

User-Avatar Relationships in Various Contexts

Does Context Influence Users' Perception and Choice of an Avatar

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Background

- Avatars are important for interacting in virtual environments
- It is important to understand how the relationship between user and avatar works
- There are many ways avatars can look like and many different contexts for virtual environments
- This study determines the influence of different contexts and representations on the perceptions of avatars

Research Question 1:

What influence does the representation form (realistic, low poly, comic-like) have on the user-avatar relationship in different contexts (work, game, meeting with friends)?

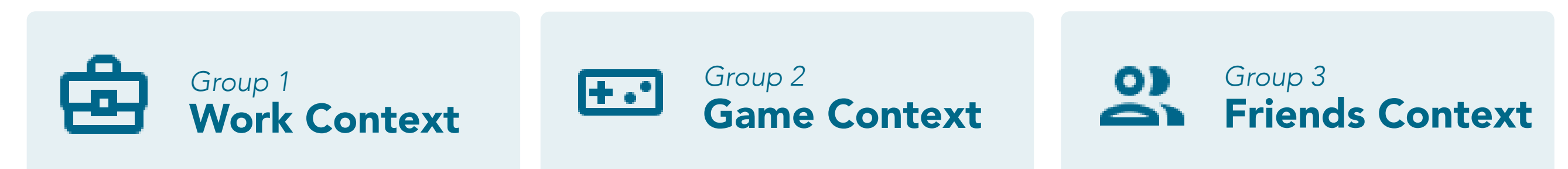
Research Question 2:

Which form of representation (realistic, low poly, comic-like) his preferred in different contexts (work, game, meeting with friends)?

Methodology

Quantitative online survey with 126 participants

Participants randomly divided in 3 groups



Choice of avatar representation form



[1]

Query for user avatar relationship for each avatar representation based on user-avatar typology by Banks [2]

Avatar-as-Object: The avatar is a tool for me through which I can interact with the environment.

Avatar-as-Me: The avatar should reflect me and represent me exactly as I am.

Avatar-as-Symbiot: The avatar should represent desirable characteristics and/or allow me to take on a different role.

Avatar-as-Social Other: The avatar is a character of its own for me, with individual character and I feel friendly feelings towards it.

[2]

Results

User-avatar relationship:



Figure 1: Representation form and chosen avatar perception for all contexts

Relation between representation and user-avatar relationship:

- Across all contexts and in single contexts significant
- Difference of work and game context regarding representation & avatar perception as self-representation is significant
- Comparison of game context and friend context is significant
- Comparison between work context and meeting with friends is not significant

Perception of user-avatar relationship:

- 50.00% perceive the realistic representation as self-representation
- 54.76% perceive the abstract low-poly representation as a tool
- 42.86% perceive the comic-like representation as a friend
- The Avatar-as-Symbiote relationship is not directly related to a representation

Avatar representation choice:

Working context: low poly was chosen by 47,6%

Gaming context: no clear preference

Meeting with friends: realistic representation was chosen by 42,1%

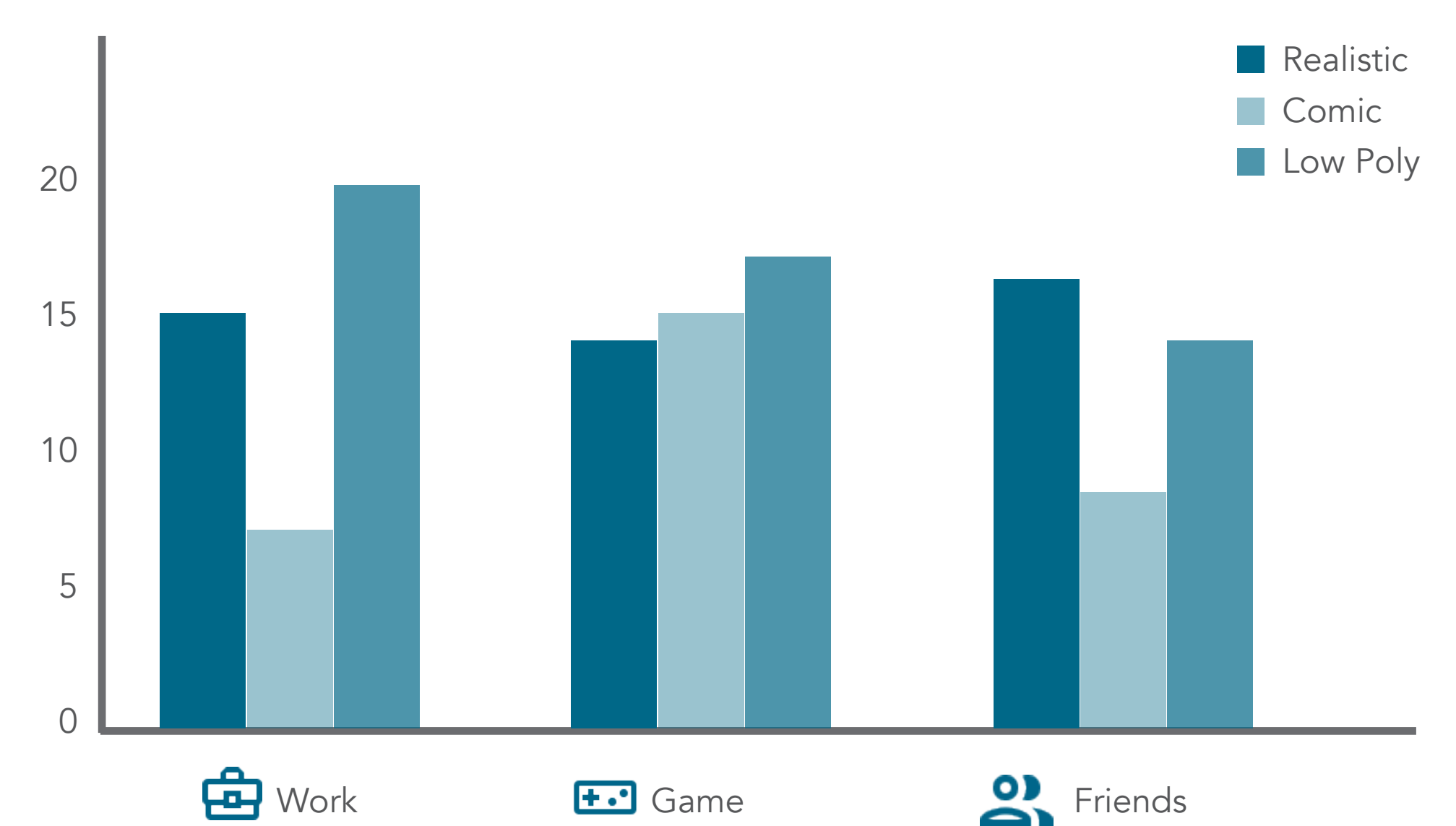


Figure 2: Avatar representation choice for each context

References

- [1] A: <https://www.cgtrader.com/free-3d-models/character?page=7> B: <http://www.unityfreaks.com/asset.php?id=538> <https://www.behance.net/gallery/74308775/CHARACTERS-2018> C: <https://www.behance.net/gallery/74308775/CHARACTERS-2018>; <https://www.domestika.org/es/projects/439308-3d-variados-2-0>; <https://www.artstation.com/artwork/L22EJO>
- [2] Jaime Banks. 2015. Object, Me, Symbiote, Other: A social typology of player- avatar relationships. First Monday (Feb. 2015). <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v20i2.5433>