Sensing the Media Character: Experiencing Parasocial Interaction, but Not Identification, as a Real Physical Occurrence

Supplemental Material

1. Complementary Findings for Testing H1

We also conducted a one-way planned-contrast analysis of variance (ANOVA) with style of address as the independent variable and parasocial interaction as the dependent variable. The following two planned contrasts used one-tailed tests with a Dunn correction which lowered the critical p-value to .0253. There was a significantly stronger experience of parasocial interaction when the character gazed at the audience than when he averted his gaze, $t(113) = 2.11$, $p = .019$ (one-tailed), Cohen's $d = .497$. However, the experience of parasocial interaction when the character gazed at the audience, although in the hypothesized direction, was not significantly stronger compared to the condition in which he gazed at a partner, $t(113) = 1.04$, $p = .15$ (one-tailed), Cohen's $d = .225$. This suggests that the effect of gazing at the audience compared to the other conditions was mainly driven by the "averted gaze" condition.

2. Complementary Findings for Testing H2

We repeated the above one-way planned-contrast ANOVA with identification as the dependent variable, and we used the modified critical p-value of .0253 based on Dunn correction. There was a significantly stronger experience of identification when the character gazed at a partner than when he averted his gaze, $t(113) = 1.98$, $p = .0250$ (one-tailed), Cohen's $d = .438$. However, the experience of identification when the character gazed at a partner compared to the condition where the character gazed at the audience was not significantly stronger, albeit in the expected direction, $t(113) = 1.47$, $p = .072$ (one-tailed), Cohen's $d = .330$. This suggests that the effect of

gazing at a partner compared to the other conditions was mainly driven by the "averted gaze" condition.

3. Complementary Findings for Testing H3

We conducted additional mediation analyses to examine Hypothesis 3 (H3) by analyzing each indicator separately instead of using a combined index as the dependent variable. The summarized results are presented in Table 1 below.

There were trends suggesting that parasocial interaction may have a stronger association with each individual indicator compared to identification. Furthermore, parasocial interaction demonstrated a potentially stronger mediating role between the style of address (direct gaze vs. the other two conditions) and each of the three indicators, compared to identification. However, despite observing these patterns, we did not find significant indirect effects even when parasocial interaction was included as a mediator. Given that the same pattern of results emerged when each indicator was examined separately, we believe that combining them into a mean index strengthens an existing pattern. Although the reliability of the combined index is somewhat questionable, it is worth considering that unreliable results do not necessarily negate the potential usefulness of a combined index, especially considering the unidimensional solution suggested by PCA. Still, we acknowledge the need for further research to address the reliability concerns associated with the combined index and replicate the findings with individual indicators. In summary, while caution is warranted due to the non-significant results of the mediation analyses with individual indicators, the combined index still contributes to the existing pattern.

Table 1

The Relationship between Style of Address and the Separate Indicators Composing the Indirect Measure of Social Presence: Results from Mediational Analyses

	DV: Perceived Crowdedness	
	Mediator: EPSI	Mediator: Identification
Total Effect	$b = .60$ (.40), $SE = .29$, $p = .049$, 95% CI [.030, 1.165]	
Path b (Mediator-DV)	$b = .19$ (.21), $SE = .09$, $p = .035$	$b = -.002$ (-.002), $SE = .12$, $p = .992$
Indirect Effect	$IE = .109$ (.074), $SE = .09$, 95% CI [-.014, .320]	$IE = .0001$ (.0001), $SE = .03$, 95% CI [-.048, .072]
Direct Effect	$b = .48$ (.33), $SE = .29$, $p = .093$, 95% CI [-.083, 1.059]	

	DV: Perceived Noise	
	Mediator: EPSI	Mediator: Identification
Total Effect	$b = .33$ (.28), $SE = .23$, $p = .159$, 95% CI [-.131, .794]	
Path b (Mediator-DV)	$b = .13$ (.18), $SE = .07$, $p = .068$	$b = -.039$ (-.040), $SE = .10$, $p = .680$
Indirect Effect	$IE = .08$ (.06), $SE = .08$, 95% CI [-.017, .276]	$IE = .005$ (.004), $SE = .03$, 95% CI [-.037, .074]
Direct Effect	$b = .25$ (.21), $SE = .24$, $p = .294$, 95% CI [-.220, .719]	

	DV: Perceived Warmth	
	Mediator: EPSI	Mediator: Identification
Total Effect	$b = .06$ (.05), $SE = .26$, $p = .822$, 95% CI [-.450, .565]	
Path b (Mediator-DV)	$b = .13$ (.17), $SE = .08$, $p = .099$	$b = .12$ (.12), $SE = .10$, $p = .232$
Indirect Effect	$IE = .092$ (.075), $SE = .09$, 95% CI [-.022, .305]	$IE = .010$ (.008), $SE = .04$, 95% CI [-.067, .112]
Direct Effect	$b = -.04$ (-.04), $SE = .26$, $p = .863$, 95% CI [-.554, .465]	

Note. Standardized regression coefficients are presented in brackets. The indoor temperature served as a covariate only when the dependent variable was the perceived warmth in the room.