

Naina V/S Kyra: A Comparative Analysis of Engagement Metrics to Uncover the Most Desired Female Virtual Influencer in India

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Abstract

The rise of Virtual Influencers has completely altered the landscape of Influencer Marketing. Talking about the digital landscape in India, these AI generated characters possess personality and attributes similar to humans and are being extensively used for Brand promotions. This paper uncovers the evolving dynamics of AI influencers in Indian market by analysing the social media engagement of India's two leading female Virtual Influencers Kyra and Naina in order to understand whom they audience perceives more likeable and desired. Moreover, this research entails the use of content analysis method which explores the likes, comments, shares as well as the video views of the brand collaboration on their Instagram handles of these two female virtual influencers- Kyra and Naina. The time frame chosen for administering this analysis is over a span of two months. Furthermore, this research intends to investigate the engagement metrics of these two virtual influencers, the preferences and perception of social media users as well as it apprehends the most desired virtual influencer in India.

Keywords: Influencer marketing, Virtual Influencers, AI Influencers, Computer generated characters, customer brand engagement.

Introduction

Influencer marketing has revolutionised the landscape of digital marketing. The primary objective of Influencers prevalent on social media is to nurture the consumer attitude towards a brand. In other words, an Influencer promotes products and services on social media and receives free products or money in exchange for doing so.

The results of a survey by Statista (July 2023) indicated that the second most preferred social media platform in India in terms of Influencer partnerships with 36 percent market share. Influencer marketing can be utilized as an effectual tool by advertisers by engaging audiences because the audiences are receptive, and this tool can offer wide reach.

Influencer marketing is growing tremendously, and its worldwide market size went from 3 billion to 9.7 billion US Dollars from 2017 to 2020. As compared to television commercials or banner advertisements, Influencer marketing is cost effective and inexpensive. In the digital landscape, Virtual Influencers have evolved the traditional Influencer marketing strategies adopted by brands. Inspired from eminent leading virtual Influencers in the western countries such as Lu do Magalu, Lil Miquela etc. this phenomenon has also now started to take hold in the Indian landscape of Influencer marketing.

Virtual Influencers are computer generated characters who have been designed in such a way that their personality resembles closely to a human. These AI Influencers vouch a unique content delivery style and fosters a considerate audience engagement. Therefore, virtual Influencers are increasingly being used for brand promotions in the Indian market. However, virtual influencer marketing with reference to the Indian market is an untapped area of study.

Kyra India's first virtual influencer was launched on 28th January 2022. She holds the reputation of being the pioneer who paved the way for more virtual influencers to proliferate in the Indian influencer marketing landscape. She was recently awarded WhosNext2023 AI creator of the year award in 2023. Kyra hails from the city of dreams Mumbai and recently made her appearance on the popular show Shark Tank India to raise funds for her creator FUTR Studios. Her target audience re Gen Z and Millennial. She usually posts food, lifestyle travel and fitness related content. She also has a virtual human manager Sravya who now looks after her brand collaborations. Whereas Naina a 22-year-old virtual influencer hails from Jhansi and shares content related to fashion, beauty, fitness and entertainment.

Therefore, it is imperative to determine the effectiveness of these virtual influencers amongst the social media users. This research paper explores the content of two leading female virtual influencers of India- Kyra and Naina and intends to uncover the engagement pattern of the social media users with them.

Literature review

Campbell and Farrell (2020) mentions that Influencer marketing can be utilized as an effectual tool by advertisers by engaging audiences because they are receptive and offer organic reach. It is imperative for marketers to explore and look for those influencers who resonate with their brand and their audience's aspirations complement the same. Influencers often captivate audiences by engaging them through replying to their comments and messages, asking and incorporating feedbacks, live sessions, uploading stories etc.

Karabacak & Güngör (2023) says that in online communities Influencers are considered as "opinion leaders" because they have the proficiency of persuading people. They have the ability to influence social media users by sharing their reviews and opinions about particular things. In the present scenario, these influencers are perceived as content creators who have achieved a celebrity status.

Nafees et al. (2021) highlight that the power of social media influencers develops over time due to their continued audience engagement. Moreover, it is likely that they will accumulate goodwill as well. On the other hand, Influencers often exhibit that they care and have their best interest for their followers. Thus, elevating the influencer's goodwill and making them a credible source of brand information. The trustworthiness associated with an influencer is positively related to brand awareness and purchase intentions.

According to **Leung et al. (2022)** when followers are exposed to excessive posting activity the influencing potential becomes ineffective. This is largely due to the fact that the audiences start selectively filtering the posts, they become disinterested, annoyed and their responsive level decreases. Messages through Influencers with original content is considered to be more effective as they are more perceived to be more trustworthy, knowledgeable, credible and are noticed more.

When the sponsored brand is more salient in the content or post, there is a boost in engagement elasticity. However, when influencers post about new product launches, the engagement elasticity experiences a decline.

Lou and Youan (2019) states that Influencer marketing intends to maximise the reach to a new set of target audience as well as garner brand awareness and sales. They further suggest that expertise, attractiveness and trustworthiness are the essential factors that are the driving force behind a source credibility.

Masuda et al. (2022) asserts that the engagement that an influencer has with their audience is greater as compared to a celebrity endorsement as the latter is a broadcasting communication which is one way. The para social relationships that the influencers have with their audiences makes it more advantageous as the replies to the audience's comments makes it a two way communication. The likability of an influencer is referred as social attractiveness goes beyond the concept of likes on the

social media and cultivates the salient notion of emotional liking between the audience and the influencer.

Kwiatek et al. (2021) indicates that that when it comes to encouraging consumers to purchase, the recommendations of other people has more potential to create a fruitful impact than advertisements. While exploring about the information and online recommendations about the brands, consumers regard macro influencers as more credible and trustworthy sources relative to micro influencers. Once consumers identify themselves with the social media influencers, they are more prone to purchase a product recommended by them as the trust with them is intensified.

According to **Shen Z (2024)** non branded virtual influencers tend to have more customer brand engagement as compared to the brand virtual influencers. They differ from the findings of previous studies which claimed that using virtual influencers for brand promotions can result in positive benefits like brand awareness and enhanced brand image. They also highlight that in order to elevate customer brand engagement' brands should not invest in creating a virtual influencer specifically for them, instead they can partner up with non-branded influencers who have a huge following on social media.

Lou et al. (2022) highlight that virtual influencers can substantially foster the brand image as well as the brand awareness. However, when compared to a Human influencer the essence of trust is missing with virtual influencers. The motivation of social media users behind following the virtual influencers on Instagram are entertainment, passing time, creative inspiration, seeking information, new trends etc.

The digital business lac.com article "12 Most Impactful AI-powered Virtual Influencers to Follow for 2023" mentioned that, with the rapid evolution of the marketing landscape AI-driven influencers may prove to be a crucial inventive element in influencer marketing. Virtual influencers created by AI are consistent with their content, cost-effective for brands, and cater to niche audiences. The article also emphasises how AI-powered influencers are set to become essential components of immersive marketing efforts, much as augmented and virtual reality experiences continue to develop.

Conti & Tricomi (2022) asserts that Virtual Influencers set unrealistic expectations and standards. This could negatively hamper the physical as well as mental health of individuals as they might feel pressurised to copy their style culture and appearance. Apart from this, social media users could experience a very confined bond with virtual influencers. Since the human touch is missing this could have an adverse effect on the brand loyalty at large. Moreover, the expenses of generating the content for virtual influencers are more extensive. On the other hand for human influencers only minimal effort is required to produce consistent content.

ASCI a self-regulatory body of advertising industry in India defines virtual influencers as "fictional computer-generated 'people' or avatars who have the realistic characteristics, features, and personalities of humans, and behave similarly as influencers". **Roy, D. (2023)** highlight that "The need for critical consideration of this arises from the fact that virtual influencers possess the appearance and online behaviour of actual humans, yet lack real-world accountability".

According to **Liu, S. (2021)** "Immersion in influencers' content makes the audience enjoy the brand information in the content and eventually cultivates brand engagement". Once the essence of source credibility of an influencer is established the para social relationship and brand engagement is strengthened.

Zhong, L. (2022) suggested that reflection of the Influencers consumer brand engagement on social media can be measured by analysing the likes, comments, views and forwarding to other users on their posts.

Audrezet & Koles (2023) indicates that virtual influencers facilitate a platform for brands to set themselves apart from their competitors. They have the ability to generate content which is appealing to the younger generation. The concept of physical limitations does not exist in AI Influencers dictionary, unlike human influencers they can be at any place available. Adaptability in accordance to the brands desire is one of their key peculiarity which helps the social media users in resonating

well with these virtual influencers. They also aid in stimulating the customised engagement rates and experiences of the target audience.

The findings of **Gerlich (2023)** highlighted that social media users tend to trust the opinion of the virtual influencers and consider them to be an expert. Factors like reliability, trust, expertise and relevance facilitate the preference of virtual influencers over human influencers. The findings of this study contradicts with the findings of other researchers. Social media users find them more credible, reason being their non-biased nature. This could further escalate the purchasing decision.

Hofeditz et al. (2022) throws light on the ethical concerns regarding the utilisation of virtual influencers in brand promotion. The social media users are unaware and have no clue about the person behind the scene who manages their content. The essence of transparency is a big concern. On the contrary, a major advantages these AI Influencers offer to brands are accessibility in terms of tailoring the content. This further gives an edge to avoid and mitigate situations revolving around brand boycotts, scandals etc.

Sands et al. (2022) states that the over resemblance of a virtual influencer with a Human influencer results in a lot of uneasiness and causes a sense of discomfort amongst the audience. They also exhibit unrealistic beauty standards amongst the audiences. Social media users might tend to feel a sense of disassociation after interacting with their content. At times they would perceive these computer generated characters to be inauthentic reason being the realisation of virtual influencer's motive of profit generation.

Utilizing the digital technologies brands can make use of transmedia storytelling i.e. sharing their single story experience across multiple formats and platforms. Compared to human influencers their engagement rates are higher; their ability to engage with the audiences and replying to the followers comments on real time can establish brand communities efficiently. If brands want to foster an emotional connection with the brand and the influencer on a deeper level, they can create a virtual influencer or ambassador for them. These can be designed in such a way that the personality, tone of voice, values, language, backstories and beliefs complement with the brand identity, brand's values along with the target audience.

Mirowska & Arsenyan (2023) mentions that the social media followers of these virtual influencers believe that virtual influencers would be apt with their social attractiveness or social circle. When the audiences are interacting with virtual as well as human influencers, and they are unaware of them being a virtual entity; their perception about both of these influencers are same. Content that is heavily emotionally enriched could result in audiences not being attentive to their content.

According to **Kim & Park (2023)** product endorser fit has come out as an imperative tool to strengthen a positive brand attitude. When the lifestyle of an influencer resonates closely with the brands idea in the sponsored advertisement, it impacts the consumer behaviour. The virtual influencer's attractiveness impacts the purchasing decision. Once the brand values are inculcated amongst the audience, it has a considerable effect on the attachment a social media user feels towards the brand.

Arsenyan & Mirowska (2021) reveal that AI influencers who have excessive human like resemblance are seen with a lot of scrutiny and do not receive a very positive response. However, the curiosity of social media users to see the nature and behaviour of human like virtual influencer results in massive video views comments and likes. Therefore, the engagement rates of virtual influencers resembling like humans are greater than anime like AI influencers.

Um (2023) asserts that the parasocial interaction with a virtual influencer has a positive impact on the advertisements endorsed by them along with the audience's attitude towards the virtual influencer. Virtual influencers evoke the feeling of familiarity and attachment which leads to parasocial interactions. Parasocial relationships are developed when audiences feel affinity and affection towards a celebrity. Since these virtual influencers do not have the same limitations that a human influencer

has like making mistakes or aging; researches indicate that virtual influencers are more impactful at inducing para social relationship as compared to human influencers.

According to **Jhawar et al. (2023)** “the perceived uniqueness, perceived fit and perceived similarity of the VIs with the SMUs’ personalities play a crucial role in strengthening the intention to accept and follow them”. The factors like human like connection, online accessibility and intimacy and realistic behaviour foster an emotional connection between a social media users and a virtual influencer resulting in enhanced parasocial interaction.

Rossi & Rivetti (2023) found that audiences perceive virtual influencers to be manipulated and supervised with a commercialised agenda. At times they even come across as soulless. However, the major driving force behind audiences on social media to follow these virtual entities are fun and curiosity.

Significance of the study

Brands are extensively hopping onto the trend of using virtual influencers for establishing a connection with social media users. The comparative analysis of engagement metrics can provide valuable insights to marketers about the consumer preferences as well as the engagement pattern of virtual influencers with reference to the Indian market. The results of this study will help the marketers in apprehending strategic decisions right from choosing the most impact virtual influencer for their brand collaboration, which virtual influencer vouches for greater engagement and influence. Moreover, the findings of this study can enable marketers in tailoring significant and impactful influencer marketing campaign, this would not only elevate the presence of the brand on social media but also promises a good return on investment.

Gaps

Most of the research that has been conducted on virtual influencers are with the reference of the western market. Research on virtual influencers in India is in its infancy stage. Customer brand engagement with Virtual Influencers in India is a little underexplored area of research. It was also found that there is a notable gap in determining the most admired virtual influencer in India. Moreover, the virtual influencer’s engagement metrics on social media with reference to the Indian market needs to be analysed. This is crucial because it would give a sense of understanding to the marketers about the opportunity these virtual influencer collaborations hold as well as the effectiveness of this brand promotion in context of the Indian social media users.

Research questions

In the landscape of social media marketing the virtual avatars are proliferating worldwide and experiencing a significant boom in brand collaborations. In the context of Indian market, these computer-generated characters are evolving in terms of influencing the consumer behaviour. Therefore, the attitude of Indian audiences towards the virtual influencers needs to be investigated thoroughly.

The research intends to address the following research questions:

1. What is attitude of social media users towards female virtual Influencers in India?
2. Among all the virtual influencers prevailing in India, which one is most appealing to social media users?
3. What is the pattern of the engagement rates in the content of Virtual Influencers?
4. Which Virtual Influencer has the most engaged audience base on Instagram?

Research Objectives

With the rapid penetration of social media in India there is an increasing trend of brands hopping into Virtual influencer collaboration. Thus, it has become imperative to uncover the preferences as well as the patterns in which social media users engage with the content of virtual Influencers. By addressing

the research objectives this research aims to contribute in the elucidating a comprehensive understanding of this trending area of brand promotion.

The research objectives identified for this study are as follows:

1. To study the Indian originated female virtual Influencers in India.
2. To analyse the engagement metrics of Virtual Influencers in India.
3. To find out which is the most desired Virtual Influencer in India?

Research design and method:

This study is based on descriptive research design with qualitative approach to analyse the engagement rates of social media users. Content analysis of India's two leading Virtual Influencers has been conducted in order to assess the engagement metrics of social media users on Instagram. The Virtual Influencers identified for this study are: Kyra- India's first virtual influencer and Naina-India's first AI superstar. The likes, comment and shares of their content has been analysed over the period of two months- December 2023 to January 2024.

Sample design

This research entails the use of systematic random sampling technique. A list of Indian Virtual Influencers were taken into consideration. The virtual Influencers have been selected on the basis of their content, popularity, active brand collaborations and followers. On the basis of followers of these Instagram handles on 26th March 2024 Kyra (@kyraonig – 226K followers) and Naina (@naina_avtr -202K) have been chosen for this research. Instagram is the most preferred platform when it comes to influencer collaborations according to a survey by Statista in July 2023. Therefore, Instagram has been chosen as the platform to examine the engagement patterns.

Type of data

To fulfil the research objectives secondary data has been taken for the content analysis of Instagram handles of AI Influencers Kyra and Naina on the selected social media platform-Instagram.

Data Analysis

The content analysis for two months of both the virtual influencers have been analysed using Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The data has been collected manually from the Instagram posts of their official Instagram handles. The likes, comments, shares, views on reels and type of content have been scrutinised to understand the customer brand engagement. According to **Unnava and Aravindakshan (2021)** when it comes to determining the engagement metrics the likes and comments of Instagram post are the key indicators. This study has incorporated their proposed calculation method. In order to ascertain the customer brand engagement, the average number of likes and comments are compared with their followers.

Table 1.1 Date of Introduction and follower count of Virtual Influencers: Kyra and Naina

Kyra		Naina	
Introduction date	Number of followers	Introduction date	Number of followers
28 th January 2022	227K	5 th October 2022	203K

Table 1.1 mentions about the details about the launch date and the number of followers on the Instagram handles of Kyra and Naina. India's first Virtual Influencer Kyra was launched on 28th January 2022 created by FUTR Studios. Founded by Himanshu Goel and George Tharian, Kyra has a total number of 89 posts inclusive of reels and static posts and has garnered 227K followers on <http://jier.org>

Instagram. On the other hand, India's first AI Superstar; Naina was launched on 5th October 2022 by Avtr Meta Labs. Founded by Abhishek Razdan, Naina has a total of 337 posts on Instagram. The total number of posts considered are till 26th March 2024.

Table 1.2 Total number of reels and static posts of Virtual Influencers: Kyra and Naina

Number of Post		
Naina		Number of Post
	Reels	39.0000
	Static Post/Pictures	5.00
Kyra		Number of Post
	Reels	10.0000
	Static Post/Pictures	1.00

Table 1.2 analyses the number of posts on the Instagram handles of these two virtual influencers over a period of two months i.e. 1st December 2023 to 31st January 2024. The virtual Influencer Naina has posted 39 reels and 5 static posts from December 2023 to January 2024. On the contrary, Kyra has posted 10 reels and 1 static post. It has been observed that the content posted by Naina has a tilt for self-branding on the other hand Kyra's content strategy prioritizes brand collaborations and partnerships in greater amount.

Table 1.3 Likes on the reel and static posts of Virtual Influencers: Kyra and Naina

Likes on Post			
Naina		Reels	Static Post/Pictures
	Mean	17793.50	1265.27
	Median	9188.00	0.00
	Minimum	0	0
	Maximum	195990	16361
Kyra		Reels	Static Post/Pictures
	Mean	63653.0909	345.9091
	Median	21034.0000	0.0000
	Minimum	0.00	0.00
	Maximum	244011.00	3805.00

Table 1.3 assessed that there is a considerable amount of disparity between the engagement rates of Naina and Kyra when the static post and reels over the two months are taken into consideration. Kyra garners more likes on her reels (mean= 63653.09) as compared to Naina (mean= 17793.50). However, Naina amasses greater likes on static posts (mean= 1265.27) relative to Kyra (mean= 345.90). The median value of the likes on Naina's reels are 9188 and Kyra are 21034. The median likes for both highlight the same pattern.

Table 1.4 Comments on the reels and static posts of Virtual Influencer: Kyra and Naina

Comments on Post			
Naina		Reels	Static Post/Pictures
	Mean	118.52	6.95
	Median	88.50	0.00
	Minimum	0	0
	Maximum	693	95
Kyra		Reels	Static Post/Pictures
	Mean	26.3636	4.0000
	Median	25.0000	0.0000
	Minimum	0.00	0.00
	Maximum	56.00	44.00

Table 1.4 examined that on an average, Kyra receives 26.36 comments on her reels and Naina receives 118.52 comments. Nonetheless, the comments received on the static posts of Naina (mean= 6.95) is again higher than Kyra (mean=4). The median value of comments vouches for the similar pattern (Naina=88, Kyra=25). Thus, Naina's content received more substantial likes than Kyra in both reels and static posts.

Table 1.5 Shares on the reels of Virtual Influencers: Kyra and Naina

Share on Post		
Naina		Reels
	Mean	1104.23
	Median	495.00
	Minimum	0
	Maximum	16700
Kyra		Reels
	Mean	222.2727
	Median	193.0000
	Minimum	0.00
	Maximum	665.00

Table 1.5 assessed that on an average the shares on Naina's reels (mean= 1104.23) is substantially higher than the shares on Kyra's reels (mean= 222.27). Moreover, the median value confirms the same pattern of shares on the content (Naina= 495, Kyra= 193). Furthermore, the maximum number of shares on Naina's reels is 16700 which is notably higher than Kyra which has 665 maximum shares. Therefore, Naina's content has greater likelihood of being shared on Instagram.

Table 1.6 Video views on the reels posted by virtual Influencers: Kyra and Naina

Views on Post		
Naina		Reels

Kyra	Mean	1028500.00
	Median	508000.00
	Minimum	0
	Maximum	16900000
		Reels
	Mean	20103163.6364
	Median	10600000.0000
	Minimum	0.00
	Maximum	74200000.00

Table 1.6 examined that the number of video views on Kyra's reels (mean=20103163.63) has outpaced Naina's video views (1028500). On the other hand, the median number indicates that Naina has considerably received lower views (508000) than Kyra (10600000) on Instagram reels. The maximum number of views received on Naina's post was 16900000, while Kyra received 74200000 views.

Table 1.7 Type of content posted by Virtual Influencers: Kyra and Naina

Type of content	Naina	Kyra
Self-branding	✓	✓
Fashion content	✓	✓
Humorous content	✓	X
Lifestyle content	✓	✓
Brand collaborations	✓	✓
Moment marketing	✓	X
Question and answer- interactive session	✓	X
Podcast	✓	X
Magazine cover	✓	✓
Award/ recognition	X	✓
Spotted with a celebrity	✓	X
Fitness content	✓	✓
Travel content	X	✓

Table 1.7 analysed the various types of content posted by Naina and Kyra since their inception. Both these virtual influencers believe in promoting their personal brand identity extensively. Despite this, Naina comes across as more active in terms of engaging herself self-branding activities. Both Naina and Kyra's content strategy includes an emphasis on fashion content. Naina engages with her audience effectively by posting humorous content, on the other hand Kyra does not prioritize humorous content. Naina incorporates current trends in moment marketing posts whereas Kyra has not hopped on this trend yet.

The posting frequency of Naina is undoubtedly greater as compared to Kyra. However, when it comes to Brand collaborations Kyra has a hold of prominent brands such as Sunfeast, American Tourister, Boat, Amazon Prime, L'Oreal Professionnel, Titan Eyeplus, The comet universe etc. In contrast, Naina has fewer brand partnerships like Bayroute restaurant, Kamoto.ai event, Hitchki India etc. Both Naina and Kyra have posted lifestyle and fitness related content.

Naina has graced the magazine cover of Social Ketchup and Kyra had previously been a part of magazine cover for five magazines along with a German and South Korean Virtual Influencer last year. Kyra has a tilt for travel content; she was also featured on the digital cover of Travel + Leisure India; India- south Asia's most Influential travel and lifestyle magazine.

Apart from this Naina actively engages with its followers by frequently posting question and answers interactive sessions with her followers. She has recently introduced India's first AI podcast- The Naina show where she invited Shruti Jain financial expert at Fikaa as her guest. She is clicked by paparazi's walking out of restaurants with Instant Bollywood, an online Bollywood network as a post collaborator further resulting in elevated reach. She also teams up with Viral Bhayani, a renowned paparazzi, and posts content of being papped up with Bollywood celebrities. Whilst this, Kyra has been recognised as WhosNext2023 AI Creator of the Year Award.

Findings:

The mean likes on the reels of Naina are 17,793.50 and static posts are 1265.27. The mean likes on the reels of Kyra are 63,653.09 and static posts are 345.91. The likes on the data indicate that Kyra has more average number of likes as compared to Naina. The mean value of the comments on Naina's reels are 118.52 and static posts are 6.95. On the other hand the mean value of the comments on Kyra's reels are 26.36 and static posts are 4. As observable Naina has greater average number of comments on the static posts and reels in comparison with Kyra.

Moreover, for determining the engagement rates of both the influencers the following calculation by Unnava and Aravindakshan was used:

Table 1.8 Engagement level=Mean likes + mean comments/ follower count of the Virtual Influencer: Naina and Kyra

Naina				Kyra			
Type of content	mean likes+ comments/ count	mean follower	Engagement level	Type of content	mean likes+ comments/ count	mean follower	Engagement level
Reels	17793.50+118.52/203000		0.088	Reels	63653.09+26.36/227000		0.28
Static post	1265.27+6.95/203000		0.006	Static post	345.91+4/227000		0.001

Using the calculation by calculation by Unnava and Aravindakshan the mean likes and mean comments were added and divided by the total follower count to determine the engagement level of the virtual influencers. The engagement level of the reels of Naina is 0.088 and static post is 0.006. Whereas the engagement level of Kyra's reels is 0.28 and static posts is 0.001. The above calculations clearly indicate that virtual influencer Kyra has an elevated engagement rate on Instagram as compared to virtual influencer Naina.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of our study we have concluded that India's first virtual influencer- Kyra in her credits has secured eminent and renowned brand collaborations as compared to Naina who has bagged fewer collaborations. However, India's first AI superstar- Naina in her accolades has higher content posting frequency on Instagram in contrast with Kyra who is not very active in terms of posting the content. Naina explores various types of content formats apart from the traditional content style adopted by Influencers on Instagram. She ensures to have a direct form of interaction as well as engagement with her followers.

It was also found that Naina's content predominantly emphasizes on self-branding such as posting fashion, lifestyle and humorous reels. She actively engages with her followers by posting question and answer interaction session frequently. Furthermore, she has strategized to elevate her reach by

launching her own podcast- The Naina show. While Kyra's content heavily fixates on collaborations from noteworthy Brands, she recently partnered with L'Oreal Professionnel and promoted them extensively for a period of two months. Kyra was also awarded as WhosNext2023 AI Creator of the Year Award at NDTV Whosthat360 Influencer awards 360.

The findings of this study suggests that Virtual Influencer Kyra is leading when it comes to gaining likes on reels in comparison with Naina. However, Naina accumulates higher likes on static posts as opposed to Kyra. Therefore, Kyra has outperformed Naina in terms of reel engagement whereas Naina is significantly leading in content engagement for static posts.

It was also observed that there is a significant difference in the engagement rates of both these virtual influencers. Naina has a greater content engagement level and audience interaction as it receives has greater number of comments. Nevertheless, the comments on Kyra's reels and static posts content is notably lower. This study also indicated that the content of Naina has more engagement, wider reach as compared to Kyra. The audience are able to resonate more deeply with Naina, therefore Naina has outshined Kyra in the shares on Instagram reels. In conclusion, reels of Kyra has eminently gained amplified views on Instagram reels elucidating a greater reach.

After applying the calculation metrics used by Unnava and Aravindakshan to determine the customer engagement levels it was found that Kyra has surpassed Naina to be the most desired female virtual influencer in India. When the average comments and likes of both the influencers are compared along with their follower count, the findings of this research indicated that Kyra has an amplified customer engagement levels on Instagram.

The perceived authenticity of a virtual influencer amongst social media users is of foremost importance. Audiences sometimes might be sceptical about these computer-generated characters being a marketing ploy, their authenticity and if the brand representation by these are genuine or not. To prevail over this lack of conviction and suspicion; these virtual influencers need to be developed by creating a backstory, provide them with values and a personality. Ensuring that the virtual influencers interact with their audiences in an organic and natural manner can also aid in stimulating the essence of authenticity.

Limitations

This study administered content analysis method to examine the content of only two female virtual Influencers since only a fewer virtual Influencers are prevalent in India who are actively collaborating with brands. Moreover, content analysis of only two months were taken into consideration. Future studies can incorporate content analysis of a greater number of Indian virtual influencers along with their content for longer duration of time.

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