

A STUDY ON AI-GENERATED INFLUENCERS ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION

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Abstract:

AI-generated influencers, virtual personalities powered by artificial intelligence, digital modeling, and machine learning, are transforming digital marketing. This study examines their effects on consumer perceptions, focusing on Indian brands boAt and Myntra, which use influencers like Kyra and Maya. Through surveys of 106 Mumbai respondents, it explores awareness, trust, realism, relatability, and purchase intent. Findings show high awareness but low trust and relatability compared to human influencers, with Myntra's Maya slightly outperforming boAt's Kyra. Ethical concerns like transparency and misleading content persist.

Keywords: *AI-Generated Influencers, Virtual Influencer, Consumer Perception*

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Introduction:

Digital technologies have reshaped marketing, with AI-generated influencers emerging as synthetic personalities that promote brands on social media. Unlike human influencers, they offer consistency, scalability, and creative control, but raise issues of authenticity and trust. In India, rapid digital growth has led brands like boAt and Myntra to adopt them boAt with Kyra for tech-savvy youth, and Myntra with Maya for fashion trends. This study addresses the gap in Indian consumer research by comparing perceptions of these influencers. It analyzes factors like realism, creativity, and curiosity amid influencer fatigue and ethical debates. The research uses descriptive methods to inform brands on balancing innovation with consumer trust.

Definitions:

AI-generated influencers : "Artificially created virtual personalities designed using AI algorithms, digital modelling, and CGI, capable of interacting with audiences online."

Virtual Influencer : "A computer-generated character that performs influencer activities such as promoting brands, posing for shoots, and posting content."

Consumer Perception "The way individuals interpret brand messages, advertisements, influencer posts, trust levels, and authenticity signals."

Literature Review :

Patel and Dada (2023) examine AI-generated advertising and virtual influencers in the Indian digital context and argue that hyperreal, algorithmically produced content can enhance efficiency and creativity, yet it blurs the boundary between human and nonhuman influence and raises ethical concerns about trust and transparency.

Boudri, Boudri, and Bentalha (2022) compare consumer responses to AI-generated influencer content versus human influencer content and find that AI posts can generate high engagement, but emotional reactions are mixed. Their analysis suggests that audiences are curious and interested, yet they often question

emotional realism and the absence of a “real” person, which weakens the deeper connection.

Akash (2021) investigates the effectiveness of AI-generated influencers on purchase intentions and focuses on four dimensions: credibility, informativeness, entertainment value, and humanlikeness. The study concludes that credibility and informativeness are the strongest predictors of purchase intention, meaning that AI influencers must not only look appealing but also provide useful, believable information

Zhang (2020) studies generative AI images in advertising and reports that consumer attitudes toward AI-generated visuals depend strongly on context and disclosure. When people know that an image is AI-generated, their trust and brand attitude can improve or decline depending on whether they perceive the AI use as honest and appropriate.

Burrow (2019) compares AI-generated and human-generated advertising content and finds that AI can support creative efficiency but may reduce perceived genuineness if brands depend too heavily on automated messages. Consumers often display a preference for human involvement, a pattern sometimes described as human favoritism.

Significance of the Study :

This study fills a research gap by examining Indian consumers' perceptions of AI-generated influencers for brands like boAt and Myntra, where academic evidence remains limited.

It provides practical insights for marketers on trust, authenticity, and effectiveness while contributing empirical data to theories like source credibility and parasocial interaction in emerging markets.

Scope of the Study:

Conceptual Scope:

The study is limited to consumer perception of AI-generated influencers in digital marketing. It focuses on awareness, trust, perceived realism, reliability,

attractiveness, curiosity, credibility, and overall attitude towards AI-generated influencers representing boAt and Myntra.

It does not cover technical AI development, financial performance, or detailed ROI; the emphasis is only on how consumers interpret and respond to these virtual influencers as part of brand communication.

Geographical scope

The geographical scope is restricted to Mumbai, including respondents from urban and semi-urban areas of the city. The findings reflect perceptions of digitally active Mumbai consumers and are not claimed to represent all regions of India or rural audiences.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Objectives of the study

The study is guided by the following objectives:

- 1.** To study consumer awareness of AI-generated virtual influencers.
- 2.** To examine consumer perception towards AI-generated influencers.
- 3.** To analyse the level of trust and credibility associated with AI-generated influencers.
- 4.** To understand the impact of AI influencers on consumer curiosity and purchase intention.
- 5.** To assess whether AI-generated influencers influence overall brand perception, with special reference to boAt and Myntra.

2. Class of respondents: Digitally active consumers in Mumbai who use social media and are familiar with brands like boAt and Myntra.

3. Sample size: 106 respondents.

4. Sampling method: Nonprobability convenience sampling.

5. Method of data collection: Structured questionnaire

- **Primary data collected:** Responses on awareness, trust, realism, reliability, attractiveness, curiosity, and attitudes toward AI-generated influencers.

- **Secondary data:** Books, research articles, reports, and online sources on AI influencers, consumer perception, and digital marketing.
- **Statistical techniques for analysis:** Percentage analysis, tables, and simple comparative analysis.

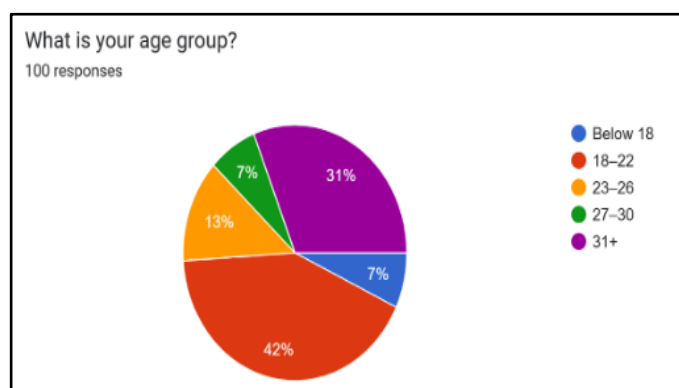
6. Hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis (H_0) : There is no significant difference in consumer perception of AI-generated influencers.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) : There is a significant difference in consumer perception of AI-generated influencers.

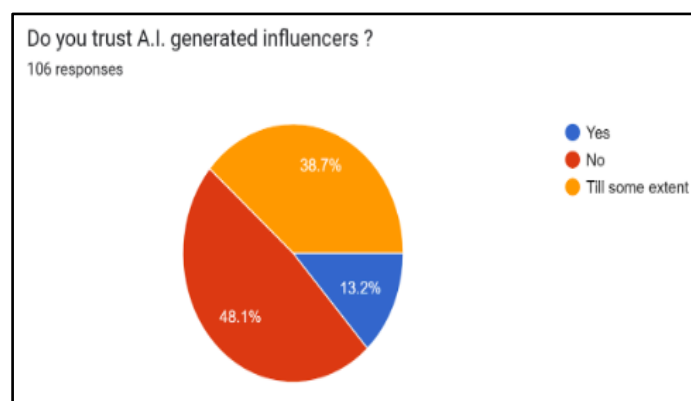
Result :

Q.1 What is your age group?



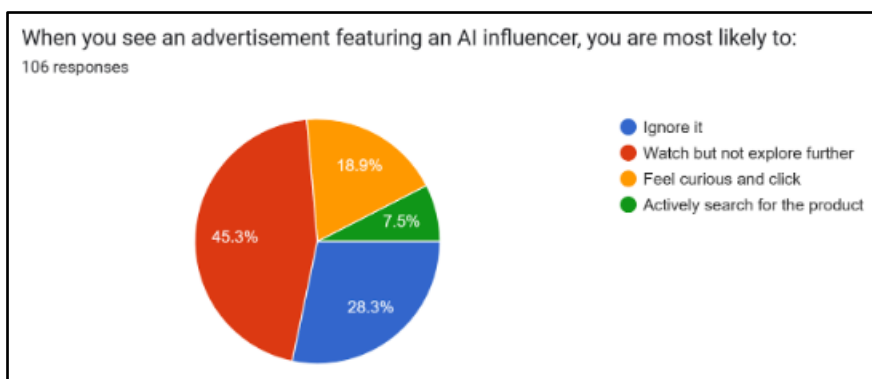
The above pie chart represents the age-wise distribution of the respondents. It is observed that the largest proportion of respondents belongs to the **18–22 years age group (41.5%)**, indicating that young adults form the majority of the sample.

Q.2 Do you trust AI-generated influencers ?



The chart clearly indicates low levels of trust toward AI-generated influencers. Half of the respondents (**50%**) stated that they do not trust AI influencers at all, making this the dominant response.

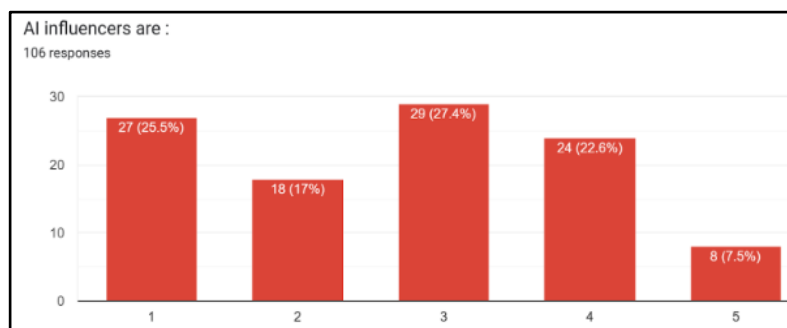
Q.3 When you see an advertisement featuring an AI influencer, you are most likely to:



Nearly half of the respondents (**45.3%**) stated that they would watch the advertisement but not take any further action. Additionally, **28.3%** would ignore such ads completely. Only a small percentage (**26.4% combined**) showed active engagement by clicking or searching for the product.

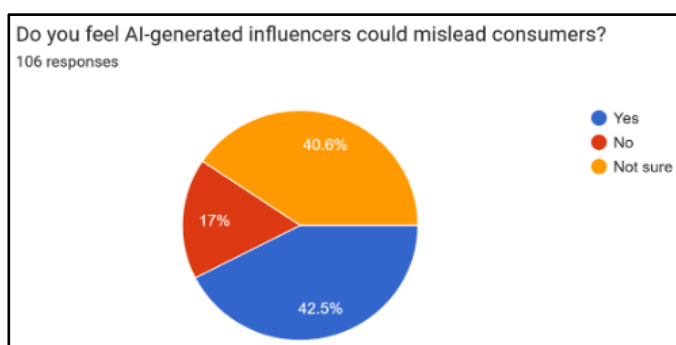
Q.4 AI influencers are:

[1 = Less relatable, 5 = Very relatable]



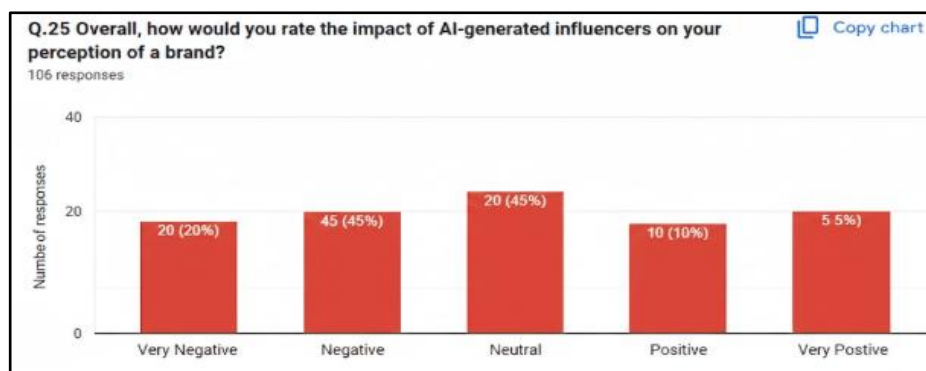
The chart reflects relatively low relatability associated with AI influencers. A significant **42.5%** of respondents rated relatability at the lower end (**1 and 2**), indicating emotional distance and lack of connection. While **30.1%** rated them as relatable (**4 and 5**)

Q.5 Do you feel AI-generated influencers could mislead consumers ?



A significant **42.5% of respondents** believe that AI influencers have the potential to mislead consumers. Additionally, **40.6% of respondents** selected “Not sure,” indicating uncertainty and hesitation.

Q.6 Overall, how would you rate the impact of AI-generated influencers on your perception of a brand ?



The data clearly indicates that the overall impact of AI-generated influencers on brand perception is **largely negative** among respondents. A majority of the sample, **65% of respondents** (20% very negative + 45% negative), expressed an unfavorable perception of brands that use AI-generated influencers. A significant **20% of respondents** selected the neutral option, indicating indecision or mixed feelings.

Findings:

- AI-generated influencers are increasingly recognized by Indian consumers, especially among young and digitally active audiences.
- Brands using virtual influencers are perceived as modern, innovative, and technologically advanced.
- Awareness of AI influencers is high, but emotional engagement and loyalty remain limited.
- AI influencers attract attention mainly due to novelty and visual appeal rather than trust or credibility.
- Myntra’s AI influencer shows slightly stronger alignment with brand storytelling, realism, and creativity compared to boAt’s AI influencer.
- Fashion-focused digital content appears to benefit more from AI influencer integration than product-centric campaigns.
- Consumer trust in AI-generated influencers is significantly lower than trust in human influencers.
- AI influencers are often viewed as brand-controlled personalities rather than genuine recommenders.
- Emotional relatability and parasocial connection are weaker with AI influencers.
- Ethical concerns exist regarding transparency and the potential to mislead consumers.
- AI influencers are more effective in enhancing brand image than in driving purchase intention.
- Virtual influencers currently serve better as supplementary marketing tools rather than replacements for human influencers.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING :

Observed Frequency Table (O)

Q. Overall, how would you rate the impact of AI-generated influencers on your perception of a brand?

- Very Negative

- Negative
- Neutral
- Positive
- Very Positive

Response	Observed Frequency
Very Negative	21
Negative	48
Neutral	21
Positive	11
Very Positive	5
Total	106

Formula for Expected Frequency (E)

E = Total responses / Number of categories

$$= 106 / 5 = 21.2$$

Chi-Square Formula

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Chi-Square Calculation Table

Calculated χ^2 Value = 51.17

Response	O	E	O - E	(O - E) ²	(O - E) ² / E
Very Negative	21	21.2	-0.2	0.04	0.0019
Negative	48	21.2	26.8	718.24	33.88
Neutral	21	21.2	-0.2	0.04	0.0019
Positive	11	21.2	-10.2	104.04	4.90
Very Positive	5	21.2	-16.2	262.44	12.38

Degrees of Freedom

$$df = n - 1 = 5 - 1 = 4$$

Table Value (5% level of significance)

- From Chi-square table:

$$\chi^2 (0.05, 4) = 9.49$$

Calculated value = **51.17** and Table value = **9.49**

Since **51.17** > **9.49** The calculated chi-square value is greater than the critical value. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H₁) is accepted.

Conclusion:

The study concludes that AI-generated influencers are emerging as an innovative element of digital marketing communication in India. Brands such as boAt and Myntra have adopted virtual influencers to capture attention, engage younger audiences, and position themselves as technologically progressive. Myntra's AI influencer demonstrates slightly better performance in realism and brand alignment, particularly within fashion storytelling contexts. However, both brands reflect moderate overall effectiveness, suggesting that AI influencer marketing is still in a developmental stage. The primary challenge remains credibility. The perception that AI influencers are fully controlled by brands creates skepticism regarding honesty and intent. Without strong emotional storytelling and transparent communication, AI influencers struggle to influence purchase decisions effectively. Thus, AI influencers should currently be used alongside human influencers rather than as replacements. They are valuable for strengthening innovative brand positioning but require further refinement in authenticity and consumer engagement strategies.

In summary, AI-generated influencers present strong future potential in digital marketing, but long-term success will depend on building trust, relatability, and ethical communication.

Limitations of the Study:

1. The study is based on a limited number of respondents, restricting broader generalization.
2. Data collection was confined to Mumbai, which may not reflect national consumer behavior.
3. Convenience sampling may introduce respondent bias.

4. Perceptions were formed through short-term exposure rather than prolonged interaction.
5. Only two brands were analyzed, limiting industry-wide applicability.

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