

**JCR MANUSCRIPT REVIEW HISTORY 003-2
(REVISION NOTES FROM AUTHORS)**

We thank you for the opportunity to revise “Threats to Hope and Motivated Reasoning” (formerly titled “This Product Has Got to Help Me: The Role of Reduced Self-Efficacy Beliefs on Motivation Reasoning of Product Information”).

As you, the AE and Reviewer A suggest, we have framed the paper as an empirical test of the ideas provided in MacInnis and de Mello (2005; see also de Mello and MacInnis 2005). The repositioning allows us to introduce constructs related to reduced confidence such as hope, anxiety and fear, self-efficacy and loss aversion as proposed by the AE.

This tack has allowed us to eliminate much of the theoretical/hypothesis development material presented earlier and to position the paper as more general test of the link between threats to what one hopes for and motivated reasoning.

In so doing, we have reduced the text of the paper to 20 as per your suggested page limit. We would be glad to eliminate additional material if there are ways you believe we can be more concise. The total length of the paper is now 28, two pages under the 30-page limit suggested by the AE. We have also developed what we hope is a more descriptive title.

We also follow the AE’s and Reviewer A’s suggestions by using the measured confidence variable. We test the mediating impact of credibility on the reduced confidence- product judgment relationship. We also describe the mediation analyses in greater detail as suggested by the AE.

H6 caused problems for several reviewers mainly because we did a poor job of articulating it. We have tried to do a better job describing these ideas in the current draft.

Our comments to the reviewers also fall within the page limit guidelines you propose.

We hope you find the revised draft acceptable and look forward to hearing your decision on the present revision.

Responses to the Associate Editor

We appreciate your thoughtful and helpful advice on revising this paper. We have followed each of your three major suggestions. Specifically, we have:

1. Reduced the paper from 48 pages to 30. We have done so by linking threats to hope (induced by reduced confidence that what one yearns for is possible) to motivated reasoning (see MacInnis and de Mello, 2005; de Mello and MacInnis 2005) as you, the Editor and Reviewer A suggest. By testing the simple proposition that reduced confidence in a hoped for outcome induces motivated reasoning, we are able to eliminate the hypotheses and the logic used to derive them. We have also eliminated the two Appendices and cut back on references. Careful editing has also enabled us to further reduce the text to 21 pages.
2. As you propose, we are more agnostic regarding the independent variable, linking reduced confidence in what one hopes for to constructs like anxiety, fear, and self-efficacy and loss aversion.
3. We have also done several mediational analyses using the measured self-efficacy score. We have attempted to be more descriptive in explaining these results and hence in providing greater evidence for mediation (as per the first of your additional comments). We now briefly report the results of an ANCOVA analysis in Studies 1 and 2 that demonstrate that the significant effect of confidence on respondents' perceptions of product effectiveness disappears when claim credibility is used as a covariate. This provides the justification for the mediational analysis, which we conduct by using the manipulation test measure of confidence, per your suggestion and that of Reviewer A.

We apologize for the awkward presentation of H6. The basic idea was not that consumers would search for negative information (we suggested in Study 1 that they would prefer to search for positive information about the product). Rather, the idea here is that consumers with reduced confidence will not be quick to judge product for which negative information has been found. Instead, they will suspend judgment longer in the face of negative information. In other words, they require more negative information before they are willing to render a judgment about the product's effectiveness.

We appreciate the help and constructive guidance you have given us. We look forward to your comments on this revised version of the paper.

Responses to Reviewer A

Thank you for your very helpful comments on our paper. We found them extremely useful in guiding our revision.

As you, the AE and Editor suggest, we have repositioned the paper as a test of the more general proposition that reduced confidence in attaining hoped for outcome induces motivated reasoning. We link these ideas to the construct of hope as described by MacInnis and de Mello (2005; de Mello and MacInnis 2005). We also link them to the ideas of hedonic loss/gain as you suggest and to the concepts of fear, anxiety and self-efficacy as suggested by the AE.

This reduction in theory allows us to develop a paper that falls within the 30 pages recommended by the editor and the AE.

Eliminating the hypotheses (and instead testing the general proposition regarding the link between reduced confidence in a hoped for outcome and motivated reasoning) eliminates the concern you had regarding whether H1-H3 (on page 11) seemed to be one hypothesis and the issues regarding part b of H4 and H5.

As you suggest, we make greater use of the manipulation check measures. We show relationships between the manipulation check measure and the dependent variables and provide evidence for a mediational effect of credibility of product claims on the reduced confidence-product evaluation relationship. As we note in our comments to the AE, we briefly report the results of an ANCOVA analysis in Studies 1 and 2 that demonstrates that the significant effect of confidence on respondents' perceptions of product effectiveness disappears when claim credibility is used as a covariate. This provides the justification for the mediational analysis, which we conduct by using the manipulation test measure of confidence, per your suggestion.

We appreciate your concerns about the sizeable differences in heterogeneity in reading rates between the two sources in Study 1. Your comments caused us to go back and take another look at the underlying data. We looked at your question about the number of sources used by subjects in each of the confidence conditions and examined whether it might be better to analyze the proportion of time respondents spent on each source (positive and negative) in the newspaper versus brochure. You are correct that there is a lot of variance. We get a range from zero to all sixteen pieces of information for both sources. Only two respondents did not look at any information from the brochure and only five did not look at any information in the newspaper. We just get a big range but for both sources we have clusters of respondents in the 3-7 range and another cluster near the limits of 16, but there are respondents spread across the full range. Across both sources 70% of the respondents used between 4 and 14 pieces of information.

In looking at the proportion of sources relative to total information obtained, the modal result is that 27% of all respondents selected an equal number of pieces of information from each source (27% of all respondents did this).

Stated simply, there is just a lot of variation within both treatment groups. The reason we get the results we do is because consumers in the low confidence group use more pieces of information from the brochure than they use from the newspaper. Although there is not much here beyond what we have in the paper, we have added several sentences in the paper to provide more details of our findings.

Once again, we thank you for these helpful comments. We look forward to your comments on our revision.

Responses to Reviewer B

Thank you for your constructive comments and useful guidance on our paper.

Thank you for your positive comments on the exposition of ideas presented in the previous version of the paper.

We apologize for the cryptic title and now propose one we hope is more descriptive of our ideas.

Your concerns about self-efficacy dovetail to a certain extent with those articulated by the Editor, AE and Reviewer A. Their suggestion was to as a test of the more general proposition that reduced confidence in attaining hoped for outcome induces motivated reasoning. We link these ideas to the construct of hope as described by MacInnis and de Mello (2005; de Mello and MacInnis 2005). We also link them to the concepts of fear, anxiety and self-efficacy as suggested by the AE. The AE and Editor believed that such a tack would enable us to produce a much shorter paper as it would test one central hypothesis articulated elsewhere—namely that reduced confidence in attaining a hoped for outcome would induce motivated reasoning. Testing this simple proposition would allow us to cut back on length by eliminating the various hypotheses. We have substantially revised the paper with these guidelines in mind.

We thank you for your helpful comments.

Comments for Reviewer C

We thank you for your comments on our paper and the plausibility of the ideas we present. We agree that the existing of sham products and the tendency of some consumers to fall victim to them is directly consistent with the ideas we proposed. We note these ideas in the paper.

You raise several concerns about the self-efficacy manipulation. The Editor suggests that while these ideas are good, he would find it preferable for us to reposition the paper as a test of the more general proposition that reduced confidence in attaining hoped for outcome induces motivated reasoning. We link these ideas to the construct of hope as described by MacInnis and de Mello (2005; de Mello and MacInnis 2005). We also link them to the ideas of hedonic loss/gain as you suggest and to the concepts of fear, anxiety and self-efficacy as suggested by the AE.

We apologize for the confusion regarding H6. We did a poor job of articulating our ideas. The idea was not that reduced confidence consumers seek out negative information. Rather, the idea was that reduced confidence consumers would require more negative information (assuming they had already come across it) before making a judgment about the product's effectiveness. We hope this idea is clearer in the current draft.

Once again, we appreciate your many thoughtful suggestions. They have provided great insight into future studies we might conduct.