EXAMINING THE CONCEPTUAL MECHANISM OF DMILS (DIRECT MENTAL INTERACTION IN LEAVING SYSTEMS) EFFECTS: ESP OR PK?

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Abstract

EDA DMILS effects are usually portrayed as representing an agent-mediated PK effect upon the receiver's EDA, and as being analogous to mental healing research. However, Braud and his colleagues, who refined the current EDA DMILS methodology, cite 'multiple psi channels' as a possible reason for the success of DMILS studies. Multiple psi channels refers to the possibility that receiver ESP, as well as agent PK, may help produce DMILS effects, e.g., receivers may use their ESP to gain knowledge of the agent's intentions and then self-regulating appropriately. This ESP-mediated effect could be viewed as analogous to a psi-mediated placebo effect. This study examines the role played by agent-mediated PK, receiver-mediated ESP, or some combination thereof.

Using four conditions, the study systematically varied the agent's role and the receivers' knowledge of the agents' role. Condition 1 mimics the standard EDA DMILS protocol with the receiver knowing that an agent will be attempting to alternatively activate or calm their EDA, according to a pseudo-randomised interaction schedule that is unknown to the receiver. In Condition 2 the receiver knows that there will not be an agent, although the agent's calm/activate instruction schedule are displayed on the monitor screen, as if there were an agent present. Condition 3 has an agent, but the receiver is unaware (uninformed) as to whether there is an agent. Condition 4 does not use an agent, and the receiver does not know whether there is an agent.

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With no specific predictions, all analyses were two-tailed. A 2 x 2 unrelated ANOVA obtained no significant main or interaction effects (presence/absence of agent effect: $F(1, 115) = 2.62$, $p = 0.11$; informed/uninformed receiver effect: $F(1, 115) = 0.22$, $p = 0.60$; interaction effect: $F(1, 115) = 2.29$; $p = 0.13$). As the ANOVA did not test for psi deviations from the MCE, a PIS measure was used to evaluate the psi outcome of each condition (outcomes measured against MCE). None of the individual conditions obtained an overall significant DMILS effect, with the most typical DMILS condition (Cond't. 1) displaying scoring in the psi-missing direction, and arguably the least typical condition (Cond't. 2, no agent and receiver informed) approaching positive significance (Cond't. 1: $t(29) = -1.38$, $p = 0.18$, 2-tailed, $r = -0.25$; Cond't. 2: $t(28) = 1.73$, $p = 0.09$, 2-tailed; $r = 0.31$; Cond't. 3: $t(29) = 0.47$, $p = 0.64$, 2-tailed, effect size $r = 0.09$; Cond't. 4: $t(29) = 0.99$, $p = 0.33$, 2 tailed, $r = 0.18$). The data was combined across conditions to further explore for main DMILS effects (deviations from MCE). PIS analyses assessed the combined two 'agent present' conditions (Cond'ts. 1 & 3) producing a non-significant outcome ($t(59) = -0.52$, $p = 0.60$, 2-tailed, $r = -0.06$), whereas the two 'no agent present' conditions (Cond'ts. 2 & 4) produced a significant, positive outcome ($t(58) = 1.99$, $p = 0.05$, 2-tailed, $r = 0.25$). The combined outcomes from the 'receiver informed' (Cond'ts. 1 & 2) and the 'receiver uninformed' (Cond'ts. 3 & 4) were both non-significant (informed: $t(59) = 0.17$, $p = 0.86$, $r = 0.02$; uninformed: $t(59) = 0.90$, $p = 0.37$, $r = 0.12$). Due to multiple analysis considerations these findings must cautiously interpreted. Nonetheless, the effect size measures may be seen as tentatively suggesting a receiver-mediated ESP/self-regulation 'psi channel' contributed to some of this study's outcomes.