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Affect over Embodiment in ASMR–VR: Immediate Well-Being via Mood Comparing a simple mediation with an embodiment-extended model

Abstract

Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) can shift mood, but its contribution to well-being in immersive VR is not well understood. We contrasted a simple, affect–first pathway with an embodimentextended alternative. Across models, the affect–first account was favored: stronger responsiveness to ASMR related to more positive immediate mood, which in turn related to higher immediate well-being. Adding body awareness and embodiment cues did not improve the model or establish a serial link through embodiment. Overall, improving affect seems more important than increasing embodiment for immediate gains in ASMR–VR. We outline design ideas for affect-focused VR microinterventions.