

**Factors influencing audience's visit intention: AI Influencer  
as a destination endorser**

A Dissertation Presented

by

Tithdane Saing

Master of Science in Marketing  
National College of Ireland

Submitted to the National College of Ireland, August 2025

# **Factors influencing audience's visit intention: AI Influencer as a destination endorser**

## **Abstract**

Companies have been leveraging the potential of social influencers to promote their products and services. There is no exception for tourism industry and destination marketing. Extensive studies have been proving the effectiveness of these social media persons in influencing their audience behavioural intention. Nonetheless, there is a gap in understanding what factors influence the intention when it comes to AI as an endorser. Humanisation of AI figure is one of the most important elements in the context of application of AI in human interaction. Source credibility and parasocial interaction have been utilised to evaluate the effectiveness of the endorsers, be it celebrities, social media influencers or AI influencers. Incorporating the three concepts, this study provides an additional understanding of its impact on audience visit intention. This study employs quantitative research method to examine the relationships. That said, a survey questionnaire adapting from previous studies was used to collect data from 210 respondents. Then, quantitative analysis on SPSS using multiple regression was employed to study the relationship of the three concepts and visit intention. The result reveals that source credibility and parasocial interaction have positive effects on audience's intention to visit while the relationship between anthropomorphism and the intention was not detected.

Keyword: AI influencers, virtual influencer, anthropomorphism, source credibility, parasocial interaction, destination marketing, tourism marketing

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**Module:** Master of Science in Marketing

**Lecturer:**

**Submission** 15 August 2025

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**Project** Factors influencing audience's visit intention: AI Influencer as a  
**Title:** destination endorser

**Word** Total of **18,705** [16,432 (*Content*) + 2,258 (*Reference*) + 15  
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## AI Acknowledgement Supplement

### [Dissertation]

#### [Factors influencing audience’s visit intention: AI Influencer as a destination endorser]

Your Number	Name/StudentCourse	Date
Tithdane Saing	MSc in Marketing	11 August 2025

This section is a supplement to the main assignment, to be used if AI was used in any capacity in the creation of your assignment; if you have queries about how to do this, please contact your lecturer. For an example of how to fill these sections out, please click [here](#).

#### AI Acknowledgment

This section acknowledges the AI tools that were utilized in the process of completing this assignment.

Tool Name	Brief Description	Link to tool
ChatGPT	ChatGPT was used for step-by-step process of multiple regression analysis, explanation of each technical terms in the analysis, how I can get the data to compute AVE, CR and HTMT, VIF.	<a href="https://chatgpt.com/c/685ae4c3-d23c-800d-886b-be5b4e45d86b">https://chatgpt.com/c/685ae4c3-d23c-800d-886b-be5b4e45d86b</a>

#### Description of AI Usage

This section provides a more detailed description of how the AI tools were used in the assignment. It includes information about the prompts given to the AI tool, the responses received, and how these responses were utilized or modified in the assignment. **One table should be used for each tool used.**

[ChatGPT]	
[ChatGPT was used to assist in running multiple regression analysis and where to find the values for further computing and for reporting stage. General prompt like who to run the analysis, where to find the value, what does the result mean, how can the phenomenon be explained so that the result is understood and can be reported. Some questions were also asked in condition/hypothetical form ‘if’. The data was not the actual dataset. It was just a sample with the same variable names and the answer that ChatGPT was an example report ]	
[I have this set of data and my dependent variables are ANT_Mean_2, SCT_Mean_2, PAR_Mean_2, INT_Mean_2. and the independent variables are Info_verification, Time on SM Group, INT_EXT, Spond_Planner, Initiator, Gender, Education, Occupation,	Thanks for sharing your SPSS .sav data file! Here's how to run multiple linear regressions on SPSS using your dependent variables (ANT_Mean_2, SCT_Mean_2, PAR_Mean_2, INT_Mean_2) and independent variables (like Info_verification, Time on

<p>Age Group, Age generation, comfortability, appealing, familiarity, ANT_Mean_2, SCT_Mean_2, PAR_Mean_2, INT_Mean_2. Now show me how to run multi linear regression on SPSS. and how to report them ]</p>	<p>SM Group, etc.), and how to report them:</p> <p>🔧 PART 1: How to Run Multiple Linear Regressions in SPSS</p> <p>You will need to run each dependent variable in a separate regression model:</p> <p>📌 Example: Linear Regression for ANT_Mean_2</p> <p>Go to: Analyze &gt; Regression &gt; Linear</p> <p>In the dialog box: Dependent: ANT_Mean_2 Independent(s): Select: Info_verification, Time on SM Group, INT_EXT, Spond_Planner, Initiator, Gender, Education, Occupation, Age Group, Age generation, comfortability, appealing, familiarity, SCT_Mean_2, PAR_Mean_2, INT_Mean_2</p> <p>Click: Statistics &gt; Check: Estimates Model fit Collinearity diagnostics (optional) Click Continue Click: OK</p> <p>Repeat this process for: SCT_Mean_2 as dependent PAR_Mean_2 as dependent INT_Mean_2 as dependent (Each time, keep the rest as independent variables)</p>
<p>and how do I get the AVE and CR value? and how to report it?</p>	<p>Great question! <b>AVE (Average Variance Extracted)</b> and <b>CR (Composite Reliability)</b> are measures used in <b>Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)</b> or <b>Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)</b>—often calculated in tools like <b>AMOS</b>, <b>SmartPLS</b>, or <b>Excel</b>, not directly in SPSS unless you compute them manually.</p> <p>But you <b>can</b> compute them from your <b>Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)</b> output or from standardized loadings if you have them.</p> <p>📖 Step-by-Step: How to Calculate AVE and CR</p> <p>You need: <b>Standardized factor loadings</b> (<math>\lambda</math>) <b>Error variances</b> (<math>\epsilon = 1 - \lambda^2</math>)</p>

	<p>✓ 1. AVE Formula  <math display="block">AVE = \frac{\sum \lambda^2}{n}</math> ] Where:  λ = standardized factor loading for each item  n = number of items in the construct</p> <p>✓ 2. CR Formula  <math display="block">CR = \frac{(\sum \lambda)^2}{(\sum \lambda)^2 + \sum \varepsilon}</math> ] Where:  <math>\sum \lambda</math> = sum of loadings  <math>\sum \varepsilon = \sum (1 - \lambda^2)</math></p>
<p>how do I report this from multiple linear regression</p>	<p>To report <b>Multiple Linear Regression</b> results in APA or professional style, you need to include several key elements: model fit, variance explained, and predictor significance (beta coefficients and p-values). Here's a clear guide tailored to your SPSS output and how to write it.</p> <p>✓ Step-by-Step Guide to Reporting Multiple Regression</p> <p>📌 1. Model Summary Table (from SPSS)  From the <b>Model Summary</b> output:  R = multiple correlation  R<sup>2</sup> = proportion of variance explained  Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = corrected for number of predictors  Std. Error = SE of estimate</p> <p>✓ Report example:  A multiple linear regression was conducted to predict <b>ANT_Mean_2</b> based on <b>Info_verification, Time on SM Group, INT_EXT, Spond_Planner, Initiator, Gender, Education, Occupation, Age Group, Age Generation, Comfortability, Appealing, Familiarity, SCT_Mean_2, PAR_Mean_2, and INT_Mean_2</b>. The model was statistically significant, <b>F(15, 124) = 4.12, p &lt; .001</b>, and explained <b>33.2%</b> of the variance in <b>ANT_Mean_2 (R<sup>2</sup> = .332, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .281)</b>.</p>

	<p>(Replace degrees of freedom and values with your actual output.)</p> <p>🎯 2. ANOVA Table This tests if your overall regression model is significant. ✅ Include like this: The regression model was a good fit for the data, <b>F(15, 124) = 4.12, p &lt; .001.</b></p>
<p>report this table from multiple regression results</p>	<p>Here's how to <b>professionally report</b> the <b>Model Summary</b> table from your multiple linear regression results (with ANT_Mean_2 as the dependent variable):</p> <p>📝 APA-Style Report (Narrative Format) A multiple linear regression was conducted to examine whether variables such as initiator status, age generation, gender, education, occupation, comfortability, AI perceptions, social media behavior, and other attitudinal predictors could significantly predict <b>ANT_Mean_2</b>. The overall model was statistically significant, <b>F(20, 189) = 23.38, p &lt; .001</b>, and explained <b>71.2%</b> of the variance in ANT_Mean_2 (<b>R<sup>2</sup> = .712, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .682</b>). The model showed a strong predictive capability (<b>R = .844</b>), and the <b>Durbin-Watson statistic</b> was 1.96, indicating no significant autocorrelation in the residuals.</p>
<p>Where do I find the value of <math>\lambda</math> in the EFA from SPSS table?</p>	<p>Great question! In <b>Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)</b> using <b>SPSS</b>, the <math>\lambda</math> (<b>lambda</b>) values you need for calculating <b>AVE</b> and <b>CR</b> are the <b>standardized factor loadings</b>. Here's where and how to find them:</p> <p>✅ Where to Find <math>\lambda</math> (Factor Loadings) in SPSS <b>Go to:</b> Analyze &gt; Dimension Reduction &gt; Factor In the dialog box: Add your items to the <b>Variables</b> box. Click Descriptive and check <b>KMO and Bartlett's test</b> Click Extraction:</p>

	<p>Method: Principal axis factoring (or Principal components if you used that)  Check <b>Unrotated solution</b> and <b>Scree plot</b>  Click Rotation:  Choose <b>Varimax</b> (orthogonal) or <b>Promax</b> (oblique), depending on your assumption.  Click Scores if you want to save factor scores.  Click OK.  The key output:  <b>Pattern Matrix</b> or <b>Rotated Component Matrix</b> (depending on method used)</p>
<p>There is no Rotated Component Matrix in my result even if I selected varimax. Can I use the component matrix instead?</p>	<p>Thanks for checking that — this sometimes happens if the rotation wasn't applied due to how the factors were extracted or because only one factor was retained.</p> <p>✅ Here's what likely happened:  If SPSS retained only <b>1 factor</b> (based on eigenvalues &gt; 1 or fixed number of factors), it won't show a <b>Rotated Component Matrix</b>, because <b>rotation is unnecessary</b> when there's just <b>one factor</b> — there's nothing to rotate.</p> <p>🔍 So, can you use the Component Matrix?  Yes, <b>you can use the Component Matrix</b> as your <math>\lambda</math> values <b>only when</b>:  You are working with <b>only one factor</b> for that construct.  The Component Matrix shows <b>clear loadings</b> (ideally &gt; .50 for all items).  There are <b>no cross-loadings</b> (only one factor is extracted anyway).</p>
<p>I have these tables from regression analysis. one is the coefficient table and the other one is correlation table. from correlation table, p-value are less than 0.05 but the correlation table shows otherwise. Explain me what happen and what does it imply.</p>	<p>Thanks for the clear visuals! You're seeing something that <b>commonly confuses researchers</b>: high <b>bivariate correlations</b>(Pearson's r) but <b>non-significant regression coefficients</b> (in the Coefficients table). Let me break it down step by step:</p> <p>🔍 What's happening?  ✅ In the Correlation Table:  <b>ANT_Mean_2</b> has a <b>significant</b> correlation</p>

	<p>with INT_Mean_score (<math>r = .683</math>, <math>p &lt; .001</math>)          So do SCT_Mean_2 (<math>r = .801</math>)          and PAR_Mean_2 (<math>r = .878</math>)  <b>Implication:</b> Each of these variables has a <b>strong individual linear relationship</b> with INT_Mean_score when examined <i>one by one</i>.</p>
<p>If I have another table which I run for the supporting analysis. it shows that Source Credibility, which I abbreviated as SCT for SPSS have a significant effect on Anthropomorphism (ANT). Does this suggest an underlying or mediating role of SCT on ANT and intention (INT)</p>	<p>Great question — and yes, <b>it potentially does</b>. Let me walk you through the logic of what your results imply and whether <b>SCT (Source Credibility)</b> may play a <b>mediating</b> or <b>underlying</b> role in the relationship between <b>Anthropomorphism (ANT)</b> and <b>Intention (INT)</b>.</p>
<p>where can I get standardized factor loading score from SPSS to calculate AVE</p>	<p>Great question! You can get the <b>VIF (Variance Inflation Factor)</b> from your <b>multiple linear regression output</b> in SPSS. It's used to assess <b>multicollinearity</b> — how much a predictor is correlated with other predictors in your model.</p> <p>✔ Here's how to get VIF in SPSS:          Go to:  <b>Analyze &gt; Regression &gt; Linear</b>          In the Linear Regression dialog box:          Move your <b>dependent variable</b> to the <b>Dependent</b> box          Move your <b>independent variables</b> to the <b>Independent(s)</b> box          Click on <b>Statistics...</b>          Under <b>Collinearity diagnostics</b>, check the box for:          ✔ <b>Collinearity diagnostics</b>          (Optional: Check Descriptives and Part/Partial correlations too)          Click <b>Continue</b>, then <b>OK</b></p>

### Evidence of AI Usage

This section includes evidence of significant prompts and responses used or generated through the AI tool. It should provide a clear understanding of the extent to which the AI tool was used in the assignment. Evidence may be attached via screenshots or text.

ChatGPT Share

Thanks for sharing your SPSS .sav data file! Here's how to run multiple linear regressions on SPSS using your dependent variables (ANT\_Mean\_2, SCT\_Mean\_2, PAR\_Mean\_2, INT\_Mean\_2) and independent variables (like Info\_verification, Time on SM Group, etc.), and how to report them:

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**PART 1: How to Run Multiple Linear Regressions in SPSS**

You will need to run each dependent variable in a separate regression model:

**Example: Linear Regression for ANT\_Mean\_2**

- Go to:
  - Analyze > Regression > Linear
- In the dialog box:
  - Dependent: ANT\_Mean\_2
  - Independent(s):
    - Select: Info\_verification, Time on SM Group, INT\_EXT, Spond\_Planner, Initiator, Gender, Education, Occupation, Age Group, Age generation, comfortability, appealing, familiarity, SCT\_Mean\_2, PAR\_Mean\_2, INT\_Mean\_2
- Click: Statistics > Check:
  - Estimates
  - Model fit
  - Collinearity diagnostics (optional)
  - Click Continue
- Click: OK

Repeat this process for:

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**PART 2: How to Report the Results**

Use APA-style or professional format, depending on your context. Here's a template:

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**Example Reporting: ANT\_Mean\_2 Regression**

A multiple linear regression was conducted to examine whether information verification, social media usage, personality traits, and other demographic/attitudinal variables predicted ANT\_Mean\_2. The overall model was statistically significant,  $F(15, XX) = X.XX, p < .05$ , and explained approximately XX% of the variance in ANT\_Mean\_2 ( $R^2 = .XX$ ).

Significant predictors included:

- "Info\_verification ( $\beta = .23, p = .01$ )"
- "Gender ( $\beta = -.18, p = .03$ )"
- "SCT\_Mean\_2 ( $\beta = .29, p < .001$ )"

VIF values were below 5, suggesting no multicollinearity issues.

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**Checklist for Reporting:**

Element	What to Include
F-statistic	Model fit: $F(df1, df2) = value, p = \dots$
R <sup>2</sup> and Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Amount of variance explained
Beta coefficients	Rep. ↓ tandardized coefficients ( $\beta$ )

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and how do I get the AVE and CR value? and how to report it?

Great question! AVE (Average Variance Extracted) and CR (Composite Reliability) are measures used in Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) or Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)—often calculated in tools like AMOS, SmartPLS, or Excel, not directly in SPSS unless you compute them manually.

But you can compute them from your Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) output or from standardized loadings if you have them.

---

**Step-by-Step: How to Calculate AVE and CR**

You need:

- Standardized factor loadings ( $\lambda$ )
- Error variances ( $\epsilon = 1 - \lambda^2$ )

---

**1. AVE Formula**

$$AVE = \frac{\sum \lambda^2}{n}$$

Where:

- $\lambda$  = standardized factor loading for each item
- $n$  = number of items in the construct

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**2. CR Formula**

$$CR = \frac{\sum \lambda^2}{\sum \lambda^2 + \sum \epsilon^2}$$

Where:

- $\sum \lambda$  = sum of loadings
- $\sum \epsilon = \sum (1 - \lambda^2)$

---

**Example (Let's say INT\_Mean\_2 has 4 items with loadings):**

Item	$\lambda$ (loading)
INT1	0.75
INT2	0.80
INT3	0.78
INT4	0.70

- AVE** =  $(0.75^2 + 0.80^2 + 0.78^2 + 0.70^2) / 4$   
 $= (0.5625 + 0.64 + 0.6084 + 0.49) / 4 = 0.575$
- CR** =  $(0.75 + 0.80 + 0.78 + 0.70)^2 / [(0.75 + 0.80 + 0.78 + 0.70)^2 + (1 - 0.75^2 + 1 - 0.80^2 + 1 - 0.78^2 + 1 - 0.70^2)]$   
 $= (3.03)^2 / [3.03^2 + (0.4375 + 0.36 + 0.3916 + 0.51)]$

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**How to Report AVE and CR**

You can report them in text or in a table:

**APA-Style Text:**

The construct INT\_Mean\_2 demonstrated good convergent validity, with an **Average Variance Extracted (AVE)** of 0.575 and **Composite Reliability (CR)** of 0.844, exceeding the recommended thresholds of 0.5 and 0.7, respectively (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

**Table Format:**

Construct	AVE	CR
ANT_Mean_2	0.61	0.85
SCT_Mean_2	0.58	0.82
PAR_Mean_2	0.64	0.87
INT_Mean_2	0.575	0.844

**Notes:**

- AVE > 0.50 = acceptable convergent validity
- CR > 0.70 = good internal consistency
- If AVE < 0.50 but CR > 0.60, convergent validity is still *tolerable*

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how do I report this from multiple linear regression

To report **Multiple Linear Regression** results in APA or professional style, you need to include several key elements: model fit, variance explained, and predictor significance (beta coefficients and p-values). Here's a clear guide tailored to your SPSS output and how to write it.

**Step-by-Step Guide to Reporting Multiple Regression**

**1. Model Summary Table (from SPSS)**

From the **Model Summary** output:

- R = multiple correlation
- R<sup>2</sup> = proportion of variance explained
- Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = corrected for number of predictors
- Std. Error = SE of estimate

**Report example:**

A multiple linear regression was conducted to predict ANT\_Mean\_2 based on Info\_verification, Time on SM Group, INT\_EXT, Spont\_Planner, Initiator, Gender, Education, Occupation, Age Group, Age Generation, Comfortability, Appealing, Familiarity, SCT\_Mean\_2, PAR\_Mean\_2, and INT\_Mean\_2. The model was statistically significant,  $F(15, 124) = 4.12, p < .001$ , and explained 33.2% of the variance in ANT\_Mean\_2 ( $R^2 = .332$ , **Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .281**).

(Replace degrees of freedom and values with your actual output.)

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**2. ANOVA Table**  
 This tests if your overall regression model is significant.

**Include like this:**  
 The regression model was a good fit for the data,  $F(15, 124) = 4.12, p < .001$ .

---

**3. Coefficients Table (Interpret Individual Predictors)**  
 For each variable, report the **standardized beta ( $\beta$ )**, **t-value**, and **p-value**.

**Example:**

Predictor	$\beta$	t	p
Info_verification	.24	2.45	.016
SCT_Mean_2	.31	3.68	<.001
Gender (Female)	-.18	-2.05	.043

**Text format:**  
 Among the predictors, **Info\_verification** ( $\beta = .24, p = .016$ ), **SCT\_Mean\_2** ( $\beta = .31, p < .001$ ), and **Gender** ( $\beta = -.18, p = .043$ ) were significant predictors of ANT\_Mean\_2. Other predictors were not statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ).

**4. Optional: Collinearity Diagnostics**

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Where do I find the value of  $\lambda$  in the EFA from SPSS table?

Great question! In **Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)** using **SPSS**, the  $\lambda$  (**lambda**) values you need for calculating **AVE** and **CR** are the **standardized factor loadings**. Here's where and how to find them:

**Where to Find  $\lambda$  (Factor Loadings) in SPSS**

- Go to:**  
 Analyze > Dimension Reduction > Factor
- In the dialog box:
  - Add your items to the **Variables** box.
  - Click **Descriptive** and check **KMO and Bartlett's test**
  - Click **Extraction**:
    - Method: **Principal axis factoring** (or **Principal components** if you used that)
    - Check **Unrotated solution** and **Scree plot**
  - Click **Rotation**:
    - Choose **Varimax** (orthogonal) or **Promax** (oblique), depending on your assumption.
  - Click **Scores** if you want to save factor scores.
  - Click **OK**.
- The key output:
  - Pattern Matrix** or **Rotated Component Matrix** (depending on method used)

**Which Table to Use for  $\lambda$ :**

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**Which Table to Use for  $\lambda$ :**

Rotation Method	Table to Use	Values Represent
Varimax	Rotated Component Matrix	Standardized loadings ( $\lambda$ )
Promax/Oblique	Pattern Matrix	Standardized loadings ( $\lambda$ )
No rotation	Component Matrix	Initial factor loadings (less preferred)

Use the **Pattern Matrix** if using **Promax**, or the **Rotated Component Matrix** if using **Varimax**.

**Example:**

Item	Factor 1 ( $\lambda$ )
INT1	0.75
INT2	0.81
INT3	0.78

These numbers are your  $\lambda$  values for calculating:

- AVE** = average of squared loadings ( $\lambda^2$ )
- CR** =  $(\sum \lambda^2) / [(\sum \lambda^2) + \sum (1 - \lambda^2)]$

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There is no Rotated Component Matrix in my result even if I selected varimax. Can I use the component matrix instead?

Thanks for checking that — this sometimes happens if the rotation wasn't applied due to how the factors were extracted or because only one factor was retained.

**Here's what likely happened:**

If SPSS retained only **1 factor** (based on eigenvalues > 1 or fixed number of factors), it won't show a **Rotated Component Matrix**, because **rotation is unnecessary** when there's just **one factor** — there's nothing to rotate.

**So, can you use the Component Matrix?**

Yes, you can use the **Component Matrix** as your  $\lambda$  values **only when**:

- You are working with **only one factor** for that construct.
- The Component Matrix shows **clear loadings** (ideally > .50 for all items).
- There are **no cross-loadings** (only one factor is extracted anyway).

**What to do next:**

- Double-check** how many factors SPSS extracted (look at the "Total Variance Explained" table).
  - If only 1 factor was extracted for your construct (e.g., INT\_Mean\_2), then **use the Component Matrix** values as  $\lambda$ .

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**What to do next:**

- Double-check** how many factors SPSS extracted (look at the "Total Variance Explained" table).
  - If only 1 factor was extracted for your construct (e.g., INT\_Mean\_2), then **use the Component Matrix** values as  $\lambda$ .
- Example:**

Item	Component Matrix ( $\lambda$ )
INT1	.72
INT2	.78
INT3	.69

Use these to compute:

- $AVE = (.72^2 + .78^2 + .69^2) / 3$
- $CR = (\sum \lambda^2) / [(\sum \lambda^2) + \sum (1 - \lambda^2)]$

**Optional: To force a Rotated Matrix**

If you want to **force a rotated matrix**, try this:

- Go to **Analyze > Dimension Reduction > Factor**
- In the **Extraction** tab:
  - Set number of factors** manually (e.g., to 2 or more if you're expecting multiple dimensions)
  - Method: Principal Axis Factoring or Principal Components
- In the **Rotation** tab:

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Correlations				Coefficients <sup>a</sup>			
	ANT	PAR	SCT		Coefficient	Std. Error	Significance
ANT	1.000						
PAR	.683	1.000					
SCT	.801	.878	1.000				
ANT		.683	.801				
PAR			.878				
SCT							

I have these tables from regression analysis. one is the coefficient table and the other one is correlation table. from correlation table, p-value are less than 0.05 but the correlation table shows otherwise. Explain me what happen and what does it imply.

Thanks for the clear visuals! You're seeing something that **commonly confuses researchers**: high **bivariate correlations** (Pearson's  $r$ ) but **non-significant regression coefficients** (in the Coefficients table). Let me break it down step by step:

**What's happening?**

**In the Correlation Table:**

- ANT\_Mean\_2** has a **significant** correlation with **INT\_Mean\_score** ( $r = .683, p < .001$ )
- So do **SCT\_Mean\_2** ( $r = .801$ ) and **PAR\_Mean\_2** ( $r = .878$ )

**Implication:** Each of these variables has a **strong individual linear relationship** with **INT\_Mean\_score** when examined *one by one*.

If I have another table which I run for the supporting analysis, it shows that Source Credibility, which I abbreviated as SCT for SPSS have a significant effect on Anthropomorphism (ANT). Does this suggest an underlying or mediating role of SCT on ANT and intention (INT)

Great question — and yes, it **potentially does**. Let me walk you through the logic of what your results imply and whether **SCT (Source Credibility)** may play a **mediating** or **underlying** role in the relationship between **Anthropomorphism (ANT)** and **Intention (INT)**.

### 🗨️ Mediation Logic (Based on Baron & Kenny, 1986 and modern mediation analysis)

You seem to be asking:

“Does SCT mediate the relationship between ANT and INT?”

Or potentially:

“Is SCT a driver of ANT, which then influences INT?”

So let's lay out the conceptual model:

```
sql
SCT → ANT → INT
```

From your findings:

1. ✓ **SCT significantly predicts ANT**

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.0. Background to the Study

Influencer marketing has become the foreground in marketing strategies and will slowly challenge celebrity endorsement (Aw and Agnihotri, 2024). Influencers are those who have the potential to engage, interact with, and/or endorse products or services to the target audience using their respective social media platforms (Kim and Kim, 2018). Their endorsement generally aims to increase the awareness of the products or brand and to influence the purchase intention (Schouten *et al.*, 2020). According to a report from Statista (2025), influencer marketing market size is forecast to reach USD 32.55 billion in 2025, which is around USD 8.55 billion growth from 2024. Moreover, based on the same report, companies allocate marketing budget share of around 10% to 19% on average on influencer marketing. Such trend signifies the significant growth of influencer endorsement in the marketing strategies.

Concurrently, with the emergence of new technologies, marketing strategies and how consumers behave will be altered and assisted by AI (Davenport *et al.*, 2020). Marketers and brands have been incorporating AI into their advertising and marketing strategies in many different forms such as utilising chatbot in their customer services, predictive AI to analyse and optimise their campaign and advertising performances, and generative AI to customise content for target audience. In a broader aspect of AI in marketing, the focus has been widely on the use of AI in relationship management, namely in chatbot, content and advertising customization, and price optimization. Statista (2025) also reported the positive attitude among marketing professionals toward the usage of AI in marketing strategies, with around 60% stating the willingness to use AI in influencer marketing.

While AI is used in different areas of marketing, marketers have now used AI with humanlike appearance and interactions as virtual endorsers (Thomas and Fowler, 2021). Statista (2025) reported that 11% of the marketing professional are planning to invest in virtual influencers. In fact, AI influencers are gaining popularity on social media with Lu do Magalu, Lil Miquela, and K/DA ranking as the top 10 AI

influencers on Instagram (BRACAI, 2024). AI influencers have been used by luxury brands such as Prada, Balenciaga, and Kenzo, and lifestyle brands like Netflix and Nike (Time, 2018; Baklanov, 2019). Beside big brands in lifestyle, there is a huge investment from brands, media agencies, and entities in service industries on developing humanlike AI figures. For instance, the German National Tourist Board (GNTB) introduced 'Emma' a German AI travel influencer for travel advice; Cenizaro Hotels & Resort in collaboration with BRACAI launched 'Sena Zaro', a female AI travel influencer promoting destinations where Cenizaro has its presence (Compton, 2024). Additionally, The Collective Artists Networks presented 'Radhika', an Indian bilingual AI travel influencer targeting Generation Z audience (The Economist Time, 2025). Qatar Airway, on the other hand, introduced 'Sama', the first digital human cabin crew with the aim of staying connected with the followers through her storytelling (Qatar Airway, 2025).

Social media influencers earned their fame through authentic content that speaks values to and earns trust from their niche, making credibility an important factor. Through that, they are expected by their followers to show honest opinions and credibility (Dhun and Dangi, 2023). Moreover, influencers engage with their audience by responding to comments to maintain the relationships. That said, it is crucial that the influencers stay credible and engaging with their followers. The same applies to AI influencers. Specifically, based on the same report by Statista, 60% of the audience believes that influencers are the useful source of information about traveling, with 31% of millennial and 25% of Generation Z relied on social media influencers to plan their trips.

Market insight reports and the growing trend influencer usage by brands paved the way for more studies in the academic arena, especially in the area of endorser effectiveness and its impact on consumer behaviour.

### 1.1. Gaps in Literature

The gap in literature is derived from two strands of research. One is the academic research on virtual influencer in marketing and related field; the other is limited studies on factors that impact visit intention when influencers are used.

Despite extensive studies confirming the effectiveness and relationship of source credibility, parasocial interaction when using social media influencers as endorsers, studies on AI influencers for a travel destination deserve more attention. AI influencers are tested to be accepted by the consumers in the context of product and service, leaving room to investigate on their influence on travel intention. For instance, Yu *et al.* (2025) and Lu *et al.* (2023) incorporated virtual influencers into their studies, yet the scope is narrow, focusing solely on livestreaming. Feng *et al.* (2024) identified anthropomorphism as an important element in AI influencers; however, their study did not investigate the relationship between anthropomorphism of AI and consumer's intentions. Similarly, Thomas and Fowler (2021) focused mainly on the transgression of AI influencers, leaving the examination of its effect on consumer's intention uncovered. Thus, the current study addresses the call for further studies from Feng *et al.* (2024) and Dabiran *et al.* (2024) to (1) explore the relationship between each attribute and consumers' acceptance of an AI influencer as a product/brand endorser yet in the context of tourism industry and (2) investigate the interaction between the virtual influencers and behaviour intention using the anthropomorphism in physical appearance.

On the other hand, Leite and Baptista (2022), Dewantara *et al.* (2023), Sokolova and Kefi (2020) examined parasocial interaction and source credibility, centering around trust, leaving the realm of AI influencers and its impact on behavioural intention uncovered. There have been mixed findings about the impact of each dimension of source credibility (Wahba *et al.*, 2025; Caraka *et al.*, 2022; Raafat *et al.*, 2023; Koay *et al.*, 2021).

## 1.2. Justification of Research

As mentioned, there is a gap in existing research in relation to AI influencers, source credibility, and parasocial interaction in the tourism context. Diagnosing the mixed findings of the previous studies on source credibility model, blending the findings about attractiveness and anthropomorphism in AI influencer, the current research hopes to bridge the gap by bringing clarity and contributing to the theoretical aspect of source credibility model and parasocial interaction in the context of AI influencer in tourism industry. Moreover, this study also hopes to bring the answer and adding evidence to the studies by Feng *et al.* (2024), Thomas and

Fowler (2021), Dabiran *et al.* (2024), and other researchers whose interest centers on AI influencers and anthropomorphism.

This work hopes to bring directions to businesses and institutions especially in tourism industry who want to incorporate AI influencers into their marketing strategies. The work will provide some guides on which aspect of virtual figure and influencer marketing weighs the most impact on audience's intention.

### 1.3. Research Aim

This work aims to bridge the gap in previous academic research by integrating source credibility model which highlights the cognitive aspects, parasocial interaction focusing on the emotional aspect, and anthropomorphism concentrating the humanised aspect of the influencer. This work will give a complete picture of what factors – psychological, cognitive, or the characteristic of the endorser – weigh more in the consumer's decision making when it comes to visit intentions.

Ultimately, this paper aims to contribute to the academic spheres, serving as the secondary source of information for researchers who are interesting AI, influencer marketing, and tourism industry.

### 1.4. Research Questions and Objectives

- Research Questions

Based on the solid background of the study, gaps identified in literature, and the aim for contribution to the academic research, this research study was able to form four research questions and the objective as follows:

1. What are the factors influencing an audience's travel intention when AI influencers are used as destination endorsers?
2. What is the relationship between anthropomorphism infused in AI influencers and audience's travel intention?
3. What is the relationship between source credibility of AI influencers and audience's travel intention?

4. What is the relationship between parasocial interaction with AI influencers and audience's travel intention?

- Objectives

To achieve the research aim and the research question, three objectives are developed as follows:

1. To examine the relationship between anthropomorphism infused in AI influencers and audience's travel intention
2. To investigate the relationship between source credibility of AI influencers and audience's travel intention
3. To find out the influence of parasocial interaction with AI influencers and audience's travel intention

#### 1.5. Research Methods and Scope

To complete the research aim, answer the research questions, and achieve the research objectives, this research empirically tests the visit intention of the Instagram users. With that, quantitative research method using survey questionnaires as research tool to measure the factors influencing audience intention. Specifically, a sample of 210 individuals was collecting using non-probability sampling technique.

The sample were asked to complete the survey via an anonymous link posted by the researcher on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and National College of Ireland student email. Only the respondents who are 18 years old or older, have an Instagram account, and have traveled in the past 12 months are qualified for the study.

Given that, this work covered only a certain scope. Firstly, the study focuses on audience using Instagram and answer the survey based on their experience as reference. It is limited to understanding the differences between social media platforms. Secondly, using non-probably sampling, there is a certain level of generalisation that needs to be addressed. Thirdly, the study focuses on the intention to travel to general destination, not specifying the types of destination. Nevertheless, recommendations for future research can be drawn from the study.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.0. Introduction

This chapter discussed literatures pertaining influencer marketing and the new form of endorser which is AI influencer. Within that, the chapter provided details of how AI influencers work, its benefits for brands and marketers, and the anthropomorphising. Together with that, existing theories such as source credibility and parasocial interaction used to evaluate endorser's persuasiveness were also discussed. Diagnosing the previous studies and elements surrounding AI, endorsement marketing, and behavioural intentions, hypotheses were formed, and conceptual model was developed.

### 2.1. Influencer Marketing

Marketers are using celebrities and influencers in their endorsement strategies to promote their products and brands aiming to reach a larger scale of audience (Mrad *et al.*, 2024). With the advancement of social media platform and its user-generated features, everyday individuals can now gain popularity and followers by creating contents related to their interest or area of expertise. These individuals later become the key opinion leaders who have the influencers on their followers and also known as social media influencers. Influencers leverage social media platforms to communicate and build connection with followers who later perceive the connection as more authentic, relatable, credible and trustworthy than celebrity endorsers (Arsenyana and Mirowska, 2021). They have become the key opinion leaders and have significant influence in their followers. Social media influencers create their own contents on social media to gain cultural capital, fame and number of followers and ultimately shape their opinions and behaviours (Arsenyana and Mirowska, 2021).

These influencers build their own distinctive personal branding and identity that are appealing to their target audience. They are also perceived to be more trustworthy and persuasive than celebrity endorsers, thanks to the close in interaction with the followers (Belanche *et al.*, 2021). However, influencers are also being criticised for excessive demands, risk of occasional indiscretions, and controversy around

authenticity regarding staged photos and paid content (Arsenyana and Mirowska, 2021). Nevertheless, social media influencers often have the potential for marketers and brands; thus, influencer marketing has become one of the strategic communication tools used by brands and marketers (Lou *et al.*, 2023). Consumer's skepticism on celebrity endorsement and the surge of social media persons has altered marketing landscape and marketing strategies. Social media influencers were observed to be an important persuasive source of information that can affect consumer's decision making (Koay *et al.*, 2022).

## 2.2. AI Influencer

In the realm of endorsement, any type of endorsers – be it celebrity endorsers, human or virtual influencers – possess social capital which could influence consumer's attitude and purchase intention. As AI influencers have similar influence on consumers, there are possibilities that AI influencers positively affect the endorsed brands like other types of endorsers (Thomas and Fowler, 2021). Virtual endorsers differ from the traditional animated endorser for their exposures in a campaign and interaction. While traditional animated endorsers and celebrities gained popularity through one-time advertising and campaign, virtual influencers garner their followers through storytelling and engagement with their followers, which accumulates over time (Dabiran *et al.*, 2024)

AI is defined as the broader sense of the use of computer with software and algorithms to act and perform human's tasks (Thomas Fowler, 2021). According to Kietzmann *et al.* (2018), AI influencers are created using five AI building blocks in conjunctively to optimise its image, content, and interactions that resonate with audiences. Given that, AI will shift the the general practices from two ends. One end is from how brands utilise AI in their marketing strategies and how consumer behaviours are influenced by AI. In simply put, AI will change how brands are building their marketing strategies and how consumers behave.

AI influencers are the computer-generated characters with humanlike behaviours, powered by AI technology and controlled by individual brands or agencies (Hofeditz *et al.*, 2022). Thus, marketers create AI infleuncers with the purpose of commercially promoting brands and products, assigning a specific identity and

character to the AI influencers based on the contents they generate (Moustakas *et al.*, 2020). From that, AI influencers enable brands to establish one-on-one communication with their target audience, maintain consistent brand voice, save cost, gain complete control on contents, ensure consistency and reliability for promotion and marketing strategies (Feng *et al.*, 2024; Groeppel-Klein and Muller, 2023; Appel *et al.*, 2020; Kietzmann *et al.*, 2018).

According to Choudhry *et al.* (2022), there are 3 types of virtual influencers which are mimic-real human, animated human, and non-human. Mimic-real human refers to those characters that are visually identical human in terms of skin, body shape, and features. Animated human is the characters with the likeness of human but in the form of cartoon or anime. Non-human virtual influencers are those animal animated characters. AI influencers, especially the mimic-real human, have been gaining traction and attention from marketers and brands thanks to its versatility to adopt to brand/company's marketing objectives, providing flexibility, benefits, and novelty (Feng *et al.*, 2024). These AI influencers are similar to human influencers as they have their own public persona, lifestyles, and narrative about their stories, which allows interaction and attracts followers through the blend of visual, sense of mystery, and storytelling on digital space (Feng *et al.*, 2024; Arsenyana and Mirowska, 2021)

AI influencers have the ability to provide meaningful benefits for endorsed brands. Drawing from associative network model of memory and Keller's brand association theory, Thomas and Fowler (2021) suggested that positive brand perception is a result of positive endorsement. That is when the AI influencers are positively perceived by the audience, the endorsed brands are perceived positively. Liu (2019) also echoed the effectiveness of AI influencers in terms of brand virality. Additionally, Kong and Fang (2024) in their studies on effectiveness of virtual endorsers in the context of sustainability added that virtual endorsers give brands the advantage of awareness, large scale reach, and consumer engagement.

In addition to brand association and brand awareness, AI influencers have the advantage of transcending physical changes such as aging. This has been elucidated by Feng *et al.*, (2024) noting that influencers are created using algorithms which can customize the looks, appearance and styles suitable for

products and brands and cater to their audience preference. Simply put, since it is powered by technology, body constraints and physical features are removed from AI figure, meaning AI influencers do not gain weight nor age and are able to tailor their responses and how they are presented based on the interest of the target audience.

Although AI influencers have proven benefits for brands and markets, it is worth noting that there is a paradox in their effectiveness. Extrants of research on AI influencers vis-à-vis human influencers concluded that authenticity matters for both AI and human influencers Choudhry *et al.* (2022), and Arsenyana and Mirowska (2021) highlighted the matter of authenticity and transparency in AI influencers when it comes to commercial content. The researchers also reported that followers' trust increases when the content is non-commercial; on the contrary, the involvement of commercial content negatively affects trust in the AI influencers. They are being criticised for excessive demands, risk of occasional indiscretions, and controversy around authenticity regarding stage photo and paid content (Arsenyana and Mirowska, 2021). Thomas and Fowler (2021) also added that regardless of the endorser types, human or AI endorsers, purchase intention and attitude are affected when the endorsers commit transgression, leaving negative impact on the brands. Nevertheless, Thomas and Fowler (2021) confirmed AI influencers to have equal positive impact on purchase intention and attitude when transgressions were not presented.

AI influencers come in different forms, yet they are all anthropomorphised. AI influencers possess duality in nature – one as a social media persona, who has the personality and characteristics like human, and the other is the computer-generated figures. Combining these two, AI influencers are indistinguishable from human owing to anthropomorphisation such as skin tone, nationality, age, facial detail, skin texture, and interaction using first-person perspective and expression of emotion on their social post (Feng *et al.*, 2024). As such, virtual social media persons exhibit humanlike characteristics, and the image are hyperreal, which blurs the line between real and unreal (Mrad *et al.*, 2024). Because of the novelty of the AI influencers, their everyday performance and humanlike emotion expression fascinate the followers, blurring the line between virtual and human

dimension Choudhry *et al.* (2022). In this sense, anthropomorphism plays a significant role for AI influencers in blending the virtuality and reality.

### 2.3. Anthropomorphism

Anthropomorphism has always been prominent in the study of virtual influencers in various disciplines and industries including advertising, retail, and tourism industries (Wang, 2025; El Hedhli *et al.*, 2023) due to its importance when studying the interaction between non-human objects and human. It is one of the critical elements in understanding the relations between AI influencers and consumers' intentions. The foundational reason for the significance of anthropomorphism in virtual figures is elucidated by behavioural science. Studies on psychology in relation to interaction by Ajzen (1974) Byrne (1997) and Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954) as cited in Ahn *et al.* (2021) emphasises the important role of 'similarity' in human interaction. An individual is attracted to and influenced by others who portray similarities in terms of personalities, cognitive functions, and appearance. Drawing from that, when AI are more similar to humans, the interactions are more positive, and evaluation on AI agents are higher. This is evident in previous studies by You and Robert Jr (2018) and Ahn *et al.* (2021). It is also backed up by Feng *et al.* (2024) and Whang and Im (2021) suggesting that humans are more receptive to those having similar characteristics or traits regardless of whether they are human or nonhuman. Thus, it lends support to the conclusion that the higher anthropomorphism, the higher perceived similarity.

Given that, there are two aspects of similarity that an AI figure possesses through anthropomorphism. Those includes appearance and social functioning (Feng *et al.*, 2024). From social functioning aspects, prior studies unveiled that anthropomorphism has an influence on willingness to follow AI Influencer's recommendation through the mediating role of perceived warmth and competence. Anthropomorphised AI influencers are able to express warmth and competence, addressing human needs for social connection through friendliness, helpfulness, trustworthiness and knowledge of the environment. That refers to the need for them to gain insights and learn from the environment (El Hedhli *et al.*, 2023). Mrad *et al.* (2024) postulated that anthropomorphism can lower consumer resistance toward AI agents, enhance interaction, trust, and emotional connections.

Humanlikeness of a AI endorser was investigated to have an influence on purchase intention through the partial mediating role of consumer engagement (Jayasingh, 2025). Anthropomorphism attracts consumer's attentions, enhances interactions and foster emotional bond between audience and the influencers (Pan *et al.*, 2024; Dabiran *et al.*, 2024).

From appearance aspect, Arsenyan and Mirowska (2021) identified different levels of anthropomorphism among AI influencers. For instance, humanlike AI influencers having lifelike and realistic in terms of looks and appearance are more prone to anthropomorphism. Although cartoon-like virtual influencers and animated virtual influencers are anthropomorphised at a certain level, they are physically disproportionated. In the realm of humanlike AI influencers, AI developers like Brud have infused human characteristics such as name, gender, age, nationality, personality and friendship to the AI characters (Thomas and Fowler, 2021).

Notwithstanding, it is worth noting that another strand of literature warned about uncanny valley effects due to excessive anthropomorphism. While AI influencers are able to gather positive reactions, it can also get a lot of negative reactions due to the uncanny valley that may occurs. The theory dictates that when the AI influencers are lifelike beyond a certain point and when the acceptance rate of the features is getting higher, the consumers eventually find it creepy (Feng *et al.*, 2024). Simply put, when AI influencers are completely autonomous and become too humanlike, the audience feel unease (Schmitt, 2020; Arsenyan and Mirowska, 2021).

Neveetheless, Mrad *et al.* (2024) argued that humanlike characteristics such as appearance, genders, ethnicity, attractiveness, age lifestyle, personality trait, and pleasant voice are the important aspects in follower's perceptions and interaction with AI influencers. In short, physical attractiveness of virtual influencer plays an important role in anthropomorphism, especially among younger generation (Mrad *et al.*, 2024; Ahn *et al.*, 2022).

Given the nature of AI, anthropomorphism alone does not suffice persuasion power of a virtual endorser, in this case, AI influencer. Previous studies expounded the importance of anthropomorphism in relation to the role of trustworthiness,

expertise, authenticity when AI influencer is used (Mrad *et al.*, 2024; Feng *et al.*, 2024; Ahn *et al.*, 2022). Thereby, credibility of the source needs to be studied.

## 2.4. Source Credibility

According to Hovland *et al.* (1953) cited in Han and Chen (2020), source credibility theory denotes people's tendency to believe in the information shared when the source shows reliable presentation of themselves. Alboqami (2023) suggested that consumer's trust on the information they received from social media is dependent on the credibility of the information and verifiable facts. Hovland *et al.* (1953) cited in Gerlich (2023) suggested the credibility of the source of information has a great significance on consumer purchase decisions; whilst the effectiveness of a marketing campaign depends on the persuasiveness of the endorsers. In other words, consumers are more likely to trust and be convinced by the credible source of information, suggesting positive association between message effectiveness and endorsers credibility. Source credibility model by Ohanian (1990) cited in Ong *et al.* (2024) evaluated on the attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness. All of which have been proven to be the key antecedents predicting the perception of audiences on social media influencers.

### 2.4.1. Source Attractiveness

The attractiveness dimension referring to the physical appearance of the influencer was investigated in previous literature to have an influence on audience's behavioural intention, whereby the intention increases when the sender of the message is perceived to be attractive. (Wahba *et al.*, 2025; AlFarraj *et al.*, 2021; Koay *et al.*, 2021). Within that, mediating role between dimensions in source credibility and visit intention was also detected. It can be explained through upward assimilative emotions which was found to be an important mediator facilitating the relationship between attractiveness and travel intention, suggesting that perceived attractiveness could influence the intention to travel by evoking positive emotional response (Wahba *et al.*, 2025).

#### 2.4.2. Source Expertise

Expertise refers to the influencer's sufficient knowledge and capability to provide reliable information about the brands or the subject they are endorsing. Expertise boosts endorser's persuasiveness and enhances endorser's competence in delivering useful information, knowledge and skills (Gerlich, 2023). Followers use content posted by the influencers to form and process information, establishing the foundation of their decision making about a destination (Arora and Lata, 2020). Gerlich (2023) found that expertise, reliability, and trust play a significant role in persuading consumers and enhancing their preferences, opinions and intentions. The study also suggested that consumers have high level of trust and believe in an AI influencer to be an expert in their respective area. Nonetheless, researchers warned that AI endorsers might not be perceived to have real expertise in the area they are endorsing due to the fact that the quality of the AI endorsers can be fabricated by brands (Gerlich, 2023). Such skepticism brought the light to the role of trustworthiness toward the endorsers.

#### 2.4.3. Source Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in source credibility model encompasses honesty, sincerity and truthfulness (Lou and Yuan, 2019). Previous studies regard trustworthiness as a significant factor in measuring engagement on influencer's content, which ultimately influences visit intention (Arora and Lata, 2020). Gerlich (2023) suggested that trustworthiness is formed by the confidence and trust the audience holds upon the endorser; meanwhile, confidence is an important factor in establishing trust between the communicator and the receiver. The findings gave a mixed signal in terms of identifying the crucial determiners in consumer behavioural intention. Noticeably, Wahba *et al.* (2025) alerted that not every dimension of source credibility model shows the same level of impact on visit intention; for instance, attractiveness has less direct significant effects on the visit intention, which is contradictory to previous studies. Trustworthiness and expertise were investigated to have a strong relationship with visit intention, suggesting that in the context of tourism, only these two dimensions should be prioritized to garner meaningful connection and building trust (Wahba *et al.*, 2025). The rejection of involving the dimension of expertise was aligned with other authors such as Caraka *et al.* (2022) and Raafat *et al.* (2023). However, Hernández-Méndez *et*

*al.* (2024) suggested otherwise. Trustworthiness and attractiveness were found to hold high importance in influencing audience intention. Meanwhile, Choudhry *et al.* (2022) addressed a challenge with virtual influencers in term of their authenticity when endorsing tangible products due their lack of physical touch and inability to physically test the products. Dhun and Dangi (2023) topped the skepticism about branded contents posted by influencers Thus, their trustworthiness, to an extent, is scrutinised.

Nonetheless, examining the three dimensions as one framework, consumers tend to believe influencers who have portrayed a certain level of credibility. The theory of source credibility is an established framework, and it is still a significant persuasion framework to predict consumers attitude via influencers. Extant studies in marketing have confirmed the effectiveness and application of the theory. Such studies reiterated the positive relationship between perceived source credibility of social media influencers and the audience's attitudes and behavioural intentions. Han and Chen (2020) and Oozdemir and Pirtini (2024) added theoretical evidence to the theory of source credibility in tourism context and influencer marketing, especially Instagram influencers, that consumers perception on the source credibility depends on the positive and negative news about source.

Meng *et al.* (2025) and Kong and Fang (2024) found that in the context virtual endorsers, source credibility play a prominent role in affecting audience's visit intention to a cultural destination and consumer's attitude towards and a product, and specially the attribute of perceived attractiveness has a huge impact on product attitude. Jayasingh *et al.* (2025) and Hernández-Méndez *et al.* (2024) theoretically contribute to source credibility theory, confirming the effectiveness of virtual influencers through source credibility model. The studies indicate the three dimensions of source credibility model have significant effect on the likelihood to visit a certain. The effectiveness is no exception for virtual endorsers, although human influencer was shown to be more effective than virtual endorsers.

## 2.5. Parasocial Interaction

Several studies have identified the moderating role of parasocial interaction on influencer's persuasion power, and it has the halo effect on influencer source

credibility (Liu *et al.*, 2023; Shan *et al.*, 2020). Several authors in previous literatures also have found the relationships between the endorser's credibility and the interaction they have with followers. For instance, Gerlich (2024) found that all dimension of source credibility model and enhance consumers preference and opinion, shading the light to better engagement. This is supported by Jayasingh *et al.* (2025) stating that the attractiveness of AI endorsers has improve customer engagement and enhances the relationship between parasocial interaction and travel intention.

Parasocial interaction is one of the important factors that influence brand-consumers relationship and consumer's intention. Parasocial interaction highlights the psychological connections between the influencers and the audience. It is the emotional bond formed by audience towards the influencers. The close bond psychologically makes audience regard the influencers as a friend or their peers (Leite and Baptista, 2022). Thus, it becomes an important determinant in evaluating consumers' purchase intentions (Lu *et al.*, 2023). Extant study focusing on social media influencers also contributes to the theoretical framework of parasocial interaction theory (Ong *et al.*, 2024; Dewantara *et al.*, 2023; Shen *et al.*, 2022; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). This implies that parasocial interaction theory, although was around and mostly used to evaluate the endorsers in traditional forms, is applicable for evaluation of new form of endorsers. On social media, users are able to form the connection with influencers or vloggers through subscribing or interacting with the influencer's accounts or channels. Practically, on social media, the influencers can interact with their followers through replying to comments, engage in the discussion, responding to requests, livestream for engagement, etc. Due to number of followers, it is not possible for influencers to establish bidirectional or in-depth relationship with every follower. In this regards, 'real' friendship is still illusionary (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020).

Parasocial interaction is explained as one-sided interactions, engagement and attention between audience and social media person. It is short-term which occurs during the media exposures only. In this sense, audience forms unilateral interaction and feeling that they are being connected to and addressed by media person (Lu *et al.*, 2023). Although the influencers respond to the comment and

engage in the conversation, the influencers do not form any kind of bond personally with the audience.

Nevertheless, the audience engages and interacts on the content posted by the influencers, creating an emotional connection and forming a certain level of closeness and friendship (Yu *et al.*, 2025). Parasocial interaction between the influencers and their audience builds trust and minimises uncertainty towards endorsed products which resulted from the quality of the content (Leite and Baptista, 2022). Parasocial interaction later stimulates parasocial relationship depending on the frequency of exposure and interactions. Consumers rely on the advice recommendation of the influencers with whom are perceived to have higher parasocial relationship.

In tourism industry, parasocial interaction was found to have positive impact on travel intention and attitude, especially among young generation (Bi *et al.*, 2021; Ong *et al.*, 2024). Stronger impact of parasocial interaction on purchase intention were detected with Generation Z consumers. However, such relationship was found to be more like an addiction to content than a friend relationship. This is not the case for the two older generations (Bi *et al.*, 2021).

In the virtual endorsement arena, Hernández-Méndez *et al.* (2024) contributed that parasocial interaction between virtual endorsers and their followers can enhance the intention to visit which is in parallel with findings by Jayasingh *et al.* (2025) emphasising consumer engagement and purchase intention. Moreover, there is no significant difference in terms of parasocial response between human and AI influencer, and the parasocial relationship between AI influencer and the audience might attribute from the novel effect in AI influencer (Stein *et al.*, 2022).

## 2.6. Hypothesis Development

Anthropomorphism refers to the perception of consumers on AI influence to have humanlike persona (Feng *et al.*, 2024). Psychologically, humans are more receptive and lower interaction barriers to objects with which they are familiar (Feng *et al.*, 2024; Ahn *et al.*, 2021). In other words, the similar the characteristics of the objects, the lower the interaction barriers. In this sense, the AI influencers

which were considered as robot by nature need to be humanised in terms of appearance, personality traits and interaction to blend in and establish a close connection with the audience. Run by algorithm, AI influencers' physical appearance can be customised to be attractive to gain social capital and increase persuasion power, lowering the audience resistance (Mrad *et al.*, 2024). Having social capital and social functioning like human, AI influencers can influence the audience behavioural intention (Feng *et al.*, 2024). Anthropomorphism was shown to improve AI influencer's social presence, which consequently enhances consumer evaluation and influences consumer acceptance as an endorser (Feng *et al.*, 2024). El Hedhli *et al.* (2023) agreed that anthropomorphism influences consumer willingness to follow and recommend a product or brand with the mediation of perceived warmth. Thus, the first hypothesis is formed.

*H1. Anthropomorphism of an AI influencer has a significant effect on visit intentions.*

When receiving the information on social media, audience assesses the credibility of the source which include physical attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness portrayed by the informant. The judgment informs the decision-making process and influences the intention. People are more inclined to information that is shared by a source perceived to be reliable and trusted. Social media influencers earn their fame and trust by portraying their knowledge and expertise on a certain area (Dhun and Dangi, 2023). Thus, influencer's credibility has a significant role in persuading consumers and enhancing their preference, opinion and intention. In the context of destination marketing, the credibility of a celebrity has shown to have the effect the intention formation, which consequently influences the purchase intention and visit intention (Hernández-Méndez *et al.*, 2024; Sucisanjiwani and Yudhistira, 2023; Lili *et al.*, 2022; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). Moreover, celebrity credibility has an influence on the consumer attitude; Dhun and Dangi, 2023; Lili *et al.*, 2022). Thus, combining the empirical findings of credibility's role in visit intention and the context of AI influencers, the second hypothesis is established.

*H2. The source credibility of an AI influencer has a significant effect on visit intentions.*

Parasocial interaction concerns emotional connection formed by interaction between the audience and the influencers. Such bond gives the audience a sense of friendship. In the studies of influencer marketing, parasocial interaction was found to foster the connection of audience toward the endorses, build trust, and shape consumer purchase intentions (Yu *et al.*, 2024). Audience interaction with the influencers contents multiple times forms a bond with the influencers, formulates trust, and establishes a close connection. The interaction consequently makes the audience more inclined to accept the information shared by the influencers, which in turn influences their purchase intention. For this extent, in destination marketing, parasocial interaction plays a significant role in influencing travel intention. Hence, the third hypothesis is formed.

*H3. Parasocial interaction with an AI influencer has a significant effect on visit intentions.*

## 2.7. Conceptual Model

The aforementioned strand of literatures and hypotheses development lend support for the current study to develop a research model which is displayed in figure 1.

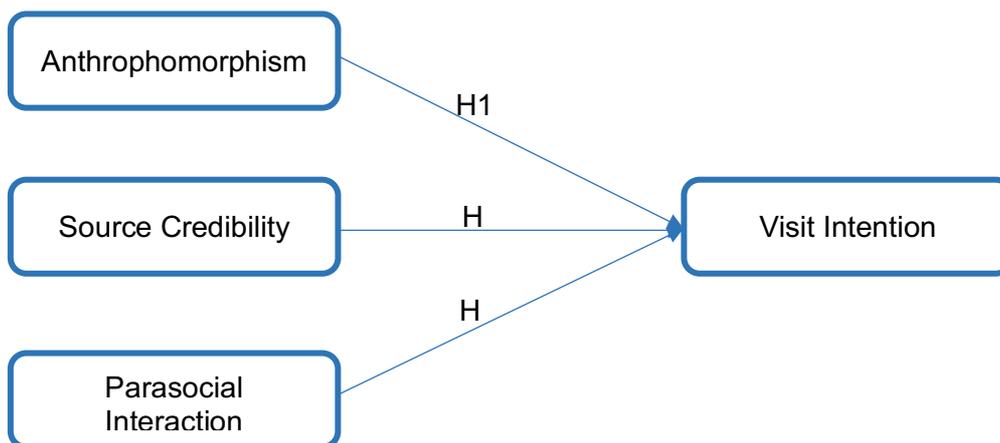


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

## Chapter 3: Research Methodology

### 3.0. Introduction

Research is defined as a systematic way undertaken to find answers to questions or to find solutions for problems with a clear purpose (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Similarly, Wilson (2010) explained that research is a process of data collection and recording, data analysis and interpretation in systematic and objective manners to find answers to problems. Song (2021) put together that research is a process of encapsulating existing knowledge, identifying the gaps, and objectifying the present approach to contribute to the knowledge in a chosen field of study. The first actions formed literature review, and the latter centers around methodology.

Therefore, this chapter outlines the methodological approach such as research philosophy, research approach, methods, strategy, data collection and analysis suitable for answering research question and objectives aiming investigate the factors influencing audience's visit intention when AI influencers are used as destination endorsers. The chapter also discussed the research limitation to set out expectation of the findings and to outline the constraints within the study. Together with that, ethical consideration was also addressed.

### 3.1. Research Philosophy

Saunders *et al.* (2019) suggested that it is important that the researchers are aware of their research positions and worldview on the investigation, which later paves the ways for the entire research project. In this sense, Saunders *et al.* (2019) developed "Research Onion" (Figure 2) explaining each layer of research methodology and choices of methods to be adopted for research projects.

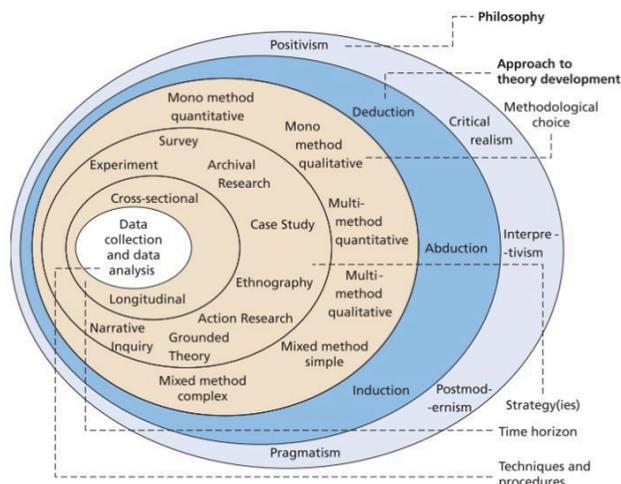


Figure 2: The Research Onion (Saunders *et al.*, 2019, p.130)

The first layer of the onion to peel off is the “research philosophy”. Research philosophy is the assumption about knowledge. The philosophical assumption allows the researchers to reflect the elements of research that sits well together. Before diving into research philosophy Saunders *et al.* (2019) suggested it is crucial that researchers reflect their own assumptions and beliefs, underpinning each philosophy. These assumptions are divided into three primary category which are ontology, epistemology and axiology (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Walliman, 2011; Wilson 2010).

Researchers upholding ontological assumption assumes the existence of reality, and they need to explore them through gathering evidence from different perspectives and experiences by using qualitative method (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Epistemology, on the other hand, centers around the nature of knowledge, questioning how knowledge is comprehended, the acceptability, reliability and validity of knowledge, and how it can be communicated (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Burrell and Morgan, 2016; Walliman, 2011). That knowledge includes numerical data, visual data, facts and opinions. Such diversity of knowledge allows researchers to adopt multiple methods (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Axiology is concerned with the value and ethics of the researcher (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Wilson, 2010). That is, a researcher allows their values to play a significant role in the research process (Wilson, 2010).

Once reflecting on which assumption being held, a researcher can decide the philosophy, guiding through the research process. Simply put, the assumption which a researcher has can be compared to the glasses they are putting on while the research philosophy is the window the researcher decides to look at. According to Saunders *et al.* (2019), there are five common philosophies such as positivism, interpretivism, critical realism, postmodernism, and pragmatism.

Positivism is associated with the natural science, adopting scientific investigation on observable social reality (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Walliman, 2011). From positivist point of view, knowledge is accepted as true through measurement, experiment or comparative analysis (Walliman, 2011). Agreed by Saunders *et al.* (2019), epistemological positivism observes and measures social phenomena and accepts it as true when it is supported by credible and valid data. Additionally, researchers adopting positivist philosophical stance are more likely to form hypothetical claims deriving from existing theories to be tested and confirmed (Saunders *et al.*, 2019) which is based on deductive approach starting theoretical framework to methodological observation (Wilson, 2010). In this light, a researcher aims to produce law-like generalisation, explaining a phenomenon or changes through the universal rules from their findings (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Wilson, 2010). That said, the positivist researcher takes on structured methodology with quantifiable measurements, allowing replication of the research. Thus, it paves the way for quantitative methods and statistical analysis.

Interpretivism argued that human beings and social phenomenon cannot be studied through fixed scientific approach, for they center around the creation of meanings through values, perception and personal experience (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Walliman, 2011). Interpretivism emphasises the importance of rich insights as result of differences within people and their cultural settings, which in turn, lends itself to qualitative methods with subjective view.

On the other hand, critical realism is described by Walliman (2011) as the reconciliatory approach to knowledge and reality, combining measurable observation and interpretation of social phenomenon. That means knowledge exists independently but is understood by explaining the underlying causes and mechanisms performed by the involvement of social actors (Saunders *et*

*al.*, 2019). Thus, critical realist research uses in-depth historical analysis and its pattern of changes to explain the reality.

Postmodernism challenges the role of language, meaning, knowledge, power relation and the truth (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Walliman, 2011). From postmodernist philosophy, “there is no universal knowledge or truth” (Walliman, 2011, p. 23) and what has been claimed to be “true” and “right” is only labelled by the collective usually by those in positions of power, leaving the marginalized unheard (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). From that, postmodernist researchers employ in-depth investigation and acknowledge their power relation and the respondents (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

Meanwhile, pragmatism emphasises the impact and contribution to practical solutions rather than questioning reality or seeking to understand or measure knowledge (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Wilson, 2010). Pragmatic researchers place an importance on “what” and “how” of the research problem (Wilson, 2010).

Examining the five research philosophies, this research adopts positivism philosophy underpinned by epistemological assumption for three reasons. Firstly, this research seeks to validate the results from the prior studies from (Feng *et al.*, 2024; Ahn *et al.*, 2022) in the context of AI influencers incorporating in tourism context (Ong *et al.*, 2024), which requires replication of the previous study designs. Moreover, from the strand of literature review, existing theories such as source credibility and parasocial interaction are again being studied in a scientific manner, following the rigorous approach which interpretivism and postmodernism cannot deliver.

Secondly, per mentioned in Chapter 1, the research question is to find out the effects of each independent variables i.g. anthropomorphism, source credibility, and parasocial interaction on the dependent variable i.g. visit intention. That is measuring the reality using rigorous approach in the pursuit of making generalization of the relationships between the variable rather than diving into finding insights behind the causes or the reason why audience makes their decision or interpreting the diverging from the philosophical stance of interpretivism and critical realism. In addition, this nature of this research deviates from

postmodernist stance, for it does not seek to challenge the language used nor the power relation between AI influencers, brands, and customers. Rather, the research focuses on its interaction and correlation between each variable.

This shades the light to the third reason whereby the hypotheses were formed relying on the evidence from the previous theories and being tested again in order to add clarity and scientifically confirm or reject the previous claims (Kim and Wang, 2024; Pan *et al.*, 2024; Ong *et al.*, 2024). Based on the three characteristics, this study falls into the positivism philosophy, which, thereafter, directs the research approach, methods, strategy and how the data was collected and interpreted.

### 3.2. Research Approach

In research studies, it is inevitable for researchers to come across theories whether it is explicitly discussed upfront or at the findings and discussion (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, it is important for researchers to identify their reasoning to connect theories to the studies. Following identifying the research philosophy, the second layer of the onion (Figure 2) is the research approach which is guided by the reasoning that the researcher adopts (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). The approaches to reasoning to be adopted are divided into inductive approach, deductive approach, and alternatively abductive approach (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Wilson, 2010). The first two are commonly discussed and utilized in research studies. Inductive approach concerns theory development or theory contribution, starting from observation to building new theories (Wilson, 2010). With inductive approach, the purpose of the research is to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of the problems or observations, and the interpretation is influenced by the context of where the events are taking place.

Conversely, deductive reasoning concerns the application of theory. The approach takes logical path which hypotheses are derived from theories. In essence, in deductive approach, researchers formulate preposition statements from existing theories, test them through quantitative data collection, and accept or falsify the prior preposition statements (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Walliman, 2011). Deductive approach has been considered to be rigorous and methodically structured,

allowing rooms for anticipation and relationship identification between variables (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Wilson, 2010). As such, in deductive approach, facts can be measured through concept operationalisation and replicated with evidence of reliability. Moreover, the approach emphasises reduction of concepts, suggesting the general concepts to be broken down into specific ones. Last but not least, deductive approach embraces generalization of the findings which requires large data for sufficing the analysis (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

In particular, this research continues with deductive approach underpinned by epistemological positivist philosophy, for the approach allows the researcher to test the existing theories of anthropomorphism, source of credibility, and parasocial interaction. In line with deductive approach characteristic, the theories are operationalised into specific context. For instance, the theories of source credibility and parasocial interaction have been used to evaluate endorsers including celebrities' and influencers' effectiveness in marketing and advertising. This study, in particular, utilised these theories in the context of human mimic AI influencers. Meanwhile, anthropomorphism has been used in the context of virtual influencers in general, and this study directs the focus to tourism marketing. On top of that, from existing studies, the hypotheses were postulated and tested to determine the relationship between variables and to validate the prior literatures. Ultimately, the relationships between anthropomorphism, source of credibility, parasocial interaction, and audience visit intentions will be tested whether to confirm or reject existing theories. Then, the relationships between the variables will be generalised across the context of virtual influencers in tourism marketing.

### 3.3. Research Methods

Research philosophy and research approach provide a direction for research design entailing the methods, strategy, data collection and analysis, and data interpretation (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Wilson, 2010). For instance, positivism and deductive reasoning are usually associated with quantitative methods, and mixed methods are used within pragmatism (Wilson, 2010).

Quantitative method is derived from rationalism, following a highly structured and predetermined procedure with the aim of quantifying and making generalisation of

the findings in a valid and reliable manner (Kumar, 2014). Saunders *et al.*, (2019) mentioned one of the characteristics of quantitative method as aiming to determine relationship between variables, which aligned with Wilson (2010) asserting that quantitative method answers the questions of why and look at the relationship, association, or cause and effect among variables or group.

On the other hand, qualitative method embedded interpretivism and empiricism philosophy which depends on meanings, flexibility, and unstructured procedure for the findings. Such nature allows qualitative research to explore the diversity of opinions and rich insights for theory development (Kumar, 2014; Wilson, 2010). Mixed methods, interestingly, utilise both quantitative and qualitative methods to fill in the research gap (Kumar, 2014).

Particularly, this research employs quantitative methods for research design for two reasons. Firstly, the research questions of this study are to investigate the relationships between anthropomorphism, source credibility, parasocial interaction, and audience's visit intention. Although qualitative method would be able to provide insights, explanation, and perspectives of the audience on AI influencers in term of their credibility and interaction, it is limited to informing the correlations, the influence, and relationships among the variables. Secondly, this research stands on positivism and adopts deductive approach which are commonly linked with quantitative methods (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). On the basis of the characteristics of quantitative method coupled with the nature of the research, quantitative method is suitable to employ in the study (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; McGregor, 2018; Creswell, 2012).

#### 3.4. Research Strategy

Having identified research method, it is more obvious for the research to choose appropriate research strategies since other strategies irrelevant to quantitative research have been cast out. This work is quantitative in nature using deductive approach; thus, a survey will be utilised to understand the audience's travel intention when an AI influence is used as a destination endorser.

Survey strategy using questionnaire as a research instrument is widely used in quantitative research as it allows researchers to economically gather standardised data from a large sample, give answers to the questions of 'what', 'where', 'who', describe and explain the phenomenon (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Although experiment strategy is also associated with quantitative method, the strategy assists the research aiming at testing causal relationships, looking at how changes made on independent variables affect dependent variables (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Creswell, 2012; Walliman, 2011). Furthermore, experiment research consists of controlled variables, interventions, and pre and post-tests (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Creswell, 2012). All of which are different and diverge from the purpose of particular research which the aim is to find out the relationships between factors such as anthropomorphism, source credibility, parasocial interaction, and audience's visit intention without having any interventions from the research. Therefore, with the use of survey as research strategy, the researcher is able to describe possible relationships between aforementioned variables (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). What is more, Adams *et al.* (2014) highlights the importance of representativeness and survey designs process (Figure 3), which involves questionnaire, pilot survey, and administering the survey; all of which will be discussed in the proceeding sections.

It is also worth noting that this work is a cross-sectional survey, collecting data at one point in time. Cross sectional survey allows the researcher to gain an overall understanding and find out the prevalence of the phenomenon at a particular time (Kumar, 2014). It enables this work to investigate the overall pictures of the factors that affect the audience's intention at the current time. Additionally, given limited timeframe to conduct the dissertation, cross-sectional survey works best, allowing the researcher to collect the data at one time off (Creswell, 2012).

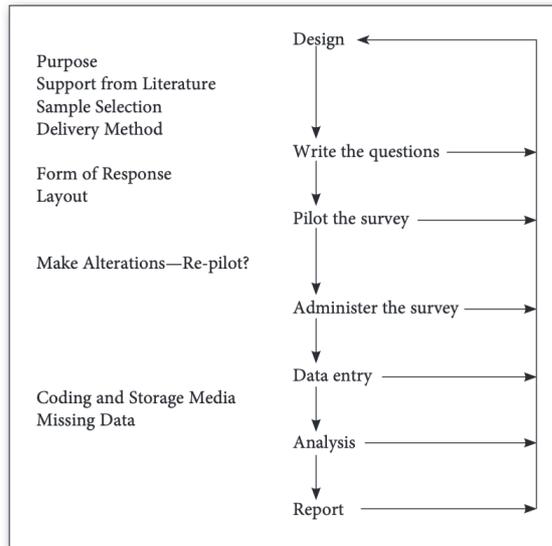


Figure 3: Survey Process (Adams *et al.*, 2014, p.119)

### 3.5. Quantitative Primary Data Collection

#### 3.5.1. Research Instrument

This research utilised a survey questionnaire as the primary tools for data collection from the target respondents. This method allows the research to acquire shallow information from a large number of people regarding their perceptions of human mimic AI influencers. The questionnaire was designed to be self-completed allowing the researcher to stay independent and distance themselves from respondents (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, it prevents the social desirability bias since the respondents are less likely to give favourable answers that enhance their self-representation in front researchers (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Blome and Augustin, 2015). The questionnaire was built using Google Form which enables the respondents to access the questionnaires through URL on their devices. With such execution, the researcher is able to reach to a large number of sample and geographically dispersed (Saunders *et al.*, 2019, p. 507).

To conform to research ethics, the questionnaire begins with an introduction to the study, the purpose of the study, the researcher's contact information, confidentiality agreement between the participants and the researcher, legal age confirmation, and consent from the respondents to voluntarily participate in the study. The questionnaire is divided into three main sections: screening section, main construct

measurement, and demographic information (Appendix 1). The first section consists of three screening questions to determine respondent eligibility (Lu *et al.*, 2023). The questions include the respondent's travel history in the past 12 months, their Instagram account, and whether they follow any influencers. Only those who answer 'yes' all three questions are allowed to proceed to the second sections where each item of four constructs is measured, and other questions related to AI influencers and traveling are assessed.

The second section started off with a picture of a humanlike AI travel influencer (Figure 4) and human travel influencer (Figure 5), attached with questions to understand respondents' reactions and their ability to differentiate humanlike AI and real human, and their familiarity toward three different types of AI influencers. Before proceeding to the construct measurement, the participants were shown posts of three AI influencer on Instagram as a stimulus for the research (Figure 6, 7, 8).



Figure 4: Humanlike AI travel influencer



Figure 5: Human Travel Influencer

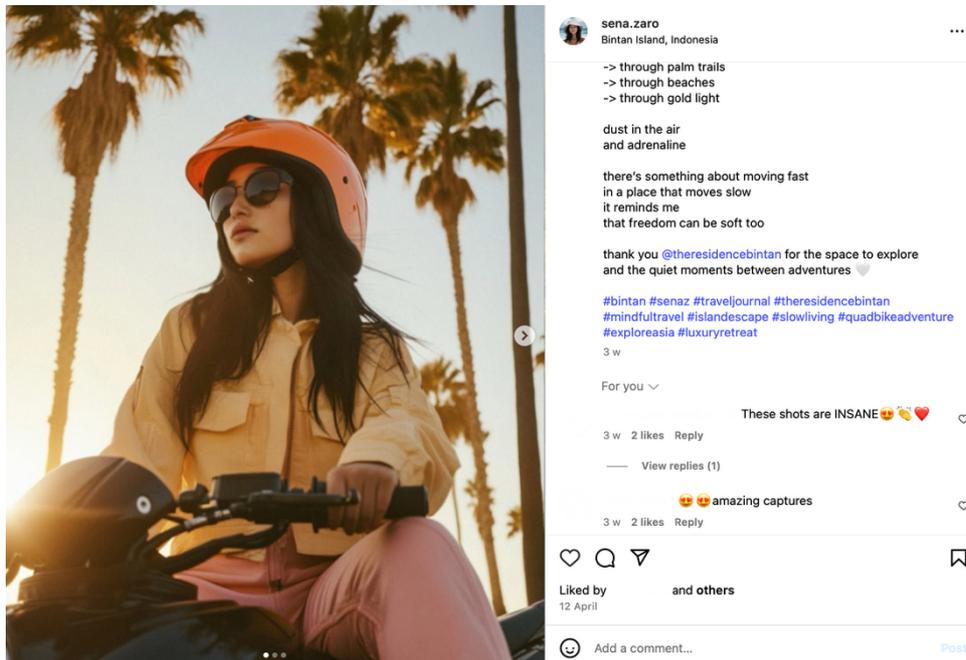


Figure 6: Stimulus 1 – Humanlike AI Influencer



Figure 7: Stimulus 2 - Humanlike AI Influencer



Figure 8: Stimulus 3 - Humanlike AI Influencer

Following the stimulus, the items of the construct of anthropomorphism were adapted from Pan *et al.* (2024), Malhotra and Ramalingam (2025), and Ahn *et al.* (2022); and source credibility, parasocial interaction, travel intention from Ong *et al.* (2024), Hernández-Méndez *et al.* (2024), and Jayasingh *et al.* (2025) were measured using seven point Likert Scale ranging from 1 being strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree (Table 1). The usage of seven-point Likert scale is based on three reasons. Firstly, it was used in the existing studies within similar context. Secondly, each construct is subjective; hence, it is important to assign the degree to the constructs, allowing the researchers to gauge and quantify the data (Mohn, 2024). Thirdly, seven-point scale is an odd number allowing the respondents to answer the question about which they feel genuinely neutral (Adams *et al.*, 2014).

The last section of the question entails the demographic information, social media behaviour, and respondents' personality and attitude in relation to traveling. It also worth noting that in accordance with GDPR, the research record only information that cannot be traced back to respondent's identity.

Table 1: Questionnaire Items

Item code	Items	Source
Anthropomorphism Construct		
ANT1	The image of this the AI influencer looks realistic based on their appearance	Pan <i>et al.</i> (2024)
ANT2	From the image, the AI influencer looks like real human based in their appearance	Feng <i>et al.</i> (2023) and Ahn <i>et al.</i> (2022)
ANT3	From the image, the AI influencer appears lifelike and not artificial based on their facial expression.	Ahn <i>et al.</i> (2022) Malhotra and Ramalingam (2025)
ANT4	From the image, the AI influencer appears natural; I do not feel fake about it	Pan <i>et al.</i> (2024) and Malhotra and Ramalingam (2025)
Source Credibility Construct		
SCT1	The AI influencer appears to be attractive.	Ong <i>et al.</i> (2024)
SCT2	The AI influencer appears to be reliable.	
SCT3	The AI influencer appears to be sincere.	

SCT4	The AI influencer appears to be knowledgeable.	
SCT6	The AI influencer appears to have common interest with me.	
Parasocial Interaction Construct		
PAR1	I'm looking forward to seeing this influencer's videos, posts and comments.	Hernández-Méndez <i>et al.</i> (2024)
PAR3	I would love to interact frequently with this influencer	
PAR4	If there is a content related to the AI influencer on any media, I would read it.	Ong <i>et al.</i> (2024)
PAR5	I can rely on information I get from the AI influencer.	
Visit Intention Construct		
INT1	When I travel, it's highly likely that I will visit the place shown by this influencer.	Ong <i>et al.</i> (2024)
INT2	I intend to visit the destination shown in the influencer campaign in the near future.	Jayasingh <i>et al.</i> (2025)
INT3	I plan to visit the destination recommended in the influencer campaign in my next trip.	Ong <i>et al.</i> (2024)
INT4	The influencer campaign makes me want to travel to the destination.	

ANT=Anthropomorphism, SCT=Source Credibility, PAR=Parasocial Interaction, INT=Visit Intention  
Only items used in final questionnaire are shown in the Table.

### 3.5.2. Pilot Test

As outlined in the survey process (Figure 2), pilot testing is an important stage prior to data collection as it helps researchers to refine the questionnaires, making it more concise and understandable (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Adams, 2014). Pilot test can be conducted on smaller scale survey with from 24 to 36 respondents as suggested by Johanson and Brooks (2010). Pilot test also gives the researcher brief assessment of the reliability and validity of the questionnaire (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). According to Leech *et al.*, (2005), Cronbach's Alpha and item-total correlation are used when testing internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire. The authors suggested that acceptable Cronbach's Alpha should range from 0.60 to 0.90 where the value less than 0.60 suggests item inconsistency for measurement and higher than 0.90 suggests items overlapping. Item-correlation should be higher than 0.30

The study underwent two rounds of pilot testing among the researcher's network in order to ensure the research's reliability and validity. There were 31 sample collected from the first round of pilot testing and 25 sample from the second round pilot testing. The first pilot test resulted in high Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.942, 0.917, 0.935, and 0.947 for the construct anthropomorphism, source credibility, parasocial relationship, and visit intention, respectively. Such results suggested elimination of some items and rewording. Meanwhile, the value of item-correlation of each item is higher than the threshold and range from 0.70 to 0.90.

Based on the result in Pilot Test 1, no items deleted could reduce Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.942 for anthropomorphism construct; thus, the items were then reworded, adding more description and emphasis to measure the construct. As a result, the value of Cronbach's Alpha improved in Pilot Test 2 (Table 2).

Table 2: Reliability Test of Anthropomorphism

	Cronbach's Alpha (Pilot Test 1) n=31	Cronbach's Alpha Test (Pilot Test 2) n=25
Anthropomorphism	0.942	0.891

Item code	Pilot Test 1		Pilot Test 2	
	Item	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted	Item	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
ANT1	The image of this the AI influencer is realistic.	0.927	The image of this the AI influencer lookss realistic based on their appearance	0.830
ANT2	From the image, the AI influencer appears to be alive.	0.923	From the image, the AI influencer looks like real human based in their appearance	0.837
ANT3	From the image, the AI influencer appears life like.	0.917	From the image, the AI influencer appears lifelike and not artificial based on their facial expression.	0.832
ANT4	From the image, the AI influencer appears natural.	0.927	From the image, the AI influencer appears natural; I do not feel fake about it	0.930

As for source credibility construct, the result from Pilot Test 1 showed the value of Cronbach's Alpha of 0.917; to improve the value, item code SCT5 was deleted in the second pilot test to bring down the score of Cronbach's Alpha; however, it did not give the intended result of Cronbach's Alpha. According to the output, item SCT 2 or SCT3 shall be further deleted in order to reduce Cronbach's Alpha (Table 3); however, these 2 items are the important antecedents in source credibility theory (Attractiveness, Expertise, and Trustworthiness) (Kong and Fang, 2024; Wahba *et al.*, 2025).

Table 3: Reliability Test of Source Credibility

	Cronbach's Alpha (Pilot Test 1) n=31	Cronbach's Alpha Test (Pilot Test 2) n=25
Source Credibility	0.917	0.924

Item code	Pilot Test 1		Pilot Test 2	
	Item	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted	Item	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
SCT1	The AI influencer appears to be attractive.	0.924	The AI influencer appears to be attractive.	0.935
SCT2	The AI influencer appears to be reliable.	0.904	The AI influencer appears to be reliable.	0.891
SCT3	The AI influencer appears to be sincere.	0.895	The AI influencer appears to be sincere.	0.891
SCT4	The AI influencer appears to be knowledgeable.	0.899	The AI influencer appears to be knowledgeable.	0.906
SCT5	The AI influencer appears to be expert.	0.889	The AI influencer appears to be expert.	Deleted
SCT6	The AI influencer appears to have common interest with me.	0.902	The AI influencer appears to have common interest with me.	0.907

The value of Cronbach's Alpha of parasocial interaction, on the other hand, was at 0.935 in Pilot Test 1; thus, item code PAR2 was deleted in the second pilot test to bring down the score of Cronbach's Alpha to 0.913 (Table 4).

Table 4: Reliability Test of Parasocial Interaction

	Cronbach's Alpha (Pilot Test 1) n=31	Cronbach's Alpha Test (Pilot Test 2) n=25
Parasocial Interaction	0.935	0.913

Item code	Pilot Test 1		Pilot Test 2	
	Item	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted	Item	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
PAR1	I'm looking forward to seeing this influencer's videos, posts and comments.	0.929	I'm looking forward to seeing this influencer's videos, posts and comments.	0.913
PAR2	I would follow and interact with this influencer on other social networks	0.906	I would follow and interact with this influencer on other social networks	Deleted
PAR3	I would love to interact frequently with this influencer	0.920	I would love to interact frequently with this influencer	0.843
PAR4	If there is a content related to the AI influencer on any media, I would read it.	0.912	If there is a content related to the AI influencer on any media, I would read it.	0.927
PAR5	I can rely on information I get from the AI influencer.	0.932	I can rely on information I get from the AI influencer.	0.860

Last but not least, visit intention construct had the value of Cronbach's Alpha of 0.947 in Pilot Test 1. As a result, item code INT2 was reworded in Pilot Test 2 to diversify the degree of intention, arriving at the value of 0.953 (Table 5).

Table 5: Reliability Test of Visit Intention

	Cronbach's Alpha (Pilot Test 1) n=31	Cronbach's Alpha Test (Pilot Test 2) n=25
Visit Intention	0.947	0.953

	Pilot Test 1		Pilot Test 2	
Item code	Item	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted	Item	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
INT1	I am very likely to visit the destination recommended in the influencer campaign.	0.931	When I travel, it's highly likely that I will visit the place shown by this influencer.	0.930
INT2	I definitely will visit the destination recommended in the influencer campaign in the near future.	0.924	I intend to visit the destination shown in the influencer campaign in the near future.	0.942
INT3	I plan to visit the destination recommended in the influencer campaign in my next trip.	0.925	I plan to visit the destination recommended in the influencer campaign in my next trip.	0.929
INT4	The influencer campaign makes me want to travel to the destination.	0.941	The influencer campaign makes me want to travel to the destination.	0.955

### 3.5.3. Sample Size, Sampling Design and Data Collection

In research, it is essential to examine who is being studied and how many respondents are sufficient for analysis. From that, research population and target population for the study need to be identified (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). In this sense, this research is associated with AI influencers who are present on social media, especially more on Instagram. Hence, the population of the study is the Instagram users. This work is limited to Instagram users who follow any influencers as the target population. Although Statista (2024) reported Millennial and Generation Z to have the higher presence on the platform, given their digital native, it is important to include older generation who is Generation X.

According to Statista (2025), Instagram has two billion monthly active users worldwide, making the research impossible to collect data from the entire population. According to Saunders *et al.* (2019), Creswell (2012), and Walliman (2011), it is practical to collect the data from a subset called sample. Sampling provides several benefits as compared to collecting data from the entire population. Sampling saves cost, time, is more efficient when there is a time constraint, and data collection process is more manageable (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Sample selection should be based on the target population, focusing on the target of research inquiry (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

Deciding on the sample size is an essential step in research. While qualitative research focuses on data saturation point, quantitative research emphasizes the importance of sample size for data analysis and making generalisation of the findings (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). As such, when deciding on the sample size, researchers look at the number of the population, the confidence level, margin of error and the effect size.

In particular, since quantitative research uses quantifying approach in nature, the study is required to have large sample size for data analysis. According to Yu *et al.* (2024), a minimum sample of 160 is needed to test the hypothesis, given an effect size of 0.15, error probability of 0.05 and a statistical power of 0.95. Based on the principle, this research aimed to collect the data from 160 respondents. As a result, the study was able to reach the sample of 210 as large sample size increases the robustness of the data and statistical power which, in turn, reduces errors and improves model reliability and precise estimation (Webster, 2025; Asiamah *et al.*, 2017).

A total of 210 samples was achieved through non-probability convenience sampling and snowball sampling. While probability sampling allows the research to have a rigorous form of research for generalization to the population, non-probability sampling is practical as an alternative under specific circumstances such as time constraints, the need for quick survey, or difficulties accessing the population (Cresswell, 2012; Walliman, 2011).

Therefore, the survey was distributed via URL to researchers' network on different social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Telegram account. On top of that, snowball sampling was employed with a total of 16 sharers on Facebook, 1 repost on LinkedIn, and forwarded Telegram messages. Moreover, a total of 1026 of master's degree students at National College of Ireland were also reached out via email for voluntary participation. Given a short timeframe for the research, platforms such as Survey Circle, an online community for research, and Prolific, a platform for respondent panel, were also used to accelerate data collection. As a result, there was a total of 231 respondents collected, but 21 respondents were screened out, leaving 210 qualified respondents for data analysis.

### 3.6. Quantitative Data Analysis

The data collected from Google Form was exported into an Excel file, cleaned and coded. Then, the coded data was imported to SPSS for analysis. As the work is quantitative, the analysis is numerical data, graphs or statistics. Therefore, frequency, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics are analysed with the help of SPSS software.

Frequency and descriptive statistics are used to describe the characteristics of the data. For instance, demographic information is presented in percentage, social media consumptions, personality traits, and familiarity toward types of AI influencers are analysed using descriptive statistics, describing the central tendency through mean score (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

More importantly, the analysis centres around quantitative approach using inferential statistics to test the hypotheses (Kremelberg, 2011). Prior to hypothesis testing, it is crucial to researcher to analyse exploratory factor analysis, internal reliability test and validity test in order to purify and observe correlations between variables and ensure internal consistency of the variables within constructs, and accuracy of sampling (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Leech *et al.*, 2005). That said, criteria such as factor loading score  $\geq 0.60$ , variance explained  $\geq 0.60$ , Eigenvalue  $> 1$ , Bartlett test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)  $> 0.50$ , Item-total

Correlation  $\geq 0.30$ , Cronbach's Alpha  $> 0.60$  were observed (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Leech *et al.*, 2005).

Validity tests such as convergent validity and discriminant validity are also assessed to ensure that the questionnaire measures the intended construct. Hence, convergent validity is measured through average variance explained (AVE)  $> 0.50$  and composite reliability (CR)  $> 0.70$  (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Meanwhile discriminant validity is measured through the value of HTMT  $< 0.85$  (Henseler *et al.*, 2015).

Last but not least, the three hypotheses are tested through multiple layers of analysis to investigate the relationships between anthropomorphism, source credibility, and parasocial interaction, and visit intentions. Namely, Chi-Square test is used to assess whether there is any relationship between the three independent variables on visit intention (Kremelberg, 2011). Furthermore, to investigate the level of influence and underlying effects of other factors, multiple regression was used with criteria to assess model fit and to determine whether the hypothesis should be supported or rejected. The criteria include  $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ ,  $t$ -value  $> |1.96|$ , and positive direct effect  $(0, +1]$  (Hair *et al.*, 2014).

### 3.7. Research Ethics

While research design, data collection and analysis are important, it is critical for researchers to consider access and ethical concerns in research projects, especially with the primary data collection. The research was designed based on deontological view, adhering to several ethical considerations and principles in accordance with the code of ethics from the National College of Ireland.

Firstly, research ethics concern the avoidance of harm. Any harm caused by the researcher to the participants was avoided at all costs. With that, no question that would trigger or cost harm to emotional well-being, mental health or physical health was asked. In the same vein, the research embraces inclusion, whereby respondents of any gender were included, and the answer choice of 'others' and 'prefer not to say' are available.

Secondly, ethical consideration regarding participation of the respondents was also taken into account. With that said, vulnerable groups including individuals under 18 years old or the elderly were not recruited for the study. Moreover, informed consent of those taking part is also addressed. In particular, the front page of the surveys stated the purpose of the study, the researcher's objectives, and the agreement to voluntarily take part in the study without being under any influence of the researcher.

Thirdly, confidentiality and anonymity of the participants are ensured. The questionnaire was built on Google Form with the settings as 'do not collect' respondent email address (Appendix 2). Thus, the email address and IP address of each response were not recorded. In addition, respondent personal information such as name, date of birth, and home address, which enables the researcher to trace back to respondent's identity, were not recorded.

Last but not least, to ensure that the research complies with data privacy GDPR and property rights, the stimuli used in the study were extracted from public source and public post for the AI influencers. The stimuli shown in Figure 3 and 4 were taken from media publications such as The Washington Post. Figure 5, 6 and 7 were taken from the posts of the influencers, yet the profiles of their commenters were blurred out.

### 3.8. Research Limitation

Designing the research in quantitative method, there is a certain limitation implied. Firstly, adopting deductive approach underpinned quantitative method, this work leaves no room for subjective interpretation and in-depth explanation for the findings. That said, this work is not able to explain the reasons for each relationship of the variables.

Secondly, adopting non-probability convenience sampling for the current work, the research had to recognition the limitation of getting the representation for a larger population. While probability sample is more suitable, providing more robust sample and allowing representation of the entire population, non-probability convenience sampling is not able to provide such representation from the findings

(Saunders *et al.*, 2019). However, it is debatable about using non-probability convenience sampling for business and management research (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Hence, there is still room for making generalization from the finding, yet it is limited to statistical ground.

Thirdly, the current study aimed to investigate humanlike AI influencers, leaving behind other types of AI influencers such as animated-human and non-human influencers. In this sense, the stimuli showed in the survey were all humanlike AI influencers; thus, the perceived anthropomorphism by the audience would be different should the other types of virtual influencers be included. Given that, the finding should be read with caution when making generalisation on other types of virtual influencers.

The last limitation worth accepting from the study concerns the exposure of the stimuli. Given the nature of cross-sectional study, the respondents were exposed to the stimuli once and in still-picture format. Therefore, there was actual interaction with the AI influencers, and their answers were solely the reference from their experience and perception on the post.

## Chapter 4: Research Findings

### 4.0. Introduction

The following chapter presents the result obtained from analysing the responses from 210 respondents. Descriptive statistics were used to describe demographic information which formed the respondent profiles, their personality traits, and travel and social media usage and behaviours, and are presented at the first part of the chapter. Then, the results of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), reliability test, convergent validity, and discriminant validity are demonstrated. Finally, the primary results from hypothesis testing using Chi Square Analysis and Multiple Regression are presented, followed by complementary analysis of underlying relationships between other variables.

### 4.1. Descriptive Statistics

#### 4.1.1. Respondent profile and Personality Trait

A total of 231 responses were collected from the online survey across the aforementioned platforms. Out of the 231, only 210 passed the screening sections and proceeded to the end of the questionnaires. Table 6 demonstrates the statistics of respondents' profile and their personality traits. Although there was not any quota set on gender, there was almost an equal split between male and female respondents who accounts for 43.3% and 55.7% respectively, and only one percent is from other gender. Moreover, 90% of them are in Generation Z and Millennial with the median age of 28 years old. In addition, the sample consists of a mixture of nationalities including African accounting for 44%, followed by Asian 36%, North American 10%, and European 9%. In terms of personality trait, only 22% of the respondents identified themselves as extroverted and 17.6% as introverted, whilst the remaining centers around neutrality, with a mean score of 4.20.

Table 6: Respondent Profile and Personality Traits

Description	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
	N=210	
<b>Introversion / Extroversion (Mean = 4.20, Std. Deviation = 1.714)</b>		
Introvert (Introvert and Somewhat introvert)	37	17.6
Extrovert (Extrovert and Somewhat extrovert)	47	22.4
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	117	55.7
Male	91	43.3
Other	2	1
<b>Age (Mean = 29 years old, Median = 29 years old)</b>		
Generation Z	115	54.8
Millennial	90	42.9
Generation X	5	2.4
<b>Qualification</b>		
High school	6	2.9
Undergraduate degree	79	37.6
Postgraduate degree	123	58.6
Certifications	1	0.5
University Diploma	1	0.5
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	36	17.1
Full-time employment	125	59.5
Part-time employment	26	12.4
Not working	7	3.3
Business owner	16	7.6
<b>Nationality</b>		
African	91	44
Asian	75	36
European	19	9
North American	22	10
South American	1	1
Central American	2	1

#### 4.1.2. Travel Behaviours and Social Media Usage

Table 7 illustrated the respondents' travel related behaviours and their social media usage. When traveling and planning, around 50% of the respondents tend to be the trip initiator and travel according to plan rather than making spontaneous visit.

This is witnessed by the mean scores of 5.38 and 5.17 respectively, showing the tendency toward a higher degree. Destinations with natural landscape and city tour or shopping were rated as the top 2 likeable types of destination. Moreover, more than two-thirds of them get information about their destinations from social media, recommendations from friends, and websites or blogs. The results also showed that, on average, the respondents spend 5 hours a day on social media. Meanwhile, when getting information on social media platforms, only 34% of them would verify the information frequently.

Table 7: Travel Behaviours and Social Media Usage

Description	Frequency	Percentage
	(N)	(%)
<b>N=210</b>		
<b>Follower / Initiator (Mean = 5.38, Std. Deviation = 1.375)</b>		
Follower (Very unlikely and extremely unlikely)	8	3.9
Initiator (Very likely and extremely likely)	112	53.3
<b>Spontaneous / Planner (Mean = 5.170, Std. Deviation = 1.611)</b>		
Spontaneous (Spontaneous and somewhat spontaneous)	19	9.0
Planner (Planner and somewhat planner)	108	51.4
<b>Favourite travel destination</b>		
Natural destination	154	73.3
City tour or shopping destination	152	72.4
Cultural destination	126	60.0
Community based destination	55	26.2
<b>Source of information</b>		
Social media influencers, vloggers, YouTubers	164	78.1
Recommendation from friends	130	61.9
Travel website or blog post	127	60.5
Social media users (followers and the followings)	115	54.8
Recommendation in Online Travel Agencies (e.g. Booking.com, Expedia, Agoda, etc)	78	37.1
Tour agent / Tour operator	51	24.3
<b>Time Spent on Social Media (Mean = 5 hours a day)</b>		
<b>Information verification (Mean = 4.8, Std. Deviation = 1.503)</b>		
Never	1	0.5
Rarely	13	6.2

Occasionally	31	14.8
Sometimes	43	20.5
Often	50	23.8
Very often	36	17.1
Always	36	17.1

#### 4.1.3. Perception and Knowledge on AI vs Human Travel Influencers

According to table 8, the results show that 9 out of 10 people can identify human influencers from the picture (Figure 4), and around 85% of the respondents recognised the influencer in Figure 3 as AI. The result also depicts the comfortability and appealing score of Human Influencer’s picture, leaning toward a positive side with the mean score of 5.92 and 5.91, respectively. Meanwhile, with respect to the picture of AI influencer, the comfortability and appealing score have more tendency toward neutrality, as evidence by the corresponding mean score of 4.73 and 4.62. The result also indicates the level of unfamiliarity of the respondent toward the three types of AI influencer, with the mean score from 3.17 to 3.5 for Animated AI, Nonhuman AI, and Humanlike AI.

Table 8: AI vs. Human Travel Influencers

Description	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
N=210		
Recognition of AI influencer post		
Human	30	14.3
AI	180	85.7
Recognition of human influencer post		
Human	189	90
AI	21	10
	Mean	Std. Deviation
Comfortability		
AI influencer	4.73	1.772
Human influencer	5.92	1.199
Appealing		
AI influencer	4.62	1.789
Human influencer	5.91	1.135

Familiarity toward AI influencer		
Animated AI	3.17	2.056
Humanlike AI	3.5	2.165
Nonhuman AI	3.43	2.131

#### 4.2. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Reliability Test

The results of Exploratory Factor Analysis and reliability test of the four constructs are shown in table 9. EFA was analysed first, followed by reliability test. All items had satisfactory factor loading score; however, it was observed that certain items of each construct required elimination when it arrived at reliability test. As a result, the remaining items were, then, analysed with EFA again and with reliability test for the second time.

There were initially four constructs measured in the study; however, the reliability test shows that item ANT 2 in anthropomorphism construct needs to be deleted to lower the value of Cronbach's Alpha to 0.926, not too high that it would suggest redundancy. Thus, there were only three items for further analysis. The result shows that the three items in anthropomorphism construct accounted for 87.06% of the total variance explained. Additionally, each item showed a satisfactory value of factor loading ranging from 0.921 to 0.940.

Table 9 also demonstrates the result for source credibility construct, in which five items were used in the survey. SCT 3 and SCT 6 were deleted due to a very high Cronbach's Alpha value. Thus, only three items remain to proceed with the analysis. Exploratory Factor Analysis result shows that the items loaded well to support the construct (SCT 1 = 0.900, SCT 2 = 0.914, SCT 4 = 0.946) with the total variance explained of 84.69%. Besides, the construct has good Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.909 after elimination of the two items.

An item from parasocial interaction construct was removed in order to reduce Cronbach's Alpha value to 0.942. As a result, only three items were analysed in EFA for the second time. The result showed good factor loading of  $>.90$  (PAR 1 = 0.944, PAR 4 = 0.962, PAR 5 = 0.933). The three items accounted for 89.55% of the total variance explained.

Last but not least, one item from visit intention construct was eliminated due to high Cronbach's Alpha in the first stage of the analysis. Therefore, only three items were left for further analysis. The final result shows that the items being measured loaded to support the construct, witnessed by factor loading scores from 0.957 to 0.960.

Table 9: Exploratory Factor Analysis and Reliability Test

Item Code	Exploratory Factor Analysis				Reliability Test	
	Factor loading	Total variance explained	Eigenvalue	KMO	Item-total correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
<b>Anthropomorphism</b>						
ANT1	0.921				0.824	
ANT3	0.940	87.06%	2.612	0.76	0.862	0.926
ANT4	0.939				0.859	
<b>ANT2</b>	<b>0.945</b>	<i>Deleted</i>			<b>0.898</b>	<i>Deleted</i>
<b>Source Credibility</b>						
SCT1	0.900				0.780	
SCT2	0.914	84.69%	2.54	0.728	0.871	0.909
SCT4	0.946				0.805	
<b>SCT3</b>	<b>0.893</b>	<i>Deleted</i>			<b>0.910</b>	<i>Deleted</i>
<b>SCT6</b>	<b>0.871</b>				<b>0.893</b>	<i>Deleted</i>
<b>Parasocial Interaction</b>						
PAR 1	0.944				0.874	
PAR 4	0.962	89.55%	2.687	0.753	0.851	0.942
PAR 5	0.933				0.866	
<b>PAR 3</b>	<b>0.969</b>	<i>Deleted</i>			<b>0.911</b>	<i>Deleted</i>
<b>Visit Intention</b>						
INT 1	0.959				0.907	
INT 3	0.960	91.91%	2.757	0.779	0.910	0.956
INT 4	0.957				0.903	
<b>INT 2</b>	<b>0.967</b>	<i>Deleted</i>			<b>0.940</b>	<i>Deleted</i>

#### 4.3. Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity

To ensure the item indicators are suitable to measure the intended constructs, convergent validity through average variance explained (AVE) and composite reliability were calculated. Table 10 indicates a good range of AVE and CR, exceeding the cutoff point of higher than 0.50 and 0.70. Thus, the research achieved convergent validity.

Table 10: Convergent Validity AVE and CR

	AVE	CR
Anthropomorphsim	0.871	0.953
Source Credibilitiy	0.847	0.943
Parasocial Interactioin	0.896	0.963
Visit Intention	0.919	0.971

Table 11 presents discriminant validity of the constructs to ensure that each variable for the study is distinct from each other. Thus, the table shows the value of Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) of each construct are in acceptable threshold ranging from 0.729 to 0.89. There is an exception for  $HTMT_{PAR, INT}$  which is at 0.928, exceeding the cutoff point of 0.90, which suggests a potential overall between parasocial interaction and visit intention. However, it should be treated with caution that this is based on how the respondents interpret the questionnaires.

Table 11: Discriminant Validity HTMT

	ANT	SCT	PAR	INT
ANT				
SCT	0.883			
PAR	0.772	0.897		
INT	0.729	0.859	0.928	

*ANT= Anthropomorphism, SCT= Source Credibility, PAR= Parasocial Interaction, INT= Visit Intention.*

#### 4.4. Chi-Square Analysis

After evaluating the reliability and validity of the study, Chi-square Analysis is used to assess the relationship between each predictor and visit intention. Overall, table 12 shows that each predictor has a significant association with visit intention. Within that, anthropomorphism has a signification relationship with visit intention, supported by the result as  $\chi^2 = 642.191$ , degree of freedom = 432, and  $p$ -value <0.001. In the same vein, significant relationship was found between source credibility and visit intention with  $\chi^2 = 780.666$ , degree of freedom = 432, and  $p$ -value <0.001. Last but not least, parasocial interaction was also found to have significant relationship with visit intention where  $\chi^2 = 837.1$ , degree of freedom =

432, and  $p$ -value  $<0.001$ . Thus, primarily, from Chi-square test of independence, the three predictors have significant relationships with visit intention.

Table 12: Chi-square Test of Independence

Pathway	Pearson Chi-Square Value	Degree of Freedom	$p$ -value
ANT → INT	642.191***	432	$<0.001$
SCT → INT	780.666***	432	$<0.001$
SCT → INT	837.100***	432	$<0.001$

**Note:** \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate statistically significant at  $p < .05$ ,  $p < .010$ ,  $p < .001$ . ANT= Anthropomorphism, SCT= Source Credibility, PAR= Parasocial Interaction, INT= Visit Intention.

#### 4.5. Multiple Regression Analysis

In addition to using Chi-square to determine the existence of relationships, Multiple regression analysis performed to further evaluate the relationships and measure the effect size of each independent variable on visit intention, ultimately testing the hypotheses. Moreover, the regression analysis was also utilized to assess other underlying relationships among other variables, providing complementary analysis to the study. Table 13 shows the result of the hypothesis test.

Firstly, the result illustrates that the overall model is statistically significant, with the model fit of  $F(3, 206) = 260.399$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . The  $R^2$  value = 0.791 and adjusted  $R^2$  value = 0.788 also suggest that approximately 79% of the variance of audience visit intention can be explained by the three predictors.

Anthropomorphism was not found to have significant effect on visit intention in multiple regression analysis ( $\beta = 0.012$ ,  $t$ -value = 0.22,  $p = 0.826$ ). Thus, hypothesis 1 is rejected. In spite of being found associated in Chi-square analysis, the relationship shows otherwise. This might be due to the fact that multiple regression takes into account other variables which are potentially similar to anthropomorphism. On the other hand, the result suggests statistically significant positive relationship between source credibility and audience visit intention ( $\beta = 0.218$ ,  $t$ -value = 3.197,  $p = 0.002$ ) with the effect size of 0.218, which classified to have relatively low effect (Leech *et al.*, 2011). Comparing to the criteria, hypothesis 2 is supported. Last but not least, parasocial interaction was found to be a significant antecedent influencing audience visit intention ( $\beta = 0.691$ ,  $t$ -value =

11.976,  $p < .001$ ), leading to supporting of hypothesis 3. The result also pointed out that parasocial interaction has a strong effect size on the intention.

Table 13: Hypothesis Testing

Pathway	Std. error	Std. coefficients ( $\beta$ )	t-value	Sig.	Hypothesis Testing
H1: ANT → INT	0.06	0.012	0.22	0.826	Rejected
H2: SCT → INT	0.076	0.218*	3.197	0.002	Supported
H3: PAR → INT	0.057	0.691***	11.976	<.001	Supported
R <sup>2</sup>			0.791		
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>			0.788		
F-Statistics			F(3, 206) = 260.399, $p < 0.001$		

**Note:** \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate statistically significant at  $p < .05$ ,  $p < .010$ ,  $p < .001$ . ANT= Anthropomorphism, SCT= Source Credibility, PAR= Parasocial Interaction. INT= Visit Intention. Adj.R<sup>2</sup> = Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>.

In addition to the preliminary analysis and hypothesis testing in table 13, another multiple regression on other variables was analysed. The result in Table 14 shows potential influence of other factors such as audience occupation, personality traits and their travel behaviours have a significant influence on anthropomorphism and source credibility. Interestingly, a statistically significant relationship between anthropomorphism and source credibility was also detected ( $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ ).

Table 14: Additional Regression Analysis

	Anthropomorphism				Source Credibility				Parasocial Interaction			
	Std. error	(β)	t-value	Sig.	Std. error	(β)	t-value	Sig.	Std. error	(β)	t-value	Std. error
(Constant)	0.745			0.906	0.586			0.017*	0.710			0.004*
Age Group	0.116	-0.003	-0.03	0.974	0.083	0.093	0.864	0.389	0.113	-0.118	-1.649	0.101
Age Generation	0.260	-0.021	-0.25	0.800	0.207	-0.006	-0.098	0.922	0.253	0.064	0.894	0.372
Gender	0.139	0.016	0.397	0.397	0.110	-0.046	-1.246	0.214	0.136	0.025	0.672	0.502
Education	0.125	0.021	0.507	0.613	0.099	-0.019	-0.372	0.711	0.122	-0.013	-0.362	0.718
Occupation	0.070	0.089	2.159	0.032*	0.055	-0.098	-2.95	0.004*	0.069	0.034	0.936	0.350
Nationality	0.001	0.002	0.047	0.962	0.001	0.045	1.123	0.263	0.001	-0.023	-0.525	0.601
Time spent on social media	0.072	-0.047	-1.07	0.286	0.057	0.023	0.624	0.533	0.070	0.030	0.783	0.434
Information Verification	0.049	-0.064	-1.5	0.134	0.040	-0.009	-0.315	0.753	0.048	0.034	0.914	0.362
Comfortibility with AI picture	0.071	0.123	1.717	0.088	0.057	-0.052	-0.875	0.383	0.069	-0.020	-0.315	0.753
Appealing for AI picture	0.067	-0.051	-0.75	0.457	0.054	0.061	1.083	0.280	0.065	0.109	1.792	0.075
Comfortibility with human picture	0.104	0.110	1.546	0.124	0.083	0.016	0.276	0.783	0.102	0.046	0.735	0.463
Appealing for human picture	0.117	-0.059	-0.78	0.436	0.094	-0.044	-0.703	0.483	0.114	0.100	1.491	0.138
Introversion/Extraversion	0.045	-0.111	-2.48	0.014*	0.036	0.092	2.503	0.013*	0.045	0.021	0.52	0.604
Trip initiator/follower	0.062	-0.037	-0.76	0.448	-0.010	0.049	-0.409	0.683	0.060	0.050	1.153	0.250
Trip planning / spontaneous	0.049	0.136	3.007	0.003*	0.039	-0.057	-1.684	0.094	0.049	-0.010	-0.238	0.812
Familiarity with animated AI	0.060	0.101	1.446	0.150	0.048	-0.047	-0.824	0.411	0.058	0.045	0.732	0.465
Familiarity with humanlike AI	0.059	-0.022	-0.3	0.767	0.047	-0.003	-0.043	0.966	0.057	0.110	1.706	0.090
Familiarity with nonumanlike AI	0.049	-0.071	-1.19	0.237	0.039	0.071	1.438	0.152	0.048	0.004	0.081	0.936
Anthropomorphism					0.048	0.465	9.47	<.001***	0.071	0.088	1.382	0.169
Source credibility	0.075	0.692	9.47	<.001***					0.076	0.548	8.107	<.001***
Parasocial interaction	0.074	0.113	1.382	0.169	0.051	0.471	8.107	<.001***				
R <sup>2</sup>	0.712				0.807				0.775			
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.682				0.786				0.752			
F-statistics	F(20, 189) = 23.376, p<.001				F(20, 189) = 39.458, p<.001				F(20, 189) = 32.635, p<.001			

## Chapter 5: Discussion

### 5.0. Introduction

The research aims to investigate the relationships of factors that would impact the audience intention when an AI influencer is used to endorse a travel destination. From different strand of literatures in the field of AI, advertising, and tourism, this study replicated and modified from the existing theories, anticipating three possible factors such anthropomorphism, source credibility, and parasocial interaction that would have influencers on visit intention. This chapter is going to discuss the research findings from the data collected with the existing bodies of literatures.

### 5.1. Anthropomorphism and Visit Intention

Unexpectedly, a statistically significant relationship between anthropomorphism and visit intention was not detected, suggesting that anthropomorphism is not the prominent predictor. The phenomenon happened due to three possible reasons. Firstly, a mediating variable might be required for the relationship to happen. In chi-square test of independence shows the existence of correlation between the two variables; however, with multiple regression which evaluates the influence of all the three variables simultaneously, the result shows otherwise. The relationship between anthropomorphism and visit intention becomes insignificant when source credibility and parasocial interaction are involved. In relation to that, in table 14, a statistically significant relationship between source credibility and anthropomorphism was found, suggesting a potential for mediating role of source credibility. It might be true as it has been in similar vein from previous literatures that anthropomorphism influences consumer behavioural intentions through the mediating role of other factors such as consumer engagement (Jayasingh, 2025), perceived warmth and competence (El Hedhli *et al.*, 2023), source credibility, authenticity, and trust (Kim and Wang, 2024; Ahn *et al.*, 2022). Dabiran *et al.* (2024) also made a synthesis from previous studies on the role of source credibility as the effect mechanism. In this sense, it could imply that although humanising AI could lower the resistance and increase human's acceptance in tourism and advertising sphere (Feng *et al.*, 2024), it does not necessarily enhance

the visit intention when there is no other effect mechanism. Indeed, there is possibilities that the audience are not convinced by the appearance and other human-like features of AI influencers unless the endorsers show credibility and expertise about the destination. Moreover, AI influencers are still operated by algorithms and under human control, which might require the leverage of credibility to be perceived as knowledgeable as the human counterpart.

Another possible reason for the rejection of hypothesis is due to similarity of the items or shared variance between anthropomorphism and source credibility. In fact, anthropomorphism encompasses physical attractiveness of the AI influencer which is also one of the important dimensions in source credibility theory (Mrad *et al.*, 2024; Ahn *et al.*, 2022; Ong *et al.*, 2024). Nevertheless, convergent validity and discriminant validity were achieved, indicating the distinction between each construct measured.

Moreover, the rejection of anthropomorphism as the predictor of visit influence might be due to the uncanny valley effect, whereby the audience perceives the AI influencers to be too realistic, making them uncomfortable and causing an adverse effect (Kim and Wang, 2024). However, this research is not able to confirm the effect of interference.

## 5.2. Source Credibility and Visit Intention

This work has proven the effectiveness of source credibility as an important predictor for visit intention destination marketing arena. Previous researchers also found a positive impact of source credibility on audience attitudes, which eventually enhances audience behavioural intentions (Wahba *et al.*, 2025; Dhun and Dangi, 2023; Han and Chen, 2022). The researchers delved deeper into each dimension of the theory and generated different findings. While Wahba *et al.* (2025) found trustworthiness to have a significant relationship on audience's intention, Dhun and Dangi (2023) found the opposite, which is probably due to skepticism. However, the congruity of the previous work lies at the effectiveness of the model in predicting audience behavioral intention. In the same vein, the current work investigated the theory as a general concept and generated the same result. The study show a direct relationship between source credibility and visit intention,

which is consistent with the previous studies done on human influencers and/or AI influencers in the context of tourism and behavioral intention in general across social media platforms (Wahba *et al.*, 2025; Hernández-Méndez *et al.*, 2024; Dabiran *et al.*, 2024; Gerlich, 2023; Sucisanjiwani and Yudhistira, 2023; Lili *et al.*, 2022; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). The consistency further amplifies the role of credibility in all types of endorsers, underscoring the significance of the source of information in internalisation process. The audience has more tendency to form a positive decision-making process about a destination when the AI endorsers appear to be knowledgeable and ab expertise about the destination. Regardless of whether the endorsers are virtual figures or human influencers, audiences are more inclined to believe in endorsers who appear knowledgeable, reliable, and attractive, which in turn, increases the persuasive power of the endorsers and enhance audience's intention to visit a destination.

It is also worth discussing that the influence of source credibility on parasocial interaction and vice versa in the context of AI endorsers in a tourism destination as shown in Table 14. The relationship was also detected in several previous studies by Jayasingh *et al.* (2025), Hernández-Méndez *et al.* (2024) and Gerlich (2024). The relationship between the two variables is probably due to human psychology that they are more open to engaging and interacting with those perceived as credible, and in this context, the humanlike AI influencers.

### 5.3. Parasocial Interaction and Visit Intention

Parasocial interaction has also been confirmed to have a significant influence on audience visit intention when a humanlike AI influencer endorses a certain destination. The predictor is also found to have a stronger relationship with visit intention as compared to source credibility (Table 13). The finding provides an implication on the role of emotional connection and interactions between audience and the endorsers, meaning audience's intention improves when there is an interaction and the bond between themselves and the endorsers. Audiences are more likely to be persuaded by the AI influencers when a connection or engagement is established. The findings of the role of parasocial interaction with visit intention in the study provide a profound support to the previous works by Jayasingh *et al.* (2025); Dabiran *et al.* (2024); Bi *et al.* (2021) and Sokolova and Kefi (2020) who conducted similar studies in the context of AI in retail, hospitality

and tourism, and human influencers in retail industry. As such, this work confirmed the effectiveness of parasocial interaction in predicting audience intentions in the context of human and AI influencers alike. The finding could also give an implication that the audience might be taking a peripheral route in decision making process in the context of destination marketing.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendation

### 6.1. Research Implication

#### 6.1.1. Theoretical Implication

This work successfully forms a model from the conceptual framework, utilising the existing theories such as source credibility and parasocial interaction which has been used advertising and celebrity endorsement. This study also incorporated anthropomorphism of the AI in the model although it was not found to be a significant predictor. Theoretically, the study adds the support to earlier research that utilises the theory of source credibility and parasocial interaction. It confirmed the previous empirical findings of previous researchers stating source credibility and parasocial interaction to be the effective persuasion mechanisms (Dabiran *et al.*, 2024; Ong *et al.*, 2024; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). The finding of parasocial interaction having stronger affect than source credibility on the intention underscores the significant role of establishing meaningful bonds with the audience. This echoed the theoretical implication from Dabiran *et al.* (2024). This work also proves the application of the two theories in tourism industry and AI in the field of advertising which has limited resources. Hence, this study serves as a provision of knowledge and understanding on audience's behavioural intention in destination marketing.

#### 6.1.2. Managerial Implication

This study also provides an implication to the practical aspects in the advertising and tourism marketing field. The results indicate that audience's intention to visit a certain place, regardless of age group, are likely to be convinced by the credibility of the source of information, in this case AI influencers. Thus, it is crucial that marketers in tourism industry, including the national tourism board of a country, AI agencies, hotel and airline, etc, who wish to use AI influencers to promote their destinations and services, portray the endorsers in a credible way. In other words, the endorsers used in the promotions or campaigns need to show the followers that they are trustworthy, appear to be physically attractive, and are knowledgeable about the information of the destination or the services being advertised. In this sense, it could be portrayed through consistent messagem and tone, reliable and

verifiable information and so on. Moreover, when using AI influencers, it is important to monitor and manage the interaction in a way that could establish a close emotional connection with the followers; for instance, replying to comments in a friendly and approachable tone. Simply put, for marketers who are looking to use an AI influencer that is monitored by media agency, they should be evaluating on the engagement rate of the influencers.

## 6.2. Recommendation for Future Research

This work is conducted with a certain level of limitation; therefore, it is suggested that further research be carried out to enhance the knowledge and close the gap in the current work. Firstly, the current study assesses internalisation process and affective process which are mostly the psychological factors in the audience decision making. The study did not take functional factors such as the quality of the content and the campaigns or type of destinations into consideration. Thus, future research can incorporate functional factors into the study. Secondly, the study focuses purely on humanlike AI influencers, leaving other types of AI influencers such as animated and nonhumanlike AI influencers uncovered. Given that, further studies are encouraged to include the other types of AI figures to provide a comparison among the three types. Last but not least, anthropomorphism was suspected to have a significant impact on the intention, yet it requires a mediator. Thus, further studies are suggested to investigate the relationship and/or dive deeper to get the audience perception on anthropomorphized AI in relation to visit intention.

## 6.3. Conclusion

Marketers have been using influencer marketing in their strategies to promote their products, services, and brands. Within the influencer marketing arena, there emerges another type of influencer. That is virtual figure run by algorithms (Thomas Fowler, 2021). Humanlike AI influencers build their own digital persona like other social media influencers and have been increasingly used across industries and by big brands. Feng *et al.* (2024) and Ahn *et al.* (2022) studied on the consumers' evaluation and acceptance of AI influencers and suggested anthropomorphism as a crucial factor in the context of AI. Coupled

with that, source credibility theory and parasocial interaction theory have been used to evaluate the effectiveness of endorsers and to predict audience intentions.

This work was conducted with the aim of investigating the relationship between the anthropomorphism, source credibility and parasocial interaction, and visit intention when a destination is endorsed by an AI influencer. Drawing from strand of literatures in tourism, retail, AI, behavioural intention, three hypotheses were established and tested. The first hypothesis about anthropomorphism and visit intention was rejected due to three possible reasons: either a mediating role was required, or shared variance, or uncanny valley effects from audience perception. This research was not able to provide further explanation of the rejections. Therefore, either one of the reasons be true would require future study to investigate. Despite, source credibility and parasocial interaction are the significant predictors of audience intention visit when an AI influencer is endorsing a destination. Among the two predictors, parasocial interaction shows strong effect on the visit intention, implying that audience value emotional connection and interaction with the influencer more than other factors. In other words, general audience's intention to visit a certain place is influenced (1) by how close the emotional connection or the interaction between themselves and the endorsers, and (2) by how the endorsers shows their credibility which include expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Survey questionnaires on Google Form

# AI Influencer as A Destination Endorser

## Purpose of the study

Dear respondents,

I am Tithdane Saing, a master's degree student in Marketing at the National College of Ireland. I am currently conducting a research study for my dissertation on "**Factors influencing audience's travel intention: AI Influencer as a destination endorser.**" The research is conducted as part of the requirement for my study completion.

The aim of the current study is to identify which factors play the most significant roles in audience travel intention when an AI influencer promotes a certain destination.

Before deciding to participate in the survey, please read the following

1. All responses in the study are confidential and used for the academic purpose only.
2. Your identity will be anonymous, and there is no personal information, which can be traced back to your identity, is collected or disclosed.
3. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you are allowed to discontinue your participation at any time without any consequences.
4. The survey will last around 7-10 minutes to complete

Your participation in the survey is highly appreciated, and I thank you in advance for participating in the survey.

## Contact information

Should you have any question of concern about the study, please feel free to contact me at [x23382244@student.ncirl.ie](mailto:x23382244@student.ncirl.ie)

## Consent

I confirm that I have read and understood the above information. I certify that I am 18 years old or older. By clicking the "**Next**" button, I indicate my voluntary participation in this study.

Next

Clear form

# AI Influencer as A Destination Endorser

\* Indicates required question

## Part 1

Please choose one answer to each question that best describe you

Have you travelled for vacation/holiday purpose (locally or overseas) in the last 12 months? \*

- Yes
- No

Do you have an account on Instagram? \*

- Yes
- No

You mentioned you are on Instagram. Are you following any influencer on the platform? [Referring to influencers of any category such as beauty, foods, travel, gaming, other entertainment, etc] \*

- Yes
- No

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[Next](#)

[Clear form](#)

## Part 2

You will be showing pictures of travel influencers and will be asked a few questions based on the picture.

Do you think this influencer is human or AI? \*



- Human
- AI

How comfortable are you looking at this post? \*

- Not comfortable at all
- Somewhat uncomfortable
- Slightly uncomfortable
- Neutral
- Somewhat comfortable
- Comfortable
- Very comfortable

Is the picture visually appealing? \*

- Not appealing at all
- Somewhat unappealing
- Slightly unappealing
- Neutral
- Somewhat appealing
- Appealing
- Very appealing

Do you think this influencer is human or AI? \*



Human

AI

How comfortable are you looking at this post? \*

- Not comfortable at all
- Somewhat uncomfortable
- Slightly uncomfortable
- Neutral
- Somewhat comfortable
- Comfortable
- Very comfortable

Is the picture visually appealing? \*

- Not appealing at all
- Somewhat unappealing
- Slightly unappealing
- Neutral
- Somewhat appealing
- Appealing
- Very appealing

From scale 1-7, how familiar are you with each type of the AI influencer. [1=not at all familiar – 7 extremely familiar]. If you are opening this survey on your phone, please swap the answer to the left to see the full scale. \*

	1 Not at all familiar	2	3	4	5	6	7 Extremely familiar
Animated AI influencer (e.g. @ilmiquela, @imma.gram, @alizarexx)	<input type="radio"/>						
Humanlike AI influencer (e.g. @teflonsega, @yameiionline, @noonoouri)	<input type="radio"/>						
Non-human AI influencer (e.g. @guggimon, @john.pork, @iamchillpill)	<input type="radio"/>						

Are you following any of these AI influencers on Instagram? \*

- Yes  
 No

What type of travel destinations you like? [You can choose more than 1 answer] \*

- Culture related destination  
 Natural related destination  
 Community based related destination  
 City tour / Shopping destination  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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[Clear form](#)

Stimulus

You will be showing posts from some influencers. Please look at the entire post since the proceeding questions will as the following sections will be based on this stimulus.

Post 1



sene\_zaro  
Boracay Island, Indonesia

-> through palm trails  
-> through beaches  
-> through gold light

dust in the air  
and adrenaline

there's something about moving fast  
in a place that moves slow  
it reminds me  
that freedom can be soft too

thank you @heresidencibintan for the space to explore  
and the quiet moments between adventures 🌿

#bintan #senaz #traveljournal #heresidencibintan  
#mindfultravel #islandescape #slowliving #quadbikeadventure  
#explorasias #sunyretreat

3 w

For you

These shots are INSANE 🤩❤️

3 w 2 likes Reply

View replies (1)

3 w 2 likes Reply

amazing captures

3 w 2 likes Reply

Liked by ... and others  
12 April

Add a comment...

Post 2



maina\_wtr

maina\_wtr #fyp #throwback to Europe, where the coffee was strong and the fashion was stronger ☕

Wrapped in a deep brown leather jacket over a sleek high-neck, a simple belt, statement earrings and classic black sunnies—effortless elegance with a touch of old-world charm. 🍷

[chic, reels, edits, love, Instagram, maina, ai, high fashion, trending, explore, fyp]

5 w

For you

4 likes Reply

Ohh beautiful you are looking like a Hollywood star 🌟

4 likes Reply

2 likes Reply

Wow 🤩

3 likes Reply

Maina maina\_wtr

Liked by ... and others  
31 March

Add a comment...

Post 3



From the image you saw in the previous section, on scale from 1-7, to what extend do you agree or disagree with the following statement? If you are opening this survey on your phone, please swap the answer to the left to see the full scale.

	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
The image of this the AI influencer looks realistic based on their appearance	<input type="radio"/>						
From the image, the AI influencer looks like real human based in their appearance	<input type="radio"/>						
From the image, the AI influencer appears lifelike and not artificial based on their facial expression.	<input type="radio"/>						
From the image, the AI influencer appears natural; I do not feel fake about it	<input type="radio"/>						

\*

	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
The AI influencer appears to be attractive.	<input type="radio"/>						
The AI influencer appears to be reliable	<input type="radio"/>						
The AI influencer appears to be sincere.	<input type="radio"/>						
The AI influencer appears to be knowledgeable.	<input type="radio"/>						
The AI influencer appears to have common interest with me.	<input type="radio"/>						

\*

	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
I'm looking forward to seeing this influencer's videos, posts and comments.	<input type="radio"/>						
I would love to interact frequently with	<input type="radio"/>						
If there is a content related to the AI influencer on any media, I would read it.	<input type="radio"/>						
I can rely on information I get from my favorite AI influencer.	<input type="radio"/>						

\*

	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
When I travel, it's highly likely that I will visit the place shown by this influencer.	<input type="radio"/>						
I intend to visit the destination shown in the influencer campaign in the near future.	<input type="radio"/>						
I plan to visit the destination recommended in the influencer campaign in my next trip.	<input type="radio"/>						
The influencer campaign makes me want to travel to the destination.	<input type="radio"/>						

## General Information

Please choose one answer to each question that best describe you

How old are you? [Please enter your age] \*

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

What is your gender? \*

- Female
- Male
- Others
- Prefer not to say

What is your education qualification? \*

- Secondary school
- High school
- Undergraduate degree
- Postgraduate degree
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your occupation? \*

- Student
- Full-time employment
- Part-time employment
- Business owner
- Not working
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your nationality? \*

Choose

How much time do you spend on social media? [Please answer in number of hours per day] \*

Your answer

How often do you verify information from social media? \*

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often
- Always

On scale from 1-7, to what extent do you consider yourself as an introvert or an extrovert? \*

- |           |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |           |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
|           | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     | 7                     |           |
| Introvert | <input type="radio"/> | Extrovert |

On scale from 1-7, to what extent do you consider yourself as a planner or a spontaneous when choosing destination, planning and going on a trip? \*

- |             |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |         |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------|
|             | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     | 7                     |         |
| Spontaneous | <input type="radio"/> | Planner |

How likely are you to be the initiator and plan your trip? \*

- Extremely unlikely
- Very Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Neutral
- Likely
- Very likely

How do you usually find information about traveling or a travel destination? [You \*  
can choose more than 1 answer]

- Travel website or blog post
- Tour agent / Tour operator
- Social media influencers, vloggers, YouTubers
- Social media users (followers, the followings, friend list)
- Recommendation from friends
- Recommendation in Online Travel Agencies (e.g. Booking.com, Expedia, Agoda, etc)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Respondent from Prolific, please enter your Prolific ID here. The Prolific completion code and URL will be shown when the survey is submitted.

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

Survey Circle Respondents will get the redemption code after submitting the survey.

**This is the end of the survey. Thank you for your participation.**

## Appendix 2: Privacy setting on Google Form

### Settings

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**Make this a quiz**   
Assign point values, set answers, and automatically provide feedback

---

**Responses** ^  
Manage how responses are collected and protected

**Collect email addresses** Do not collect ▾

**Send responders a copy of their response** Off ▾  
Requires **Collect email addresses**

**Allow response editing**   
Responses can be changed after being submitted

REQUIRES SIGN IN

**Limit to 1 response**