
Mien or Mind: the Effect of Digital Beauty on Trust

Completed Research Paper

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Abstract

Online interactions anchor on the creation and maintenance of personal virtual image. A critical component of virtual image is personal pictures shared online, which are subject to enhancements and may deviate from actual physical appearance. We study the adoption of digital makeup in enhancing personal profile picture in a laboratory experiment. In the experiment, participants play the investment game (REF) with their profile pictures shown saliently. Our results suggest that when participants' profile pictures are enhanced, senders will decrease their level of trust, while the responders will increase the level of trustworthiness. The use of digital makeup software will increase the trust and trustworthiness of senders and responders respectively.

Keywords: Virtual image, Digital makeup, Trust, Self-presentation, Investment game