

JCR MANUSCRIPT REVIEW HISTORY 003-3 (REVISION NOTES FROM AUTHORS)

Responses to the Editor and Associate Editor

We appreciate your continued support of our paper and are happy to hear that the paper has been conditionally accepted. As you have suggested, we have attempted to respond to the remaining comments of the reviewers (as described below). In particular, we have clarified the results of Study 3 and have justified the motivation for retaining Study 2 (this justification is described in greater detail in our first comment for Reviewer C).

Once again, we thank you for the supportive and constructive nature of this review process.

Responses for Reviewer A

Thank you for your continued support of our manuscript. As you have suggested we have:

- Reworked paragraph 3 on page 1, elaborating on the ideas, reducing jargon, laying out the logic in the manner you suggest, relating the idea to work on gambling, and defining hope.
- We have used the terms subjects as opposed to “consumers” in the empirical sections of the manuscript.

We appreciate your help in improving our manuscript.

Responses for Reviewer B

Thank you for your thoughtful comments. In response:

- We have included ideas about measures of self-efficacy, and research on cognitive dissonance and regret as areas for future research in the discussion section.
- We believe your point # 3 was due to a lack of clarity on our part in describing the manipulations. We have revised a few sentences to make the manipulation clearer.
- We have continued to leave the reporting of the interaction effects after we discuss the main effects—however we are happy to change this if the Editor prefers that we do.
- We have also attempted to better motivate study 3 and indicate why the results provide strong support of a motivated reasoning explanation.

Once again, we truly appreciate your helpful comments.

Responses for Reviewer C

We appreciate your continued help in making our contributions clear. In response to your comments, we have:

- Reworked the discussion of Study 2 to better explain why its results are consistent with the results of Study 1. In study 1 we found that confidence was mediated by the perceived credibility of claims, which differed between high and low confidence subjects (but we only measured credibility, we did not manipulate it). In study 2 we find that low confidence subjects do not discriminate between manipulated high and low credibility claims (while high confidence subjects do discriminate). The failure of low confidence subjects to discriminate between the manipulated high versus low credibility claims results in low confidence subjects attributing greater credibility to the (manipulated) low credibility claims relative to the high confidence subjects. These differences in credibility of claims mediate perceived product efficacy just as we found in Study 1. We believe that study 2 provides additional support for motivated reasoning beyond that provided in study 1—and hence that it makes sense to retain Study 2. Furthermore, we actually manipulate credibility in Study 2 as opposed to Study 1.
- We have also provided more explanation for the results of study 3 on page 18. Note that in study 3 we examined how many pieces of information respondents gathered before they were willing to render a judgment about the effectiveness of the product. We argue that strong evidence for motivated reasoning would be revealed by finding that low confidence subjects required more pieces of negative information than did their high confidence counterparts before being willing to judge the effectiveness of the product. To the extent that they discounted the negative information they encountered and decided to engage in additional information search, they were able to keep the hope alive that this product might help them achieve their goal. Because high confidence subjects have less of an incentive to discount negative information, they may be willing to judge the effectiveness of the product (or lack thereof) after gathering fewer pieces of negative information.

We hope these changes are helpful. Once again, we truly appreciate your comments on our paper.