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UTILIZING VIRTUAL REALITY TECHNOLOGY TO DEVELOP CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Abstract:

Virtual Reality (VR) is an immersive technology providing simulated experiences to its users. VR has been used as a learning platform for simulated training in the workplace. As an emerging technology, VR is gaining popularity in corporate training. This study used a VR head-mounted device to gather qualitative and quantitative data from participants and conduct a mixed methods study. We gathered qualitative and quantitative data from a sample of graduate business management students who have work experience, performed a variety of data analyses techniques, and triangulated the results in order to derive theoretical interpretations and draw conclusions of participants' perceptions of VR technology in helping them develop CQ. Through a deductive thematic approach, written reflections were coded to derive theoretical themes for behavioral, cognitive, psychological, and experiential factors. Additionally, word frequency, statistical, and sentiment analyses were also conducted and data were triangulated to draw conclusions of participants' development related to CQ. Results revealed a convergence of participant statements, sentiments, and CQ scores. We also identified experiential factors to serve as a boundary condition when evaluating the usefulness of VR technology as a training platform for developing CQ. In other words, when a participant's previous experience of VR technology is primarily negative, they tend to reflect on those inconveniences more than focusing on the simulation topic at hand (i.e., CQ). In summary, this research is an initial step in empirically analyzing a conventional concept (CQ) using an emerging technology (VR) so as to advance our understanding of the dimensions and affordances of this technology for workplace trainings. Through the usage of VR technology, the study offered participants an opportunity to experience an immersive and engaging cultural environment. We incorporated a technology that is being increasingly used for non-technical skills training to build on past CQ literature and bridge a research-practice gap.

Keywords:

virtual reality, cultural intelligence, diversity

JEL Classification: M16, M10, M19