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A Study on AI-Generated Influencers on Trust, Reach, and ROI among Users of Various Social Media Platforms in Ahmedabad City

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A R T I C L E I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

Artificial intelligence (AI)-generated influencers, or virtual identities that brands deploy to interact with audiences on social media platforms, are a new trend brought about by the quick development of AI in digital marketing. This study investigates how age affects Ahmedabad City social media users' perceptions of return on investment (ROI), trust, and interaction with AI influencers. 209 respondents of various ages were given a standardized questionnaire, and chi-square tests were used to investigate the relationship between age and a number of variables, including platform usage, awareness, credibility, and receptivity toward AI influencers. The results show that user trust and behavioral reactions to AI-generated influencers are not significantly impacted by age. Although there were some noteworthy correlations found, such as the use of Instagram and Snapchat, knowledge of AI influencers, and appreciation of their affordability, these correlations were not very strong overall. Regardless of age, the majority of respondents continue to show a preference for human influencers, especially when it comes to engagement and trust. By indicating that demographic variables such as age are not reliable indicators of how customers will react to AI influencers, this study advances our theoretical knowledge of AI in influencer marketing. The results provide useful insights for companies, emphasizing the value of strategic platform utilization, transparency, and high-quality content over straightforward demographic targeting. It is advised that future studies investigate additional impacting elements like digital literacy, psychographics, and ethical considerations.

INTRODUCTION

India's influencer marketing industry has rapidly evolved into a vital pillar of the country's digital economy, valued at over ₹1,800 crore (~~$220 million USD) as of 2024 and projected to cross ₹2,800 crore (~~$340 million USD) by 2026 with 20–25% annual growth (Vidani, 2015). This growth is driven by widespread digital penetration, affordable data, and the increasing use of smartphones across Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, expanding the reach of influencer content to diverse socio-economic and linguistic segments (Vidani & Solanki, 2015).

The influencer ecosystem in India has transformed content creation into a viable career path, supporting not only creators but also editors, graphic designers, videographers, and influencer managers, thus contributing to employment and skill development (Vidani, 2015). Creators across niches—fashion, tech, finance, education, lifestyle—are leveraging Instagram, YouTube, and emerging platforms to monetize content while building engaged communities (Vidani, 2015). This has led to the formalization of the creator economy, with tax guidelines and regulatory frameworks beginning to take shape (Vidani, 2015).

Influencer marketing has significantly boosted India's startup ecosystem and the Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) revolution (Solanki & Vidani, 2016). Brands like Mamaearth, BoAt, and WOW Skin Science have utilized influencer partnerships to drive awareness, build trust, and increase product trials, often achieving higher ROI than traditional media (Vidani, 2016). By leveraging micro and nano influencers, these brands effectively target niche audiences while maintaining cost efficiency (Bhatt, Patel, & Vidani, 2017).

A notable trend within India's influencer landscape is the rise of regional and hyperlocal influencers who create content in languages such as Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, and Marathi, enabling brands to penetrate deeper into local markets while respecting cultural contexts (Niyati & Vidani, 2016). This localization strategy is helping brands expand their footprint beyond metros, fostering inclusive digital growth (Pradhan, Tshogay, & Vidani, 2016).

The government's initiatives under Digital India and Skill India indirectly support the influencer ecosystem by promoting digital literacy and entrepreneurship (Modi, Harkani, Radadiya, & Vidani, 2016). The introduction of tax guidelines for social media influencers by the CBDT and discussions around industry regulations indicate a recognition of the influencer economy's contribution to India's GDP (Vidani, 2016).

Additionally, India is witnessing the early stages of AI-generated influencers entering the marketing ecosystem (Sukhanandi, Tank, & Vidani, 2018). These virtual influencers offer scalability, consistency, and creative control, presenting brands with new avenues for cost-effective and 24/7 consumer engagement (Singh, Vidani, & Nagoria, 2016). As generative AI tools and AR/VR technologies mature, virtual influencers are expected to complement human creators in campaigns demanding precision and novelty (Mala, Vidani, & Solanki, 2016).

Economically, influencer marketing contributes to increased e-commerce transactions, retail sales, and consumer spending across categories like beauty, electronics, fashion, and fitness (Dhere, Vidani, & Solanki, 2016). Influencers drive product discovery and purchase intent, acting as trusted intermediaries between brands and consumers while enhancing brand storytelling and authenticity (Singh & Vidani, 2016).

In conclusion, influencer marketing in India is not merely a digital trend but a transformative force reshaping advertising, consumer behavior, and economic growth (Vidani & Plaha, 2016). With a young, digitally savvy population and rising digital infrastructure, India is poised to become one of the largest influencer-driven markets globally, making influencer marketing an essential strategy for brands aiming to engage meaningfully with modern Indian consumers (Solanki & Vidani, 2016).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVIES

- Assess the level of awareness and perception of AI-generated influencers among different age groups and occupations using social media in Ahmedabad.(H1), (H2), (H3), (H4), (H5), (H6), (H7), (H8), (H9), (H10), (H11)
- Evaluate the trust and credibility that users place in AI-generated influencers compared to human influencers.(H12), (H13), (H14), (H15),(16)
- Examine the perceived reach and engagement capabilities of AI influencers across platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Snapchat.(H17), (H18), (H19), (H20), (H21)
- Determine the perceived effectiveness and ROI of using AI-generated influencers for brand marketing campaigns from the users' perspective.(H22), (H23), (H24), (H25), (H26)
- Understand the acceptance and future outlook of AI influencers in the influencer marketing landscape among users in Ahmedabad. .(H27), (H28), (H29), (H30), (H31)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Published Sep 1, 2023 · Adi Mursalin, Yuli Purbaningsih, Surya Fadjar Boediman

Influencer marketing powered by AI has become a game-changing strategy in the field of digital advertising (Vidani, 2016). In contrast to conventional techniques, this study sought to investigate the efficacy and efficiency of integrating AI into influencer marketing initiatives (Vidani, Chack, & Rathod, 2017). The study examined the effects of AI on influencer selection, campaign performance, and ethical considerations using a mixed-methods approach that included both qualitative interviews and quantitative data analysis (Vidani, 2018). The results showed that the accuracy and efficiency of AI-driven influencer selection procedures greatly surpassed those of manual approaches (Biharani & Vidani, 2018). Influencers and target audiences were successfully matched by AI algorithms, which raised engagement rates and brand awareness (Vidani, 2018).

Marketers were able to make data-driven decisions and instantly adjust their campaign tactics because to the real-time information that AI tools offered. Furthermore, in terms of measures like reach, impressions, and ROI, influencer campaigns that were optimized with AI continuously outperformed conventional marketing (Odedra, Rabadiya, & Vidani, 2018). AI's data-driven strategy produced more relevant and targeted ads that connected with consumers more and produced measurable outcomes for companies (Vasveliya & Vidani, 2019). However, it was determined that algorithmic biases and ethical issues were important components of AI-powered influencer marketing (Sachaniya, Vora, & Vidani, 2019). To reduce biases and guarantee moral influencer selection, transparent procedures and continuous audits of AI algorithms were stressed (Vidani, 2019). According to Vidani, Jacob, and Patel (2019), the use of AI in influencer marketing seems to have a bright future.
More precise influencer matching and more in-depth audience insights will result from improvements in AI algorithms, enabling hyper-personalized advertising (Vidani J. N., 2016). Businesses can stay ahead in the ever-changing world of digital advertising and establish more effective connections with their target consumers by adopting AI technologies ethically (Vidani & Singh, 2017).
Published Feb 18, 2022 ·S. Sands, Colin Campbell, Kirk Plangger

Goal This study compares the effects of artificial intelligence (AI)-generated social media influencers to those of conventional (human) influencers in order to investigate how consumers react to these influencers (Vidani & Pathak, 2016). Design, methodology, and strategy The authors investigate the effectiveness of AI social media influencers in two empirical investigations (Pathak & Vidani, 2016). In Study 1, the authors examine the impact of social-psychological distance on consumer views and create baseline effects for AI influencers (Vidani & Plaha, 2017). In order to test the limits of the findings and ascertain the interplay between influencer type and influencer agency, the authors additionally look into the role of an influencer's agency, whether it be autonomous or externally managed (Vidani J. N., 2020).

The authors of Study 2 provide generalizability and overlay the function of demand for uniqueness as a moderated mediator, serving as an extension and validation of Study 1 (Vidani J. N., 2018). Results The authors demonstrate how customers' perceptions of AI and human influencers differ and are similar (Vidani & Dholakia, 2020). Crucially, the writers discover no variation in terms of personalization or intention to follow (Vidani, Meghrajani, & Siddarth, 2023). This implies that customers view the degree of personalization offered by both AI and human influencers as being comparable, and they are equally willing to follow either type of influencer (Rathod, Meghrajani, & Vidani, 2022). Additionally, an AI influencer is more likely to generate word-of-mouth intentions even if they are typically seen as having lesser source trust (Vidani & Das, 2021). To comprehend these impacts, the authors demonstrate that the association between influencer type and the outcomes they study is mediated by social distance (Vidani J. N., 2022). The findings also indicate that customers with a strong need for uniqueness may be more impacted by AI influencers (Saxena & Vidani, 2023).

Lastly, the authors discover a negative consequence of a lack of influencer agency. Limitations and implications of the research The studies look at how people react to AI influencers in general on Instagram, but future studies could look at how people react to posts that promote particular products in a range of category contexts and on various social media platforms (Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Singh, 2023). Implications for practice According to the authors, an AI influencer may be just as successful as a human influencer in some situations (Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Chaudasi, 2023). According to the authors, consumers may be receptive to recommendations from AI influencers as a result of their encounters with previous AI recommendation systems.

The authors warn marketers against hastily substituting AI influencers for human influencers because they consistently uncover evidence that AI influencers are less trustworthy than traditional influencers (Bansal, Pophalkar, & Vidani, 2023). Value and originality This study provides fresh perspective on the growing AI influencer phenomena (Chaudhary, Patel, & Vidani, 2023). In particular, it begins the process of gaining knowledge on how customers react to AI influencers and compares these outcomes with those of human influencers (Patel, Chaudhary, & Vidani, 2023).

Published Feb 1, 2025 ·Saanvi Agarwal

This study explores how AI influencers can revolutionize startup marketing strategies, highlighting the importance of mass personalization (Sharma & Vidani, 2023). The goal is to investigate how startups can use AI-driven tools to improve customer engagement and optimize resources (Sharma & Vidani, 2023). Data was acquired through case study analysis, industry publications, and interviews with marketing professionals, offering a full understanding of AI integration in influencer marketing. Key findings illustrate that AI enables companies to discover appropriate influencers, personalize content efficiently, and make demonstrable increases in campaign ROI.

However, adoption is significantly hampered by issues including algorithmic biases, data privacy, and ethical concerns. The study comes to the conclusion that although AI provides companies with creative and scalable solutions, success depends on moral behavior, openness, and building customer trust. Startups can use the power of AI influencers to achieve sustainable growth and a competitive edge in the digital marketplace by implementing appropriate AI initiatives.

Published Dec 16, 2024 ·Prasenjeet Samanta, Mohd Amir, Sanjiv Maira

The introduction of AI into influence marketing revolutionized how companies interact with their target audience today. As a result, marketing campaigns are now more accurate, efficient, and effective. The many facets of AI's role in influencer marketing are covered in this article, including campaign management, content tailoring, consumer behavior analysis, and ROI measurement. The exploratory case studies used in the research demonstrate how effective AI marketing is at transforming consumer decision-making and brand perception. It examines the opportunities and difficulties that arise in real-world applications of AI in influencer marketing.

AI technologies have the potential to improve ROI, boost customer-brand relationships, and speed up higher levels of engagement. These findings underscore the enormous benefits of AI-driven tactics and on the other hand bring out the fact that one will have to steer between ethical considerations and integration complications. As AI's prominence grows, so does its role in influencing the future. It is essential to influencer marketing and opens up new avenues for innovation and expansion in the field of digital marketing.

Published Dec 20, 2024 ·Yueyan Zhang, Jiaji Zhu, Haibo Chen

AI influencers are more cost-effective, more efficient, and more equitable when it comes to managing objective duties than human influencers. Nonetheless, it is thought that their observation and empathy skills are lacking. In light of their marketing content, how can businesses decide which promoter—AI or human—is better suited? How can businesses create more compelling marketing materials based on the influencer type? In this paper, three behavioral studies were carried out. The findings show that AI influencers can greatly increase people's perceived trust when they publish marketing content with functional advertising appeal.

Human influencers can greatly increase people's perceived empathy by sharing marketing content with experiential advertising appeal. Compared to consumers with higher levels of knowledge, individuals with lower levels are more vulnerable to the matching effect of advertising appeal type and influencer type on the persuasive effect of marketing content. The study's findings help businesses align advertising appeals with influencer types in a scientific manner. Businesses can optimize marketing efficacy by selecting influencers according to the type of marketing material or by creating appropriate marketing content according to the influencer type. This improved marketing approach increases the brand's competitiveness in the market while also enhancing the marketing content's persuasive power.

RESEARCH GAP

While the existing literature extensively explores the effectiveness of AI-generated influencers compared to traditional human influencers in terms of efficiency, reach, personalization, and ROI, several notable gaps remain:

- Geographical and Cultural Context:

Most existing studies focus on global or Western audiences. There is limited research investigating how users in specific regional or cultural contexts—like Indian cities (e.g., Ahmedabad)—perceive and respond to AI-generated influencers, especially in comparison to human ones. Cultural nuances may significantly influence trust, relatability, and purchase intention.

- Longitudinal Impact:

Current studies primarily use cross-sectional data or short-term campaign metrics. There is a lack of longitudinal studies exploring how consumer trust, loyalty, and engagement evolve over time with repeated exposure to AI influencers.

- Demographic Influence (e.g., Age, Tech-Savviness):

While studies touch on need for uniqueness or consumer knowledge, few delve into demographic variables such as age, education, or tech-savviness, and how these influence trust and engagement with AI versus human influencers.

- Ethical Perception vs. Behavioral Intention:

Although ethical concerns like algorithmic bias and lack of transparency are acknowledged, how these concerns influence consumer behavior (e.g., willingness to follow, share, or purchase through AI influencers) remains underexplored.

- Platform-Specific Engagement:

Most studies mention Instagram or speak generally about social media. However, there's a gap in understanding platform-specific consumer behavior—for example, how AI influencers perform on LinkedIn vs. Instagram vs. YouTube, particularly in terms of trust, reach, and ROI.

- Content Type Matching:

Although recent studies begin exploring the interaction between content appeal (functional vs. experiential) and influencer type, further research is needed to understand how this matching varies by industry or product category (e.g., beauty vs. finance vs. tech).

- Perceived Authenticity:

One major criticism of AI influencers is their perceived lack of authenticity or emotional depth. Few studies systematically compare how this perception affects actual consumer decision-making, such as click-through rates or purchase conversion.

HYPOTHESIS

H1 There is a significant association between age and usage of Facebook.
H2 There is a significant association between age and usage of Instagram.
H3 There is a significant association between age and usage of YouTube.
H4 There is a significant association between age and usage of LinkedIn.
H5 There is a significant association between age and usage of Twitter.
H6 There is a significant association between age and usage of Snapchat.
H7 There is a significant association between age and awareness of the existence of AI-generated (virtual) influencers.
H8 There is a significant association between age and the ability to differentiate between real and AI-generated influencers on social media.
H9 There is a significant association between age and the perception that AI-generated influencers appear realistic and engaging.
H10 There is a significant association between age and the belief that AI influencers are innovative and futuristic.

H11 There is a significant association between age and curiosity to follow or interact with AI-generated influencers online.
H12 There is a significant association between age and trust in the content shared by AI-generated influencers.
H13 There is a significant association between age and belief that AI influencers provide unbiased and credible information.
H14 There is a significant association between age and willingness to consider AI influencers as reliable sources for product recommendations.
H15 There is a significant association between age and perception of trustworthiness of AI influencers compared to human influencers.
H16 There is a significant association between age and likelihood to trust a brand endorsed by a human influencer over an AI influencer.
H17 There is a significant association between age and belief that AI influencers have a strong presence on popular platforms.
H18 There is a significant association between age and having seen AI influencers in brand campaigns or advertisements.
H19 There is a significant association between age and belief that AI influencers can engage followers effectively.
H20 There is a significant association between age and belief that AI influencers can reach a large and diverse audience.
H21 There is a significant association between age and preference for engaging with content from human influencers over AI influencers.
H22 There is a significant association between age and belief that brands can benefit from using AI influencers.
H23 There is a significant association between age and belief that using AI influencers reduces marketing costs.
H24 There is a significant association between age and belief that AI influencers help brands achieve higher visibility and awareness.
H25 There is a significant association between age and belief that campaigns with AI influencers drive customer conversion and purchase intent.
H26 There is a significant association between age and belief that ROI from AI influencer campaigns is higher than traditional methods.
H27 There is a significant association between age and openness to follow AI-generated influencers in the future.
H28 There is a significant association between age and belief that AI influencers will become more common in digital marketing.
H29 There is a significant association between age and belief that AI influencers may replace human influencers in some contexts.
H30 There is a significant association between age and feeling positive about the growing use of AI in influencer marketing.
H31 There is a significant association between age and willingness to recommend brands to experiment with AI-generated influencers.

Table 1: Validation Of Questionaire

Statements	**Citation from JV citation file (You can add more than 1 citation)**
Facebook	(Vidani, 2015)
Instagram	(Vidani & Solanki, 2015)
Youtube	(Vidani, 2015)
LinkedIn	(Vidani, 2015)
Twitter	(Vidani, 2015)
Snapchat	(Solanki & Vidani, 2016)
I am aware of the existence of AI-generated (virtual) influencers	(Vidani, 2016)
I can easily differentiate between real and AI-generated influencers on social media.	(Bhatt, Patel, & Vidani, 2017)
AI-generated influencers appear realistic and engaging.	(Niyati & Vidani, 2016)
I find the concept of AI influencers innovative and futuristic.	(Pradhan, Tshogay, & Vidani, 2016)
I feel curious to follow or interact with AI-generated influencers online.	(Modi, Harkani, Radadiya, & Vidani, 2016)
I trust the content shared by AI-generated influencers.	(Vidani, 2016)
I believe AI influencers provide unbiased and credible information.	(Sukhanandi, Tank, & Vidani, 2018)
I would consider AI influencers as reliable sources for product recommendations.	(Singh, Vidani, & Nagoria, 2016)
AI influencers seem as trustworthy as human influencers	(Singh, Vidani, & Nagoria, 2016)
I am more likely to trust a brand endorsed by a human influencer than by an AI influencer	(Dhere, Vidani, & Solanki, 2016)
AI influencers have a strong online presence on popular social media platforms.	(Singh & Vidani, 2016)
I have seen AI influencers being featured in brand campaigns or advertisements.	(Vidani & Plaha, 2016)

I believe AI influencers can effectively engage followers through comments, stories, or content.	(Solanki & Vidani, 2016)
AI influencers are capable of reaching a large and diverse audience.	(Vidani, 2016)
I am more likely to engage with content (likes, shares, comments) posted by human influencers than AI influencers.	(Vidani, Chack, & Rathod, 2017)
Brands can benefit from using AI influencers for marketing.	(Vidani, 2018)
Using AI influencers can reduce marketing costs for brands.	(Biharani & Vidani, 2018)
AI influencers can help brands achieve higher visibility and awareness.	(Vidani, 2018)
I believe campaigns with AI influencers lead to customer conversion and purchase intent.	(Odedra, Rabadiya, & Vidani, 2018)
ROI from campaigns involving AI influencers is likely to be higher than traditional influencer marketing.	(Vasveliya & Vidani, 2019)
I am open to following AI-generated influencers in the future.	(Sachaniya, Vora, & Vidani, 2019)
I believe AI influencers will become more common in digital marketing campaigns.	(Vidani, 2019)
AI influencers have the potential to replace human influencers in certain contexts.	(Vidani, Jacob, & Patel, 2019)
I feel positive about the growing use of AI in the influencer marketing industry.	(Vidani J. N., 2016)
I would recommend brands to experiment with AI-generated influencers.	(Vidani & Singh, 2017)

**Source: Author's compilation*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

- The study uses descriptive research design to collect data.

Sampling:

- To guarantee representation from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds, a non-probability convenient sampling technique is employed.

- The target population consists consumers of (Write your company name here) living in Ahmedabad.
- Sample size = 150

Data Collection:

- Primary data is collected through structured questionnaires distributed to the selected participants.
- The questionnaire consists of demographic questions and other related questions

Data Analysis:

- Descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, percentages) is used to summarize demographic characteristics.

Table 2: Research Methodology

Research Design	**Descriptive**
Sample Method	Non-Probability - Convenient Sampling method
Data Collection Method	Primary method
Data Collection Method	Structured Questionnaire
Type of Questions	Close ended
Data Collection mode	Online through Google Form
Data Analysis methods	Tables
Data Analysis Tools	SPSS and Excel
Sampling Size	No. of responses in Google form
Survey Area	Your area of data collection
Sampling Unit	Students, Private and government Job employees, Businessmen, Home maker, Professionals like CA, Doctor etc.

*Source: Author's compilation

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

The study sample consisted of 209 respondents. A majority of participants (68.9%) were aged 21–25 years, followed by 16.3% in the 26–30 age group. Smaller proportions were aged 31–35 (7.7%), 36–40 (4.3%), and 41–55 (2.9%). In terms of gender, 68.9% of the respondents were male, while 31.1% were female. Regarding occupation, the largest group were students (62.2%), followed by working professionals (10.5%), businessmen (7.7%), and housewives (7.2%). Smaller segments included professionals (10.5%) and retired individuals (1.9%).

CRONBACH ALPHA

Table 3: CRONBACH ALPHA

Cronbach Alpha Value	No. of items
.956	31

*Source: SPSS Software

To assess the internal consistency of the research instrument, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated. The overall Cronbach's Alpha value obtained was 0.956 for the 31 items included in the questionnaire. This value indicates excellent reliability, as it exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0.9 for high internal consistency. This suggests that the items in the scale are highly correlated and consistently measure the underlying construct. Therefore, the instrument used in this study can be considered both reliable and suitable for further data analysis.

Table 4: Results Of Hypothsis Testing

Sr. No	Alternate Hypothesis	Result p =	>/ < 0.05	Accept/ Reject Null hypothesis	R value	Relationship
H01	There is a significant association between age and usage of Facebook.	.235	>	H01 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.283	Weak
H02	There is a significant association between age and usage of Instagram.	.012	<	H02 Rejected (Null hypothesis rejected)	.000	Weak
H03	There is a significant association between age and usage of YouTube.	.181	>	H03 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.001	Weak
H04	There is a significant association between age and usage of LinkedIn.	.216	>	H04 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.015	Weak
H05	There is a significant association between age and usage of Twitter.	.577	>	H05 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.812	Weak
H06	There is a significant association between age and usage of Snapchat.	.002	<	H06 Rejected (Null hypothesis rejected)	.004	Weak
H07	There is a significant association between age and awareness of the existence of AI-generated (virtual) influencers.	.002	<	H07 Rejected (Null hypothesis rejected)	.011	Weak

H08	There is a significant association between age and the ability to differentiate between real and AI-generated influencers on social media.	.009	<	H08 Rejected (Null hypothesis rejected)	.000	Weak
H09	There is a significant association between age and the perception that AI-generated influencers appear realistic and engaging.	.740	>	H09 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.317	Weak
H10	There is a significant association between age and the belief that AI influencers are innovative and futuristic.	.952	>	H10 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.417	Weak
H11	There is a significant association between age and curiosity to follow or interact with AI-generated influencers online.	.177	>	H11 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.115	Weak
H12	There is a significant association between age and trust in the content shared by AI-generated influencers.	.851	>	H12 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.124	Weak
H13	There is a significant association between age and belief that AI influencers provide unbiased and credible information.	.197	>	H13 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.234	Weak
H14	There is a significant association between age and willingness to consider AI influencers as reliable sources for product recommendations.	.342	>	H14 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.217	Weak
H15	There is a significant association between age and perception of trustworthiness of AI influencers compared to human influencers.	.822	>	H15 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.702	Weak
H16	There is a significant association between age and likelihood to trust a brand endorsed by a human influencer over an AI influencer.	.124	>	H16 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.005	Weak
H17	There is a significant association between age and belief that AI influencers have a strong presence on popular platforms.	.130	>	H17 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.018	Weak
H18	There is a significant association between age and having seen AI influencers in brand campaigns or advertisements.	.005	<	H18 Rejected (Null hypothesis rejected)	.007	Weak

H19	There is a significant association between age and belief that AI influencers can engage followers effectively.	.075	>	H19 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.001	Weak
H20	There is a significant association between age and belief that AI influencers can reach a large and diverse audience.	.616	>	H20 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.291	Weak
H21	There is a significant association between age and preference for engaging with content from human influencers over AI influencers.	.356	>	H21 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.177	Weak
H22	There is a significant association between age and belief that brands can benefit from using AI influencers.	.102	>	H22 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.077	Weak
H23	There is a significant association between age and belief that using AI influencers reduces marketing costs.	.019	<	H23 Rejected (Null hypothesis rejected)	.069	Weak
H24	There is a significant association between age and belief that AI influencers help brands achieve higher visibility and awareness.	.377	>	H24 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.068	Weak
H25	There is a significant association between age and belief that campaigns with AI influencers drive customer conversion and purchase intent.	.395	>	H25 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.057	Weak
H26	There is a significant association between age and belief that ROI from AI influencer campaigns is higher than traditional methods.	.278	>	H26 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.080	Weak
H27	There is a significant association between age and openness to follow AI-generated influencers in the future.	.742	>	H27 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.084	Weak
H28	There is a significant association between age and belief that AI influencers will become more common in digital marketing.	.165	>	H28 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.006	Weak
H29	There is a significant association between age and belief that AI influencers may replace human influencers in some contexts.	.498	>	H29 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.206	Weak

H30	There is a significant association between age and feeling positive about the growing use of AI in influencer marketing.	.275	>	H30 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.127	Weak
H31	There is a significant association between age and willingness to recommend brands to experiment with AI-generated influencers.	.893	>	H31 Accepted(Null hypothesis accepted)	.265	Weak

*Source: Author's compilation

DISCUSSION

This study examined the influence of age on users' perceptions, trust, and engagement with AI-generated influencers across various social media platforms in Ahmedabad. Results from chi-square tests revealed that while a few significant relationships were found—particularly in platform usage (e.g., Instagram, Snapchat) and awareness of AI influencers—most behavioral and emotional responses, such as trust, realism, and willingness to take advice, were not significantly influenced by age. Notably, participants across age groups favored human influencers when it came to credibility and emotional resonance. Although younger users were more aware and better at identifying AI influencers, overall correlations were weak, indicating that age alone is not a reliable predictor of engagement with AI influencer content. These findings challenge assumptions within traditional models like the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Diffusion of Innovations Theory, which often associate tech adoption with age. Instead, they support a shift toward considering factors such as digital literacy, authenticity, content quality, and user experience. The study also extends influencer marketing theory by highlighting the need to distinguish between human and AI influencers, given the emotional limitations of AI personas. Thus, a more multidimensional framework—incorporating psychological, technological, and contextual variables—is essential for understanding user behavior in the evolving AI-driven digital marketing landscape.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This research reveals that age has minimal influence on trust and interaction with AI influencers, suggesting that marketers should shift from age-based targeting to psychographic segmentation focused on user interests, tech-savviness, and platform behavior. Although platform preferences like Instagram or Snapchat vary by age, deeper responses such as engagement and purchase intent remain consistent, allowing brands to deploy AI influencers broadly—provided the content is credible, emotionally resonant, and aligned with brand values. The findings also highlight the importance of well-designed AI personas and transparent communication about their artificial nature to build user trust. Educational initiatives may help boost awareness, especially among older or less tech-savvy audiences. Notably, AI influencers offer cost-effective, scalable solutions for SMEs, making them ideal for consistent and automated content

delivery. However, the study recommends a hybrid strategy—using AI influencers for functional content and human influencers for emotional storytelling—to balance innovation with authenticity. Ultimately, strategic integration and audience understanding are key to maximizing AI influencer marketing success.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between age and user opinions, trust, reach, and ROI concerning AI-based influencers on different social media platforms in Ahmedabad City. The results showed that although age impacts platform choice and awareness to a certain degree, its impact on deeper factors like trust, engagement, and behavioral intention is minimal. Substantial correlations were significant only in some dimensions—such as the use of Instagram and Snapchat, understanding of AI influencers, capacity to discriminate between real and virtual influencers, appearance in brand campaigns, and belief in cost savings for marketing—but all with low relationship strengths.

These findings reveal that age is not a good indicator on its own for user interaction with AI-created influencers. Despite age groups, most users are still reserved in believing and interacting with AI influencers, reflecting a common reluctance to completely accept virtual personalities within influencer marketing. Emotional resonance, trustworthiness, and veracity—garden-variety determinants of success in human influencer marketing—are less applicable to AI-created personas at this point.

Overall, the study provides important intelligence for marketers, brands, and digital strategists seeking to use AI in order to innovate. With AI influencers offering the possibilities of cheap, scalable marketing, their success will depend significantly on user education, content quality, and a strategic mix with human influencers.

Lastly, AI-powered influencers are promising, but success lies not only in demographic targeting such as age, but also on the user experience, transparency, and content personalization. As the digital marketing landscape continues to change, brands need to balance technological innovation with human touch to gain consumers' trust and achieve the highest engagement rate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While this study sheds light on the role of age in shaping perceptions of AI-generated influencers, future research can expand in several ways:

1. Broaden Demographic Scope – Include factors like education, income, and digital literacy for a fuller picture of user behavior.
2. Psychographic Insights – Study user attitudes, tech adoption, and social media habits to uncover deeper motivations.
3. Larger & Diverse Samples – Expand beyond Ahmedabad to other cities and demographics for more generalizable results.
4. Longitudinal Studies – Track evolving perceptions as AI influencer technology matures.

5. Qualitative Research – Use interviews or focus groups to explore emotional and ethical responses.
6. Platform-Specific Analysis – Study how AI influencers perform across platforms like Instagram, TikTok, or LinkedIn.
7. AI vs Human Influencers – Compare effectiveness in trust, engagement, and ROI through direct performance metrics.
8. Trust & Ethics – Investigate how issues like transparency and data privacy affect consumer trust.
9. Experimental Designs – Conduct A/B tests with identical products endorsed by AI vs human influencers.
10. Visual Realism & Design – Examine how appearance and personality of AI influencers influence acceptance and engagement.
11. These directions offer rich opportunities to deepen our understanding of AI influencer marketing's future.

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