

Introduction

Immersive virtual-reality (VR) platforms promise to shift how people reason about right and wrong, yet little is known about how VR interacts with behavioural “nudges” that subtly frame moral choices.

This research investigates how virtual reality influences the effectiveness of nudges within moral dilemmas, and what implications this has for theories of moral behaviour and ethical intervention strategies.

VR x Utilitarian
Nudging

VR x
Deontological
Nudging

No VR x
Utilitarian
Nudging

No VR x
Deontological
Nudging

Results

Acceptance was higher for utilitarian (64%) than deontological (36%) nudges, especially in VR (73%)

Chi square and logistic regression showed no significant effects. The VR × Utilitarian interaction had a positive coefficient (0.201) and approached significance ($p = .15$)

Methods

this study made use of a 2x2 between-subject experimental design a total of 66 subjects recruited using a mixed approach

ETHICS IN 360°:

How does immersion in Virtual Reality shape the effectiveness of nudges in moral dilemma scenarios?

Hypothesis

VR immersion reduces psychological distance and increases both cognitive and emotional engagement, making people more likely to follow nudged moral decisions compared to less immersive environments.



New knowledge

VR may increase susceptibility to utilitarian moral nudges, descriptive patterns suggest an interaction between immersion and ethical framing.

Presence may be a key factor in psychological distance and moral judgment. However, statistical limitations may constrain applicability of findings.

Recommendations

Use larger sample sizes for adequate statistical power and incorporate physiological measures to assess presence and engagement.

Refine nudge phrasing to ensure clarity and conceptual distinction and explore within-subject or mixed designs to reduce variance.

Conclusion

VR increases the likelihood of utilitarian decisions, especially when paired with utilitarian nudges. No statistically significant effects were found due to the small sample size of the study.

However, groundwork for future immersive ethical training applications, education, marketing, law, psychology and AI training.

