

Impact of Digital Agent's Types and Humanoid Features on Parasocial Relationship: Evidence of Online Gym Exercises

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Abstract

With the growing use of digital agents in various online communications scenarios, there have been emerging interests in understanding the forms and impacts of digital agents. Via operating three studies scenarios, this research first zooms in on online fitness. It investigates the intermediary effects of psychological perception (perceived warmth and perceived competence) and how a parasocial relationship is built between the agents and gym attendants from a psychological perspective. Secondly, this paper examines the impact of agent types (human, avatar, and robot) on the fitness for parasocial interaction and continued usage intention. Furthermore, a further test on the interactive effect of non-real-human agent types (avatar vs robot) and humanoid image (non-humanoid vs humanoid) is conducted for psychological and behavioural outcomes. This paper extends the conceptual model and provides conclusions and implications for more effective usage of agents to trigger personal psychological status and functionality, parasocial relationship for continuous usage.

Subject Areas: *Consumer Behaviour, Customer Relationship Management and Customer Satisfaction, Electronic Commerce and Internet Marketing, Service Marketing, Sports Marketing*

Track: Services Marketing