FROM DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER (D2C) TO DIRECT-TO-METAHUMAN (D2M): AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY ON THE METAVERSE

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ABSTRACT

The Metaverse is a digital space that utilizes the internet and augmented reality to blend real-life and virtual experiences. This emerging environment offers opportunities for individuals to purchase goods and services, enjoy entertainment, and participate in virtual events. By utilizing Direct-to-Avatar (D2A) and Metahuman (D2M) approaches, brands can create more seamless and immersive customer experiences, representing a progression in omnichannel evolution. Despite this growing interest in the Metaverse, there is limited research on how it impacts consumer perceptions. To address this gap, a qualitative study was conducted involving semi-structured interviews with C-level executives in the fashion industry, alongside two experimental studies that examined hypotheses related to the Metaverse experience. The results revealed that customer experiences in the Metaverse enhance perceived seamlessness and customer engagement. These findings can assist managers in identifying innovative ways to improve customer experiences, including developing new paradigms for the phygital world, combining elements of both physical and digital reality, and creating distinctive brand-customer interactions.

Keywords: Direct-to-consumer (D2C), Direct-to-avatar (D2A), Omnichannel, Metaverse, Seamlessness

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