

Chapter 11

Generational Differences in Perceiving AI Influencer Authenticity

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ABSTRACT

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) influencers on social media has sparked a significant shift in the way audiences engage with content creators. This chapter investigates the generational differences in perceiving the authenticity of AI influencers across various social media platforms. By analyzing how different age groups interact with and perceive AI-generated personas, we aim to uncover the underlying factors that influence these perceptions and their subsequent impact on user engagement. The findings suggest that while younger generations are more inclined to embrace AI influencers as authentic and innovative, older generations tend to exhibit skepticism, valuing human authenticity over digital representation. This chapter contributes to the growing body of literature on digital influence and offers insights for marketers seeking to navigate the complex landscape of AI-driven social media.

INTRODUCTION

The advent of AI influencers, such as virtual personalities generated through sophisticated algorithms, has revolutionized the landscape of social media marketing. These AI influencers, often indistinguishable from human influencers in appearance and behavior, have garnered millions of followers and considerable influence on

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platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube (Caliandro & Graham, 2020). However, the perception of these digital personas' authenticity varies significantly across different generational cohorts, leading to a diverse range of engagement behaviors and attitudes.

Understanding the generational differences in perceiving AI influencer authenticity is crucial for brands and marketers aiming to leverage these digital entities effectively. Younger generations, particularly Generation Z, are known for their adaptability to new technologies and are more likely to perceive AI influencers as authentic and innovative (Sundar, 2021). In contrast, older generations, including Baby Boomers and Generation X, may approach AI influencers with skepticism, questioning the authenticity and trustworthiness of these non-human entities (Cheung et al., 2022).

This chapter explores these generational perceptions in detail, examining the factors that contribute to the acceptance or rejection of AI influencers across age groups. By drawing on existing literature and recent studies, we aim to provide a comprehensive analysis of how AI influencers are reshaping the concept of authenticity on social media and what this means for future digital marketing strategies.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the generational differences in the perception of AI influencers' authenticity across various social media platforms. Specifically, the study aims to understand how different age groups—ranging from Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X, to Baby Boomers—perceive the authenticity and credibility of AI influencers, and how these perceptions influence their engagement behaviors. By exploring these generational differences, the research seeks to uncover the underlying psychological and sociocultural factors that shape these perceptions, ultimately providing insights that can guide marketers in crafting more effective AI-driven social media strategies.

The research will focus on the following key aspects:

Identification of Perception Differences: To identify and analyze the differences in how various generations perceive the authenticity of AI influencers, including their trustworthiness and credibility, compared to human influencers.

Influence on Engagement: To explore how these perceptions influence the level of engagement, including likes, shares, comments, and overall interaction, that different generational cohorts have with AI influencers.

Implications for Marketing Strategies: To examine the implications of these generational differences for digital marketing strategies, particularly in terms of content creation, targeting, and brand positioning.

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