"The Charismulator" – Charisma simulator

A study of a VR intervention to improve charisma

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Introduction
Charisma is considered to be a “you know it when you see it” trait or ability. Although many consider it a gift that you are either born with or not, empirical studies have demonstrated that training to become more charismatic is effective. (Antonakis, Bastardoz, Jacquart, & Shamir, 2016). Antonakis, Fenley, & Liechti (2011) had specifically focused on teaching charisma, and the results of their study suggested that “charisma can be taught” (p. 392). However, the specific intervention in which charisma can be trained is still mostly unknown.

By combining leadership and virtual reality research, this current study focuses on the non-verbal communication aspect of charisma and on how to improve charisma through VR training. A new VR charisma training was developed based on Antonakis et al., 2011 three non-verbal charismatic leadership tactics:

- body gestures
- facial expressions
- animated voice tone

Methodology
This study was a laboratory experiment using experimental (charisma) and control (kickboxing) groups, with pre (Time 1) and post-test (Time 2) of charisma.

It included two samples: 121 Israeli Hebrew speaking attending participants, who came to practice the VR training (study design below), and 355 online American non-Hebrew speaking participants who evaluated the speakers’ charisma without understanding the content.

Results
Results demonstrated that participants who practiced charisma VR training increased charisma ratings by observers between the first and second measurements in contrast to the control groups. The difference between training in front of a virtual audience and an empty hall was insignificant.

Analysis

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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Audience</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>M T1 (52)</td>
<td>M T2 (53)</td>
<td>M T1 (50)</td>
<td>M T2 (51)</td>
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<tr>
<td>50 (charisma)</td>
<td>(1.4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(observers)</td>
<td>(0.15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCI (observers)</td>
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<td>GCI (tard-</td>
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Repeated Measures ANOVA results with Charisma rating index 1-100 by observers, GCI (observers), and GCI (tard-observers) as independent variable.

Conclusion
The results of this laboratory study indicated, once again, that charisma can be taught, and much faster than used to assume in previous studied (Antonakis et al., 2011) and also not depending on the coach/researcher’s abilities. It also indicated that improve in charisma can be implemented by only operating and evaluating non-verbal charismatic tactics. The influence of audience presence should be further explored in future research.

To the full research