

Perceived Interactivity Moderates the Effect of Aesthetic VR Narrative on Well-Being

Abstract

Well-being, as a positive and fulfilling state, supports both individual growth and social health. It reflects quality of life and the ability to find purpose. This study examined how well-being may be shaped by narrative virtual reality (VR), with a specific focus on the moderating role of perceived spatial presence and interactivity within VR. Eighty-one art-engaged participants experienced either a 360° cinematic or interactive VR condition, with well-being measured before and after the experience. While no significant difference was found between the cinematic and interactive formats, results revealed that perceived interactivity (Spatial Presence: Possible Actions) significantly moderated the change in well-being. Participants with higher perceived interactivity experienced greater improvements in well-being, suggesting that subjective presence—rather than actual interactivity—enhances positive outcomes. These findings indicate that aesthetic VR experiences, through perceived engagement, can foster well-being, supporting art's potential for personal enrichment even in virtual settings.