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The Economics of Authenticity: How Sincerity is Created and Sold in the Creative Industries

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Abstract: The object of the study is the creative economy of the Russian Federation in the period 2021-2024, viewed through the prism of the phenomenon of authenticity. The subject of the study is economic indicators reflecting the creation and commercialization of intangible assets (intellectual property, innovation, and unique content), which are interpreted as proxy variables of the "authenticity economy." The aim of the work is to identify empirical patterns between investments in intellectual property, intangible assets and commercial results of creative industries, as well as to determine the dynamics of the transformation of the cost structure towards intangible production. The methodology of this study includes statistical time series analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, calculation of chain growth rates and data visualization. An almost linear relationship (r = 0.998) has been established between revenue and investments in intellectual property. It was revealed that the share of such investments in the total volume of investments increased from 27.3% to 48.5% in four years. A high synchronicity of growth in gross value added, profit and intangible assets was also revealed; the innovative activity of enterprises increased from 10.7% to 13.6%. The data obtained confirm the scientific hypothesis that in the creative industries authenticity (as uniqueness and immateriality) becomes a key factor in creating value, and its commercialization is carried out through investments in intellectual products and their subsequent capitalization.

Keywords: economy of authenticity, creative industries, intellectual property, intangible assets, innovation activity, commercialization of sincerity, statistical analysis.

INTRODUCING

Ontologically, authenticity and sincerity are rooted in the nature of human existence as a desire for authenticity, for the correspondence of internal content to external expression [1], [2]. As the world develops trends change, the digital marketing environment and business had been through significant transformation. Over 1,600 influencers manage across major social media platforms now, in sectors such as fashion, beauty, and entertainment [3]. In classical philosophy, authenticity was associated with the self, with loyalty to oneself, while sincerity was understood as honesty in relationships with Others, but in the era of total consumption and the global market, these categories are undergoing a significant transformation. Epistemologically, the problem lies in the fact that the knowledge of authenticity becomes mediated by sign systems, brands, narratives, and we can no longer directly "grasp" sincerity, we are forced to interpret it through material and symbolic artifacts [3]. In the consumer society, the epistemic status of authenticity is changing dramatically, as it turns from an internal characteristic of the subject into an external attribute of the product, into a marketing category [4]. Sincerity begins to be sold, and authenticity begins to be produced, and it is this paradox that underlies the so-called "authenticity economy," in which uniqueness, creation history, human involvement, and intangible qualities become the main sources of added value. Creative industries such as cinema, music, literature, design, software, and art are the environments where authenticity is most clearly produced, since their product is unique by definition and cannot be replicated in a material sense. The theoretical significance of this research lies in the concretization of abstract philosophical concepts through specific economic indicators, which makes it possible to combine the humanitarian and economic traditions. The practical significance lies in identifying patterns useful for managing creative clusters, investment policy, and evaluating the effectiveness of investments in intangible production.

Within marketing scholarship in USA, authenticity is commonly defined as the perceived alignment between a brand's expressed values and its observable actions, generating consumer trust [5]. In the context of celebrity branding, authenticity is closely linked to perceptions that a celebrity acts in accordance with their "true self" [6]. This research proposes that when consumers have knowledge that a celebrity has low investment in a brand (endorsement or celebrity brand), the celebrity will be viewed as being less authentic. For example, a single social media post may represent an endorsement from a celebrity, e.g. Selena Gomez posting pictures of herself with Coca-Cola, Pantene and Louis Vuitton on Twitter [7]. In spite of the lucrative nature of endorsements – reports suggest Selena Gomez can earn upwards of $800,000 per social media post [8].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

By the economy of authenticity, we mean a way of managing in which a unique, irreproducible experience or artifact bearing the imprint of the creator's personality and perceived as a sincere act of creation becomes the key resource and final product [9], [10]. The creation and sale of sincerity in the creative industries are realized through several mechanisms: 1. through narrative - the history of the creation of the work, the biography of the author, the process of work become part of the product; 2. through limitation - replication, exclusivity, collectibles; 3. by involving the audience in collaborative creativity, which enhances the sense of authenticity. [11], [12], [13]. Creative industries encompass activities based on individual creativity, skills and talent that can create wealth and jobs by generating intellectual property, these include, among others, software production, film, music, literature, visual arts, advertising, design and related sectors [14], [15], [16]. For empirical analysis, we used Rosstat data on key economic indicators of the creative economy for 2021-2024. Since there are no direct metrics for assessing "sincerity" or "authenticity" in official reporting, we have modeled a system of proxy indicators reflecting the intangible nature of production.: 1) investments in intellectual property; 2) intangible assets, changes in their book value; 3) the level of innovation activity; 4) the resulting financial variables (revenue, profit, gross value added). The research methodology included several stages: I. the data were structured in tabular form by year; II. the chain growth rates for each indicator were calculated, which made it possible to assess the dynamics of changes; III. Pearson correlation analysis was performed between all variables to identify the strength and direction of the relationships; IV. data visualization was performed in the form of line graphs, diagrams scattering with regression lines and heat maps of correlations. All calculations are completed.

As for the research for USA marketing scholarship was made by 3 steps: 1) Industry representation: music (Billie Eilish), beauty (Hailey Bieber), and activism (Selena Gomez); 2) Authenticity claims: Publicly asserted commitments to "genuine" self-expression; 3) Commercial success: Documented revenue exceeding $100M annually: a) systematic analysis of 150+ Instagram/TikTok posts using content analysis frameworks; b) comparative assessment of product launches and documentary releases; c) evaluation against academic authenticity models [3]; d) examination of both successful and failed authenticity initiatives.

RESEARCH RESULTS

An analysis of the dynamics of key financial indicators for 2021-2024 demonstrates the steady growth of Russia's creative economy. [*]. Table 1 shows the selected economic indicators that we use as a proxy for authenticity and its commercial effectiveness.

Table 1: Main indicators of the creative economy of the Russian Federation, 2021-2024

Year	Gross value added, bln rub.	Contribution to GDP, %	GVA Physical Volume Index, %	Revenue (net), bln rub.	Profit from sales, bln rub.	Investments in fixed assets, bln rub.	IP object, bln rub.	Intangible assets, bln rub.	Change in IP value, %	The level of innovation activity, %	IP share in investments, %
2021	3 903,5	3,2	119,5	5 904,1	575,0	323,4	88,3	173,6	114,4	10,7	7,3
2022	4 592,2	3,2	97,0	6 580,8	605,1	417,8	132,8	228,1	111,3	9,9	1,8
2023	5 993,4	3,8	115,6	8 845,2	1 084,5	604,7	269,3	438,6	128,6	10,7	4,5
2024	7 475,2	4,1	112,1	10 727,9	1 368,8	855,3	415,2	705,8	144,0	13,6	8,5

Source: developed by the authors according to Rosstat data in the Python environment using the pandas, numpy, matplotlib, seaborn and scipy libraries

Gross value added has almost doubled, from 3,903.5 billion rubles to 7,475.2 billion rubles, and the contribution to GDP has increased from 3.2% to 4.1%, indicating an increased importance of the creative sector in the national economy. The GVA physical volume index shows uneven dynamics: a decline in 2022 to 97.0% (probably due to external shocks) is followed by an increase (recovery) to 115.6% in 2023 and 112.1% in 2024. Sales revenue increased by 81.7 % over four years, from 5,904.1 billion to 10,727.9 billion rubles. The profit from sales shows an even more impressive increase from 575.0 to 1368.8 billion rubles, that is, 2.38 times, and this clearly indicates an improvement in profitability, which may be due to an increase in the share of intangible added value, which usually has a higher margin. These dynamics are visualized in Figure 1 (linear graphs of GVA, revenue and profit).

[*] Creative economy. Rosstat.- URL: https://rosstat.gov.ru/statistics/Creative_Economy

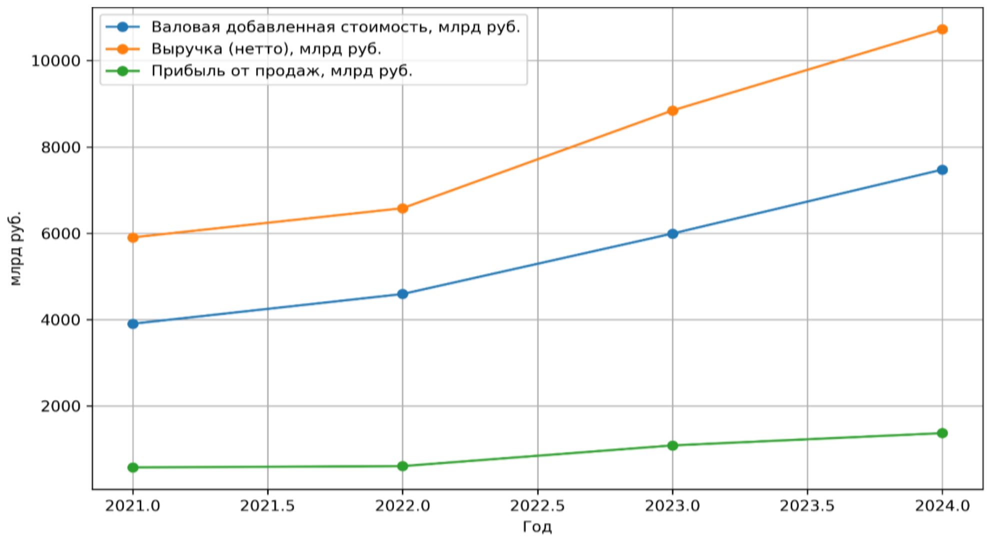

Figure 1: Dynamics of key financial indicators

Source: developed by the authors

Figure 1 clearly shows the synchronous upward movement of all three indicators, with profit growing faster than revenue (this is typical for digital and creative products, where the marginal cost of copying is close to zero [17]).

Figure 2 illustrates the dynamics of investments in IP and intangible assets, demonstrating their faster growth compared to total investments.

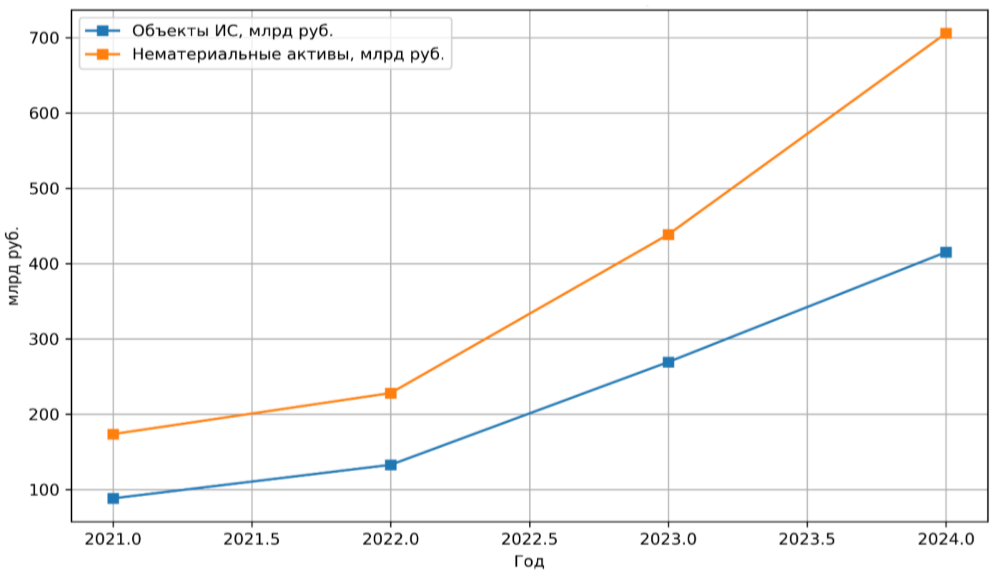

Figure 2: Dynamics of investments in IP and intangible assets

Source: developed by the authors

The total volume of investments increased from 323.4 to 855.3 billion rubles, while investments in intellectual property (IP) increased from 88.3 to 415.2 billion rubles, or 4.7

times (growth rate of 370.2%) and as a result, the share of investments in IP in the total volume of investments increased from 27.3% in 2021 to 48.5 % will almost double in 2024. This is a fundamental structural shift, as creative enterprises increasingly devote resources to creating intangible assets (patents, copyrights, licenses, software, brands) that form the material basis of authenticity. At the same time, intangible assets (including intellectual property) increased from 173.6 billion rubles to 705.8 billion rubles, i.e. 4.06 times, which indicates the accumulation of authenticity capital, which does not depreciate physically, but, on the contrary, can bring returns over time. The change in the accounting value of IP objects also accelerated: in 2021, the increase was 114.4%, in 2022 - 111.3%, in 2023 - 128.6%, and in 2024 - already 144.0%, which means that the market is overestimating intellectual assets upward, which correlates with an increase in confidence in them as a reliable source. income.

Figure 3 (double axis) shows the simultaneous growth of the IP share in investments and the level of innovation activity of organizations.

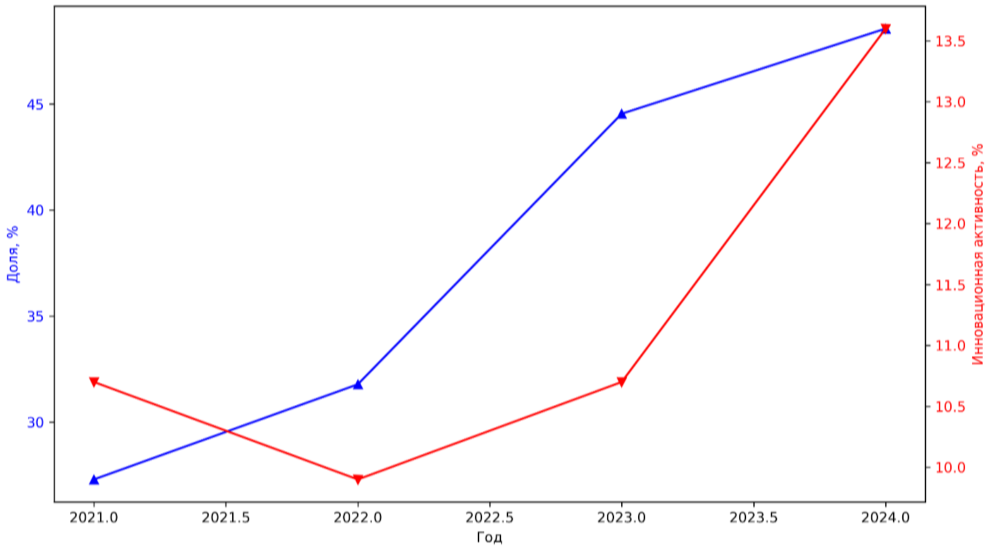

Figure 3: Structural indicators of authenticity

Source: developed by the authors

Innovation activity, measured as the proportion of enterprises engaged in technological, marketing, or organizational innovations, increased from 10.7% in 2021 to 13.6% in 2024, with the drop to 9.9% in 2022 being quickly offset. In other words, innovation and a focus on intangible assets "go hand in hand," which confirms our hypothesis that authenticity requires constant updating and creative search.

To assess the intensity of the changes, we calculated the chain growth rates (Table 2), which objectively show that 2022 was a year of stagnation or even decline in a number of indicators (the GVA physical volume index fell by 18.8%; the change in the value of IP decreased by 2.7%; innovation activity fell by 7.5%), which is likely This is due to geopolitical upheavals, but already in 2023 there is a powerful rebound: revenue growth by 34.4%, profit by 79.2%, IP investments by 102.8%, intangible assets by 92.3%, and IP value change by 15.5%. In 2024, the growth rate slowed down slightly, but remained high: revenue added

21.3%, profit - 26.2%, investments in IP - 54.2%, intangible assets - 60.9%, which indicates a structural restructuring of the creative economy, which, after an external shock, not only recovered, but also moved to a qualitatively new level, where intangible assets play a leading role.

Table 2: Chain growth rates of indicators, %

Year	Gross value added	Contribution to GDP	GVA Physical Volume Index	Revenue	Profit	Investments in fixed assets	IP objects	Intangible assets	Change in IP value	The level of innovation activity
2022	+17,64	0,00	-18,83	+11,46	+5,23	+29,19	+50,40	+31,39	-2,71	-7,48
2023	+30,51	+18,75	+19,18	+34,41	+79,23	+44,73	+102,79	+92,28	+15,54	+8,08
2024	+24,72	+7,89	-3,03	+21,28	+26,21	+41,44	+54,18	+60,92	+11,98	+27,10

Source: developed by the authors according to Rosstat data in the Python environment using the pandas, numpy, matplotlib, seaborn and scipy libraries

Correlation analysis provides even more convincing results. The matrix of paired correlations (Table 3) shows that almost all the selected indicators are closely related to each other.

Table 3: Pearson correlation matrix (selected, all coefficients are given in full)

Indicator	GVA	Contribution to GDP	GVA Physical Volume Index	Revenue	Profit	Investments in OK	IP oblect	Intangible assets	Change in IP value	Innovative activity	IP share in investments
GVA	1,00	0,98	0,08	1,00	0,99	1,00	1,00	0,99	0,96	0,84	0,97
Contribution to GDP	0,98	1,00	0,28	0,99	1,00	0,97	0,98	0,98	0,98	0,83	0,98
GVA Physical Volume Index	0,08	0,28	1,00	0,14	0,24	0,07	0,12	0,14	0,31	0,30	0,13
Revenue	1,00	0,99	0,14	1,00	0,99	0,99	1,00	0,99	0,98	0,84	0,98
Profit	0,99	1,00	0,24	0,99	1,00	0,98	0,99	0,98	0,98	0,84	0,98
Investments in OK	1,00	0,97	0,07	0,99	0,98	1,00	1,00	1,00	0,97	0,86	0,96
IP oblect	1,00	0,98	0,12	1,00	0,99	1,00	1,00	1,00	0,98	0,86	0,97
Intangible assets	0,99	0,98	0,14	0,99	0,98	1,00	1,00	1,00	0,98	0,89	0,95
Change in IP value	0,96	0,98	0,31	0,98	0,98	0,97	0,98	0,98	1,00	0,92	0,93
Innovative activity	0,84	0,83	0,30	0,84	0,84	0,86	0,86	0,89	0,92	1,00	0,72
IP share in investments	0,97	0,98	0,13	0,98	0,98	0,96	0,97	0,95	0,93	0,72	1,00

Source: developed by the authors according to Rosstat data in the Python environment using the pandas, numpy, matplotlib, seaborn and scipy libraries

The correlation coefficients between gross value added, revenue, profit, investments in fixed assets and IP objects exceed 0.98, which indicates an almost linear relationship. The correlation between revenue and investments in IP objects is of the greatest interest: $r = 0.998$ at $p = 0.002$ is practically a functional relationship. This means that an increase in the cost of creating intellectual property leads almost directly to an increase in revenue, which confirms the thesis of a high return on investment in authenticity. The correlation between profit and contribution to GDP also reaches 0.999, indicating that profit growth is fully reflected in the increased macroeconomic importance of the sector. The correlations of innovation activity with other variables are slightly lower, but still positive (from 0.72 to 0.92), which is understandable since innovation is a broader concept that includes both product and process innovations that are not always directly monetized in the short term, but the trend is positive. The correlation heat map (Figure 4) clearly demonstrates the cluster structure: all financial and investment variables form a dense block, and innovation activity adjoins it with somewhat less force.

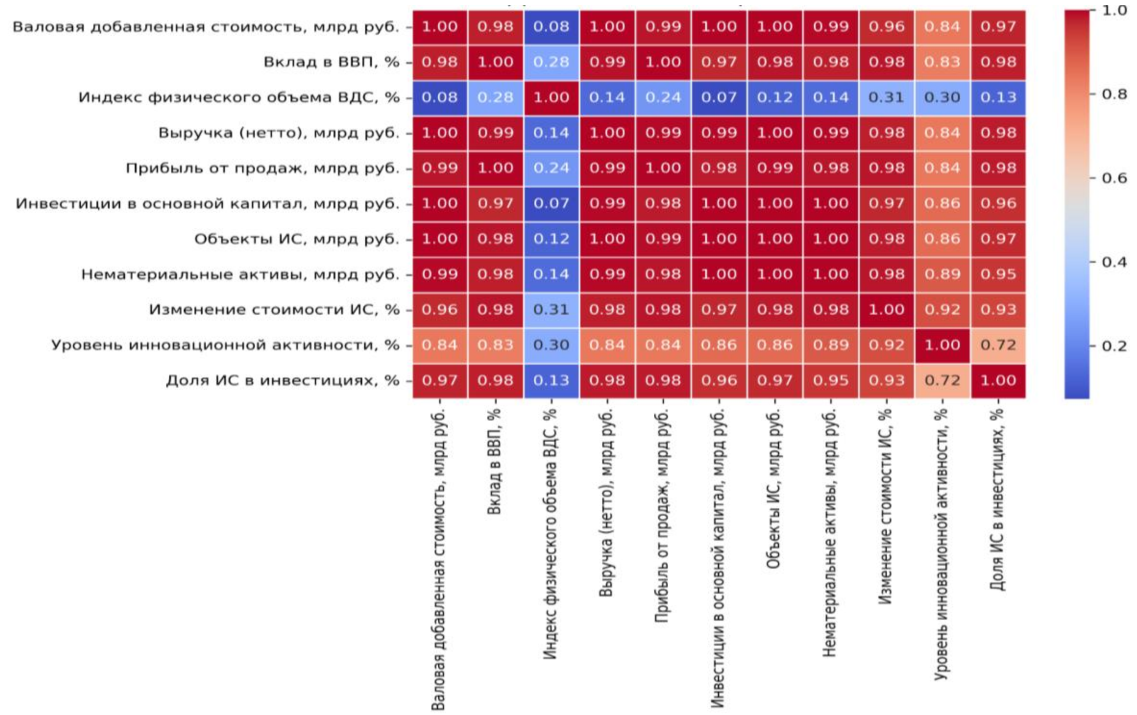

Figure 4: Thermal correlation matrix of indicators

Source: developed by the authors

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of indicators (for 2021-2024)

Indicator	Quantity	Average	Standard deviation	Min	The 25th percentile	The median	The 75th percentile	Max
GVA	4	5 491,1	1 583,0	3 903,5	4 420,0	5 292,8	6 363,8	7 475,2
Contribution to GDP	4	3,6	0,4	3,2	3,2	3,5	3,9	4,1
GVA Physical Volume Index	4	111,1	9,8	97,0	108,3	113,9	116,6	119,5
Revenue	4	8 014,5	2 203,2	5 904,1	6 411,6	7 713,0	9 315,9	10 727,9
Profit	4	908,3	385,6	575,0	597,6	844,8	1 155,6	1 368,8
Investments in OK	4	550,3	234,5	323,4	394,2	511,3	667,4	855,3
IP oblect	4	226,4	147,6	88,3	121,7	201,1	305,8	415,2
Intangible assets	4	386,5	241,6	173,6	214,5	333,4	505,4	705,8
Change in IP value	4	124,6	15,0	111,3	113,6	121,5	132,5	144,0
Innovative activity	4	11,2	1,6	9,9	10,5	10,7	11,4	13,6
IP share in investments	4	38,0	10,1	27,3	30,7	38,2	45,5	48,5

Source: developed by the authors according to Rosstat data in the Python environment using the pandas, numpy, matplotlib, seaborn and scipy libraries

Descriptive statistics: Table 4 shows the average values, standard deviations and range for each indicator, so the average gross value added over four years was 5491.1 billion rubles. with a standard deviation of 1583.0; revenue 8,014.5 ± 2,203.2; profit 908.3 ± 385.6; investments in IP 226.4 ± 147.6; intangible assets 386.5 ± 241.6. The range of values indicates a pronounced upward trend with no signs of saturation. The coefficients of variation (the ratio of the standard deviation to the average) for investments in IP and intangible assets are 0.65 and 0.63, respectively, which are higher than for revenue (0.27) or GVA (0.29), and this indicates that intangible components are growing faster and are drivers of overall growth.

Additionally, investment efficiency indicators were calculated: the ratio of revenue growth to investment growth in IP for each year. In 2022, this ratio was approximately 8.5 (revenue growth of 676.7 billion rubles for investment growth of 44.5 billion rubles), in 2023 - 12.8, and in 2024 - 8.9. This means that every ruble invested in intellectual property generates from 8 to 13 rubles of additional revenue, which is an exceptionally high return. Such indicators can serve as a guideline for investment policy in the creative sectors.

Figure 5 shows a scatter plot with a regression line showing the dependence of revenue on investments in IP facilities.

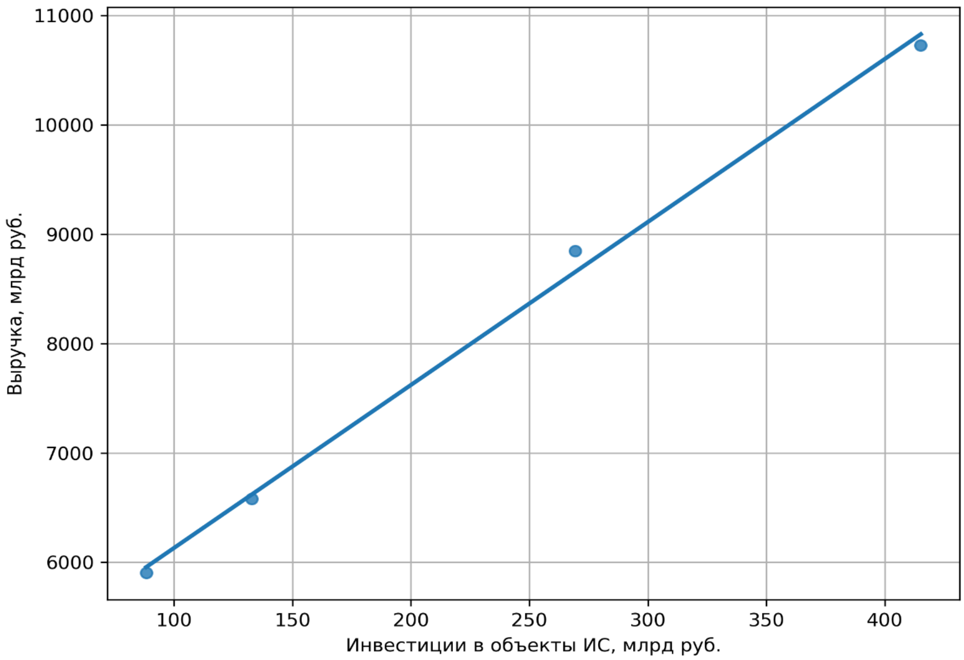

Figure 5: Dependence of revenue on investments in IP (regression equation)

Source: developed by the authors

The points almost lie on a straight line, which visually confirms the correlation coefficient of 0.998. This is one of the strongest arguments in favor of the fact that investments in authenticity (intangible assets) are directly converted into financial results.

Therefore, in USA marketing divided into archetypes of advertising and brand positioning, for example, Billie Eilish: The Rebel Archetype.

Eilish's 2019 Vogue interview – slouched in an oversized hoodie, sipping soda while critiquing pop culture – sparked debates about her authenticity. Yet as Troisi et al. (2022) found: "Audiences don't demand perfection but consistency in self-presentation."

Her anti-glamour stance (baggy clothes, raw lyrics) became "weaponized authenticity." By 2023, high-fashion designers copied her thrift-store aesthetic for $10,000 Met Gala dresses. The irony? Her rebellion became so valuable that "the industry started replicating it" [18]. **Economic impact**: Generated $131.7 with hers “Happier Than Ever” tour (Parade, Jessica Sager). This demonstrates how consistent nonconformity converts authenticity into commercial capital.

Another type, Hailey Bieber: The Relatability Expert

Bieber’s "clean-girl aesthetic" (slicked hair, minimal makeup) seems effortless. But her GRWM videos reveal 7+ Rhode products creating that "natural" glow. This exemplifies what Boucher et al. (2022) term: "Aspirational accessibility – selling luxury as attainable fantasy."

Her $28 peptide gloss succeeds because it lets consumers think "I can be Hailey" – despite requiring professional-level resources. This paradox drives what Dutot and Lichy (2022) call "the authenticity premium" where consumers pay more for perceived genuineness. **Economic impact:** Hailey Bieber sold her make-up brand to e.l.f. Beauty for $1 billion, and she stayed Chief Creative Officer (BBC, Natalie Sherman). The $1B valuation of her Rhode brand [19] directly resulted from this authenticity strategy, with consumers purchasing not merely products but perceived transformation into Bieber's lifestyle.

Selena Gomez describes and shows the type of Vulnerability Pioneer

Gomez’s documentary *My Mind & Me* showed raw moments like sobbing backstage. This wasn’t just "messy" – it strategically aligned with Rare Beauty’s mission. As Troisi et al. (2022) observe: "Successful influencers curate vulnerability to build communities, not just products." Her donation of 1% to mental health creates what Boucher et al. (2022) call "purpose-driven consumption" – turning customers into movement participants. **Economic impact:** Selena raised over $20 million for charities, and her brand is worth $2.7 billion (Reddit). This demonstrates how curated openness generates both social capital and economic value.

DISCUSSION

The growth of investments in intellectual property and intangible assets is closely correlated with financial results, which confirms our central hypothesis that authenticity as an economic category is becoming a real factor of production. The high consistency of the indicators and their logical interpretation suggest that the trend is stable.

CONCLUSION

The correlation picture we have obtained suggests that sincerity and authenticity, when translated into economic indicators, become measurable and manageable factors. By investing in the creation of unique content and brands, creative enterprises not only increase their revenue, but also enhance the macroeconomic contribution of the sector. Our scientific hypothesis that the commercialization of sincerity is carried out through investments in intellectual property has been empirically confirmed.

USA three patterns emerge: 1) authenticity requires consistency – Eilish’s style evolved but kept its core; 2) vulnerability builds trust – Gomez’s mental health advocacy creates loyal communities; 3) relatability drives sales – Bieber’s "achievable luxury" approach fuels purchases. As Boucher et al. (2022) summarize: "The most successful influencers treat authenticity not as a trait but as a practice – consciously performed yet genuinely felt."

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