

Two Essays on Marketplace Interaction

By

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Dissertation Abstract (English)

This dissertation comprises of two essays on marketplace interaction. The first essay focuses on consumers' interaction with firms in the context of market research surveys. Consumers sometimes anticipate interacting with firm representatives during follow-up interviews after completing market research surveys. Based on an anticipated cognitive effort mechanism, this essay shows in four studies that anticipated firm interaction can bias consumer responses to market research surveys, such that anticipated firm interaction increases the gap between private and publicly expressed attitudes when the valence of private attitude is negative but not when it is positive. This essay contributes to the literature on consumer interactions in the marketplace by first identifying a new joint effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on attitude gap, and second by identifying a new underlying mechanism based on anticipated cognitive effort. The second essay focuses on consumers' interaction with sellers in peer-to-peer marketplaces. Based on a fit-fluency mechanism, this essay examines the joint influence of seller depth of disclosure and consumer self-construal on seller and product evaluations. Results from four studies indicate that depth of disclosure has a positive effect on seller and product evaluations when self-construal is interdependent, and this positive effect is eliminated when self-construal is independent. This essay contributes to the literature on depth of disclosure by first identifying a new joint effect of depth of disclosure and self-construal on seller and product evaluations, and second by identifying a new underlying mechanism based on fit-fluency.

Dissertation Abstract (French)

Cette dissertation comprend deux essais portant sur les interactions dans le marché. Le premier essai se concentre sur l'interaction consommateur-firme dans le contexte des enquêtes de marché/satisfaction. On sait que les consommateurs anticipent parfois la possibilité d'interactions ultérieures avec les représentants corporatifs lorsqu'ils remplissent des questionnaires portant sur leur niveau de satisfaction. Reconnaissant qu'un certain niveau d'effort cognitif est requis par de tels mécanismes d'anticipation, cet essai démontre au moyen de quatre études que l'anticipation d'une interaction éventuelle avec la firme peut biaiser les réponses du consommateur lors d'une étude de marché/satisfaction: l'anticipation d'une possible interaction avec la firme peut augmenter l'écart entre l'évaluation privée du consommateur et celle qu'il déclare publiquement; un tel écart apparaît dans le cas où l'évaluation privée est négative mais n'apparaît pas lorsque l'évaluation privée est positive. Ce essai contribue à la littérature des interactions des consommateurs dans le marché premièrement en identifiant un nouvel effet conjoint de l'interaction anticipée avec la firme et de la combinaison de l'évaluation privée et de l'écart d'évaluation et deuxièmement en identifiant un nouveau mécanisme basé sur l'effort cognitif requis pour effectuer une telle anticipation. Le deuxième essai porte sur l'interaction consommateur-vendeur dans un marché peer-to-peer. Se basant sur la facilité avec laquelle le mécanisme d'ajustement de perception s'effectue, cet essai examine l'influence du niveau de divulgation du vendeur sur l'évaluation/perception que le consommateur se fait du vendeur et du produit. Les résultats de quatre études démontrent que l'intensité de la divulgation a un effet positif sur l'évaluation que se fait le consommateur du vendeur et du produit lorsque le consommateur perçoit que lui et le vendeur sont interdépendants; cependant cet effet positif est éliminé lorsque le vendeur perçoit qu'il est indépendant du vendeur. Cet essai contribue à la

littérature sur le niveau de divulgation premièrement en identifiant un nouvel effet conjoint du niveau de divulgation et des perceptions d'interdépendance ou d'indépendance de l'acheteur par rapport au vendeur et de l'évaluation du produit par le consommateur, et deuxièmement en identifiant un nouveau mécanisme fondamental basé sur le niveau de capacité d'ajustement des perceptions.

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Preface

This dissertation is written as a part of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management, McGill University. The dissertation is comprised of two essays. The first essay contributes to the literature on anticipated interaction in the marketplace, and the second essay contributes to the literature on depth of disclosure in peer-to-peer marketplaces. The findings reported in this dissertation are original, unpublished, and independent work by the author, Sumitra Auschaitrakul, under the supervision of Prof. Ashesh Mukherjee.

Essay 1

The Effect of Anticipated Firm Interaction on Attitude Gap

Consumers sometimes anticipate interacting with firms in the future such as when they agree to take part in a follow-up interview after a market research survey. In this essay, I examine the effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap, which is the difference between the public attitude expressed to firms in market research surveys and the private attitude held privately in consumers' minds. I show in four studies that anticipated firm interaction has a positive effect on attitude gap when the valence of private attitude is negative, but not when it is positive. Further I show this joint effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on attitude gap is driven by a mechanism based on anticipated cognitive effort. These findings make two contributions to the literature on consumer interaction in the marketplace. First, I identify a new joint effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on attitude gap, and second, I identify a new mechanism underlying this effect based on anticipated cognitive effort. From a managerial perspective, the findings indicate that anticipated firm interaction can bias consumer responses to market research surveys and lead to inaccurate assessment of consumers' true opinions about products and services.

Keywords: anticipated firm interaction, anticipated cognitive effort, attitude gap, survey bias

Firms often conduct market research surveys to collect information from consumers about their product and service experiences. These surveys may be conducted online or offline, and typically consist of a series of scaled and open-ended questions to which consumers provide written responses. A particular feature of surveys that is becoming increasingly popular is the follow-up interview. For example, a hotel or a cruise liner might ask survey respondents for permission to contact them later for further discussion and clarification of their survey ratings; see appendix 1 for illustrative examples of surveys with follow-up interview requests in different industries. Notably, consumers who agree to take part in a follow-up interview would be interacting with the firm in the future, while those who decline to take part in a follow-up interview would not be interacting with the firm in the future. More formally, I define anticipated firm interaction as consumers' expectation of verbally discussing with a firm about their product or consumption experiences (Duhachek, Zhang, and Krishnan 2007; Schlosser and Shavitt 2002). In this research, I examine two levels of anticipated firm interaction: present when survey respondents agree to participate in a follow-up interview, and absent when survey respondents do not agree to participate in a follow-up interview.

This research examines the effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap, which has been defined as the gap between the public and private attitudes of consumers (Duhachek et al. 2007; Schlosser 2009). Here, public attitude refers to consumer opinions of product or consumption experience which are expressed in market research surveys whereas private attitude refers to consumer opinions of product or consumption experience which are not shared with the firm. Attitude gap is an outcome of interest to managers since it influences the reliability of market research data, and consequently managerial decision-making. For example, a positive attitude gap where expressed public attitude in a survey is more positive than the consumer's

actual private attitude might make managers complacent about the quality of their product or service. Conversely, a negative attitude gap whereby expressed public attitude in a survey is more negative than the consumer's actual private attitude might divert managerial resources toward addressing irrelevant issues with their product or service. Based on an anticipated cognitive effort mechanism, I show in four studies that anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude jointly influence attitude gap, such that anticipated firm interaction has a positive effect on attitude gap when consumers have a negative private attitude toward the firm, but not when consumers have a positive private attitude toward the firm. Consistent with the proposed mechanism, I show that these effects of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude are mediated by anticipated cognitive effort, and moderated by consumers' need for cognition.

This research makes two theoretical contributions to the literature on consumer interactions in the marketplace. First, I identify a new joint effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on attitude gap, such that anticipated firm interaction has a positive effect on attitude gap only when the valence of private attitude is negative. The observed positive effect of anticipated interaction on attitude gap in the current context of consumer-to-firm interactions contrasts with a negative effect of anticipated interaction reported by past research in the context of consumer-to-consumer interactions (Duhachek et al. 2007; Schlosser 2005, 2009). The second contribution of the current research is identification of a mechanism underlying the effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on attitude gap based on anticipated cognitive effort. Past research on consumer-to-consumer interactions has examined two mechanisms underlying the effect of anticipated interaction on attitude gap, namely impression management (Schlosser 2005, 2009) and social validation (Duhachek et al.

2007). Impression management refers to behavioral strategies that people use to create desired social images or identities (Tetlock and Manstead 1985) while social validation refers to the acceptance of social consensus as evidence for reality (Cialdini 1993). I extend this literature by identifying a new mechanism based on anticipated cognitive effort that can arise in the context of consumer-to-firm interactions. Finally, from an applied perspective, the present research cautions managers that consumers could provide biased responses to managers when they anticipate interacting with the firm during a follow-up interview. In order to minimize this bias, the present research suggests that managers could inform customers during the survey that the follow-up interview is likely to be short and require little effort. To further minimize the bias arising from anticipated firm interaction, managers could inform customers that only some survey respondents would be contacted to take part in the follow-up interview.

The rest of this research is organized as follows. I begin with a review of past research examining the effect of anticipated interaction on judgment and decision-making. I then develop a theoretical framework based on prospect theory and bounded rationality to generate hypotheses about the joint effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on attitude gap. I subsequently report four studies that test the proposed hypotheses across different product categories using different measures of attitude gap. I conclude with a general discussion that highlights key contributions, and identifies promising directions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Anticipated Interaction

Research in social psychology has examined the effect of anticipated interaction in an interpersonal context, such as when individuals expect to interact with other individuals to share opinions, have conversations, or engage in collaboration. This research has investigated effects

on liking (Tyler and Sears 1977), memory (Devine, Sedikides, and Fuhrman 1989), information acquisition (Levine and Russo 1995), mood regulation (Erber, Wegner, and Therriault 1996), deceptive behavior (Tyler and Feldman 2004), task performance (Augustinova, Oberle, and Stasser 2005), self-disclosure (Gibbs, Ellison, and Heino 2006), and evaluation accuracy (Roch 2007). More relevant to the present research, investigations in consumer psychology have studied the effect of anticipated interaction between individuals in commercial contexts such as focus groups, discussion forums, and online reviews. This latter stream of research has examined effects on outcomes such as public attitude (Schlosser 2005; Schlosser and Shavitt 2002), argument sidedness (Schlosser 2005), and attitude gap (Duhachek et al. 2007; Schlosser 2009). Below I summarize the key findings in this latter stream of research and differentiate my proposed model from past research on this topic. Specifically, I begin with findings which examined public attitude as a dependent variable, and then I focus on findings which examined attitude gap as a dependent variable.

Public attitude

Schlosser and Shavitt (2002) studied the effect of anticipated group interaction on public attitude in a focus group context. Anticipated group interaction refers to the expectation of talking to other consumers about a product while public attitude refers to consumers' publicly expressed evaluation of the product to others. The authors argued that anticipated group interaction influences public attitude through the salience of product attributes. Specifically, the authors argued that the presence of anticipated group interaction increases the salience of less important product attributes; in contrast, the absence of anticipated group interaction increases the salience of the more important product attributes. Based on this argument, the authors posited that effect of anticipated interaction on public attitude should depend on the valence of product

attributes, i.e., whether the more or less important product attributes are positive or negative in valence. The authors tested their propositions in three studies conducted in the context of restaurants where anticipated group interaction was manipulated by informing respondents that they either would or would not be discussing a restaurant with other respondents in a focus group. Consistent with their predictions, these researchers found that the effect of anticipated group interaction on publicly expressed attitude in a focus group is a function of the salience and valence of product attributes.

In contrast to the previous article which focused on anticipated group interaction between consumers in a focus group context, Schlosser (2005) studied anticipated group interaction in an online review context. In this context, the authors argued that anticipated group interaction is determined by communication role which refers to whether the individual in question is a poster (i.e., someone who posts product experiences on the Internet) or a lurker (i.e., someone who reads others' postings on the Internet but does not post anything themselves). In particular, posters are expected to be relatively higher on anticipated group interaction than lurkers since posters (but not lurkers) share information with others on the Internet. With communication role as a proxy for anticipated group interaction, Schlosser (2005) investigated the moderating role of valence of other's opinion on the effect of communication role on public attitude. Using an impression management mechanism whereby individuals are said to act in a way that creates desired social images or identities (Tetlock and Manstead 1985), the author argued that posters are concerned about being judged undesirably by others on their product evaluation. Since a negative product evaluation is likely to be seen as being more discerning than a positive product evaluation, expressing a negative evaluation in public would increase one's likelihood of being judged desirably by others. Hence, posters are likely to decrease their public attitude when the

valence of other's opinion is negative, but not when it is positive. In contrast, lurkers by definition do not anticipate interacting with others. Therefore, they would not feel the social pressure of being judged; as a result, lurker's public attitude was not expected to be influenced by other's opinions. The author tested these propositions in two studies conducted in the product category of movies. For example, in study 1, communication role was manipulated by informing participants that they would either write a review of a movie which would be made public in the poster condition or read other's reviews of a movie in the lurker condition. Next, all participants watched a short animation movie for 8 minutes, and then read a movie review provided by others. This review was used to manipulate valence of other's opinion, such that participants read a positive review in the positive valence of other's opinion condition and a negative review in the negative valence of other's opinion condition. After reading the review, all participants rated and reviewed the movie. This rating measured public attitude. Consistent with the author's predictions, posters but not lurkers evaluated the movie more negatively after reading a negative review compared to positive review.

Attitude Gap

Different from the previous two articles which focused on public attitude as the dependent variable, the next two articles focused on attitude gap as a dependent variable. First, Duhachek et al. (2007) investigated the joint effect of anticipated group interaction and congruity of social network on attitude gap in a focus group context. Congruity of social network was categorized into two types: congruous and incongruous. A congruous social network refers to the situation where consumers expect to interact with a group holding attitude that is the same valence as their private attitudes. For example, consumers holding a negative private attitude toward the product expect to interact with a group holding a negative attitude toward the same

product. In contrast, an incongruous social network refers to the situation where consumers expect to interact with a group holding attitude that is not the same valence as their private attitudes. For example, consumers holding a negative private attitude toward the product expect to interact with a group holding a positive attitude toward the same product. Attitude gap was defined as the difference between consumer's public and private attitudes. Private attitude refers to consumers' evaluation of the product that is not shared with others, whereas public attitude refers to consumers' evaluation of the product that is expressed to others. The authors argued that anticipated group interaction moderates the effect of congruity of social network on attitude gap.

Consider first the case of anticipated group interaction absent. In this case, the authors predicted that incongruous social network (i.e., consumers holding a positive private attitude but group holding a negative attitude) would lead to greater attitude gap compared to congruous social network (i.e., both consumer and group holding a negative attitude). The authors used information congruity and negativity bias to explain their predictions. Information incongruity suggests that incongruent information is more salient and diagnostic than congruent information (Fiske 1980), and negativity bias explains that negative information possesses greater salience and diagnostic compared to positive information (Skowronski and Carlston 1989). Based on these mechanisms, the authors argued that information about negative group attitude would be more salient and diagnostic to consumers holding a positive private attitude compared to negative private attitude. Hence, consumers holding a positive private attitude would adjust their public attitude downward in the direction of the group resulting in an attitude gap. Conversely, consumers holding a negative private attitude would be less likely to adjust their public attitude in the direction of group attitude resulting in a lesser attitude gap.

Next, consider the case of anticipated group interaction present. The authors predicted that congruous social network (i.e., both consumer and group holding a negative attitude) would lead to greater attitude gap than incongruous social network (i.e., consumers holding a positive private attitude but group holding a negative attitude). Based on a social validation mechanism where individuals accept social consensus as evidence for objective reality (Cialdini 1993), the authors argued that consumers holding a negative private attitude would perceive a negative group attitude to be more salient and diagnostic compared to consumers holding a positive private attitude. Hence, consumers holding a negative private attitude would adjust their public attitude downward in the direction of group attitude resulting in an attitude gap. However, this attitude gap would be narrowed in the case of an incongruous social network where consumers hold a positive private attitude but group holds a negative attitude. The reason is that consumers holding a positive private attitude would find the negative group attitude threatening, and hence would focus on their own positive attitude resulting in a lesser attitude gap.

The authors tested their predictions in two studies. For example, in study 1, participants were asked to read either a positive or a negative study guide review, and then evaluated the study guide. This evaluation was served as a measure of private attitude. Next, participants were informed that there would be a focus group discussion about the study guide in which the group held either positive or negative opinion of study guide. Here, the review of study guide and the information about focus group discussion manipulated congruity of social network. For example, participants in the congruous social network condition read a negative review and were told a negative group opinion, whereas participants in the incongruous social network condition read a positive review and were told a negative group opinion. Later, participants were given the option to participate in this focus group discussion about the study guide. This instruction was designed

to measure anticipated group interaction, such that those who signed up for discussion represented anticipated group interaction present, whereas those who did not sign up for discussion represented anticipated group interaction absent. Finally, all participants were asked to provide their evaluation of study guide which served as a measure of public attitude. Consistent with the authors' predictions, attitude gap was greater when the social network was incongruous versus congruous in the anticipated group interaction absent condition; in contrast, attitude gap was greater when the social network was congruous versus incongruous in the anticipated group interaction present condition.

Similar to the previous article, Schlosser (2009) also focused on attitude gap as the dependent variable, and extended the findings of Schlosser (2005) by considering the additional role of communication medium. Communication medium was defined as the carrier of communication, which could be either computer-mediated (e.g., online forums) or face-to-face (e.g., focus groups). Using an impression management mechanism, the author argued that face-to-face communication would lead to greater attitude gap compared to computer-mediated communication. The reason was that those in the face-to-face condition would perceive themselves to be closer to the group compared to those in the computer-mediated condition. Therefore, those in the face-to-face condition would seek to fit in, and hence express a public attitude closer to the group attitude but further from their own private attitude. In contrast, those in the computer-mediated condition would seek to stand out, and hence express a public attitude that is further from the group but closer to their own private attitude.

The author tested these propositions in three studies conducted in the restaurant product category. In these studies, communication medium was manipulated by informing participants that they would be joining a focus group – either in a round table format in the face-to-face

condition, or in front of a computer in the computer-mediated condition. Participants' attitude reported privately about the restaurant was considered to be their private attitude while participants' attitude stated to the group during the focus group discussion was considered to be their public attitude. Consistent with the author's predictions, attitude gap was found to be greater in the face-to-face compared to the computer-mediated condition.

THE CURRENT INVESTIGATION

The current investigation differs from the past research described above in three ways. First, the past research summarized above focuses on consumer-to-consumer interactions such as focus groups while the present research in this manuscript focuses on consumer-to-firm interactions such as follow-up interviews with firms. To the best of my knowledge, research has not yet examined the possible effects of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap. Second, the present research identifies a new joint effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on attitude gap, such that the presence of anticipated firm interaction increases attitude gap when the valence of private attitude is negative, but not when it is positive. This positive effect of anticipated firm interaction observed in the present context of consumer-to-firm interactions contrasts with a negative effect reported in past research on consumer-to-consumer interactions (Duhachek et al. 2007; Schlosser 2005, 2009). For example, both Schlosser (2005) and Duhachek et al. (2007) found that consumers publicly assess a product more negatively when they anticipate communicating their evaluations to other consumers holding a negative evaluation of the product. Furthermore, Schlosser (2009) found that this negative effect was stronger in a face-to-face than in a computer-mediated context. In contrast to this negative effect of anticipated interaction in past research on consumer-to-consumer interactions, I show a positive effect in the context of consumer-to-firm interactions.

Third, the current research identifies a new mechanism based on anticipated cognitive effort that underlies the effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on attitude gap in the context of consumer-to-firm interactions. Past research on consumer-to-consumer interactions has examined two mechanisms underlying the effect of anticipated interaction on attitude gap, namely impression management (Schlosser 2005, 2009) and social validation (Duhachek et al. 2007) in the context of consumer-to-consumer interactions. Using an impression management mechanism, Schlosser (2005) argued that consumers strategically evaluate a product more negatively because they want to be seen as discerning. Similarly, Schlosser (2009) argued that consumers in a face-to-face context strategically express a more negative attitude toward a product in the direction of the group because they want to appear to be discriminating to the group. Based on a social validation mechanism, Duhachek et al. (2007) argued that consumers anticipating discussion with a group which holds a negative view of a product are likely to shift their views toward the negative group attitude. In contrast to the mechanisms in past research, I propose a new mechanism in the present research based on anticipated cognitive effort which predicts a joint effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on attitude gap. I propose this new mechanism because social norms governing interactions between consumers are less likely to govern interactions between consumers on one hand and firms on the other. Hence, the mechanisms identified in past research which are related to social norms are not likely to apply in the current context of consumer-firm interaction. The model proposed in this research is shown in figure 1 and developed in the following sections based on prospect theory and bounded rationality.

 Insert figure 1 about here

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Prospect Theory

Prospect theory posits that individuals psychologically evaluate losses and gains differently, such that losses loom larger in the mind than gains (Kahneman and Tversky 1979). Consistent with prospect theory, past research has shown that managerial judgments and decisions often display loss aversion. For example, in the context of corporate decisions involving investment risk and return, managers are more likely to take risky decisions that promise high returns when firms perform below rather than above the industry average (Mowen and Gaeth 1992). Managers have also been found to be loss averse in the context of marketing decisions. For example, past research showed that managers generally give more weight to information about the organization's weaknesses and threats than the organization's strengths and opportunities when making decisions about advertising expenditures (White, Varadarajan, and Dacin 2003). Similarly, it has been demonstrated that managers are more concerned with the causes and consequences of negative compared to positive customer feedback (Kraft and Martin 2001). These findings indicate that managerial judgments and decisions are subject to loss aversion, such that negative information looms larger for managers than positive information. I apply this insight from prospect theory to develop hypotheses about the effects of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on anticipated cognitive effort, and subsequently on attitude gap.

As stated earlier, anticipated firm interaction refers to consumers' expectation of verbally discussing with a firm about their consumption experiences (Duhachek et al. 2007; Schlosser and Shavitt 2002). For example, in the context of market research surveys, anticipated firm interaction would be present when consumers agree to take part in a follow-up interview after the

survey while anticipated firm interaction would be absent when consumers decline to take part in a follow-up interview after the survey. Intuitively, anticipated firm interaction should have a main effect on anticipated cognitive effort which has been defined as the perception of cognitive resources required to complete future tasks (Bechwati and Xia 2003; Cooper-Martin 1994; Paas 1992). This is because anticipated firm interaction in the form of an interview is likely to require cognitive effort on the part of the consumer for understanding and responding to questions from the firm. As a result, the presence compared to absence of anticipated firm interaction should lead to higher anticipated cognitive effort on the part of consumers. A contribution of the present research is that, in addition to this main effect, I used prospect theory to propose an interaction effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on anticipated cognitive effort. Here, valence of private attitude refers to unfavorable or favorable consumers opinions of the product or consumption experiences, such that it can be negative or positive (Schlosser 2005).

To understand the moderating role of valence of private attitude, consider the following example. Assume that a consumer had stayed at a hotel for two nights and now he is at the check-out counter. Before checking-out, he thinks back about his experience at this hotel. In the negative valence of private attitude condition, the consumer might have encountered unfriendly hotel staff and stayed in a dirty room, and hence formed a negative private opinion about the hotel. In contrast, a consumer in the positive valence of private attitude condition might have encountered friendly hotel staff and stayed in a clean room, and hence formed a positive private opinion about the hotel. As mentioned earlier, anticipated firm interaction should increase anticipated cognitive effort. That is, anticipated firm interaction should have a positive main effect on anticipated cognitive effort. Building on this main effect, in the present research, I

argue that the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on anticipated cognitive effort is stronger when valence of private attitude is negative compared to positive.

First, consider the case of negative valence of private attitude. In this case, prospect theory predicts that the presence versus absence of anticipated firm interaction is likely to increase anticipated cognitive effort on the part of consumer. The reason for the prediction is as follows. Since managerial judgments are subject to prospect theory, I argue that consumers could learn over time that losses loom larger than gains for managers. If so, then consumers with negative private attitude could anticipate that managers are likely to ask in-depth questions during interviews that follow negative evaluations in a survey. This is because negative evaluations are akin to a loss which is likely to loom large in managers' minds during follow-up interviews. For example, managers could ask follow-up questions such as: "Could you please explain your negative rating?", "Would you explain your negative experience in more detail?", or "Which staff caused you inconvenience?" Answering a series of such questions would require consumers to expend a relatively high level of cognitive effort to recall their experiences and formulate their answers. Consequently, the presence versus absence of anticipated firm interaction should increase anticipated cognitive effort when valence of private attitude is negative.

Next, consider the case of positive valence of private attitude, such as when a hotel guest met friendly staff and stayed in a clean room. In this case, the prospect theory argument described earlier implies that consumers are likely to anticipate fewer follow-up questions from managers during follow-up interviews. This is because positive evaluation is akin to a gain, which is likely to prompt lesser managerial questioning during follow-up interviews. As the extent of questioning reduces, consumers should anticipate lesser cognitive effort for answering

questions from managers. Hence, in the case of positive valence of private attitude, I argue that the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on anticipated cognitive effort is likely to be attenuated.

In addition to prospect theory, the literature on egocentric bias is also consistent with my above propositions. This literature states that people use themselves as a reference point when estimating the perspective, thoughts, and feelings of others (Kruger 1999; Macklin 1987). In the present context, the egocentric bias suggests that consumers are likely to use themselves as a reference point to infer managers' likely response to their survey responses. Specifically, if consumers seek and respond to negative feedback more than positive feedback (Finkelstein and Fishbach 2012), then consumers being subject to the egocentric bias should conclude that managers too should ask more detailed questions when following up negative rather than positive survey responses. Consequently, consumers should anticipate that the future interviews following negative survey responses are going to be more effortful than future interviews following positive survey responses. The preceding arguments are summarized in the following hypothesis:

H1: Valence of private attitude will moderate the effect of anticipated firm interaction on anticipated cognitive effort, such that the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on anticipated cognitive effort will be stronger when valence of private attitude is negative compared to positive.

Next, I investigate the downstream effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on attitude gap as shown in figure 1. Here, attitude gap refers to the difference between consumers' public and private attitudes (Duhachek et al. 2007; Schlosser 2009). In

particular, I use the theoretical lens of bounded rationality to predict a joint effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on attitude gap.

Bounded Rationality

The theory of bounded rationality posits that individuals have limited cognitive resources, and hence use strategies to minimize cognitive effort during judgment and decision-making (Payne, Bettman, and Johnson 1988; Shah and Oppenheimer 2008; Simon 1955). A large body of research supports the view that bounded rationality modifies consumers' judgment and decisions in a variety of domains. For example, research on information search has shown that seeing a large number of choice options increases anticipated cognitive effort, and hence lowers the size of the consideration set (Diehl 2005). Similarly, it has been shown that making in-depth product comparisons during online shopping increases consumer cognitive effort, and hence increases the use of decision aids (Bechwati and Xia 2003; Häubl and Trifts 2000). Likewise, past research has shown that increasing the difficulty of survey questions increases cognitive effort on the part of respondents, which in turn increases their tendency to answer questions randomly (Krosnick 1991). These findings indicate that due to inherent processing limitations, individuals faced with cognitively demanding tasks are inclined to use strategies that minimize cognitive effort. In the present research, I apply the concept of bounded rationality to propose an interactive effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on attitude gap.

Consider first the case of negative valence of private attitude. In this case, hypothesis H1 had predicted that anticipated firm interaction would have a positive effect on anticipated cognitive effort. Recall that the core premise of bounded rationality is that consumers facing cognitively demanding tasks adopt strategies to minimize cognitive effort. In the current context, I argue that one way consumers could minimize cognitive effort would be to shift their public

attitude upward. This is because, as discussed earlier, prospect theory suggests that a more positive public attitude should prompt managers to ask fewer questions during the follow-up interview which would minimize consumers' cognitive effort during the interview. Such an increase in public attitude, in turn, is likely to increase attitude gap which is defined as the difference between consumers' public and private attitudes. As a result, I argue that anticipated firm interaction is likely to have a positive effect on attitude gap in the case of negative valence of private attitude.

Next, consider the case of positive valence of private attitude. In this case, I propose that the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap is likely to be attenuated. As stated in hypothesis H1, anticipated firm interaction is likely to have a relatively weak effect on anticipated cognitive effort when valence of private attitude is positive. If anticipated cognitive effort does not increase substantially in this latter condition, then consumers would not need to use strategies for reducing cognitive effort such as shifting their public attitude upward. Consequently, anticipated firm interaction should have a relatively smaller effect on attitude gap when valence of private attitude is positive. The preceding arguments are summarized in the following hypothesis:

H2: Valence of private attitude will moderate the effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap, such that the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap will be stronger when valence of private attitude is negative compared to positive.

Recall that the proposed mechanism underlying hypotheses H1 and H2 was based on anticipated cognitive effort whereby individuals anticipate greater cognitive effort during future firm interaction when valence of private attitude is negative compared to positive. I now test this

anticipated cognitive effort mechanism by examining an individual difference variable known to be related to cognitive effort, namely need for cognition.

Need for Cognition

Need for cognition (NFC) refers to an individual difference in intrinsic motivation to engage in effortful cognitive tasks (Cacioppo and Petty 1982), such that high NFC individuals are more likely to engage in effortful thinking than low NFC individuals (Briñol, Petty, and Tormala 2004). Past research has shown that NFC moderates the persuasive effects of marketing communications. For example, research in the context of advertising has shown that high NFC consumers are more influenced by central cues whereas low NFC consumers are more influenced by peripheral cues (Haugtvedt and Petty 1992; Petty and Cacioppo 1986; Zhang 1996). In the context of sales promotions, it has been shown that low NFC consumers superficially use the presence of a promotion as a signal of value whereas high NFC consumers examine the promotion content in depth to assess value (Inman, Peter, and Raghurir 1997). I used NFC in the present research to test the cognitive effort mechanism underlying the joint effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on attitude gap.

Recall I had proposed earlier in hypothesis H2 that anticipated firm interaction is likely to have a positive effect on attitude gap when valence of private attitude is negative. The mechanism underlying this effect was set to be based on anticipated cognitive effort, such that consumers shift their public attitude upward to avoid cognitive effort during future firm interaction. I argue that this anticipated cognitive effort mechanism should be sensitive to consumers' NFC. Specifically, when NFC is low, I predict the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap hypothesized earlier. This is because low NFC consumers are less motivated to engage in effortful tasks compared to high NFC consumers. Hence, low NFC

consumers should shift their public attitude upward to avoid effortful discussions with the firm in the future. Consequently, in the case of low NFC consumers, anticipated firm interaction is likely to have a positive effect on attitude gap when valence of private attitude is negative.

In contrast, when NFC is high, I predict that the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap in the negative valence of private attitude condition will be attenuated. High NFC consumers are more motivated to engage in effortful tasks compared to low NFC consumers. As a result, high NFC consumers should be less likely to shift their public attitude upward to minimize discussion effort in the future, thus reducing the gap between public and private attitude. Consequently, in the case of high NFC consumers, the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap in the negative valence of private attitude condition is likely to be attenuated. The preceding arguments are summarized in the following hypothesis:

H3: In the case of negative valence of private attitude, NFC will moderate the effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap, such that the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap will be stronger when NFC is low compared to high.

In hypothesis H3, I predicted that the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap in the negative valence of private attitude condition will be stronger for low NFC consumers compared to high NFC consumers. I had also argued that this positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap was driven by anticipated cognitive effort. If so, then anticipated cognitive effort should conditionally mediate the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap in the low NFC but not in the high NFC condition. Thus, I propose the following hypothesis:

H4: In the case of negative valence of private attitude, the effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap will be conditionally mediated by anticipated cognitive effort when NFC is low, but not when NFC is high.

I tested hypothesis H1-H4 in four studies: H1 in study 1, H2 in study 2, H3 in study 3, and H4 in study 4. The four studies were also design to assess robustness of effects across two product categories and three measures of attitude gap.

STUDY 1

Participants and Design

Two hundred and one residents of the United States were recruited using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (mTurk, hereafter) and participated online for a small payment. The average age of participants was approximately 35 years, 55.2% of the participants were male ($N = 111$), and 44.8% of them were female ($N = 90$). The study was designed as a 2 (anticipated firm interaction: absent vs. present) $\times$ 2 (valence of private attitude: positive vs. negative) between-subjects ANOVA. This, as well as subsequent studies were conducted using the Qualtrics survey software.

Procedure

The cover story stated that this study was about understanding consumers' responses to a market research survey request by a hotel. Participants were given a scenario consistent with this cover story that manipulated the independent variables of valence of private attitude and anticipated firm interaction (see appendix 2). In this scenario, participants were asked to imagine that they had stayed in a fictitious hotel called Bonjour Hotel for two nights and they were now at the hotel's check-out counter. At this point, they thought back about their experience at the hotel. In the positive valence of private attitude condition, participants were asked to imagine

that the service in the hotel was excellent, the room was clean, and the hotel restaurant had an outstanding selection of food. In the negative valence of private attitude condition, participants imagined that the service was terrible, the room was unclean, and the hotel restaurant had a poor selection of food. Participants then rated their attitude toward the Bonjour Hotel by responding to a three-item scale adapted from Duhachek et al. (2007): “I like this hotel”; “This hotel is a good hotel”; and “This is a high quality hotel.” (1 = strongly disagree/7 = strongly agree). Since these items had high reliability ($\alpha = .99$), they were combined into an index of private attitude.

Next, anticipated firm interaction was manipulated by asking participants to imagine that they were now approached by a hotel staff with request to complete a market research survey and then take part in a subsequent follow-up interview with a manager. All participants were told that they had agreed to complete the market research survey. Participants in the anticipated firm interaction absent condition were then told that they had declined to take part in the follow-up interview, while participants in the anticipated firm interaction present condition were told that they had agreed to take part in the follow-up interview (see appendix 3). Finally, participants responded to the outcome measures, and were thanked for their participation.

Outcome Measures

The dependent variable of anticipated cognitive effort was measured with a four-item scale adapted from previous research (Ein-Gar, Shiv, and Tormala 2012): “How much effort will you have to put in during your upcoming survey [and follow-up interview with a manager]?”, “How much energy will you have to put in during your upcoming survey [and follow-up interview with a manager]?”, “How tiring will your upcoming survey [and follow-up interview with a manager] be?”, and “How difficult will your upcoming survey [and follow-up interview with a manager] be?” (1 = very little/7 = very much). The part of the items within [] was relevant

only to the anticipated firm interaction present condition, and was hence administered only within this condition. The items had acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .74$) and were aggregated into an index of anticipated cognitive effort. The manipulation of anticipated firm interaction was checked by asking participants to indicate whether the following two statements were true (yes) or false (no): “At the beginning of this study, you were asked to assume that you agreed to complete a survey about your stay at the Bonjour Hotel/ take part in an interview with a manager at the Bonjour Hotel.” The manipulation of valence of private attitude was checked using the three-item index for private attitude described earlier.

Attention Checks

Past research indicates that it is important to conduct attention checks with mTurk data since these respondents are completing surveys outside a controlled laboratory experiment (Aust et al. 2013; Paolacci, Chandler, and Ipeirotis 2010; Peer, Vosgerau, and Acquisti 2013; Reips 2002). Attention checks have been performed with structured questions (Paolacci et al. 2010) as well as reading time measures (Aust et al. 2013; Greenwood 2013; Reips 2002). In the present research, I used the latter approach by measuring reading time of the two test scenarios, compared with benchmark reading times assessed in a pilot study where participants were known to be paying attention. In this pilot study, I asked a convenience sample of eleven doctoral student participants to read the two scenarios at a normal and comfortable pace, and unobtrusively measured their reading times through the Qualtrics software.

For the first scenario, the average reading time was 27.25 seconds with a minimum of 14.95 seconds and a maximum of 45.45 seconds. For the second scenario, the average reading time was 43.95 seconds with a minimum of 13.69 seconds and a maximum of 111.62 seconds. Thus in summary, the pilot study data indicated an overall lower bound of 13.69 seconds and

upper bound of 111.62 seconds for reading times across the two scenarios. To account for the possibility of faster and slower readers in the main study compared to the pilot study, I adjusted these lower and upper bounds to be 10 seconds and 200 seconds for participants in the main study. Thus participants in the main study who took less than 10 seconds or more than 200 seconds to read any of the two scenarios – as measured using the Qualtrics software – were judged not to be paying attention and were excluded from analysis. I used this conservative approach for attention check because I manipulated key constructs using scenarios. Therefore, controlling for lower bounds reading time would exclude participants who did not imagine the scenarios whereas controlling for upper bounds reading time would exclude participants who were distracted from reading the scenarios. On application of these reading time criteria, 47 participants in the main study were excluded from analysis: 32 participants from the anticipated firm interaction scenario and 15 participants from the valence of private attitude scenario. The results reported below exclude these 47 participants; the pattern of results was similar when excluded participants were included in the analysis.

Manipulation Checks

As described earlier, the manipulation check of anticipated firm interaction was done by asking participants to answer two questions. The first question asked whether participants had agreed to take the survey. For this question, all participants were expected to answer yes. The second question asked whether participants had agreed to participate in a follow-up interview with the manager. For this second question, those in the anticipated firm interaction absent condition were expected to answer no while those in the anticipated firm interaction present condition were expected to answer yes. To pass the manipulation check of anticipated firm interaction, participants needed to answer both questions correctly. Results showed that 3

participants failed the first question, 11 failed the second question, and 1 failed both questions. In total, 15 participants failed the manipulation check of anticipated firm interaction, and hence were excluded from analysis.

Next, recall that the manipulation check of valence of private attitude was done by using participants' private attitude. Consistent with the manipulation, participants in the positive valence of private attitude condition rated their private attitude as being significantly higher than participants in the negative valence of private attitude condition ($M_{\text{positive}} = 8.71$ vs. $M_{\text{negative}} = 1.39$; $t(137) = 59.03$, $p < .001$). Further consistent with the manipulation, participants in the positive valence of private attitude condition rated their private attitude significantly higher than the neutral mid-point of the scale ($M_{\text{positive}} = 8.71$ vs. $M_{\text{neutral}} = 5$; $t(61) = 61.72$, $p < .001$) while participants in the negative valence of private attitude condition rated their private attitude significantly lower than the neutral mid-point of the scale ($M_{\text{negative}} = 1.39$ vs. $M_{\text{neutral}} = 5$; $t(76) = -36.03$, $p < .001$).

Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis H1 proposed that valence of private attitude moderates the effect of anticipated firm interaction on anticipated cognitive effort, such that the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on anticipated cognitive effort is stronger when valence of private attitude is negative compared to positive. This hypothesis was tested using ANOVA, with anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude as the independent variables and anticipated cognitive effort as the dependent variable. Analysis of variance showed the predicted interaction of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude ($F(1, 135) = 3.91$, $p < .05$), along with significant main effects of anticipated firm interaction ($F(1, 135) = 5.17$, $p < .03$) and valence of private attitude ($F(1, 135) = 16.67$, $p < .001$); see table 1 for means and

standard deviations. Consistent with H1, planned contrasts showed that anticipated firm interaction had a positive effect on anticipated cognitive effort when valence of private attitude was negative ($M_{\text{absent}} = 3.37$ vs. $M_{\text{present}} = 4.27$; $F(1, 135) = 10.15$, $p < .002$), but not when valence of private attitude was positive ($M_{\text{absent}} = 2.92$ vs. $M_{\text{present}} = 2.98$; $F(1, 135) < 1$, $p > .84$).

 Insert table 1 about here

The results of study 1 supported H1 regarding the joint effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on anticipated cognitive effort. The purpose of the next study was to test the effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on attitude gap as stated in hypothesis H2.

STUDY 2

Participants and Design

Two hundred and ninety eight residents of the United States were recruited using mTurk and participated online for a small payment. The average age of the participants was approximately 33 years, 63.8% of the participants were male ($N = 190$), and 36.2% of them were female ($N = 108$). The study was designed as a 2 (anticipated firm interaction: absent vs. present) x 2 (valence of private attitude: positive vs. negative) between-subjects ANOVA.

Procedure

The procedure of study 2 was similar to that of study 1, except that attitude gap instead of anticipated cognitive effort was measured as a dependent variable. Participants began by reading the same cover story and scenario manipulation of valence of private attitude as in study 1. Participants then rated their private attitude toward the Bonjour Hotel by responding to a single item scale used in past research (Schlosser 2005): “Overall, how would you rate the Bonjour

Hotel?” (1 = Terrible/9 = Excellent). Next, participants read the same scenario that was used to manipulate anticipated firm interaction in study 1. Finally, participants responded to the outcome measures, and were thanked for their participation.

Outcome Measures

As stated earlier, the dependent variable of attitude gap is defined as the difference between participants' public and private attitudes (Duhachek et al. 2007; Schlosser 2009). Consistent with this definition, I measured attitude gap as the difference of public and private attitude. As stated earlier, private attitude was measured with a single item scale: “Overall, how would you rate the Bonjour Hotel?” (1 = Terrible/9 = Excellent). To ensure consistency of wording across private and public attitudes, public attitude was also measured with the same single item scale: “Overall, how would you rate the Bonjour Hotel?” (1 = Terrible/9 = Excellent). The manipulations of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude were checked as in the previous study.

Attention Checks

Using the same reading time criteria as in the previous study, 84 participants in the main study were excluded from analysis: 66 participants from the anticipated firm interaction scenario and 18 participants from the valence of private attitude scenario. The pattern of results was similar when excluded participants were included in the analysis.

Manipulation Checks

Using the same manipulation check of anticipated firm interaction as in the previous study, 2 participants failed the second question, and were hence excluded from the analysis. Consistent with the manipulation of valence of private attitude, participants in the positive valence of private attitude condition rated their private attitude significantly higher than

participants in the negative valence of private attitude condition ($M_{\text{positive}} = 8.76$ vs. $M_{\text{negative}} = 1.53$; $t(210) = 79.65$, $p < .001$). Further consistent with the manipulation, participants in the positive valence of private attitude condition rated their private attitude significantly higher than the neutral mid-point of the scale ($M_{\text{positive}} = 8.76$ vs. $M_{\text{neutral}} = 5$; $t(101) = 69.36$, $p < .001$), while participants in the negative valence of private attitude condition rated their private attitude significantly lower than the neutral mid-point of the scale ($M_{\text{negative}} = 1.53$ vs. $M_{\text{neutral}} = 5$; $t(109) = -48.52$, $p < .001$).

Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis H2 proposed that the valence of private attitude moderates the effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap, such that the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap is stronger when valence of private attitude is negative compared to positive. This hypothesis was tested using ANOVA with the gap between participants' public and private attitudes as the dependent variable. Analysis of variance showed the predicted interaction of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude ($F(1, 208) = 5.11$, $p < .03$), along with significant main effect of valence of private attitude ($F(1, 208) = 10.33$, $p < .002$), but not anticipated firm interaction ($F(1, 208) = 1.24$, $p > .27$); see table 2 for means and standard deviations. Consistent with H2, planned contrasts showed that anticipated firm interaction had a positive effect on attitude gap when valence of private attitude was negative ($M_{\text{absent}} = .09$ vs. $M_{\text{present}} = .33$; $F(1, 208) = 5.92$, $p < .02$), but not when valence of private attitude was positive ($M_{\text{absent}} = .02$ vs. $M_{\text{present}} = -.06$; $F(1, 208) < 1$, $p > .43$).

 Insert table 2 about here

The results of study 2 were consistent with hypothesis H2 regarding the joint effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on attitude gap. Next, study 3 aimed to test hypothesis H3 regarding the cognitive effort mechanism underlying a proposed model.

STUDY 3

Participants and Design

One hundred and ninety seven residents of the United States were recruited using mTurk and participated online for a small payment. The average age of participants was approximately 34 years, 60.9% of the participants were male ($N = 120$), and 39.1% of them were female ($N = 77$). The design was a one factor (anticipated firm interaction: absent vs. present) between-subjects ANOVA along with a measure of NFC, and with all participants in the negative valence of private attitude condition.

Procedure

The procedure in study 3 was similar to the negative valence of private attitude condition of study 2 along with a measure of NFC. After reading the cover story, participants were given a scenario that induced negative valence of private attitude (see appendix 4). In this scenario, participants were asked to imagine that they had stayed in a fictitious hotel called Bonjour Hotel for two nights and they were now at the check-out counter of the hotel. At this point, they thought back about their experience at the hotel. All participants were told to imagine that the bed was uncomfortable, the room was unclean, and the staff was unfriendly and impolite. Participants then rated their private attitude toward the Bonjour Hotel by responding to a single item scale: “Based on your experience (e.g., room and service) at the Bonjour Hotel as described above, how would you rate the Bonjour Hotel on the following scale? (1 =Terrible/10 = Excellent).

Next, anticipated firm interaction was manipulated by asking participants to imagine that they were now approached by a hotel staff with a request for feedback (see appendix 5). As in the two previous studies, participants in the anticipated firm interaction absent condition were told that they had agreed to complete a survey but had not agreed to be interviewed by the manager. In contrast, participants in the anticipated firm interaction present condition were told that they had agreed to complete a survey and had agreed to be interviewed by the manager. Finally, participants responded to measures of the dependent variable, manipulation check, NFC, and were thanked for their participation. To measure NFC, participants were told that the researchers would like to create a profile of research participants such as themselves. They were then asked to complete an 18-item NFC scale (Cacioppo, Petty, and Kao 1984). Examples of items were: “I feel relief rather than satisfaction after completing a task that required a lot of mental effort (reverse-coded)”; “It’s enough for me that something gets the job done; I don’t care how or why it works (reverse-coded)”; “I usually end up deliberating about issues even when they do not affect me personally.” (1 = strongly disagree/7 = strongly agree). These 18 items were summed up to form a NFC scale ($\alpha = .96$) which ranged from 1 – 126. The effect of NFC was subsequently assessed using the spotlight analysis at plus and minus one standard deviation from the mean (Goodman and Irmak 2013).

Outcome Measures

The dependent variable of attitude gap was measured as in study 2, using the difference between participants’ public and private attitudes. Notably, I incorporated one change in the measure of private and public attitudes. Recall that in study 2, participants’ private and public attitudes were measured with the same scale as has been done in past research (Duhachek et al. 2007). However, a potential drawback of using the same scale is an anchoring effect whereby

private attitudes can serve as an anchor for public attitudes. To minimize this anchoring effect and consistent with past research (Schlosser 2005, 2009; Tormala et al. 2006), I measured public attitude with a two-item rather than a one-item scale: “How would you rate the room of the hotel?”, and “How would you rate the service of the hotel staff?” (1 = Very Bad/10 = Very Good). These two items had acceptable reliability ($r = .76$) and were then aggregated into an index of public attitude. The manipulation of anticipated firm interaction was checked by asking participants to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following two-item scale: “I agreed to take part in a follow-up interview with a manager”; and “I agreed to discuss my survey responses with a manager of the Bonjour Hotel.” (1 = strongly disagree/7 = strongly agree). These items had acceptable reliability ($r = .79$) and were hence aggregated into an index of anticipated firm interaction.

Attention Checks

Using the same reading time criteria as in earlier studies, 24 participants in the main study were excluded from analysis: 2 participants from the anticipated firm interaction scenario and 22 participants from the valence of private attitude scenario. The pattern of results was similar when excluded participants were included in the analysis.

Manipulation Check

Consistent with the manipulation of anticipated firm interaction, participants in the present condition expected significantly higher future interaction with the firm than participants in the absent condition ($M_{\text{absent}} = 1.69$ vs. $M_{\text{present}} = 6.06$; $t(171) = -18.60$, $p < .001$). To confirm that all participants were in the negative valence of private attitude condition, I examined participants’ ratings of private attitude. Consistent with induced negative valence of private

attitude, participants rated their private attitude to be significantly lower than the neutral point of the scale ($M_{\text{negative}} = 2.20$ vs. $M_{\text{neutral}} = 5.5$; $t(172) = -32.19$, $p < .001$).

Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis H3 proposed that in the case of negative valence of private attitude, the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap is stronger when NFC is low compared to high. To test this hypothesis, I conducted a regression analysis predicting attitude gap with anticipated firm interaction (coded 1 for anticipated firm interaction present and -1 for anticipated firm interaction absent), NFC (mean-centered), and their interaction. Confirming the hypothesis, results showed the predicted interaction of anticipated firm interaction and NFC ($\beta = .14$, $t(169) = 3.16$, $p < .01$), along with significant main effect of anticipated firm interaction ($\beta = .17$, $t(169) = 2.47$, $p < .02$), but not NFC ($\beta = .06$, $t(169) = 1.33$, $p > .19$). To explore the nature of the interaction, I conducted a spotlight analysis at plus and minus one standard deviation from the mean of NFC (see figure 2). Consistent with H3, results showed that anticipated firm interaction had a positive effect on attitude gap when NFC was low ($M_{\text{absent}} = -.18$ vs. $M_{\text{present}} = .58$; $\beta = .76$, $t(169) = 4.02$, $p < .001$), but not when NFC was high ($M_{\text{absent}} = .07$ vs. $M_{\text{present}} = -.03$; $\beta = -.09$, $t(169) = -.48$, $p > .63$).

 Insert figure 2 about here

Study 3 showed that NFC moderates the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap in the negative valence of private attitude condition. This result is consistent with an anticipated cognitive effort mechanism underlying the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap. In the next study, it aimed to replicate hypothesis H3 and tested the

proposed anticipated cognitive effort mechanism through the mediating role of anticipated cognitive effort at different levels of NFC as stated in hypothesis H4.

STUDY 4

Participants and Design

One hundred and thirty two residents of the United States were recruited using Amazon mTurk and participated online for a small payment. The average age of participants was approximately 32 years, 57.6% of the participants were male ($N = 76$), and 42.4% of them were female ($N = 56$). The design was a one factor (anticipated firm interaction: absent vs. present) between-subjects ANOVA along with a measure of NFC, and with all participants in the negative valence of private attitude condition.

Procedure

The procedure was similar to that of study 3 except for three differences. First, I changed the product category from hotel to cruise; second, I used a different method to induce negative private attitude; and third, I added a measure of anticipated cognitive effort. The cover story stated that the study was about understanding consumers' responses to a survey request by a cruise liner. Participants were then given a scenario that induced negative valence of private attitude. Recall that the previous studies had asked participants to read a scenario inducing negative valence of private attitude, and then asked participants to rate their private attitude. In contrast, the scenario in the present study did not ask participants to rate their private attitude, but instead provided them with a rating that represented their private attitude (see appendix 6). Specifically, the scenario asked participants to imagine that they had been on a cruise trip for five nights with a fictitious cruise liner called Nova Atlantic Cruise, and were now returning to port. They were then asked to imagine that based on several negative incidents during the cruise,

they concluded their cruise experience was unsatisfactory as expressed by a rating of 2 on the following point scale (1 = very poor/5 = very good).

As in the earlier studies, anticipated firm interaction was manipulated by asking participants to imagine that they were approached by a staff of the cruise ship with a request for feedback (see appendix 7). In the anticipated firm interaction absent condition, participants were told that they had agreed to complete a survey but had not agreed to take part in a follow-up interview with a manager. In the anticipated firm interaction present condition, participants were told that they had agreed to complete a survey and had also agreed to take part in a follow-up interview with the manager. Finally, participants responded to measures of the mediating variable, dependent variable, manipulation check, NFC, and were thanked for their participation. As in study 3, participants completed the 18-item NFC scale (1 = strongly disagree/7 = strongly agree). The effect of NFC was subsequently assessed using the spotlight analysis at plus and minus one standard deviation from the mean (Goodman and Irmak 2013).

Outcome Measures

The dependent variable of attitude gap was measured by the difference between participants' public and private attitudes. As in a previous study, public attitude was measured with the following single item scale: "Your overall cruising experience on Nova Atlantic Cruise is" (1 = very poor/5 = very good). To construct attitude gap, I subtracted private attitude from public attitude as both were measured on 5-point scales. To measure anticipated cognitive effort, participants were asked: "Do you think the upcoming survey [and follow-up interview] is likely to be hard, difficult, and tiring?" (1 = not at all/7 = very much). Note that the part of the items in bracket [] was administered only in the anticipated firm interaction present condition. The items had high reliability ($\alpha = .89$), and were hence aggregated into an index of anticipated cognitive

effort. As in study 3, the manipulation of anticipated firm interaction was checked by asking participants to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following two statements: “I agreed to take part in a follow-up interview with a manager”; and “I agreed to discuss my survey responses with a manager of the Nova Atlantic Cruise.” (1 = strongly disagree/7 = strongly agree). These items had acceptable reliability ($r = .75$) and were hence aggregated into an index of anticipated firm interaction.

Attention Checks

Using the same reading time criteria as in earlier studies, 34 participants in the main study were excluded from analysis: 23 participants from the anticipated firm interaction scenario and 11 participants from the valence of private attitude scenario. The pattern of results was similar when excluded participants were included in the analysis.

Manipulation Check

Consistent with the manipulation, participants in the anticipated firm interaction present condition expected significantly higher future interaction with the firm than participants in the anticipated firm interaction absent condition ($M_{\text{absent}} = 1.49$ vs. $M_{\text{present}} = 5.89$; $t(96) = -15.12$, $p < .001$).

Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis H3 proposed that in the case of negative valence of private attitude, the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap is stronger when NFC is low compared to high. To test this hypothesis, I conducted a regression analysis predicting attitude gap with anticipated firm interaction (coded 1 for anticipated firm interaction present and -1 for anticipated firm interaction absent), NFC (mean-centered), and their interaction. Confirming the hypothesis, results showed the directionally predicted interaction of anticipated firm interaction

and NFC ($\beta = .00$, $t(94) = 1.56$, $p > .12$), along with a significant main effect of anticipated firm interaction ($\beta = .16$, $t(94) = 2.20$, $p < .03$), but not NFC ($\beta = -.006$, $t(94) = -.43$, $p > .67$). To explore the nature of the interaction, I conducted a spotlight analyses at plus and minus one standard deviation from the mean of NFC (see figure 3). Consistent with H3, results showed that anticipated firm interaction had a positive effect on attitude gap when NFC was low ($M_{\text{absent}} = .75$ vs. $M_{\text{present}} = 1.29$; $\beta = .54$, $t(94) = 2.64$, $p < .01$), but not when NFC was high ($M_{\text{absent}} = 1.04$ vs. $M_{\text{present}} = 1.13$; $\beta = .09$, $t(94) = .45$, $p > .66$).

 Insert figure 3 about here

Hypothesis H4 proposed that in the case of negative valence of private attitude, the effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap is mediated by anticipated cognitive effort when need for cognition is low, but not when it is high. I tested this conditional mediation hypothesis using PROCESS model 14 (Hayes 2013) with anticipated firm interaction (absent = 0, present = 1) as the independent variable, anticipated cognitive effort as the mediating variable, mean-centered NFC as the moderating variable, and attitude gap as the dependent variable.

 Insert figure 4 about here

As shown in figure 4, model 14 tested three separate models. The first model tested the main effect of the independent variable on the mediating variable (path a). Results showed that the main effect of anticipated firm interaction on anticipated cognitive effort was significant ($\beta = 1.50$, $t(96) = 4.91$, $p < .001$). The second model tested the direct effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable (path c). Results showed that the direct effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap was not significant ($\beta = .18$, $t(93) = 1.12$, $p > .26$). The third

model tested the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable through the interaction of mediator and moderator (path b). Results showed that the indirect effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap through the interaction of anticipated cognitive effort and NFC was marginally significant ($\beta = .00$, $t(93) = -1.87$, $p < .06$), supporting H4. Consistent with H4, bootstrapping analysis with 5,000 samples showed that the indirect effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap through anticipated cognitive effort was significant at low NFC since the confidence interval excluded zero (95% CI, .05, .58). In contrast, the indirect effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap through anticipated cognitive effort at high NFC was not significant since the confidence interval included zero (95% CI, -.14, .12).

Additional Analysis

I also considered the possibility that NFC might moderate the path between anticipated firm interaction and anticipated cognitive effort (path a). From a conceptual point of view, this moderation is not likely since NFC by definition influences consumer responses to cognitive effort and not the magnitude of cognitive effort itself. Consistent with this reasoning, I wanted to empirically confirm that NFC did not moderate the path between anticipated firm interaction and anticipated cognitive effort.

I investigated the potential moderating role of NFC on the path between anticipated firm interaction and anticipated cognitive effort by using the bootstrapping approach with 5,000 samples. Specially, I used PROCESS model 1 (Hayes 2013) with anticipated cognitive effort as the dependent variable, and anticipated firm interaction, NFC, and their products as the independent variables. Results showed that the joint effect of anticipated firm interaction and NFC on anticipated cognitive effort was not significant ($\beta = .00$, $t(94) = -.34$, $p > .73$). In

contrast, and as proposed in H4, my preceding results indicate that NFC moderates the path between anticipated cognitive effort and attitude gap.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Consumers sometimes anticipate having to interact with firms in the future, such as when they agree to participate in interviews following market research surveys. I show in four studies that anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude jointly influence attitude gap. Specifically, I show that anticipated firm interaction has a positive effect on attitude gap when valence of private attitude is negative, but not when it is positive. I also show that this effect is driven by a mechanism based on anticipated cognitive effort, as indicated by the mediating role of anticipated cognitive effort and the moderating role of NFC. These results were found to be robust across two product categories and three measures of attitude gap.

Theoretical Contributions

This research makes two theoretical contributions to the literature on anticipated interaction in the marketplace. First, the present research identifies a new joint effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on attitude gap, such that anticipated firm interaction has a positive effect on attitude gap only when the valence of private attitude is negative. Notably, the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction in the present research on consumer-to-firm interactions contrasts with a negative effect of anticipated interaction reported by past research in the context of consumer-to-consumer interactions (Duhachek et al. 2007; Schlosser 2005, 2009). For example, both Schlosser (2005) and Duhachek et al. (2007) found that consumers publicly assessed a product more negatively when they anticipated communicating their evaluations to other consumers holding a negative evaluation of the product. Furthermore, Schlosser (2009) found that this negative effect was stronger in a face-to-

face context rather than in a computer-mediated context. For example, consumers anticipating discussion with others in a group adjusted their evaluation of the restaurant more negatively compared to consumers anticipating discussion with others online. In contrast to this negative effect of anticipated firm interaction in past research on consumer-to-consumer interactions, I show a positive effect in the context of consumer-to-firm interactions. For example, consumers anticipating discussion with a firm about negative survey response adjust their rating which will be seen by the firm more upward compared to consumers anticipating discussion with a firm about positive survey response.

Second, the present research identifies a new mechanism underlying the positive effect based on anticipated cognitive effort. The anticipated cognitive effort mechanism in the present context of consumer-to-firm interactions contrasts with impression management and social validation mechanisms identified in past research on consumer-to-consumer interactions (Duhachek et al. 2007; Schlosser 2005, 2009). For example, using an impression management mechanism, Schlosser (2005) argued that consumers anticipating interaction with other consumers can strategically evaluate a product more negatively because they want to be seen as discerning. Likewise, Schlosser (2009) argued that consumers in a face-to-face context strategically express a more negative attitude toward a product in the direction of the group because they want to appear to be discriminating to the group. Moreover, prior research on consumer-to-consumer interactions has used social validation mechanism; for example, Duhachek et al. (2007) argued that consumers anticipating discussion with a group which holds a negative view of a product tend to shift their views toward the negative group opinion because conforming to this negative group opinion represents social validation for the consumer. I extend

this literature by identifying a new mechanism based on anticipated cognitive effort that operates in the present context of consumer-to-firm interactions.

The present research also contributes to the literatures on survey response bias and consumer complaining behavior. Survey response bias has been defined as the extent to which responses in a market research survey deviate from consumers' true evaluations (Mittal and Kamakura 2001). Attitude gap as examined in the present research can be considered to be a type of survey response bias, since a gap indicates that publicly expressed opinions in a survey are different from privately held true evaluations of the consumer. Past research has identified a number of factors that can influence survey response bias including, type of question (Gal and Rucker 2011), type of participation appeal (Childers, Pride, and Ferrell 1980), provision of participation incentive (Hansen 1980), provision of participation premium (Whitmore 1976), customer characteristics (Mittal and Kamakura 2001), and expecting to evaluate (Ofir, Simonson, and Yoon 2009). The present research extends this literature by identifying anticipated interaction and valence of private attitude as additional factors that can influence response bias in market research surveys.

Consumer complaining behavior refers to consumers voicing their dissatisfaction to firms following product or service failures (Bougie, Pieters, and Zeelenberg 2003; Singh 1988). Attitude gap as examined in the present research is related to complaining behavior since a positive gap implies a relatively low level of dissatisfaction being voiced, while a negative gap implies a relatively higher level of dissatisfaction being voiced. Past research has identified several antecedents of complaining behavior such as cost of complaining (Day 1984), attribution of controllability (Folkes, Koletsky, and Graham 1987), propensity to seek redress (Chebat, Davidow, and Coddjovi 2005), attitude toward complaining (Blodgett and Anderson 2000),

perceived betrayal (Ward and Ostrom 2006), service provider responsiveness (Voorhees, Brady, and Horowitz 2006), and consumer anger (Bougie et al. 2003; Folkes et al. 1987). The present research extends this literature by identifying three new antecedents of complaining behavior, namely anticipated firm interaction, valence of private attitude, and need for cognition.

Managerial Implications

The present research has several implications for managers. First, the results suggest that managers are sometimes at risk of getting a false positive view of their performance when they seek to interact with customers after a market research survey. Specifically, results indicate that consumers shift their expressed attitudes in surveys upward when their true attitude is negative, and when they anticipate future interaction with the firm. This research also suggests ways to minimize this bias in two ways. First, managers could signal to customers that the follow-up interview will not be cognitively effortful. This could be done, for example, by informing survey respondents who have agreed to a follow-up interview that the firm places great value on respondents' time, so the follow-up interview would take only a few minutes to complete. Firms could also indicate the exact length of the follow-up interview (e.g., 5 minutes) since this would provide evidence for lesser cognitive effort during the interview. Another method for minimizing the bias introduced by anticipated firm interaction would be to inform consumers that only a random sample of those who agree to participate would later be contacted and actually interviewed. This latter approach could prompt consumers to discount anticipated cognitive effort by lowering the probability of being contacted later by the firm. I discuss this latter approach in more detail in the future research section below.

Limitations and Future Research

The present research has two key limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the studies in this research all used scenarios to manipulate anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude. Scenario based manipulations have been widely used in past research on consumer interactions in the marketplace (Chan and Sengupta 2010; Kramer and Block 2008; Schlosser 2009). Past research has also argued that scenario based manipulations are appropriate for testing hypothesis about consumer behavior because they maximize internal validity and interpretation of results (Gershoff and Koehler 2011). Nevertheless, it would be desirable for future research to replicate the observed results using more realistic manipulations of the variables in my model. For example, valence of private attitude could be manipulated in future research by varying the respondent's actual experience with a product or service, and anticipated firm interaction could be manipulated by inducing some respondents to sign up for a follow-up interview with managers from the firm in question.

A second potential limitation is related to the probability of anticipated firm interaction. Recall that all the studies manipulated anticipated firm interaction to be either present or absent. These are deterministic levels of anticipated firm interaction because respondents were sure that they either would or would not interact with the firm in the future. However, anticipated firm interaction could also vary in a probabilistic manner in the marketplace. For example, firms could inform survey participants that only some respondents might, but would not necessarily be contacted for a follow-up interview. In such cases, anticipated firm interaction can be considered to be probabilistic since the likelihood of interacting with the firm in the future is a probability between 0% and 100%. I expect that a probabilistic manipulation of anticipated firm interaction would lead to similar effects on attitude gap as observed in the present study, with the effect size

being reduced due to discounting of anticipated cognitive effort. The reason for this prediction is that consumers facing a probabilistic firm interaction would still anticipate cognitive effort and shift their public attitudes upward; however, the size of this shift would be reduced since consumers would discount anticipated cognitive effort by the probability of being contacted later by the firm.

The present research also indicates several other directions for future research. First, the present research focuses on anticipated firm interaction in the context of market research surveys. Future research could extend this investigation to the context of online reviews. In the context of online reviews, anticipated firm interaction could be manipulated with the absence or presence of management responses to reviews. Many review websites now offer firms the option of responding to consumer reviews by posting a reply immediately below the review in question. It is possible that seeing numerous management responses from a firm to past reviews would signal to consumers that the firm has a relatively high level of interaction with its customers. In contrast, seeing a few or no management responses from a firm to past reviews might signal that the firm does not interact much with its customers. Using the same arguments as before, I would predict that the gap between consumers' private evaluation and their public evaluation as expressed in posted reviews would be influenced by the number of management responses on review websites – with more management responses indicating higher anticipated firm interaction and vice versa. Future research can test this hypothesis in the context of review websites by manipulating anticipated firm interaction through management responses.

Second, future research could manipulate rather than measure anticipated cognitive effort. Recall that the studies reported herein measured anticipated cognitive effort using a multi-item scale. However, the role of anticipated cognitive effort in my proposed model could also be

assessed by manipulating this variable. This manipulation could be done, for example, through the length of the follow-up interview. In the low anticipated cognitive effort condition, participants could be informed that the follow-up interview will be relatively short (e.g., at most 5 minutes) while participants in the high anticipated cognitive effort condition could be informed that the follow-up interview will be relatively long (e.g., at least 20 minutes). Such manipulation of anticipated cognitive effort would also be managerially useful by providing benchmarks for the appropriate length of follow-up interviews, i.e., the interview length that represents the best tradeoff between amount of information collected, and the quality of information collected.

Third, past research could measure dependent variables other than attitude gap. Recall that my proposed mechanism posited that individuals use strategies to minimize anticipated cognitive effort during future interaction with the firm. Changing one's public attitude, i.e., increasing attitude gap is one such strategy investigated in the present research. Another possible strategy might be for individuals to give shorter answers to questions from the firm during future interaction. This latter strategy would also serve to minimize cognitive effort, and thus length of consumer responses during consumer-firm interaction could be measured in future research as additional dependent variable. This dependent variable could be measured by adding a final phase to the study where participants are asked to interact with a representative from the firm, and these interactions are coded for length of responses to interview questions. Notably, the length of consumer responses to interview questions is of managerial significance because shorter answer might provide less rich information to managers during the survey process.

Fourth, future research could investigate alternative mechanisms that could drive the observed positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap. One possible alternative mechanism is suggested by politeness theory (Brown and Levinson 1987). Politeness theory

states that, during social interactions, people tend to avoid behaviors that threaten their interaction partners' public image of being liked and respected (Argo and Shiv 2012; Hamilton, Vohs, and McGill 2014). Consistent with this theory, it has been found that consumers sometimes lie to employees about their feelings after experiencing bad service in an effort to be polite (Argo and Shiv 2012). In the present context, politeness concerns might be greater in the case of consumers anticipating discussion of negative compared to positive private attitude. The reason is that discussing negative private attitude would imply talking about poor performance of the firm, which could threaten the manager's public image of being liked and respected. To address these politeness concerns, consumers could shift their public attitudes upward which would increase attitude gap. Future research could test this alternative mechanism by measuring concerns about politeness, and assess its role as a mediator of the positive effect of anticipated firm interaction on attitude gap in the negative valence of private attitude condition. To conclude, this research focused on an important aspect of marketplace interaction that has not been studied yet in the literature, namely consumers' anticipated interaction with firms. Within this context, the present research identified a novel joint effect of anticipated firm interaction and valence of private attitude on attitude gap in the context of market research survey, and showed that this effect is driven by a new mechanism based on anticipated cognitive effort.

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Table 1
ANTICIPATED FIRM INTERACTION, VALENCE OF PRIVATE ATTITUDE, AND
ANTICIPATED COGNITIVE EFFORT: STUDY 1

	Positive valence of private attitude		Negative valence of private attitude	
	Anticipated firm interaction absent	Anticipated firm interaction present	Anticipated firm interaction absent	Anticipated firm interaction present
Anticipated cognitive effort	2.92 (1.09)	2.98 (1.38)	3.37 (1.14)	4.27 (1.35)

NOTE.—Values in table are means and standard deviations in parentheses.

Table 2
ANTICIPATED FIRM INTERACTION, VALENCE OF PRIVATE ATTITUDE, AND
ATTITUDE GAP: STUDY 2

	Positive valence of private attitude		Negative valence of private attitude	
	Anticipated firm interaction absent	Anticipated firm interaction present	Anticipated firm interaction absent	Anticipated firm interaction present
Private attitude	8.71 (.63)	8.83 (.43)	1.64 (.89)	1.40 (.53)
Public attitude	8.73 (.49)	8.77 (.48)	1.72 (.86)	1.73 (.74)
Attitude gap	.02 (.36)	-.06 (.25)	.09 (.60)	.33 (.71)

NOTE.—Values in table are means and standard deviations in parentheses.

Figure 1
PROPOSED MODEL

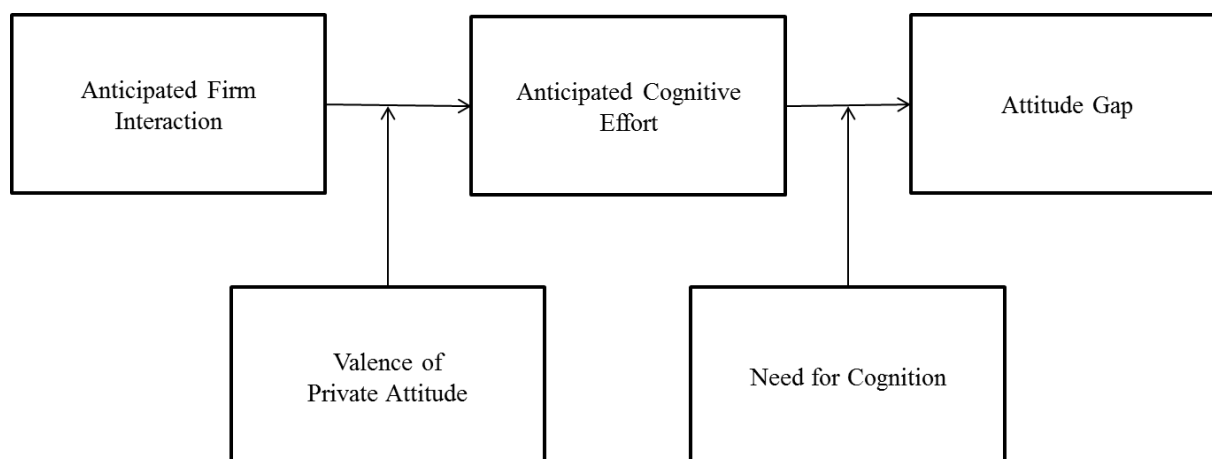
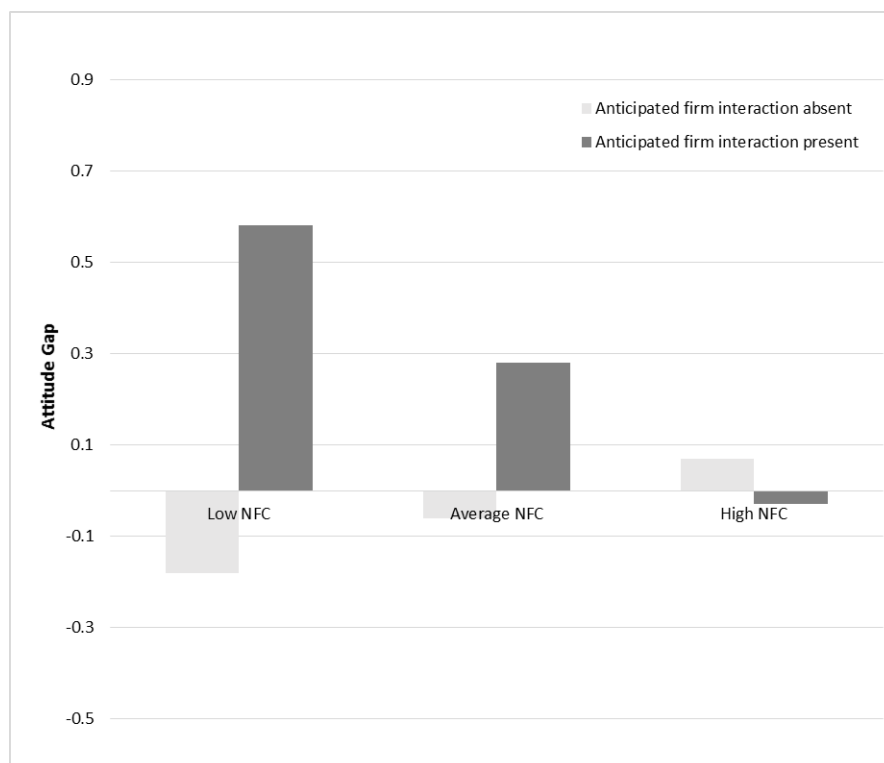
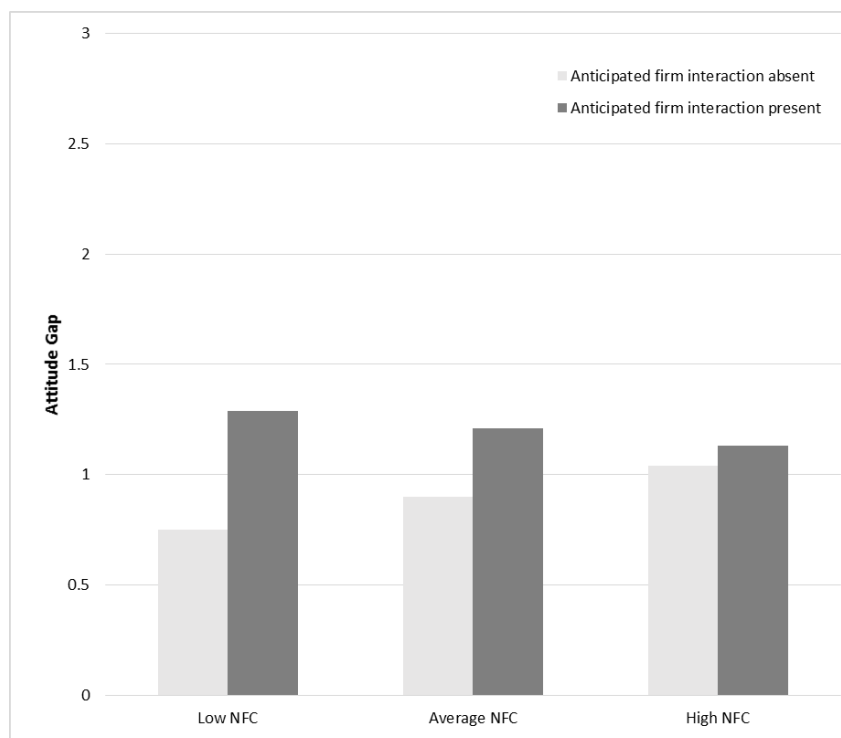
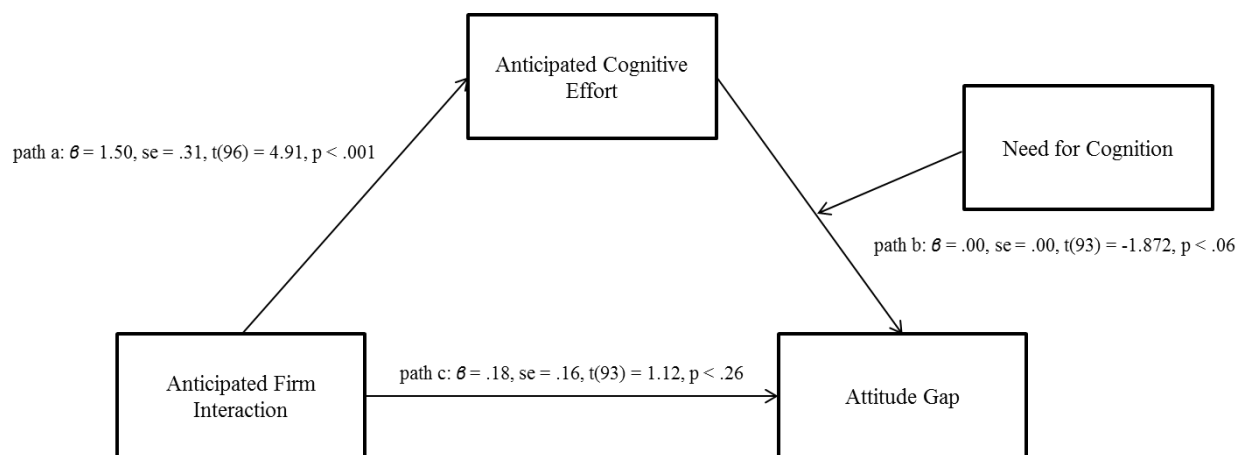


Figure 2**ANTICIPATED FIRM INTERACTION, NFC, AND ATTITUDE GAP: STUDY 3**

NOTE.— Low NFC was calculated at -1 standard deviation and high NFC was calculated at + 1 standard deviation from the mean. Average NFC was mean-centered.

Figure 3**ANTICIPATED FIRM INTERACTION, NFC, AND ATTITUDE GAP: STUDY 4**

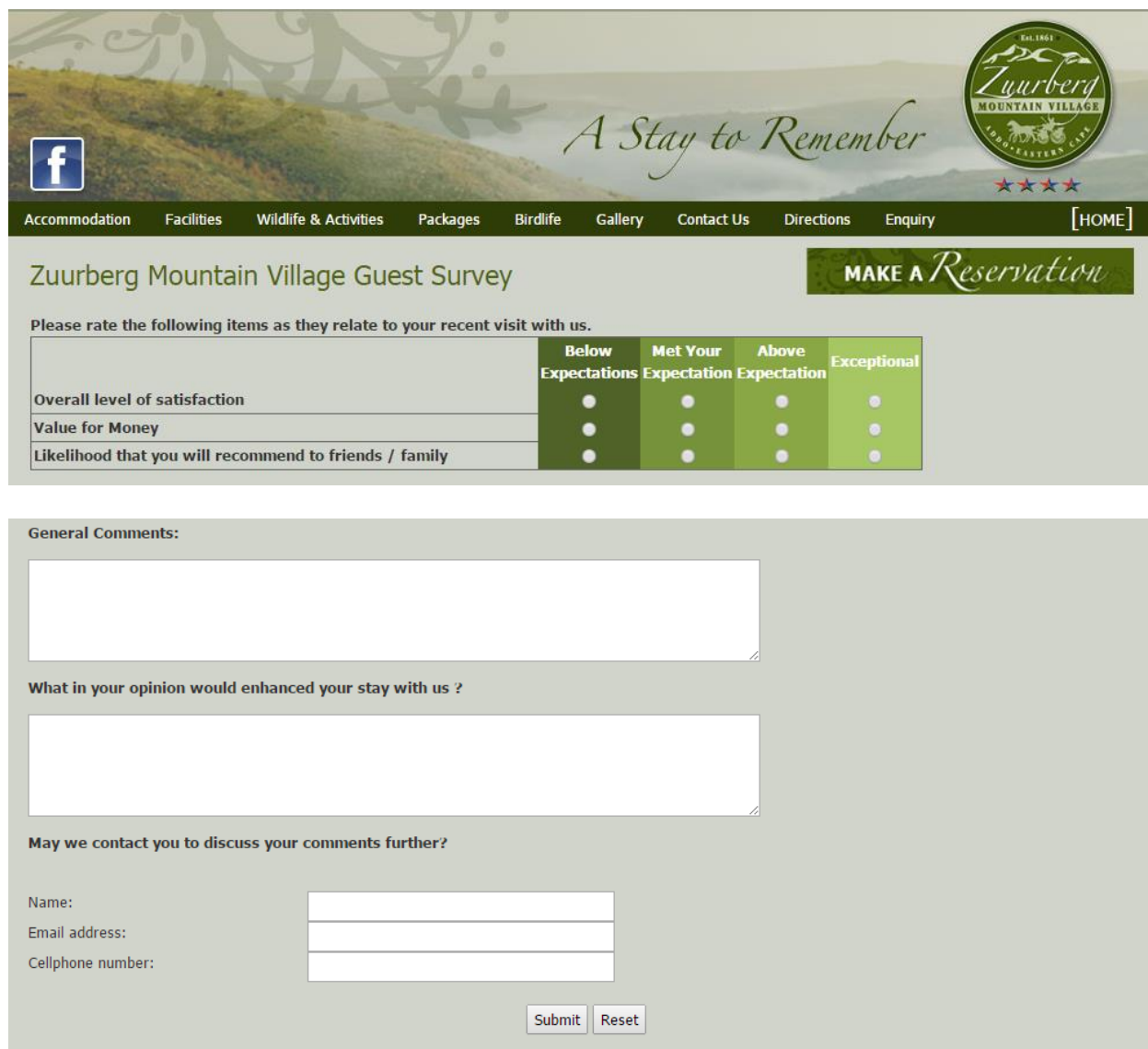
NOTE.— Low NFC was calculated at -1 standard deviation and high NFC was calculated at + 1 standard deviation from the mean. Average NFC was mean-centered.

Figure 4**CONDITIONAL MEDIATION ANALYSIS: STUDY 4**

NOTE.—The conditional mediation analysis was conducted using PROCESS model 14 (Hayes 2013).

Appendix 1

EXAMPLES OF ANTICIPATED FIRM INTERACTION



Zuurborg Mountain Village Guest Survey

Please rate the following items as they relate to your recent visit with us.

	Below Expectations	Met Your Expectation	Above Expectation	Exceptional
Overall level of satisfaction	☐	☐	☐	☐
Value for Money	☐	☐	☐	☐
Likelihood that you will recommend to friends / family	☐	☐	☐	☐

General Comments:

What in your opinion would enhanced your stay with us ?

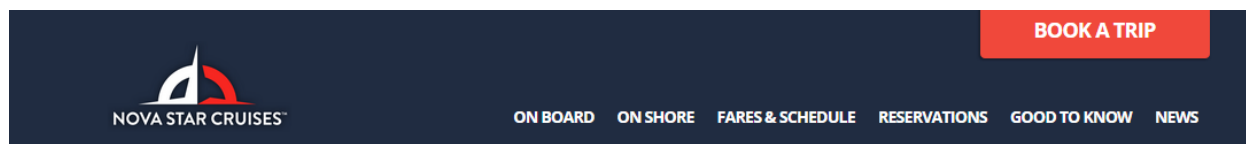
May we contact you to discuss your comments further?

Name:

Email address:

Cellphone number:

Source: <http://www.addo.co.za/component/survey/>



Guest Experience Survey

Please share your thoughts on your experience aboard *Nova Star*. We welcome all feedback and hope you return in the future.

How would you rate your overall Nova Star experience?

4 (Exceeded expectations) 3 (Met Expectations) 2 (Opportunity for Improvement)
1 (Poor)

1) Making reservations online *

☐ 4
☐ 3
☐ 2
☐ 1

2) Call center *

☐ 4
☐ 3
☐ 2
☐ 1

3) Overall Food Quality *

☐ 4
☐ 3
☐ 2
☐ 1

4) Overall Cruise Experience *

☐ 4
☐ 3
☐ 2
☐ 1

May we contact you to further discuss your
Nova Star experience? *

☐ Yes
☐ No

Name

Phone

Email

Date *

Trip *

☐ Portland to Yarmouth
☐ Yarmouth to Portland

SUBMIT

Source: <http://novastarcruises.com/stored/onboard-survey/>



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Customer Survey

Name:		Date:	
Phone Number:		Email:	

	VerySatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Dissatisfied
1. Were you greeted promptly and treated courteously by our managers?	☐	☐	☐
2. Did our managers clearly explain the recommended repairs?	☐	☐	☐
3. Did you have any work performed during this visit?	☐	☐	☐
4. Was your job finished on time?	☐	☐	☐
5. Was the work done correctly the first time?	☐	☐	☐
6. Overall, was our work satisfactory?	☐	☐	☐
7. Were the charges within estimate?	☐	☐	☐
8. Would you recommend our services to others?	Yes ☐ No ☐		
9. Would you like us to call you for further discussion?	Yes ☐ No ☐		

Source: <http://www.lloydsautomotive.com/survey.html>



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Post-Appointment Survey

We appreciate you choosing our practice, and we are committed to making sure that your time spent with us is as comfortable and fulfilling as possible. In order to continue providing the kind of care that keeps our patients smiling, we encourage your comments and suggestions about the treatments and personal care you've received while visiting our practice.

Please take a moment to provide us with your feedback. When you're finished, click on the **SUBMIT** button at the bottom of the page.

Please tell us about your appointment:

Bold fields are required.

How would you rate your overall experience?

Your Rating:

⊗☆☆☆☆

Please provide any additional comments/suggestions.

Contact Information:

Would you like a member of our team to contact you to further discuss your experience?

Select an option ▼

Submit Feedback

Source: <http://www.bellamyorthodontics.com/post-appointment-survey>



5. Please rate our service:

Please rate the following statements:

	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Neutral	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	N/A
It was easy for me to find the court forms I needed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I found the FAQs helpful in answering my questions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The drop-down menu of common search requests helped me quickly find information.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The tips in the bubbles (on the interactive forms) were helpful in making sense of the information.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. Would you be willing to participate in a follow up interview / survey to help us further evaluate the website?:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please provide your name and email so we can contact you (we will only use this information for contacting you regarding a follow up interview / survey. Your answers to the survey above will not be connected to your name and/or your identity so that your responses can remain anonymous):

Name:

Email:

Thank you for providing us your feedback! Your suggestions are important to us.

Source: <http://www.nsfamilylaw.ca/stakeholder-survey>

Appendix 2

VALENCE OF PRIVATE ATTITUDE MANIPULATION: STUDIES 1-2

Valence of Private Attitude – Positive Condition

We would like you to imagine that the following situation actually happened to you.

After reading each sentence, **CLOSE YOUR EYES AND TRY TO VISUALILY IMAGINE AND EXPERIENCE THE EVENTS DESCRIBED:**

Imagine that you had stayed at a hotel called "Bonjour Hotel" for 2 nights, and are now checking out of this hotel. Before checking out, you think back about your experiences at this hotel.

- You recall that you had **excellent** service from the moment you set foot in the hotel. The bellboys welcomed you with a **smile**, and the reception staff was **friendly** and **efficient**.
- You recall that the room was **clean** and **spacious**, and the bathroom was **well stocked** with towels and toiletries.
- You recall that the hotel restaurant had **outstanding** selections on their menu, and your dinner **could have not been better**. The breakfast buffet was yet another **pleasant surprise** with **tasty** food and **variety**.

Valence of Private Attitude – Negative Condition

We would like you to imagine that the following situation actually happened to you.

After reading each sentence, **CLOSE YOUR EYES AND TRY TO VISUALILY IMAGINE AND EXPERIENCE THE EVENTS DESCRIBED:**

Imagine that you had stayed at a hotel called "Bonjour Hotel" for 2 nights, and are now checking out of this hotel. Before checking out, you think back about your experiences at this hotel.

- You recall that you had **terrible** service from the moment you set foot in the hotel. The bellboys **did not** welcome you with a **smile**, and the reception staff was **unfriendly** and **inefficient**.
 - You recall that the room was **unclean** and **small**, and the bathroom was **not well stocked** with towels and toiletries.
 - You recall that the hotel restaurant had **poor** selections on their menu, and your dinner **could have been better**. The breakfast buffet was yet another **unpleasant surprise** with **tasteless** food and **without variety**.
-

Appendix 3

ANTICIPATED FIRM INTERACTION MANIPULATION: STUDIES 1-2

Anticipated Firm Interaction – Absent Condition

We would like you to imagine that the following situation actually happened to you.

After reading each sentence, **CLOSE YOUR EYES AND TRY TO VISUALILY IMAGINE AND EXPERIENCE THE EVENTS DESCRIBED:**

Imagine that you are at the check-out counter of the Bonjour Hotel. After checking out, that you are approached by a hotel staff member who says:

“Hello, would you please complete a short survey about your stay with us, followed by an interview with our manager to discuss your survey responses?”

Let’s assume that you have **agreed to complete the survey** but **did not agree to be interviewed by the manager**.

Anticipated Firm Interaction – Present Condition

We would like you to imagine that the following situation actually happened to you.

After reading each sentence, **CLOSE YOUR EYES AND TRY TO VISUALILY IMAGINE AND EXPERIENCE THE EVENTS DESCRIBED:**

Imagine that you are at the check-out counter of the Bonjour Hotel. After checking out, that you are approached by a hotel staff member who says:

“Hello, would you please complete a short survey about your stay with us, followed by an interview with our manager to discuss your survey responses?”

Let’s assume that you have **agreed to complete the survey and also agreed to be interviewed by the manager**.

Appendix 4

VALENCE OF PRIVATE ATTITUDE MANIPULATION: STUDY 3

Valence of Private Attitude – Negative Condition

We would like you to imagine that the following situation actually happened to you.

After reading each sentence, **CLOSE YOUR EYES AND IMAGINE THE EVENTS in the scenario:**

Imagine that you had stayed at a hotel called “Bonjour Hotel” for 2 nights, and are now checking out of this hotel. Before checking out, you think back about your experience at this hotel.

You recall that you were **not impressed with the room and the service**. For the room, you felt that the bed was **uncomfortable** and the room was **unclean**. For the service, you felt that the staff was **unfriendly** and **impolite**.

Appendix 5

ANTICIPATED FIRM INTERACTION MANIPULATION: STUDY 3

Anticipated Firm Interaction – Absent Condition

We would like you to imagine that the following situation actually happened to you.

After reading each sentence, **CLOSE YOUR EYES AND IMAGINE THE EVENTS in the scenario:**

Think for a minute about your experience at the Bonjour Hotel as described earlier. Now imagine that after checking out of the hotel, you are approached by a hotel staff who says:

“Hello, would you please complete a short survey about your stay with us, and then take part in a follow-up interview with our manager to discuss your survey responses?”

Please assume that you **agreed to complete the survey but did not agree to be interviewed by the manager.**

Anticipated Firm Interaction – Present Condition

We would like you to imagine that the following situation actually happened to you.

After reading each sentence, **CLOSE YOUR EYES AND IMAGINE THE EVENTS in the scenario:**

Think for a minute about your experience at the Bonjour Hotel as described earlier. Now imagine that after checking out of the hotel, you are approached by a hotel staff who says:

“Hello, would you please complete a short survey about your stay with us, and then take part in a follow-up interview with our manager to discuss your survey responses?”

Please assume that you **agreed to complete the survey and also agreed to be interviewed by the manager.**

Appendix 6

VALENCE OF PRIVATE ATTITUDE MANIPULATION: STUDY 4

Valence of Private Attitude – Negative Condition

We would like you to imagine that the following situation actually happened to you. After reading each sentence, **CLOSE YOUR EYES AND IMAGINE THE EVENTS in the scenario:**

Imagine that you have been on a cruise trip for 5 nights with "*Nova Atlantic Cruise*", and are now returning to port.

While sitting on board, you think back about your cruising experience.

Based on several negative incidents that happened to you during the cruise, you conclude that your cruise experience was **unsatisfactory** on the following scale:

(1) Very Unsatisfactory (2) Unsatisfactory (3) Average (4) Satisfactory (5) Very Satisfactory



Appendix 7

ANTICIPATED FIRM INTERACTION MANIPULATION: STUDY 4

Anticipated Firm Interaction – Absent Condition

We would like you to imagine that the following situation actually happened to you.

After reading each sentence, **CLOSE YOUR EYES AND IMAGINE THE EVENTS in the scenario:**

Now imagine that you have been approached by a staff member of the cruise ship who says: “Hello sir, could you please give us feedback on your cruise experience by taking part in a survey and a follow-up interview with our manager to further discuss your survey responses? The survey would be completed right now on board the ship via an iPad and the follow-up interview will be conducted later with the manager in a cruise lounge.”

Please assume that you **agreed to complete the survey but did not agree to take part in a follow-up interview with the manager.**

Anticipated Firm Interaction – Present Condition

We would like you to imagine that the following situation actually happened to you.

After reading each sentence, **CLOSE YOUR EYES AND IMAGINE THE EVENTS in the scenario:**

Now imagine that you have been approached by a staff member of the cruise ship who says: “Hello sir, could you please give us feedback on your cruise experience by taking part in a survey and a follow-up interview with our manager to further discuss your survey responses? The survey would be completed right now on board the ship via an iPad and the follow-up interview will be conducted later with the manager in a cruise lounge.”

Please assume that you **agreed to complete the survey and also agreed to take part in a follow-up interview with the manager.**

Essay 2

The Effects of Depth of Disclosure and Self-Construal in Peer-to-Peer Markets

Peer-to-peer markets, such as apartment sharing and meal sharing websites, involve interaction between individual buyers and sellers. During these interactions, sellers often disclose information about themselves which can vary in terms of depth, i.e., degree of intimacy of the information. This essay shows that depth of disclosure by the seller interacts with consumer self-construal to influence consumer evaluations of the seller and the product being offered by the seller. Results indicate that depth of disclosure has a positive effect on seller and product evaluations when self-construal is interdependent, but this positive effect is eliminated when self-construal is independent. Results also indicate that the positive effect of depth of disclosure and self-construal is driven by processing fluency in the case of interdependent self-construal condition. This essay contributes to the literature on depth of disclosure by identifying a new moderator of self-construal and a new mechanism of processing fluency that underlies the effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations.

Keywords: depth of disclosure, self-construal, processing fluency, seller evaluation, product evaluation, peer-to-peer markets

Peer-to-peer (P-to-P) markets are platforms where individual sellers exchange products and services with individual buyers. For example, Airbnb is a platform where sellers offer rooms to buyers; Eatwith is a platform where sellers offer meals to buyers; and Vayable is a platform where sellers offer unique travel experiences to buyers. P-to-P markets are becoming increasingly important for consumers and sellers around the world. Airbnb has over a million listings from sellers accommodating over 375,000 guests per night (Fraiberger and Sundararajan 2015) and Eatwith operates in more than 30 countries around the world (Lawler 2014). A survey of consumers in United States, Canada, and United Kingdom found that one in four respondents had used a P-to-P market to make product purchases in 2014 (Owyang, Samuel, and Grenville 2014), and media reports suggest that P-to-P markets are fast expanding in countries such as China, Singapore, and Hong Kong (Ann 2014).

A unique characteristic of P-to-P markets compared to more traditional business-to-consumer markets is that sellers in P-to-P markets often disclose personal information about themselves to buyers. For example, those who list their apartment for rent on Airbnb often post a short description of themselves along with a description of the apartment in question. Such personal information about sellers can vary in terms of depth of disclosure which has been defined as the degree of intimacy of information shared with others (Collins and Miller 1994; Moon 2000; Rubin 1975; Shaffer, Smith, and Tomarelli 1982). For example, consider the following two actual listings posted by two sellers on Airbnb as shown in appendix 1. The first listing reads: “I’m a federal attorney serving as a regional counsel for the Social Security Administration. I like to read, write, draw, and swim.” The second listing reads: “I don’t have any children but my sister has two of her own and I think they are adorable. My life is rich and full. I have many friends and family that love me.” These two listings illustrate different depths

of disclosure that sellers chose to share in this P-to-P market, ranging from relatively low depth in the former to relatively greater depth in the latter listing. As illustrated by these examples, low depth of disclosure refers to personal information about seller that is less intimate, more superficial and gives little insight into the seller's character, feelings, and beliefs. In contrast, high depth of disclosure reveals personal information about seller that is more intimate, more private, and gives greater insight into the seller's character, feelings, and beliefs.

Given variation of depth of disclosure in P-to-P markets, an important question that arises is: what is the effect of depth of disclosure on consumer evaluations of sellers and their products in these markets? This is an important question because positive evaluations of sellers are likely to have desirable consequences for sellers such as positive word-of-mouth, increased brand loyalty, and increased customer satisfaction (Gremler and Gwinner 2008; Hansen, Sandvik, and Selnes 2003). Similarly, positive evaluations of products are likely to translate into desirable outcomes such as higher purchase intent and willingness to pay (Argo, Dahl, and Morales 2008).

Past research on depth of disclosure suggests an inverted-U relationship between depth of disclosure and evaluation of the discloser whereby evaluation increases from low to moderate depth and then decreases at high depth (Cozby 1972). Further, past research has identified several moderators of the effect of depth of disclosure on evaluation of the discloser such as relationship type (Chaikin and Derlega 1974), discloser gender (Derlega and Chaikin 1976), disclosure deviance (Derlega, Harris, and Chaikin 1973), disclosure valence (Gilbert and Horenstein 1975), and disclosure scarcity (Petty and Mirels 1981). These moderators have been developed in past research using different theoretical frameworks such as social penetration theory (Chaikin and Derlega 1974), social exchange theory (Cozby 1972; Worthy, Gary, and

Kahn 1969), commodity theory (Petty and Mirels 1981), and attraction theory (Derlega et al. 1973; Sprecher, Treger, and Wondra 2013).

The present research makes three contributions to the existing literature on depth of disclosure. First, in contrast to past research which has examined depth of disclosure in social contexts, I examine the effect of depth of disclosure in the commercial context of P-to-P markets where consumers form judgments of sellers and products. Second, I identify self-construal – i.e., whether consumers see themselves as predominantly independent or interdependent individuals (Duclos and Barasch 2014; Markus and Kitayama 1991; White and Simpson 2013) – as a key moderator that determines the effect of self-construal on seller and product evaluations. In particular, I show that depth of disclosure has a positive effect on seller and product evaluations when self-construal is interdependent, but this positive effect is eliminated when self-construal is independent. Third, I identify processing fluency as the mediator underlying the effects of depth of disclosure and self-construal, where processing fluency refers to the subjective experience of ease or difficulty with which information is processed (Hong and Sternthal 2010; Kim, Rao, and Lee 2009; Lee and Aaker 2004).

The findings of this research also have important implications for sellers in P-to-P markets. The results suggest that sellers in collectivistic countries such as China would benefit by disclosing at relatively higher depths while sellers in individualistic countries like United States would benefit by disclosing at relatively lower depths. The results also indicate that sellers in P-to-P websites can influence consumer self-construal through pictures and words, and then present depth of disclosure information in a manner that maximizes seller and product evaluations. For example, a seller at Airbnb could induce interdependent self-construal by showing a picture of a group of people with a tagline that emphasizes relationships, friends, and

family. This seller could then share personal information in their listing at moderate depth of disclosure to maximize seller and product evaluations.

The rest of this research is organized as follows. I begin with a review of past research on depth of disclosure, and delineate the differences between past research and this research. I then develop hypotheses regarding the interactive effect of depth of disclosure and self-construal on seller and product evaluations as well as the mechanism underlying this effect. I subsequently report four studies that test the hypotheses using different manipulations of depth of disclosure and self-construal in different P-to-P markets. I conclude with a general discussion that highlights key contributions, and identifies promising directions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Depth of Disclosure

As stated earlier, depth of disclosure has been defined as the degree of intimacy of revealed information about the self (Collins and Miller 1994; Moon 2000; Rubin 1975; Shaffer et al. 1982). Low depth of disclosure refers to personal information about a seller that is superficial and lends little insight into the seller's character, feelings, and beliefs. In contrast, high depth of disclosure refers to personal information about a seller that is more private in nature and lends greater insight into the seller's character, feelings, and beliefs. Past research on depth of disclosure has investigated its effect on outcomes such as liking (Cozby 1972), reciprocal disclosure (Rubin 1975), physiological adjustment (Chaikin and Derlega 1974), intimacy (Laurenceau, Barrett, and Pietromonaco 1998), marital satisfaction (Hendrick 1981), sexual satisfaction (MacNeil and Byers 2005), and future interaction intent (Sprecher et al. 2013); see appendix 3 for a selected list of key articles on depth of disclosure. Since the present research

focuses on consumer evaluations of the seller and product, I summarize below past research examining the effect on depth of disclosure on evaluation of the discloser.

In an early investigation, Worthy et al. (1969) studied the effect of depth of disclosure on liking between strangers. These researchers found that depth of disclosure had a positive effect on liking, such that recipients liked strangers more when they disclosed at high (e.g., one's ideas and experiences related to sex) compared to low depth (e.g., one's food preference and favorite TV program). The authors explained their findings with social exchange theory which posits that individuals assess the costs and benefits of relationships, and the decision to maintain or grow relationships is based on the balance between costs and benefits. That is, if benefits are perceived to be greater than costs, then individuals maintain or grow relationships; in contrast, if costs are perceived to outweigh benefits, then individuals abandon relationships (Thibaut and Kelley 1959). Applying social exchange theory to the context of disclosure among strangers, the authors argued that recipients assess greater benefits when depth of disclosure is high compared to low. This is because recipients of high versus low depth of disclosure perceive greater trust on the part of the discloser which, in turn, leads to greater liking of the discloser. Hence, recipients should like disclosers revealing high depth more than low depth.

Cozby (1972) also investigated the effect of depth of disclosure on liking between strangers. In this article, the author investigated three levels of depth: low (e.g., one's favorite TV program), moderate (e.g., things one enjoys most in life), and high (e.g., one's greatest romantic disappointment). The researcher found an inverted-U relationship between depth of disclosure and liking, such that liking was higher when depth of disclosure was moderate compared to high or low. Notably, this researcher also used social exchange theory to conceptualize the observed inverted-U relationship between depth of disclosure and liking. As in

Worthy (1969), this researcher argued that recipients should perceive greater benefits as depth of disclosure increases from low to moderate because they would think that they are being trusted by the disclosers. As a result, recipients should like disclosers revealing at moderate depth more than disclosers revealing at low depth. Additionally, the author argued that as depth of disclosure increases from moderate to high, recipients should perceive greater costs because of perceived pressure to reciprocally disclose information at the same depth to a stranger. As a result, recipients should like disclosers revealing at high depth less than disclosers revealing at moderate depth. Taken together, the preceding arguments suggest an inverted-U relationship between depth of disclosure and liking.

Different from the above two articles which examined the main effects of depth of disclosure, Derlega et al. (1973) examined the moderating effect of disclosure deviance on the relationship between depth of disclosure and liking. Disclosure deviance refers to the content of disclosure which could be either deviant or conventional. Deviant disclosure is content that is contrary to recipient's values, attitudes, and beliefs, whereas conventional content is content that is similar to the recipient's values, attitudes, and beliefs. In this article, the authors investigated three conditions: conventional-low depth (e.g., one's current plan for summer), conventional-high depth (e.g., one's being caught by her mother in a sexual encounter with a male friend), and deviant-high depth (e.g., one's being caught by her mother in a sexual encounter with a female friend). These researchers found that recipients liked disclosers better when they revealed conventional-high depth of disclosure compared to conventional-low depth of disclosure; however, recipients liked disclosers less when they revealed deviant-high depth of disclosure compared to conventional-low depth of disclosure. The authors explained these findings with attraction theory which posits that individuals like others to the extent that others are similar to

themselves (Byrne 1971; Collisson and Howell 2014; Sprecher et al. 2013). Based on attraction theory where similarity increases liking, the authors argued that recipients should like strangers who reveal conventional-high depth of disclosure more than conventional-low depth of disclosure because recipients should be able to identify with the views expressed by the strangers, and this perceived similarity should enhance liking of the disclosers. In contrast, the authors argued that recipients should display lower liking for strangers who reveal deviant-high depth of disclosure compared to conventional-high depth of disclosure because recipients would perceive the former type of disclosure to be offensive.

Chaikin and Derlega (1974) studied relationship type as a moderator of the effect of depth of disclosure on liking. These researchers investigated three types of relationships: stranger, acquaintance, and close friend. They found that depth of disclosure had a positive effect on liking when relationship type was close friend, but this positive effect was attenuated when relationship type was either acquaintance or stranger. These effects were explained in the light of social penetration theory which states that friendship formation is seen as a gradual process in which conversations between two strangers should slowly increase from low to high depth of disclosure; as the relationship develops, individuals are expected to reveal higher depth of disclosure to each other (Altman and Taylor 1973). Consistent with this theory, the authors argued that recipients would perceive high level of depth disclosed by strangers or acquaintances to be less appropriate, but the same information disclosed by close friends to be more appropriate. As a result, recipients' liking of close friends should increase from low to high depth of disclosure, and this increase in liking should be attenuated in the case of strangers and acquaintances.

Derlega and Chaikin (1976) investigated another factor, namely discloser gender, which can moderate the relationship between depth of disclosure and liking. Specifically, the authors found that depth of disclosure had a positive effect on liking when discloser gender was female, but this effect was attenuated when discloser gender was male. This finding was explained with reference to gender norms where it is more socially acceptable for women than men to publicly express their intimate thoughts, feelings, and personal characteristics (Jourard 1971). Based on this norm, the authors argued that it would be seen as more appropriate for women than men to disclose at high level of depth. Hence, recipients should like females revealing high depth of disclosure more than males revealing information at an equally high level of depth of disclosure.

Gilbert and Horenstein (1975) investigated the moderating role of disclosure valence in the relationship between depth of disclosure and liking. Disclosure valence refers to positive (e.g., I really love my wife) or negative (e.g., I got so furious. I hit my wife) disclosure content. Surprisingly, these authors did not find a positive effect of depth of disclosure on liking, but instead found a positive effect of disclosure valence on liking. Consistent with social exchange theory where relationships are developed based on perceived benefits and costs (Thibaut and Kelley 1959), the authors argued that recipients would perceive greater benefits of developing a relationship with a discloser revealing positive information because the discloser is seen as more attractive based on the positive qualities expressed in the disclosure. In contrast, recipients would perceive greater costs of developing a relationship with disclosers revealing negative information because such disclosers would be seen as less attractive. As a result, recipients should like disclosers revealing positive information more than those revealing negative information.

Petty and Mirels (1981) investigated the moderating role of disclosure scarcity in the relationship between depth of disclosure and liking. Disclosure scarcity refers to the extent to

which the information disclosed is unavailable to others, such that it can be low (i.e., information disclosed to many people), high (i.e., information disclosed to a few people), or not specified. The authors found that depth of disclosure had a positive effect on liking when scarcity of disclosure was not specified; this positive effect was attenuated when disclosure scarcity was low; and this positive effect was magnified when disclosure scarcity was high. The authors explained their results in the light of commodity theory. Commodity theory posits that increasing scarcity of objects enhances their value in the eyes of observers (Brock 1968; Collins and Miller 1994). Based on this theory, the authors argued that high depth information would be perceived as more scarce when information about disclosure scarcity was not provided. As a result, recipients would think that they were being specially selected for receiving scarce information, and this should increase liking for disclosers. In contrast, when disclosure scarcity is low, recipients should not see much value in the information being shared and this should attenuate the positive effect of disclosure depth on liking. And when depth of disclosure scarcity is high, recipients should perceived greater value of receiving such information, leading to a stronger positive effect of depth of disclosure on liking.

Finally, Sprecher et al. (2013) investigated the moderating effect of disclosure role in the relationship between depth of disclosure and liking in the context of strangers. Disclosure role refers to the person's role in the communication process which can be either giving (i.e., discloser) or receiving (i.e., receiver). The authors found that the positive effect of depth of disclosure on liking was stronger in the case of receivers and weaker in the case of disclosers. These results were explained using attraction theory which posits that increased similarity leads to increased liking (Byrne 1971; Collisson and Howell 2014). Specifically, the authors argued that those in a receiving role are able to learn about the other person as their communication role

is to process information being shared by others. This learning should then increase perceived similarity between themselves and others, which should increase liking of the other person. In contrast, the authors argued that those in a giving role are not learning about the other as their communication role is to reveal one's own information to others rather than process information about others. This lack of information processing about others should decrease perceived similarity and hence liking of others.

THE CURRENT INVESTIGATION

This research extends the literature summarized above in three ways. First, in contrast to past research which has focused on social contexts, I examine the effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations in a new context of P-to-P markets. Second, I identify self-construal as a new moderator of the effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations. Third, I identify a new mechanism based on processing fluency that underlies the interactive effect of depth of disclosure and self-construal on seller and product evaluations.

Notably, this research focuses on the low and moderate levels of depth of disclosure and examines high depth of disclosure only as a comparison condition. This focus on low and moderate depth of disclosure is based on a pilot study which suggested that these two levels of depth of disclosure are more common in P-to-P markets than high depth of disclosure. In this pilot study, two coders were asked to analyze actual listings by sellers on two P-to-P websites, namely Airbnb and Eatwith. The coders were given a set of instructions which included the definition of depth of disclosure (see appendix 2). The two coders then visited the two P-to-P websites together and examined the first 20 listings displayed on each website. Each coder independently rated each listing using two items. The first item coded for the absence versus presence of seller disclosure information using a two-level categorical scale (0 = absent, 1

present), while the second item coded for depth of disclosure using a nine-point Likert scale (1 = not at all intimate, 9 = very intimate) as in prior research (Derlega and Chaikin 1976). Each coder then transformed his depth of disclosure rating into a three-level categorical scale (1 = low, 2 = moderate, 3 = high) using the following transformations: 1 = low range of ratings (1-3 on the 9-point scale), 2 = moderate range of ratings (4-6 on the 9-point scale), and 3 = high range of ratings (7-9 on the 9-point scale). The coders then compared their three-level categorical rating of each website on depth of disclosure – if there was consensus between coders, then the consensus rating was recorded for that website, and if there was disagreement, the two coders tried to resolve their disagreement amongst themselves. Initial intercoder agreement was 92% and all remaining disagreements were mutually resolved among coders.

Analysis of the pilot study data revealed the following results. First, 39 out of 40 sellers in these two popular P-to-P websites disclosed personal information about themselves which attests to the prevalence of seller disclosure in P-to-P markets. Furthermore, among the 39 sellers who revealed personal information, 14 sellers disclosed at low depth (35.9%), 20 sellers disclosed at moderate depth (51.3%), and only 5 sellers disclosed high depth (12.8%). In other words, a large majority of 34 out of 39 sellers revealed at either low or moderate depths. I also conducted a binomial test which indicated that the frequency of listings with high depth of disclosure was significantly lower than the frequency of listings with either moderate ($z = -2.35$, $p < .01$) or low ($z = -1.48$, $p < .07$) depths of disclosure. These results suggest that high depth of disclosure occurs less frequently in P-to-P markets than moderate or low depths of disclosure. The observed rarity of high depth of disclosure in this pilot study is also consistent with the notion that sellers in P-to-P markets do not personally know potential buyers, and hence might be hesitant to disclose highly intimate information about themselves to potential buyers.

Consequently, I focus primarily on low and moderate depth of disclosure in this research and consider high depth of disclosure only as a comparison condition in the analyses. I begin in the next section by presenting a conceptual framework for this research based on fit-fluency. I then apply this framework to develop hypotheses about the interactive effect of self-construal and depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Fit-Fluency

The fit-fluency mechanism posits that the fit or consistency between message and consumer characteristics can create feelings of processing fluency, which has been defined as the subjective feeling of ease or difficulty that individuals experience when processing information about an object (Hong and Sternthal 2010; Kim et al. 2009; Lee and Aaker 2004). These positive feelings of processing fluency, in turn, are misattributed to objects in the environment leading to more positive object evaluation (Cesario, Grant, and Higgins 2004; Lee and Aaker 2004). Past research has investigated fit between different message characteristics such as message construal and message framing, in conjunction with different consumer characteristics such as regulatory focus and temporal focus; see appendix 4 for a selected list of key articles on fit-fluency. For example, Lee, Keller, and Sternthal (2010) investigated fit between construal level of a message and regulatory focus of the consumer, where construal level refers to the degree of abstraction of the message and regulatory focus refers to whether consumers have a promotion or prevention focus. These researchers showed that messages expressed in terms of a high-level or abstract construal fit better with consumers who have a promotion focus; in contrast, messages with a low-level or concrete construal fit better with consumers who have a prevention focus. The researchers also found that conditions of high fit were associated with greater feelings of processing fluency which, in turn, led to increased evaluation of the product in question.

Kim et al. (2009) used a similar fit-fluency mechanism to understand the effects of message construal and temporal distance on the evaluation of political candidates. These researchers showed that voters in a distant election (e.g., 6 months away) reported higher processing fluency when they read an election ad with an abstract message construal (e.g., focus on why things should be done) compared to a concrete message construal (e.g., focus on how things should be done). In contrast, voters in a near election (e.g., next week) reported higher processing fluency for an election ad featuring a concrete compared to abstract message construal. These feelings of processing fluency, in turn, were found to influence voters' attitudes toward the candidates in question. In the present research, I apply the fit-fluency mechanism to develop hypotheses about the interactive effect of depth of disclosure and self-construal on seller and product evaluations. The model proposed in this research is shown in figure 1.

 Insert figure 1 about here

Self-Construal

Self-construal has been defined as the extent to which people perceive themselves as being connected to or separate from others (Duclos and Barasch 2014; Markus and Kitayama 1991; White and Simpson 2013). People with interdependent self-construal (interdependents, hereafter) perceive themselves as being connected to others whereas people with independent self-construal (independents, hereafter) perceive themselves as being separate from others. Past research has shown that interdependents place high value on relationship and group harmony whereas independents place high value on accomplishment and benefits for the self (Duclos and Barasch 2014; Hong and Chang 2015; White and Simpson 2013; Zhang and Shrum 2009). Research indicates that self-construal can vary chronically across individuals as well as across cultures. Individual-level data on self-construal using multi-item scales has shown significant

variation of independent and interdependent self-construal across individuals (Singelis 1994; Yang, Stamatogiannakis, and Chattopadhyay 2015). Similarly, it has been reported that people in collectivistic countries like Hong Kong score higher on interdependent self-construal items compared to people in individualistic countries like the United States. Conversely, people in individualistic countries like United States have been found to score higher on independent self-construal items compared to people in collectivistic countries like Hong Kong (Duclos and Barasch 2014; Hong and Chang 2015).

In addition to chronic self-construal, it has been shown that self-construal can also be primed situationally by techniques such as exposure to textual or pictorial stimuli. For example, Hong and Chang (2015) primed Chinese participants – who tend to have chronically interdependent self-construal – by asking them to circle all pronouns that appeared in the text. In the interdependent self-construal condition, plural pronouns (i.e., we, our, us) appeared frequently; in the independent self-construal, singular pronouns (i.e., I, me, my) appeared frequently. Results indicated that Chinese participants primed with independent self-construal thought more about themselves, compared to Chinese participants primed with interdependent self-construal. Similarly, Duclos and Barasch (2014) asked American participants – who tend to have chronically independent self-construal – to circle all pronouns in a text. Results indicated that American participants primed with pronouns related to interdependent self-construal thought more about others, compared to American participants primed with independent self-construal. Other research has primed interdependent versus independent self-construal using pictorial rather than textual stimuli (Mandel 2003). In this research, participants primed with interdependent self-construal watched a short movie clip emphasizing relationships and family while participants primed with independent self-construal watched a short self-help clip emphasizing

accomplishment and differentiation from others. Results indicated that participants who watched the movie clip thought more about others while participants who watched the self-help clip thought more about themselves.

Past research has investigated the effects of self-construal on a number of outcomes such as persuasion (Aaker and Lee 2001; Spassova and Lee 2013), sustainable behavior (White and Simpson 2013), pro-social behavior (Duclos and Barasch 2014), impulsive consumption (Zhang and Shrum 2009), choice (Hong and Chang 2015), price judgment (Bolton, Keh, and Alba 2010; Lalwani and Shavitt 2013), brand extension evaluation (Ahluwalia 2008), risk-taking behavior (Mandel 2003), and consumer motivation for goal pursuit (Yang et al. 2015). Past research has also identified several moderators of the effect of self-construal such as regulatory framing (Aaker and Lee 2001), temporal distance framing (Spassova and Lee 2013), appeal type (White and Simpson 2013), goal type (Yang et al. 2015), group membership (Duclos and Barasch 2014), peer presence (Zhang and Shrum 2009), and risk domain (Mandel 2003). This research extends past research on self-construal by examining for the first time the interactive effect of self-construal and depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations in the context of P-to-P markets.

Depth of Disclosure and Self-Construal

Consider the following scenario. Imagine that a consumer is looking for a meal at someone's house. You browse Eatwith, a website where people advertise food they cook and serve in their own homes. Assume that the website shows two listings advertised by two different sellers (i.e., seller A and seller B) offering the same type of cuisine at the same price. The personal information on the listing from seller A reads: "I recently traveled around Europe where I visited museums, historical buildings, and tourist attractions. At home, I like watching talent

shows and news on TV in the evening after work”. The personal information on the listing from seller B reads: “Three things I can’t live without are chocolate, cheese, and my cat called Fluffy. I should also tell you that I am a plus size woman, and have struggled with weight issues since I was young”. Which seller and meal is this consumer likely to evaluate more favorably? I propose that the answer depends on whether the consumer is predominantly interdependent or independent in terms of self-construal.

Consider first the case of a consumer with an interdependent self-construal. As discussed earlier, past research suggests that interdependents place high value on relationship and group harmony. In the present context, this implies that interdependents are likely to focus on developing a relationship with sellers which could be fostered by activities such as having conversations, interacting, and making friends with the seller. Given the relationship focus of interdependents, it is likely that the personal information on the listing from seller B would fit better with an interdependent self-construal compared to the personal information from seller A. This is because, compared to low depth of disclosure, moderate depth of disclosure provides personal information that promotes social connections and can be used as a starting point for developing a relationship (Hackenbracht and Gasper 2013). For example, learning about the seller’s feelings and the things she values in life would help interdependents gain more insight about the seller’s character compared to learning about the seller’s recent trip and her hobbies. Hence, in the case of interdependents, I propose greater fit as depth of disclosure increases from low to moderate. As fit increases, past research on fit-fluency suggests that consumers will experience greater feelings of processing fluency, which might then transfer to the seller as well as the product being offered by the seller. This, in turn, should result in more favorable evaluations of the seller and the product being offered by the seller.

Next, consider a consumer with an independent self-construal. Past research suggests that independents place high value on accomplishment and benefits for self. In the present context, this implies that independents are likely to focus more on maximizing product benefits, and correspondingly less on relationship building with the seller. That is, independents should focus on the meal such as the taste of food, cleanliness of food, and amount of time spent on food preparation and serving. Since independents focus on maximizing product benefits and not relationship building, I argue that disclosure of personal information – whether at low or moderate depth of disclosure – would not fit their self-construal. Lack of fit should eliminate feelings of processing fluency, and hence there should be no effect of depth of disclosure on product and seller evaluation for consumers with an independent self-construal.

My above propositions extend past research which has examined the interaction of self-construal with factors such as regulatory framing (Aaker and Lee 2001), temporal distance framing (Spassova and Lee 2013), and appeal type (White and Simpson 2013). For example, Aaker and Lee (2001) showed that messages framed in terms of prevention benefit (e.g., drinking grape juice reduces heart disease) fit better with interdependents, whereas messages framed in terms of promotion benefit (e.g., drinking grape juice increases energy) fit better with independents. These differences in fit, in turn, were shown to increase message recall and attitude toward the brand. Extending prior investigations, the present research investigates the interaction of self-construal and depth of disclosure for the first time using a fit-fluency framework. The preceding arguments are summarized in the following hypotheses:

- H1:** Depth of disclosure and self-construal will interact to influence consumer evaluations of the seller and the product, such that:

H1a: When consumers have an interdependent self-construal, seller and product evaluations will be higher in the moderate compared to low depth of disclosure condition.

H1b: When consumers have an independent self-construal, there will be no difference in seller and product evaluations between the moderate and low depth of disclosure conditions.

H2: Processing fluency will mediate the positive effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations when self-construal is interdependent, but not when self-construal is independent.

Hypotheses H1-H2 were tested in four studies: studies 1-2 tested hypothesis H1 while studies 3-4 tested hypothesis H2. The four studies were designed to establish robustness of effects across different manipulations, measures, and P-to-P markets.

STUDY 1

Participants and Design

One hundred and thirty four residents of the United States were recruited using Amazon Mechanical Turk (mTurk, hereafter) and participated online for a small amount of money. The average age of participants was approximately 37 years, 54% of the participants were male ($N = 72$), and 46% of them were female ($N = 62$). The study was designed as a 2 (depth of disclosure: low vs. moderate) $\times$ 2 (self-construal: independent vs. interdependent) between-subjects ANOVA.

Pretest for Depth of Disclosure Manipulation

I conducted a separate pretest to develop the stimuli for manipulating depth of disclosure. In this pretest, 106 participants on mTurk were asked to read a short paragraph about a person named Megan with a view to forming an impression of her. Based on past research (Cozby 1972;

Moon 2000), I developed three paragraphs corresponding to low, moderate and high depths of disclosure by varying the intimacy of information in the paragraph (see appendix 5). Three approximately equal groups of participants read one of the three paragraphs and responded to the outcome measures. Although I tested three levels of depth of disclosure in the pilot study, I focused on the low and moderate depth conditions in the main study since these latter levels examined in my hypothesis.

After reading the paragraph, participants responded to a two item scale, nine-point measuring depth of disclosure (Cozby 1972; Derlega and Chaikin 1976; Moon 2000): “Megan described intimate things about herself” and “Megan described private things about herself” (1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree). The two items were reliable ($r = .74$) and were hence averaged to form a depth of disclosure index. To assess convergent validity, I also measured depth of disclosure using a separate 100-point scale: “How intimate was the information revealed by Megan in her paragraph?” (0 = not at all intimate; 100 = very intimate). Analysis with both scales indicated that the three paragraphs differed as expected on depth of disclosure.

Considering the two-item depth of disclosure index, there was a significant effect of type of paragraph on perceived depth of disclosure ($F(2,103) = 41.81, p < .001$). Follow-up comparisons indicated that participants in the low depth condition perceived lower depth compared to participants in the moderate depth condition ($M_{\text{low}} = 3.59$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 6.21; t(68) = -5.80, p < .001$), and participants in the moderate depth condition perceived lower depth than participants in the high depth condition ($M_{\text{moderate}} = 6.21$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 7.38; t(70) = -2.86, p < .01$). Results were similar with the single-item, 100-point measure of perceived depth of disclosure. There was a significant main effect of type of paragraph ($F(2,103) = 37.59, p < .001$); participants in the low depth condition perceived lower depth than participants in the moderate depth condition ($M_{\text{low}} =$

26.26 vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 58.49$; $t(68) = -6.19$, $p < .001$); and participants in the moderate depth condition perceived lower depth than participants in the high depth condition ($M_{\text{moderate}} = 58.49$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 72.46$; $t(70) = -2.41$, $p < .02$). Taken together, this pretest indicated that three paragraphs varied as expected on depth of disclosure.

Procedure

Participants in the main study first read a cover story explaining that they would be participating in two unrelated short studies: the first study was said to investigate people's language abilities, while the second study was said to investigate consumer opinions about e-commerce websites. The first study primed participants' independent versus interdependent self-construal using pronouns as in prior research (Hong and Chang 2015). Specifically, participants were asked to read a short story about a trip to a city. The pronouns in this short story were all singular (i.e., I, my, me) in the independent self-construal condition, and the pronouns were all plural (i.e., we, our, us) in the interdependent self-construal condition (see appendix 6). After reading the story, participants were asked to count number of pronouns appearing in the story, enter the number of pronouns in the text box, and then answer some questions. Responses to these questions were analyzed later to check the manipulation of self-construal. Notably, a similar manipulation check of self-construal has been used by Hong and Chang (2015).

Next, participants proceeded to the subsequent unrelated study. In this study, participants were asked to evaluate a fictitious e-commerce website called EatAtHome where people advertise meals that they cook and serve in their own homes. Participants were shown an ad that was said to have appeared on this website recently featuring information about a person named Megan offering a meal. The information about Megan was designed to manipulate low versus moderate depth of disclosure using the paragraph verified in the pretest. After viewing the ad,

participants responded to measures of the outcome variables, and were thanked for their participation.

Outcome Measures

The dependent variables were seller evaluation and product evaluation. Seller evaluation was measured with the following two item scale adapted from past research (Cozby 1972; Lakin and Chartrand 2003): “How much do you like Megan?” (1 = not at all, 9 = a great deal); and “How interested would you be in spending time with Megan?” (1 = not at all interested, 9 = extremely interested). These items were combined to form an index of seller evaluation ($r = .75$). Product evaluation was measured with a single item scale for purchase intent adapted from Liu and Gal (2011): “Assuming that the price of this meal is \$30, how likely is it that you would buy this meal from Megan?” (1 = not likely at all, 9 = very likely). The price of the meal was fixed at a realistic \$30 in order to control for price effects. The manipulation of self-construal was checked by asking participants to answer the following two items (Hong and Chang 2015): “Reading the story made me think about myself,” and “Reading the story made me think about my friends and family” (1 = not at all, 9 = a lot). The first item focused on self-thoughts which measured independent self-construal, whereas the second item focused on other-thoughts which measured interdependent self-construal. As in the pretest, the manipulation of depth of disclosure was checked by asking participants to respond to the two-item index of depth of disclosure ($r = .84$) as well as the 100-point single item scale for depth of disclosure. Finally, I performed an attention check by asking the following question: “This question is to make sure you are paying attention. Please select choice 3” (May and Monga 2014). All participants passed this attention check and were hence included in the analysis.

Manipulation Checks

I checked the manipulation of depth of disclosure by conducting a 2 (depth of disclosure: low vs. moderate) x 2 (self-construal: independent vs. interdependent) ANOVA with perceived disclosure depth index as a dependent variable. Supportive of the manipulation, the effect of depth of disclosure was significant ($F(1,130) = 88.93, p < .001$), but not the effects of self-construal ($F(1,130) < 1, p > .59$) or the interaction term ($F(1,130) = 2.04, p > .16$). Further participants in the low depth condition indicated lower perceived depth of disclosure compared to participants in the moderate depth condition ($M_{\text{low}} = 3.35$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 6.61$; $t(132) = -9.63, p < .001$). The results were similar with the 100-point measure of perceived depth of disclosure. Consistent with the manipulation, the effect of depth of disclosure was significant ($F(1,130) = 91.26, p < .001$), but not the effects of self-construal ($F(1,130) < 1, p > .84$) or the interaction term ($F(1,130) < 1, p > .65$). Further participants in the low depth condition perceived less depth of disclosure compared to participants in the moderate depth condition ($M_{\text{low}} = 27.03$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 62.00$; $t(132) = -9.75, p < .001$).

I checked the manipulation of self-construal by conducting a 2 (self-construal: independent vs. interdependent) x 2 (thought type: self vs. other) mixed ANOVA with self-construal as a between-subjects factor and thought type as a repeated measure (Hong and Chang 2015). Consistent with the manipulation, participants in the independent self-construal condition indicated higher ratings on the self-thought item compared to participants in the interdependent self-construal condition ($M_{\text{independent}} = 4.85$ vs. $M_{\text{interdependent}} = 3.84$; $F(1,132) = 5.85, p < .02$). In contrast, and also consistent with the manipulation, participants in the independent self-construal condition indicated lower ratings on the other-thought item compared to participants in the

interdependent self-construal condition ($M_{\text{independent}} = 3.22$ vs. $M_{\text{interdependent}} = 4.43$; $F(1,132) = 7.24, p < .01$).

Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis H1 predicted an interactive effect of depth of disclosure and self-construal on seller and product evaluations. Specifically, in the interdependent self-construal condition, seller and product evaluations were predicted to be higher in the moderate compared to low depth of disclosure conditions (H1a). In contrast, in the independent self-construal condition, there were no predicted differences in seller and product evaluations between the moderate and low depth of disclosure conditions (H1b). I tested these hypotheses separately for seller and product evaluation as dependent variables; see table 1 for means and standard deviations.

Seller Evaluation. To test H1, I conducted ANOVA on the seller evaluation index with depth of disclosure, self-construal, and their interaction term as the independent variables. Consistent with H1, results showed a significant interaction ($F(1, 130) = 6.16, p < .01$), but no main effects of depth of disclosure ($F(1, 130) < 1, p > .71$) or self-construal ($F(1, 130) < 1, p > .80$). Directionally consistent with H1a, planned contrasts showed that participants in the interdependent self-construal condition indicated higher seller evaluation when depth of disclosure was moderate compared to low ($M_{\text{low}} = 5.25$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 5.97$; $F(1, 130) = 2.30, p > .13$). However, contrary to H1b, planned contrasts showed that participants in the independent self-construal condition indicated lower seller evaluation when depth of disclosure was moderate compared to low ($M_{\text{low}} = 6.01$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 5.04$; $F(1, 130) = 3.95, p < .05$).

Product Evaluation. To test H1, I conducted ANOVA on purchase intent with depth of disclosure, self-construal, and their interaction term as the independent variables. Consistent with H1, results showed a significant interaction ($F(1, 130) = 4.02, p < .05$), but no main effects of

depth of disclosure ($F(1, 130) < 1, p > .63$) or self-construal ($F(1, 130) < 1, p > .46$).

Directionally consistent with H1a, planned contrasts showed that participants in the interdependent self-construal condition indicated higher purchase intent when depth of disclosure was moderate compared to low ($M_{\text{low}} = 4.00$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 4.72$; $F(1, 130) = 1.20, p > .28$).

However, contrary to H1b, planned contrasts showed that participants in the independent self-construal condition indicated lower purchase intent when depth of disclosure was moderate compared to low ($M_{\text{low}} = 4.59$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 3.43$; $F(1, 130) = 2.99, p < .09$).

Insert table 1 about here

Discussion

Hypothesis H1 proposed that seller and product evaluations would increase from low to moderate depth of disclosure when self-construal was interdependent (H1a) and this increase would be eliminated when self-construal was independent (H1b). The results were directionally consistent with H1a for both seller and product evaluations. However, the results were different from H1b by showing a negative effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations when self-construal was independent rather than the null effect predicted in H1b. A potential methodological reason for this gap between observed and predicted results is that the manipulation of depth of disclosure in study 1 could have been confounded with disclosure valence. Specifically, I manipulated depth of disclosure with two topics which could have varied in terms of valence. In particular, the topics manipulating low depth of disclosure were positive in valence (i.e., Megan's recent trip and her favorite television program) whereas the topics manipulating moderate depth of disclosure were mix of positive and negative elements (i.e., things Megan enjoys in life and her worry about physical appearance). This unintended variance in disclosure valence could have weakened the observed effects by increasing evaluations in the

low depth condition, and reducing evaluations in the high depth condition. I address this issue in the next study 2 by controlling for disclosure valence by using only disclosures with positive valence.

Study 2 was also designed with three other objectives in mind. First, I wanted to manipulate self-construal using commercial stimuli rather an experimental task. I also wanted to conduct the manipulation check for self-construal at the end of the study rather than during the study as was done in study 1. Second, I wanted to replicate the results in a different product category using a different measure of product evaluation. Third, I wanted to investigate high depth of disclosure as a comparison condition in the analyses. As discussed earlier, past research suggests an inverted-U relationship between depth of disclosure and liking, such that liking increases from low to moderate and decreases from moderate to high depth of disclosure (Cozby 1972). In hypotheses H1 and H2, I had advanced propositions about the effects of low versus moderate depth of disclosure. I now turn to the likely consequences of moderate versus high depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations.

Since past research indicates that source evaluation decreases from moderate to high depth of disclosure (Cozby 1972), I similarly propose that seller evaluation should decrease from moderate to high depth of disclosure. I further propose that self-construal can modify this negative effect of depth of disclosure from moderate to high levels. Consider first the case of independent self-construal. I argue that the reduction of seller evaluation for moderate to high depth of disclosure will be accentuated in the case of consumers with an independent self-construal. This is because such consumers are likely to be particularly sensitive to pressures for reciprocal disclosure that accompany high disclosure from sellers. In contrast, I argue that the reduction of seller evaluation from moderate to high depth of disclosure will be lessened in the

case of consumers with an interdependent self-construal since these consumers are likely to be more open to reciprocal disclosure. Furthermore, I argue that the preceding effects on seller evaluation are likely to carry over to evaluation of the product being offered by the seller. This is consistent with past research on affect transfer which suggests that feelings toward one object can be transferred to associated objects (MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch 1986). Thus, to summarize, I propose that (a) controlling for self-construal, increasing the depth of disclosure from moderate to high would reduce seller and product evaluations, (b) when self-construal is independent, the preceding negative effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations would be magnified, and (c) when self-construal is interdependent, the preceding negative effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations would be minimized.

STUDY 2

Participants and Design

Two hundred and twelve residents of the United States were recruited using mTurk and participated online for a small amount of money. The average age of participants was approximately 36 years, 59% of the participants were male ($N = 125$), 41% of them were female ($N = 87$). The study was designed as a 3 (depth of disclosure: low vs. moderate vs. high) $\times$ 2 (self-construal: independent vs. interdependent) between-subjects ANOVA.

Pretest for Depth of Disclosure Manipulation

I conducted a separate pretest to verify the stimuli used for manipulating depth of disclosure. 92 participants on mTurk were asked to read an ad posted by a person named Megan on an apartment rental website. In the ad, participants saw apartment information as well as personal information about Megan. Similar to study 1, depth of disclosure was manipulated at three levels by varying the content of the personal information about Megan while controlling for

valence by using only positive content (see appendix 8). After reading the ad, participants completed the same measures of depth of disclosure as in study 1. Additionally, to assess positive disclosure content, participants indicated their agreement with the following item: “Megan described herself with personal information that was positive.” (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

Consistent with the manipulation, there was a main effect on the depth of disclosure index ($r = .78$) across conditions ($F(2, 89) = 24.97, p < .001$). Specifically, participants in the low depth condition indicated lower perceived depth compared to those in the moderate depth condition ($M_{\text{low}} = 3.48$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 5.30$; $t(62) = 3.84, p < .001$), and participants in the moderate depth condition indicated lower perceived depth compared to those in the high depth condition ($M_{\text{moderate}} = 5.30$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 6.88$; $t(58) = 3.57, p < .01$). Similarly, results with the 100-point scale showed that participants perceived different depth of disclosure across conditions ($F(2,89) = 22.12, p < .001$). Participants in the low depth condition perceived lesser perceived depth compared to those in the moderate depth condition ($M_{\text{low}} = 31.54$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 51.57$; $t(62) = 3.44, p < .001$), and participants in the moderate depth condition perceived lesser depth compared to those in the high depth condition ($M_{\text{moderate}} = 51.57$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 69.38$; $t(58) = 3.56, p < .001$). Results also indicated that participants perceived the content to be positive in all conditions. Participants in the low depth condition perceived that the content was positive compared to a mid-point of the scale ($M_{\text{low}} = 5.00$ vs. $M_{\text{midpoint}} = 4$; $t(31) = 5.40, p < .001$). Similarly, participants in the moderate depth condition perceived that the content was positive compared to a mid-point of the scale ($M_{\text{moderate}} = 6.13$ vs. $M_{\text{midpoint}} = 4$; $t(31) = 12.32, p < .001$). Likewise, participants in the high depth condition perceived that the content was positive compared to a mid-point of the scale ($M_{\text{high}} = 5.07$ vs. $M_{\text{midpoint}} = 4$; $t(27) = 3.75, p < .001$). Taken

together, results of this pretest indicated that the manipulation of depth of disclosure worked as intended.

Pretest for Self-Construal Manipulation

A separate pretest was conducted with 74 participants on mTurk to develop the self-construal manipulation. Participants in this pretest were asked to evaluate an e-commerce website, and then shown a webpage of a new website for travelers. Based on past research (Aaker and Lee 2001; Bolton et al. 2010; Hamilton and Biehal 2005), I manipulated self-construal through text and picture displayed on the webpage (see appendix 9). Specifically, participants in the independent self-construal condition read a tagline focusing on life and saw a picture of one person, whereas participants in the interdependent self-construal read a tagline focusing on relationships and saw a picture of four people. After reading the screen capture, participants responded to eight items on a 7-point scale measuring self-construal (Hamilton and Biehal 2005). The first four items measured independent self-construal: “This webpage encouraged me to think of myself”; “At this moment; I am focused on myself”; “Right now, a sense of “I” is at the top of my mind”; and “Reading this webpage made me think about myself.” (1= very little, 7 = a lot). These items were averaged to form a self-thought index ($\alpha = .94$). The other four items measured interdependent self-construal: “This webpage encouraged me to think of others I care about”; “At this moment, I am focused on others I care about”; “Right now, a sense of “We” is at the top of my mind”; and “Reading this webpage made me think about my friends and family.” (1= very little, 7 = a lot). These items were averaged to form an index of other-thoughts ($\alpha = .96$).

Consistent with the manipulation, participants in the independent self-construal condition indicated higher ratings on the self-thought index compared to participants in the interdependent

self-construal condition ($M_{\text{independent}} = 4.43$ vs. $M_{\text{interdependent}} = 3.55$; $F(1, 72) = 5.87, p < .02$).

Conversely, and also consistent with the manipulation, participants in the independent condition indicated lower ratings on the other-thought index compared to participants in the interdependent self-construal condition ($M_{\text{independent}} = 2.62$ vs. $M_{\text{interdependent}} = 5.72$; $F(1, 72) = 75.54, p < .001$).

The results indicated that the manipulation of self-construal worked as intended.

Procedure

Participants in the main study were told that the purpose of this study was to investigate consumer opinions about e-commerce websites. Participants were then randomly assigned into one of two self-construal conditions. Using the stimuli verified in pretest, participants were asked to read a webpage which manipulated self-construal through pictures and text. Specifically, participants in the independent (vs. interdependent) self-construal condition were shown a fictitious webpage of SimplicityStay (vs. TogetherStay) website where people advertised rooms in their apartments for short term rental. After reading the webpage, participants were shown an ad posted by the seller on the website. Taken from the pretest, this ad contained information about the room and the host offering the room such that the information about the host manipulated depth of disclosure (see appendix 10). Next, participants were asked to complete measures of the outcome variables and were thanked for their participation.

Outcome Measures

As in study 1, the two key dependent variables were seller evaluation and product evaluation. Seller evaluation was measured with the following four-item scale (Cozby 1972; Forest and Wood 2012; Jones and Archer 1976; Lakin and Chartrand 2003): “How much do you like Megan?” (1 = not at all, 7 = a great deal), “How interested would you be in spending time with Megan? (1 = not at all interested, 7 = extremely interested), “How interested would you be

in interacting with Megan in other situations? (1 = not at all, 7 = a great deal), and “Would Megan be someone you would want as a friend? (1 = definitely not, 7 = definitely yes). These items were averaged to form an index of seller evaluation ($\alpha = .91$). Product evaluation was measured with the following item (Montgomery and Unnava 2009): “If you were looking to book a room, how likely is it that you would book Megan’s room?” (0 = I would definitely not book, 100 = I would definitely book). Finally, the manipulation checks of depth of disclosure and self-construal, as well as the attention check item administered as in study 1. One participant failed the attention check and was hence removed from analysis.

Manipulation Checks

As in study 1, I checked the manipulation of depth of disclosure by conducting a 2 (depth of disclosure: low vs. moderate) x 2 (self-construal: independent vs. interdependent) ANOVA with perceived disclosure depth index ($r = .90$) as a dependent variable. Results showed only a main effect of depth of disclosure was significant ($F(2,205) = 83.06, p < .001$), but not self-construal ($F(2,205) = 1.47, p > .23$) or the interaction term ($F(2,205) = 1.34, p > .26$). Consistent with the manipulation, participants in the low depth condition indicated lower perceived depth compared to participants in the moderate depth condition ($M_{\text{low}} = 2.73$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 5.44$; $t(140) = -6.00, p < .001$), and participants in the moderate depth condition indicated lower perceived depth compared to participants in the high depth condition ($M_{\text{moderate}} = 5.44$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 8.44$; $t(139) = -6.35, p < .001$). Similarly, I conducted ANOVA on the 100-point scale with depth of disclosure, self-construal, and their interaction term as independent variables. Results showed that the effect of depth of disclosure was significant ($F(2,205) = 90.99, p < .001$), but not self-construal ($F(2,205) = 2.90, p < .09$) or the interaction term ($F(2,205) < 1, p > .63$). Consistent with the manipulation, participants in the low depth condition perceived less depth compared to

participants in the moderate depth condition ($M_{\text{low}} = 17.66$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 40.46$; $t(140) = -6.18$, $p < .001$), and participants in the moderate depth condition perceived less depth compared to participants in the high depth of disclosure condition ($M_{\text{moderate}} = 40.46$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 67.01$; $t(139) = -6.60$, $p < .001$).

Similar to the pretest, I conducted a 2 (self-construal: independent vs. interdependent) x 2 (thought type: self vs. other) mixed ANOVA with self-construal as a between-subjects factor and thought type as a repeated measure. Supportive of the manipulation, participants in the independent self-construal condition indicated higher ratings on the self-thought item compared to participants in the interdependent self-construal condition ($M_{\text{independent}} = 4.54$ vs. $M_{\text{interdependent}} = 3.41$; $F(1,209) = 20.67$, $p < .001$). In contrast, and also consistent with the manipulation, participants in the independent self-construal condition indicated lower ratings on the other-thought item compared to participants in the interdependent self-construal condition ($M_{\text{independent}} = 3.41$ vs. $M_{\text{interdependent}} = 4.87$; $F(1,209) = 30.47$, $p < .001$).

Hypothesis Test

Seller Evaluation. To test H1, I conducted ANOVA on the seller evaluation index with depth of disclosure, self-construal, and their interaction term as the independent variables; see table 2 for means and standard deviations. Consistent with H1, results showed a significant interaction ($F(2, 205) = 3.55$, $p < .03$) as well as a marginal main effect of depth of disclosure ($F(2, 205) = 2.74$, $p < .07$), but no main effect of self-construal ($F(2, 205) < 1$, $p > .70$). Consistent with H1a, planned contrasts showed that participants in the interdependent self-construal condition indicated higher seller evaluation when depth of disclosure was moderate compared to low ($M_{\text{low}} = 4.26$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 5.40$; $t(205) = -3.13$, $p < .001$). Consistent with H1b, planned contrasts showed that participants in the independent self-construal condition reported

similar seller evaluations when depth of disclosure was either low or moderate ($M_{\text{low}} = 4.91$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 4.87$; $t(205) = 1.41$, $p > .92$).

Product Evaluation. To test H1, I conducted ANOVA on purchase intent with depth of disclosure, self-construal, and their interaction term as the independent variables. Consistent with H1, results showed a significant interaction ($F(2, 205) = 2.94$, $p < .06$) along with a main effect of depth of disclosure ($F(2, 205) = 3.39$, $p < .04$), but no main effect of self-construal ($F(2, 205) < 1$, $p < .47$). Consistent with H1a, planned contrasts showed that participants in the interdependent self-construal condition indicated higher purchase intent when depth of disclosure was moderate compared to low ($M_{\text{low}} = 55.07$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 70.85$; $t(205) = -2.60$, $p < .005$). Consistent with H1b, planned contrasts showed that participants in the independent self-construal condition reported similar purchase intent when depth of disclosure was either low or moderate ($M_{\text{low}} = 68.35$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 70.32$; $t(205) = .61$, $p > .73$).

Insert table 2 about here

Additional Analysis

Regarding the comparison condition of high depth of disclosure, recall I had proposed earlier that (a) controlling for self-construal, increasing the depth of disclosure from moderate to high would reduce seller and product evaluations, (b) when self-construal is independent, the preceding negative effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations would be magnified, and (c) when self-construal is interdependent, the preceding negative effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations would be minimized. Paired comparisons indicated that participants in the high depth of disclosure condition expressed directionally lower seller evaluation compared to participants in the moderate depth of disclosure condition ($M_{\text{moderate}} = 5.14$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 4.88$; $t(139) = 1.08$, $p > .28$). Further, participants in the high depth of

disclosure condition indicated lower purchase intent compared to participants in the moderate depth of disclosure condition ($M_{\text{moderate}} = 70.59$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 61.42$; $t(139) = 2.18$, $p < .03$). These results partially support my proposition regarding the negative effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations controlling for self-construal since the predicted negative effect was significant in the case of purchase intent and directionally consistent in the case of seller evaluation.

In the case of independent self-construal, paired comparisons showed that participants expressed directionally lower seller evaluation when depth of disclosure was high compared to moderate ($M_{\text{moderate}} = 4.84$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 4.71$; $t(205) = 0.36$, $p > .64$). Further, these participants indicated lower purchase intent when depth of disclosure was high compared to moderate ($M_{\text{moderate}} = 70.32$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 58.65$; $t(205) = -1.76$, $p < .04$). These results were again partially supportive of my proposition in the independent self-construal condition by indicating a significant negative effect in the case of purchase intent and directional negative effect in the case of seller evaluation. Finally, in the case of interdependent self-construal, results indicated only directional negative effects in the case of seller evaluation ($M_{\text{moderate}} = 5.40$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 5.05$; $t(205) = -0.53$, $p > .30$) as well as purchase intent ($M_{\text{moderate}} = 70.85$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 64.23$; $t(205) = -.68$, $p > .25$). This is consistent with my proposition that the negative effect on seller and product evaluations would be weakened in the independent self-construal condition. Overall, the results of this additional analysis replicate the negative effect of disclosure depth from moderate to high levels, and add new insight into the role of self-construal in modifying this negative effect.

Discussion

The results of study 1 and study 2 taken together provide convergent evidence for hypothesis H1 regarding the interactive effect of depth of disclosure and self-construal on seller

and product evaluations. The goal of studies 3 and 4 was to test the underlying role of processing fluency as shown in my model figure 1 and as stated in hypothesis H2. I did this by manipulating processing fluency in study 3 and measuring processing fluency in study 4. Study 3 examined the role of processing fluency by focusing on the interdependent self-construal/moderate depth of disclosure condition. I had argued earlier that seller and product evaluations would be highest in this condition due to high levels of processing fluency experienced by consumers. If so, then reducing processing fluency through an experimental manipulation should reduce seller and product evaluations within the interdependent self-construal/moderate depth of disclosure condition. I test this latter proposition in study 3.

STUDY 3

Participants and Design

Sixty nine residents of the United States were recruited using mTurk and participated online for a small amount of money. The average age of participants was approximately 34 years, 55% of the participants were male ($N = 38$), and 45% of them were female ($N = 31$). The study was designed as one factor ANOVA with two levels (processing fluency: low vs. high) manipulated between-subjects design, and with all subjects in the moderate depth of disclosure/interdependent self-construal condition.

Pretest for Processing Fluency Manipulation

I conducted a separate pretest to develop my manipulation of processing fluency with 80 participants on mTurk. They were told that the purpose of this study was to evaluate the elements of effective ad designs. They were then shown an ad that the person named Megan had posted on apartment rental website. Since all participants were in the moderate depth of disclosure condition, I took the ad used in study 2 for moderate depth of disclosure and manipulated

processing fluency by varying visual clarity of the text in the ad (Kim et al. 2009; Shen, Jiang, and Adaval 2010). Participants in the low processing fluency condition saw a blurry ad in a difficult-to-read font, while participants in the high processing fluency condition saw a clear ad in an easy-to-read font (see appendix 11). After reading the ad, participants indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements: “The ad was easy to read;” and “The ad was easy to process” (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). These two items were combined to form a processing fluency index ($r = .83$). Consistent with the manipulation, results showed that participants in the high processing fluency condition perceived that the ad was easier to read, compared to participants in the low processing fluency condition ($M_{\text{low}} = 3.18$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 6.45$; $t(78) = -10.78$, $p < .001$).

Procedure

Participants in the main study were told that the purpose of this study was to investigate consumer opinions about e-commerce websites. As in study 2, participants were then asked to read a webpage which induced interdependent self-construal through pictures and text. After reading the webpage, participants were shown an ad that had appeared on the website. This ad was designed to represent moderate depth of disclosure, and two versions of the ad manipulated the two levels of processing fluency while controlling for content. Specifically, participants in the low processing fluency condition saw a blurry ad in a difficult-to-read font, while participants in the high processing fluency condition saw a clear ad in an easy-to-read font taken from pretest (see appendix 11). Next, participants were asked to complete measures of the outcome variables, and were thanked for their participation.

Outcome Measures

As in earlier studies, seller evaluation was measured with the following items: “How much do you like Megan?” (1 = not at all, 7 = a great deal), “How much would you enjoy interacting with Megan?” (1 = not at all, 7 = a great deal). These items were then averaged to form a liking index ($r = .75$). Similar to study 2, product evaluation was measured with purchase intent using the following item: “If you were looking to book a room, how likely is it that you would book Megan’s room?” (0 = I would definitely not book, 100 = I would definitely book). In addition, product evaluation was also measured using a scale for attitude toward the product (Lee et al. 2010): “I like Megan’s room;” “I think Megan’s room is good;” and “I have a favorable attitude toward Megan’s room.” (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). These three items were averaged to form a product attitude index ($\alpha = .94$). The manipulation of processing fluency was checked using the following items: “The ad was easy to read;” “The ad was easy to process;” “The ad was easy to understand;” and “The ad was easy to comprehend.” These items were averaged to form a processing fluency index ($\alpha = .88$). Finally, the manipulations of depth of disclosure and interdependent self-construal as well as the attention check were assessed as in study 1. All participants passed the attention check, and were hence included in the analysis.

Manipulation Checks

The manipulation of processing fluency was successful since participants in the high processing fluency condition perceived the ad to be easier to read compared to participants in the low processing fluency condition ($M_{\text{low}} = 4.38$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 6.37$; $t(67) = -6.52$, $p < .001$). To assess the induction of moderate depth of disclosure, I conducted an independent t-test on the disclosure depth index ($r = .80$). As expected, participants in both the low and high processing fluency

conditions perceived depth of disclosure to be moderate ($M_{\text{low}} = 4.37$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 4.69$; $t(67) = -.65$, $p > .52$).

To assess the induction of interdependent self-construal, I conducted a 2 (processing fluency: low vs. high) x 2 (thought type: self vs. other) mixed ANOVA with processing fluency as a between-subjects factor and thought type as a repeated measure. As expected, results showed that the main effect of thought type was significant, such that all participants indicated lower ratings on the self-thought item than the other-thought item ($M_{\text{self-thought}} = 3.36$ vs. $M_{\text{other-thought}} = 4.48$; $F(1, 67) = 28.35$, $p < .001$). I also investigated whether processing fluency interacted with thought type. Results showed that participants in both low and high processing fluency conditions indicated lower ratings on the self-thought item ($M_{\text{low}} = 3.41$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 3.31$; $F(1, 67) = 0.57$, $p > .81$), but higher ratings on the other-thought item ($M_{\text{low}} = 4.53$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 4.43$; $F(1, 67) = .047$, $p > .83$). These results indicated that the induction of interdependent self-construal worked as expected.

Hypothesis Test

Seller and Product Evaluations. I had proposed that reducing processing fluency through an experimental manipulation should reduce seller and product evaluations within the interdependent self-construal/moderate depth of disclosure condition. To test this proposition, I conducted a series of ANOVA's on the dependent variables of seller evaluation, purchase intent, and attitude toward the product; See table 3 for means and standard deviations. Consistent with the proposition, participants in the high processing fluency condition indicated higher seller evaluation compared to participants in the low processing fluency condition ($M_{\text{low}} = 4.79$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 5.34$; $F(1, 67) = 3.46$, $p < .07$). Similarly, participants in the high processing fluency condition indicated higher purchase intent compared to participants in the low processing fluency condition

($M_{\text{low}} = 57.99$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 68.92$; $F(1, 67) = 4.16$, $p < .05$). Finally, participants in the high processing fluency condition indicated higher attitude toward the product compared to participants in the low processing fluency condition ($M_{\text{low}} = 4.87$ vs. $M_{\text{high}} = 5.52$; $F(1, 67) = 5.59$, $p < .02$).

 Insert table 3 about here

Discussion

The results of study 3 support the fit-fluency mechanism underlying my proposed model. In the final study 4, I test the fit-fluency mechanism in a different way by measuring rather than manipulating processing fluency. Specifically, study 4 focused on the interdependent self-construal condition since I had proposed earlier in H2 that processing fluency would mediate the positive effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations in the interdependent self-construal condition. Within this condition, I measured processing fluency and expected that processing fluency would mediate the positive effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations.

Another objective of study 4 was to assess an alternative account for the results based on message involvement. For example, Aaker and Lee (2001) showed that fit between consumers' self-construal and regulatory framing can increase message involvement, and hence message recall and attitude toward the brand. Similarly, in the current context, it is possible that message involvement could mediate the hypothesized positive effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations. In particular, it is possible that higher fit between interdependent self-construal and moderate depth of disclosure – compared to low depth of disclosure – could lead to higher message involvement. This, in turn, could increase message recall and hence increase

seller and product evaluations. I test this alternative account for my predicted effects in study 4 by measuring message involvement.

STUDY 4

Participants and Design

Seventy three residents of the United States were recruited using mTurk and participated online for a small amount of money. The average age of participants was approximately 36 years, 52% of the participants were male ($N = 38$), 46% of them were female ($N = 34$), and 1 participant did not indicate gender. The study was designed as one factor ANOVA with two levels of depth of disclosure (low vs. moderate) manipulated between-subjects design, and with all subjects in the interdependent self-construal condition.

Pretest for Self-Construal Manipulation

A separate pretest was conducted with 30 participants on mTurk to assess the induction of interdependent self-construal. In this pretest, participants were told that the purpose of the study was to investigate elements of effective website design. They were then asked to read a fictitious webpage of TogetherEat website (see appendix 12). As in study 2, I induced interdependent self-construal through text and pictures, and measured participants' thoughts about self and others. Participants responded to the following items: "This webpage encouraged me to think of myself," "Reading this webpage made me think about myself," "This webpage encouraged me to think of others I care about," and "Reading this webpage made me think about my friends and family." (1 = very little, 7 = a lot). I averaged the first two items to form a self-thought index ($r = .95$) and the latter two items to form the other-thought index ($r = .86$). Consistent with the induction of interdependent self-construal, participants indicated lower

ratings on the self-thought index than the other-thought index ($M_{\text{self-thought}} = 2.40$ vs. $M_{\text{other-thought}} = 5.75$; $F(1, 29) = 69.70$, $p < .001$).

Procedure

Participants in the main study were asked for their opinions about an e-commerce website called TogetherEat. They first saw a webpage of this website which was designed to induce interdependent self-construal as in the pretest. Next, participants were shown an ad that had appeared on the website recently. This ad was used to manipulate depth of disclosure using the same approach as in study 2 (see appendix 13). Finally, participants responded to the outcome measures, and were thanked for their participation.

Outcome Measures

As in earlier studies, seller evaluation was measured by asking participants the following questions: “How much do you like Megan?” (1 = not at all, 7 = a great deal), “How interested would you be in spending time with Megan?” (1 = not at all interested, 7 = extremely interested), “How much would you enjoy interacting with Megan in some other situation? (1 = not at all, 7 = a great deal), and “Would you like Megan to be your friend?” (1 = definitely not, 7 = definitely yes). These items were averaged to form an index of seller evaluation ($\alpha = .93$). As in study 3, product evaluation was measured with a single item scale for purchase intent: “If you were to buy a meal, how likely is it that you would buy this meal from Megan?” (0 = I would definitely not buy, 100 = I would definitely buy), and three-items measuring attitude toward the product: “Indicate your feelings toward Megan’s meal?” (1 = unfavorable, 7 = favorable; 1 = dislike, 7 = like; 1 = bad, 7 = good). The three items were averaged to form a product attitude index ($\alpha = .96$). The mediator of processing fluency was measured by asking participants to indicate their agreement with the following item (Newman, Howlett, and Burton 2016): “I feel confident about

whether Megan's meal is good or bad based on information provided in the ad." (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Past research has measured processing fluency at both encoding and judgment stages of information processing. In study 3, I measured processing fluency at encoding stage after varying the degree of difficulty experienced by participants while processing information. In the present study, I measured processing fluency at the judgment stage by asking participants to judge how easily they were able to assess product attractiveness based on the information available about the product.

The potential mediator of message involvement was measured using the following items (Lee and Aaker 2004; White, MacDonnell, and Dahl 2011): "Indicate the extent to which you read the ad carefully" (1 = skimmed it quickly, 7 = read it carefully), and "Indicate the extent to which you paid attention to the ad" (1 = paid little attention, 7 = paid a lot of attention). These items were averaged to form an index of message involvement ($r = .70$). Finally, the manipulation checks of depth of disclosure and self-construal were conducted with the same measures as in previous studies, and the attention check was done with the same question as before. Results showed that three participants failed the attention check, and hence they were removed from analysis.

Manipulation Checks

Consistent with the manipulation of depth of disclosure, participants in the low depth of disclosure condition perceived lower depth on the disclosure index ($r = .81$) compared to participants in the moderate depth of disclosure condition ($M_{\text{low}} = 3.23$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 5.42$; $t(68) = -4.31, p < .001$). Similarly, and again consistent with this manipulation, results from the 100-point scale showed that participants in the low depth of disclosure condition perceived less depth

of disclosure compared to participants in the moderate depth of disclosure condition ($M_{\text{low}} = 24.06$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 42.21$; $t(67) = -2.85$, $p < .01$).

Consistent with the induction of interdependent self-construal, participants in the low depth of disclosure condition indicated lower ratings on the self-thought item, but higher ratings on the other-thought item ($M_{\text{self-thought}} = 3.51$ vs. $M_{\text{other-thought}} = 4.58$; $F(1, 68) = 13.86$, $p < .001$). Similarly, and also consistent with this manipulation, participants in the moderate depth of disclosure condition indicated lower ratings on the self-thought item, but higher ratings on the other-thought item ($M_{\text{self-thought}} = 3.54$ vs. $M_{\text{other-thought}} = 5.16$; $F(1, 68) = 36.34$, $p < .001$).

Hypothesis Test

Seller and Product Evaluations. I conducted a series of ANOVA's on the dependent measures, namely seller evaluation, purchase intent, and attitude toward the product; See table 4 for means and standard deviations. Results showed that participants in the moderate depth of disclosure condition indicated higher seller evaluation compared to participants in the low depth of disclosure condition ($M_{\text{low}} = 4.21$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 4.96$; $F(1,68) = 4.72$, $p < .03$). Similarly, participants in the moderate depth of disclosure condition indicated higher purchase intent compared to participants in the low depth of disclosure condition ($M_{\text{low}} = 47.93$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 59.73$; $F(1,68) = 2.74$, $p < .10$). Finally, participants in the moderate depth of disclosure condition indicated higher attitudes toward the product compared to participants in the low depth of disclosure condition ($M_{\text{low}} = 4.98$ vs. $M_{\text{moderate}} = 5.69$; $F(1,68) = 5.13$, $p < .03$). These results are consistent with hypothesis H1a in that seller and product evaluations are higher when depth of disclosure is moderate compared to low in the case of consumers with an interdependent self-construal.

Insert table 4 about here

Mediation Analysis. I had proposed that processing fluency would mediate the positive of effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations in the interdependent self-construal condition. I tested this mediation hypothesis using PROCESS model 4 (Hayes 2013) with depth of disclosure (low = 0, moderate = 1) as the independent variable, processing fluency as the mediator, and seller evaluation index as the dependent variable. As proposed, analysis with 5,000 bootstrap samples showed that perceived fluency mediated the effect of depth of disclosure on seller evaluation since the confidence interval did not include zero (95% CI, .02, .68). The results were similar with purchase intent and product evaluation as dependent variables. As proposed, analysis with 5,000 bootstrap samples showed that processing fluency mediated the effect of depth of disclosure on purchase intent since the confidence interval did not include zero (95% CI, .57, 15.13). Likewise, as proposed, analysis with 5,000 bootstrap samples showed that processing fluency mediated the effect of depth of disclosure on attitude toward the product since the confidence interval did not include zero (95% CI, .00, .48). These results are consistent with the role of processing fluency as a driver of the effect of depth of disclosure and self-construal on seller and product evaluations.

Additional Analysis

The alternative account described earlier was that message involvement could mediate the positive effect of positive of effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations in the interdependent self-construal condition. I tested this alternative account using PROCESS model 4 (Hayes 2013) with depth of disclosure (low = 0, moderate = 1) as the independent variable, message involvement index as a potential mediator, and seller evaluation index as the dependent variable. Analysis with 5,000 bootstrap samples showed that message involvement

did not mediate the effect of depth of disclosure on seller evaluation index (95% CI, -.22, .11) since the confidence interval included zero. I conducted the same mediation analysis with purchase intent and attitude toward the product as dependent variables. Analysis with 5,000 bootstrap samples showed that message involvement did not mediate the effect of depth of disclosure on purchase intent (95% CI, -3.51, 1.57) or attitude toward the product (95% CI, -.27, .13) since the confidence intervals for both included zero. These results do not support the potential alternative mechanism underlies my model based on message involvement.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The present research examined the interactive effect of seller depth of disclosure and consumer self-construal on seller and product evaluations in P-to-P markets. Results showed that depth of disclosure had a positive effect on seller and product evaluations when self-construal was interdependent, and the positive effect was eliminated when self-construal was independent. This research also showed that the positive effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations in the interdependent self-construal condition was driven by processing fluency. Notably, these results were robust across different manipulations, measures, and P-to-P markets.

Theoretical Contributions

The present research makes two theoretical contributions to the literature on depth of disclosure. First, this research identifies self-construal as a new moderator on the effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations. This extant past research which identified other moderators of the effect of depth of disclosure such as disclosure valence (Gilbert and Horenstein 1975), discloser gender (Derlega and Chaikin 1976), disclosure deviance (Derlega et al. 1973), disclosure scarcity (Petty and Mirels 1981), and relationship type (Chaikin and Derlega 1974). The second contribution of this research is the application of a theoretical framework

based on fit-fluency to understand the effects of depth of disclosure and self-construal on seller and product evaluations. Consistent with this framework, I show the mediating role of processing fluency by manipulating (study 3) as well as measuring (study 4) this variable. The role of fit-fluency in the present research is different from other theoretical frameworks used in past research on depth of disclosure such as social penetration theory (Chaikin and Derlega 1974), social exchange theory (Cozby 1972; Worthy et al. 1969), commodity theory (Petty and Mirels 1981), and attraction theory (Derlega et al. 1973; Sprecher et al. 2013).

This research also contributes to the literature on fit-fluency which has examined the fit between different types of messages and different consumer characteristics. For example, past research on fit-fluency has examined fit between construal level of message and consumer's regulatory focus (Lee and Aaker 2004; Lee et al. 2010), construal level of message and consumer's temporal focus (Kim et al. 2009), construal level of message and consumer prior knowledge (Hong and Sternthal 2010), and message framing and consumer's construal level (White et al. 2010). In contrast, the present research examines a novel type of fit between the message characteristic of depth of disclosure and the consumer characteristic of self-construal. This research also contributes to the literature on self-construal by demonstrating the mediating role of processing fluency for the first time. Past research on self-construal using a fit mechanism has focused on other mediators such as message involvement (Aaker and Lee 2001) and thought type (White and Simpson 2013). In contrast, the present research examines the mediating role of processing fluency generated by fit between depth of disclosure and self-construal.

More broadly, this research contributes to the literature on persuasion by identifying a new source characteristic of depth of disclosure that influences persuasion in the form of seller and product evaluations. Past research on persuasion has examined source characteristics such as

likability (Kahle and Homer 1985), attractiveness (Argo et al. 2008; Till and Busler 2000), credibility (Gotlieb and Sarel 1991; Grewal, Gotlieb, and Marmorstein 1994), expertise (Ratneshwar and Chaiken 1991), familiarity (Tanner and Maeng 2012), and babyfacedness (Gorn, Jiang, and Johar 2008). The present research extends this literature by showing that the source characteristic of depth of disclosure has a positive effect on seller and product evaluations when self-construal is interdependent, but not when it is independent.

Managerial Implications

This research has important implications for sellers in P-to-P markets. The results suggest that sellers in collectivistic countries such as China would benefit by disclosing at relatively higher depths while sellers in individualistic countries like United States would benefit by disclosing at relatively lower depths. The results also suggest methods that can be used by sellers to manipulate consumer self-construal. For example, sellers can design ads featuring a picture of one person to prime independent self-construal versus a picture of multiple people to prime interdependent self-construal. Another way to manipulate consumer self-construal would be to vary the text in the ad. For example, displaying text which reads “remember, enjoying your life is what is really all about” can prime independent self-construal, whereas displaying text which reads “remember, relationships are what life is really all about” can prime interdependent self-construal. Sellers can then disclose personal information at a level of depth which matches the activated level of self-construal. For example, low depth of disclosure might be manipulated through topics such as “What is your favorite hobby?” and “What is your favorite television program?” In contrast, moderate depth of disclosure might be manipulated through topics such as “What are your views toward life?” and “What are things you enjoy the most in life?” High fit

between self-construal and depth of disclosure, in turn, is likely to increase seller and product evaluations.

Limitations and Future Research

The present research has two limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the present research conducted a partial test of hypothesis H2. Recall H2 stated that processing fluency will mediate the effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations when self-construal is interdependent, but not when self-construal is independent. In my studies, I tested this hypothesis in two ways – first by manipulating processing fluency (study 3), and second by measuring processing fluency (study 4). Notably, studies 3 and 4 converged in supporting the proposed role of processing fluency in my model. However, future research could conduct a more complete test of H2 by manipulating both depth of disclosure and self-construal, and measuring processing fluency as well as seller and product evaluations. Depth of disclosure could be manipulated in this future study using different topics that vary on intimacy as was done in the present research. Self-construal could be manipulated in a number of ways. First, participants could be asked to book a meal either for herself in the independent self-construal condition, or close family members in the interdependent self-construal condition (Yang et al. 2016). Second, participants could be selected from different national cultures such as Americans for independent self-construal and Chinese for interdependent self-construal. Third, self-construal could be measured using individual difference scales (e.g., Singelis 1994), which would then be used to categorize participants as interdependents or independents.

A second limitation is related to the product categories used in the four studies reported herein. Recall that the two product categories used were meal (studies 1 and 4) and accommodation (studies 2 and 3). A common characteristic of these two product categories is

that they both involve a relatively high level of interaction between sellers and consumers. For example, consumers are likely to interact with sellers while having a meal at the seller's home. Similarly, consumers are likely to interact with sellers while sharing accommodation with them. However, not all P-to-P markets are characterized by high levels of interaction between consumers and sellers. For example, consumers might expect relatively little interaction with sellers when renting bicycles on Spinlister, a website where sellers rent their bikes to buyers. Similarly, consumers might expect little interaction with sellers when hiring on Taskrabbit, a website where buyers hire skilled sellers for household errands. I expect that my predictions would hold when anticipation of interaction in P-to-P markets is relatively high. When anticipation of interaction in P-to-P markets is relatively low, it is possible that the positive effect of depth of disclosure in the case of interdependents observed in this research would be attenuated. This is because interdependents might infer lesser opportunity to develop relationships with sellers when anticipated interaction with sellers is low. As a result, interdependents might place lesser value on depth of disclosure as a starting point for building a relationship with the seller, leading to attenuation of the positive effect of depth of disclosure on seller and product evaluations. Future research could explore these issues by varying the level of anticipated interaction and observing effects on seller and product evaluations.

The present research also indicates other directions for future research. First, future research could measure dependent variables other than seller and product evaluations. Recall my proposed model posited that the fit between seller depth of disclosure and consumer self-construal increases evaluations of the seller and the product because consumers misattribute a feeling of processing fluency to objects (i.e., seller and product). Using the same argument, another possible downstream consequence of fit could be website evaluation. It is important to

investigate this variable because higher website evaluation could increase customer satisfaction with the website experience, intention to revisit the website, and relationship with the website (Wolfinbarger and Gilly 2003). Future research could measure the dependent variable of website evaluation by asking participants to express their attitude toward the website in question.

Future research could investigate variables other than depth of disclosure that might be important in P-to-P markets. For example, research could study the effects of breadth of disclosure and self-construal on product evaluation. Breadth of disclosure refers to the amount of information disclosed which can be measured by the length of the listing while controlling for its intimacy (Moon 2000). For example, low breadth of disclosure at low depth might be limited information about less intimate topics such as seller's hometown, career, and upcoming vacation. In contrast, high breadth of disclosure also at low depth would consist of more extensive information about the same topics. It is possible that breadth of disclosure would interact with self-construal to influence product evaluation, such that interdependents would express lower product evaluation when breadth of disclosure is high compared to low; in contrast, there might be no difference in product evaluation when self-construal is independent. Consider first the case of interdependent self-construal. I argue that interdependents might find sellers who disclose high versus low breadth to be less attractive because greater depth of disclosure in the listing curtails future opportunity to develop a relationship face-to-face with the seller. In contrast, I argue that independents might find sellers who disclose at either low or high breadth to be equally unattractive because information about the seller is peripheral to their goal of maximizing product benefits.

Another factor relevant P-to-P markets that could be investigated in future research is seller motivation. Similar to individuals, sellers could also have intrinsic or extrinsic motivation

where intrinsic motivation refers to internal rewards being sought by the seller and extrinsic rewards refer to external rewards being sought by the sellers (Botti and McGill 2011; Spiro and Weitz 1990). An example of a listing expressing intrinsic motivation on the part of the seller could be “Hi, I’m Megan. I joined Airbnb because hosting is my passion. I love to share my knowledge and experience with others.” Conversely, a listing expressing extrinsic motivation could be “Hi, I’m Megan. I joined Airbnb because I wanted to make extra money to pay my rent.” Future research could study the effects of seller motivation and self-construal on product evaluation. Controlling for depth and breadth of disclosure, I predict that in the case of interdependent self-construal, seller and product evaluations would be higher when seller motivation is intrinsic compared to extrinsic. This is because interdependents might consider sellers with intrinsic motivation to better fit their desire to develop relations which, in turn, could increase seller and product evaluations. In contrast, independents might be indifferent between sellers with intrinsic versus extrinsic motivations since these consumers are focused more on the product features rather than characteristics of the seller. As such, I predict that in the case of independent self-construal, there would be no difference in seller and product evaluations across intrinsic and extrinsic seller motivations. To summarize and conclude, this research identifies a new interactive effect of depth of disclosure and self-construal on seller and product evaluations, and shows that this effect is driven by a new mechanism based on fit and processing fluency.

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Table 1

DEPTH OF DISCLOSURE AND SELF-CONSTRUAL: STUDY 1

	Independent self-construal		Interdependent self-construal	
	Low depth of disclosure	Moderate depth of disclosure	Low depth of disclosure	Moderate depth of disclosure
Seller evaluation	6.01 (1.44)	5.04 (2.31)	5.25 (2.42)	5.97 (1.73)
Purchase intent	4.59 (2.67)	3.43 (2.90)	4.00 (2.59)	4.72 (2.65)

NOTE.—Values in table are means and standard deviations in parentheses.

Table 2**DEPTH OF DISCLOSURE AND SELF-CONSTRUAL: STUDY 2**

	Independent self-construal			Interdependent self-construal		
	Low depth of disclosure	Moderate depth of disclosure	High depth of disclosure	Low depth of disclosure	Moderate depth of disclosure	High depth of disclosure
Seller evaluation	4.91 (1.31)	4.87 (1.30)	4.71 (1.72)	4.26 (1.32)	5.40 (1.25)	5.05 (1.46)
Purchase intent	68.35 (19.24)	70.32 (21.84)	58.65 (29.46)	55.07 (22.78)	70.85 (21.92)	64.23 (26.31)

NOTE.—Values in table are means and standard deviations in parentheses.

Table 3
PROCESSING FLUENCY: STUDY 3

	Low processing fluency	High processing fluency
Seller evaluation	4.79 (1.39)	5.34 (1.04)
Purchase intent	57.99 (25.31)	68.92 (18.86)
Attitude toward the product	4.87 (1.38)	5.52 (0.86)

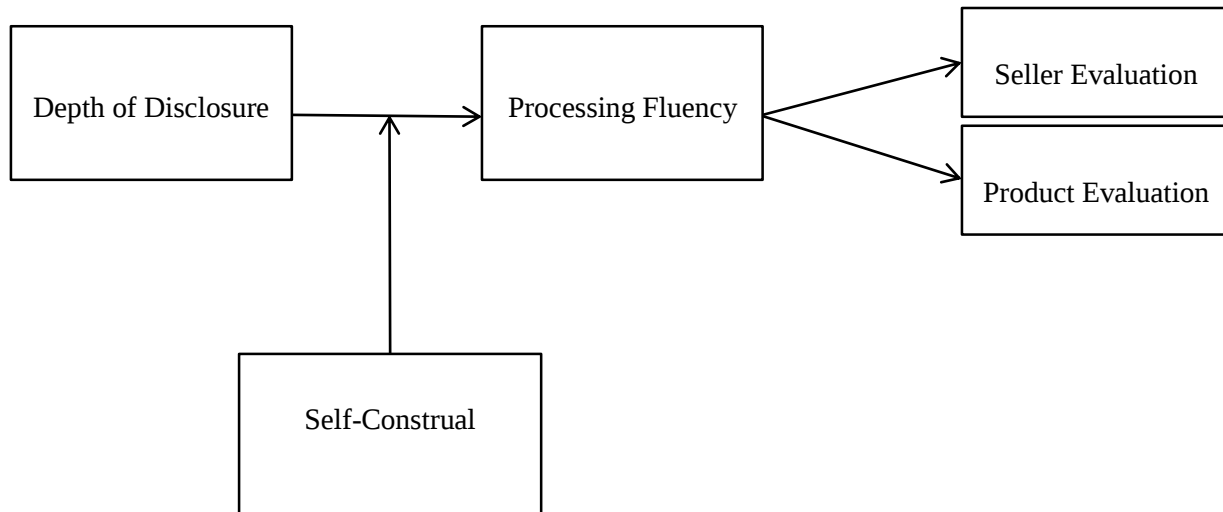
NOTE.—Values in table are means and standard deviations in parentheses.

Table 4
DEPTH OF DISCLOSURE: STUDY 4

	Low depth of disclosure	Moderate depth of disclosure
Processing fluency	3.42 (2.02)	4.38 (2.09)
Seller evaluation	4.21 (1.39)	4.96 (1.48)
Purchase intent	47.93 (28.71)	59.73 (30.69)
Attitude toward the product	4.98 (1.45)	5.69 (1.18)

NOTE.—Values in table are means and standard deviations in parentheses.

Figure 1
PROPOSED MODEL



Appendix 1

EXAMPLES OF DEPTH OF DISCLOSURE

Seller Information Posted on Airbnb

About the Host, Graham



I'm a federal attorney serving as a regional counsel for the Social Security Administration. I like to read, write, draw, and swim.

About the Host, Maria Luisa



i love colors and music and art and have taken bellydancing lessons but i'm not really very good at it, but i do dance salsa and zumba. i don't have any children but my sister has 2 of her own and i think they are adorable. my life is rich and full and i have many friends and family that love me.

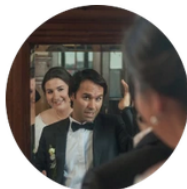
Seller Information Posted on Eatwith

ABOUT AYALA



I'm born and raised in Amsterdam, at the moment I'm studying. Together with a friend of mine, I'm offering a dinner, you can find more details at the dinner information.

ABOUT CENK



Me and my German wife Anna met in a picnic in Moda, Istanbul in 2011. It was a weekly Couchsurfing meeting which turned out a life time journey for us!

Anna moved to Istanbul 1.5 year after we met and we got married at the end of 2013! =)

Appendix 2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CODERS

Overview

1. You will be given two instructional sheets
 - a. Website Selection Sheet
 - b. Coding Sheet
2. You will also be given an excel file and a word file
3. Please follow the procedures as outlined in the two instructional sheets

Instructions for Website Selection Sheet

1. Please work together
2. Go to Airbnb website, and then type in a name of city
3. Pick any 20 listings that display on the same page. Please make sure that the listing is advertised by different sellers
4. Click on each listing, and do the following tasks:
 - a. Copy URL and then paste the URL on the word document provided
 - b. Type the date accessed website, then type in the name of seller and assign number to the seller in order
 - c. Take a screen capture of seller information (i.e., about host), and then paste the screen capture on the word document provided
5. Repeat step 1 to step 3 for Eatwith website
6. Open an excel file provided, and then do the following tasks:
 - a. Assign number of seller in consistent with number assigned to seller in the word document in a column labeled Seller ID
 - b. Type in the name of seller in a column labeled Seller Name
 - c. Assign number 0 if the website is Airbnb and number 1 if the website is Eatwith in a column labeled Website
 - d. Assign number 0 if the seller is male and number 1 if the seller is female in a column labeled Seller Gender

Instructions for Coding Sheet

1. Please work independently
2. Read each screen capture and then answer the following two questions
 - a. Indicate whether the seller disclose personal information (0 = absent, 1 = present)
 - b. Indicate the extent to which the seller disclose intimate information (1 = not at all intimate, 9 = very intimate). Low intimacy refers to personal information about seller that is less intimate, more superficial and gives little insight into the seller's character, feelings, and beliefs. In contrast, high intimacy reveals personal information about seller that is more intimate, more private, and gives greater insight into the seller's character, feelings, and beliefs.
3. Open an excel file provided and then assign 3 numbers to each screen capture
 - a. Assign 0 if personal information is absent and 1 if personal information is present in a column labeled Disclosure
 - b. Assign a number from 1 to 9 in a column labeled Intimacy
 - c. Focusing on (3b), assign number 1 if the number is in the range of 1-3, assign number 2 if the number is in the range of 4-6, and assign number 3 if the number is in the range of 7-9 in a column labeled Depth
4. Please work together
5. Focusing on (3c), compare the number each coder has assigned to column labeled Depth. If there is any disagreement, discuss between the two coders until agreement is reached.
6. Enter the number that both coders agree on a column labeled Agreement
7. Then save the excel file

Appendix 3

SELECTED LIST OF ARTICLES ON DEPTH OF DISCLOSURE

Outcome	Articles
Liking	Chaikin and Derlega (1974); Cozby (1972); Derlega and Chaikin (1976); Derlega et al. (1973); Gilbert and Horenstein (1975); Petty and Mirels (1981); Sprecher et al. (2013); Worthy et al. (1969)
Reciprocal disclosure	Archer and Berg (1978); Cozby (1972); Derlega and Chaikin (1976); Derlega et al. (1973); Rubin (1975)
Psychological adjustment	Chaikin and Derlega (1974); Cozby (1972); Derlega and Chaikin (1976)
Intimacy	Bazarova (2012); Jiang, Bazarova, and Hancock (2011); Laurenceau et al. (1998)
Marital satisfaction	Hendrick (1981)
Sexual satisfaction	MacNeil and Byers (2005)
Closeness	Sprecher et al. (2013)
Future interaction intent	Falk and Wagner (1985); Sprecher et al. (2013)

Appendix 4

SELECTED LIST OF ARTICLES ON FIT-FLUENCY

Fit between message type and consumer characteristic on outcome	Articles
Fit between construal level (abstract vs. concrete) and regulatory focus (promotion vs. prevention) on persuasion	Lee and Aaker (2004); Lee et al. (2010)
Fit between construal level (abstract vs. concrete) and temporal focus (near vs. distant) on political persuasion	Kim et al. (2009)
Fit between construal level (abstract vs. concrete) and prior knowledge (low vs. high) on product evaluation	Hong and Sternthal (2010)
Fit between message framing (loss vs. gain) and construal level (abstract vs. concrete) on recycle intention	White et al. (2011)
Fit between regulatory focus (promotion vs. prevention) and regulatory focus (promotion vs. prevention) on interpersonal evaluation	Hamstra et al. (2013)

Appendix 5

PARAGRAPHS USED IN PRETEST FOR DEPTH OF DISCLOSURE: STUDY 1

Intimacy of Disclosure – Low Condition

Hi, I'm Megan. I recently traveled around Europe where I visited museums, historical buildings, and tourist attractions. At home, I like watching talent shows and news on TV in the evening after work.

Intimacy of Disclosure – Moderate Condition

Hi, I'm Megan. Three things I can't live without are chocolate, cheese, and my cat called Fluffy. I should also tell you that I am a plus size woman, and have struggled with weight issues since I was young.

Intimacy of Disclosure – High Condition

Hi, I'm Megan. I want to let you know that I am a lesbian and I met my current girlfriend on Tinder. I also went through a mid-life crisis a few years ago, during which I quit my job and traveled to different cities.

Appendix 6

SELF-CONSTRUAL MANIPULATION: STUDY 1

Independent Self-Construal

I go to the city often. **My** anticipation fills **me** as **I** see the skyscrapers come into view. **I** allow myself to explore every corner, never letting an attraction escape **me**. **My** voice fills the air and street. **I** see all the sights, **I** window shop, and everywhere **I** go **I** see **my** reflection looking back at **me** in the glass of a hundred windows. At nightfall **I** linger, **my** time in the city almost over. When finally **I** must leave, **I** do so knowing that **I** will soon return. The city belongs to **me**.

Interdependent Self-Construal

We go to the city often. **Our** anticipation fills **us** as **we** see the skyscrapers come into view. **We** allow ourselves to explore every corner, never letting attraction escape **us**. **Our** voice fills the air and street. **We** see all the sights, **we** window shop, and everywhere **we** go **we** see **our** reflection looking back at **us** in the glass of a hundred windows. At nightfall **we** linger, **our** time in the city almost over. When finally **we** must leave, **we** do so knowing that **we** will soon return. The city belongs to **us**.

Appendix 7

AD STIMULI: STUDY 1

Depth of Disclosure (Low)


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Tasting Italian Flavors

Hosted by Megan

Meal Format
 Cuisine type: Italian
 Meal type: Dinner
 Duration: 3 Hours
 Group size: 2 – 6 Guests
 Host style: I host by myself

Menu
 Menu will be based on several dishes, starting with an appetiser, then soup and main courses. A desert will be served to close the dinner, and coffee will also be offered.

Interesting Facts about Megan
 Hi, I'm Megan. I recently traveled around Europe where I visited museums, historical buildings, and tourist attractions. At home, I like watching talent shows and news on TV in the evening after work.

Depth of Disclosure (Moderate)


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Tasting Italian Flavors

Hosted by Megan

Meal Format
 Cuisine type: Italian
 Meal type: Dinner
 Duration: 3 Hours
 Group size: 2 – 6 Guests
 Host style: I host by myself

Menu
 Menu will be based on several dishes, starting with an appetiser, then soup and main courses. A desert will be served to close the dinner, and coffee will also be offered.

Interesting Facts about Megan
 Hi, I'm Megan. Three things I can't live without are chocolate, cheese, and my cat called Fluffy. I should also tell you that I am a plus size woman, and have struggled with weight issues since I was young.

Appendix 8

PARAGRAPHS USED IN PRETEST FOR DEPTH OF DISCLOSURE: STUDIES 2-4

Depth of Disclosure – Low Condition

I'm currently working as a freelancer. I like watching television shows and news programs at home in the evening. I watch different kinds of news stories from world, politics, business, sports, entertainment to weather.

Depth of Disclosure – Moderate Condition

I'm passionate about animal rescue. I found my true calling in life the day I encountered a stray kitten. I was heartbroken to see the kitten, and I felt happy to take care of it. My motto is: be good to yourself and others. I'm easy on myself when I make mistakes in life.

Depth of Disclosure – High Condition

I'm the daughter of a single mom. I quit my job last year to take care of my sick mom. She is the most amazing person I know. When I was young, mom surprised me with a kitten for Christmas even though she could barely afford to pay the bills. It was the most heartfelt gift ever.

Appendix 9

SELF-CONSTRUAL MANIPULATION: STUDIES 2-3

Self-construal (Independent)

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Visit simplicitystay.com to start exploring local places and
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Self-construal (Interdependent)

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sharing experience with your friends and family.**

TogetherStay where spending time together matters most.

Appendix 10

AD STIMULI: STUDY 2

Independent Self-Construal Condition

Depth of Disclosure (Low)



Room in Downtown

About the Room

Room available in this apartment located near a subway station and within walking distance from many attractions. The room has a comfortable bed, a desk with a swivel chair, a large closet, a small book case, and a bathroom with shower.

Interesting Facts about Megan

I'm currently working as a freelancer. I like watching television shows and news programs at home in the evening. I watch different kinds of news stories from world, politics, business, sports, entertainment to weather.

Depth of Disclosure (Moderate)



Room in Downtown

About the Room

Room available in this apartment located near a subway station and within walking distance from many attractions. The room has a comfortable bed, a desk with a swivel chair, a large closet, a small book case, and a bathroom with shower.

Interesting Facts about Megan

I'm passionate about animal rescue. I found my true calling in life the day I encountered a stray kitten. I was heartbroken to see the kitten, and I felt happy to take care of it. My motto is: be good to yourself and others. I'm easy on myself when I make mistakes in life.

Depth of Disclosure (High)



Room in Downtown

About the Room

Room available in this apartment located near a subway station and within walking distance from many attractions. The room has a comfortable bed, a desk with a swivel chair, a large closet, a small book case, and a bathroom with shower.

Interesting Facts about Megan

I'm the daughter of a single mom. I quit my job last year to take care of my sick mom. She is the most amazing person I know. When I was young, mom surprised me with a kitten for Christmas even though she could barely afford to pay the bills. It was the most heartfelt gift ever.

Interdependent Self-Construal Condition

Depth of Disclosure (Low)



Room in Downtown

About the Room

Room available in this apartment located near a subway station and within walking distance from many attractions. The room has a comfortable bed, a desk with a swivel chair, a large closet, a small book case, and a bathroom with shower.

Interesting Facts about Megan

I'm currently working as a freelancer. I like watching television shows and news programs at home in the evening. I watch different kinds of news stories from world, politics, business, sports, entertainment to weather.

Depth of Disclosure (Moderate)


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Room in Downtown

About the Room

Room available in this apartment located near a subway station and within walking distance from many attractions. The room has a comfortable bed, a desk with a swivel chair, a large closet, a small book case, and a bathroom with shower.

Interesting Facts about Megan

I'm passionate about animal rescue. I found my true calling in life the day I encountered a stray kitten. I was heartbroken to see the kitten, and I felt happy to take care of it. My motto is: be good to yourself and others. I'm easy on myself when I make mistakes in life.

Depth of Disclosure (High)


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Room in Downtown

About the Room

Room available in this apartment located near a subway station and within walking distance from many attractions. The room has a comfortable bed, a desk with a swivel chair, a large closet, a small book case, and a bathroom with shower.

Interesting Facts about Megan

I'm the daughter of a single mom. I quit my job last year to take care of my sick mom. She is the most amazing person I know. When I was young, mom surprised me with a kitten for Christmas even though she could barely afford to pay the bills. It was the most heartfelt gift ever.

Appendix 11

AD STIMULI: STUDY 3

Processing Fluency (Low)



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Room in Downtown

About the Room

Room available in this apartment located near a subway station and within walking distance from many attractions. The room has a comfortable bed, a desk with a swivel chair, a large closet, a small book case, and a bathroom with shower.

Interesting Facts about Megan

I'm passionate about animal rescue. I found my true calling in life the day I encountered a stray kitten. I was heartbroken to see the kitten, and I felt happy to take care of it. My motto is: be good to yourself and others. I'm easy on myself when I make mistakes in life.

Processing Fluency (High)



TogetherStay

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Room in Downtown

About the Room

Room available in this apartment located near a subway station and within walking distance from many attractions. The room has a comfortable bed, a desk with a swivel chair, a large closet, a small book case, and a bathroom with shower.

Interesting Facts about Megan

I'm passionate about animal rescue. I found my true calling in life the day I encountered a stray kitten. I was heartbroken to see the kitten, and I felt happy to take care of it. My motto is: be good to yourself and others. I'm easy on myself when I make mistakes in life.

Appendix 12

SELF-CONSTRUAL MANIPULATION: STUDY 4

Self-construal (Interdependent)

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TogetherEat where spending time together matters most.

Appendix 13

AD STIMULI: STUDY 4

Depth of Disclosure (Low)


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Tasting Italian Flavors

Hosted by Megan

Menu
Menu will be based on several dishes, starting with an appetiser, then soup and main courses. A desert will be served to close the dinner, and coffee will also be offered.

Interesting Facts about Megan
I'm currently working as a freelancer. I like watching television shows and news programs at home in the evening. I watch different kinds of news stories from world, politics, business, sports, entertainment to weather.

Depth of Disclosure (Moderate)


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Tasting Italian Flavors

Hosted by Megan

Menu
Menu will be based on several dishes, starting with an appetiser, then soup and main courses. A desert will be served to close the dinner, and coffee will also be offered.

Interesting Facts about Megan
I'm passionate about animal rescue. I found my true calling in life the day I encountered a stray kitten. I was heartbroken to see the kitten, and I felt happy to take care of it. My motto is: be good to yourself and others. I'm easy on myself when I make mistakes in life.