AI digital humans and destination marketing: the multidimensionality of anthropomorphism, parasocial interactions, and marketing effectiveness

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We wish to publish the abstract in the online proceedings.

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Abstract

Though AI digital humans' anthropomorphism has been identified as a key in affecting marketing effectiveness, the multidimensional nature of anthropomorphism was underexamined. Focusing on AI digital humans in short videos that promote tourism destinations, we investigate how AI digital humans' multiple anthropomorphic features affect the marketing outcomes. With an online survey (N=435) and through the PLS-SEM analysis with SmartPLS 4.0, we found that consumers' perceived anthropomorphism of the AI digital human's voice, behavior and mentality enhances their parasocial interactions with the AI digital human. The impacts of the anthropomorphic appearance, voice, and behavior on parasocial interactions are mediated by the anthropomorphic mentality. Besides, consumers' familiarity with the historical figure on which the AI digital human is modeled negatively moderates the effect of anthropomorphic mentality on parasocial interactions. Last, we found that parasocial interactions enhance consumers' attitudes to the AI digital human and attitudes to the travel destination. The findings have implications for research on the multidimensionality of anthropomorphism and the use of AI digital humans in marketing campaigns.

Keywords: AI digital humans, Anthropomorphism, parasocial interactions, the CASA paradigm, the MASA paradigm, Destination marketing