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Bijlages: foto VR studie, profile pictureP

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| **SAGE Ocean Blog – Submission Template** | |
| **Blog post title**  What will capture the audience? | Virtual Reality: The future for user experience research |
| **Choose a content stream**  Please delete what does not apply. | * Tools & Tech * Methods Innovation |
| **Key messaging** | Virtual reality offers a both realistic and controlled research environment. That is why VR is the future for carrying out valid and reliable research in the social sciences. |
| **Tags**  Please tag appropriate keywords. | Virtual reality, consumer experience, experimental research |
| **Author(s)**  Please list all authors including short biographies. You can attach a bio picture to the email if you like (not compulsory). | Ruth Pijls, Senior lecturer/researcher – Saxion University of Applied Sciences  Ruth Pijls is a cognitive psychologist. She has worked as a researcher and consultant in the field of multi-sensory marketing. Currently, she is working at the Hospitality department of Saxion University of Applied Sciences in The Netherlands. Her expertise is on hospitality, customer experience and sensory perception. She is currently in the final phase of her PhD trajectory at the University of Twente on the experience of hospitality in service environments. |
| **Image description(s)**  All our posts include image(s). We are happy to source one for you but if you have an image you’d like to use please attach to the email and supply an image credit and a short description. | The entrance of the hotel that could be either transparent or opaque |
| **Twitter**  Please provide your Twitter handle and your company/institutions if possible. | @PijlsR  @SaxionUAS |
| **Virtual Reality: The future for user experience research**  Virtual reality (VR) offers both a realistic and a controlled research environment. Therefore, it is a very suitable technology to conduct valid and reliable research in the social sciences. Let me explain this by providing a concrete example of the use of VR in a study on the experience of hospitality.  During my PhD research on consumers' experiences of hospitality in services, I conducted experiments to investigate the role of particular environment cues on the hospitableness of the service environment.  For hospitality research, a controlled laboratory setting is not suitable. After all, how do you assess hospitality in a laboratory? That is why most experimental studies have been carried out in real service environments. I studied the influence of warm drinks on the experience of hospitality in a theatre, the role of comfortable seats in a self-service restaurant and the role of visual transparency and door opening at the entrance of a hotel.  To show the effects of such variables on people's experience of hospitality, the manipulations of the environmental variables need to be sufficiently pronounced. In the theatre, this was feasible by offering either warm drinks (tea or coffee) or cold drinks (ice tea or iced coffee). In the restaurant, it was also feasible to offer both comfortable chairs and uncomfortable stools. However, the transparency of an entrance is more difficult to manipulate.  In a pilot study, we manipulated this transparency by putting up a strip of adhesive semi-transparent plastic at eye level on the transparent revolving door at the entrance. Visitors could not see what was behind the door. Unfortunately, this manipulation turned out to be too subtle. But how can we manipulate visual transparency more effectively? It is quite impossible in real life to turn a transparent façade into an opaque one.  Virtual reality was the solution. With this technology, a virtual entrance to the lobby of a hotel was created (see the images below). In the transparent situation, the entrance, including the two automatic access doors, consisted mainly of glass. People were able to look inside the building as they approached it. For the opaque condition, the entrance and the doors were made opaque by using frosted glass. The light could still enter the building, but participants were not able to look inside.  Additionally, the virtual hotel entrance offers the possibility to better manipulate door speed, which served as another variable in our study. Instead of using a revolving door, the timing and the speed at which two automatic doors opened when participants approached the entrance were varied. In a fast-opening situation, both sets of doors opened smoothly after each other, so participants could walk right through. In the slow-opening situation, the first door only opened after participants had been standing still for a few seconds at the entrance door. After entering the building, the first door closed, and then the second automatic door opened, after which the participants could continue to enter the building. In the latter situation the door opening was experienced as slow and irritating, but the participants recognised this from real-life situations, for example, in nursing homes.  Advanced VR technology were used to trace the location of the participants. In this way, the doors reacted to the position of the participants. In VR it was also possible to implement avatars, representing hotel employees, who welcomed and instructed participants when they entered the reception desk.  Participants indicated that they experienced the virtual hotel as quite realistic. They had the feeling that they were really present in the virtual world. Participants, remarked for example that 'the environment in VR provides a good and realistic impression of the environment' and called this 'a very nice experience, it just seemed real!'.  Experimental research using VR is promising because it provides a realistic and controlled environment. It also enables the researcher to design and control particular environments. VR offers the possibility to examine the effects of environmental aspects on people's real-time experience in a realistic environment in which many variables can be controlled, similar to the conditions of a laboratory study. VR is also beneficial for training and educational purposes, in areas such as health care, service management and interior design. Ultimately, VR offers the opportunity to measure how people react and evaluate various (test) situations. | |