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

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

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ABSTRACT

The emerging 3D virtual worlds attract more and more people to participate in the virtual environment, creating a new market for business to sell their products. In 3D virtual worlds, members mainly interact with each other through avatars. The selling process is fulfilled through the shop avatars. How businesses sell their products successfully to the potential customers and eventually persuade the customer to purchase the product is an essential question. Trust played a key role in the selling process. In the general selling process, trust was established through the sales person. In the virtual world environment, could the trust be established between the sales avatars and customer avatars?

This paper aims at answering this question by examining the trust transference process in the 3D virtual world environment. An experiment was conducted to categorize the avatars into attractive and expert ones. The research result first suggest that trust formed in a 3D avatar seller could be transferred to a selling company and a product but for an expert 3D avatar seller, trust transferred to the company and product results in intent to purchase. Trust in a 3D avatar seller is transferred to trust in a product and a company and furthermore, an expert avatar can affect a consumer's intent to purchase. In the case of an attractive 3D avatar, although trust is transferred, it is only to the point of intent to purchase.