Age of disillusionment: conceptualising why consumers resist prosocial advertising

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Abstract:
Recent geopolitical crises and social instability have led to profound disappointment, sadness, and a loss of idealism. In this conceptual paper, we propose disillusionment as a sociopsychological factor in consumer responses to prosocial advertising. Drawing on multidisciplinary insights, we introduce existential and social disillusionment. We argue that consumers are continuously exposed to geopolitical crises and institutional inconsistencies, leading to both forms of disillusionment, which in turn lead to altruism fatigue. As altruism fatigue increases, consumers become less responsive to prosocial advertising. We further propose that individual ethical fortitude moderates the relationship between social disillusionment and altruism fatigue.

Keywords: disillusionment, prosocial advertising, altruism fatigue, ethical fortitude