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AI-Generated Influencers and Their Role in Consumer Purchase Intention: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed influencer marketing by introducing AI-generated influencers, also known as virtual influencers, who can create engaging and personalized digital interactions with consumers. These digitally created personalities are increasingly being used by brands to communicate product information, build online engagement, and influence consumer attitudes and purchase decisions. This study indicates that factors like credibility, authenticity, attractiveness, parasocial interaction, and trust can shape consumer's response to virtual influencers and their purchase intentions. The aim is to study how consumers perceive AI-generated influencers and how these perceptions influence their intention to purchase promoted products. The study is expected to contribute to the growing literature on AI-enabled influencer marketing by providing empirical insights into the psychological and behavioral mechanisms through which AI-generated influencers affects consumers. It can also help marketers understand the importance of maintaining credibility, transparency, authenticity, and meaningful consumer engagement when using AI-generated personalities in digital marketing campaigns. A sample of 233 was collected to find the result of the study. The factors studying AI-Generated Influencers and Their Role in Consumer Purchase Intention are AI-Influencer Credibility, Perceived Authenticity, Personalization and Consumer Trust.

Keywords: AI-generated influencers, Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Influencers, Consumer behavior, Social Media marketing

Introduction

With the arrival and rapid adoption of AI-generated influencers, a significant evolution of digital marketing has been seen. These AI-generated influencers visually appeal and algorithmically improve virtual personalities, providing brands new and highly adaptable ways to attract customers, it delivers targeted messages and create constant engagement. Before evolution of AI-generated influencers, brands are highly dependent on social media creators, traditional celebrities and digital campaigns that are content-driven for influencing consumer behavior. Algorithms of targeted advertising, data analytics, collaboration between influencers and brand and tools of social media management depend on human creativity, availability and perceived authenticity were restricted marketing technology that are available during that time. It is also highlighted that AI-generated influencers make contribution towards the discovery of products and digital engagement but their effect on consumer behavior is found to be limited. A base understanding is provided by these insights towards the evolving role of AI-driven creators in the field of influencer marketing (Melekar, Dalvi & Ambavade, 2025). While some tasks are performed by AI-generated influencer in a similar to human influencer, the underlying psychological process by which they can attain their goals in different. Perhaps the most interesting implication, however, lies in the leading role of trust elements as a driver of underlying psychological process. It shows a paradigm shift in psychological process of persuasion that depends on the nature of influencer. Trust mediates the influence of perceived authenticity as well as para-social interaction partially on purchase intention, but the attitude did not mediate any of the tested relations significantly. It is also indicated that persuasion in AI-influencer interaction is mainly based on cognitive, instead of affective processes (Becaro-Lapiz et al. 2026). In the rising world of influencer marketing, AI

influencers have made a substantial effect and have transformed the approach towards brand promotion on social media platforms. In present time, majority of popular brands have done the partnership with AI influencers for engaging with the social media customers. Value of attractiveness and entertainment were found to be making indirect impact on buying intentions through customer engagement. Informative value, credibility and human likeness are main factor that make influence on consumer engagement and buying intentions towards promotion of brand through AI-based virtual influencer. Entertainment value and attractiveness of AI influencer on social media post impact customer engagement by showing no impact on buying intention (Jayasingh, Sivakumar & Vanathaiyan, 2025).

Influencer marketing has been transformed by AI with the introduction of virtual personalities that communicate with customer on digital channels, Brands are using AI-generated influencers as they are consistent, scalable and can be controlled easily. However, there are some concerns regarding how authentic and trustworthy these influencers are in comparison to human influencers. The importance of trust and authenticity as main driver of consumer purchase intention is highlighted by the analysis. A favourable response is expected by consumers towards influencer recommendation when they perceive influencers as credible, authentic and capable to establish a meaningful engagement. These findings strengthen the rising significance of associating quality and credibility in digital marketing despite rapid advancement of technology (Sahay, Patil & Patil, 2026). Virtual influencers also called AI influencers are persona that are created digitally that communication with the audience on social media platforms. Brands are using such entities for influencing consumer behavior, more to Gen Z as they are digital generation and engaged in digital content. The outcome shows that, although virtual influencers are very efficient in creation of engagement and brand awareness, its efficacy in translation of this engagement into real purchase intention is reliant on trust and perceived authenticity. The analysis highlights that concerns related to privacy are major hindrance in that they have a negative effect on trust, therefore lowers the persuasive power of AI-driven influencers (Gupta et al. 2026).

Literature Review

For influencers, AI has become a game changer. It helps influencers in refining their features as it provides the insights into latest trends enabling influencers in creation of tailored content engaging audience at a deep level. Despite of such advancement, customers are falling into the trap of trusting wrong influencers, which is a significant challenge for them for identification and trusting the right influencer. The study provides a framework to evaluate influencer credibility of traits beyond the surface level. Attributes like trendiness, attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness might capture the attention initially, it is suggested by the findings that involvement, similarity and interaction plays a significant role to build brand awareness and trust in branded content. Customers need to consider such deep qualities while deciding whether to depend upon recommendations of influencers. With the understanding regarding what encourages customers for trusting and purchasing based on the recommendations of influencers, the brands, businesses and can develop targeted and more effective strategies of marketing (Dhiman & Bhati, 2025). Virtual influencer has become a salient phenomenon in digital environment, still understanding of how their traits shape up the purchase intentions of customers stays fragmented conceptually. The significance of calibrating human-likeness, credibility strengthening, improving interactivity and ensuring the alignment between identity of influencer and positioning of brand is highlighted by the result of the study, it also made emphasis on the efficacy depending on the configuration of multiple traits. The existing knowledge is consolidated by the study while identifying the gaps and condition of boundary, it provides a foundation of future research in the evolving domain (Zhou et al. 2026). Influencer marketing, nowadays is one of the rising sectors. Social media influencer is growing by the time and brand and are moving towards endorsing themselves on social media platforms. Artificial Intelligence is the new factor for influencer marketing to grow and helping them to improve themselves on digital platform. Artificial Intelligence would make positive influence helping to identify new methods of managing the campaigns of influencers and celebrities on social media platforms. The novel virtual social presence has made customers to get attracted and attentive towards virtual influencers making impact on the perceived quality of products used by those influencers (Rana, Ashfaq & Jalbani, 2023). Marketing strategies has been revolutionised by AI, mainly in the domain ok influencer marketing playing a vital role that shapes up consumer behavior. In this digital era, a significant evolution has been seen in marketing strategies, it

has leveraged advanced digital technologies for enhancement of effectiveness as well as engagement. Among those advancements, AI has appeared as a transformative tool that offers analysis capabilities of unprecedented data, personalization of customers and automation. A significant impact is seen by this technological advancement on various aspects of marketing; it includes the growing field of influencer marketing. It on social media on which influencer marketing for endorsing products and services benefitting from integration of AI. The positive association between AI-driven influencer marketing, customer engagement and purchase intention highlights the efficacy of integration of AI technologies into strategies of marketing (Krishnan, et al. 2024).

Social media has become a dominating medium for dissemination of content and social engagement, transformation of sectors like electronics, fashion, luxury and technology through new methods of marketing. The paradigm of influencer marketing has been transformed by AI with the application of digital tools and methodologies improving the efficacy of campaigns. Organizations can use AI-driven solutions AI-driven solutions can be used by organizations for optimization of the identification of proper influencers, forecasting of campaign results, and tracking of real-time engagement. Such integration has reportedly enhanced the efficiency and accuracy of influencer marketing campaigns; it allows companies to involve more effectively with the audience. Integration of skills of Artificial Intelligence in influencer marketing enabling firms in addressing conventional issues like improper selection of influencers and ineffective monitoring of campaigns. Furthermore, Artificial Intelligence reduces the necessary human labor for analysis of data, permit marketers to focus more on the creative and strategic dimensions of their initiatives (Arya et al. 2025). AI-driven influencers or virtual personalities that are powered by AI, machine learning and digital modelling have completely transformed digital marketing. The marketing has been reshaped by digital technologies, with AI-powered influencers appearing as an artificial personality promoting brands on social media. Different from human influencers, they are offering consistency, scalability, and creative control, but raising issues related to trust and authenticity. The main challenge stays credibility. The perception that Artificial Intelligence influencers are controlled fully by brands that create scepticism with regards to intent and honesty. AI influencers are struggling to make influence on purchase decisions effectively without attractive emotional storytelling and transparent communication. Therefore, AI-powered social media influencers are being used along with human influencers instead of replacements. They are proved to be valuable to strengthen innovative positioning of brands but need more refinement in authenticity and strategies of consumer engagement (Saini et al. 2026).

Credibility can be built by AI influencers with the alignment of their brand with their messaging as well as being consistent, they are lacking authenticity even in the face of initial criticism. In influencer marketing, the relevance of experience is demonstrated by favourable effects their perceived expertise might have on purchasing behavior of customers. About trustworthiness of AI influencers, customers might first have doubts, these humane qualities can win over them progressively. Their efforts might be differentiated by marketers in the digital era by using new and adaptability of AI influencers for creating memorable as well as attractive experiences for their customers. The usage of AI influencers can be maximized by marketers by tailoring the messages to user preferences and observing the reactions closely. The usage of AI influencers can be maximised by marketers for raising the efficiency of their campaigns by personalization of messaging in order to match preferences of customers (Babu et al. 2024). The transformation of digital technology, in the last decade, giving rise to the new types of personalized communication of marketing, one of those is through the presence of AI-powered influencers. The landscape of marketing has been shaped up by digital technology; new complexities are introduced by AI-powered influencers related to how customers can assess authenticity and trust development. In context of digital based on influencers, including those generated by AI, customer trust creates a vital determinant of buying behavior (Guspul & Dali, 2026). For inducing customer behavior, influencer marketing has become a strong tool, it also hovers brand awareness. The outcome reveals that a significant impact is made by influencer marketing on the buying intentions of the consumers, which suggests that AI plays a vital role in customer's decision-making by using distinct social medial platforms. It suggests that by prediction of customer behavior, personalized recommendations and enhancing customer experience by chatbots and targeted advertisements, Artificial Intelligence makes impact on purchase intentions, resulting in a more satisfied customer and rise in purchase intention. The outcome shows the expanding role of AI in digital marketing, which supports past studies and highlights how crucial it is in making influencing buying decisions of consumers (Tyagi & Painuly, 2025). In

digital marketing, the increasing adoption of virtual influencers has sparked the interest in their influence on Gen Z in the evolving marketing. Driven by AI and digital animation, VIs are appearing as a novel and controllable method of involving with targeted audience in marketing. It is suggested by the findings that customers perceiving VIs as trustworthy are more possibly like to get involved with their content, and such communication improves their willingness to make purchase subsequently the recommended products. An important role is played by trust among Gen Z, who are not just digital natives, but it is also in agreement to alignment with the brand and authenticity (Xiaolu & Fernandez, 2025).

Objective

1. To Explore factors associated with "AI-Generated Influencers and Their Role in Consumer Purchase Intention"
2. To measure the impact of AI-generated influencers on consumer purchase intention

Methodology

233 participants were surveyed from respondents using different Social Media Platform. The method of sampling was "Random sampling" for collection of data and examination was done by "Explanatory Factor Analysis" for results.

Findings

Table 1 demonstrates demographic details, it shows that 48.50% are Male, 51.50% are female. Looking at the age, 21.88% are below 18 years, 20.60% are between 18 to 25% 27.04% are between 25 to 35 years and 30.48% are above 35 years. Looking at the Frequently Used Social Media Platform, 26.18% are using Instagram, 25.32% are using YouTube, 29.61% Facebook & Snapchat and 18.89% other.

Table. 1 Respondent's Details

Variables	**Participants**	**Percentage**
Gender		
Male	113	48.50%
Female	120	51.50%
Total	**233**	**100**
Ages in years		
Below 18 years	51	21.88%
18 to 25	48	20.60%
25 to 35	63	27.04%
Above 35	71	30.48%
Total	**233**	**100**
Frequently Used Social Media Platform		
Instagram	61	26.18%
YouTube	59	25.32%

Facebook & Snapchat	69	29.61%
Other	44	18.89%
Total	**233**	**100**

"Factor Analysis"

"KMO and Bartlett's Test"

Table. 2 "Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy"

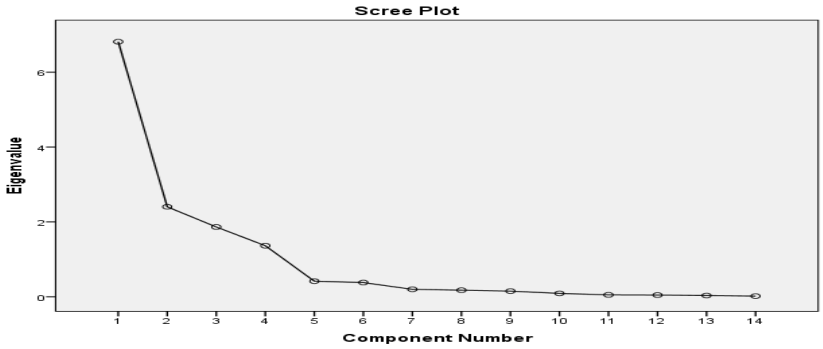
"Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy"		.785
"Bartlett's Test of Sphericity"	"Approx. Chi-Square"	4375.185
	df	91
	Significance	.000

"KMO and Bartlett's Test", value of KMO is .785 (Table 2).

Table 3 "Total Variance Explained"

"Component"	**"Initial Eigenvalues"**			**"Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings"**		
	"Total"	**"% Of Variance"**	**"Cumulative %"**	**"Total"**	**"% Of Variance"**	**"Cumulative %"**
1.	6.813	48.662	48.662	3.915	27.963	27.963
2.	2.403	17.163	65.825	3.741	26.722	54.685
3.	1.864	13.314	79.139	2.578	18.413	73.097
4.	1.364	9.743	88.882	2.210	15.785	88.882
5.	.416	2.971	91.853			
6.	.379	2.709	94.563			
7.	.199	1.422	95.985			
8.	.175	1.251	97.236			
9.	.150	1.075	98.311			
10.	.090	.645	98.955			
11.	.051	.361	99.316			
12.	.045	.325	99.641			
13.	.033	.235	99.876			
14.	.017	.124	100.000			

The four factors contribute towards explaining total 88.882% of variance. Variance explained by AI-Influencer Credibility is 27.963%, Perceived Authenticity is 26.722%, Personalization is 18.413%, and Consumer Trust is 15.785%. (Table 3).



"Scree Plot"

Table. 4 "Rotated Component Matrix"

S. No.	Statements	Factor Loading	Factor Reliability
	AI-Influencer Credibility		**.963**
1.	AI-influencer provide credible information about products and brands	.947	
2.	AI-generated influencers appear trustworthy when recommending products	.904	
3.	Consumers consider product information provided by AI-influencers as reliable	.867	
4.	Professional appearance of AI-generated influencers increases their credibility	.866	
	Perceived Authenticity		**.974**
1.	Consumers find AI-generated influencers provide authentic product recommendations	.957	
2.	AI Influencers can create a sense of realistic interaction with consumers	.905	
3.	Consumers find these personalities of AI-generated influencers relatable	.904	
4.	These influencers appear genuine in their communication with consumers	.892	
	Personalization		**.886**
1.	AI-generated influencers content can match individual preferences of consumers	.911	

2.	Personalized recommendations make products more appealing to consumers	.864	
3.	AI influencers understand and respond to different consumer preferences	.807	
	Consumer Trust		
1.	Consumer trust AI influencer when they provide product related information	.925	**.818**
2.	Transparency about sponsored content increases trust in AI-generated influencers	.908	
3.	Consumer trust in AI influencers affect consumer willingness to purchase promoted products	.592	

Factors of the study and its related variables

The first statement of the study is AI-influencer provide credible information about products and brands, AI-generated influencers appear trustworthy when recommending products, Consumers consider product information provided by AI-influencers as reliable and Professional appearance of AI-generated influencers increases their credibility. Perceived Authenticity is the second factor, it includes variables like Consumers find AI-generated influencers provide authentic product recommendations, AI Influencers can create a sense of realistic interaction with consumers, Consumers find these personalities of AI-generated influencers relatable and These influencers appear genuine in their communication with consumers. Third factor is Personalization, the variables it includes are AI-generated influencers content can match individual preferences of consumers, Personalized recommendations make products more appealing to consumers and AI influencers understand and respond to different consumer preferences. Last and fourth factor is Consumer Trust, its variables are Consumer trust AI influencer when they provide product related information, Transparency about sponsored content increases trust in AI-generated influencers and Consumer trust in AI influencers affect consumer willingness to purchase promoted products.

Table 5 "Reliability Statistics"

"Cronbach's Alpha"	"Number of Items"
.912	14

Total reliability of 14 items that includes variables for Factors exploring the "AI-Generated Influencers and Their Role in Consumer Purchase Intention" 0.912 (Table 5).

"Table 6 Model Summary"

"Model"	**"R"**	**"R Square"**	**"Adjusted R Square"**	**"Std. Error of the Estimate"**
1	.847[a]	.718	.713	.42154
Predictors: (Constant), AI-Influencer Credibility, Perceived Authenticity, Personalization, and Consumer Trust				

The adjusted R-squared value is 0.713 with approximately 72% of the variation.

"Table 7 ANOVA"

"Model"		"Sum of Squares"	"df"	"Mean Square"	"F"	"Sig."
1	"Regression"	103.090	4	25.772	145.034	.000[b]
	Residual	40.515	228	.178		
	Total	143.605	232			
a. Dependent Variable: Overall impact of AI-generated influencers on consumer purchase intention						
b. Predictors: (Constant), AI-Influencer Credibility, Perceived Authenticity, Personalization, and Consumer Trust						

Value under significant column indicates a significant relationship between (AI-Influencer Credibility, Perceived Authenticity, Personalization, and Consumer Trust) and consumer purchase intention.

"Table 8 Coefficients"

"Model"	"Un standardized Coefficients"		"Standardized Coefficients"	"t"	"Sig."
	"B"	"Std. Error"	"Beta"		
(Constant)	3.863	.028		139.869	.000
AI-Influencer Credibility	.356	.028	.453	12.864	.000
Perceived Authenticity	.076	.028	.096	2.735	.007
Personalization	.308	.028	.391	11.114	.000
Consumer Trust	.466	.028	.592	16.842	.000
DV: Overall impact of AI-generated influencers on consumer purchase intention					

All the factors AI-Influencer Credibility, Perceived Authenticity, Personalization, and Consumer Trust are showing significant impact on consumer purchase intention. Highest impact is shown by Consumer Trust (.592), AI-Influencer Credibility (.453), Personalization (.391) and Perceived Authenticity (.096).

Conclusion

The study highlights the rising significance of AI in transforming influencer marketing and consumer decision-making. AI-generated influencers provide brands with new opportunities to create consistent, engaging, and personalized digital content while reaching consumers across social media platforms. Their ability to present products in visually attractive and interactive formats can influence consumer perceptions and contribute to purchase intentions. The study emphasises that factors like perceived credibility, authenticity, attractiveness, trust, consumer engagement, and parasocial interaction can play an important role in shaping consumer's responses to AI-generated influencers. Consumers are more likely to consider products promoted by AI-generated influencers when the content is perceived as relevant, informative, trustworthy and engaging. AI-generated influencers represent an emerging dimension of digital marketing that can influence consumer attitude and purchase intentions. The findings of the study can provide useful insights for marketers, brands, and social media strategies

seeking to incorporate AI-generated personalities into promotional activities. The factors studying AI-Generated Influencers and Their Role in Consumer Purchase Intention are AI-Influencer Credibility, Perceived Authenticity, Personalization and Consumer Trust. The study concludes that there is significant impact of AI-generated influencers on consumer purchase intention.

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