

I feel myself as more malleable: The effect of augmented reality try-on service on malleable self-concept and self-brand connection

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Abstract

Brands and retailers are eager to utilize the augmented reality (AR) technology to engage consumers and develop favorable relationships with them. However, there is a need for a theoretical understanding of the assumed AR effect. This study aims to identify an underlying mechanism of the AR (vs. typical online website) effects by focusing on consumers' feeling of malleable self-concept. Through two experiments, the findings demonstrate that AR, when compared to a typical online website, increases self-brand connection through enhanced imagery and beliefs on the malleability of the self. The improved self-brand connection further heightens marketing outcomes such as revisit intention to the website. The AR effect is qualified by consumers' self-discrepancy, suggesting an important implication for brand management. This research offers new insights into the role of AR interface in consumer-brand relationship and highlights the impact of AR on consumer's self-perception. Innovative marketers and brands are likely to benefit from this study in improving their relationship with consumers by utilizing emerging digital retail environments.

Key words: augmented reality, imagery, malleable self-concept, self-brand connection, self-discrepancy