ISCTE IUL
REPOSITÓRIO
INSTITUTO UNIVERSITÁRIO DE LISBOA

Repositório ISCTE-IUL

Deposited in *Repositório ISCTE-IUL*:
2026-09-11

Deposited version:
Publisher Version

Peer-review status of attached file:
Peer-reviewed

Citation for published item:
Yildiz, D., Loureiro, S. M. C. & Guerreiro, J. (2025). Human, virtual, or both?: A systematic literature review on influencer marketing in the metaverse. In Demetris Vrontis, Yaakov Weber, Evangelos Tsoukatos (Ed.), 18th. Conference Book of Proceedings (pp. 1532?1535). Euromed Press.

Further information on publisher's website:
https://euromedacademy.org/book-of-proceedings/

Publisher's copyright statement:
This is the peer reviewed version of the following article: Yildiz, D., Loureiro, S. M. C. & Guerreiro, J. (2025). Human, virtual, or both?: A systematic literature review on influencer marketing in the metaverse. In Demetris Vrontis, Yaakov Weber, Evangelos Tsoukatos (Ed.), 18th. Conference Book of Proceedings (pp. 1532?1535). Euromed Press.. This article may be used for non-commercial purposes in accordance with the Publisher's Terms and Conditions for self-archiving.

Use policy

Creative Commons CC BY 4.0
The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a link is made to the metadata record in the Repository
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Serviços de Informação e Documentação, Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL)
Av. das Forças Armadas, Edifício II, 1649-026 Lisboa Portugal
Phone: +(351) 217 903 024 | e-mail: administrador.repositorio@iscte-iul.pt
https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt

Yildiz, D., Loureiro, S. M. C., & Guerreiro, J. (2025). Human, virtual, or both? A systematic literature review on influencer marketing in the metaverse. In Demetris Vrontis, Yaakov Weber, & Evangelos Tsoukatos (Eds.), *Conference book proceedings of **18th Annual Conference** of the EuroMed Academy of Business: Exploring New Horizons in Business and Management* (pp. 1455-1458). Porto, Portugal: EuroMed Press. September 10–12, 2025.

HUMAN, VIRTUAL, OR BOTH? A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON INFLUENCER MARKETING IN THE METAVERSE

Yildiz, Duygu[1] , Loureiro, S.M.C.[1], Guerreiro, J.[1]

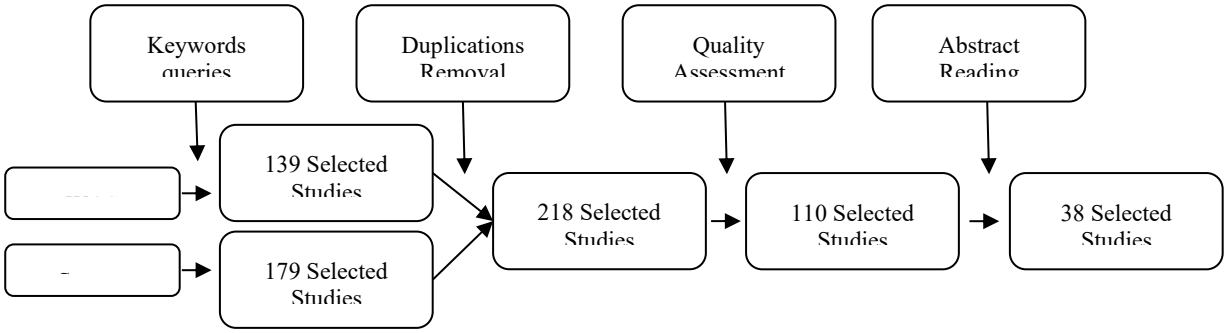
[1]Iscte-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa and Business Research Unit (BRU-IUL), Lisboa, Portugal, dyzuu@iscte-iul.pt

Keywords: Social Media Influencer, Virtual Influencer, Metaverse, Systematic Literature Review, AI, Machine Learning, Big Data

Influencers within the metaverse represent a burgeoning topic in the discipline of marketing. This topic particularly captivates the interest of numerous scholars and industry professionals due to the simultaneous existence of human and virtual influencers within the metaverse. Notably, there exists a need for a methodical approach to the examination and synthesis of academic literature within this emerging domain. This research adopts a systematic review of the literature (Tranfield et al., 2003; Loureiro et al., 2020), drawing upon 218 pertinent Web of Science and Scopus articles. The research provides relevant research themes, methodologies,

theoretical frameworks, variables, antecedents, consequences, and potential avenues for further study.

Figure 1. Screening process



Source: Author's elaboration

The initial phase of the screening process of the studies utilized in this research and presented in Figure 1 above are extracted from two prominent online libraries: Web of Science and Scopus. Respectively, 2,874 and 1,645 results are identified based on the specified keywords across all domains of expertise.

Subsequently, only Business, Management, and Accounting articles in English are chosen on Scopus, yielding 179 results. The same criteria are attempted to select on the Web of Science; however, accounting is not listed as a research category on the platform. This leads to 139 articles on Business and Management written in English. In total, 318 publications are collected on Scopus and Web of Science.

In the next phase of the screening process, 100 of 318 articles are duplicated and extracted from the total number (318), indicating 218 results. One hundred eight (108) of these results (218) were removed due to the content in the title and abstract being irrelevant to the purpose of this research, leaving 110 articles for abstract reading. Based on the quality criteria suggested by Macpherson and Holt (2007), 72 of 110 are eliminated for not meeting the requirements.

Of the literature on the topic, 38 articles related to this study's objective were published from 2019 to 2025. The year with the highest number of publications is 2024. That year, various journals contributed to the scientific community (50% of all journals with publications). Some examples of journals published in 2024 are the Journals of Retailing and Consumer Services, Business Research, and Psychology and Marketing.

Concerning the sectors of studies analyzed in this literature review, 62% deal with virtual influencers; however, 32% compare human and virtual influencers. There is only one (1) article each on hospitality, cosmetics, and luxury in a multicultural context.

Regarding the study methodologies, 17 are quantitative, 14 are qualitative, and 7 adopt mixed methods. In these studies, seventeen (17) different theories are identified throughout the analysis; only five (5) theories (28% of all theories) are referenced more than once. The most referenced theories in the studies examined in this research are as follows: Computers-Are-Social-Actors (CASA) Paradigm (Gambino et al., 2020; Nass et al., 1994), Mind Perception Theory (Gray et al., 2012), Source Credibility Theory (Hovland et al., 1953), Uncanny Valley Theory (Mori et al., 2012), and The Uses and Gratification Theory (Ruggiero, 2000; Lee and Cho, 2020).

The findings of this systematic literature review provide a framework to show the primary constructs and relationships used to study influencers in the metaverse, present gaps in the literature, and point to avenues for future research, as well as provide businesses with some pointers for best practices.

References

Gambino, A., Fox, J., and Ratan, R. (2020). "Building a stronger CASA: extending the computers are social actors paradigm." *Human-Machine Communication 1*, 71–86, available at: https:// doi.org/10.30658/hmc.1.5.

Hovland, C.I., Irving, L. J., and Kelley, H. H. (1953). "Communication and Persuasion." *New Haven: Yale University Press.*

Lee, H. and Cho, C.H. (2020). "Uses and gratifications of smart speakers: Modelling the effectiveness of smart speaker advertising." *International Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 39 No. 7, pp. 1150-1171, available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2020.1765657.

Loureiro, S.M.C., Guerreiro, J., and Ali, F. (2020). "20 years of research on virtual reality and augmented reality in tourism context: A text-mining approach." *Tourism Management*, Vol.77 (August 2019), available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.104028.

Macpherson, A. and Holt, R. (2007). "Knowledge, learning and small firm growth: a systematic review of the evidence." *Research Policy*, Vol.36 No.2, pp.172-192, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2006.10.001.

Mori, M., K. F. MacDorman, and N. Kageki. (2012). "The Uncanny Valley [From the Field]." *IEEE Robotics & Automation Magazine*, 19 (2): 98–100, available at: https://doi.org/10.1109/MRA.2012.2192811.'=

Nass, C., Steuer, J., and Tauber, E.R. (1994). “Computers are social actors.” In: Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, pp. 72–78.

Ruggiero, T.E. (2000). “Uses and gratifications theory in the 21st century.” *Mass Communication and Society*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 3-37, available at https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0301_02.

Tranfield, D., Denyer, D. and Smart, P. (2003). “Towards a methodology for developing evidence-informed management knowledge by means of systematic review.” *British Journal of Management*, Vol.14, pp.207–222, available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.00375.