Swati Pandita

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Research Interests

Human Computer Interaction: social media & virtual reality (VR), mental health & embodiment, avatars & identity

Education

2017–2022	**Communication**, **PhD**, Cornell University Committee: Drs. Andrea Stevenson Won (Chair), Lee Humphreys, Natalie Bazarova, Marlen Gonzalez, and JoAnn Difede Dissertation: "Affective Avatars: Effects of Avatar Customization on Positive and Negative Emotions"
2020	**Communication**, **MS**, Cornell University
2016	**Information Science**, **MPS**, Cornell University
2015	**Neuroscience**, **BS**, Rhodes College

Research Experience

8/2022–present	**The Fear Lab,** California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA Postdoctoral Researcher
8/2017–8/2022	**The Virtual Embodiment Lab**, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY Graduate research assistant
1/2017–6/2017	**The Yau Lab**, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX Research assistant
4/2016–1/2017	**Pairade (now Current)**, Chicago, IL User experience research intern
5/2016–8/2016	**Psycomm Lab**, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY Graduate research assistant
2/2016–5/2016	**Communication & Collaborative Technologies Lab**, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY Graduate research assistant

8/2015–1/2016   **Visual Cognition Lab,** Rhodes College, Memphis, TN
Undergraduate research assistant

5/2014–7/2014   **Cognition and Aging Lab**, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN
Undergraduate research assistant

9/2013–5/2014   **Learning Technologies Lab**, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN
Undergraduate research assistant

Awards

2024   Info Sys Travel Award ($600), International Communication Association

2024   Chen Institute Travel Grant ($600), Caltech

2021   CALS Alumni Association Award ($400), Cornell University

2020   Media Studies Graduate Working Group Grant ($1,000), Cornell University

2017   Cornell Graduate Research Fellowship ($28,036), Cornell University

2014   Cognitive Aging Fellowship ($4,329), Rhodes College

Publications

2024   **Pandita, S.***, Garg, K.*, Zhang, J., Zhang, J., Mobbs, D. (2024). "The three roots of online toxicity: Disembodiment, Accountability, and Disinhibition." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences (TiCS), 28*(9). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2024.06.001 *equal author contribution

2023   Kao, D., Mubarrat, S. T., Joshi, A., **Pandita, S.**, Mousas, C., Liang, H. N., & Ratan, R. (2023). "Exploring how gender-anonymous voice avatars influence women's performance in online computing group work." *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 103146. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhcs.2023.103146

2021   Boydstun, C., **Pandita, S.**, Finkelstein-Fox, L., Difede, J. "Harnessing virtual reality for disaster mental health: a multidisciplinary systematic review." *Translational Issues in Psychological Sciences*. https://doi.org/10.1037/tps0000282

2020   Won, A. S., **Pandita, S.,** Kruzan, K. (2020). "Social interaction and pain threshold in virtual reality." *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 23(12). https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2020.0055

Madden, J. H., **Pandita, S.**, Won, A.S., Schuldt, J.P., Kim, B., & Holmes, N.G. (2020). "Ready student one: Exploring the predictors of student learning in virtual reality." *PLoS ONE*, 15(3). https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0229788

Pandita, S., & Won, A.S. (2020). "Clinical Applications of virtual reality in patient-centered care." In J. Kim & H. Song (1), Technology and Health: Promoting Attitude and Behavior Change (pp. 129–148). Academic Press.

Archived Papers

2023   Sun, Y., **Pandita, S.**, Madden, J. M., Kim, B., Holmes, N. G., Won, A. S. (2023). "Exploring interaction, movement, and video-game experience in an educational VR Experience." In *Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI)*.

Long, T.[†] , **Pandita, S.**, & Won, A. S. (2023). Perspectives from Naive Participants and Experienced Social Science Researchers on Addressing Embodiment in a Virtual Cyberball Task. In *Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing* (CSCW) (pp. 189-194). [†]*mentored student author*

Pandita, S., Humphreys, L., Won, A.S. (2023) "The Paradox of Customization: Negotiating racial identity with "multiple choice" in avatar creation." *PsyArXiv*.

Conference Papers & Presentations

2024   **Pandita, S.**, Ratan, R., Kim, T., Jang, D., Lim, C., Xu, K., Won, A.S., Stavropoulos, V., Sinlapanuntakul, P., Praetorius, A.S., Pena, J., Park, I., Nowak, K., Matthews, N., MacArthur, V., Lin, T., Lee, K.M., Klebig, B., Kim, S.,…Aymerich-Franch, L. (2024). "The Development and Validation of the Motivations for Avatar-Mediated Meetings (MAMM) Scale." Paper presented at 74th Annual International Association of Communication Conference, June 20–24, Gold Coast, Australia.

2022   Won, A.S. & **Pandita, S.** (2022). "Being Yourself: A Scoping Review on How Avatar Personalization Is Implemented in Empirical Work." Poster presented at 72nd Annual International Association of Communication Conference, May 26-30, Hybrid Conference.

2021   **Pandita, S.**, Humphreys, L., Won, A.S. (2021). "The paradox of customization: Negotiating racial identity with "multiple choice" in avatar creation." Paper presented at 71st Annual International Association of Communication Conference, May 27–31, Virtual Conference.

Pandita, S., (2021). "Mechanisms of care: The importance of routine for mental healthcare in Animal Crossing New Horizons." Research escalator presented at 71st Annual International Association of Communication Conference, May 27-31, Virtual Conference.

2020   **Pandita, S.**, Yee, J., & Won, A.S. (2020). "Affective embodiment: Embodying emotions through postural representation in VR." Poster presented at 27th IEEE Conference on Virtual Reality and 3D User Interfaces, March 22–26, Atlanta, GA.

Pandita, S. (2020). "Affective embodiment: The effect of avatar appearance and gesture representation on emotions in VR." Doctoral Consortium at 27th IEEE Conference on Virtual Reality and 3D User Interfaces, March 22–26, Atlanta, GA.

2019   **Pandita, S.**, Humphreys, L., & Won, A.S. (2019). "Expectations of the self in virtual reality: A qualitative analysis of virtual avatar creation." Paper presented at 24th Annual CyberPsychology, CyberTherapy, and Social Networking Conference, June 24–26, Norfolk, VA.

Pandita, S., Celikors, E., Rojas, N., et al. (2019). "Visualizing Movement with Learning Outcomes in Educational VR Environments." Poster presented at 24th Annual CyberPsychology, CyberTherapy, and Social Networking Conference, June 24–26, Norfolk, VA.

Won, A.S., Kruzan, K.*, & **Pandita, S**.* (2019). "As long as you're with me: the effects of social presence and distance on pain perception in virtual environments." Paper presented at 24th Annual CyberPsychology, CyberTherapy, and Social Networking Conference, June 24–26, Norfolk, VA.
equal author contribution

2018   Madden, J. H., Won, A. S., Schuldt, J. P., Kim, B., **Pandita, S.**, Sun, Y., et. al. (2018). "Virtual Reality as a Teaching Tool for Moon Phases and Beyond." In Proceedings of the Physics Education Research Conference, Aug 1–2, Washington, DC.

Sun, Y., **Pandita, S.**, Shaikh, O., Kim, B. & Won, A. S. (2018). "Personalized Avatars and Self-presence." In Proceedings of the International Society for Presence Research Annual Conference, May 21–22, Prague, Czech Republic.

2017   Schrader, D., Tallapragada M., **Pandita S.**, Etri C., & Shore A. (2017). "Self Efficacy and Social Aggression." Paper presented at 43rd Association for Moral Education Annual Conference, St. Louis, MO.

Schrader, D., Tallapragada M., **Pandita S.**, Etri C., & Shore A. (2017). "Personality, Trust, and the Privacy Creep." Paper presented at 43rd Association for Moral Education Annual Conference, St. Louis, MO.

2016   **Pandita, S.**, Suresh, S., & Haberman, J. (2016). "Average Size Estimation of Dots Completing behind an Illusory Surface Is Precise." Poster presented at 16th Annual Meeting of Vision Sciences Society.

2014   Person, S., **Pandita S.***, & Schonhoff A.* (2014). "Politeness Strategies in Expert Tutoring." Poster presented at 24th Annual Meeting of Society for Text & Discourse, Chicago, IL. **equal author contribution*

Current Research

2024   Ratan, R. & **Pandita, S.** (forthcoming). "Avatars, Explicated: Toward a broad definition to last another 4,000 words."

Ratan, R., Lim, C, **Pandita, S.**, Foxman, M., Hales G. E., Liu, H., Lei, Y. S., Beyea, D., Lee O. JY. (under review). "Openness to the Metaverse Workplace: Zoom fatigue and metaverse information seeking mediate gender inequities."

Pandita S., Won, A. S. (in prep). "Effects of avatar customization on AAPIs coping with negative emotions."

Pandita, S., Difede, J., Won, A. S. (in prep). "Breathing Room: designing mood regulation spaces for depression."

Guo, S., Liu, C., **Pandita, S.**, Sun, Y., Bailey, J., Won, A. S. (in prep). "Like the Back of My Own Hand: Investigating the effects of context and experience on people's attitudes toward inconsistent first-person avatar views."

Pandita, S., Garg, K., Zhang, B., Anderson, I. A., Mobbs, D. (in prep). "The neural correlates of social media."

Pandita, S., Garg, K., Mobbs, D. (in prep). "It's good for my health: Exploring perceptions of social media use for anxiety management."

Pandita, S., Anderson, I. A., Mobbs, D. (in prep). The boundaries of disembodiment: a questionnaire for virtual disembodiment.

Anderson, I. A., Garg, K., **Pandita, S.**, Mobbs, D. (in prep). "Likability and monetary reward and punishment in anonymous online chats."

Garg, K., Anderson, I. A., **Pandita, S.**, Mobbs, D. (in prep). "Social interactions and individual differences in online conversations."

Cornell University Teaching Experience

Instructor of Record

Summer 2022   COMM 2010 Oral Communication

Spring 2020   COMM 2010 Oral Communication

Fall 2019   COMM 2010 Oral Communication

Summer 2019   COMM/INFO 2450 Communication and Technology

Graduate Teaching Assistant

Spring 2022   COMM 3200 New Media & Society

Fall 2021   COMM 1101 Introduction to Communication

Summer 2021   COMM 4300 Ethics in New Media, Technology, and Communication

Fall 2017   COMM/INFO 2450 Communication and Technology

Guest Lecturer

Spring 2022   COMM 3200 New Media & Society

Fall 2021   COMM 1101 Introduction to Communication

Summer 2021   COMM 1300 Visual Communication

Spring 2019   COMM 1300 Visual Communication

Spring 2018   COMM 1300 Visual Communication

Invited Talks, Workshops, & Panels

2024   Invited talk, "Effects of Avatar Embodiment on Clinical VR Applications for Mental Health." [Virtual Medicine (vMed24) Conference](). Los Angeles, CA.

2021   Invited talk, "iLRN 2021 UX Insights." [Immersive Learning Research Network (iLRN)](). Online.

2021   Invited participant, "Research Collaboration Opportunity Jam." [XR Access Symposium](). Online.

2020   Invited talk, "Affective Embodiment: designing virtual environments for depression management." Visual Cognition Lab, Rhodes College.

2019   Organized Workshop, "Hands-on Workshop in Immersive Technology for Beginners." [Immersive Media in Medicine Symposium](#). New York, NY.

Panel Moderator, "VR for Beginners." [Immersive Media in Medicine Symposium](#). New York, NY.

Invited participant, "[Grad Cohort for Women 2019](#)" hosted by Computing Research Association Widening Participation (CRA-WP). Chicago, IL.

Panelist, "Practical Replication and Data Sharing Examples." 69th International Communication Association of Communication Conference. Washington, D.C.

Service

Volunteer

2024   Meaningful XR, conference organizer

2022   Cornell University, Department of Communication's Advisory Board, graduate student volunteer

2021   iLRN Assessment and Evaluation Team

2018   Connecting Opportunities Summer Event, organized by Lesa Carter and Kathy Dimiduk of Engineering, Cornell University.

Reviewer (since)

2024   Meaningful XR 2024
Journal of Media Psychology

2023   Designing Interactive Systems
International Communication Association (ICA)
Conference on Human Factors and Computing Systems (CHI)

2022   Computer-supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)
New Media & Society

2020   Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking

Students Mentored

Current

Caltech

2024	Matt Tyszka, Biology (BS)
2023	Julia Kim, Computer Science (BS) Noah Okada, PhD student at Caltech
2022	Molina Zhang, Neuroscience (BS), now PhD student at Brown University

Cornell University

2018	Jueun Kwon, MEng (BS), now PhD student at Northwestern University

Former

Cornell University

2021-2022	Stephanie Tan, Communication (BS) Tao Long, Information Science (BS), now PhD student at Columbia University
2021	Winnie Chen, Communication (BS)
2020-2022	Cathy Xie, Communication (BS)
2020	Christabella Forest, Communication (BS)
2019-2020	Nayana Paraviel, Computer Science (BS) Annie Fu, Information Science (BS) Michael Huang, Information Science (BS)
2017-2020	Jessica Yee, Information Science (BS) Joshua Zhu, Information Science (BS)
2017-2018	Jane Kim, Computer Science (BS) Frank Rodriguez, Computer Science (BS) Anirudh Maddula, Computer Science (BS)

Rhodes College

2014-2016	Ashley Bruneau, Biology (BS)

Association Membership

2019–present	International Communication Association (ICA)
2019–2020	IEEE
2015–2016	Vision Sciences Society (VSS)

Media Coverage

2024	Model highlights three roots of online toxicity. Phys.org. Aug 26. Understanding Online Toxicity. Caltech News. Aug 24.
2019	Episode 65: Jack Madden and Swati Pandita. Leading Lines Podcast. Oct 7.
	Study Finds No Difference in VR Learning Outcomes Compared to Other Modes. Campus Technology. Feb 7.
	Study probes effect of virtual reality on learning. Cornell Chronicle. Feb 5.

Skills

Psychophysics	MatLab, Psych Toolbox, AFNI, FreeSurfer
Qualitative	Interview study design, semi-structured interviews, and thematic analysis
Quantitative	Experimental design, survey design, statistics (SPSS, R) VR movement data collection and analysis
User-centered Design	Development: Unity Engine (C#), WebGL, FTP Prototyping: Adobe Photoshop, Figma, Sketch, Invision, CSS, HTML Methods: Participatory design, Personas, User Modeling, Storyboarding, User-testing