

# A Systematic Review of Virtual Influencers: Similarities and Differences between Human and Virtual Influencers in Interactive Advertising

**Jeonghee Byun**  
Korea University  
**Sun joo (Grace) Ahn**  
University of Georgia

Cite as:

Byun Jeonghee, Ahn Sun joo (Grace) (2023), A Systematic Review of Virtual Influencers: Similarities and Differences between Human and Virtual Influencers in Interactive Advertising. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy, 52nd*, (114054)

Paper from the 52nd Annual EMAC Conference, Odense/Denmark, May 23-26, 2023



# A Systematic Review of Virtual Influencers: Similarities and Differences between Human and Virtual Influencers in Interactive Advertising

## **Abstract**

Virtual influencers, computer-generated characters that serve as influencers, offer novel and cost-effective advertising strategies. Virtual influencers' roles and appearances are comparable to those of human influencers in that they mimic humans in their behavior. However, novel features of these digital entities allow them to engage in unique interactions with audiences. With the rise of successful virtual influencers, academic research on virtual influencers has been growing rapidly. Thus, a systematic comparison of virtual and human influencers in the context of interactive advertising would be a timely endeavor to better understand the conceptual and operational similarities and differences between them and to guide future research. The current review suggests similarities between human and virtual influencers and their roles as the source of advertising messages, but also critical differences that determine the limitations and potentials of virtual influencers in interactive advertising.

**Subject Areas:** *Advertising, Electronic Commerce and Internet Marketing*

**Track:** Digital Marketing & Social Media