



THE INFLUENCE OF AI-GENERATED CONTENT ON AUDIENCE TRUST IN DIGITAL MEDIA: A STUDY OF UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IN INDONESIA

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1. Abstract:

The following questions are used to guide the research:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has revolutionized the world of digital media, especially the profusion of AI-generated content, including automated news articles, synthetic images, and chatboats (Dwivedi et al., 2023). The use of these tools has enhanced productivity and content generation, but it has raised questions about trust, credibility, and the reliability of information. Trust on digital media has become less so in an age where it's difficult to distinguish between what is man-made and what is AI-generated. This study aims to analyze the impact of AI-generated content on trust in digital media, particularly among internationally-studied students in Indonesia who are a digitally literate and culturally diverse community. This study aims to explore how exposure to generated content affects user's trust and credibility in digital information, and how exposure to generated content affects the user's engagement with the content. The research method used is quantitative research design which is a structured research survey administered to the international students in universities in Indonesia. Through statistical analysis, links between AI content consumption and trust and other mediating factors (e.g., perceived transparency and media literacy) are uncovered. The findings suggested that there will be diminishing audience trust with increasing exposure to the use of AI-generated content unless there is transparency and source disclosure. Besides that, it is expected that trust ability in evaluating will be strengthened through media literacy as moderator. The research highlights a number of key issues for AI providers, digital media companies and policy makers, such as the need for clarity when labeling AI tools and the need for greater digital literacy initiatives. In conclusion, this study sheds light on the evolving landscape of trust in today's communication landscape driven by AI.

Keywords: AI-generated content; audience trust; digital media; international students; Indonesia

1. Introduction:

The digital media world has experienced a lot of change in the name of Artificial Intelligence (AI). From news generation systems to the creation of videos and images using artificial intelligence to conversational agents, there are a number of different AI systems that are increasingly impacting the generation, distribution, and consumption of information. With the environment as it is, platforms are now beginning to utilize AI to generate “tons of content” in a short amount of time, reducing production costs and increasing efficiency, but also resulting in problems with authenticity and credibility (Wirtz, Weyerer, & Geyer, 2019)



The blurred lines between AI and human content are becoming more prevalent as AI becomes more ubiquitous with the rise of artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT and automated journalism platforms, and deepSeeks (Kasneci et al., 2023). While these developments bring growth in creativity and access, they also bring risks of misinformation and manipulation, and the inability to access credible information sources online.

In this instance, trust is a key issue in digital communication. Trust plays a central role in determining who will accept, share or reject information and is a vital component of the successful and credible digital media ecosystem (Tsfati & Cappella, 2003). In the era of increased content production by AI tools, researchers and media and policy makers have to be able to gauge the trustworthiness of the content. In this study, the population of international university students in Indonesia is a sub-population that has a special relevance. They are deeply connected to digital platforms, are from all cultural and educational backgrounds and are often seeking academic and social information from online media. They are inundated with a wealth of information systems, and they play a special role in comprehending the trust dynamics in the global digital environment.

Research on AI and media credibility has grown in recent years, but it has not yet been geared towards understanding how the international student body perceives and trusts AI-generated media in a new educational context such as Indonesia. Avoid using the results of research on specific populations and/or other circumstances without sufficient research. Thus, this study aims to examine the effects of AI generated content on the audience trust in digital media among international students in universities in Indonesia. The aim of this study is to explore how exposure to AI-generated content affects perceptions of credibility and trust and what factors affect this relationship.

- How does the creation of AI generated content affect readers' trust with digital media?
- What are the factors influencing the trust international university students have in AI-generated information?
- Do media literacy affect the connection between AI-generated content and the audience's trust?

Based on these questions, the study suggests that more exposure to AI-generated content may negatively impact trust, while media literacy and increased transparency may positively affect media users' views on trust and critical thinking about digital information.

2. Problem Statement:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies have revolutionized the creation and sharing of digital media content. Much of the content created by AI has gone mainstream, such as automated news articles, ChatGPT-generated text, synthetic images, fake videos, and more. These technologies are used for greater efficiency, accessibility and personalization of the content, but also create enormous problems of authenticity and credibility of information, as well as trust. With its advanced capacity to produce highly realistic content, AI has become a growing challenge for audiences to differentiate between human-made and artificial information, raising concerns regarding misinformation, manipulation, and a loss of trust in digital media (Lazer et al., 2018).

Trust by audience is essential to effective communication, and is a key factor in shaping their reception of information. But as AI-generated content becomes more prevalent, trust building has become more complicated. Wary of transparency, accountability, and the authenticity of AI-generated content, there has been a rise in skepticism about digital media platforms. In the age of misinformation and the rise of deepfakes technologies, the evaluation and trust of AI-



generated content is a crucial topic in communication studies, for communication media and for communication policy (Dwivedi et al., 2023). Although academic research is currently focused on Artificial Intelligence and media credibility, there are several limitations in current studies. The majority of research has been with general populations or Western populations, and much less research has been conducted in developing countries or multicultural educational contexts. Moreover, there is little empirical research that focuses on how international university students experience and assess AI-generated content, and also few studies that reflect the complexity of international students' exposure to various information environments and their high reliance on digital technologies.

Indonesia is an ideal country to explore this question, as the digital media environment is rapidly growing and communication technologies powered by AI are becoming more prevalent. International university students in Indonesia are a specific target group in terms of their cultural background, extensive use of digital media and different levels of media literacies. But, very little is known about how this population views the credibility of AI-generated content and how the credibility of such content relates to their trust in digital media.

Hence, empirical research is needed to study the relationship between AI generated content and the trust of international students in universities in Indonesia. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the effects of AI-generated content on trust in digital media and the importance of perceived credibility, transparency, and media literacy in building trust in AI-driven communication settings.

3. Research Objectives

This study aims to explore how AI-produced material affects the trust of audiences in digital media, especially among international university students in Indonesia. This study seeks to gain insight into the impacts of exposure to AI-generated content on perceptions of credibility and, consequently, trust in digital information sources.

In particular, the study aims to:

- To investigate the impact of AI-driven content on trust in digital media and its impact on the perceived credibility of the media.
- To compare perceptions of international university students between content created by AI and content created by humans.
- Identify factors that affect the trust of generated content by AI, such as accuracy, transparency, source credibility etc.
- To examine audience reactions to behavior, for example if they are more likely to share, believe or verify AI-generated information before accepting it.

The goals introduce a systematic approach to understanding the intricate dynamics between AI-generated content and audience trust, and also help to enhance understanding of digital media consumption in a multicultural academic setting.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The current study aims to address the effect of content produced by artificial intelligence on trust in digital media among international students at universities in Indonesia through a series of research questions. The following questions help to understand perception and behavioral reactions to AI information.

Research Questions

1. How does AI content affect the trust in digital media?
2. What makes some people trust AI-generated digital content, and what doesn't?



3. What are the differences between information created by people and AI in the eyes of international university students?

Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses are suggested based on the research objectives and theoretical background:

- H1: There is a negative impact of AI-generated content on audience trust in digital media. H1: The use of generative AI content impacts negatively the audience trust in digital media.
- H2: AI-generated content is more trustworthy when it is transparent.
- H3: Media literacy has a moderating effect between the use of AI-generated content and trust, where people who can skillfully evaluate trust in media are more likely to have more accuracy in their trust evaluation.

These research questions and hypotheses serve as the basis for analyzing the relationship between AI-generated content and audience trust, providing conceptual understanding and empirical testing.

5. Literature Review

The review of relevant literature was conducted to understand the important concepts related to AI-generated content, trust of audiences, credibility of information, dependency on media, and digital media use by international students. It also states the research gap that is justified by the current research.

5.2 How to recognize AI-generated content in digital media?

Artificial intelligence-generated content is digital content that is produced or heavily influenced by artificial intelligence algorithms, but not necessarily authored by a person. Advancements in natural language processing, deep learning models, and generative AI systems have propelled the evolution of AI-generated content to a great pace. The initial applications of AI in media consisted of automated reporting systems that generated basic news reports from structured data. Today, with the advent of sophisticated AI models like large language models and generative adversarial networks, it is possible to create extremely detailed and naturalistic content in various formats (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020).

There are a number of distinct categories of AI content. Content generated by systems like ChatGPT, such as automated news articles, chatbot responses and social media posts is considered text-based content. These are images with AI-generated art, manipulated images, and synthetic images generated using AI-driven tools like diffusion models. AI content includes video-based content, such as creating or editing video sequences using deep learning systems, including synthetic media and deepSeeks. One such technology, deepSeek, in particular, has been of concern because it allows for the manipulation of facial expressions and voice to create a strikingly realistic look and sound, making it hard for viewers to tell that something is fake (Tandoc, Lim, & Ling, 2018) the belief that information is credible, reliable and accurate.

5.3 Audience Trust in Digital Media

Trust in digital media is a key concept in communication theory and is defined as the belief that information is credible, reliable and accurate (Meyer, 1988). The role of trust in the interpretation, acceptance and dissemination of information in digital environments is crucial. Communication theories of credibility suggest that a credible information source establishes trust through perceived expertise, honesty and reliability.



According to source credibility theory, the audience judge's credibility by three elements: the source's credibility, the message's credibility, and the credibility of the medium used (Appelman & Sundar, 2016; Flanagin & Metzger, 2007). These dimensions in digital media get increasingly complicated with the introduction of algorithmically created content and user-generated information. This means that the audience has to make use of extra cues like platform reputation, presentation style and context to judge the trustworthiness of the content. With the increasing volume of AI-generated content, the process of evaluating whether content is human-made or automated is getting more complex, and traditional signs of authorial intent are not always present.

5.4 Information Credibility in the AI Era:

AI-generated content has dramatically changed the way information is being distributed and its credibility. Traditionally, credibility was related to human authorship, editorial control, and institutional responsibility (Metzger & Flanagin, 2013). But, with the dawn of AI, the creation of content can take place without the need for manual effort, making it challenging for viewers to determine the authenticity and reliability of the content.

One of the challenges in this regard is the perception of content by humans and artificial intelligence. AI-generated content may be seen as more authentic and emotionally compelling, potentially making it more credible to the audience, whereas human creation can be seen as more trustworthy and transparent, due to its perceived authenticity and emotional depth. Moreover, AI technologies have contributed to the amplification of the spread of misinformation and disinformation, as they can produce a vast amount of misinformation or falsified content. This poses major problems for digital media ecosystems, because it is hard to tell fact from fiction (Pennycook & Rand, 2021).

5.5 Media Dependency and Uses & Gratifications Theory:

Media Dependency Theory states that the heavy usage of digital media for the purpose of fulfilling information, social, and psychological needs. Digital platforms are the go-to sources in today's society for news, entertainment, education and socialization. The more people rely on them, the more they rely on the media in their perception and behavior (McQuail, 2010). The more people rely on these platforms, the more they rely on the media in perception and behavior.

At the same time, the Uses and Gratifications Theory is interested in why people use the media. It proposes that audiences seek out specific media outlets due to the needs of information seeking, convenience, entertainment, and social connection. Users might interact with AI-generated content even when they doubt its authenticity, as it can be quick to create, easy to access, and personalized to the user. These theories work together to help answer the question of why audiences continue to engage with AI-powered digital media, even when they are unsure about the authenticity and trust of the content.

5.6 Students from other countries and the use of digital media:

International university students are a very dynamic and digitally-oriented population. They have been exposed to a variety of cultural, language and educational settings and interact with digital media accordingly. They are in the process of adjusting to new learning and social environments, and make strong use of the internet for learning, information and communication.

International students' understanding of digital content is shaped by challenges from cross-cultural communication. They may be influenced by disparities in language skills, cultural beliefs and media systems, which can impact on their understanding and assessment of



information trustworthiness. Moreover, they need to negotiate between familiar and unfamiliar media practices in their adaptation to foreign digital environments in an ongoing manner (Rogers, 2003). This is especially crucial for their perception of AI-generated content, where they are required to filter through intricate information landscapes and make decisions about trust and reliability.

5.7 Research Gap:

While the literature on artificial intelligence in the media production process and the trust of the audience in digital communication has been extensively researched, there is still a lack of empirical studies that approach the topic of AI generated media and the impact of AI on trust in a specific cultural and educational context. In Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia, for example, the use of digital media is rapidly growing, especially in connection with communication dynamics related to AI, but has been sparsely studied.

In addition, the focus of research on international university students as an audience group is lacking. The current literature mostly focuses on general populations or Western readers, and there is limited knowledge regarding the cultural and linguistic diversity of international students and their perceptions and evaluation of AI-generated content. The identified gap demonstrates the need for continued research to better understand the impact of exposure to AI-generated media on the formation of trust in multicultural academic settings, the primary focus of this study

Theoretical Framework:

The research is based on relevant communication and technology-related theories to investigate the effect of AI content on audience trust in digital media. The theoretical framework is designed to combine the concepts of Source Credibility Theory, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and the Information Trust Models to give a conceptual understanding of how trust is built in an AI communication environment. These theories offer a multi-dimensional lens for analysing the perception of the audience, their behavioural intention as well as their evaluation of trust.

Source Credibility Theory:

One of the most basic theories in communication research is the theory of source credibility, which outlines how audiences will assess and react to information in relation to the credibility of the source. The theory holds that there are three core elements to credibility: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness or appeal of the source (Sundar, 2008). These are dimensions that affect audiences' reception of information in a digital communication setting. For AI-generated content, Source Credibility Theory is important as the source of information can be vague. AI-generated content can have no identifiable "author" as is typically the case with traditional media, where it is clear that it originated from a particular journalist or organization. This ambiguity can also diminish audiences' sense of trustworthiness, since they may doubt the quality and accountability of information produced by machines. This means that the process of evaluating the credibility of these platforms is more complicated, and users have to look at indirect indicators, like platform reputation, transparency labels, or consistency of the content.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM):

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a model that explains why users accept and use new technologies, which is based on two dimensions: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. This model suggests that people are more inclined to use a technology if they think that



the technology will improve their performance and will be simple to interact with (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

For AI-generated content, TAM can provide insights into how audiences continue to engage with platforms that generate AI content even in the face of concerns about credibility. Chatbots, automated news generation, content recommendation systems, and other AI tools are seen as very effective, time-saving, and easy-to-use. Even if trust in the accuracy of content is moderate or low, these perceived benefits may contribute to increased user acceptance. Thus, alongside trust-based theory explanations, TAM can be used to understand the behavioral aspect of the adoption of AI content.

Information Trust Model:

Information Trust Models are about how people assess the trustworthiness and credibility of information in cyberspace. Trust is built on a number of criteria, such as accuracy, consistency, transparency, and reliability of the source. These cues help users to assess the trustworthiness of information in online environments where information is plentiful, and often unverified (Shin, 2021).

When it comes to AI content, information trust is a key concern as artificial information might not have proper sourcing or editorial verification. As such, the audience will have to rely on contextual cues like transparency cues, credibility of the platform, and prior knowledge of similar content. This is because, when transparency is high and information is seen to be consistent and accurate, then trust is likely to grow. On the other hand, if the content is produced with AI that isn't disclosed or transparent, users may lose trust.

Conceptual Relationship:

The conceptual framework of this study is derived from an amalgamation of the aforementioned theories, aimed at elucidating the connection between AI-generated content and audience trust in digital media. The framework suggests that audiences' interpretation of the credibility of information created by AI can impact their broader faith in digital media platforms.

This can be expressed as follows:

The creation of AI-Generated Content leads to audiences' trust in digital media through a sense of credibility. Audiences' trust in digital media is facilitated by the credibility of AI-Generated Content.

The perceived credibility serves as a crucial mediator in this model, elucidating the relationship between AI-generated content and the process of building trust. Moreover, this relationship is anticipated to be reinforced or inhibited by other factors, such as the transparency of AI use and media literacy. Media literacy helps people to critically assess digital information, and clear labeling of AI-generated content improves the visibility and evaluation of information.

The overarching theoretical lens offers a coherent way to approach the examination of the relationship between technological, cognitive, and communicative elements in influencing audience trust in AI-generated digital media contexts.

Methodology:

This study uses a structured methodological approach to explore how the use of AI-generated content affects the trust of foreign university students in the digital media in Indonesia. The methodology aims to systematically and systematically collect data, analyze it in a measurable way, and interpret the relationships between the key variables, including the exposure to AI, its perceived credibility, transparency, media literacy, and the audience's trust.



Research Design:

The research method used in this study is Quantitative Research Design because the research is aimed to measure and analyze the relation between the variables in a structured and numerical form. This research uses a quantitative approach because it enables the examination of patterns, correlations, and potential causal relationships between exposure to AI-generated content and trust in digital media via the use of statistics.

Standardized answers were obtained through a survey-based approach, allowing for comparisons between various groups and an objective interpretation of the data. This is an appropriate design when the hypothesis being tested involves an examination of a measurable relationship between variables.

Population and Sample

This study targets international university students who are studying in Indonesia. This group was chosen because they are highly exposed to digital media platforms and are often encountered with the use of AI-generated content in academic, social, and informational settings.

For this study, a total of 150 valid responses were obtained. The sample includes:

- 95 Bachelor's students
- 45 Master's students
- 10 PhD students

The sampling technique applied in this study is purposive sampling technique which is selected because the respondents are considered as relevant for the research. To ensure data relevance and accuracy, only students that were actively using digital media and exposed to AI generated content were included in the study.

Data Collection Method:

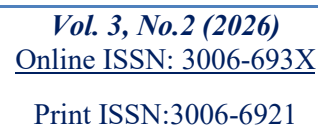
Data were collected using a structured, physical paper based questionnaire survey. A printed questionnaire pamphlet was manually delivered to international students at the various university campuses in Indonesia, and achieved a high response rate with direct engagement with the students. The survey instrument was designed to be as brief and simple to complete as possible and took about 2-3 minutes for respondents. There was no cost to participation and a disclaimer, printed at the top of the pages, was posted to make it clear that it was a study of an academic nature. The questionnaire included demographic questions followed by 15 structured statements that assessed the exposure to AI-generated content, perceived credibility, transparency, media literacy, and the ultimate trust in digital media of the audience.

Research Instrument:

The research tool used was a 4 point likert scale questionnaire, which was used to measure the respondents' attitude and perception. The answers were Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

The instrument involved in the measurement was based on the questionnaire data provided, which was used to measure the following constructs:

- The frequency of exposure to AI-generated content (how often one comes into contact with AI-generated media content)
- The trustworthiness of AI-generated material, as assessed by the audience. The credibility of AI-developed material viewed by the viewers.
- The transparency of digital media platforms in their use of AI. Transparency of digital platforms in their use of AI.
- The respondents' capacity to use the media and critically analyze it.





Exposure AI-Generated Content audience trust:

The results of this study suggest that audiences' trust for digital media is not inevitably boosted with the consumption of AI-generated content. Rather, the connection seems to be complicated, and for the most part limited. While respondents indicated that they are regularly exposed to AI-generated content on digital platforms, their trust in AI-generated content is relatively low, with a low level of trust for accuracy and authenticity.

The finding is consistent with Source Credibility Theory which suggests that information source's appearance of knowledge and reliability is an important factor in gaining trust. The lack of a clear source in the case of AI-generated content diminishes perceived accountability and consequently trust (Sundar, 2008). The results indicate that viewers are becoming more aware of algorithmic content production, and take an ambivalent stance to algorithmic content. Theoretically, this stands in favor of the concept that in today's digital world, exposure is not enough to create trust. Rather, the formation of trust relies on other cognitive appraisals that involve credibility cues and contextual understanding.

Mediating Role of Transparency in Trust Building:

This research has revealed one of the strongest and most important correlations between transparency and audience trust, among others. One important aspect that can be concluded from this study is the correlation between transparency and audience trust, which is strong positive. When digital platforms explicitly indicated their use of AI in content creation, respondents showed greater trust in the content.

The study results confirm that transparency plays an important mediating role in digital communication. If users are provided with information about the source of content, they can better assess its purpose, constraints, and credibility. This decreases uncertainty and perceived credibility.

Transparency is a heuristic used in Information Trust Models to evaluate information reliability. If the content is not transparent, users can become skeptical of its authenticity and lose trust in the AI system. But, in the case of transparency, it is a mechanism that builds trust, and contributes to user confidence even in the automated environment.

The finding is also partly driven by general ethical considerations about AI communication in which transparency about the involvement of AI is becoming crucial to uphold trust in digital ecosystems.

Media Literacy as a moderating factor:

The results also show that there is a significant moderating role of Media literacy in the relationship between audience trust. Those who were more "culturally" media competent were more likely to assess digital media critically, to detect misinformation, and to differentiate between content created by individuals and content created by artificial intelligence.

It reinforces the Media Dependency view that places emphasis on the need for the heavy users of media to enhance their evaluation skills in coping with information overload. In this study, media-literate users were less likely to take information on face value and were more likely to check for information before making judgments.

In addition, media literacy enhances the connection between transparency and trust. People who have more media literacy can better decipher transparency signals and utilize them more effectively in the evaluation of trust. This means that media literacy can not only have an impact on critical thinking, but also strengthen the effectiveness of transparency mechanisms in digital environments.



The findings of this study are compared with the results of previous studies:

The results of this study align with previous studies that also indicated the emergence of new challenges regarding the credibility of information and a loss of trust (Appelman & Sundar, 2016; Shin, 2021) in audiences when consuming AI-generated content. Previous research on digital communication has revealed that audiences have concerns about authenticity, accountability, and emotion when reading machine-generated content, making it less believable.

This study, however, provides a more context specific insight by focusing on international students studying in Indonesia. This group is very exposed to digital technologies and has a high level of digital engagement, but also has a cautious attitude towards information produced by artificial intelligence. This indicates that while digital literacy and exposure might not fully resolve trust concerns, they could raise awareness of potential risks related to AI-generated content.

Cultural and Contextual influences on Media trust:

Indonesians and multicultural upbringing among international students are known to have a significant impact on trust perceptions in the academic environment of Indonesia. Students' expectations of the credibility of information and media reliability have different backgrounds according to each educational and cultural system.

When the environment is so diverse, there is greater uncertainty of the sources of the content. This heightens the need for transparency cues and personal evaluation strategies in information assessment. Therefore, people's trust in AI-generated content is not consistent, but rather influenced by their personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, and familiarity with the media.

The implications for the Digital Media Ecosystem:

The findings reveal several key implications for digital media platforms and AI developers. First, transparency becomes a core necessity for establishing audience trust in AI-infused communication systems. The lack of transparency regarding the origin of AI content can lead to distrust and lower user confidence in the platform.

Secondly, the outcomes highlight the significance of media literacy education. However, with the rise of AI-generated content, users will need to be able to critically assess content in order to navigate the complex digital environment. These skills are important to build in university students and are in the hands of educational institutions.

Finally, the research indicates that the quality of the content is no longer the only factor in determining the trustworthiness of a digital media, but rather the integrity of the production process is also contributing. It's a major change from the age of AI on the way to building credibility.

Summary of Discussion:

In summary, the results suggest that AI-generated content can have a complex impact on audience trust. Trust is still a matter of negotiation in the experience of AI content, and transparency and media literacy are key. The study results validate the multi-dimensional nature of trust in digital media, which is affected by technological, cognitive and contextual factors.

The findings bring to communication theory by advancing the knowledge of how trust can be established in an AI-mediated environment and emphasize the necessity of adopting transparent communication agendas in AI communication and building up media literacy skills in digital societies.



Implications of the Study:

This section describes the theoretical and practical implications of the results. It provides an overview of the contribution of the study to the existing academic literature on media trust as well as the implications of the findings for the practices in journalism, the development of artificial intelligence, education, and digital policy-making.

Theoretical Implications:

This study's results represent a valuable addition to the existing literature on media trust and artificial intelligence and the digital communication. First, the study continues the development of the Source Credibility Theory, showing that a human-based source assessment of credibility is not the only option available in modern digital environments. Audiences, however, now judge algorithmic or AI-generated content more by cues to transparency, perceived authenticity, and contextual understanding. This means that the source credibility dimensions (expertise, trustworthiness) need to be broadened to incorporate technological source awareness.

Secondly, the study is important for Information Trust Models, as it identifies transparency as one of the key mechanisms involved in building trust. The study reveals that users who know AI is being used in content creation are more likely to evaluate the reliability of the content when using these AI tools. This implies that transparency is not only an ethical demand but also a structural element in processes of trust in digital ecosystems.

Third, the study enriches the knowledge of media literacy as a moderating variable in trust formation models. The results reveal that having more media literacy skills can help people assess AI-generated content more effectively, which can affect the dynamics and intensity of trust relationships. This further validates the notion that cognitive skills are important mediators of the influence of technology on communication behavior.

Overall, the study contributes to theoretical discussions by incorporating the concept of AI communication into the existing foundations of trust, and by highlighting that digital trust is a multi-layered phenomenon influenced by technological, cognitive, and contextual factors.

Practical Implications:

For Journalists and Media Organizations

The results highlight the importance of more transparency in content production in the digital media and journalism. Media companies need to identify when AI tools are used in the creation or assistance of content, particularly when it comes to news. This transparency is vital for audience trust and to avoid any misinformation worries. In addition, journalists need to consider fact-checking and human oversight in the use of AI systems to ensure accuracy and credibility.

For AI Developers and Technology Companies:

AI developers have a crucial role to play in the perception and trust of AI-generated content by users. The research underscores the need for systems that are designed with built-in transparency mechanisms, such as "made with" AI labels, source markers, or explanation features. The study emphasizes the necessity of incorporating built-in transparency mechanisms, like AI content labels, source indicators, or explanation tools, into systems. The features can support users in comprehending how content is produced and sharpen their reliability assessment skills. In addition to minimizing misinformation risks, developers need to pay attention to enhancing model accuracy and adhering to ethical guidelines for AI design. Including teachers, principals, and school personnel. This includes teachers, principals, and school personnel. Results show the increasing significance of media literacy education in



educational settings. Collaboration between universities and educators is essential to incorporate digital literacy and critical thinking skills into educational programs, equipping students to effectively interact with these AI-driven information systems. Evaluating content credibility is especially important for international students, who are likely to be encountered with a wide range of digital environments both at school and in the community, and is vital for academic success as well as informed decision-making. There should also be an emphasis on the risks, benefits, and awareness of AI technologies in education.

The course is designed for policy makers and digital regulators:

The research highlights the critical need for policy frameworks to guarantee transparency in AI-generated content on digital platforms from a policy perspective. Government and regulation should consider providing guidelines for clear labeling of AI-generated material, particularly in the news media and public information systems. Moreover, there is a need for policies that support digital literacy programmes for the adoption of technology in communication society. Public trust in digital ecosystems will be crucial, and it will be vital to make sure that everyone is held accountable and that ethical considerations are respected.

Summary of Implications:

Overall, this study has contributed significantly for both theoretical and applied aspects. It is theoretically an extension of the current concept of trust in the media by adding an additional layer of evaluation for AI-generated content. In practice, it draws attention to the need for transparency, media literacy and trust among media, technology producers, education and policy makers in digital communication systems. The study concludes that trust in the AI age is not a right but a rightful process that requires transparency, education, and ethical design strategies.

Limitations of the Study:

This study has a few limitations that ought to be noted to fully understand the results of the study. Although valuable insights were gained from this study about the impact of AI content on trust within digital media, there are some limitations that should be acknowledged to fully understand the results of this study.

Sample Size Limitations:

This study has some limitations, one of which is the moderate number of respondents, which is 150. This number is adequate for descriptive and inferential statistical analysis in a study that is based on a survey, but it is not enough to represent the diversity of views from everyone who is an international student at a university in Indonesia. With a larger sample size, statistical generalization would have been more robust and various cultural groups and digital media usage patterns would have been better represented.

Geographic Restriction (Indonesia Only):

Additionally, the study is limited in that it only includes international university students who are studying in Indonesia. This group offers valid information for studying a multicultural academic setting, but the results are not necessarily generalizable to other countries or educational settings. Regional differences can exist in the digital media environment, cultural attitudes towards AI, and media literacy. So the results should be considered in the specific socio-cultural and educational context in Indonesia.

Self-Reported Data Bias:

The data in this study is self-reported and gathered using a questionnaire survey, hence response bias exists. The participants might have given socially desirable responses or might not have responded properly in terms of their actual behaviors and attitudes towards the use of



AI-generated content. Further, the trust and credibility perceived by respondents is subjective and can differ depending on the interpretation of the survey items by each respondent. This limitation can be seen in survey research and should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results.

Summary of Limitations:

In summary, the study offers valuable insights into the nature of AI-generated content and the trust consumers have in it, but should be taken with a grain of salt because of the small sample size, limited geographic scope, and reliance on self-reported data. Future studies with larger and more diverse samples and mixed methods may help to alleviate these shortcomings and give a more complete picture of the phenomenon.

Recommendations:

The results of this study suggest the following recommendations for enhancing trust in AI-generated content in digital media and for future research in this field.

Improve transparency of labelling for AI products. Enhance transparency of AI product labelling. This study found that transparency is a crucial part of improving the trust of the audience in AI-generated content. Thus, the digital media platforms, news media, and content producers are strongly encouraged to adopt easy-to-understand and consistent AI transparency labelling systems. This labelling should be prominently displayed and should specify the extent to which the content has been generated by AI. This will make it easier for users to understand where the information they are consuming is from and minimize any uncertainty on authenticity. Audiences and digital platforms can ultimately benefit from trust by practicing transparency in communication.

Media Literacy Programs:

The study emphasizes the significance of media literacy in influencing people's assessment and confidence in digital information. Consequently, there is a need to develop structured media literacy program, especially for university students, in educational institutions. These programs should focus on critical thinking skills, digital verification techniques, and awareness of AI-generated content. Engaging with information critically is important for international students to make informed decisions and to minimize exposure to misinformation in the complex digital environment in which they live and work.

Future Research Directions:

The limitations of this study should be expanded in future research to include more contexts and more diverse populations. Secondly, more research is needed in other nations to understand the impact of cultural, educational, and technological dissimilarities on trust in AI-generated content. Secondly, greater number of samples should be included to enhance the generalizability and the strength of findings. Furthermore, future research could include using mixed-method designs, such as quantitative questionnaires paired with qualitative interviews or focus groups, to better understand user perceptions and motivational behaviors. Specific platforms or categories of AI-generated content might also be explored for detailed analysis of trust dynamics in various media environments, further research could be done.

Summary of Recommendations:

To conclude, enhancing transparency in AI, enhancing media literacy education, and broadening future studies in various contexts represent crucial steps in tackling the challenge of trust in AI-powered media. These measures will help to build more trustworthy users and, in the times of artificial intelligence, a more informed, critical, and resilient digital society.



Conclusion:

This study looked at how AI-generated content affects audience trust in digital media from an international student perspective from Indonesia in the university setting. The study aimed to gain insights into the impact of AI-generated content on perceived credibility and trust and how transparency and media literacy influence these perceptions.

Summary of Key Findings:

The results of the study show the high level of exposure international university students have to AI-generated content in their daily digital uses. However, such exposure does not necessarily result in increased trust in digital information. Instead, it is a skeptical and conservative level of trust, especially when it comes to authenticity and accuracy of content.

The results further indicate that perceived transparency plays a crucial role in enhancing trust. If the digital platforms are transparent and clearly indicate that they are using AI to generate content, users will be more inclined to think positively about the information and build trust in the platform. However, transparency causes a lack of confidence in the content and uncertainty. The moderating effect of media literacy is a key discovery. The students who have media skills are more capable of critically assessing the AI-generated materials and identifying reliable and unreliable information. This makes their decision making in digital context more effective and better enables the assessment of digital trust.

Final Statement on AI and Trust Relationship:

In conclusion, the study finds that the correlation between AI-generated content and audience trust is not always straightforward and linear. However, AI-generated content does not equal trust; there is a mixture of transparency, perceived credibility, and user media literacy that form trust. In the age of the fast development of AI, trust in digital media does not come automatically, but must be built. To ensure credibility in digital communication systems, the use of AI should be disclosed and users should gain media literacy. While AI technologies provide many benefits for efficiency and content creation, their effect on trust will be dependent on the degree of transparency and responsibility in which they are adopted within digital media contexts.

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