



Public reception on the use of AI influencers in beauty brand campaigns on Instagram

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ABSTRACT

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) influencers as models in brand campaigns in recent years, particularly in beauty brands, has sparked scepticism and distrust among the public. This study aims to explore the impact of AI influencer usage on message reception within beauty brand campaigns on Instagram according to the audience reception theory. Using a quantitative approach with random sampling techniques, the research covers the entire active Instagram user population in Indonesia, with 100 respondents. The analysis reveals a decline in message reception when AI influencers are employed in beauty brand campaigns on Instagram. Factors contributing to this decline include a lack of trust, limited social presence, and absence of humanistic elements in content. Additionally, aspects like visual realism and hyperreality content create a disparity between the portrayed image and reality. These findings indicate a tendency for declining message reception over time, warranting further investigation into public responses and AI influencer roles. To counter this decline, continuous monitoring of evolving trends and dynamics in message reception through AI influencers is recommended. Further, collaborative efforts between AI influencers and humans are suggested to mitigate the downward trend. This comprehensive understanding is vital for brands navigating the evolving landscape of influencer marketing and maintaining a positive reception among their target audience.

Keywords: **Artificial intelligence, influencer, brand campaign, message reception, Instagram**

INTRODUCTION

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) influencers as models in product and brand campaigns has fuelled doubts and distrust among the public (Byers, 2023). This concern is particularly pronounced in the beauty industry, where several brands have used AI influencers to endorse their products and brands, mainly through the social media platform, Instagram. While engaging AI influencers is an innovative and attention-grabbing approach to campaigns, it has also led to scepticism among the public. Research findings show that the public, particularly active users of Instagram, have lower perceptions of AI influencers in terms of trustworthiness (5.02%), social presence (4.32%), and humanity (8.19%) when compared to human influencers (Hofeditz et al., 2022). This underscores that using AI influencers in brand and product campaigns poses significant challenges in fostering public trust, thereby impacting public attitudes and reception of brands and products.

AI influencers or virtual influencers are a phenomenon that has emerged from advances in artificial intelligence technology. These influencers are virtual characters created using AI and other advanced technologies to convincingly portray their realism (Nguyen, 2023). Being a visually orientated platform, Instagram serves as the main platform for AI influencers to interact with their followers. There are various categories of AI influencers, including cartoon characters, highly realistic personas, and characters that are challengingly enough to be distinguished from real humans (Triana et al., 2023).

AI has become an asset in campaigns and public interaction, going beyond automation and optimisation to play a central role (Nirwana, 2023). AI influencers, with their multifaceted role in recommending products, delivering visually appealing content, and influencing social interactions and public preferences through virtual presence, offer corporate public relations the opportunity to craft engaging content, enhance narratives, and establish personalised connections with audiences. This pivotal role extends to cultivating relationships through product and brand campaigns, aligning with the broader shift in mass communication towards hyperreality, emphasising the significant role of digital media in marketing and advertising.

This evolution highlights an important shift in communication strategies, where the prominence of hyperreality is linked to the substantial growth and importance of digital media, especially in the field of marketing and advertising (Mishod et al., 2022). Under these conditions, the boundary between reality and its representation becomes very blurred and difficult to discern (Saumantri & Zikrillah, 2020). Simultaneously, campaigns and advertisements present in mass media and social media play an important role in creating a world of simulacra that present hyperrealistic lives to audiences (Sadono & Putri, 2017). This is in line with companies' efforts to build a positive image through evolving strategies, including the integration of innovative technologies on crowded user platforms such as Instagram (Karo-karo & Wijaya, 2019).

Several brands have been using AI influencers to promote their products. In recent years, the proliferation of AI influencers has extended to more specific segments, including fashion, sports, beauty, tourism and more (Sookkaew & Saephoo, 2021). The inception of AI influencers started on YouTube with Lu do Magalu promoting a major retail company in Brazil. Instagram then emerged as a new arena for the evolution of AI influencers, particularly in the beauty industry. Chicor Beauty, Isamayabeauty and Shiseido are some of the brands that have embraced this trend by partnering with AI influencers such as Rozy.gram, Lil Miquela and Shudu Gramm. The application of AI influencer innovation in campaigns undoubtedly has the potential to effectively capture public attention and contribute to fostering positive public perception of brands (Thomas & Fowler, 2021).

However, it is very important to consider the authenticity of the message. Utilising AI influencers that look too “perfect” can make the message inauthentic or devoid of the human touch needed to build a genuine connection with the public (Suradi, 2023). In addition, claims made by AI influencers regarding the products they endorse are often perceived as manipulated, as they may not actually use the promoted products or brands (Kalpokas, 2021).

While AI influencers hold significant potential to increase public attention to brands, balancing between artificial intelligence and human elements in advertising is crucial to ensure the quality of the message received. Building a strong brand image requires a positive public experience, empathy, and emotional connection in both the delivery and reception of the message (Keller, 2016). Despite the high level of sophistication exhibited by AI influencers, messages that lack the human touch can appear cold and inauthentic. Compared to human influencers, AI influencers are considered to have more limitations in interacting with the public. This implies that consumers may face the same challenges when interacting with AI influencers as they do with inanimate objects (Hancock et al., 2011). Hence, a concerted effort is required to align messages with brand values and uphold meaningful interactions with the public. Awareness of this delicate balance is crucial in harnessing the potential of AI influencers while maintaining strong public relations.

If the current perception of AI influencers as less socially engaged entities in corporate campaigns persists, companies may encounter challenges, including the absence of an emotional connection between the brand and the audience or public, potentially hindering efforts to foster strong engagement. In addition, the diminished level of trust and exaggerated perception of the messages delivered by AI influencers may adversely affect the brand image (Muttamimah & Irwansyah, 2023). Ethical considerations, transparency, and increased human engagement in content creation are essential in strengthening brand and public relationships. Actively listening to feedback and adapting to consumer needs are important strategies to avoid a reputation crisis. Brands must proactively address these challenges to ensure effective and authentic engagement with consumers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Analysing the influence of AI influencers on consumer behaviour: Insights from TikTok and beyond

The foundation of this research builds on several related studies, each of which provides valuable input into the complex realm of AI influencers and their impact on consumer behaviour and perception. One such study examined the influence of AI influencers as agents for product promotion by offering recommendations to consumers through the social media platform, TikTok. While the theme was similar, focusing on the use of AI influencers in promotional activities, important differences emerged regarding the social media platforms studied, as well as aspects related to their impact on consumer product acquisition.

Research shows AI influencers’ recommendations receive less response than those from human influencers, reflecting consumer scepticism about their ability to authentically engage. Concerns also arise about their compatibility with data sources and potential misinformation spread (Zhang & Wei, 2021). These factors, including influencer types and social-psychological distance, strongly influence consumer decision-making. For instance, consumers trust human influencers more due to the emotional connection compared to AI influencers, reflecting the evolving media ecology (Triana et al., 2023).

Exploring the landscape of virtual influencers: Opportunities and challenges in marketing strategies

Research on fake idols examines the opportunities and challenges presented by the rise of virtual influencers, a phenomenon gaining momentum in the marketing landscape. Brands and marketers are increasingly adopting virtual influencers, prompting thorough exploration into the associated aspects. Simultaneously, the concept of virtual environments is subject to ongoing debate, with its economic and cultural framework rapidly intertwining with the physical world as advancements continue (Ge & Noor, 2023). The analysis uncovers the opportunities and challenges associated with the use of virtual influencers, which include the risks associated with counterfeiting and its potential impact on reputation (Sands et al., 2022). This exploration highlights the evolving dynamics of virtual influencers in marketing strategies, offering valuable insights into the complexities and considerations involved in their utilisation. In terms of authenticity, virtual influencers do not provide a truly close relationship with their followers, due to things like personality, content, and the main reason they are doing this, is to earn money. This demonstrates a principle in the audience reception theory, which states that people receiving messages, such as followers, can understand and interpret what virtual influencers are saying, while realising that there is a difference between a digital image created for commercial purposes and an actual personal relationship.

Trust perception in influencer marketing: A comparative analysis of human and virtual influencers

In another study on the comparison between perceived trust in human and virtual influencers, preliminary findings showed that respondents often struggled to distinguish whether the influencers were human or AI-driven. This challenge highlights the evolving landscape of influencer marketing, where virtual influencers, characterised by their unique blend of visual appeal, mysterious persona, and creative storytelling, attract followers. However, despite their allure, virtual influencers face scepticism regarding their overall trustworthiness.

Nonetheless, followers demonstrate trust in specific domains such as technology, music, gaming, and art, showcasing nuanced attitudes towards virtual influencers in different contexts (Choudhry et al., 2022). Certain aspects such as trustworthiness, social presence and humanity were consistently rated higher for human influencers. By using the audience reception theory as the basis of the research, these results underscore the important role of trust and humanity in shaping public perceptions of influencers, implying that these factors remain important aspects in online interactions (Hofeditz et al., 2022). This comparative analysis delves into the intricacies of trust perception, highlighting the challenges posed by the blurring of boundaries between human and virtual influencers in the digital landscape.

Understanding the influence of AI influencers: Humanizing, social presence, and trust in beauty brand campaigns

This study builds on previous research to examine the impact of AI influencers on message reception, with a focus on humanising, social presence, and trust indicators in the context of beauty brand campaigns. Using Stuart Hall's audience reception theory, this research emphasises the role of the audience in interpreting media texts. The main objective is to analyse how AI influencers can foster emotional connection, enhance social presence, and increase the level of trust among the public (Hidayat et al., 2022). The audience reception

theory states that the success of media communication, or at least the comprehension of the message, depends on how the audience receives and interprets it, and not on the intention of the media creator (Ayu & Rajagukguk, 2022). This research focuses on a beauty brand campaign shared through the social media platform, Instagram, which features visuals (images) accompanied by supporting captions. By delving into this context, it is hoped that this research can make a significant contribution to understanding the influence of AI influencers, particularly in beauty brand campaigns.

Based on the explanation given, the researcher formulated a hypothesis as the basis for testing in this study. The null hypothesis (H0) states that there is no effect of using AI influencers on message reception in beauty brand campaigns on Instagram. Conversely, hypothesis one (H1) states that there is an effect of using AI influencers on message reception in beauty brand campaigns on Instagram. This hypothesis aims to evaluate the relationship between the independent variable, “use of AI influencers,” and the dependent variable, “message reception,” among Indonesian Instagram users in the context of beauty brand campaigns.

METHODS

The research method employed in this study is a quantitative approach. This research belongs to the category of associative research, intending to identify the relationship or influence between the independent variable (x) and the dependent variable (y). In the context of this study, the researchers aimed to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the use of AI influencers (x) and message reception (y).

The target population in this study are all the active users of Instagram in Indonesia. Based on data obtained from Databoks, the number of Instagram users in Indonesia is approximately 103.3 million users (Lidwina, 2021). The data collection technique used was simple random sampling, ensuring that every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected as a sample. The researcher chose this random sampling technique to avoid bias towards certain beauty brands, thus ensuring results that accurately represent the entire population. Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire instrument.

The sample size used in this study was calculated using the Slovin formula, namely
$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$
. The Slovin formula is applied to estimate a representative sample size

from a population, considering a 10% margin of error. This percentage represents the maximum acceptable error in the sample size estimation. Utilising this formula, a sample size of 100 respondents was determined for this study. While this sample size may not perfectly represent the entire population of Instagram users in Indonesia, it is statistically reasonable, taking into consideration resource limits and time efficiency. A random sampling technique was used to ensure representation and generalisation of the findings to the wider population.

In this study, variables were measured using an interval measurement scale, specifically using a Likert scale. The Likert scale serves to convert the measured variables into variable indicators, which were then used as a basis for formulating statements and research questions (Muri Yusuf, 2017). To assign scores, the researcher simplified the process by using the following scale: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree.

Before being analysed and evaluated, the data was first tested for validity and reliability. The validity test is carried out to show the accuracy with which the data obtained through the research instrument, namely the questionnaire in this study, could

measure the variables (Abdullah, 2015). Simultaneously, reliability testing is carried out to assess how consistent the instrument can provide results in measuring a variable because a reliable instrument will produce consistent data (Suryadi et al., 2019). Once the data has been validated and proven reliable, it undergoes a normality test to ascertain whether the resulting residual values are normally distributed or not (Purnomo, 2016).

Validity

The validity test was conducted to ensure the reliability and suitability of the measurement instruments in this study. The findings from the validity test results for variable X, which refers to the use of AI influencers in beauty brand campaigns, showed a very high level of validity, with a range between 0.477 and 0.714. Each indicator also has a significance value (Sig.) of 0.000, which signifies a very high level of validity. This confirms that these indicators have a significant influence on variable X. With a high level of validity, it can be concluded that the indicators are effective as a measuring tool for the variable. This finding provides additional validation of the quality of the instruments in the study and provides a strong basis for conducting further data analysis.

Furthermore, the validity test results of variable Y, which includes message acceptance in beauty brand campaigns, also show a high level of validity. In the value range between 0.400 and 0.832, each indicator showed a significance value (Sig.) of 0.000. This indicates a strong correlation between each indicator and the Y variable. Therefore, it can be concluded that all indicators used in this study are valid to measure variable Y. These findings indicate the quality of the instrument that can be relied upon for further data analysis, without the need to be presented in a separate table.

Reliability

After the instrument was declared valid, the next step taken was to conduct a reliability test on the research instrument to find out whether the instrument used is reliable or trusted. Unreliable data cannot be processed further because it can produce biased conclusions. When the reliability test is carried out, the data can be said to be reliable if the α (alpha) value is greater than 0.70. Conversely, if the α value obtained is smaller than 0.70, then the data is considered unreliable and untrustworthy.

Table 1. Reliability test results

Variables	Crobach's Alpha	Description
Use of AI influencers (X)	0.727	Reliable
Message reception (Y)	0.759	Reliable

Reliability testing showed both the use of AI influencers (X) and message acceptance in beauty brand campaigns (Y) generated Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding 0.70, indicating instrument reliability. Furthermore, a strong relationship exists between the reliable independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y), affirming the instruments' reliability in illustrating their close relationship.

Before conducting the correlation and simple linear regression tests, researchers first conducted a normality test to ascertain whether the resulting residual values had a normal distribution or not, in accordance with the method put forward by Purnomo (2016). At this stage, SPSS was used as a tool to conduct a normality test by utilising the Kolmogorov-Smirnov non-parametric statistical method. In calculating the normality test in this study, the researcher decided to use the Kolmogorov-Smirnov calculation with an

exact p value. The use of exact p values is the main choice because the sample size used is relatively small, namely 100 (Mehta & Patel, 2011).

The normality test results showed a value of 0.086, and this finding indicates that the data obtained has a normal distribution. This assessment is attributed to the probability value (Exact Sig) obtained being greater than 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that the data in this study is normally distributed, fulfilling the assumptions for regression testing. This whole process provided a strong basis for continuing the correlation and simple linear regression analyses with the confidence that the data used had met the required assumptions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The respondents for this study were selected using random sampling to ensure that they could represent the population of Instagram users in Indonesia evenly and were not biased towards any beauty brand. The sample size was 100 respondents in consideration of obtaining representative results. Of these, 57% were female, while the rest were male respondents. Considerations were also made to include diverse age groups, to reflect the age diversity of the population.

In the process of analysing the data, the active participation of different age groups in this study was clearly illustrated. The highest percentage was found in the 18–25 age group at 54%, followed by the 26–35 age group at 28%, and the over 35 age group at 18%. Whilst efforts were made to cover as much variation in the population as possible, the results obtained may not include a full geographical representation of Indonesia. In particular, the data collected showed significant participation from different islands in Indonesia, with the highest percentage coming from Java, followed by Sumatra, Sulawesi, and Kalimantan. It should be recognised that data from Papua was not obtained for this study.

Nonetheless, this research has made maximum efforts to portray an accurate picture of the perception and acceptance of Instagram users across different age groups and regions in Indonesia. With a focus on age diversity and geographical distribution, this research endeavours to create a comprehensive understanding of people's responses to the use of AI influencers in beauty brand campaigns on social media platforms.

A correlation test was conducted to examine the relationship between “Use of AI Influencers” (X) and “Message Reception” (Y) in beauty brand campaigns. This test helped determine the direction and strength of the correlation between the variables. Additionally, a regression test was employed to assess the impact of “Use of AI Influencers” on “Message Reception.” Through these statistical analyses, we evaluated the influence of AI Influencer Usage on changes in Message Reception, providing valuable insights into its significance and effectiveness in beauty brand campaigns.

Table 2. Correlation test result

		Use of AI influencers	Message reception
Use of AI influencers	Pearson Correlation	1	-.355**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Message reception	Pearson Correlation	-.355**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation test provides crucial insights for decision-making. A significance value below 0.05 indicates a correlation between variables, while a value above 0.05 suggests no correlation. In this study, the correlation test between “Use of AI influencers” (X) and “Message Reception” (Y) in beauty brand campaigns yielded significance values below 0.05, indicating a correlation between the two variables. Although the Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.355 fell within the category of weak correlation, ranging from 0.21 to 0.40 (Sugiyono, 2013), it remains pertinent to the study’s context. This negative correlation suggests that higher usage of AI influencers correlates with lower message acceptance in beauty brand campaigns. Thus, it can be inferred that increased AI influencer usage leads to decreased message acceptance, and vice versa.

After finding the correlation between the two variables, the researcher then conducted a simple linear regression test to measure the extent to which the correlation relationship could be predicted. Table 3 presents the results of the regression test that was carried out.

Table 3. Regression test result

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.355a	.126	.117	2.43553

^aPredictors: (Constant), use of AI Influencers

The SPSS analysis revealed a notable correlation between the variables: Use of AI Influencers (x) and Message Reception (y), with a correlation coefficient of 0.355, indicating a moderate relationship. Additionally, the coefficient of determination (R-square) at 0.126 suggests that about 12.6% of Message Reception variation can be attributed to AI Influencer Usage fluctuation.

The findings reveal a notable positive correlation between employing AI influencers in beauty brand campaigns and message acceptance among Indonesian Instagram users. Despite the relatively low explained variation (12.6%), this insight offers preliminary understanding of AI influencers’ impact on message reception. This interpretation sheds light on how the AI influencer presence may influence message reception among Indonesian Instagram users in beauty brand campaigns.

Table 4. ANOVA^a result

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	83.592	1	83.592	14.092	.000b
	Residual	581.318	98	5.932		
	Total	664.910	99			

The results of the ANOVA analysis in Table 4 show that there is a significant correlation between the use of AI influencers and decreased message acceptance in the context of beauty brand campaigns. With a calculated F value of 14.092 and a significance level of 0.000, this result shows that the relationship between the variables of AI influencer usage and decreased message acceptance is statistically significant. The significance level being lower than the set level (0.05) indicates that this relationship does not occur by chance. This gives confidence that the relationship has significant relevance.

The ANOVA analysis revealed a significant link between AI influencer usage and the decrease in message acceptance in beauty brand campaigns. Initially, AI influencers may enhance message acceptance, but this correlation diminishes over time. Thus, hypothesis

testing is essential to assess AI influencers' impact on declining message acceptance in beauty brand campaigns. These insights are crucial for strategic planning, with an emphasis on sustainability and adaptability for prolonged communication effectiveness.

Table 5. Your coefficient of determination analysis results

	Unstd Coeff.		Std. Coeff.	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	22.520	1.878		11.992	.000
Use of AI influencers	-.308	.082	-.355	-3.754	.000

From the results presented in Table 5, the constant value (a) is 22.520, while the value of Using AI Influencers (regression coefficient) is -0.308. Thus, the regression equation can be written as follows:

$$y = a + bx$$

$$y = 22.520 + (-0.308)x$$

The constant, 22.520, signifies a baseline Message Acceptance value. With no AI influencer usage (X), Message Reception remains at 22.520. Meanwhile, the regression coefficient x (-0.308) suggests that a 1% rise in AI influencer usage results in a 0.308 decrease in Message Reception. In essence, increased AI influencer usage correlates with decreased message acceptance.

In the analysis of simple regression test decisions, it can be seen through the significance value and t value. From the information presented in Table 5, the significance value obtained is 0.000 which is smaller than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the variable Use of AI influencers (X) has a significant influence on the variable Message reception (Y). In addition, for the t value, the results from Table 5 show that the t value is 11.992 which exceeds the t table of 1.660. This indicates that variable X has a significant negative influence on variable Y. This finding also establishes the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H1).

Data from the collected questionnaires, along with correlation and simple linear regression tests, revealed a correlation: increased AI influencer usage in beauty brand campaigns led to decreased Message Reception. While initially boosting message acceptance, this relationship may evolve over time, resulting in reduced acceptance. These findings align with the hyperreality theory, media ecology theory, and audience reception theory.

The hyperreality theory emphasises that in an era where the boundaries between the real world and the world of representation are increasingly blurred, people tend to be confronted with experiences that can no longer be distinguished between the real and the reproduced (Robi'ah, 2019). In the context of beauty brand campaigns, the use of AI influencers, who are virtual representations, can create increasingly realistic and hyperrealistic images. However, this trend has the potential to decline over time as the public becomes accustomed to increasingly hyperrealistic images, so much so that the messages conveyed by AI influencers may lose their appeal.

In the context of visual realism, hyperreality content, and visual appeal shown by AI influencers in their Instagram posts as beauty brand campaign models, it is not uncommon to omit the human element that can make the message more easily accepted by the public. In the context of beauty itself, the hyperreality theory asserts that overly perfect beauty icons can create a gap between the represented image and reality (Handayani, 2023). This results in a less positive response from the public who want something more

authentic and emotionally connected. Although the use of AI influencers increases the perceived innovativeness of a brand, AI influencers need to be clearly identified to prevent potential fraud, both for consumers and the general public (C. M. Franke et al., 2023). Therefore, the right balance between engaging visuals and humanised elements is needed to achieve optimal beauty brand campaign effectiveness.

In the digital era and the development of social media, such as Instagram, mass communication has undergone a significant shift. In mass communication today, the media has a role and representation in conveying messages to the public (Setiadi, 2016). Social media platforms such as Instagram have become a key medium for beauty brand campaigns, conveying messages to the public. The use of AI influencers represents a shift in mass communication, where virtual representations replace traditional human influencers. Analysing this phenomenon through the mass communication theory can help explicate the effects and interactions between the message and its reception. The shift to digital communication, especially through Instagram, used by AI influencers, is crucial in assessing the impact of beauty brand campaigns.

As stated, the mass communication theory highlights that message reception can be influenced by various factors, including the way the message is presented, the communication channel used, and the characteristics of the audience (McQuail, 2011). The use of AI influencers as mass communication intermediaries creates an increasingly complex picture. While AI influencers are designed to create an attractive and flawless image, their tendency to lose the human element can affect the reception of the message by the public.

In the ever-evolving landscape of mass communication, AI influencers utilise platforms such as Instagram to spread beauty brand campaigns globally, reaching millions of users through visual and textual narratives. However, challenges arise when the messages delivered by AI influencers struggle to establish an emotional or authentic connection with the public. This suggests a difference in message reception compared to human influencers, despite both utilising the same platform (Girsang, 2020). AI influencers tend to focus on visual content designed to showcase beauty and a certain aesthetic appeal. However, when it comes to supporting text, AI influencers tend to write generic and less contextualised messages. Overly generic captions may not reflect authenticity and humanity, which are important aspects in mass communication theory, thus creating a gap between the message conveyed and its reception by the public.

In the mass communication theory, an important point to consider is the impact of the message on the audience. The use of non-specific captions by AI influencers in beauty campaigns on Instagram can decrease attraction and engagement. While the uploaded photos create a hyperrealistic image of beauty, generic captions tend to fail to convey relevant messages and connect emotionally with the audience (Morse, 2017). The transformation of mass communication media to the digital realm, particularly on the Instagram platform, confirms that the use of AI influencers should consider more than just appealing visuals. A balance between aesthetically appealing visual content and contextualised captions is essential to achieve optimal message reception amidst the increasingly fierce competition for information in the digital world (Hendriyani et al., 2013). Aligned with the media ecology theory, the interaction between media and information environments shapes how messages are transmitted and interpreted by audiences. McLuhan's media ecology theory explores the impact of media and communication processes on human perceptions, emotions and values. It covers how technology affects communication, including the delivery and reception of messages, through the development of new technologies (Ratana, 2018).

When AI influencers use generic and non-specific captions in beauty campaigns on Instagram, audience interest and engagement may decrease. While the uploaded photos create a very realistic picture of beauty, generic captions are not able to convey a relevant message or connect emotionally with the audience. Despite the visually captivating images, such captions fail to deliver a pertinent message or evoke emotional connection. This underscores the need for a balance between visually appealing content and personalised captions for effective communication. Within the framework media ecology theory, this underscores how the ever-evolving digital landscape affects the delivery and reception of messages. Therefore, staying on trend and adapting to digital changes is crucial to ensure the effectiveness of beauty brand campaigns that utilise AI influencers.

Furthermore, in the perspective of the audience reception theory, the audience, or public plays an important role as an active constructor and interpreter of the messages conveyed (Ayomi, 2021). In terms of the use of AI influencers, the humanist indicator becomes relevant, as the tendency to lose the human element in digital interactions can decrease the attractiveness of the message (Nugroho, 2020). When audiences are less able to connect emotionally or do not find authentic human elements, the reception of beauty brand campaign messages may decrease.

Moreover, social presence also plays a key role in message reception (Virginia, 2012). In the audience reception theory, message receivers not only receive messages, but they also engage in a process of social interaction with the messenger. The authenticity and human engagement exuded in social presence can strengthen the relationship between brands, AI influencers and the public. However, AI influencers have a substantial weakness in creating a convincing social presence, due to their lack of physical presence and direct interaction with the public. For their physical presence, AI influencers utilise augmented reality technology which is the incorporation of two- or three-dimensional virtual objects; in this case, the AI influencer itself, projected into the real world (Budiartawan, 2022). In terms of interaction, AI influencers never interact two-way or directly with the public, such as replying to comments on posts.

The role of trust is crucial according to the audience acceptance theory, when using AI influencers in beauty brand campaigns on Instagram. The level of public trust in AI influencers as brand representatives plays an important role in shaping the acceptance of the messages delivered. The success or failure of the AI influencer in delivering the message with integrity and credibility directly impacts public trust. However, there is an additional dynamic of public distrust of AIs delivering messages for beauty brands. This is due to the public's lack of direct experience with AI influencers, given that they are not human (Lou et al., 2023).

Most consumers tend to perceive less trust towards AIs that cannot provide direct experience or testimonials, as humans can (C. Franke et al., 2023). Also, people nowadays have lesser trust in the information presented to them through social media (Yusuf et al., 2022). Therefore, maintaining the integrity and credibility of AI influencers is not only related to the content and messages delivered, but also needs to include strategies to overcome public distrust that may arise due to the non-human nature of AI. By detailing the experiences and advantages that AI has applied in the context of beauty, brand campaigns can more effectively overcome any prejudices or doubts that may arise from public ignorance about the use of AI in this role.

This analysis reveals the complexity of the interaction between message recipients and media messages when using AI influencers in beauty brand campaigns. Trust plays a central role in constructing message interpretations. The audience reception theory helps explain how people respond to AI influencers, focusing on humanising aspects, social

presence, and trust. The theory suggests that shifts in mass communication and technology create new dynamics in message reception in the digital age. Understanding the role of the audience reception theory is crucial in adapting to current developments in communication technology. In this regard, further studies are needed to explore these dynamics and provide targeted guidance to utilise AI influencers in beauty brand campaigns in the modern era.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the downward trend of message reception in beauty brand campaigns using AI influencers. Although acceptance initially increased, a gradual decline was observed over time, which calls for further exploration of how individuals perceive and respond to AI influencers. The conclusion highlights the complex interactions between message recipients and digital media, which is based on the hyperreality theory and audience reception theory. Trust, humanist elements, social presence, and audience receptivity factors emerge as particularly important in shaping perceptions of AI influencers.

The expectation of this research is for stakeholders in the beauty brand campaign industry to consider the implications of using AI influencers more carefully. Understanding this downward trend in message reception can help them optimise their digital marketing and PR communications strategies. This involves planning more innovative content, considering human factors and social presence, and building public trust in AI influencers.

As a recommendation, it is suggested that the industry and digital PR practitioners continue to monitor the shifting trends and dynamics in message reception through AI influencers. Communication strategies should be constantly updated and adapted to technological developments and changes in consumer behaviour. In addition, collaboration between AI influencers and humans can be a strategic step in mitigating the downward trend in message reception, while maintaining the element of authenticity and social interaction needed in the context of audience reception.

Through a holistic and sustainable approach, it is hoped that the beauty brand campaign industry can utilise the technological advantages of AI influencers without compromising the quality and reception of the desired message. Along with that, further research can be conducted to continue exploring the dynamics of interaction between AI influencers and the public, providing more concrete guidance for the industry and digital PR practitioners in facing the challenges and opportunities offered by the development of modern mass communication technology.

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