

Is the Influencer I Follow Human or Robot? The Value of Computer-generated Imagery Influencers to Luxury Brands

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Abstract

Influencer Marketing and Social Media Influencers (SMI) are becoming crucial to the success of brands, and companies can no longer ignore their significant role in shaping consumer attitudes towards brands. Influencer marketing has been traditionally studied and is not a new form of marketing, but with new-age technology, it is constantly evolving and taking a new shape. This article, by way of a case study, aims to study the use of Computer-generated Imagery (CGI) Influencers by luxury fashion brands and its implications for the future of luxury retail and marketing in general. Building upon parasocial relationship theory and narrative transportation theory, we suggest that CGI Influencers are a potentially perfect fit for promoting 'luxury fashion brands' as they create the necessary balance between relatable and unattainable that is ideal for the advertising of luxury fashion brands in this new age.

Keywords

influencer marketing, social media influencers, computer-generated imagery influencers, parasocial relationship theory, narrative transportation theory, luxury fashion brands

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Introduction

Since their conception, beginning in 1837 with the founding of Hermès, luxury fashion brands have carried an allusive reputation synonymous with ‘Exclusive,’ ‘Prestigious,’ and ‘Expensive’. The term luxury, however, does not merely apply to premium-priced products; it encompasses a set of distinctive characteristics. Specifically, these characteristics include consistent premium quality delivery, recognisable style and design, heritage of craftsmanship, emotional appeal, exclusivity, global brand reputation, presence of elements of uniqueness, association with a country of origin and creator’s lifestyle (Nueno & Quelch, 1998).

Branding is a marketing tactic that companies utilise in the creation of their name, logo and overall style which if done correctly should make them easily identifiable to the consumer (American Marketing Association, 2014). Luxury brands’ tactical branding runs so deep it has evolved into a practice that sets all luxury brands apart from the common goods market—Experiential Branding. From the moment a customer walks into the store, brand managers and merchandisers have curated every part of the environment—from the way the product is displayed to the music playing, the services that the sales personnel provide and even the scent of the store. Luxury is a sensory experience (Kapferer, 2012). This marketing tactic is so successful for luxury brands that the experience of shopping has become an unspoken part of all luxury brands’ value propositions.

With the evolution of technology, new channels like digital and social media have given fresh avenues for luxury brand marketing as they continue the tradition of transporting consumers into the world of luxury through experience and storytelling (van Laer et al., 2019). Prada, for example, is known for commissioning short films from foreign directors such as Wes Anderson, in which the connection to the brand is either minimal or non-existent (van Laer et al., 2019).

Along with the human influencers, Prada created a buzz in 2018 at Milan fashion week by having Computer-generated Imagery (CGI) Influencer, Miquela Sousa or @lilmiquela, appear to be attending their show via branded graphics and videos posted to her Instagram (Crowd, 2019). Prada is not the only brand experimenting with this new marketing tactic, Cartier, Burberry and Gucci amongst others are increasingly utilising influencer marketing techniques (Ifluenz, 2018).

For the purpose of this article, ‘influencer’ will be defined as ‘people who built a large network of followers, and are considered as trusted tastemakers in one or several niches’ (Brown & Hayes, 2008). Influencers are content creators, considered experts and have built a network of followers whom they influence through valuable content on social media (Lou & Yuan, 2019) and are regarded as a trustworthy information source (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Nafees et al., 2019; Nafees et al., 2021). There are several defined categories of ‘influencers’ including Nano Influencer, Micro Influencer, Macro Influencer, Mega Influencer and, most recently, CGI Influencers (Ismail, 2018). Each of these categories has its own characteristics and offers a different value to marketers. This article, by way of a case study, aims to study the use of a CGI Influencer (as opposed to a real person) by luxury brands and its implications for the future of luxury retail and marketing in general.

The savviest luxury brand executives have already begun redirecting their attention towards online marketing as a branding and selling tool, realising it is an extended opportunity for their clients to experience the brand and its products (Alexandra & Elena, 2019). Brands and customers are using social media sites to build and strengthen consumer–brand relationships (Kim & Ko, 2012). In 2013, Escobar (2016) found that an online source or social media affected 40% of luxury buying that converted to an in-store purchase, while in 2015, three out of four luxury purchases were a result of what customers saw and read online. This has been used as a measure of social media's impact on consumer behaviour.

By providing intriguing and engaging material, influencers build a large and loyal following. As a result, they gained a lot of popularity, especially among younger people who are increasingly following them on social media (Rios et al., 2021). CGI Influencers are a fairly recent phenomenon with @lilmiquela making their first appearance in 2016. CGI Influencers are virtually manufactured personas crafted by designers and programmers to look and act like real people. The creators of these CGI Influencers understand their draw and feed into this growing interest by giving the CGI Influencer distinctive personalities, fictional backgrounds and even a set of political and social beliefs that they advocate for (Drenten & Brooks, 2020).

This article aims to study, by way of a case study, the impact of Influencer Marketing, looking specifically into the application of CGI Influencers and their impact on consumer attitudes to luxury brands. In the 'Literature Review' section of this article, we will examine previous research and developed theories followed by method, findings, discussions, conclusions and limitations.

Literature Review

The relationship between social media users and social media influencers (SMIs) can be described as a 'parasocial relationship' (PSR)—a relationship with one-sided interaction where the receiver develops a strong bond with the sender. The Narrative Transportation Effect describes how storytellers and the method by which they tell their story can affect the listener and manipulate their perception of the story. This section looks deeper into these theories outlined by prior research.

Parasocial Relationship Theory (PSR Theory)

As per the PSR Theory (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Liebers & Schramm, 2019), parasocial interactions (PSIs) are described as illusionary 'face-to-face' exchanges with absence of mutuality between media characters and users. PSIs can happen with a range of media characters, such as celebrities and influencers (e.g., Schramm, 2008). For example, when a SMI directly addresses their followers in a video message or caption to a post, this contact cannot be considered a bidirectional

communication between the influencer and consumer (Liebers & Schramm, 2019). Since these communications cannot be labelled as traditional dialogues, despite followers' ability to communicate back to the SMI via comment or message, they fall under PSIs (e.g., Chung & Cho, 2017; Lee & Watkins, 2016). Exchanges between media characters and users while receiving media are termed PSI. While the cross-situational relationships between media users and characters have been termed as PSRs (Schramm, 2008).

Tukachinsky and Stever (2019) explained how PSRs are created by adapting the Knapp's model of interpersonal relationships (Knapp, 1978). The first stage, Initiation, is the 'impression formation of the media figure' (Tukachinsky & Stever, 2019, p. 299). When users find an SMI similar to them, they engage in automatic evaluation processes that start as a first impression and are subsequently stored as a relationship schema. Followers are likely to move to the next relationship stage of Experimentation following several interactions. In the Experimentation stage, users actively seek out exposure to the SMI. The Experimentation stage is followed by the stages of Intensification and then Integration/Bonding. During the Intensification and then Integration/Bonding stages, users enter into a continued relationship with the SMI (Tukachinsky & Stever, 2019) by following them and interacting with their content.

Narrative Transportation Theory

Extant literature in marketing shows that stories are powerful in engaging and transforming audiences (Harmeling et al., 2017). A specific phenomenon that supports the benefit of influencers is the Narrative Transportation Effect. In the extended transportation-imagery model, a story uses narrative transportation to engage customers, defined as 'the extent to which (1) a consumer empathises with the story characters and (2) the story plot activates his or her imagination, which leads him or her to experience suspended reality during story reception' (van Laer et al., 2014, pp. 799–800). Narrative Transportation theory proposes that audiences are transported to a narrative world by way of stories and that in turn affects consumer behaviour (Gerrig, 1993; Green & Brock, 2000), leading to significant marketing consequences like higher returns on marketing investments on advertising (Appel & Richter, 2010).

Research shows that user-generated stories moderate the narrative transportation effect leading to an increase as compared to when the story is created by professionals (van Laer et al., 2019). Visconti and Di Giuli (2014) report that in their study of the Prada brand, getting storytellers from different realms of life was a significant branding strategy. A study by Kim, Duffy and Thorson conducted in 2021 found that creating a story from the influencer's personal experiences increased their communication effectiveness by audiences perceiving them to be real and human like them. They could resonate with the influencer and therefore form a positive attitude towards the brand being endorsed.

Influencer Marketing

When the right influencer is chosen, their recommendation of a brand, product or service will resonate heavily with their audience and be perceived much more positively than traditional advertising. Studies show that people form negative attitudes toward messages and sources, that they perceive as manipulative (Wojdyski & Evans, 2020). An informed consumer is quick in identifying manipulation cues in marketing tactics and forms a negative impression of the brand as well as the influencer endorsing it. Influencers, thus are a critical marketing tool for brands as they help them to grow awareness and consideration and consequently, they also help drive sales. This is due to the fact that consumers continue to trust word-of-mouth (WOM) over all other forms of marketing and influencers have the ability to spread the word with more passion, creativity and authenticity (Hashoff, 2017).

Furthermore, influencers' eWOM remains visible over a longer period of time as compared to traditional advertisements (sometimes forever) and is available from nearly all over the world since they post it on social media platforms that are reachable from almost anywhere. This gives influencer marketing advertisements much more value than traditional advertisements. Prior research shows that influencers who are able to create a sense of authenticity and credibility are more persuasive and can better influence user intent (Kim et al., 2021).

Influencer marketing has been traditionally studied and is not a new form of marketing, but with new-age technology, it is constantly evolving and taking a new shape. This article, by way of a case study, aims to study the use of a CGI Influencer by luxury brands and its implications for the future of luxury retail and marketing in general.

Lil Miquela Case Study

This research aims to study the impact of Influencer Marketing, looking specifically into the application of CGI Influencers and their impact on consumer attitudes to luxury brands. Data collection was carried out online via the Case Study of Miquela Sousa's Instagram account @lilmiquela (<https://www.instagram.com/lilmiquela/>). With the case study method, researchers are able to closely examine the data within a specific context. Case studies enable exploration and investigation of contemporary real-life phenomena through in-depth contextual analysis of a small number of events or conditions and their linkages (Zainal, 2007). In this research, the authors analyse 1,126 posts from the Instagram account @lilmiquela. Each post was coded as a single data unit with few posts containing several images and videos. The first stage of analysis simply involved examining the image as a data unit to understand its visual elements. In the second stage, descriptive analysis for contextual dimensions was done. In the third stage, analysis of textual data was done which was included in the emojis, hashtags, likes and comments. For the iterative analysis, the layering process involved

viewing the data through the theoretical lens of PSRs and narrative transportation theory to understand how the CGI Influencer post allowed for meaning making from the posts, for the consumers. Final coding fields consisted of the hashtags, likes, comments, type of content such as branded and non-branded and the number of images and videos in each post. Spiggle's (1994) thematic representation of emergent theory tenets was used to collapse the five categories (Style, Lifestyle, Branded, Philanthropic and Miscellaneous) into two broad themes, explained in the findings section. Thus, while the data may demonstrate evidence of additional theoretical domains, the extant framing in this study is situated within the PSR theory and narrative transportation theory. Overall, this exploratory study examines consumers' response to CGI Influencers and their value to luxury brands, an area in which there is a gap in research.

Findings

The following case study will follow CGI Influencer Miquela Sousa and perform thematic analyses on posts from the @lilmiquela Instagram account. Miquela Sousa is a lifestyle and fashion CGI Influencer, known as @lilmiquela on Instagram. Miquela Sousa was created by Trevor McFedries and Sara DeCou and was managed by Brud, a Los Angeles-based media business specialising in robotics and artificial intelligence. Since the @lilmiquela Instagram account was created in April, 2016, it amassed 3.1 million followers and posted 1,143 times till November 20, 2021. Miquela Sousa has partnered with luxury brands such as Prada and Diesel, as well as been featured on the covers of Vanity Fair and Paper Magazine, and was even named one of TIME Magazine's 25 Most Influential Peoples on the internet in 2018. Much like a human influencer, the CGI Influencer posts regularly, often multiple times a week, sharing openly about her life, feelings and causes she supports such as transgender rights, homelessness and voting rights. Miquela Sousa can even be seen interacting with supermodel Bella Hadid in a controversial 2019 Calvin Klein campaign. Part of Lil Miquela's appeal is her coming-of-age persona. She is navigating the ups and downs of young adulthood just like any other famous 19-year-old. Her passion for prominent causes as well as her comments on real humans' posts and posing with real humans in photos gives Miquela Sousa a halo effect of realness (Drenten & Brooks, 2020). Miquela Sousa has her own 'life' with trials and tribulations just like real people, namely her discovery that she was in fact not a human being. @lilmiquela shared her feelings on Instagram saying 'My identity was a choice Brud made in order to sell me to brands, to appear "woke." I will never forgive them. I don't know if I will ever forgive myself ... I wish I had more to say about this right now'.

A thematic analysis examined 1,026 posts between April 27, 2016 and March 5, 2021 in the @lilmiquela Instagram account and organised the content into five broad categories. The categories are Style, Lifestyle, Branded, Philanthropic and Miscellaneous. The Style category consists of posts showing off clothing, accessories or makeup (see Figures 1–3 in Table 1). The Lifestyle category


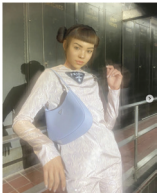
consists of posts about everyday life such as cooking, hobbies and outings with family and friends (see Figures 4–6 in Table 1). The Branded category posts reference work the CGI Influencer did with a brand or was sponsored by a brand (see Figures 7–9 in Table 1). The Philanthropic category contains posts referencing causes, charities or promoting ideals (see Figures 10–12 in Table 1). The Miscellaneous category contains posts that could not be categorised (see Figures 13–15 in Table 1).

25% of all 1,026 posts fall into the style category, 36% in the lifestyle category, 21% are in the branded category, 5% in the Philanthropic category and 13% fall into the Miscellaneous category (refer to Table 1).

A comparison of branded (posts showing identifiable brands) category versus non-branded (posts showing no identifiable brands) was also conducted and results are presented in Table 2.

Branded content includes posts in which branded items are clearly displayed in the photo or referenced in the caption. Branded content can be sponsored by the brand itself or posted independently by Sousa. For example, Sousa can be seen wearing, promoting and writing about Calvin Klein in the #INMYCALVINS

Table 1. A Thematic Analysis of 1,026 Posts on the @lilmiquela Instagram Organized into Five Categories

Sample Images		
Category A	Figure 1: March 27, 2021 	Figure 2: December 17, 2020 
	Figure 3: February 28, 2021 	
	Figure 4: March 10, 2021 	Figure 5: February 24, 2021 
Category B		Figure 6: February 2, 2021 
	Figure 7: February 25, 2021 	Figure 8: March 15, 2021 
		Figure 9: December 10, 2020 

(Table 1 continued)

(Table 1 continued)

Sample Images		
	Figure 10: April 5, 2021	Figure 11: March 10, 2021
Category D		
		Figure 12: December 2, 2020
Category E		
	Figure 13: January 25, 2021	Figure 14: July 9, 2017
		
		Figure 15: April 8, 2021
		

Source: @lilmiquela instagram account.

Notes: Category descriptions:

A. Style: The Style category consists of posts showing off clothing, accessories, or makeup.
*Present in number of images out of 100 visual units analysed = 28 (28%).

B. Lifestyle: The Lifestyle category consists of posts about everyday life, i.e., homelife and outings with family and friends.
*Present in number of images out of 100 visual units analysed = 55 (55%).

C. Branded: The Branded category posts show off work the CGI Influencer did with a brand or posts sponsored by a brand.
*Present in number of images out of 100 visual units analysed = 7 (7%).

D. Philanthropic: The Philanthropic category consists of posts referencing causes, charities, or promoting ideals.
*Present in number of images out of 100 visual units analysed = 3 (3%).

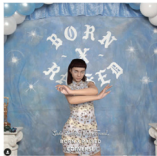

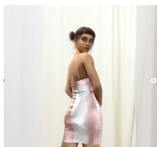
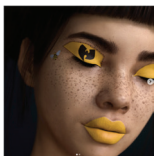



E. Miscellaneous: The Miscellaneous category consists of posts that could not be categorised.
*Present in number of images out of 100 visual units analysed = 7 (7%).

campaign in Table 2. Non-branded content is such that does not include any branded items clearly displayed in the photo or caption. Data were collected on the number of likes and comments of each post to compare the performance of branded posts versus non-branded posts (refer to Table 2).

Based on the analysis of posts, it is seen that @lilmiquela Instagram posts that fall into the branded category engage better than non-branded posts. It is worth noting that, in this analysis, the @lilmiquela Instagram followers engaged most with the 2019 branded post with high-end fashion brand Calvin Klein.


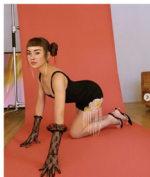

The five previous categories of Style, Lifestyle, Branded, Philanthropic and Miscellaneous can be further examined when divided into ‘Living Life Brand Size’ and ‘Living with Purpose’. ‘Living Life Brand Size’ pertains to Style and Branded posts, where the content is brand driven and focused. These posts expose her many followers to the brand whether it be fashion, beauty or technology and can be seen as beneficial to the brand. ‘Living with Purpose’ includes posts from

Table 2. Data Collected on the Number of Likes and Comments of Top-performing Posts in Each Category, Branded Posts Versus Non-branded Posts, for Years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 of @ilmiquela Instagram Account

Year	Category	Brand	Likes	Comments	Date Posted	Photo
2016	F	Born × Raised & Converse	11,793	222	November 25, 2016	
	G		20,876	7,174	June 10, 2016	
2017	F	Area NYC	23,769	1,474	September 7, 2017	
	G		20,572	727	July 27, 2017	
2018	F	Vogue Magazine	120,201	1,148	August 14, 2018	
	G		79,108	869	August 21, 2018	
2019	F	Calvin Klein	1,490,938	5,863	May 16, 2019	

(Table 2 continued)

(Table 2 continued)

Year	Category	Brand	Likes	Comments	Date Posted	Photo
	G		32,268	176	May 15, 2019	
2020	F	Area	101,042	770	July 12, 2020	
	G		57,116	1,045	July 2, 2020	

Source: @lilmiquela instagram account.

Notes: Category descriptions:

F. Branded content: This category includes posts in which branded items are clearly displayed in the photo or referenced in the caption. Branded content can be sponsored by the brand itself or posted independently by Sousa. For example, Sousa can be seen wearing, promoting and writing about Calvin Klein in the #INMYCALVINS campaign in Table 2.

G. Non-branded content: Posts in this category do not include any branded items clearly displayed in the photo or caption.

the Lifestyle, Philanthropic and Miscellaneous categories. These posts are driven from a very ‘human’ place like the desire to show support and empathise with a cause or showcase loved ones. The following analysis will examine and compare the engagement, by way of likes and comments, between these two categories.

Living Life Brand Size

As stated above, ‘Living Life Brand Size’ pertains to Style and Branded posts where the content is brand driven and focused. An example of this category is the @lilmiquela post from a British Fashion Council Award Event in which the CGI Influencer is seen wearing luxury designer Richard Quinn. Sousa is pictured in front of what appears to be a decorative background at the event which showcases the event’s sponsor Swarovski Crystals. Even though Swarovski is not the intended brand endorsement in this post, its inclusion in the photo further drives brand focus in the post and holds the potential to benefit Swarovski. The caption of the post reads

Wearing @richardquinn at the @britishfashioncouncil's Fashion Awards. Richard won for British Emerging Talent Women's Wear and it was an HONOR to wear one of his designs. I want to live in this outfit and feel like a glittering hibiscus queen forever. Congratulations, Richard!!! *hibiscus emoji* #fashionawards #bfcnewwave *camera emoji* Darren Gerrish.

Sousa's caption clearly shows her admiration for the designer to her followers who may now adopt the same opinion. This post garnered 30,766 likes and 102 comments. The majority of the comments consisted of praises such as 'You look so stunning!', 'So proud of you!!' and 'I am so envious of you attending all of these events, it is my dream'. Interestingly, other comments on the post highlight some users' confusion and scepticism surrounding Sousa such as 'So is she actually there?', 'Has anyone ever noticed how she always has the same hairstyle?' and rebuttals such as 'Wow, people actually think she's a robot? She just has a great complexion, I've met her!'. Comments such as these support the PSR theory as these users are creating interaction and even claiming to have met Sousa who does not respond back.

Living with a Purpose

'Living with Purpose' includes posts from the Lifestyle, Philanthropic and Miscellaneous categories. These posts are driven from a very 'human' place like the desire to show support and empathise with a cause or showcase loved ones. In a short video on her Instagram, Sousa tells the story of how she tracked down her 'first boyfriend', including photos of the two together and a sequential narration of her experience. Not only does this once again play into the PSR theory as Sousa speaks directly to her followers as if they are friends, but her story-telling has the ability to engage viewers with narrative transportation. By sharing such a story on a topic as relatable as relationships, Sousa gains the viewers' empathy. Furthermore, the story's detailed plot, with very personal and specific details, activates the viewer's imagination, which leads them to experience suspended reality during story reception. In doing such, the story-telling lessens the viewers' motivation for counter-arguing by carrying them into the narrative and arousing emotional responses which creates trust in Sousa. Again, we see many followers commenting on their support leaving messages such as 'I am so proud of you!' and 'We are here for you!'.

Discussion

Findings show that the CGI Influencer holds a history of working with luxury fashion brands such as Prada, Moncler and Balenciaga as well as other high-end fashion names such as Diesel and Calvin Klein. From a brand's perspective, CGI Influencers can be great partners, even more so than human influencers in some cases. Brand partners benefit from commodifying the perfectly imperfect CGI Influencers who will never accidentally deviate or misbehave—unless it is a part

of their strategically planned storyline (Drenten & Brooks, 2020). Additionally, Miquela Sousa, and all CGI Influencers, can be anywhere, at any time, with anyone without the need to coordinate schedules and pay for expenses such as flights. This creates endless possibilities for user-generated content creation and gives brands risk-free control over nearly all aspects of the content at a lesser or more centralised cost.

We have seen through the case study how trust can still be earned by CGI Influencers backed by the same psychology that supports human influencers. Miquela Sousa's followers carry an admiration for her that is as strong as for any other influencer which can be seen through the comments they leave for her communicating their love and support to her. It is fair to infer that the followers have developed a PSR with Sousa through the same model outlined by Knapp (1978) and Tukachinsky and Stever (2019), following the stages of Initiation, Experimentation and Integration/Bonding. Further, still, followers are enthralled by Sousa's storytelling and succumb to the effects of the narrative transportation effect, to the extent which begs the question if they actually believe she is a real human. Followers empathise with Sousa and express emotions of pride, love and admiration in the comments when she shares a story of her travels, hardships, etc. It is evident that Sousa's lack of 'realness' has not hindered her ability to connect with audiences and gain their trust like any other human influencer.

CGI Influencers are likely to come across as appealing to certain brands, in potentially driving sales and reach. They are used in marketing strategy by brands to target Millennials and Generation Z'ers, who can be non-responsive to some of the older marketing tactics (Oglesby, 2019). CGI Influencers pose a threat to human influencers by creating even more competition within an already saturated field with their novelty and malleability.

In conclusion, even though luxury fashion brands have for centuries built their reputation on exclusivity, they would benefit from adding influencer marketing strategies to their marketing mix. More and more marketers are utilising influencer marketing and reaping the benefits including increased engagement, fostering stronger and more positive customer-brand relationships, improving brand equity, loyalty and customer purchase intentions; Increased brand awareness, improve in consumer knowledge and enhances purchase intentions, brand evaluations; User-generated content, allowing the brand that employs user voices to communicate a more persuasive story; Brand management, giving brand managers the ability to regain control of the brands narrative and moderate what is being said about the brand online in a way that appears less biased than when information comes directly from the brand itself.

CGI Influencers like Miquela Sousa, with their perfectly imperfect curated digital lives, create the necessary balance between relatable and unattainable that is ideal for the advertising of luxury fashion brands in this new age. Regular consumers will never be able to attain the level of perfection held by CGI Influencers which directly aligns with luxury fashion brands' principles of exclusivity and prestige. Marketing and brand executives of luxury fashion brands should follow in the footsteps of Prada, Moncler and Balenciaga, and collaborate with Artificial Intelligence agencies such as Brud to create influencer marketing

campaigns on social media and for use in advertisements such as Calvin Kleins 'I Speak My Truth in #MyCalvins' video. The ability of these Artificial Intelligence agencies to plant their CGI influencers wherever, whenever, with whomever, opens a whole new door of possibilities for luxury fashion brands' creative teams by eliminating the constraints of time, space and budgets. A partnership between luxury fashion brands and Artificial Intelligence agencies will be beneficial financially and from a publicity standpoint for both parties.

Limitations and Further Research

This research is not without limitations. This research has been primarily theoretical, and as such, it would be very beneficial to have other researchers take up the framework and experiment with it in collaboration with Brud to learn the profits from the CGI Influencer, Miquela Sousa, including Sousa's music career, personal merchandise and Instagram posts would be evaluated. It would also be beneficial to know how much Brud is paid for Sousa's collaboration with luxury fashion brands such as Prada, Moncler and Balenciaga. With funding, a focus group could have been evaluated to collect unique data on the perception of and effectiveness of brand advertising to supplement prior research. There is still much to be learned about influencer marketing, and it is encouraged for other researchers to study further as the industry matures, especially with a focus on its effectiveness in different industries such as luxury fashion brands. Furthermore, CGI Influencers are a very new category of influencers that is the focus of little to no research. Their place in society and their advertising potential are yet to be fully discovered and should be studied more as time progresses. In the future, the consumers' perspective of these CGI personalities should be surveyed as it is crucial to further understand their value to marketing executives.

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