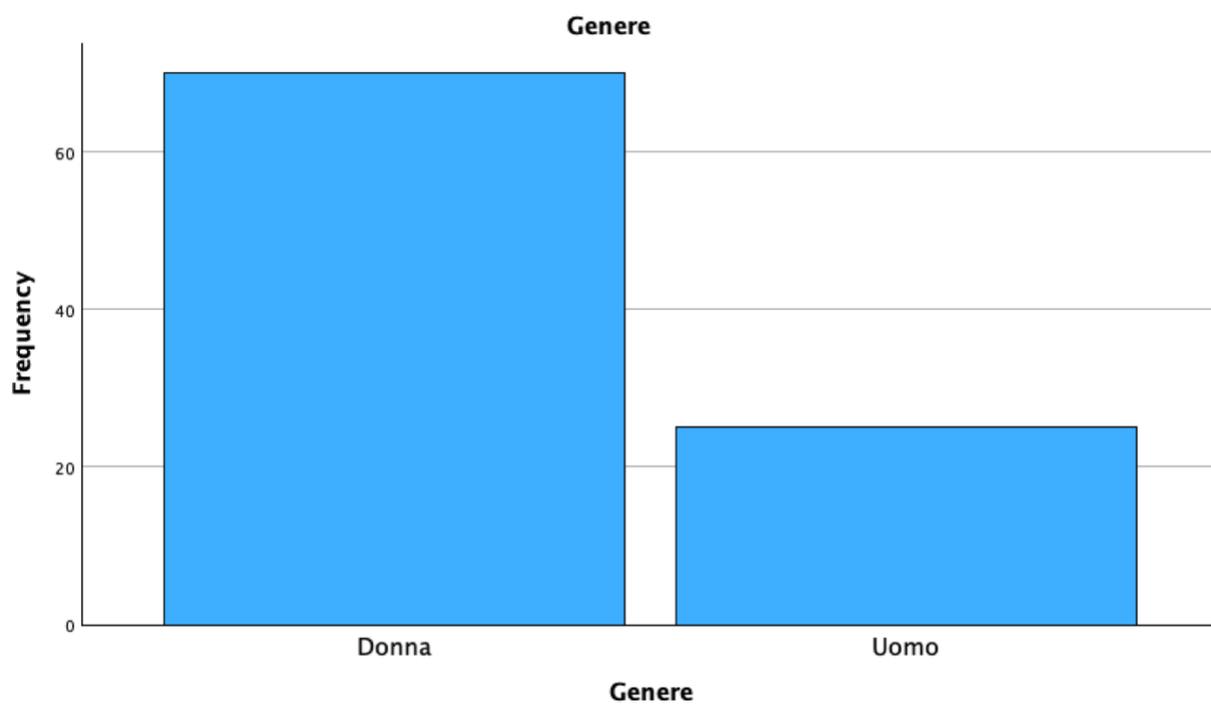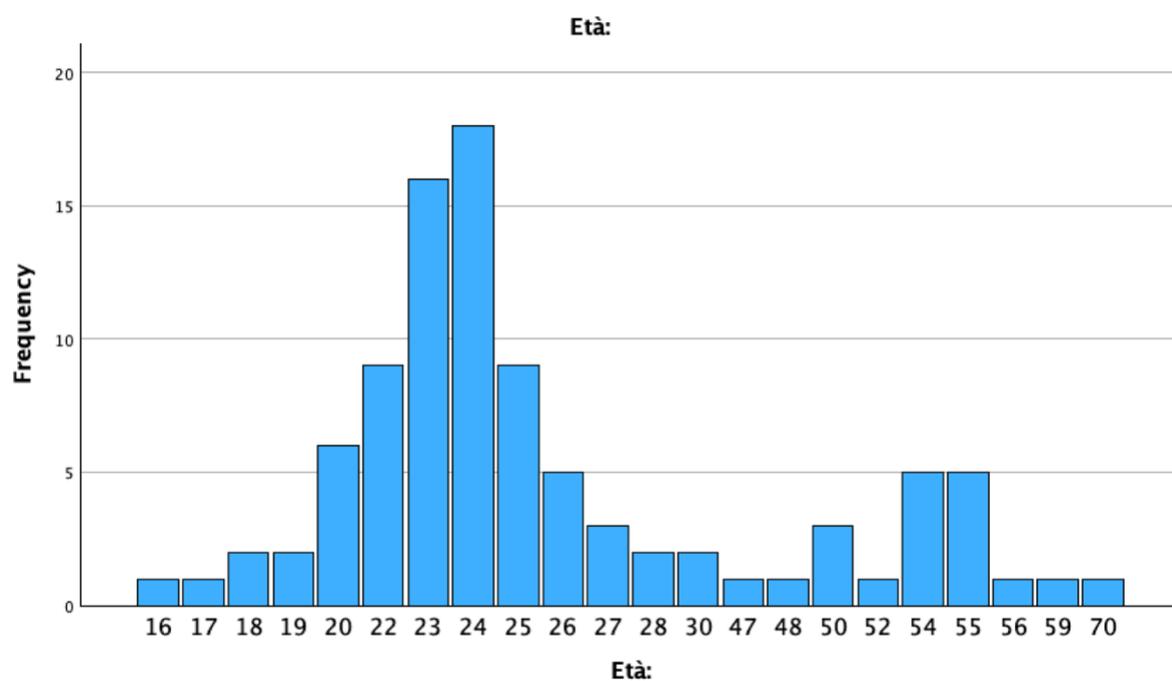
Reliability Dependent Variable (DV) scale

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	95	100,0
	Excluded[a]	0	,0
	Total	95	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,918	,919	8

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – La qualità è un elemento centrale per il brand	5,48	1,090	95
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand realizza i prodotti seguendo standard molto rigorosi, e ogni attività dell'azienda è mirata a migliorare la qualità	5,25	1,148	95
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand è un forte simbolo di qualità costante nel tempo	5,27	1,171	95
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – L'azienda si impegna a mantenere gli standard di qualità storicamente consolidati per il brand	5,09	1,221	95
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand ha un marchio distintivo che rappresenta la qualità	5,46	,998	95
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand rafforza e si basa su tradizioni consolidate nel tempo	5,34	1,154	95
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand riflette un design senza tempo	5,35	1,201	95
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand rimane fedele ai valori che dichiara	5,17	1,173	95

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – La qualità è un elemento centrale per il brand	Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand realizza i prodotti seguendo standard molto rigorosi, e ogni attività dell'azienda è mirata a migliorare la qualità	Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand è un forte simbolo di qualità costante nel tempo	Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – L'azienda si impegna a mantenere gli standard di qualità storicamente consolidati per il brand	Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand ha un marchio distintivo che rappresenta la qualità	Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand rafforza e si basa su tradizioni consolidate nel tempo	Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand riflette un design senza tempo	Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand rimane fedele ai valori che dichiara
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – La qualità è un elemento centrale per il brand	1,000	,700	,695	,668	,623	,528	,504	,718
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand realizza i prodotti seguendo standard molto rigorosi, e ogni attività dell'azienda è mirata a migliorare la qualità	,700	1,000	,676	,582	,667	,553	,414	,719
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand è un forte simbolo di qualità costante nel tempo	,695	,676	1,000	,651	,628	,577	,507	,702
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – L'azienda si impegna a mantenere gli standard di qualità storicamente consolidati per il brand	,668	,582	,651	1,000	,452	,483	,376	,546
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand ha un marchio distintivo che rappresenta la qualità	,623	,667	,628	,452	1,000	,445	,424	,614
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand rafforza e si basa su tradizioni consolidate nel tempo	,528	,553	,577	,483	,445	1,000	,705	,618
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand riflette un design senza tempo	,504	,414	,507	,376	,424	,705	1,000	,661
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand rimane fedele ai valori che dichiara	,718	,719	,702	,546	,614	,618	,661	1,000

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – La qualità è un elemento centrale per il brand	36,94	41,187	,797	,673	,902
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand realizza i prodotti seguendo standard molto rigorosi, e ogni attività dell'azienda è mirata a migliorare la qualità	37,17	40,929	,767	,675	,905
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand è un forte simbolo di qualità costante nel tempo	37,15	40,318	,796	,654	,902
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – L'azienda si impegna a mantenere gli standard di qualità storicamente consolidati per il brand	37,33	41,626	,660	,531	,914
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand ha un marchio distintivo che rappresenta la qualità	36,96	43,594	,678	,531	,912
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand rafforza e si basa su tradizioni consolidate nel tempo	37,08	41,823	,695	,598	,911
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand riflette un design senza tempo	37,07	42,260	,629	,612	,916
Sulla base della campagna che hai appena visto, ti chiedo cortesemente di indicare quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni: – Il brand rimane fedele ai valori che dichiara	37,25	39,914	,825	,722	,900

Reliability Control Variable (CV) scale

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	89	93,7
	Excluded[a]	6	6,3
	Total	95	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,901	,906	5

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Poco Attraente:Attraente	5,78	1,412	89
Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Negativo:Positivo	5,81	1,086	89
Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Spiacevole:Piacevole	5,89	1,027	89
Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Sfavorevole:Favorevole	5,74	1,284	89
Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Indesiderabile:Desiderabile	5,78	1,412	89

Inter–Item Correlation Matrix

	Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Poco Attraente:Attraente	Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Negativo:Positivo	Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Spiacevole:Piacevole	Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Sfavorevole:Favorevole	Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Indesiderabile:Desiderabile
Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Poco Attraente:Attraente	1,000	,653	,632	,588	,721
Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Negativo:Positivo	,653	1,000	,765	,616	,639
Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Spiacevole:Piacevole	,632	,765	1,000	,581	,632
Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Sfavorevole:Favorevole	,588	,616	,581	1,000	,751
Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Indesiderabile:Desiderabile	,721	,639	,632	,751	1,000

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Poco Attraente:Attraente	23,16	16,891	,765	,597	,877
Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Negativo:Positivo	23,13	19,247	,767	,664	,877
Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Spiacevole:Piacevole	23,02	19,831	,761	,648	,880
Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Sfavorevole:Favorevole	23,17	18,098	,748	,594	,879
Ora ti chiedo di valutare la tua impressione su Bottega Veneta, il brand mostrato nella campagna pubblicitaria che hai appena visto. Per favore, indica la tua opinione per ciascuna coppia di aggettivi – Indesiderabile: Desiderabile	23,11	17,324	,759	,620	,877

Univariate Analysis of Variance (Two-way ANOVA for DV: Perceived Brand Authenticity)

Between-Subjects Factors

		Value Label	N
Model_nature	1,00	Human	54
	2,00	Deepfake	41
Disclosure_condition	1,00	No Disclosure	43
	2,00	Disclosure	52

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: DV_Mean

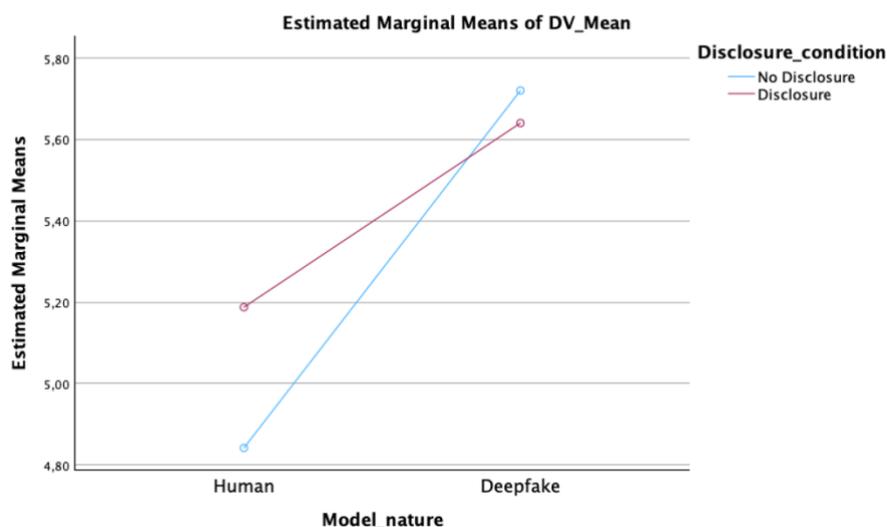| Model_nature	Disclosure_condition	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Human	No Disclosure	4,8413	,69602	26
	Disclosure	5,1875	,63601	28
	Total	5,0208	,68196	54
Deepfake	No Disclosure	5,7206	,68112	17
	Disclosure	5,6406	1,26045	24
	Total	5,6738	1,04914	41
Total	No Disclosure	5,1890	,80888	43
	Disclosure	5,3966	,99130	52
	Total	5,3026	,91449	95

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: DV_Mean

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	11,615[a]	3	3,872	5,259	,002	,148	15,776	,919
Intercept	2619,483	1	2619,483	3557,972	<,001	,975	3557,972	1,000
Model_nature	10,163	1	10,163	13,805	<,001	,132	13,805	,957
Disclosure_condition	,406	1	,406	,551	,460	,006	,551	,114
Model_nature * Disclosure_condition	1,040	1	1,040	1,412	,238	,015	1,412	,217
Error	66,997	91	,736					
Total	2749,813	95						
Corrected Total	78,612	94						

a. R Squared = ,148 (Adjusted R Squared = ,120)

b. Computed using alpha = ,05

Profile Plots

Estimated Marginal Means of DV_Mean

Univariate Analysis of Variance (Two-way ANCOVA for CV: Brand Attitude)

Between-Subjects Factors

		Value Label	N
Model_nature	1,00	Human	54
	2,00	Deepfake	41
Disclosure_condition	1,00	No Disclosure	43
	2,00	Disclosure	52

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: DV_Mean

| Model_nature	Disclosure_condition	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Human	No Disclosure	4,8413	,69602	26
	Disclosure	5,1875	,63601	28
	Total	5,0208	,68196	54
Deepfake	No Disclosure	5,7206	,68112	17
	Disclosure	5,6406	1,26045	24
	Total	5,6738	1,04914	41
Total	No Disclosure	5,1890	,80888	43
	Disclosure	5,3966	,99130	52
	Total	5,3026	,91449	95

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: DV_Mean

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	29,296[a]	4	7,324	13,366	<,001	,373	53,465	1,000
Intercept	25,974	1	25,974	47,402	<,001	,345	47,402	1,000
CV_Mean	17,681	1	17,681	32,268	<,001	,264	32,268	1,000
Model_nature	6,988	1	6,988	12,754	<,001	,124	12,754	,942
Disclosure_condition	,674	1	,674	1,230	,270	,013	1,230	,195
Model_nature * Disclosure_condition	,007	1	,007	,012	,912	,000	,012	,051
Error	49,316	90	,548					
Total	2749,813	95						
Corrected Total	78,612	94						

a. R Squared = ,373 (Adjusted R Squared = ,345)
b. Computed using alpha = ,05

Profile Plots

Estimated Marginal Means of DV_Mean
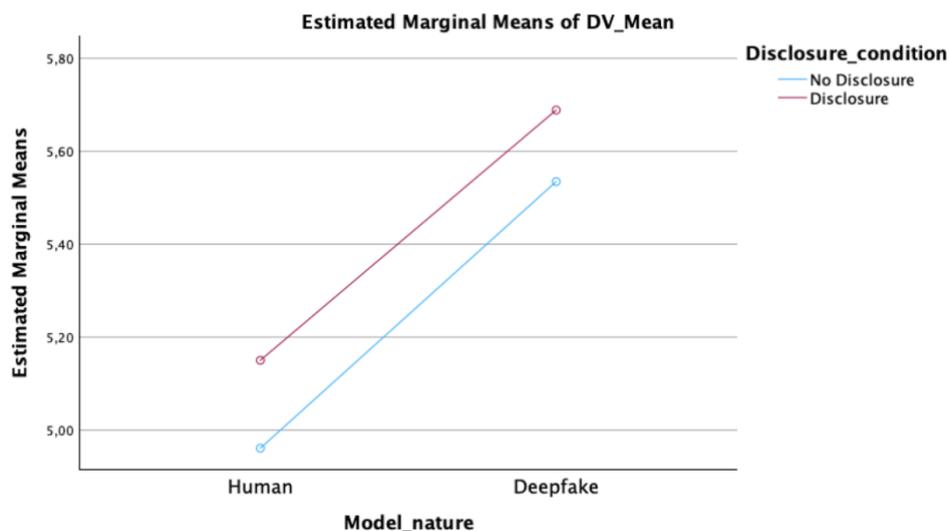
Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: CV_Mean = 5,7912

Frequencies of individuals that failed manipulation check

Frequencies

Statistics

		Età:	Genere
N	Valid	35	35
	Missing	0	0
Mean		31,57	1,31
Std. Deviation		13,808	,471

Età:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18	1	2,9	2,9	2,9
	20	1	2,9	2,9	5,7
	21	1	2,9	2,9	8,6
	22	1	2,9	2,9	11,4
	23	9	25,7	25,7	37,1
	24	6	17,1	17,1	54,3
	25	2	5,7	5,7	60,0
	26	2	5,7	5,7	65,7
	30	2	5,7	5,7	71,4
	34	1	2,9	2,9	74,3
	36	1	2,9	2,9	77,1
	44	1	2,9	2,9	80,0
	49	1	2,9	2,9	82,9
	51	1	2,9	2,9	85,7
	55	2	5,7	5,7	91,4
	61	1	2,9	2,9	94,3
	62	1	2,9	2,9	97,1
	64	1	2,9	2,9	100,0
	Total	35	100,0	100,0	

Genere

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Donna	24	68,6	68,6	68,6
	Uomo	11	31,4	31,4	100,0
	Total	35	100,0	100,0	

Bar Chart

Età:

Genere
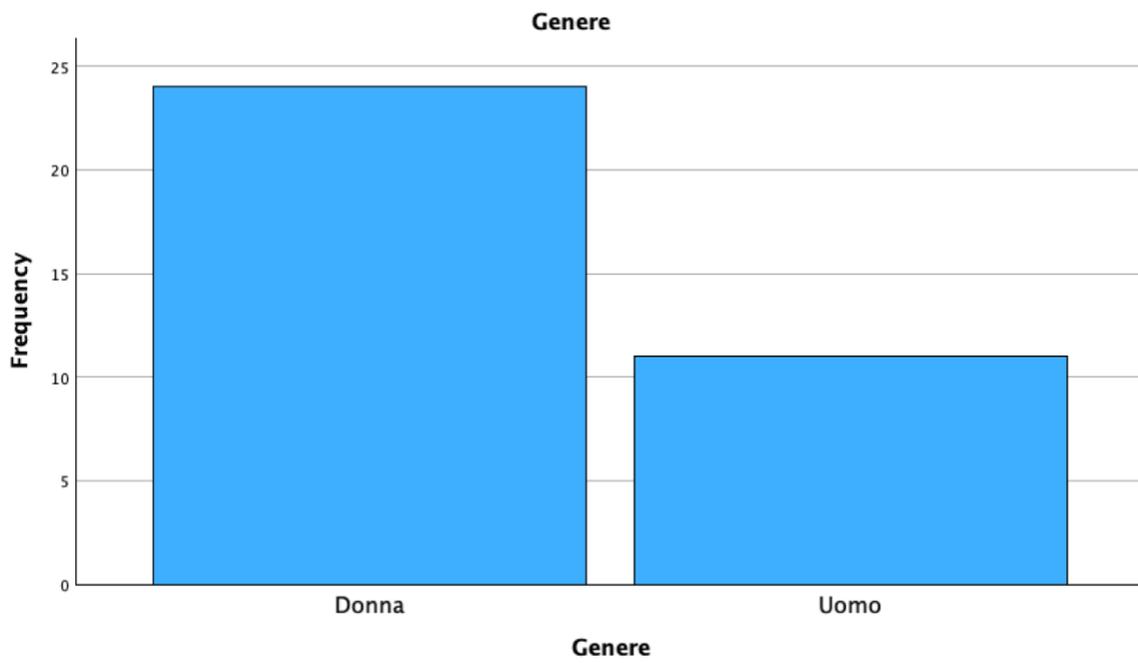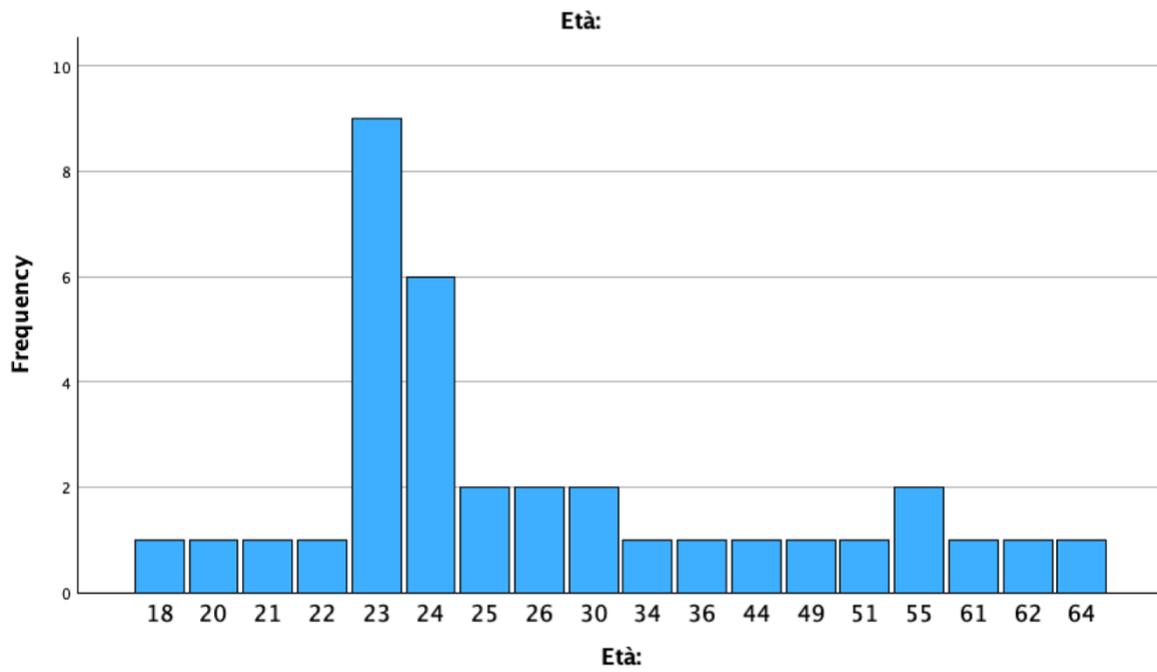
Analysis of individuals that failed manipulation check

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Conditions * MC_b_pass	35	100,0%	0	0,0%	35	100,0%

Conditions * MC_b_pass Crosstabulation

			MC_b_pass ,00	Total
Conditions	1,00	Count	7	7
		% within MC_b_pass	20,0%	20,0%
	2,00	Count	16	16
		% within MC_b_pass	45,7%	45,7%
	3,00	Count	6	6
		% within MC_b_pass	17,1%	17,1%
	4,00	Count	6	6
		% within MC_b_pass	17,1%	17,1%
Total		Count	35	35
		% within MC_b_pass	100,0%	100,0%