**Avatars with faces of real people: A construction method for scientific experiments in virtual reality**

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**Study 1 description**

Can participants identify avatars of real people that they are familiar with?

* Avatar Block: Participants viewed avatars of real people and identified them if they knew who they were (Counterbalanced with Photo Block).
* Photo Block: Participants viewed photos of the avatars’ real-world counterparts and identified them if they knew who they were (Counterbalanced with Avatar Block).
* Name Block: Participants viewed names of each avatar, and confirmed yes/no if they were visually familiar with that person’s appearance.
* Based on positive responses in the Name Block, data from the Avatar and Photo Block were transformed into four categories:
  + Identified Avatar and Photo
  + Identified Avatar but not Photo
  + Identified Photo but not Avatar
  + Identified neither Photo nor Avatar
* Data were analysed via a within-subjects ANOVA.

**Study 2 description**

Can participants match avatars of real people to digital photographs of their real-life counterparts?

* Avatar-Photo Block: Participants viewed avatars alongside a photograph and responded as to whether these depicted the same person (identity match), or two different people (Identity mismatch).
* Name Block: Participants viewed names of each avatar, and confirmed yes/no if they were visually familiar with that person’s appearance.
* Based on positive responses in the Name Block, data from the Avatar-Photo Block were transformed into four categories:
  + Familiar match
  + Familiar mismatch
  + Unfamiliar match
  + Unfamiliar mismatch
* Accuracy and signal detection data for each of these levels were calculated, and were analysed via a 2 (trial type: identity match versus identity mismatch) x 2 (familiarity: familiar versus unfamiliar) within-subjects ANOVA.

**Study 3 description**

This study performed a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) on the similarity of the avatar faces and their photographic real-life counterparts, to establish that these two representations of each identity occupied a similar perceptual space.