

Avatar design types and user engagement in digital educational games during evaluation phase

ABSTRACT

Avatar design types can range from human representations to abstract representations. In digital educational games (DEGs), avatars are frequently used to encourage users to play the game. However, the role of avatar design types and their engagement in digital games are still unclear and empirically under research. Therefore, a bespoke digital educational game in geography was developed and validated by six expert users. Then forty-five users participated in the evaluation phase to investigate engagement and avatar types on digital educational games using the user engagement scale (UES). The results reported aesthetics and satisfaction factors somehow influenced the avatar design types, but none of the UES subscales was influenced by preferred avatar design types. Moreover, the human-cartoon avatar, which was not entirely human and cartoonish, was the most popular avatar design type among young adults. Other issues discussed for future developers and research included incorporating more avatar design selections into the study, integrating social interaction features into the game, using the same drawing style for avatars and provide easy access to the bespoke game during data collection.