

You Are What You Read: The Relationship Between Experience-Taking and Behavior

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Overview

- What is Experience-Taking?
 - Outcomes of Experience-Taking
- Experience-Taking and Behavior
- Study 1 – Correlating experience-taking and performance changes
- Study 2 – Manipulating experience-taking
- Discussion and Application



What is Experience-Taking?

- In general language there is some confusion over the term (Carroll, 2011)
- Most common definition:
 - “...the imaginative process of assuming the perspective and identity of a character in a work of fiction, which leads individuals to experience, through simulation, the events of a narrative as if they were a particular character and to take on that character’s thought, emotions, behaviors, goals, and traits, while in the story world.” (Kaufman, 2009)
- Reader completely transcends self-other boundaries (Kaufman & Libby, 2012)



Outcomes of Experience-Taking

- Attribute protagonist's personality traits to the self (Kaufman & Libby, 2012)
- Share the character's attitudes, beliefs and goals (Kaufman & Libby, 2012)
- Exploration of ideal or possible selves (Green et al., 2004)
- Can provide pathways to goals through the character enacting them and the outcomes being “observed” by the reader (Green, 2005)



Experience-Taking and Behavior

- Engaging in experience-taking can cause a change in behavior (Kaufman & Libby, 2012)
 - Participants who engaged in experience-taking were more likely to vote in an election 2 weeks later



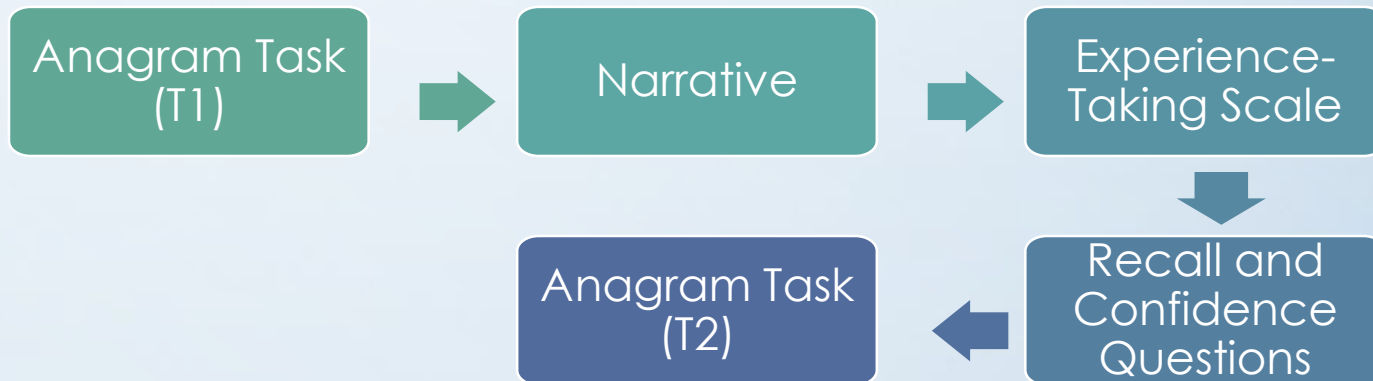
The Goal...

- The main goal of the presented studies is to examine whether engaging in experience-taking can lead participants to emulate the successful performance of a character in a narrative



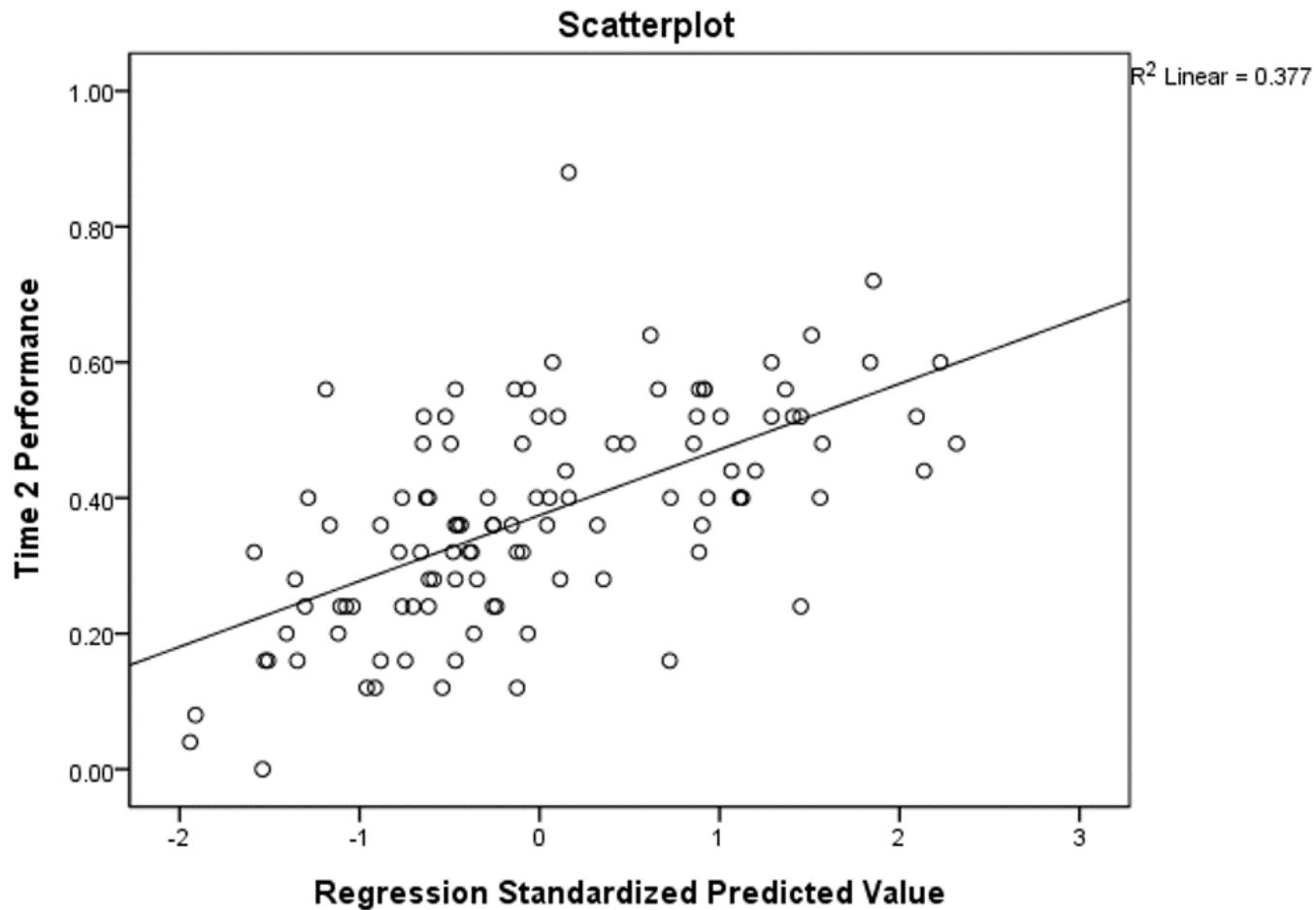
Study 1

- Hypotheses: Experience-taking will be positively correlated with...
 - How well the participants think they will do
 - Their confidence that they can perform well
 - Their actual performance
 - Their persistence



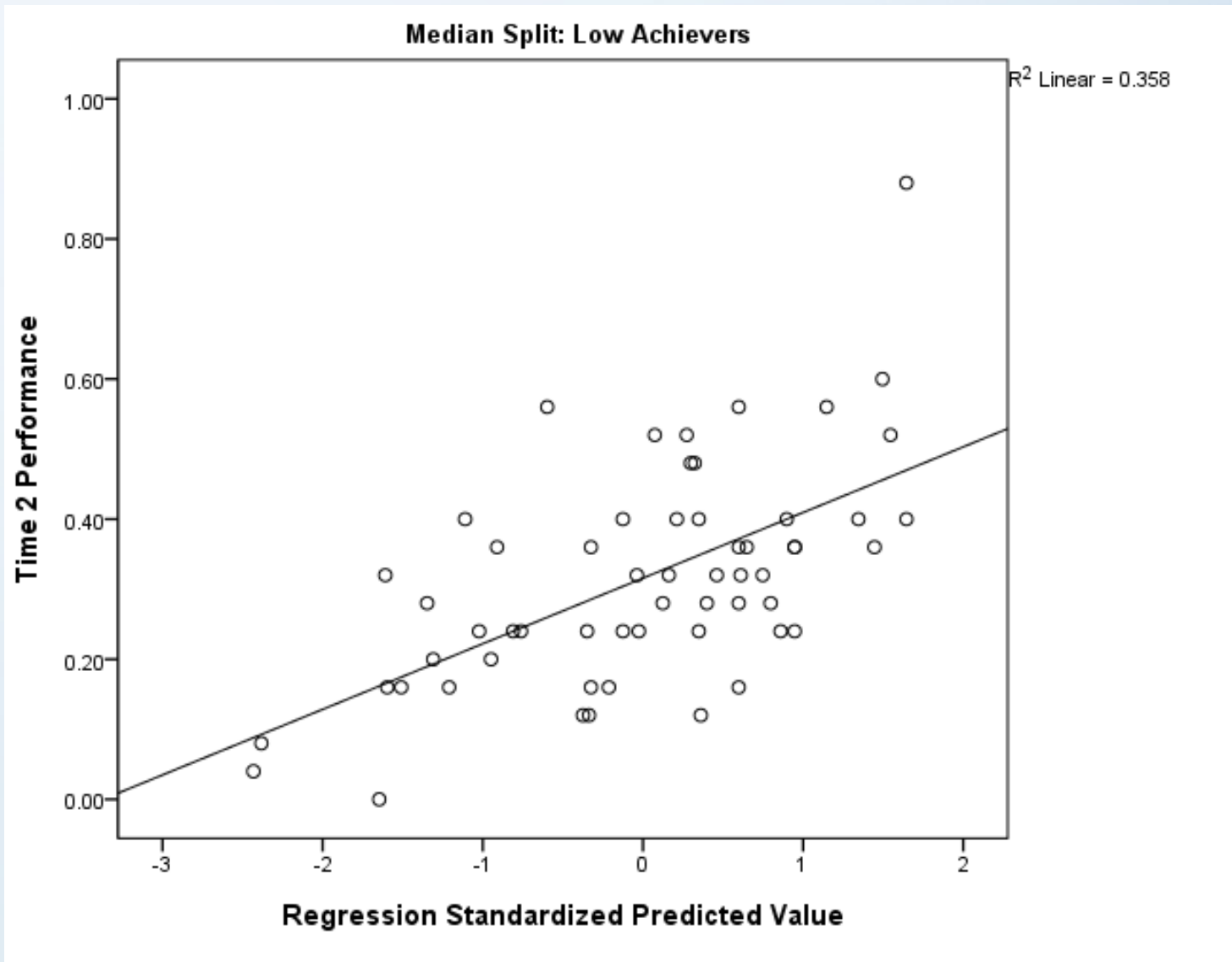
Study 1 Results

Time 1 Performance and Experience-Taking Predicting Time 2 Performance



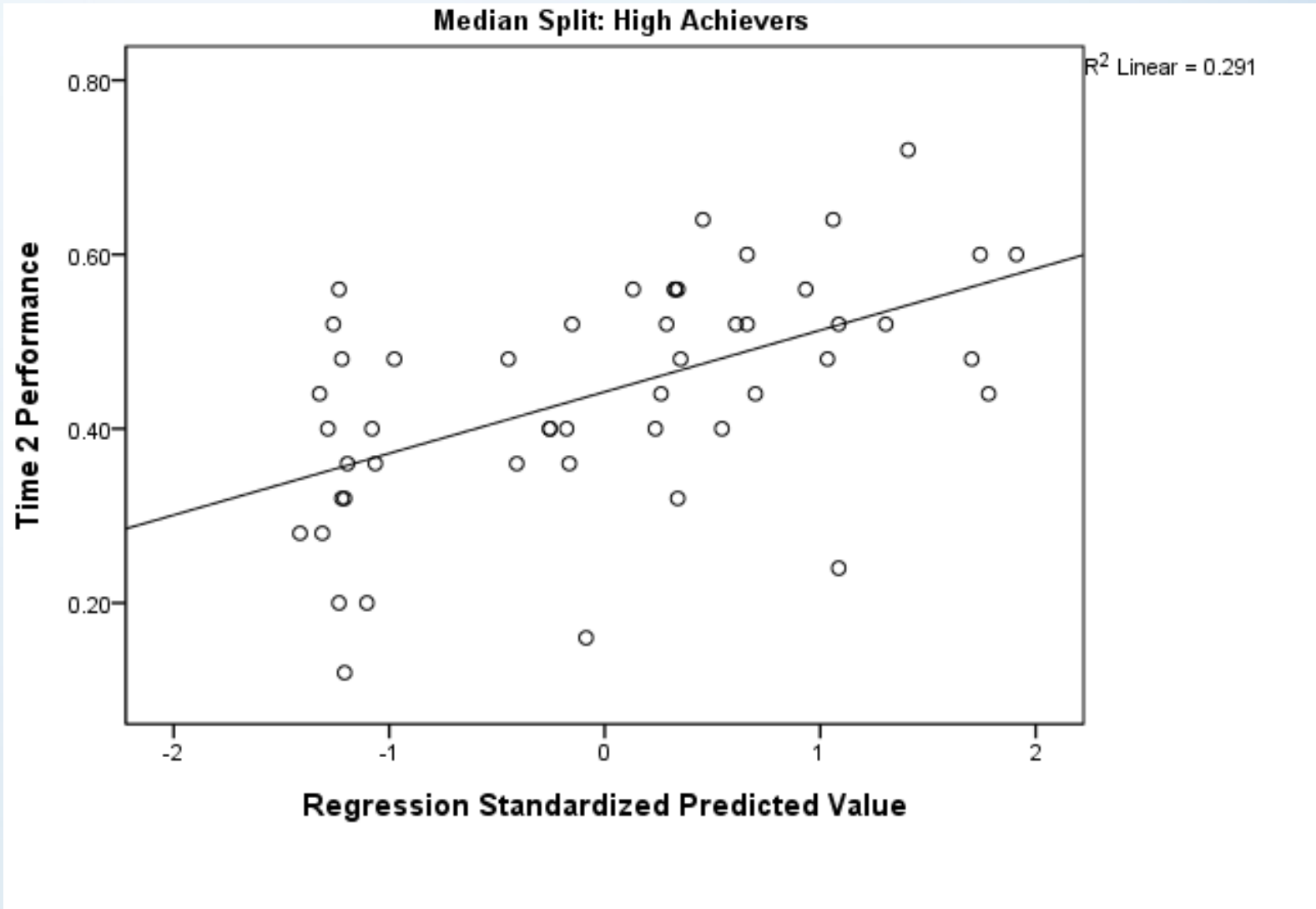
$$B = .158, t(105) = 2.032, p < .05$$

Study 1 Results



$B = .283, t(55) = 2.616, p < .03$

Study 1 Results



$B = .054, t(47) = -.436, p = .664$

Study 1 Results

- Perceived similarity with the character and experience-taking were highly correlated with each other, $r(106) = .557, p < .01$
 - Ran regression analysis to determine if similarity could be a mediator, analysis was not significant ($\beta = .060, t(105) = .749, p = .455$)



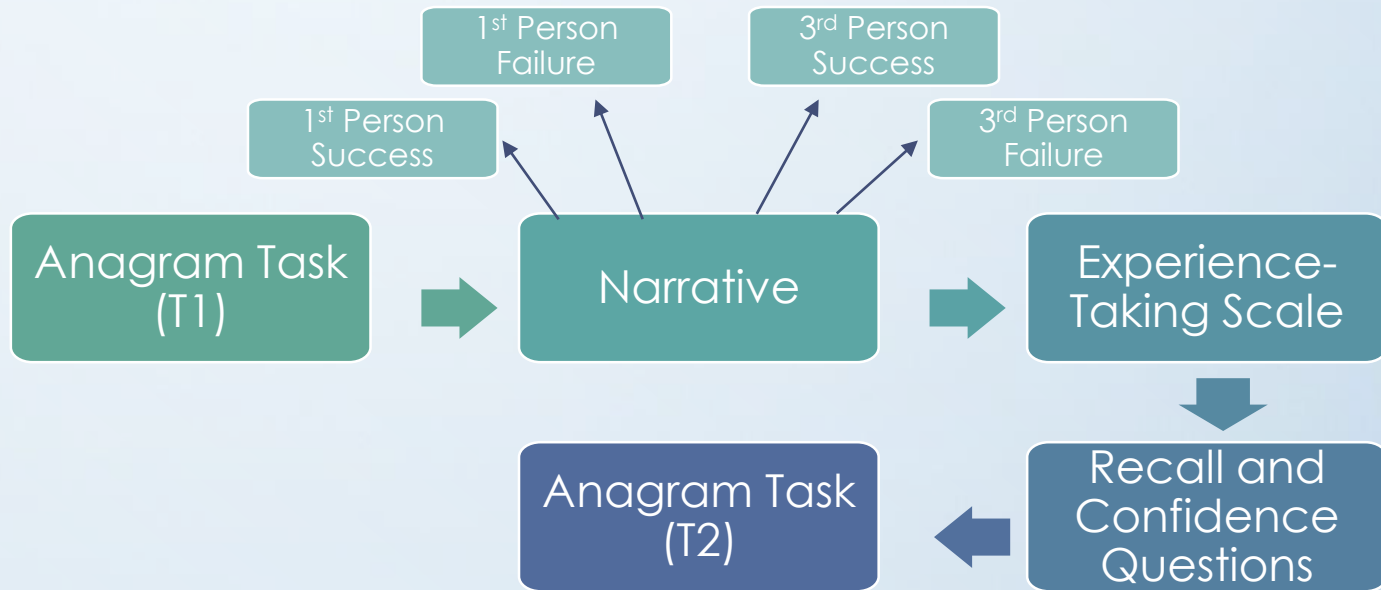
Study 2 Purpose

- The purpose of Study 2 was to attempt to manipulate experience-taking and assess its effect on performance
 - Used manipulation from previous research: 1st vs. 3rd person perspective (Kaufman & Libby, 2012)



Study 2 Methods

- Methodology identical to Study 1 but with added narrative manipulation.



Anagram Performance

- ANCOVA conducted on T2 performance with T1 performance as covariate
 - No significant main effect of Perspective on T2 performance

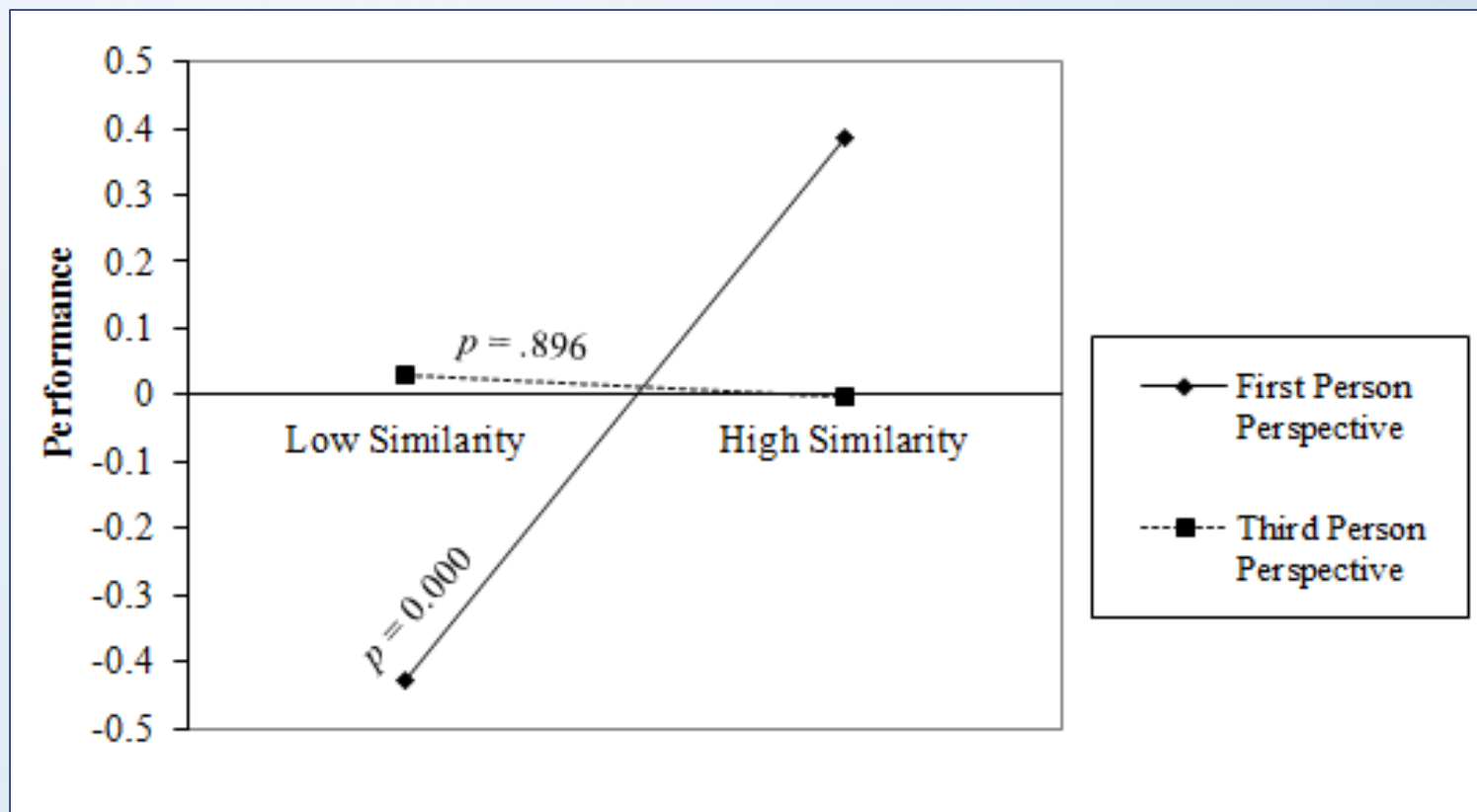


Anagram Performance

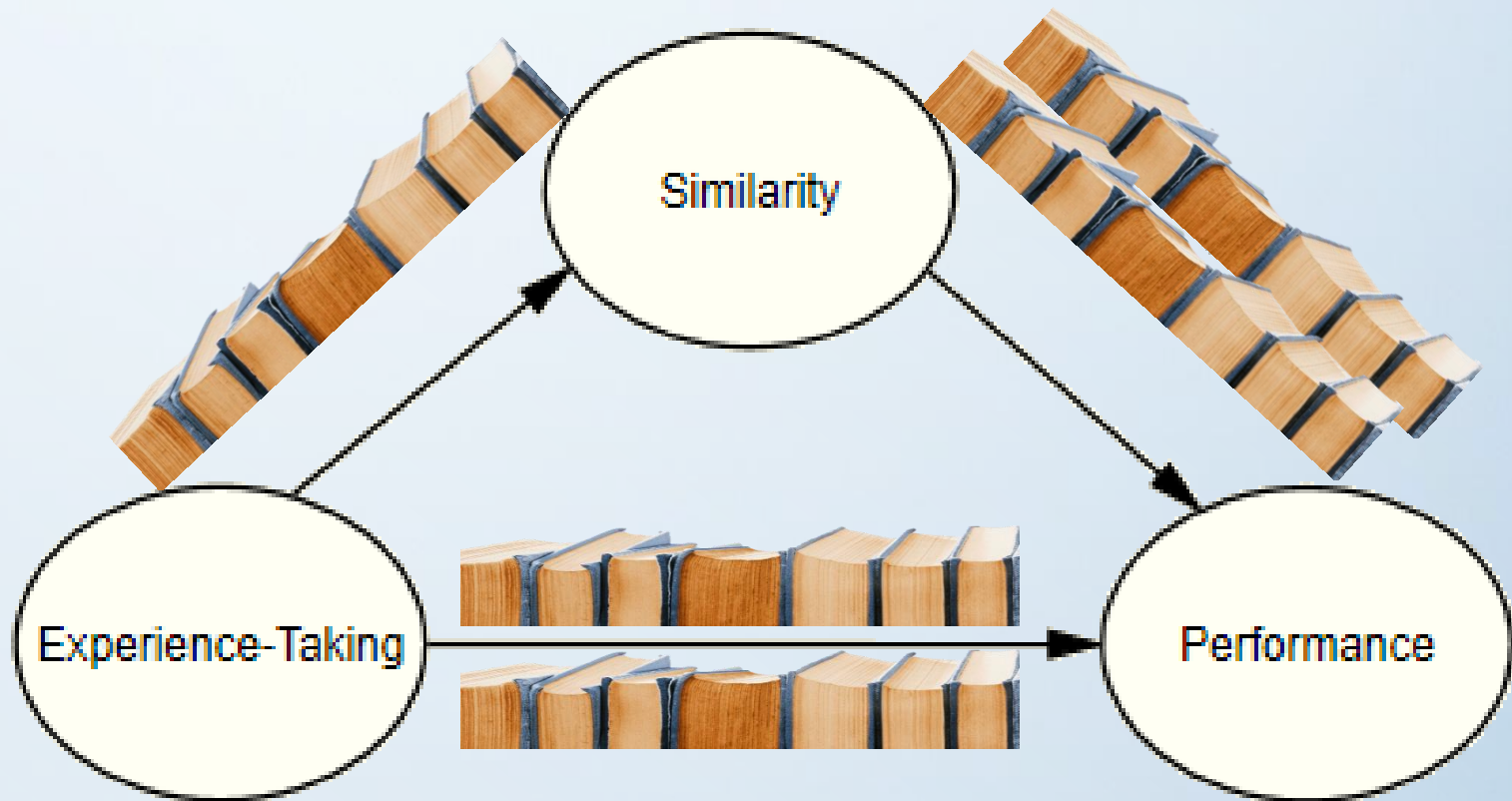
Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for T2 Performance

Variable	β	t	p
T1 performance	.66	8.32	.00
Perspective	.02	.25	.80
Experience-taking	-.00	-.02	.99
Similarity	.46	2.13	.04
Inspiration	.44	2.22	.03
Perspective X Similarity	-.44	-2.13	.04
Perspective X Inspiration	-.29	-1.55	.13
Perspective X Experience-taking	.07	.35	.73

Interaction Between Perspective and Similarity on T2 Performance



Mediation Analysis



Sobel (1982) test - $z = 2.98$, $p = .003$

Summary

- Study 1
 - Preliminary evidence for an association between experience-taking and performance
- Study 2
 - Perspective-taking manipulation did not exert differential effects on performance
 - Experience-taking, similarity, and inspiration were positively associated with performance
 - Similarity mediated the relationship between experience-taking and performance in the first-person perspective condition



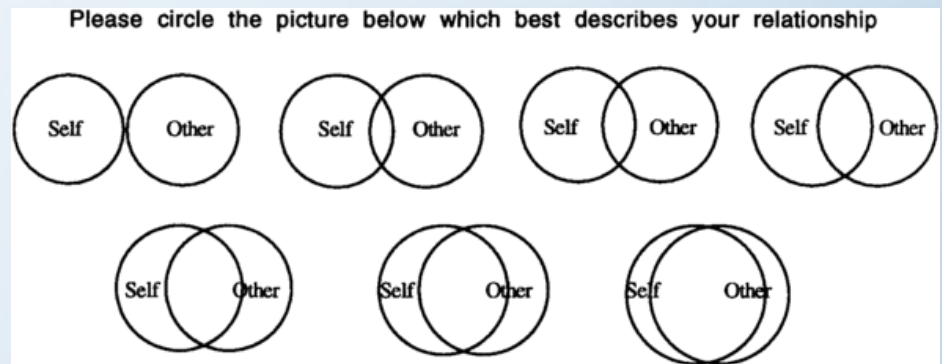
Links Between Experience-Taking, Similarity, and Performance

- Found support for a model in which experience-taking enhances perceived similarity between self and character, and similarity perceptions, which in turn elicits performance enhancement
 - Future research should examine mechanisms
 - A possibility is that similarity perceptions inspire readers (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997; Markman & McMullen, 2003; Mussweiler, 2003)



Future Research

- Can experience-taking lead to the adoption of negative or even harmful beliefs, goals, traits, and behaviors?
- Are there alternative ways to measure experience-taking?
 - Inclusion of Other in Self (IOS) scale (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992)
- Can readers “store” selves developed through experience-taking?



Application

- Has potential to encourage children to perform better in an educational setting
 - Similar to idea of using a prosocial model to decrease aggression (Bandura, 1971)



Questions?

