

Comparing The Effects of AI Influencer Vs Human Influencer Advertising on Affective Reactions of The Audience

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Abstract

The study aims to compare the affective reactions of the audience towards AI influencer and human influencer advertising of brands and to provide insights and recommendations for marketers on the use of AI influencers vs human influencers in advertising.

As a first step a preliminary semantic analysis of the social media (Instagram) post was done for the comparison of advertisements using Python. In the steps In-depth interviews will be conducted and results will be triangulated.

We conducted interviews with Instagram users who were exposed to AI influencer ads featuring brands like Versace, Dior, Samsung, Gucci, etc. The interviews aimed to gauge customer sentiments, explore themes related to AI influencer advertising, and identify key phrases expressed by the respondents.

The findings from the preliminary analysis imply that AI influencers can function in a manner that is fundamentally comparable to that of human influencers. The findings revealed no significant distinctions in terms of following or liking between the AI models-based ads and human models-based ads. This might suggest that consumers are as willing to follow an influencer who uses AI or a human being.

The study also revealed several preliminary themes, including brand innovation, brand differentiation, audience targeting, and concerns about authenticity. Additionally, themes related to marketing and branding were also identified, such as brand reputation, brand perception, and engagement. The findings shed light on the impact of AI influencer advertising on consumer perceptions, providing valuable insights for social media managers, marketers, businesses, and advertisers. The study will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on AI influencer advertising and offers guidance for leveraging AI influencers effectively in brand promotion strategy.

The study will be helpful in knowing the usefulness of the type of influencer for different products. It will also be possible to make an automated system to assess the engagement level and affective reactions of ads on audiences. The study highlights the importance of a new trend i.e AI influencer models in the field of advertisement.

Although AI influencer marketing is a novel and creative idea, its potential value for brands is still unknown. The study is one of the very few studies conducted so far in the area of AI influencer models.

Keywords: AI, AI Influencer, Advertisements, Instagram, Sentiment Analysis

Introduction

The application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in marketing has become a game-changer in the industry. This technology can automate repetitive tasks and predict consumer behaviour, enabling marketers to create targeted ads and recommendations. In addition, AI can be used for analysing data to identify the best influencers and help them create engaging content.

Influencer marketing is a form of social media marketing that involves endorsements and product placements from individuals who have a high level of social influence or credibility in their respective fields. Influencer marketing has become a popular and effective strategy for brands to reach and engage with their target audiences, especially in the digital era where consumers are increasingly relying on online sources of information and recommendations.

However, influencer marketing is also facing some challenges and limitations, such as the authenticity and credibility of influencers, the ethical and legal issues of disclosure and transparency, the measurement and evaluation of influencer marketing effectiveness, and the saturation and competition of the influencer market. Moreover, with the rapid development and advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, a new phenomenon of AI influencers has emerged in recent years. AI influencers are computer-generated characters that mimic human influencers in terms of appearance, personality, style, and content. Some examples of AI influencers are Lil Miquela, Shudu Gram, Noonnoori, and Bermuda.

AI influencers have attracted considerable attention and curiosity from both consumers and marketers, as they offer some potential advantages over human influencers, such as lower costs, higher scalability, greater control, and more creativity. However, AI influencers also pose some challenges and risks, such as the ethical and moral implications of creating and manipulating virtual identities, the authenticity and trustworthiness of AI-generated content, the emotional and psychological effects of interacting with non-human entities, and the legal and regulatory issues of intellectual property and data protection.

Therefore, it is important and timely to examine and compare the effects of AI influencer vs human influencer advertising on affective reactions of the audience, such as attitude, emotion, engagement, and purchase intention. Affective reactions are crucial indicators of consumer

behavior and decision making, as they reflect the psychological and emotional responses of consumers to marketing stimuli. Affective reactions can also influence cognitive processes, such as attention, memory, perception, and evaluation.

However, despite the growing popularity and relevance of AI influencers in the marketing landscape, there is a lack of empirical research on how they affect consumers' affective reactions compared to human influencers. Most of the existing literature on influencer marketing focuses on human influencers only or does not explicitly compare them with AI influencers. Moreover, most of the existing literature on AI influencers is conceptual or descriptive rather than empirical or analytical. Zhang and Wei (2021, p.7) also noted that “Research on the power of AI influencers in impacting consumer decisions is quite limited”. Limited research exists on the extent to which virtual influencers effectively accomplish significant advertising objectives, as highlighted by Franke, Groeppel-Klein, & Müller (2022). Therefore, there is a gap in the literature that needs to be addressed by conducting a systematic and rigorous empirical study on this topic.

While AI influencers have gained popularity as a marketing tool, more research is needed to fully understand their impact on customers. Human influencers, on the other hand, bring a personal touch and emotional connection to marketing campaigns, making them a powerful tool for building trust and credibility with consumers. To determine the most effective approach, empirical research is needed to compare the effectiveness of AI and human influencers in advertising.

However, due to its novelty, limited research has been conducted in this domain. Although computer-generated influencers have gained significant popularity, there is a notable absence of empirical research examining their influence on purchase intention specifically through Instagram. This research gap underscores the need for further investigation in this area (Wilke, 2023). Therefore, as highlighted in the study conducted by Whittaker et al. (2021), it is crucial to explore the impact of these influencer types on Instagram users through further research.

However, there is a need for empirical research comparing the effects of AI influencer and human influencer advertising on brand engagement and affective reactions of the audience. This presents a significant gap in the literature and a need for a systematic investigation of the potential advantages and disadvantages of using AI influencers in advertising. Therefore, the present study

aims to address this gap by comparing the effects of AI influencer and human influencer advertising on brand engagement and affective reactions of the audience and providing insights for marketers and advertisers on the effectiveness of these two types of influencers.

Literature Review

AI is now being applied to automatically write and reply to messages in the social media environment (Liu, 2019), greatly assisting brands in managing their social media accounts. Interestingly, it has prompted the birth of a new category of influencer in the field of influencer marketing: the AI influencer (Thomas & Fowler, 2021).

An AI influencer is a social media personality that has been created by artificial intelligence (AI) having a strong social media fan following. They can be designed to look like anyone and programmed to say and do anything. They act like normal influencers and amass huge followers but are tailored to fit the brand's marketing objectives. There is another term that is also used for AI influencer, i.e., virtual influencer e.g., Lou et al., (2022) used the term of virtual influencer for digitally created individuals who possess human-like traits, characteristics, and personalities. According to Conti et al., (2022), virtual influencer “*are Computer-Generated Imagery (CGI) characters that act and resembles humans, even if they do not physically exist in the real world. This recent phenomenon has sparked interest in society, and several questions arise regarding their evolution, opinions, ethics, purpose in marketing, and future perspective*”. In many studies, both terms have been used interchangeably. A clear distinction would take a long time to emerge, due to the common characteristics existing between both. AI technology nowadays is blended with virtual character designs. Ultimately, both AI influencers and virtual influencers are part of the evolving landscape of digital media and have their unique characteristics and applications. In this paper, the term AI influencer has been used.

The use of AI influencers in brand marketing is a relatively new concept and there is limited academic research in this area. However, there have been a few studies that have explored the potential benefits and challenges of using AI influencers for brand marketing. A study conducted by Bungei (2022) looked at the effect of AI influencers on customers in Saudi Arabia and the study found that AI social media influencers have been seen as better than human influencers, and that while human influencers effectively generate more WOM for general brands, niche specific brands

would do well with AI influencers. In another study, Sands et al., (2022) examined how consumers react to AI influencers compared to human influencers. The study predicts that consumers will trust human influencers more than AI influencers, but due to novelty AI influencers get more following and recommendations. However, it is important for marketers to thoughtfully evaluate the utilisation of virtual influencers, aligning their selection with the desired advertising objectives and brand values (Franke et al. ,2022).

Thomas and Fowler (2020) also compared people's perceptions of AI influencers and celebrity endorsers. They found that AI influencers are perceived positively by consumers and provide meaningful brand benefits, but those brands that employ AI influencers also experience the detrimental effects of endorser transgressions. They further argued that interestingly, replacing an AI influencer with a human celebrity endorser can help improve brand perceptions after a transgression, whereas replacing one AI influencer with another does not have the same effect.

According to Zhang and Wei (2021), the main benefit of using AI influencers for firms is the ability to have greater control over branding and messaging based on their preferences. AI influencers are particularly effective in engaging customers because they can have meaningful conversations with each individual and learn from those interactions through AI assessments of behavior and reactions to different variations (Campbell et al., 2020).

The Uncanny Valley Theory

The Uncanny Valley theory, proposed by Japanese roboticist Masahiro Mori in 1970, suggests that as robots or digital creations become more human-like in appearance and behaviour, there is a point at which they become less appealing and creepier or disturbing to humans. This "uncanny valley" occurs when the robot or digital creation appears almost, but not exactly, like a human being.

This response can be seen as a dip in the graph of the emotional response as the degree of resemblance increases, hence the term "valley". The theory has implications for the design of robots and digital creations (like AI influencers) that are intended to interact with humans.

Overall, the literature suggests that while AI influencers have the potential to provide brands with more targeted and cost-effective marketing solutions, there are also potential challenges, such as a lack of authenticity and an emotional connection, that need to be addressed.

Methodology

The study aims to compare the affective reactions of the audience towards AI influencer and human influencer advertising.

Research Design:

For this study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods to examine the effects of AI influencer advertising compared to human influencer advertising.

A combination of interviews and online reviews analysis were conducted to gather data and analyse the affective reactions of the audience towards AI influencer and human influencer advertising. The mixed-methods approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the effects of AI influencer advertising compared to human influencer advertising. The qualitative interviews provide in-depth insights into participants' perceptions and sentiments, while the quantitative survey data offer statistical evidence and patterns. By combining these methods, this study aims to provide a holistic view of the audience's affective reactions and preferences towards AI and human influencer campaigns, contributing to the existing knowledge in the field of influencer marketing and the role of AI in advertising.

Instagram Online Reviews Sentiments Analysis:

We wanted to know quantitatively if both types of models induce similar or different sentiments in the audience, before going in depth to find out the details of their reactions. In the preliminary part, a sentiment analysis was run using the Python programming language. Sentiment analysis, also known as opinion mining, is a valuable technique in natural language processing that involves analysing and categorising text to determine the sentiment expressed within it.

Sentiment analysis is a branch of natural language processing that aims to extract and quantify the emotional polarity of textual data. Sentiment analysis is a natural language processing technique that identifies the polarity of a given text, such as positive, negative or neutral. It is a useful tool for monitoring social media platforms and understanding the sentiment around specific topics, events, or campaigns. By analysing the opinions, attitudes, and emotions expressed by users on social media, sentiment analysis can help identify trends, patterns, and insights that can inform decision making, marketing strategies, and customer service. Python is a popular programming language for sentiment analysis, as it offers many libraries and tools for data analysis and machine learning. One of these libraries is NLTK, which provides pre-trained sentiment analysis models as well as methods to build custom classifiers (Daityari, 2019).

Later, In-Depth interviews were conducted, and the results triangulated. Methodological triangulation can be employed to augment the analysis and interpretation of research findings (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012). By incorporating data from various sources, such as multiple data collection methods or perspectives, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying issues related to the phenomena under investigation. This approach expands the researcher's insights and helps reduce biases, thereby enhancing the credibility and robustness of the study.

Two categories of advertisements by brands were selected: one was the advertisements featuring the AI influencer models, namely Noonnoori and LilMiquela that advertised the brands Versace, Dior, Samsung, Gucci, etc. The other category was the traditional ads featuring a human model. These two ad categories were studied.

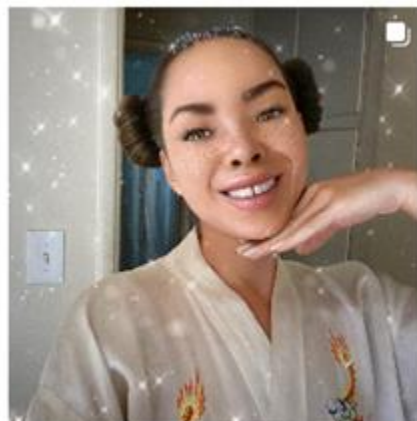


Figure 1: Noonnoouri AI Model Figure 2:LilMiquela AI Model

Against each ad by an AI influencer, there were public comments and reactions posted by different people across the globe. These comments were publicly available on Instagram and the user profile was not included in the comments analysis. The transcript of comments was extracted from Instagram using Python. These comments were related to both AI model ads and Human model ads on brand. To create a file that could be used for sentiment analysis, the transcribed responses were processed.

The comments were preprocessed using the advanced natural language processing library spaCy. The process of segmenting text into words, punctuation, and other elements begins with tokenization. For consistency, all text was changed to lowercase. Lemmatized words were used to build a list of stop words that contained the stop words offered by the spaCy library. A custom list of stop words was also included. The text was then cleared of these stop words. Spacytextblob and Spacymoji addons were added to the Natural Language Toolkit (NLTK) to aid the process of sentiment analysis.

Results of Sentiment Analysis

Sentiment analysis was conducted to extract the emotional tone and sentiment expressed in the text of Instagram comments. The outputs are discussed below:

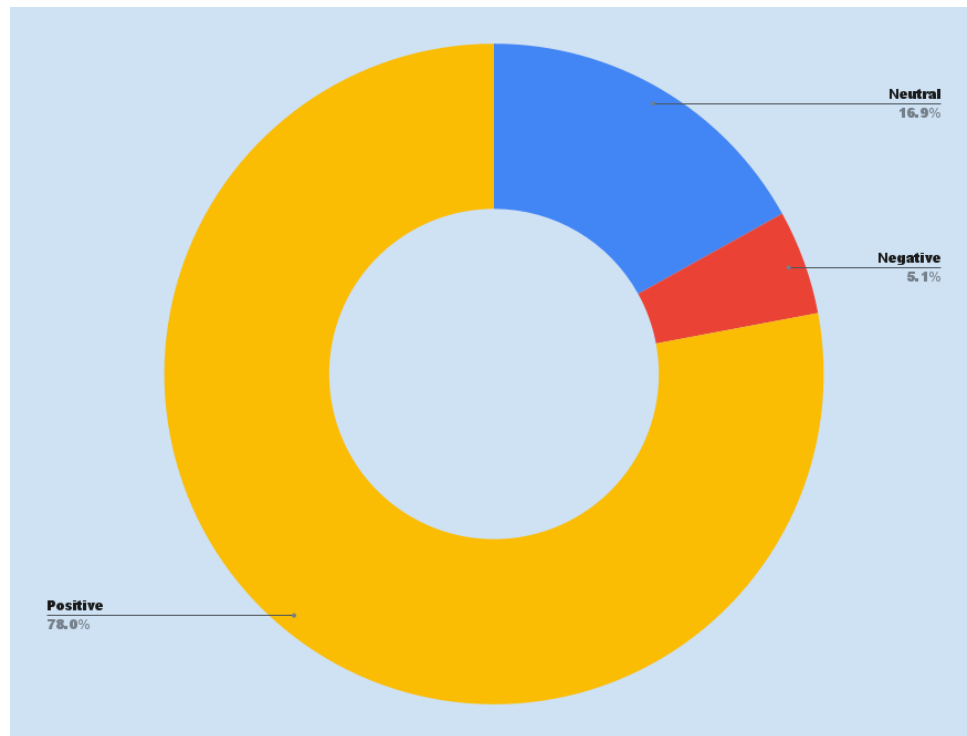


Figure 3: Sentiment Analysis of AI Influencer Ad

In figure 3, the graph shows that 78% (yellow) of the comments on the advertisement were classified as positive, 5% (red coloured) were classified as negative, and 16.9% were classified as neutral. This suggests that the AI model advertisement was generally well-received by the Instagram audience, with the majority of comments expressing positive sentiments. The small percentage of negative comments may indicate areas where the advertisement could be improved or addressed, while the neutral comments may provide opportunities for further engagement or clarification.

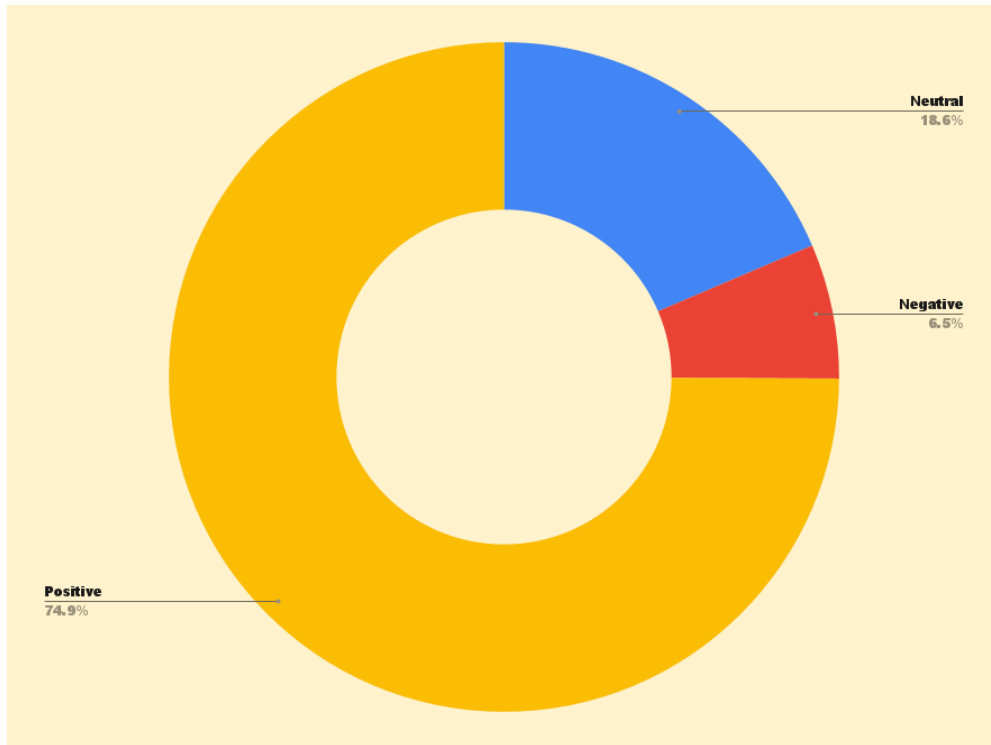
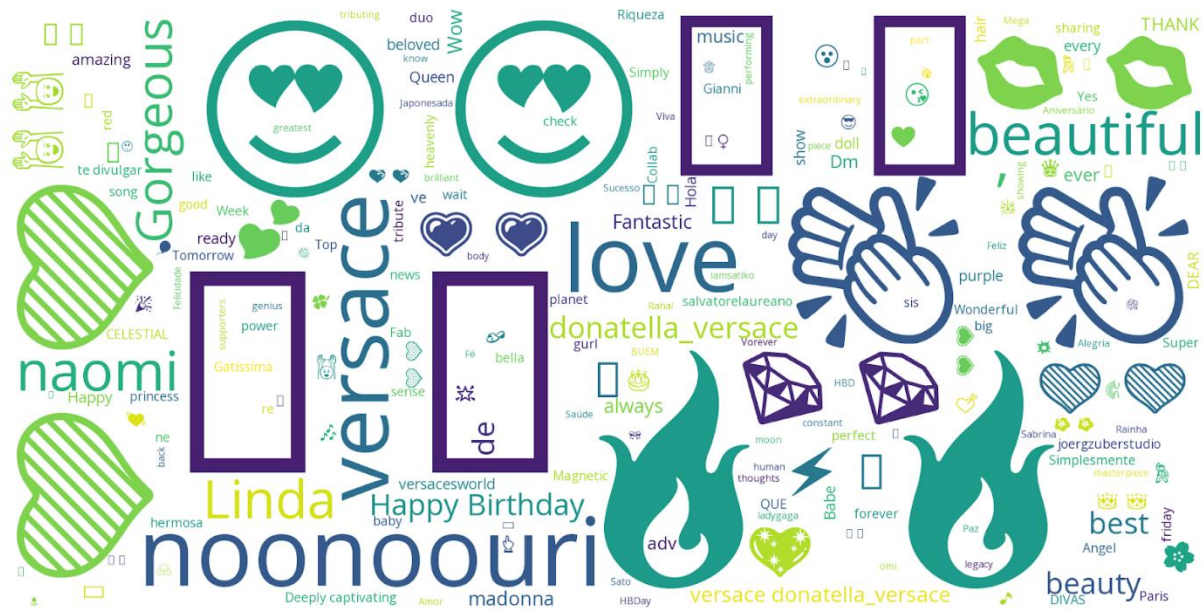


Figure 4: Sentiment Analysis of Human Influencer Ad

Similarly in figure 4, the sentiment analysis results for a human model advertisement on Instagram show that the majority of comments were positive, with 74.9% expressing favourable sentiments. A small percentage of comments, 6.5%, were negative, while 18.6% were classified as neutral.

Overall, these graphs can be a useful tool for analysing the sentiment of comments on an Instagram post and gaining insights into the emotions and opinions of the audience. It can help the creator or marketer to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their content and make adjustments to future campaigns accordingly.



Sampling:

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who met the criteria of being active Instagram users and having experienced AI influencer advertising.

The target population for this study consists of Instagram users in Pakistan who have been exposed to AI influencers like Noonouri and LilMiquela, as well as human influencers promoting brands such as Versace, Dior, Samsung, Gucci, etc. Those not exposed to such AI models, we showed them Instagram videos of the ads.

Recruitment:

Participants were recruited on the university campus by reaching out to potential candidates who met the sampling criteria. The recruitment process included providing information about the study's purpose, the nature of participation, and obtaining informed consent from interested individuals.

Data Gathering:

a. Interviews:

Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each participant. The interviews were conducted in person or through video conferencing platforms, allowing for flexibility and convenience for the participants. A set of interview questions were prepared, focusing on participants' experiences, perceptions, and sentiments related to the AI influencer ads they had been exposed to.

The questions explored topics such as their initial reactions, emotional responses, brand perceptions, authenticity concerns, and overall opinions about AI influencer advertising.

b. Ad Exposure:

Prior to the interviews, participants were shown ads featuring AI influencers on Instagram. The selection of specific AI influencer ads was based on relevance to the participants' demographics and interests, considering brands that had engaged in AI influencer collaborations in Pakistan. The

ads were presented to participants during the interview, ensuring that they had a visual reference while discussing their reactions.

Interview Process:

Each interview began with a brief introduction and explanation of the research purpose to the participant. The interviewer created a comfortable and non-judgmental environment, encouraging participants to express their honest opinions and feelings about the AI influencer ads. The interview questions were asked in a conversational manner, allowing for follow-up probing questions to delve deeper into participants' thoughts and experiences. The interviews were recorded (with participant consent) to ensure accurate capturing of their responses for further analysis.

Data Analysis:

The interviews were transcribed verbatim, capturing participants' responses and non-verbal cues. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify recurring themes, patterns, and key insights from the interview data. The data analysis involved a systematic process of coding, categorising, and grouping similar responses to identify common themes and subthemes. Key quotes and excerpts were extracted to support and illustrate the identified themes, providing rich qualitative evidence.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

Participant privacy and confidentiality were ensured throughout the data gathering process. All personal information collected was anonymized to maintain confidentiality. The interviews and transcriptions are securely stored and accessible only to the research team (the two authors of this paper).

Results and Discussion

Below we discuss each theme and sub-theme in detail and provide quotes from the interview transcript to support our analysis.

Table 1: Themes and subthemes

	Themes	Sub-Themes	
1	Brand Innovation	Use of AI influencers as a form of brand innovation	• "The collaboration with AI influencers demonstrated the brands' willingness to explore new advertising approaches." • "It's a unique form of brand innovation to leverage AI-generated influencers for promotions."
2	Brand Perception	Varying perceptions of brand endorsements	• "The collaborations with luxury brands added a certain element of novelty and uniqueness to the campaigns." • "I questioned the actual impact and genuine connection between AI influencers and the endorsed brands."
3	Brand Differentiation	AI influencer advertising as a way to differentiate brands	• ".... sets the brands apart from traditional marketing strategies." • "Collaborating with AI influencers helps brands differentiate themselves in the market." • "This(Samsung) is a tech brand so, it can differentiate itself by using AI influencers"
4	Audience Targeting	Strategic approach to target specific audiences	• "AI influencers help brands connect with tech-oriented, digitally engaged, and trend-conscious consumers." • "Brands leverage AI influencers to reach and engage with their desired target audience effectively."
5	Brand Perception and Reputation	Impact of AI influencer collaborations on brand perception and reputation	• "The collaboration with AI influencers positively impacts the brands' image in the eyes of the audience." • "It's interesting to see how the association with AI influencers shapes brand perception and reputation."

6	Brand Authenticity	Authenticity of AI influencer endorsements	• "I questioned whether AI influencers genuinely reflect the values and identity of the brands they promote." • "There is a concern about the authenticity of AI influencer partnerships and the true alignment with brand culture."
7	Engagement and Attention	Curiosity and exploration of AI influencers' content	• "The unique nature of AI influencers caught my attention, so I followed them to see what they were all about." • "I was curious to see how they presented themselves and engaged with the audience."
8	Mixed Sentiments	Appreciation for creativity but concerns about authenticity	"I appreciate the creative approach of using AI influencers, but I question their authenticity." "While there is novelty, I still prefer human influencers for their genuine connection."
9	Visual Aesthetics	Visually appealing content	• "The collaborations with luxury brands produced visually stunning posts." • "The aesthetic quality of the content shared by AI influencers caught my attention." • "I personally love this aesthetic"
10	Novelty and Intrigue	Fascination with AI-generated influencers	• "I was genuinely surprised by the concept of AI influencers endorsing brands." • "The idea of AI-generated influencers caught my attention and sparked my curiosity."
	Brand Type	Tech Oriented brands must use AI	• "Since this is a tech brand, they can and should use AI influencers".
	Blend with Human Influencer	AI influencers can be used alone or can be combined with human models.	• " I liked this ad showing both human and AI influencers together so it's an innovation".

	Culture	Localised	• “I did not liked this, as it is showing Western culture, I would have loved to see the model in a desi dress”.
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The analysis of the themes extracted from the interviews with Instagram users exposed to AI influencer ads revealed several interesting findings.

Brand Innovation and Differentiation: Participants acknowledged that the collaboration with AI influencers demonstrated brands' willingness to explore new advertising approaches and leverage AI-generated influencers for promotions. They perceived AI influencer advertising as a unique and innovative form of brand differentiation, setting brands apart from traditional marketing strategies.

Brand Perception and Reputation: The impact of AI influencer collaborations on brand perception and reputation was recognized by participants. They believed that such collaborations positively influenced brands' image in the eyes of the audience especially in the case of tech brands. However, there were concerns about the authenticity of AI influencer endorsements and the true alignment of AI influencers with brand values and culture.

Audience Targeting: Participants acknowledged that AI influencers helped brands effectively connect with specific target audiences, particularly tech-oriented, digitally engaged, and trend-conscious consumers. They recognized the strategic approach of leveraging AI influencers to reach and engage with desired target audiences.

Engagement and Attention: The unique nature of AI influencers caught participants' attention, and they expressed curiosity and exploration of AI influencers' content. They followed AI influencers to see how they presented themselves and engaged with the audience, indicating a level of engagement and interest in the AI influencer phenomenon.

Mixed Sentiments: Participants expressed mixed sentiments regarding AI influencer advertising. While they appreciated the creative approach and novelty of using AI influencers, there were concerns about their authenticity compared to human influencers, who were perceived to have a more genuine connection with the audience.

Contributions

The study can provide important theoretical contributions to the literature and especially to Uncanny Valley Theory which suggests that the use of AI-generated entities in advertising could potentially trigger negative reactions in viewers if the AI influencer appears too human-like but not quite real. This could be due to a variety of factors, such as awkward movements, strange facial expressions, or unnatural speech patterns. However, the current study findings, albeit rudimentary, couldn't prove this. Our sentiment analysis of the comments posted on Instagram shows positive reactions, instead of negative ones.

Furthermore, this study can help to refine the extant literature by identifying specific factors that contribute to specific effects. For example, the research could investigate the impact of different levels of facial realism or speech patterns on viewers' emotional responses to AI influencers.

Finally, the study of AI influencers in advertising can also provide insights into how to design AI-generated entities that can avoid the Uncanny Valley effect and elicit positive responses from viewers. By identifying the factors that contribute to the valley effect, designers can create AI influencers that appear more natural and realistic, which can ultimately enhance their effectiveness.

We provide implications for theorists and managers, as well as list restrictions and suggest areas for future research to better comprehend AI influencers.

The findings from the interviews with Instagram users exposed to AI influencer ads can be analysed and interpreted in light of the Uncanny Valley theory. The Uncanny Valley theory suggests that as human replicas become more realistic but still fall short of perfect human resemblance, they elicit feelings of unease and discomfort in viewers.

This theory can explain participants' mixed sentiments and concerns about authenticity regarding AI influencer endorsements. The AI-generated influencers, although visually appealing, may not achieve a perfect resemblance to humans, triggering a sense of unease or suspicion about their authenticity and genuine connection with brands.

The theory also aligns with participants' curiosity and fascination with AI-generated influencers. The unique nature of AI influencers, residing in the realm of the unfamiliar and novel, elicits intrigue and exploration. Participants may be drawn to AI influencers due to their distinctiveness and the novelty of experiencing a form of advertising that challenges traditional norms. The effect on actual sales, however, has to be demonstrated.

The visual aesthetics of AI influencer content, recognized by participants, can be related to the Uncanny Valley theory. The visually stunning posts created in collaborations with luxury brands may approach the boundary of the Uncanny Valley, where the AI influencer's appearance is close to human but not quite perfect. This visual appeal can simultaneously attract attention and create a sense of intrigue but may also contribute to a subtle feeling of unease due to the uncanniness of the AI influencer's appearance.

The Uncanny Valley theory can shed light on participants' varying perceptions of AI influencer endorsements. Participants' concerns about the authenticity of AI influencer endorsements may be influenced by their perception of the AI influencer as falling within the Uncanny Valley, not quite achieving a fully authentic human presence.

Overall, the Uncanny Valley theory provides a theoretical framework to understand participants' mixed sentiments, curiosity, and concerns regarding AI influencer advertising. It highlights the delicate balance between visual appeal and perceived authenticity, as well as the role of novelty and familiarity in shaping audience reactions. By considering the Uncanny Valley theory, we can better understand the nuanced responses of Instagram users towards AI influencer ads and their underlying psychological mechanisms.

Practical Implications

With the help of this research, significant initial steps are taken toward educating social media managers, marketers, businesses, and advertisers on the potential impact of AI influencers.

The research highlights the potential impact of AI influencers in advertising campaigns. It brings attention to the unique characteristics and innovative nature of AI influencer collaborations, demonstrating how they can be a novel and creative approach to brand promotion. This awareness

can help social media managers, marketers, and advertisers recognize the possibilities and opportunities (and dangers) that AI influencers can offer. The study delves into the perceptions and sentiments of Instagram users towards AI influencer ads. By exploring themes such as brand perception, authenticity concerns, engagement, and visual aesthetics, the research provides valuable insights into how audiences respond to AI influencers. This understanding helps marketers and advertisers gauge the potential impact of AI influencers on their target audience and make informed decisions about incorporating them into their campaigns.

The findings emphasise the role of AI influencer advertising as a means of brand differentiation and innovation. Collaborations with AI influencers allow brands to set themselves apart from traditional marketing strategies, capture audience attention, and showcase their willingness to explore new approaches. This insight can inspire social media managers, marketers, and advertisers to think creatively and consider the unique benefits that AI influencers can bring to their brand messaging.

The research highlights the strategic aspect of using AI influencers to target specific audiences effectively. By leveraging AI influencers, brands can connect with tech-oriented, digitally engaged, and trend-conscious consumers who resonate with the AI influencer phenomenon. This understanding of audience targeting can guide social media managers and advertisers in identifying the right influencers for their campaigns and tailoring their messaging to appeal to the desired audience segments.

The study raises important considerations about authenticity in AI influencer endorsements. It highlights the need for brands to carefully align AI influencers with their values and culture to maintain a positive brand perception and reputation. This insight prompts social media managers, marketers, and advertisers to critically evaluate the authenticity of AI influencer partnerships and ensure they align with the brand's identity.

Overall, this research contributes to the knowledge and understanding of the potential impact of AI influencers in advertising. It equips social media managers, marketers, businesses, and advertisers with insights into audience perceptions, brand differentiation, targeted engagement, and authenticity concerns related to AI influencer collaborations. Armed with this knowledge,

professionals in the field can make more informed decisions about incorporating AI influencers into their advertising strategies, enabling them to leverage the benefits and navigate the challenges associated with this emerging trend.

The study suggests the implications of AI influencers' advertisements by highlighting that AI influencers can provide brands with more targeted and personalised marketing strategies. AI influencers can provide brands with more cost-effective marketing solutions. By analysing consumer data, such as purchase history, demographic information, and social media activity, AI influencers can create tailored campaigns that are more likely to reach and engage the target audience. Hence, AI influencer advertisements have the potential to provide brands with real-time insights and optimization, allowing them to make data-driven decisions and adjust their marketing strategies in real-time.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this study on the effects of AI influencer versus human influencer advertising on the affective reactions of the audience provides valuable insights into the potential impact of AI influencers in the realm of brand promotion and marketing. Through the analysis of interviews with Instagram users who were exposed to AI influencer ads, several themes emerged, shedding light on various aspects of AI influencer advertising.

The findings reveal that AI influencer advertising represents a form of brand innovation, allowing brands to explore new advertising approaches and differentiate themselves from traditional marketing strategies. The collaborations with AI influencers demonstrate a willingness to embrace novel and creative approaches to brand promotion.

However, the study also highlights the importance of brand perception and authenticity. While AI influencers can capture attention and generate curiosity among audiences, there are concerns regarding the authenticity of their endorsements and the extent to which they truly align with the values and culture of the brands they promote. These authenticity concerns highlight the need for

careful alignment and management of AI influencer partnerships to ensure a positive brand perception and reputation.

The study also emphasises the strategic aspect of AI influencer advertising, as it allows brands to effectively target specific audiences, particularly those who are tech-oriented, digitally engaged, and trend-conscious. Leveraging AI influencers enables brands to connect with their desired target audience more efficiently.

Furthermore, the study reveals the significance of visual aesthetics and the role they play in attracting audience attention. The visually appealing content shared by AI influencers, particularly in collaborations with luxury brands, captures the interest of viewers and contributes to the overall effectiveness of the advertising campaigns.

Overall, the findings of this study contribute to the growing body of knowledge on AI influencer advertising and its implications for brand promotion. The insights gained from the interviews provide social media managers, marketers, businesses, and advertisers with valuable information to better understand audience perceptions, target specific demographics, and navigate the challenges surrounding authenticity and brand reputation.

Moving forward, further research can delve deeper into the long-term effects of AI influencer advertising, exploring factors such as audience trust, consumer behaviour, and the evolution of AI influencer technology. With continued investigation and understanding, marketers can harness the potential of AI influencers to create impactful and successful advertising campaigns in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

Although AI influencer marketing is a novel and creative idea, its potential value for brands is still unknown. The potential advantages and difficulties of deploying AI influencers should be carefully considered by brands as they attempt to develop marketing strategies that successfully engage and reach consumers. As a result, companies should carefully assess the kind of influencer advertising that best suits their target market and marketing objectives.

Limitations and future directions

In the case of Instagram data, we could not consider the points of view of those audiences who did not comment on these. The fact that these people commented shows that they were engaged by the ads and were involved in them. Those whom the ads could not engage or those who were too lazy or too busy to comment were excluded. This might have implications for the results. Similarly, we did not check if the comments were made by a real human or by an AI bot.

Our interview design can be thought of as experimental, we showed ads to participants before conducting these interviews, there is still a need for rigorous experimental designs. In future studies, experimental designs with fully random assignment can be utilised to get a better picture; another option can be some sort of A/B testing in which the company shows one ad with AI influencer to one set of audience and another version of that ad with real human is shown to another set of audience.

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