



The “Magic” Behind Our Identity: The Impact of Self-Verification on Affective Response in Fantasy Groups



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Study Background

- Self-verification is the tendency to seek out relationships and information that confirms our stable self-views (Swann, 2012).
- Fusion is the process whereby the personal self joins with the social self (Swann & Buhrmester, 2014).
- The fantasy world for this study was the popular Harry Potter book series and “self-views” were the fans’ self-identified Hogwarts House (Rowling, 1999)
- Compensatory self-verification behaviors refer to feedback-seeking behaviour taken by people when their self-views are disconfirmed (Swann & Brooks, 2012).

Hypotheses

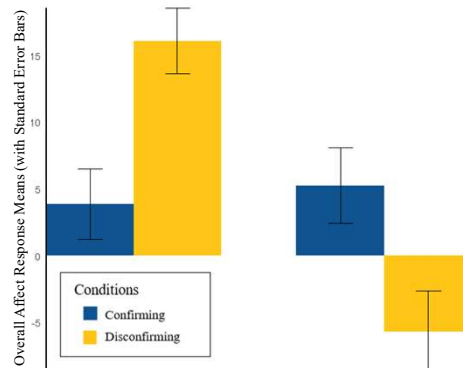
- **(H1a)** Participants who are strongly fused to their Hogwarts House will have negative affective reactions (low overall affect response) when their self-views are disconfirmed.
- In this project, verification of the group identity was manipulated by informing participants that the results of a personality test indicate that they are (confirming feedback condition) or are not (disconfirming feedback condition) suited to be a member of their Hogwarts House with which they are strongly or weakly fused.
- **(H1b)** Participants who are weakly fused to their Hogwarts House should be less bothered by evaluations that disconfirm their group identity. Therefore, relative to strongly fused participants, weakly fused will have less negative affective reactions to disconfirming feedback.
- Upon receiving disconfirming feedback, fans should be more likely to seek additional information about their quiz results, and strongly fused participants should be less likely to accept disconfirming feedback.
- Therefore, **(H2a)** upon receiving disconfirming feedback, strongly fused participants will have high feedback-seeking scores and **(H2b)** weakly fused participants will have low feedback-seeking scores.

Manipulation

“Your responses to the personality test and open-ended questions were fed into a computer program which read your responses. According to your personality traits, the computer program determined that your previously assigned Hogwarts House **is/is not** your correct house.”

Results

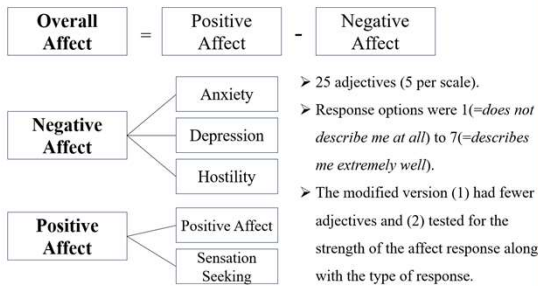
Participants who were strongly fused had lower (more negative) overall affect responses when they received disconfirming feedback compared with weakly fused participants who received the same feedback (* for p<0.005).



Overall affect regression results summary (* for p<0.005)

	Estimate	Std. Error	t-value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	-16.11	11.47	-1.40	0.16
self-verification	32.85	15.51	2.12	0.04
fusion	5.59	2.38	2.35	0.02
self-verification: fusion	-9.38	3.24	-2.89	0.004*

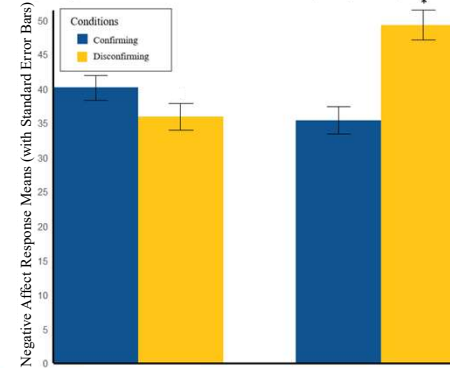
Modified MAACL-R



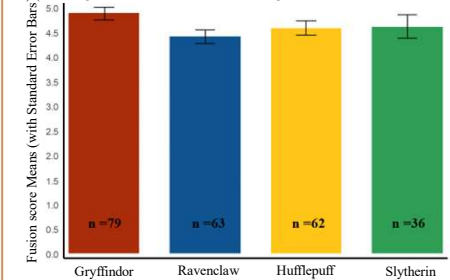
Negative affect regression results summary (* for p<0.005)

	Estimate	Std. Error	t-value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	47.69	8.29	5.75	2.72E-08
self-verification	-30.31	11.21	-2.70	0.01
fusion	-2.09	1.72	-1.21	0.23
self-verification: fusion	7.62	2.34	3.25	0.0013*

Participants who were strongly fused had higher negative affect responses when they received disconfirming feedback compared with weakly fused participants who received the same feedback (* for p<0.005).



Average fusion scores for the four Hogwarts Houses across conditions.



Summary & Conclusions

- Identity fusion moderates the relationship between self-verification and affective responses in fantasy groups (i.e., the Harry Potter Hogwarts Houses)
- Strongly fused participants had more negative affective reactions when they received disconfirming feedback compared to weakly fused participants.
- The strongest differences within the negative affect scores were seen in participants’ anxiety and depression scores.
- There were no significant differences between the positive affect and feedback-seeking response scores of strongly and weakly fused participants when they received disconfirming feedback.
- Our findings are the first to show a fusion and self-verification treatment interaction with strongly fused participants, reporting more negative affective reactions to disconfirming feedback than weakly fused participants.

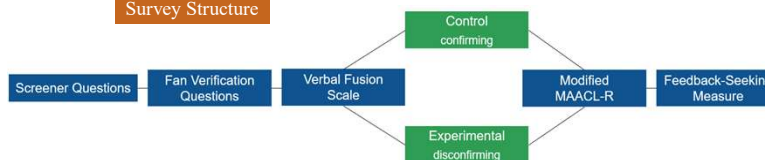
References

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Survey Structure



Sample

- n = 240
- Recruited on MTurk
- Gender (Male=69, Female=169, Other=2)
- Age (Mean= 36yrs, SD= 10.4)