

UC Merced

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

Shared experiences strengthen social connectedness through shared impression formation and communication behavior

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2bp9v575>

Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 45(45)

Authors

Mahaphanit, Wasita
Chang, Luke

Publication Date

2023

Peer reviewed

Shared experiences strengthen social connectedness through shared impression formation and communication behavior

Wasita Mahaphanit

Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, United States

Luke Chang

Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, United States

Abstract

We provide an empirical test for shared reality theory, which predicts individuals seek to share similar impressions about the world with others in order to connect and reduce uncertainty. We built an online platform permitting synchronous communication between groups of participants time-locked to video stimuli. We first presented participants with the same introduction to a reality show and then seamlessly showed different dyads within a group separate video segments depicting different social interactions between pairs of contestants. People reported feeling more connected to group members who underwent the same video experience compared to those who unknowingly watched a different video. The nature of the interactions also appeared to impact relationships as participants reported feeling more connected to partners who responded to their messages more quickly during the group chat. Together, these results highlight the importance of communication during shared experiences in aligning shared interpretations of reality and facilitating social connection.