CENTER FOR SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITAS TRUNOJOYO MADURA, INDONESIA

Simulacra
e-ISSN: 2656 8721

UNIVERSITAS TRUNOJOYO
MADURA

Exploring the para-social relationship dynamics of a Bangladeshi Facebook author with the local community

Samiya Asadi[1*]

[1]*Journalism and Media Studies, Faculty of Social Science, Stamford University Bangladesh, 51, Siddheswari, Dhaka, Bangladesh 1215*

[*]Corresponding author
E-mail address: samiyaasadi@stamforduniversity.edu.bd
DOI: https://doi.org/10.21107/sml.v8i1.29314

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: social presence negative self-disclosure open communication UGC parasocial relationship	Facebook has redefined digital interactions, shaping community formation and identity construction. This study explores how a Bangladeshi Facebook-born author uses social presence strategies to build community attachment, foster parasocial relationships, and enhance digital authorship. By negotiating cultural and social capital, the author uses digital networks for self-promotion and audience engagement. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study applies parasocial relationship and social presence theory to explore three key questions: How does a celebrity maintain digital authorship for promotion and community attachment? What are the different dimensions of social presence between celebrities and audiences? How have parasocial relationships evolved in the digital age? The study analyzed Facebook posts and comments from Mouri's official novel Facebook page for quantitative content analysis and conducted in-depth interviews with the author and her six fans for qualitative insights. Findings show that the author strategically used UGC (user-generated content), among other strategies, to strengthen community ties. Audiences engaged primarily through interactive strategies, followed by affective and cohesive strategies. A nuanced mix of these strategies was also observed. In addition, open communication facilitated both positive and negative self-disclosure, making the parasocial relationship more reciprocal, interactive, and engaging. This study highlights the sociological dynamics of technology, connectivity, and digital authorship.

Introduction

In the past, fans relied on traditional media like newspapers, TV, radio, and magazines for updates on celebrities, which offer a linear or one-way flow of information with no room for immediate feedback. However, the landscape has drastically transformed with the emergence of digital communication, particularly through the fusion of the internet and social media. Social media enables users to actively participate, converse, share, collaborate, and connect, thus driving its widespread popularity (Dominick, 2012). Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook have ushered audiences into an era of interactivity, where they can engage in reciprocal communication with their favorite stars. From a sociological perspective, this transformation reflects broader shifts in media power and audience agencies. Unlike traditional media, which maintains a clear divide between celebrities and their followers, social media enables fans to engage in seemingly reciprocal communication with their favorite figure. Even simple responses from celebrities- such as liking a comment or replying to a message can create an illusion of personal connection, reinforcing the perception that celebrities are accessible and invested in their followers' lives (Rasmussen, 2018). This dynamic illustrates how social media reconfigures relationships between public figures and audiences, fostering new forms of digital intimacy, influence, and social capital in the contemporary media landscape.

Among the social media platforms, Facebook stands out with a staggering 3.35 billion monthly active users, marking a 5% increase from the previous year (Facebook, 2024). Facebook dominates the social media landscape in Bangladesh, boasting a 63.57% user base, while platforms like YouTube, and Instagram trail behind with shares of 31.04% and 1.62% respectively (StatCounter,

Jan 2024- Jan 2025). In this context, Mouri Morium, a young Bangladeshi female writer emerged from a Facebook group in 2016 with just 200 members. She regularly shared her self-written stories gradually, building a dedicated readership. Encouraged by her Facebook audience, she published her first book. In 2018, she launched her official Facebook page, which now boasts 260,000 followers. Beyond promotion, she believed the Facebook page fosters greater reach, real-time interaction, and a strong emotional and community connection with audiences. She has published so far 17 novels and has received prestigious awards including the Rokomari best-seller award, Humayun Ahmed Literary Award, and BTI Stellar Women Award. (Interview 2024, Daily Star, 2024)

The study explores how a Bangladeshi Facebook-born author engages with local audiences through social presence strategies, focusing on building community attachment, fostering parasocial relationships, and enhancing digital authorship and self-promotion. This recent study employed mixed- methods approach and utilized Parasocial Relationship and Social Presence Theory as its theoretical framework.

Social Presence Theory introduced by Short, Williams, and Christie, (1976), refers to the sense of connectedness in mediated communication, encompassing psychological, emotional, and interactional dimensions. This theory underscores the sociological importance of presence in digital spaces, where mediated interactions shape interpersonal bonds and group cohesion. Roureke, et al., (1999) developed a template for assessing social presence in a CMC environment. Their study categorized social presence into interactive, effective, and cohesive responses that are fundamental to the construction of social ties in digital communities. Expanding on this, Biocca and Harms (2002) extended Social Presence

Theory, defining it as perceived intimacy and emotional accessibility, positioning it as a critical factor in the negotiating of social identities and relationships online. Garrison (2016) further emphasized its role in fostering trust and engagement, which are central to community building and collective action.

From a sociological standpoint, social presence extends beyond individual interactions, influencing social structures and power dynamics in digital spaces. Advocacy organizations, for instance, employ social presence strategies to strengthen bonds with stakeholders, mobilize communities, and reinforce shared identities. Mazid (2020) found LGBT advocacy organizations strengthen stakeholder relationships by using emotional expression, openness, and interactive tactics on Facebook to cultivate solidarity and social capital. In the political sphere, female candidates in the 2018 elections strategically utilized social presence to enhance public engagement on social media, demonstrating its impact on visibility, legitimacy, and participatory democracy (Mazid, 2022).

The evolution of digital communication has also transformed the nature of parasocial relationships (PSRs), a concept introduced by Horton and Wohl (1956) coined the concept of parasocial relationships, describing them as one-sided interactions where audiences feel a personal connection with media personalities, akin to real friendship (Chung & Cho, 2017; Aw & Labrecque,2020). However, technological advancements have transformed these interactions into more reciprocal and dynamic through social media (Ballantine & Martin, 2005). Fans now engage directly with celebrities via comments or messages, transforming PSEs from one-sided admiration into reciprocal exchanges, creating an illusion of interpersonal communication, that fosters connection and enhances credibility (Konijn & Hoorn, 2017; Kim & Kim, 2020; Tao et al.,

2019; Stever & Lawson, 2013; Rasmussen, 2018). This shift has significant sociological implications, as it reconfigures traditional distinctions between public and private spheres, reshaping cultural hierarchies and authenticity in social interaction.

The conventional concept of parasocial Relationships no longer fully encompasses the evolving contemporary digital interaction and relationship. Lou (2022) introduced the concept of 'Trans-parasocial' relationships, which are characterized by collective reciprocity, (a)synchronization, interaction, and co-creation between influencers and their audiences. This emerging form of digital sociality challenges conventional notions of influence and intimacy, illustrating the fluidity of online social bonds and the participatory nature of modern media culture. As social presence and para-sociality continue to evolve, they underscore the broader sociological processes of identity formation, community engagement, and mediated intimacy in digital society.

At the heart of these sociological transformations is user-generated content (UGC), which has emerged as a democratizing force in digital media. Dominick, (2012) treated user-generated content or peer production as a most celebrated trend where with minimum technical skilled audience can create content for social media. UGC refers to material created by users, often seen as a core aspect of self-produced content (Halliday, 2016). User-generated- content (UGC) is created by individuals who are not part of professional online publishing organizations. With the widespread availability of high-speed internet and the rise of social networking services, producing and consuming UGC has become a routine activity for many internet users (Yu & Ko, 2021). As digital culture continues to evolve, the interplay between social presence, parasociality, and user-generated content underscores broader

shifts in media power, participatory culture, and the social dynamics of online interaction. The study addresses three primary research questions. **Q1:** How does a celebrity maintain digital authorship for promotion and community attachment? **Q2:** What are the different dimensions of social presence between celebrity and audience? **Q3:** How have parasocial relationships evolved in the digital era?

Method

The study employed a mixed-method approach which involves collecting quantitative and qualitative data and combining or integrating the data to yield insights or interpretations from the combined data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The data analysis for this study involves both quantitative content analysis & qualitative thematic analysis, integrating the two for a comprehensive interpretation. Here is how each part of the collected data is analyzed.

Quantitative content analysis

Facebook posts and comments were structured and analyzed using a codebook based on social presence theory (Rourke et al., 1999, Mazid, 2022).

Table 1. Adapted Social Presence Codebook

Category	Definition
Affective	Conventional expressions of emotion, or unconventional expressions of emotion, opinion, use of humor, and even a sense of vulnerability
Interactive	Provides a reference to others' posts or comments, shares other's posts or comments, compliments, appreciates, asks questions, and expresses agreement.
Cohesive	Seeks to develop a sense of online community and nurture a sense of group community by referring to the public by name (vocatives), using an inclusive pronoun, and engaging in Phatic communication (communication that serves as purely social function; greetings, closures).

Source: Rourke et al., 1999, Mazid, 2022.

A total of 148 Facebook posts published between August 2022 to October 2023 were scanned initially. These posts were categorized into four distinct types. Book update, Teaser, Review & Self-endorsement (award-winning, media exposure, meet & greet, fake-ID alert etc). Following the inclusion criteria, from August 2022 to October 23, two posts & comments from each category were extracted. A total of 08 posts and N-728 comments were analyzed for the study. This data was collected manually and curated with MS Excel, further mapped to three social presence strategies based on the adapted Social Presence Codebook. To mitigate researchers' positionality bias, an independent coder who was also a Facebook user, was recruited for the study. A codebook was developed based on the social presence theory to facilitate categorizing comments for quantitative content analysis. A total of 07 codes from comments of 728 were identified. These codes were mapped to three social presence strategies—affective, interactive, and cohesive—using definitions from Rourke et al (2001) and Mazid (2022)

The following were the inclusion criteria (depending on the research purpose & questions):
Posts that obtain the highest reactions or views,
Posts that have highly interactive comments especially with authors and others (both breadth & depth), Review-related unique posts with interactive and engaging comments
The following were the exclusion criteria: posts that had been reposted, posts & comments which were not interactive & engaging.

Qualitative thematic analysis

The interview data of the author and six fans (4 female, 2 male) were transcribed

and analyzed using an inductive thematic analysis approach.

Themes identified

Engagement patterns: How fans interact with the author's content
Perceived authenticity: How the author's engagement affects fan perception.
UGC participation: Motivations for fans to create and interact with content.

Table 2. Lists of Interviewees in the Study

No	Pseudonym	Age	Occupation	Gender identity
1	Samiha	22	Student	Female
2	Rose	21	Student	Female
3	Sakib	25	Service	Male
4	Ekra	19	Student	Female
5	Afrin	23	Writer	Female
6	Fahad	21	Student	Male

Source: Author's data.

To reach out to the respondents the snowball sampling method was used in which the first respondent provided the interviewer with another interviewee's name(s). They know who has the complete criteria. The criteria of respondents were to be Bangladeshi, aged 18-30, who had been a fan for at least 4 years, actively observing her social media presence, and who participated in different UGC.

Triangulation: The interview findings were compared with the Facebook comment analysis to enhance validity.
Integration of quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative content analysis provided a structured understanding of the types and nature of engagement.
The qualitative analysis explored the motivations and perceptions behind these interactions.
The findings were synthesized to provide a holistic understanding of how social presence strategies influence fan engagement.

Results and Discussion

This study contributes to the sociological understanding of digital interaction by exploring the evolving nature of social presence strategies and the parasocial relationships between audiences and celebrities on Facebook. By examining these dynamics from both the celebrity's and the audience's perspectives, the research shed light on the broader implications of mediated celebrity-audience engagement in contemporary society. The findings offer valuable insights for celebrities and public relations professionals in refining their communication strategies, thereby shaping digital sociability and reinforcing new forms of social connection in the digital age.

The strategies to maintain digital authorship for promotion and community attachment

Among 168 posts (August 2022 to October 2023) 67 (39.88%) posts were related to Book reviews (UGC)(Simple reviews, reviews with artwork, book photography), 52 (30.95%) were Book updates (pre-order, offer, book alert, re-print), 25(14.88%) teasers (short description of context, conversation between characters of the novel, poem of upcoming books), 24 (14.28%) Self-endorsement (award-winning, media exposure, meet & greet in book fair, fake-ID alert).

Posts 1 and 4 effectively encouraged readers to collect the novels by leveraging a sense of social belonging in digital spaces through the bandwagon heuristic. Post 1, featuring a video of a pre-ordered book, suggested that many had already started reading, While Post 4, announcing a reprint with a proofreading image, reinforced the book's high demand. Together, these posts conveyed a sense of urgency, advising that if others were collecting the books, one should do the same to stay connected

Table 3. *Facebook Posts and Reactions*

Post	Date	Name	Total	love	like	care	wow	haha	angry	share	views	comments
1	29 Aug,2022	Pre-order	1.2k	658	539	31	31	1	–		8.4k	38
2	1 Sept, 2022	Book review	697	279	393	15	9	1	–	–		26
3	20 Oct, 2022	Fake ID Alert	271	33	220	1	14	2	1	–		11
4	19 Nov, 2022	Re-print	3.6k	1.7k	1.6k	124	68	5		17		366
5	10 Jan, 2023	Artwork	1.4k	812	471	39	144	–		2		37
6	06 Feb 2023	Meet & greet	3.3k	1.2k	2k	58	5	6	–	7	–	137
7	28 Sept, 2023	Teaser	859	307	528	16	8			2	–	46
8	10 Oct, 2023	Teaser	1k	378	659	21	12			3		67
Total												728

Source: Author's data.

with the community. This reflects the bandwagon effect, where individuals rely on collective judgment to make quick decisions-essentially, 'If many people believe something is good, I should too' (Sundar et al., 2008). In the digital space, this need to follow the bandwagon is driven by a desire for social validation and inclusion.

Posts 3 and 6 served as mechanisms for building social capital rather than mere promotional content. Post 3, a Fake ID alert, reinforced trust within the online community by demonstrating the platform's ability to manage risks and protect its members, fostering a sense of security and reliability. Meanwhile, Post 6, a meet-and-greet event, facilitated bonding social capital by transforming virtual interactions into real-life connections, strengthening the relationship between the author and fans. Together, these posts contributed to both trust-based and interaction-driven social capital, enhancing the sense of belonging and collective engagement within the community.

In Facebook posts, 2 & 5 were UGC posts, the reviewers not only wrote reviews here but also showcased their creativity through artwork, In post 2, Fan named Samiha crafted a handmade book cover, and bookmarks inspired by the novel "Deyal Bhangar gan". One bookmark featured the novel's title, while the other displayed a poem from the book. In post 5, a girl was holding a canvas of Prematal book cover in one hand and holding the mobile in the other hand and the screenshot of Prematal book cover was being seen on the mobile. The background of the picture was filled with her colorful floral wall art. The author acknowledged & shared these artworks on her official Facebook page. Muntinga et al., (2011) categorized UGC within COBRAs (consumers' online brand-related activities), where engagement progresses from consuming to contributing and creating. This study highlights how fans transitioned from contributors to co-creators, actively shaping the author's digital presence. Through their engagement, they became integral to Mouri's digital self-creation, contributing to their aesthetic sense and creativity. This process reflects mediated intimacy in the digital society, where audiences not only consume content but also participate in co-constructing the personal and artistic narratives of public figures. By fostering a sense of closeness and shared creativity, this dynamic blur the boundaries between celebrity and audience, reinforcing digital connectivity and emotional investment in online communities:

I used to make bookmarks of various novels by Mouri Morium. It's my pleasure to express my positive feelings through this art. I got tremendous appreciation from the author and audience as well. Several comments like 'Can I

get the bookmark if I collect the book?', 'how do you draw the bookmark, give me suggestions', etc treated as a driving force to create such artwork more and more. I felt thrilled when some readers got interested in collecting the book after seeing the bookmark. I began to feel that I was part of this journey too, contributing something special to help bring the book to a wider audience (Interview, 2024).

On the other hand, besides her love and affection for the author, Rose was inspired to start her new identity as an artist through the post. She mentioned:

I was overwhelmed when the author acknowledged and shared my artwork on her Facebook page. It was my first time doing canvas art. After the post, not only the artwork, I also as a new artist gained popularity. Positive comments from the audience inspired me to continue this sort of artwork on a regular basis. As a result, I introduced the 'Roshney Art & Craft shop' from last year (2023) (Interview, 2024).

The idea of book reviews from readers was initiated by the author and implemented by the readers which made a fruitful connection between them. This kind of review was also treated as a creative technique of positive image building and an example of an intimate para-social relationship. How do you make community connections and promotion as well as with your community? She mentioned that:

I make it a priority to maintain an active social presence, regularly sharing updates about my books and engaging storytelling about upcoming releases as key promotion strategies. Besides traditional promotion (poster, OVC, teaser of upcoming book), I prefer more participatory, engaging, and fun activities to build a stronger connection with my community. Initiatives like book photography, review writing, letters to a favorite character, quiz competitions, and encouraging readers to write their own stories have received incredible responses. To make it even more rewarding, I often gift my upcoming book to

winners. These activities create a snowball effect- gradually attracting new readers, strengthening connections, fostering a vibrant community, and naturally boosting book promotion.

The author employed a multifaced promotional approach aimed at strengthening community connection and fostering audience engagement. In addition to conventional methods such as pre-order announcements and teasers, she emphasized interactions and co-creation. Notably, around 39.88% of the posts featured fan reviews, highlighting her active role in fostering a sense of community and encouraging creative participation. Besides different activities on social media, she occasionally organized social gatherings such as meet & greet events at book fairs, to enhance social interactions and bridge the gap between virtual and real life.

Different dimensions of social presence between celebrity and audience

The study found that audiences engaged in vocative (5.77%) & phatic (4.67%) communication in various comments on the discussed posts. Most commenters mentioned their closest connections to arranging book collection, often using playful and informal language to request the book as a gift from each other. They used local language like *'chol jai kinte'* (let's go to buy the book), debani' (will give you), *nibani melai'* (will take you to the fair), please apu (sister) booked this one for me as my birthday gift' were commonly used. Rourke et al., (1999) mentioned that vocatives were also an important expression of cohesion, which was evident in the observed interactions. Addressing participants by name, along with the use of informal communication, demonstrated a strong cohesive strategy. These findings corroborate with Rourke, Anderson, Garrison, and Archer (1999) that by referring

to each other by name, commenters engaged in phatic communication, and interaction strengthening their sense of community and fostering an online bond. Moreover, fans found gratification in engaging in conversations about their favorite writer and her novels. Sakib, a fan of Mouri Morium, shared:

We have a small group where we exchange Mouri-Morium's novels- so far 17 of them. We often organize 'boi-adda' (get-togethers) to discuss different characters from her books, which serve as social currency for us. Beyond that, we love writing reviews on her novels and feel honored when she selects and shares a few on her page (Interview, 2024).

The study identified that most of the comments on the page were centered around

Table 4. *The Frequency of Social Presence Code Occurrence*

Codes of Social Presence	Frequency of the codes	Percentage of the codes
Self-disclosure (affective)	148	20.33
Asking questions, queries, eagerness (interactive)	187	25.69
Referring to others (interactive)	78	10.71
Reply to others (interactive)	72	9.89
Compliment (interactive)	167	22.94
Vocatives (cohesive)	42	5.77
Phatic (cohesive)	34	4.67

Source: Author's.

asking questions, and queries showing eagerness to purchase the book (25.69%), referring to others (10.71%), and replying to others (9.89%). Many inquiries focused on the publishing date of specific novels, book prices, online purchasing options, and available discounts and offers. This demonstrated a strong use of interactive strategy within social presence.

Notably, while most queries remained unanswered by the author, some members of the community took the initiative to

respond. The author, however, engaged with her audience only occasionally and in a highly precise manner. Her communication style was formal and direct, without any informal or playful interactions. Addressing this approach, Mouri shared her perspective:

Since this page is an official one, I maintain and follow specific strategies, such as selectively answering only important book-related questions. I do not entertain any personal inquiries. To avoid misunderstandings, I manage the page myself without employing moderators or AI tools. I prefer to handle communication with my fans personally if needed.

Ekra, one of Mour's fans, said in this regard:

Though she (the author) participates occasionally in any conversations, fans remain highly active in various interactions. I know some who enjoy answering questions on her behalf, and I also feel delighted to respond to any queries about her books. I have noticed that whenever she replies to a comment, the interaction gains momentum and reaches its peak (Interview, 2024).

The study highlighted that audiences actively employed interactive strategy while also displaying affective & cohesive engagement. Fans engaged in open communication through questions & queries aligning with the findings of Dunmoye et al. (2024). The study underscores the significance of fostering open communication, which strengthens emotional connectionsand group interactions. Through these exchanges, fans cultivated a sense of belonging and deeper engagement within the community.

Parasocial relationships in the digital era

The traditional concept of parasocial Relationships no longer fully captures the evolving nature of contemporary digital interactions. Lou (2022) introduced this

kind of parasocial relationship as "Trans-parasocial" to describe a collectively reciprocal, (a)synchronously interactive, and co-created relationship between influencers and their engaged followers. Recent study indicated that this kind of transpersonal relationship not only reinforces the celebrity's image but also, empowers the audience to engage in public self-disclosure (positive or negative) while providing a creative platform for individuals to showcase their talents and establish their presence.

Self-disclosure regarding the book and its characters was notable (20.33%). It was observed that most of Mouri's novels were centered around romantic themes. Alongside her romantic storytelling, she vividly described various natural tourist destinations and locations across Bangladesh. The study found a significant presence of discussions related to these tourist and natural spots. Dedicated readers often shared their perceptions & memories of these locations. In post 2, several comments mentioned that 'Nafakhum', a tourist spot described in the novel, had changed over the past five years. Commenters showed their concern that Nafakhum has become more modern, losing some of its natural appeal. Similarly, numerous comments in posts 7 and 8 focused on the river 'Gouro' which was mentioned in her novel 'Naiory', particularly its breathtaking beauty during the rainy season.

Discussions about the protagonists were also prominent. Especially characters such as 'Mugdho', 'Titir' from 'Prematal' & 'Jesmin', and 'Ronju' from 'Naiory' were among the most talked about by Mour's fans. Regarding fan activity, Afrin shared that:

We not only discuss different characters of her novels but also often relate to them on a personal level, drawing inspiration to overcome challenges in our lives. One such character is Prano from the novel 'Mohajatra'. The author portrays Prano as someone who faced significant hardships early in

life but never bogged down. Through relentless struggle, she eventually overcame obstacles and achieved success. Many fans find motivation and strength in their journey, using it as a source of encouragement to face their own realities. Additionally, the author has a private group called Mouri's Novel, where dedicated fans actively engage with her work. They share their thoughts on her novels & characters, post book photography, and even post photos dressed up as their favorite characters, sharing their creative expressions with the community (Interview, 2024).

A recent study revealed that besides celebrities' self-disclosure, contributions from other viewers or fans promoted a sense of community homophily, encouraging viewers to step out of their comfort zones and share personal stories with fellow viewers (Kim et al., 2024). By corroborating with the study, the recent study revealed that fans used the platform not only to express their thoughts and creativity to their favorite public figures but also to engage in conversations with like-minded readers(fans). This interaction created a shared field of experience, further strengthening their sense of community. Here Researcher also found an evident presence of an affective strategy of social presence. Garrison et.al (1999) described the affective strategy of social presence as the expression of emotion, feelings, warmth affiliation, attraction, and openness.

Comments of post 3, shows empathy towards the author in her vulnerable situation which mostly indicates to affective strategy of social presence. On the other hand, among the 11 comments regarding the Fake ID alert, 7 of them were about reports of fake ID. In the comments the audience confirmed the author that they had reported the ID as fake. A commentator expressed her frown by calling the fake ID creator a 'savage.' Another commentator shared a Facebook link named 'Take Down

Fighters' who worked to destroy Fake IDs. The study found that a deep sense of online community feelings existed here also. When audiences identified that the author was in distress then audiences got involved in the matter. Reporting fake ID, expressing anger, or giving suggestions were treated as strong community feelings which is the part of Cohesive strategy.

Significant findings also revealed that audiences were not always engaged in positive self-disclosure, negative self-disclosure was also observed. Critical comments such as, 'Too much price…', 'I don't like to read your book', 'Most of them are eighteen plus' 'Disgusting story' 'You used a strategy where only half the story is posted, and readers have to buy the whole book if want to read the rest'. Additionally, some readers expressed dissatisfaction, stating, 'Your book has become monotonous, you need to change romantic style." Lou & Zhou's (2024) research indicates that negative comments from followers can affect an influencer's well-being. However, the recent study presents a slightly different perspective. It found that when negative comments are handled with confidence and celebrities' approach constructive criticism with an open mindset, it can ultimately be more beneficial for them. In this context, Mouri depicted her point of view that:

There are few audiences who involved themselves in negative and demotivating comments also, by using this open platform they try to bad labeling to authors. Sometimes I also experience negative comments but, in these contexts, most of the time I appreciate negative comments if it seems constructive, otherwise, I go for the do not care approach. It is true in the sense that social media gives a platform for a new writer to introduce her or himself to anonymous audiences but at the same time few drawbacks and challenges are also being experienced by authors. Especially for a female writer this virtual journey is not always treated smoothly. Few female writers I know who

victims of online bullying and negative comments have been. In my point of view virtual presence is easy to start but hard to sustain.

In this context of negative comments, Fahad one of Mouri's fans told that:

I have often noticed negative comments on her Facebook page, yet she consistently responds with patience and intelligence. Without displaying any distress, she proves herself to be a calm and cool-headed individual. Beyond that, she actively supports young writers, offering them encouragement and opportunities to grow. She even invites many emerging writers to share their stories in her Facebook group, 'Mouri's Novel'. Through her digital presence, she has already become an inspiring figure for us among young writers (Interview, 2024).

The study found (22.94%) of the comments were compliments directed toward their favorite author, particularly praising her novels. Commonly used words of admiration included 'congratulation', amazing', brilliant and inspiring' 'relatable', 'worthy purchase',' so inspiring', 'most romantic book I ever read' etc. Beyond verbal expressions, the study also highlighted the significant use of emojis. Gunawardena & Zittle (1997) noted that online communicators enhanced their socioemotional experience by using emoticons to express missing nonverbal cues in written form. Similarly, this research revealed many users expressed mental state through emojis rather than verbal words. Among the most frequently used emojis were colorful hearts, with red hearts being the most prominent. Other heart colors observed included green, blue, pink, black, white, and lavender hearts also. Additionally, various facial emojis appeared in the comments, such as smiling and pleading faces, heart eyes, hugging faces, star eyes, frowning faces, face-throwing kisses, heart hands, cat faces, and weary faces in the comments. Consistent with Pallof's (2011) findings, the recent

study also confirmed that both verbal and nonverbal cues contribute to establishing and maintaining a social presence in online environments. Moreover, non-verbal cues often complement verbal cues in meaningful ways. Do you like to use different emojis to show your emotions towards your fans? She said:

> *I used to use colorful heart emojis to show sympathy and affection towards my audience. In my observation sometimes emoji could express more than words and able to portray an appropriate message of my true feelings without hurting someone.*

From the posts of user-generated content (post 2 & 5), remarkable comments were dedicated to artwork. From post 2, commentators specially praised the handmade bookmark by using different types of complementing words like-amazing', 'much more creative' wow', and 'so wonderful'. Post 5 was also much more like post 2. Audiences gave positive feedback about the painting. They highly praised the artwork. Few of them expressed that they also had planned to draw the cover of Prematal. Few of them claimed that their idea of recreating the book cover had been stolen. Mouri wrote to mention them 'Go ahead". No problem at all, make a new one and add a blue heart emoji. Researchers revealed the presence of deep affective and interactive strategies through these comments. Besides appreciation and positive compliments, there were few competitive responses also notified.

Conclusion

The Study explored the application of social presence strategies, the development of parasocial relationships in the digital era, and the role of community engagement in shaping virtual interactions. The result showed that audiences predominantly employed interactive strategies, followed by affective and cohesive strategies to engage with digital authors. Additionally, a nuanced blending of these strategies was observed, demonstrating the complex and multifaceted nature of online engagement. The result further underscored the potential for Celebrities, digital influencers, and public relations professionals to harness the social dynamics of online platforms. By strategically utilizing social presence techniques, they can maximize audience reach, foster a sense of community attachment, and enhance self-endorsement and personal branding.

However, this study has several limitations. It focuses only on an emerging digital author and examines a single social media platform, Facebook. Expanding the scope to include multiple digital authors and platforms such as Instagram and YouTube could provide deeper insights and reveal more diverse strategies. While social media provides digital authors with interactive features that help cultivate a loyal audience, enhance visibility, and foster community engagement, it also presents significant challenges. Public figures often encounter issues such as the spread of hatred, cyberbullying, and negative commentary, which can disrupt virtual interactions and, in some cases, severely impact their online presence. Given these complexities, future research should explore the darker aspects of digital authorship and online engagement. Such inquiries would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of digital authorship's evolving landscape and virtual communities' socio-psychological dynamics.

Acknowledgement

(Oyo State), Akungba (Ondo State), and Oye Ekiti (Ekiti) who assisted in rebroadcasting the survey link to various platforms.

Declaration of Ownership

This article is my original work.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest to declare in this article.

Ethical Clearance

This study was approved by the institution.

References

Aw, E. C. X., & Labrecque, L. I. (2020). Celebrity endorsement in social media contexts: Understanding the role of parasocial interactions and the need to belong. *Journal of Consumer Marketing, 37*(7), 895–908. https://doi.org/10.1108/JCM-10-2019-3474

Ballantine, P. W., & Martin, B. A. (2005). Forming parasocial relationships in online communities. *Advances in Consumer Research, 32*, 197–201.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.

Chung, S., & Cho, H. (2017). Fostering parasocial relationships with celebrities on social media: Implications for celebrity endorsement. *Psychology & Marketing, 34*(4), 481–495. https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21001

Daily Star. (2024, December). A wordsmith's story of weaving dreams: How Mouri became a writer. *The Daily Star*. https://www.thedailystar.net/supplements-0/news/wordsmiths-story-weaving-dreams-how-mouri-became-writer-3783626

Dominick, J. R. (2012). *The dynamics of mass communication: Media in transition* (12th ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Dunmoye, I. D., Rukangu, A., May, D., & Das, R. P. (2024). An exploratory study of social presence and cognitive engagement association in a collaborative virtual reality learning environment. *Computers & Education: X Reality, 4*, 100054. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cexr.2023.100054

Facebook. (n.d.). Meta reports fourth quarter and full year 2024 results; Initiates quarterly dividend. *Meta Investor Relations*. Retrieved February 1, 2025, from https://www.facebook.com/MetaIR/posts/meta-reports-fourth-quarter-2024

Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (1999). Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education, 2*(2–3), 87–105. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7516(00)00016-6

Garrison, D. R. (2016). *E-learning in the 21st century: A community of inquiry framework for research and practice* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Gunawardena, C. N., & Zittle, F. J. (1997). Social presence as a predictor of satisfaction within a computer-mediated conferencing environment. *American Journal of Distance Education, 11*(3), 8–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/08923649709526970

Halliday, S. V. (2016). User-generated content about brands: Understanding its creators and consumers. *Journal of Business Research, 69*(1), 137–144. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.07.027

Horton, D., & Wohl, R. R. (1956). Mass communication and para-social interaction: Observations on intimacy

at a distance. *Psychiatry, 19*(3), 215–229. https://doi.org/10.1080/00332747.1956.11 023049

Kim, M., & Kim, J. (2020). How does a celebrity make fans happy? Interaction between celebrities and fans in the social media context. *Computers in Human Behavior, 111*, 106419. https://doi.org/10.1016/j. chb.2020.106419

Kim, H. S., Pak, J., Chung, M. Y., & Kim, Y. (2024). How self-disclosure builds cancer communities through authentic stories on YouTube: Mediating role of user participation in self-disclosure reciprocity. *Computers in Human Behavior, 156*, 108226. https://doi.org/10.1016/j. chb.2024.108226

Konijn, E. A., & Hoorn, J. F. (2017). Parasocial interaction and beyond: Media personae and affective bonding. In P. Rössler (Ed.), *The international encyclopedia of media effects* (pp. 1–15). John Wiley & Sons. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118783764. wbieme0074

Lou, C. (2022). Social media influencers and followers: Theorization of a trans-parasocial relation and explication of its implications for influencer advertising. *Journal of Advertising, 51*(1), 4–21. https:// doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2021.1880345

Lou, C., & Zhou, X. (2024). What else is new about social media influencers? Uncovering their relation and content strategies, and the downsides of being famous. *Frontiers in Psychology, 15*, 1437384. https://doi.org/10.3389/ fpsyg.2024.1437384

Mazid, I. (2020). Virality of social change messages on Facebook: A study of advocacy and relationship building strategies of LGBTQ advocacy organizations. *International Journal of Strategic Communication, 14*(2), 105–121. https://doi.org/10.1080/155311 8X.2020.1730377

Mazid, I. (2022). Political campaign messages on Facebook: A study of public engagement, social presence strategies, and the 2018 US Senate elections. *Public Relations Journal, 15*(2), 2–14.

Muntinga, D. G., Moorman, M., & Smit, E. G. (2011). Introducing COBRAs: Exploring motivations for brand-related social media use. *International Journal of Advertising, 30*(1), 13–46. https://doi. org/10.2501/IJA-30-1-013-046

Osei-Frimpong, K., & McLean, G. (2018). Examining online social brand engagement: A social presence theory perspective. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 128*, 10–21. https://doi. org/10.1016/j.techfore.2017.10.010

Palloff, R. M. (2011). *The excellent online instructor: Strategies for professional development*. Jossey-Bass.

Rasmussen, L. (2018). Parasocial interaction in the digital age: An examination of relationship building and the effectiveness of YouTube celebrities. *The Journal of Social Media in Society, 7*(1), 280–294.

Rourke, L., Anderson, T., Garrison, D. R., & Archer, W. (1999). Assessing social presence in asynchronous text-based computer conferencing. *The Journal of Distance Education/Revue de l'éducation à distance, 14*(2), 50–71.

Short, J., Williams, E., & Christie, B. (1976). *The social psychology of telecommunications*. John Wiley & Sons.

Sundar, S. S., Oeldorf-Hirsch, A., & Xu, Q. (2008). The bandwagon effect of collaborative filtering technology. In *CHI '08 extended abstracts on Human factors in computing systems* (pp. 3453–3458). https://doi.org/10.1145/1358628.1358873

StatCounter. (2024). Social media stats Bangladesh: Jan 2024 – Jan 2025. *StatCounter Global Stats*. https:// gs.statcounter.com/social-media-stats/ all/bangladesh

Stever, G. S., & Lawson, K. (2013). Twitter as a way for celebrities to communicate with fans: Implications for the study of parasocial interaction. *North American Journal of Psychology, 15*(2), 339–354.

Tao, M., Wahab, H. K. A., & Khan, J. (2019). Social media celebrities and para-social relationships: The Chinese context. In K. S. Soliman (Ed.), *Strategic innovative marketing and tourism: 7th ICSIMAT 2018, Athenian Riviera, Greece* (pp. 827–833). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-12453-3_91

Yu, J., & Ko, E. (2021). UGC attributes and effects: Implication for luxury brand advertising. *International Journal of Advertising, 40*(6), 945–967. https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2021.1898773