3D Avatar Seller's Effect on Online Consumer's Purchasing Behavior: A Trust Transference Perspective*

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Background
Virtual World population has reached 1400 million

- Business transactions in virtual worlds will increase with the development of virtual worlds
- In physical world, sales person plays the key role in the selling process
- In virtual worlds, sales avatar played the role of selling products or services to customers

Literature Review
- Sales person’s role is of essential importance in helping customers making purchasing decisions
- According to the social response theory, people tend to respond to computer technology like a social subject
- Avatar creates the social presence
  - Trust is an important factor in the selling process
  - Trust could be transferred through avatars to the product and company

Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of 3D Avatar Salesperson</th>
<th>Attractive Avatar</th>
<th>Expert Avatar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liability</td>
<td>H5</td>
<td>H6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise</td>
<td>H3</td>
<td>H4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seller's Intention</td>
<td>H7</td>
<td>H2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Intention to Purchase
- Company Trust
- Product

Research Methodology

Selection of Avatar Type

- Survey was conducted with the employees in IT industry such as major Korean SI companies through an online survey sites
- Experiments were conducted for respondents to answer the questionnaire

Data Analysis Results

PLS is used in this study for the analysis purpose
- Both reliability and validity are appropriate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Expert avatar</th>
<th>Attractive avatar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1: Trust in a company → Intent to purchase</td>
<td>0.31**</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2: Trust in a product → Intent to purchase</td>
<td>0.21*</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3: Trust in a seller → Trust in a company</td>
<td>0.76***</td>
<td>0.75***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4: Trust in a seller → Trust in a product</td>
<td>0.74***</td>
<td>0.63***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5: Liability → Trust in a seller</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>0.48***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6: Expertise → Trust in a seller</td>
<td>0.40***</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H7: Seller's Intention → Trust in a seller</td>
<td>0.29***</td>
<td>0.54***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion
-Trust formed in a 3D avatar seller is transferred to a selling company and a product for an expert 3D avatar seller but not for an attractive avatar.
-When a 3D avatar sells a product that requires high involvement, such as a vehicle, it is better to use an expert avatar than an attractive avatar to achieve better results

References are upon request

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