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

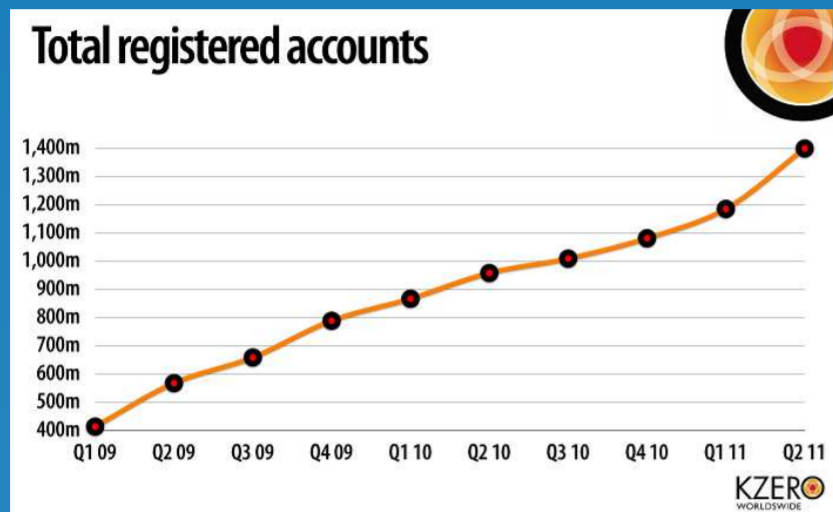
Kun Chang Lee
SKK Business School
Dept of Interaction Science
Sungkyunkwan University
kunchanglee@gmail.com

Seong Wook Chae
National Information Society Agency
seongwookchae@gmail.com

Honglei Li
Northumbria University
HongleiLi@gmail.com

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

Research Methodology

Selection of Avatar Type



Experimental Environment Development

- 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

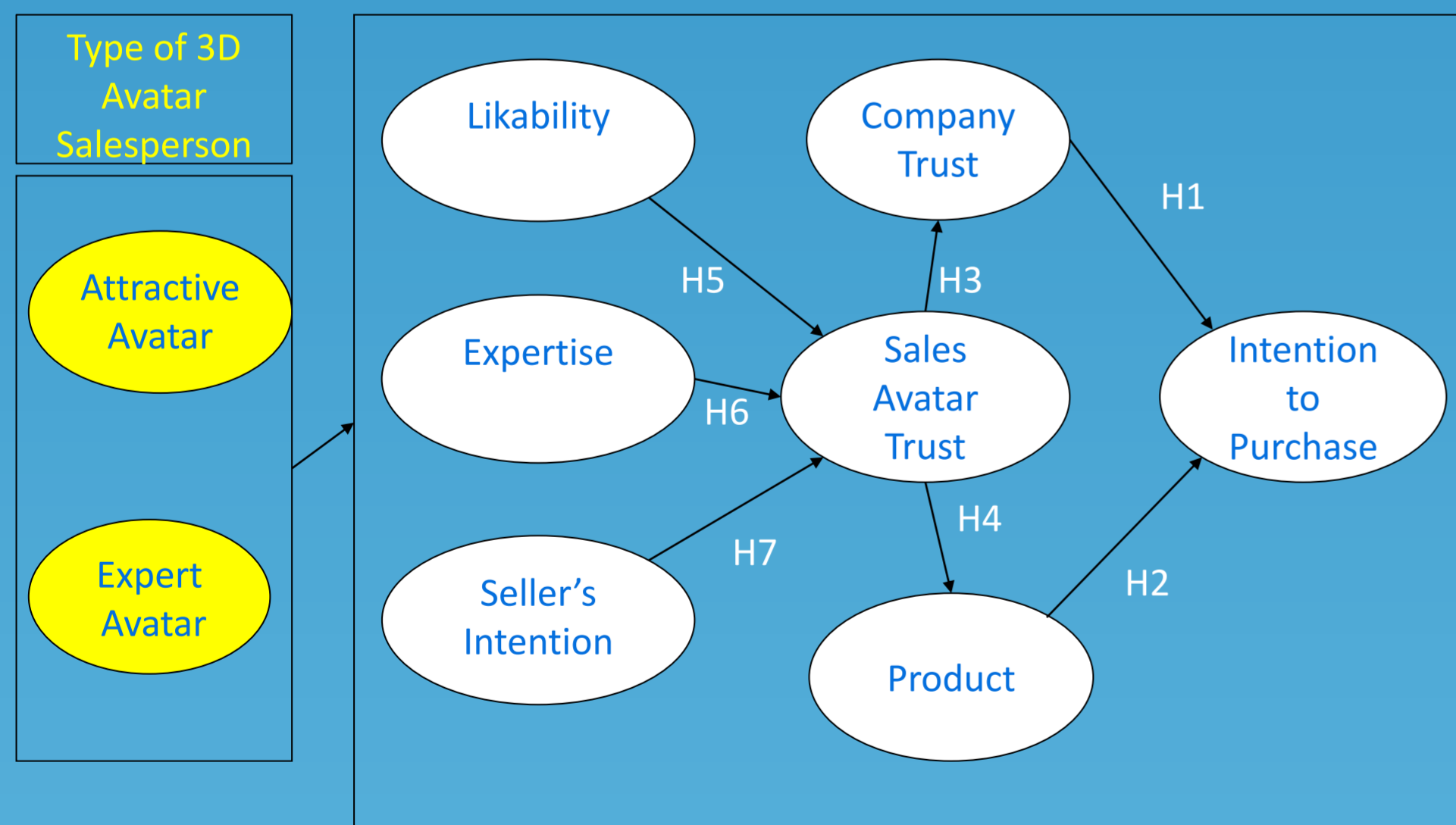
Data Analysis Results

PLS is used in this study for the analysis purpose

- Both reliability and validity are appropriate

| Path | Expert avatar | Attractive avatar |
|---|---------------|-------------------|
| H1: Trust in a company → Intent to purchase | 0.31** | 0.13 |
| H2: Trust in a product → Intent to purchase | 0.21* | 0.03 |
| H3: Trust in a seller → Trust in a company | 0.76*** | 0.75*** |
| H4: Trust in a seller → Trust in a product | 0.74*** | 0.63*** |
| H5: Likability → Trust in a seller | 0.30** | 0.48*** |
| H6: Expertise → Trust in a seller | 0.40*** | 0.18* |
| H7: Seller's Intention → Trust in a seller | 0.29*** | 0.34*** |

Conceptual Model and Hypotheses



- H1: Trust in a selling company will have a positive (+) effect on intention to purchase.
 H1a: Trust that is transferred from the trust in an attractive 3D avatar will have a positive (+) effect on intention to purchase.
 H1b: Trust that is transferred from the trust in an expert 3D avatar will have a positive (+) effect on intention to purchase.
 H2: Trust in a product will have a positive (+) effect on intent to purchase.
 H2a: Trust in a product which is transferred from the trust in an attractive 3D avatar will have a positive (+) effect on intention to purchase.
 H2b: Trust in a product which is transferred from the trust in an expert 3D avatar will have a positive (+) effect on intention to purchase.
 H3: Trust in a 3D avatar seller will have a positive (+) effect on the formation of trust in a selling company.
 H3a: Trust in an attractive 3D avatar seller will have a positive (+) effect on the formation of trust in a selling company.
 H3b: Trust in an expert 3D avatar seller will have a positive (+) effect on the formation of trust in a selling company.
 H4: Trust in an 3D avatar seller will have a positive (+) effect on the formation of trust in a product.
 H4a: Trust in an attractive 3D avatar seller will have a positive (+) effect on the formation of trust in a product.
 H4b: Trust in an expert 3D avatar seller will have a positive (+) effect on the formation of trust in a product.
 H5: Likability of a 3D avatar seller will have a positive (+) effect on the formation of trust in the seller.
 H5a: Likability of an attractive 3D avatar seller will have a positive (+) effect on the formation of trust in the seller.
 H5b: Likability of an expert 3D avatar seller will have a positive (+) effect on the formation of trust in the seller.
 H6: Expertise of a 3D avatar seller will have a positive (+) effect on the formation of trust in the seller.
 H6a: Expertise of an attractive 3D avatar seller will have a positive (+) effect on the formation of trust in the seller.
 H6b: Expertise of an expert 3D avatar seller will have a positive (+) effect on the formation of trust in the seller.
 H7: Intention of a 3D avatar seller will have a positive (+) effect on the formation of trust in the seller.
 H7a: Intention of an attractive 3D avatar seller will have a positive (+) effect on the formation of trust in the seller.
 H7b: Intention of an expert 3D avatar seller will have a positive (+) effect on the formation of trust in the seller.

References are upon request

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 seller
- 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

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