

Inverted Uncanny Valley: the Credibility of Virtual Influencers vs Human Influencer

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Abstract

Virtual influencers are the latest addition to burgeoning influencer marketing industry, estimated to value \$15 billion in 2022 (Rahal, 2020). Companies can cooperate with them at their own discretion, meaning there are fewer risks regarding their values, beliefs and behaviors, which could negatively impact brand's image or reputation. This article presents the results of experimental study that aimed to investigate the perception of the credibility of virtual influencers, depending on whether they are more or less similar to a human compared to a real influencer. We followed the choice of three types of influencers as proposed by Arsenyan and Mirowska (2021): non- human (anime) – like virtual influencer (Noonoori), human- like virtual influencer (LilMiquela), and human influencer (Marta Cygan). The results indicate that the more human- like a virtual influencer is, the smaller the difference in perceived credibility is.

Subject Areas: *Advertising, Consumer Behaviour*

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