Topic: AI influencer marketing

Hypothesis: AI influencer is more effective than real-person influencers in terms of marketing products.

IV: Al influencer and real person influencer

DV: Audience’s purchasing intention

Medorater: social media use

Mediator: influencers’ image and product match-up

Article 1: What are some common factors intimate people's purchasing intention

Hwa, Cheah etl. (2017). The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Purchase Intention and the Mediation Effect of Customer Attitude. Asian Journal of Business Research. 7. 19-36. 10.14707/ajbr.170035.

This study investigates the notion of social media influencers by examining what factors of influencers account for consumers' positive attitude and purchasing intention. Dependent variables (DV) are the consumers' attitude towards social media influencers and purchasing intention. The independent variables (IV) are source credibility, source attractiveness, and product match-up. It is a cross-sectional design, collecting survey data from 129 respondents, using a question and answer format to analyze the relationship between the IV and DV. Source credibility of social media influencers are likely to cause a negative attitude and purchase intention; respondents tend to consider social media influencers lack credibility towards the product that they endorsed. Source attractiveness, although it doesn't show a strong causality to positive purchasing intention, the influencers remained significant to stimulate respondents' positive attitude. Respondents were more likely to accept brands endorsed by social media influencers that they perceived as a resemblance to themselves or people they admired. Social media influencers' product match-up was found to be significant with purchase intention and consumer attitude. The study has limitations since the data should primarily be based on a larger sample size to explore this topic and ultimately produce highly extensive results. The respondents' backgrounds were also a restricting factor, as they were predominantly teenagers with minimal income. Therefore, they may not be a good predictor of purchasing power.

Article 2: AI influencers possess some factors mentioned in Article 1

Molin, V., & Nordgren, S. (2019). Robot or Human? The Marketing Phenomenon of Virtual Influencers : A Case Study About Virtual Influencers' Parasocial Interaction on Instagram (Dissertation). Retrieved from http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-388646

This is a case study conducted on eight female Swedish consumers between 18-28 years old. As it is already established that human influencers can create parasocial interaction with their followers, the purpose of this study is to explore what factors in source credibility facilitate parasocial interaction between the actors. The independent variables are appearance and life-like activities (humanness), attractiveness, similarity and trustworthiness. The dependent variable is a credible interaction between virtual influencers and consumers. Two virtual fashion influencers involved in the study: LilMiquela and Noonoouri. Researchers use a set of questions (evaluated from 1-5) to measure the extent of consumers' feeling about the independent variables, and another set of questions to measure the dependent variables, then get the mean of answers to analyze. The result of this study shows that it is important to be able to connect and see the similarities between oneself and the virtual influencer, and similarity and attractiveness factors need to be aligned in order to be considered a credible virtual influencer. But too humanized appearance can be a problem since people may feel afraid. When virtual influencers have too much cooperation with brands, their attractiveness will decrease. Thus, transparency is essential. Their superior ability to humans' in communicating is the high frequency; such high frequency enhances the level of intimacy with virtual influencers. Also, the perception of the virtual influencer's language and the tone was in line with humans' way of interacting, further increasing engagement. Such engagement and intimacy further increase AI influencers' attractiveness and trustworthiness. This study's limitations mainly concern the sampling. Firstly, the authors' interviewed Instagram users who were not original followers of virtual influencers. This means that the results are based on respondents who are not following virtual influencers by their own choice but asked by the authors to follow them. Secondly, the respondents were all Swedish, which is a limitation since virtual influencers are more popular outside of Sweden.

Article 3: The potential disadvantages of AI influencers in terms of communicating

Mou, Y., & Xu, K. (2017). The media inequality: Comparing the initial human-human and human-AI social interactions. Computers in Human Behavior, 72, 432-440. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2017.02.067

Ten volunteers were recruited through a snowball sampling to provide two copies of his/her conversation transcripts on WeChat: One with Little Ice and one with a normal human friend. Those targets were evaluated by 277 viewers on their personality and communication attributes. IV is human communicator or AI communicator; DV is the degrees of participants' neurotic response.

The results showed that when the target people interacted with Little Ice, they showed different personality and communication characteristics when they interacted with humans. In particular, users tend to be more open, friendly, outgoing, serious and self-revealing in their interactions with humans than they are with artificial intelligence. Users are thought to have higher levels of neuroticism in their interactions with ice. This may confirm what Nass and Lee (2001) found that computer users prefer to communicate with people who share their personality traits. Since Little Ice is designed to be a naughty girl who can tell jokes, recite poems and tell horror stories, users may prefer to respond to Little Ice in a more neurotic way. At the same time, a combination of playful personality and multiple social functions may make users feel insecure and reluctant to reveal their information to the AI.

Despite Microsoft's claim that more than 90 million users have used Little Ice to conduct conversations, it has been difficult to find the right person to conduct the study because of the strict and standardized recording of conversations. That's why the study only recruited six subjects. As a result, the study's universality is limited. In addition, this study was conducted in China. Although Chinese Culture emphasizes adherence to social rules, individuals in Chinese culture may feel more pressure than individuals in other cultures to act in a socially appropriate way in an interpersonal communication environment (Hofstede, 1984) . Stuart (2016) also suggested that human responses to social robots may be influenced by their cultural background. Future Studies may consider cross-cultural comparisons of individuals' attitudes toward chatbots.

Article 4: AI's advantages in terms of communicating

Sycara, Katia P., 1990. "Negotiation planning: An AI approach," European Journal of Operational Research, Elsevier, vol. 46(2), pages 216-234, May.

This study uses content analysis, reviewing the previous negotiation cases. IV is different characteristics of a negotiation (environment, features of negotiators); DV is whether the negotiation reached a solution or not. In a real negotiation case, if a solution that satisfies both sides is needed, there are infinite compromise choices left. AI is competitive since it could not only store a large amount of data but also utilize that data to cover almost all of the compromise choices.

First and foremost, AI is programmed to organize similar concepts based on the stored cases. This high-level knowledge structure that is used to organize similar concepts in memory is called a generalized episode. AI takes advantage of generalized episodes, categorize similar cases, finding out those failures first, then analyze the reasons for failure and store them. Failure doesn't equal to useless, since AI needs to conduct a specific analysis of specific issues. After failure analysis, AI will store all the successful experiences.

When it comes to the real negotiations, AI depends on several same or similar index/ characteristics to locate the similar cases it stored, then retrieve all the instances and pinpoint useful arguments in those cases. Once an argument has been identified and selected, AI negotiators will adjust and change some dimensions to better fit the current situation.

Conclusion:

From the above articles, it's safe to conclude that AI influencers satisfy some requirements to intimate people's purchasing intentions via some mediators (like humanness, attractiveness, etc.). Also, previous studies show that AI demonstrates a remarkable capacity in terms of communicating. Although some AI communication programs have some disadvantages compared to human communicators that drive people to not act naturally, such characteristics could be fixed when designing an AI social media influencer. Besides the disadvantages, AI also has unique advantages in terms of communicating and negotiating; it could store previous cases and conduct keyword research, then analyze the context to achieve a successful communication.

Thus, with AI's advantages and mend of disadvantages, I would like to compare AI influencers and real human influencers with regard to how they stir up consumers' purchasing intentions.

Also, if there are any other variables that play a mediator role in the direct relationship between the features of AI influencers and people' purchasing intentions?