

Pod me maybe: how Self-Disclosure attracts Lonely Listeners through Parasocial Relationships

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Abstract

Podcast consumption is rapidly increasing, while loneliness has become a growing societal concern. Because people often look to media personalities for a sense of connection, these two trends may meaningfully intersect. Building on research on loneliness and media-based companionship, we examined how lonely consumers respond to podcasts using an experimental design. Our findings show that when podcasters share personal information, thus engaging in self-disclosure, listeners form more favourable attitudes toward the podcast and express stronger interest in listening to future episodes. This occurs because self-disclosure strengthens perceived parasocial relationship with the podcaster. Moreover, this effect is amplified among listeners who report higher levels of loneliness.

Track: Consumer Behaviour