



## The Impact of Avatars on Trust and Purchase Intentions Among Online Consumers in the Context of the Sports Fashion Industry

Tam Tanjaya<sup>1</sup>, Nuttapol Assarut<sup>\*2</sup>, and Papaporn Chaihanchai<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Technopreneurship and Innovation Management Program, Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

<sup>2</sup>Marketing Department, Chulalongkorn Business School, Bangkok, Thailand

<sup>3</sup>Department of Public Relations, Faculty of Communication arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

<sup>\*</sup>Corresponding author, E-mail: nuttapol@cbs.chula.ac.th

### Abstract

The Metaverse represents a fusion of offline and online marketing channels to create novel consumer experiences by leveraging avatars as intermediaries between brands and consumers. Avatars serve as brand representatives, engaging with customers within the Metaverse. Given this principle, contemporary businesses and marketers must prioritize avatar design to build consumer trust as brand proxies, particularly in the sports fashion industry. This research aims to examine how avatar designs influence consumer trust and the subsequent impact of this trust on purchase intentions for sports fashion products. The study evaluates the effectiveness of avatar creation and design strategies specifically tailored for fashion businesses. This quantitative research employs a survey methodology, gathering data through questionnaires from 140 consumers in Bangkok and its metropolitan areas, a region with a population of approximately 10.9 million, ensuring a representative sample of consumers familiar with avatars. The data are analyzed using multiple regression analysis and analysis of mediating variable effects using Hayes Process Macro to assess the relationships between avatar type, consumer trust, and purchase intention. The findings indicate that both "Expert Avatars" and "Attractive Avatars" have a significant direct impact on consumers' cognitive and emotional trust. Furthermore, consumer trust positively affects purchase intentions for sports fashion products. When considering consumer trust as a mediating variable, the study reveals a full mediation effect between avatar design and purchase intention. This implies that, regardless of the avatar type used, establishing consumer trust is critical, as cognitive and emotional trust significantly influence purchase intentions in the sports fashion sector.

**Keywords:** Marketing, Avatar, Fashion, Consumer Trust, Purchase Intention