**The "Magic" Behind Our Identity:**

**The Impact of Self-Verification on Affective Response in Fantasy Groups**

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**Abstract**

Our self-views are the beliefs we hold about ourselves. They encourage us to seek *self-verification* in the form of information that preserves our self-views. When people fail to receive self-verifying evaluations, they respond by engaging in compensatory actions designed to stabilize the self-views that are not verified. Identity fusion refers to a process whereby the personal self (i.e., aspects of the individual that are unique, such as intelligence, sociability, etc.,) becomes enmeshed with a social self (i.e., aspects of the self that link the individual to a group, such as Democrat, Christian, etc.). People differ in how strongly they are fused to any given group. Those who are strongly fused should become highly emotional and upset when they receive evaluations that disconfirm their belief that they are aligned with a group, whereas those who are weakly fused to a group should be less emotional and upset when they receive the same disconfirming evaluations. This study integrated the self-verification and identity fusion constructs in a novel population—the Harry Potter Hogwarts House fantasy groups. The study revealed that participants ($n$=240) who were strongly fused to their Hogwarts House had more negative affective reactions when they received disconfirming feedback compared to their weakly fused counterparts. No significant differences were seen for positive affect and feedback-seeking responses. This shows that identity fusion moderated the relationship between self-verification and affective response in fantasy groups. The findings are the first to show that individuals can be strongly fused to fantasy groups in addition to groups like religious or political ones and that fusion can moderate their affective response to social feedback.

*Keywords*: self-verification, identity fusion, affect response, feedback-seeking behaviors.

Our behavior online, just like our behavior in real life, is complex. However, both online and in real life, people strive to represent their true selves (Fullwood et al., 2020; Hance et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2022). The current study adds to the existing identity and online behavior literature by investigating how identity constructs apply to fantasy groups whose members primarily interact online. *Self-verification* is the tendency to seek relationships and information that confirms our stable self-views (Swann, 2012). For instance, people seek friendships and intimate relationships with people who confirm their stable self-views (Kim et al., 2019). Upon receiving non-verifying or feedback that disconfirms these self-views, people are more likely to seek self-verifying evaluations, i.e., compensatory actions taken by people when their self-views are disconfirmed (Swann & Brooks, 2012). This pattern should emerge pertaining to self-views that are salient to us both in real life and online.

Online forums and platforms play a positive role in people's lives by serving as communication platforms for fans of fantasy groups that are tied to fantasy worlds.  The fantasy world chosen for this study is the popular Harry Potter book series and the self-views are the fans' self-identified Hogwarts Houses (Rowling, 1999). J.K. Rowling (1999), describes Hogwarts as a school for witches and wizards. The school is divided into four houses known as the Hogwarts houses. They include Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin. Students who attend Hogwarts are sorted into these houses based on their salient personality characteristics. For example, the Slytherin house in the series is tied to the characteristic of ambition, while the Hufflepuff house is associated with kindness (Rowling, 1999).

To study self-verification, the self-views under study need to be stable ((Kim & Gonzales, 2018)). The Hogwarts houses' self-views tend to be stable since they are self-assigned when people are first introduced to the world and rarely change after that

introduction (Jakob et al., 2019). This means that the fans self-assign their house

identities based on their stable, real-world personality characteristics that are derived

from their personality traits.  According to Crysel et al. (2015), the four Hogwarts

houses are associated with different personality traits. For example, Slytherin is

associated with the Dark Triad traits (i.e., narcissism, Machiavellianism, and

psychopathy), while Gryffindor is associated with extraversion.

Furthermore, because the self-views are based on personality characteristics

fans already have, they are less likely to be subject to the fan's parasocial bond (i.e., a

one-sided relationship where one party is unaware of the existence of the other or the

other member is fictional), with a particular character (Liebers & Straub, 2020).

Finally, Harry Potter fans often confirm their Hogwarts house self-views with a

sorting quiz on WizardingWorld.com (the official website for Harry Potter fans and

content). They also participate in online discussion forums and games that strengthen

their connection to their Hogwarts house. Fan's tendency to seek self-verification might

be influenced by their *identity fusion* with their Hogwarts House, a feeling of oneness

with a group that motivates personally costly, pro-group behavior (Swann &

Buhrmester, 2015). Strongly fused fans tend to have strong *relational ties* (i.e.,

attachments) to fellow group members (Buhrmester et al., 2015c. This means that they

perceive the House members to be like their family.

**Identity**

***Self-verification***

Our identities are comprised of self-views, of varying salience, that inform how

we want the world to see us. Self-views can refer to physical attributes like our height to

subjective beliefs that vary based on our well-being and perception of our audience e.g.,

political leanings or religious identity. Those that are important to us and that remain

relatively unchanged are known as stable self-views.

Self-verification is the tendency to seek relationships and information that

confirms our stable self-views (Swann, 2012). People both seek relationships and

information that confirm their positive self-evaluations as well as those that confirm

their negative self-evaluations.

There are three primary ways that people achieve self-verification: (i) creating

self-verifying "opportunity structures", (ii) communicating their self-views, and (iii)

selectively interpreting information as evidence that verifies their self-views.  The

creation of self-verifying opportunity structures encapsulates all efforts by individuals

to seek out friendships and relationships that verify their self-views (Swann et al.,

1989). The "opportunity structures" they create are their social environments (e.g.,

relationships that provide the chance for self-verification).

The communication of self-views includes the presentation of "identity cues",

signs and symbols that represent someone's self-views and identity, especially those

that connect to a particular social group, e.g., merchandise that supports a particular

sports team (Gosling, 2008). People present these cues consciously or unconsciously to

encourage self-verification from their environment.  The selective interpretation of

information includes all three stages of information processing— attention, recall, and

interpretation. This means that people interpret the world to verify their self-views and

perceive their interactions in it as offering more confirmation than there exists (Talaifar

& Swann, 2017).

We want our experiences to confirm our stable self-views. Self-verification

achieves this goal by matching our perceptions of ourselves with how we believe the

world perceives us. However, our social experiences are moderated by our perceived

audience and that also has an impact on our efforts to seek self-verification.

Kim and Gonzales (2018) found that people's self-verifying tendencies vary

based on their perceived audience. 113 participants were presented with a discussion

task in which they received feedback via email either with or without 38 other copied

observers. Subjects with positive self-views responded negatively to negative feedback

in both conditions (non-self-verifying feedback). However, subjects with negative self-

views showed self-verification tendencies only in the experimental condition with the

38 other copied observers. This might mean that self-verification occurs mainly when

the perceived audience is larger and more public in nature. Kim and Gonzales' study

connects self-verification to the theory of identity shift which is the process of

intentional self-presentation depending on the perceived audience and context (Carr et

al., 2021).

The perceived audience is both determined by whether people consider

themselves in public or in private and by the credibility of the evaluator from whom the

person is seeking self-verification. Szumowska et al. (2022) found that people are more

likely to display self-verification efforts when they are being evaluated by a less credible

source. In their study, the two sources were an experienced psychologist, a credible

source, and another student, a less credible source. Participants preferred self-verifying

feedback only in the less credible source condition and in the credible source condition

they preferred self-discrepant feedback.  The study provides an example of self-

verification not being consistently sought out across different contexts. Finally, when

self-verification does not occur people are more likely to engage in feedback-seeking

behavior, compensatory actions taken by people when their self-views are not verified

(Swann & Brooks, 2012).

*Self-enhancement*

Before the introduction of the theory of self-verification, the prevailing theory in the field was that of *self-enhancement* which is that people prefer positive feedback and evaluations regardless of their perceived accuracy and that people strive to see themselves and have others see them in a positive light (Szumowska et al., 2023). Self-enhancement is driven by our need to perceive ourselves positively while self-verification is motivated by our need to perceive ourselves accurately.

Talaifar and Swann (2017) discussed instances in which self-enhancement establishes itself as a strong theory, e.g., people favoring themselves over others, favoring positive evaluators over negatives ones, and the tendency of children as young as four months old to show preference for themselves over others. However, self-verification is a stronger theory as it explains the motives behind verifying both negative and positive self-views. Self-verification requires two steps that include classifying the evaluation as positive or negative and determining the congruency of the evaluation with one's self-views. Self-enhancement only requires the first step of classifying the evaluation as according to the theory all positive evaluations are accepted and all negative ones are rejected. Unfortunately, the distinction between the two theories is harder to define in practice.

 The two theories in the context of self-presentation on social media have been found to motivate posting on social media depending on the perceived audience. Zheng et al. (2020) observed that users' liking and sharing behavior on social media was different when they were interacting with a group of their close friends versus a larger, more public audience. People were more likely to display self-verifying tendencies especially related to negative self-views when sharing content with their close friends. When sharing content with a larger audience of people their content was more self-

enhancing in nature rather than self-verifying. However, Zheng et al. acknowledged that this difference in behavior could be due to an identity shift or "tie strength", which is a measure of the strength of a relationship between two people.

### *Identity Fusion*

*Identity fusion* is the feeling of "oneness" or connection with a group that motivates people to indulge in pro-group behavior that is personally costly (Swann & Buhrmester, 2015). When individuals are strongly fused to a group, they regard their individual identity and the identity of the group as having porous borders that motivate synergistic activities in the service of the group.

In part, identity fusion is the result of strong relational ties, close and personal relationships between in-group members (Buhrmester et al., 2015). This means that people who are strongly fused to a group perceive group members to be like their family.

Finally, it has been demonstrated that self-verification can predict fusion with in-group members (Rousis et al., 2023). That is participants who received self-verification from their fellow group members reported feeling strongly fused to the same group. However, there has been a lack of research looking at whether fusion predicts the relationship between self-verification and affective responses, and this study aims to fill this research gap, by understanding this relationship within the context of a novel population—fantasy groups.

### Fantasy Groups

For this study, fantasy groups have been defined as those that have their roots in fictional worlds inspired by either a book or movie series. These fantasy groups also must have a substantial online community to allow for ease of study. Current research around such fantasy groups has primarily focused on the ideation and formation of one-

sided relationships in which one party is unaware of the existence of the other, otherwise known as parasocial relationships, (Brodie & Ingram, 2021; Liebers & Straub, 2020). However, that is not the only type of social interaction that fans have online.

Popular book series like the Divergent series (Roth, 2011) or the Harry Potter series (Rowling, 1999) have multiple online forums for fans to discuss and engage with their favorite fictional worlds, including quizzes that assign them a place within these worlds. The Harry Potter series in particular has the sorting hat quiz on Wizarding World (formerly known as Pottermore), the official fan website (Wizarding World: The official home of Harry Potter, 2023). This website classifies fans into one of the four Hogwarts houses based on their defining personality traits—Gryffindor (bravery), Hufflepuff(kindness), Ravenclaw(wisdom), and Slytherin(ambition).

According to Crysel et al. (2015), some fans who have been sorted into a Hogwarts house show their house's signature trait more than others. For example, Slytherins are higher in the Dark Triad traits (narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy) which align with the book's portrayal of Slytherins as the villains of the series. While Ravenclaws, who are known for their intelligence, on average display a higher need for cognition, the desire for careful thinking. Hufflepuffs display higher agreeableness, and desire for social harmony personality traits covered under the Big Five personality traits, than the other houses. However, Gryffindors did not display higher levels of extraversion, from the Big Five personality traits, contrary to the house member's popular image of being extroverted and outgoing. This study demonstrates how fantasy group identities are connected to personality traits.

De Souza and Roazzi (2017) similarly found a psychological basis for the fantasy groups within the Divergent series. However, with both of these studies, it is hard to establish whether fans truly have these personality traits or whether they are modifying

their existing traits to embody a certain character. A replication of the Crysel et al. (2015) study showed that the connection between the houses and personality traits was weaker than originally thought, but the act of assigning oneself a role or identity within a fictional world like the Harry Potter world has an impact on a person's values and thereby indirectly impacts their personality (Jakob et al., 2019).

While, this study acknowledges the role personality traits play in both fans' interaction with fantasy groups but also their behavior online, the focus of the study is on the impact fantasy groups have on their identity. Specifically, how self-verification of the self-views related to these fantasy groups, impacts fans' affective responses, and the role identity fusion plays in moderating that relationship.

**Current Research**

Our identity is comprised of self-views that can be verified by our environment to varying degrees. The process of seeking confirmation of self-views is known as self-verification and it is sought out through social relationships and selective interpretation of information. The perceived audience and the credibility of the evaluator play a role in our tendency to seek out self-verification. Self-enhancement, the opposing theory to self-verification, is that we only seek out verification of our positive self-views. However, this theory fails to acknowledge the desire to verify negative self-views that we may hold about ourselves. Identity fusion is the process whereby the personal self joins with the social self. Fantasy groups are those which rise from fictional worlds like the Harry Potter series. There is a lack of research that examines these fantasy groups' impact on fans' identities, particularly their salience to an individual's identity.

This study connects identity fusion with self-verification in a novel population (i.e., Harry Potter/Hogwarts fantasy groups). The focus of the study will be to examine whether confirming one's Hogwarts House identity produces a positive affective

response and whether disconfirming the same elicits a negative affective reaction. A

fan's identity fusion strength is hypothesized to moderate reactions to feedback.

Exploratory analyses in this study will investigate fans' personality traits within the

context of their Hogwarts House to understand whether certain houses are associated

with certain personality traits.

**Methods**

**Study Design Overview**

This study aimed to understand whether identity fusion moderated the relationship between self-verification and affective responses in fantasy groups. It examined this by conducting surveys of Harry Potter fans through an online outsourcing tool Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). The control group had their Hogwarts house identity verified with a faux sorting quiz (confirming feedback) and the experimental group did not (disconfirming feedback). The survey measured participants' identity fusion to their Hogwarts house using the verbal measure of identity fusion (Gómez et. al., 2011) before the manipulation. Prior to taking the faux sorting quiz participants also took the relational ties measure (Swann et. al.,2012) to better understand the nature of their identity fusion to their house. The methods and data analysis plans were pre-registered using AsPredicted, an online pre-registration platform, and an anonymous pdf of the published pre-registration can be accessed through this link:

https://aspredicted.org/W9R_DPQ.

The faux sorting quiz consisted of a concise measure of the Dark Triad (Jonason & Webster, 2010), and a free-response question that asked participants to describe

Figure 1
*Survey structure*
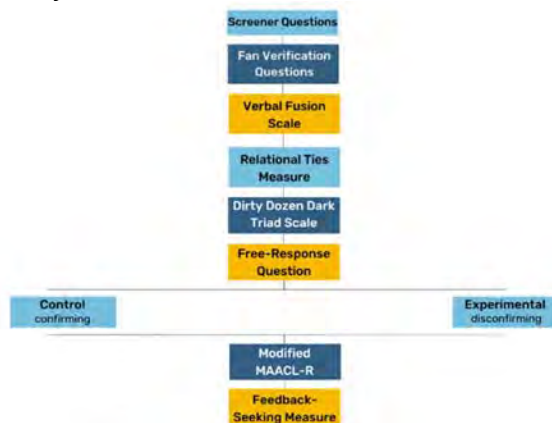


*Note:* This figure shows the chronological sequence of scales and questionnaires in the experimental and control conditions of the study.

their relationship with their Hogwarts House. Participants were told that their

responses to the quiz and the free-response question were fed into a computer program

that assessed whether their self-reported Hogwarts house was their correct house.

After the sorting quiz participants took a modified version of the Multiple Affect

Adjective Check List-Revised (MAACL-R) to measure their affective response to the

manipulation, followed by the Feedback-Seeking measure (Swann & Brooks, 2012).

Finally, participants responded to an Accuracy measure (see Appendix B) which was

used to understand whether participants found the results of the faux sorting quiz and

the computer programs' result credible.

> We hypothesized that the more strongly fused people are to a fantasy group, the

more likely disconfirming (Talaifar & Swann, 2017) that fantasy self-view should impact

their affective responses (Howarth & Forbes, 2015; Swann et al., 2014). That is,

participants who are strongly fused (Swann & Buhrmester, 2015) to their fantasy sub-

group will have a negative affective response (high anxiety and hostility scores

combined with low positive affect scores) when they receive disconfirming feedback

(H1a). Participants who are weakly fused to their fantasy sub-group identity should be

less bothered by evaluations that disconfirm their group identity.  Therefore, upon

receiving disconfirming feedback, weakly fused participants will show reduced negative

affective responses (lower anxiety, hostility, and higher positive affect scores)

compared to strongly-fused fans (H1b).

> When they receive disconfirming feedback, strongly fused fans should be more

likely to seek additional information about their quiz results, and they should be less

likely to accept non-self-verifying results. Therefore, (H2a) strongly fused participants

will have high feedback-seeking scores (Swann & Brooks, 2012), and (H2b) weakly

fused participants will have low feedback-seeking scores.

Exploratory analyses will look at whether certain Hogwarts houses score higher on the Dirty Dozen Dark Triad scale (Jonason & Webster, 2010) than others. Results may reveal whether certain Hogwarts houses are more likely to display Dark Triad personality traits. For example, people who identify with the Slytherin house have been linked to higher Dirty Dozen Dark Triad scores, indicating that they are more likely to display the traits of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy, which align with the book's portrayal of Slytherins as the villains of the series (Crysel et al., 2015). Identity fusion is impacted by people's relational ties with the group they are fused (Buhrmester et al., 2015). Therefore, (H3a) strongly-fused participants will have high relational ties scores and (H3b) weakly-fused participants will have low relational ties scores.

**Participants**

All procedures and materials for the study were approved by the Institutional Review Board of The University of Texas at Austin for research with human subjects (IRB). Participants (*n*=240, *M* = 36 years old, *SD* = 10 years) consisted of verified Harry Potter fans. The eligibility criteria were (1) they spoke English as a native/first language, (2) were at least 18 years of age, (3) had completed a quiz which sorted them into one of the four Hogwarts houses (Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, or Slytherin), and (4) remembered the results of that quiz. Participants were recruited through the online outsourcing tool Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and were paid ($0.25) for their participation (see Appendix D for MTurk recruitment message). All participants were asked to report their age and signed a consent form (see Appendix A). After completion of the experiment all participants signed a debriefing form to allow the use of their data in this study (see Appendix E).

**Materials and Measures**

*Screener Questions*

Participants were asked these questions to confirm that they were at least 18 years of age and spoke English as a native/first language (see Appendix B). The questions were included to adhere to the IRB standards and to ensure that participants could legally consent to participation in the study as well as give permission for the use of their data.

*Fan Verification Questions*

Participants were asked questions to verify their status as Harry Potter fans. Their status as fans was confirmed if they answered yes to these questions. This data was used to label participants according to their self-reported Hogwarts Houses indicated by their response to the last questions in this section (see Appendix B).

*Verbal Fusion Scale*

The Verbal Fusion Scale (Gómez et al., 2011) measures people's identity fusion with a particular social group based on their feelings of connectedness and reciprocal strength with the group. Its scores are independent of several personality and identity measures. It consists of 7 items that are modified based on the social group under study and are scored based on participants' agreement with the items. For this study, the questions were modified to match participants' preferred Hogwarts houses (Appendix B).

The responses to items on the Verbal Fusion scale are scored according to a Likert scale that ranges from *0 (= strongly disagree) to 6 (= strongly agree)*, with higher scores indicating higher identity fusion with the social group under study. The sum of participant scores for the 7 items gives their overall fusion score. The scale has been used in key studies in the field of identity fusion research (Ashokkumar & Pennebaker,

2022; Swann et al., 2009) and has demonstrated convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity and test-retest reliability across two different languages (Gómez et al., 2011).

### Relational Ties Measure

The Relational Ties measure consists of three questions that measure whether the participants have close ties with in-group members of their fused group, and whether they consider these members as close as family or relatives (Swann et. al.,2012). It is scored on a 7-point scale which ranges from *0 (disagree strongly) to 6 (agree strongly)*. The questions were modified to match the group under study i.e., the Hogwarts houses (Appendix B). The sum of their scores for the 7 items was then calculated to find their overall relational ties score.

### Dirty Dozen Dark Triad Scale

The Dirty Dozen Dark Triad Scale (Jonason & Webster, 2010) is a shorter version of the Dark Triad scale developed by Paulhus and Williams (2002). The Dirty Dozen consists of 12 items (4 items per personality trait) and measures narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism, it is a concise version of the Dark Triad scale with 12 items instead of 91 while still retaining flexibility and improving efficiency through ease of testing (Jonason & Webster, 2010). It has demonstrated both structural and test-retest reliability along with convergent and discriminant validity.

Participant responses were scored according to the Dirty Dozen Dark Triad Scale responses which ranged from *1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)* (Jonason & Webster, 2010). The sum of all the 12 items was calculated which represented the overall Dirty Dozen Dark Triad score.

*Free-Response Question*

Participants were asked to answer a free-response or open-ended question that asked them to describe why they think they belong to their preferred Hogwarts house (see Appendix B). These responses were analyzed with LIWC, a psycholinguistic tool that uses natural language processing to analyze psychological characteristics like personality traits. The categories of interest within the LIWC analysis were analytical thinking, prosocial behavior, negative tone and positive tone word scores that were generated by uploading the participant responses to the LIWC software. However, since the number of valid free responses (at least 200 words that pertained to the questions and were not plagiarized) were significantly lower than the number of participants (65 valid responses). This data will be analyzed as a part of a different study.

*Modified Multiple Affect Adjective Check List- Revised (MAACL-R)*

The Multiple Affect Adjective Check List- Revised (MAACL-R) measures affective responses across five dimensions—Anxiety, Depression, Hostility, Positive Affect, and Sensation Seeking (Lubin et al., 1986). It has both trait, typical affect measure, and state, current affect measure, the latter of which was modified and used in this study to measure affective response. The original measure consists of 132 adjective measures along with a "feel today" prompt which asks participants to list how they are feeling in the present moment (see Appendix B). The adjectives are associated with the five scales e.g., 'nervous, fearful, panicky' for the Anxiety dimension and 'happy, joyful, pleasant' for the Positive Affect dimension. The MAACL-R is often used in clinical settings and has internal consistency (Cronbach alpha coefficients between 0.69 to 0.95) and test-retest reliability (Lubin et al., 2001). It has also demonstrated convergent and divergent validity (Lubin et al., 1986). However, since the goal of the study was not diagnostic in

nature and was primarily focused on classifying participant affective responses as positive or negative, the scoring of the scale was modified (see Appendix C).

The modified measure had 25 adjectives (five for each of the five scales) to reduce participant fatigue (see Appendix C). We also included response options to determine the strength of participants affective responses. The response options ranged from 1(=*does not describe me at all)* to 7(=*describes me extremely well)*.

Participants' responses were scored by taking the sum of their responses for each scale. Then the scores for the two composite scales was calculated. These scales were Negative Affect and Positive Affect (see Appendix C for further scoring information).

### Feedback-Seeking Measure

This measure consisted of a single question that asks fans to indicate how much more information they would like to receive about the results of the sorting quiz (see Appendix B). Participant responses were scored according to a scale which ranged from *1 (= not at all interested) to 7 (=extremely interested)*. The question was asked to gauge the strength of their feedback-seeking response (Swann & Brooks, 2012). Therefore, their response was assigned a value according to the scale.

### Accuracy Measure

Participants were asked two questions about whether they found the results of the faux sorting quiz credible (see Appendix B). This was to correct for potentially confounding variable where participants don't trust the study classification and used to better interpret results since as described before self-verification relies on credibility of the evaluation (Szumowska et al., 2022). Participants' response to the first accuracy question was scored on a scale ranging from *0 (= completely disagree) to 6 (=completely agree)*. Their response to the second accuracy question was scored according to a scale

which ranged from *0 (= not at all accurate) to 6 (=extremely accurate)*. The sum of these

scores was taken to measure the participants' overall accuracy score.

### *Demographics*

Participants' background information was collected through a series of

demographic's questions (see Appendix B). The questions included in this questionnaire

were those that may affect the variables under study for example the participants' race,

ethnicity, and their gender.

## Procedures

The survey first asked participants for informed consent and to confirm their

age. They were then asked to verify their status as Harry Potter fans (see Fan

Verification Questions in Appendix B), and instructed to answer questions regarding

identity fusion with their Hogwarts house (Gómez et. al., 2011), and relational ties

(Swann et. al.,2012) towards members of their Hogwarts house. They were then asked

to take the faux sorting quiz, i.e., the Dirty Dozen Dark Triad Scale (Jonason & Webster,

2010) and the free response question.

Participants were then randomly assigned to either a (1) confirming condition, in

which participants received confirming feedback (i.e., were told their preferred house is

their correct house based on their responses); or (2) a disconfirming condition, in which

participants received disconfirming feedback (i.e., were told their preferred house is not

their correct house based on their responses). Afterwards, participants were asked to

report their affective response to the faux sorting quiz results. They were then asked

Feedback-Seeking questions about their sorting quiz results. Finally, they answered

Demographic questions (e.g., race, gender) to control for any confounding factors. They

also answered attention-check questions (see Appendix B). If they failed a majority (2/3

or more) of the attention-check questions their data was removed from the analysis.

Participants were unaware that the sorting quiz randomly assigned them to either of the two conditions and were debriefed about the same after they completed the experiment.

**Analyses**

A liner regression analysis with interaction was conducted to test the statistical significance of differences in affective responses between strongly and weakly fused participants who receive confirming or disconfirming feedback. The same test was used to test the statistical significance of differences in feedback-seeking responses between strongly and weakly fused participants who receive confirming or disconfirming feedback. Additionally, a multivariate regression analysis and a simple effects test was conducted to further understand the significance of differences in affective responses. The statistical software program R was used to perform these analyses.

**Results**

**Descriptive Analysis**

*Affect Responses*

Participants in the disconfirming condition (*M*=-0.68, *SD*=32.42) had more negative overall affect responses than those in the confirming condition (*M*=10.04, *SD*=8.34). When splitting the conditions by strongly and weakly fused we found that strongly fused participants in the disconfirming condition (*M*=-5.68, *SD*=32.97) had more negative overall affect responses compared to the confirming condition (*M*=16.07, *SD*=26.74). While their weakly fused counterparts had less negative overall affect responses in the disconfirming condition (*M*=5.24, *SD*=31.03) when compared to the confirming condition (*M*=3.81, *SD*=28.82).

Upon further looking at the details of the overall affect responses, we found that that strongly fused participants (*M*=49.17, *SD*=23.63) in the disconfirming condition had more negative affect responses compared to the confirming condition (*M*=35.84, *SD*=21.36). Their weakly fused counterparts had less negative affect responses in the disconfirming condition (*M*=35.29, *SD*=22.17) compared to the confirming condition (*M*=40.07, *SD*=19.35).

Furthermore, strongly fused participants in the disconfirming condition (*M*=43.49, *SD*=14.67) had less positive affect responses compared to the confirming condition (*M*=51.9, *SD*=10.09). Weakly fused participants also had less positive affect responses in the disconfirming condition (*M*=40.53, *SD*=14.08) compared to the confirming condition (*M*=43.88, *SD*=13.77).

### Feedback-seeking Responses

Feedback-seeking scores across the two conditions for both strongly and weakly fused participants did not differ greatly. Strongly fused participants in the disconfirming condition (*M*=5.55, *SD*=1.68) had slightly lower feedback-seeking scores compared to the confirming condition (*M*=5.82, *SD*=1.34). While, weakly fused participants in the disconfirming condition (*M*=5.16, *SD*=1.83) had slightly higher feedback-seeking scores compared to the confirming condition (*M*=5.07, *SD*=1.78).

### Relational Ties Scores

Strongly fused participants (*M*=5.27, *SD*=1.07) across both conditions had higher relational ties scores compared to their weakly fused counterparts (*M*=3.47, *SD*=1.25).

### Dirty Dozen Dark Triad (DDDT) Scores

Participants who identified with Slytherin had higher overall DDDT scores (*M*=51.47, *SD*=11.47) compared to the other houses (*M*=35.5, *SD*=14.74). Participants in Hufflepuff had the next highest scores (*M*=35.42, *SD*=16.53). Followed by those in Ravenclaw (*M*=32.44, *SD*=10.8) and Gryffindor (*M*=30.73, *SD*=12.33).

### Accuracy Scores

Highly fused participants (*M*=9.31, *SD*=2.76) across both conditions had higher accuracy scores compared to their weakly fused counterparts (*M*=8.33, *SD*=2.55).

### Regression Analyses

### Affect Responses

When given disconfirming feedback, strongly fused participants had more negative affective reactions compared to weakly fused participants who received the same feedback. These results are demonstrated by the linear regression analysis results for both the overall affect response and the negative affect responses (see Table 1 and Table 2).

Strongly fused participants upon receiving disconfirming feedback had significantly lower overall affect response scores compared to their weakly fused counterparts (b=-9.39, SE=3.24, t-val=-2.9, p<0.005).

Table 1

*Overall affect responses predicted by self-verification and fusion*

|  | Estimate (b) | Std. Error | t-value | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Intercept) | -16.11 | 11.48 | -1.40 | 0.16 |
| self-verification | 32.85 | 15.52 | 2.12 | 0.04* |
| fusion | 5.60 | 2.39 | 2.35 | 0.02* |
| self-verification: fusion | -9.39 | 3.24 | -2.90 | 0.004** |

*Note.* Significant interaction. * is p<0.05 and ** is p<0.005

Figure 2

*Overall affect responses regression plot*
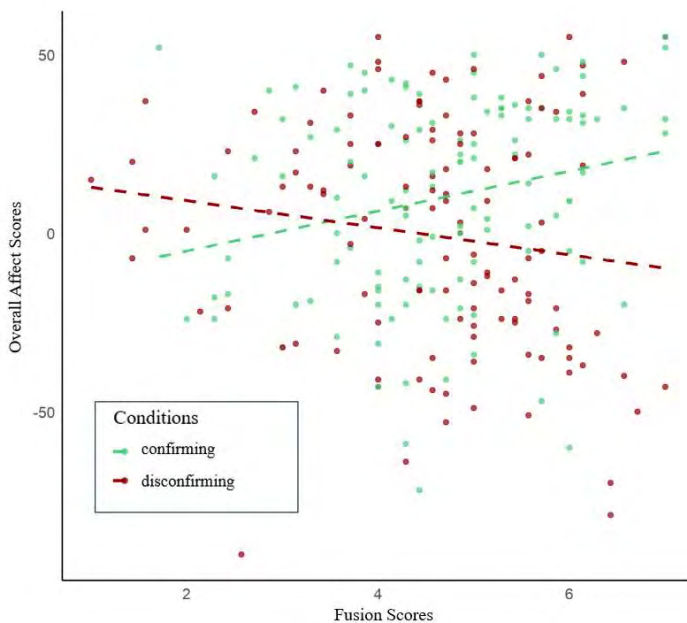


*Note:* This figure displays an interaction between participants' fusion scores and the self-verification treatment.

Figure 2 reflects this result as it displays an interaction between participants' fusion scores and the self-verification treatment. Since for the disconfirming condition (depicted in red) the strongly fused participants who are farther along the x-axis have

lower overall affect scores (depicted on the y-axis). While strongly fused participants in

the confirmation condition have higher overall affect scores. Figure 3 also depicts this.

Since strongly fused fans when exposed to disconfirming feedback (depicted in yellow)

have more negative overall affect responses compared to their weakly fused

counterparts.

Figure 3

*Overall affect responses bar chart*
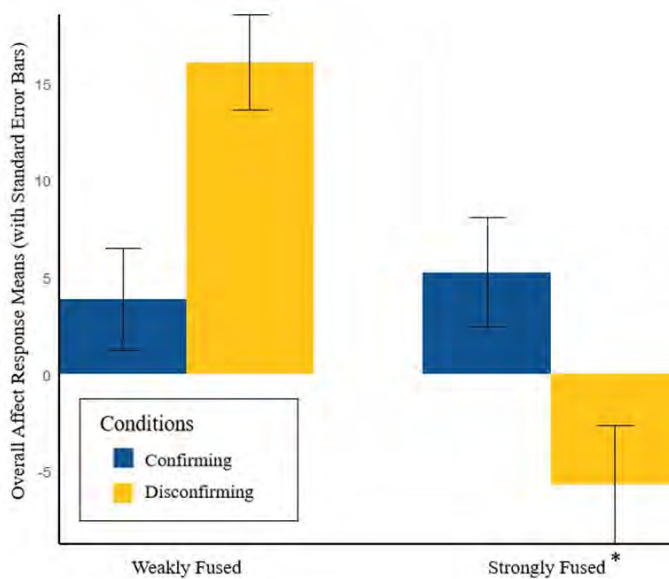


*Note:* This figure displays a significant difference between strongly
fused participants' overall affect responses (more negative) upon
disconfirming feedback compared to their weakly fused counterparts
(* for p<0.005).

When looking at the breakup of the overall affect scores. We found that strongly

fused participants upon receiving disconfirming feedback had significantly higher

negative affect response scores compared to their weakly fused counterparts (b=7.63,

SE=2.34, t-val=3.26, p<0.005).

Table 2

*Negative affect responses predicted by self-verification and fusion*

|  | Estimate (b) | Std. Error | t-value | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (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 | 7.63 | 2.34 | 3.26 | 0.001** |

*Note.* Significant interaction. * is p<0.05 and ** is p<0.005

Figure 4

*Negative affect responses regression plot*
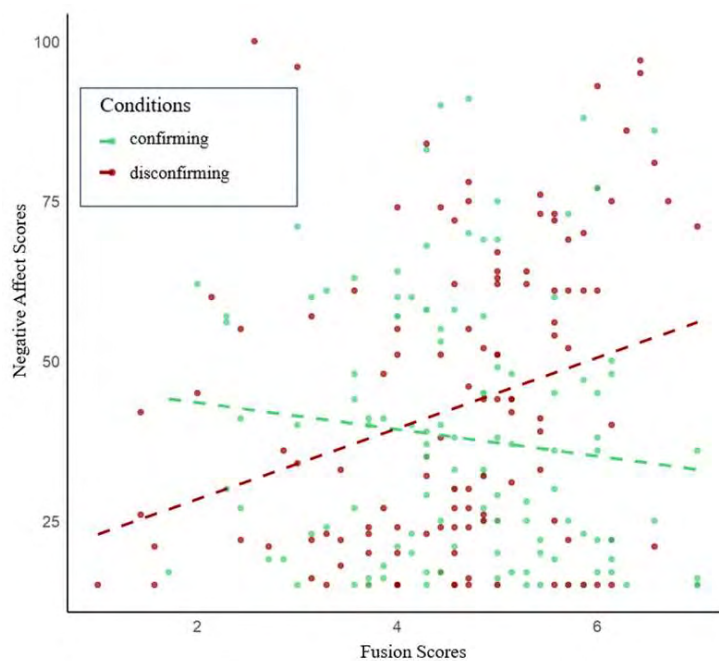


*Note:* This figure displays an interaction between participants'
fusion scores and the self-verification treatment.

Figure 4 reflects this result as it displays an interaction between participants' fusion scores and the self-verification treatment. Since for the disconfirming condition (depicted in red), the strongly fused participants who are farther along the x-axis have higher negative affect scores (depicted on the y-axis). This is seen in Figure 5 as well. Since strongly fused fans when exposed to disconfirming feedback (depicted in yellow) have higher negative affect responses compared to their weakly fused counterparts.

Figure 5

*Negative affect responses bar chart*
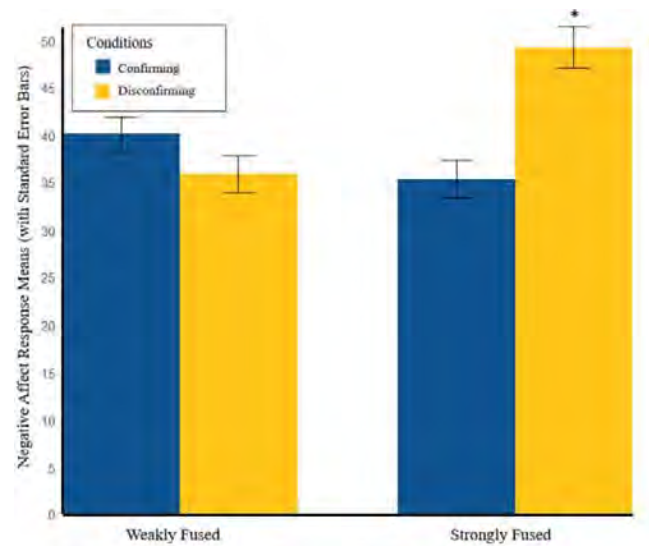


*Note:* This figure displays a significant difference between strongly fused participants' negative affect responses upon disconfirming feedback compared to their weakly fused counterparts (* for p<0.005).

There were no significant differences between the positive affect responses of strongly fused and weakly fused participants who received disconfirming feedback (see Table 3).

A multivariate regression analysis showed that within the negative affect responses, the subscales with the most significant differences between the strongly fused and weakly fused participants who received disconfirming feedback were Depression ($t(240) = 3.67$, $p = .0003$) and Anxiety ($t(240) = 2.93$, $p = .004$). While, Hostility ($t(240) = 2.38$, $p = .02$) was the least significant. While neither of the positive affect response subscales was significant the multivariate regression analysis confirmed that neither the Positive Affect ($t(240) = -1.56$, $p = .12$) nor the Sensation Seeking ($t(240) = -0.73$, $p = .46$) subscale showed significant differences between the strongly fused and weakly fused participants who received disconfirming feedback (see Table 5).

### *Feedback-seeking Responses*

There were no significant differences between the feedback-seeking responses of strongly fused and weakly fused participants who received disconfirming feedback (see Table 4).

## Simple Effects Tests

The simple effects tests showed that the self-verification manipulation (confirming feedback) increased overall affect responses (less negative) for strongly fused participants but not for weakly fused participants. It also showed that the self-verification manipulation (confirming feedback) decreased negative affect responses for strongly fused participants but not for weakly fused participants. Thereby verifying the directionality of the significant results (see Table 6).

## Discussion

### Main Findings

Identity fusion moderates the relationship between self-verification and negative affective reactions in fantasy groups. When exposed to disconfirming feedback strongly fused participants and had more negative affective reactions than their weakly fused counterparts. Negative affective reactions refer to higher negative affect responses. The same fusion and self-verification interaction was not seen in the participants' positive affect responses nor their feedback-seeking responses.

Our findings are consistent with the self-verification literature (Seih et al., 2013; Swann et al., 1989; Swann & Brooks, 2012; Swann & Buhrmester, 2012) in that we found that people seek to verify their stable self-views and are upset when they receive disconfirming evaluations. This study newly found that identity fusion moderates this relationship between self-verification and negative affective reactions at least within the context of fantasy groups. This finding further builds on those of Rousis et al. (2023) by demonstrating a synergistic link between fusion and self-verification.

However, it is important to note that these findings only applied to participants' negative affective reactions as there were no significant differences between the positive affect responses of strongly and weakly fused participants who received the same disconfirming feedback. This could be because the measure used to capture positive affective responses consisted of two subscales one which looked at an overall positive affect and the second which looked at sensation-seeking affect. And even though the measure was modified to better suit the needs of the study, the adjectives used were from the original measure (Lubin et al., 1986). Furthermore, the positive affect subscales were primarily created to capture joy, elation, and enthusiasm. So, it

may be the case that while people are upset when they receive evaluations that

disconfirm their self-views but they are not joyous when they receive evaluations that

do confirm those same self-views.

There were no significant differences between the feedback-seeking responses of

strongly and weakly fused participants who received the same disconfirming feedback.

This result fails to confirm those found by Swann & Brooks (2012). However, one

explanation for these findings could be that strongly fused fans are active participants

within these fantasy world communities online and have a strong interest in any

content related to the fantasy world.

The findings also make sense if understood within the context of the accuracy

score findings. Strongly fused fans had higher accuracy scores across both conditions

compared to their weakly fused counterparts. This means that they considered the faux

sorting quiz an accurate and valid measure to confirm whether their house was the

correct one for them. Therefore, they would be interested in learning its rationale as

that content would be related to the fantasy world that they care about and actively

participate in.

Seih et al. (2013), have shown that people universally embrace self-evaluations

that reflect their self-views in that those with positive self-views are more likely to

embrace positive evaluations while those with negative self-views rated negative

evaluations as more accurate. The Hogwarts houses self-views vary on an individual

basis, in that, one could consider themselves a Slytherin because they are ambitious

(positive self-view) but also because they are cunning (negative self-view). This study

builds on Seih et al. (2013) work, as it shows that people strive to verify self-views, both

positive and negative, with confirming evaluations that match their interpretations of the valence of those self-views (positive or negative).

Furthermore, because the Hogwarts house self-views are subjective in their valence and could represent more than one conceptualization of a personal self it would make sense that those who strongly identify with their house have more porous boundaries between their personal self and social self. For example, someone who is strongly fused with Hufflepuff may believe that they're kind because they are in the Hufflepuff Hogwarts house. This occurs because they interact with fans online and consume Harry Potter content thereby seeking information and relationships that verify their Hogwarts house identity. They also develop relational ties with other fans who are members of their house. Those strong relational ties then encourage the merging of their personal self with their social self.

**Secondary Findings**

We found that strongly fused participants across both conditions had stronger relational ties with their Hogwarts houses and this supports those findings by Buhrmester et al. (2015). Strongly fused participants across both conditions also rated the faux sorting quiz as more accurate compared to their weakly fused participants. This could be because they are more familiar with sorting quizzes and since the faux quiz was more extensive than the average sorting quiz online, they determined that it was more accurate regardless of whether it confirmed their self-views or not.

The Dirty Dozen Dark Triad (DDDT) scores were higher for participants who identified with Slytherin. These findings confirm those of Crysel et al. (2015), however, it is hard to determine causation. That is, one can't ascertain whether people who score

high on the DDDT tend to identify with Slytherin or whether identifying with Slytherin

means that one would score higher on the DDDT.

**Limitations**

The main limitation of this study was that the outcome measure was a modified

version of the MAACL-R that was being used for the first time. Further studies would

need to be done with the scale to determine its accuracy and efficacy. In addition to that

when discussing fusion within the context of this study we are only referring to fusion

with a group. That is, more research would need to be done to understand whether

fusion with values or leaders moderates the relationship between self-verification and

affect responses. More importantly, this fusion and self-verification interaction was only

observed within the context of fantasy groups as that was the population under study.

More work will need to be done to confirm whether this interaction applies to other

groups such as political or religious ones.

With regards to the sample, there were more female participants (n=169) than

other genders (n=71) however, a covariate analysis showed that this characteristic of

the sample did not affect the results (see Table 7). Finally, the sample was collected on

MTurk and therefore, represents the Harry Potter fans found on the platform rather

than Harry Potter fans in general.

**Conclusion**

Identity fusion moderates the relationship between self-verification and negative

affective reactions in fantasy groups. Specifically, upon receiving disconfirming

feedback, strongly fused Harry Potter fans had a negative affective reaction (high

negative affect response) compared to their weaky fused counterparts. The same was

not seen for the positive affect and feedback-seeking responses of the same fans. The

findings are the first to study identify fusion in the novel population of fantasy groups. It

also uncovers another aspect of the synergistic relationship between identity fusion and

self-verification.

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**Tables**

Table 3: Positive Affect

*Positive affect responses predicted by self-verification and fusion*

|  | Estimate(b) | Std. Error | t-value | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Intercept) | 31.58 | 5.05 | 6.25 | 1.88E-09 |
| self-verification | 2.54 | 6.83 | 0.37 | 0.71 |
| fusion | 3.51 | 1.05 | 3.34 | 0.001** |
| self-verification: fusion | -1.76 | 1.43 | -1.24 | 0.22 |

*Note.* Significant interaction. * is p<0.05 and ** is p<0.005

Table 4: Feedback-seeking

*Feedback-seeking responses predicted by self-verification and fusion*

|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-value | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Intercept) | 3.53 | 0.63 | 5.61 | 5.62E-08 |
| self-verification | 0.99 | 0.85 | 1.16 | 0.25 |
| fusion | 0.41 | 0.13 | 3.14 | 0.002** |
| self-verification: fusion | -0.22 | 0.18 | -1.26 | 0.21 |

*Note.* Significant interaction. * is p<0.05 and ** is p<0.005

Table 5: Multivariate Regression

*Multivariate Regression results*

|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t value | Pr(>|t|) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anxiety |  |  |  |  |
| (Intercept) | 16.34 | 2.92 | 5.60 | 5.92E-08 |
| self-verification | -10.74 | 3.94 | -2.72 | 0.01 |
| fusion | -0.48 | 0.61 | -0.80 | 0.43 |
| self-verification:fusion | 2.41 | 0.82 | 2.93 | 0.0037 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Depression |  |  |  |  |
| (Intercept) | 17.41 | 3.16 | 5.51 | 9.20E-08 |
| self-verification | -13.46 | 4.27 | -3.15 | 0.00 |
| fusion | -1.15 | 0.66 | -1.75 | 0.08 |
| self-verification:fusion | 3.27 | 0.89 | 3.67 | 0.0003 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Hostility |  |  |  |  |
| (Intercept) | 13.94 | 2.89 | 4.82 | 2.54E-06 |
| self-verification | -6.11 | 3.91 | -1.56 | 0.12 |
| fusion | -0.46 | 0.60 | -0.77 | 0.44 |
| self-verification:fusion | 1.94 | 0.82 | 2.38 | 0.0182 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Positive Affect |  |  |  |  |
| (Intercept) | 16.91 | 2.80 | 6.03 | 6.1e-09 ** |
| self-verification | 2.87 | 3.79 | 0.76 | 0.45 |
| fusion | 1.56 | 0.58 | 2.67 | 0.008 ** |
| self-verification:fusion | -1.23 | 0.79 | -1.56 | 0.12 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Sensation Seeking |  |  |  |  |
| (Intercept) | 14.67 | 2.56 | 5.73 | 3.07e-08 ** |
| self-verification | -0.33 | 3.46 | -0.09 | 0.92 |
| fusion | 1.94 | 0.53 | 3.66 | 0.00031 ** |
| self-verification:fusion | -0.53 | 0.72 | -0.73 | 0.46 |

*Note.* Significant interaction. * is $p<0.05$ and ** is $p<0.005$

Table 6: Simple effects tests

*Simple effects results*

| contrast | fusion | estimate | SE | df | t.ratio | p.val |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **confirming - disconfirming** | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Overall Affect Response | | | | | | |
| Strongly Fused | 5.51 | 20.88 | 5.50 | 116 | 3.80 | 0.000 |
| Weakly Fused | 3.64 | -1.61 | 5.73 | 108 | -0.28 | 0.7 |
| | | | | | | |
| Negative Affect Response | | | | | | |
| Strongly Fused | 5.51 | -12.98 | 3.93 | 116 | -3.31 | 0.001 |
| Weakly Fused | 3.64 | 5.34 | 3.84 | 108 | 1.39 | 0.1 |

*Note.* Significant interaction. * is p<0.05 and ** is p<0.005

Table 7- Covariate test

*Covariate test results*

| | Df | Sum of Sq | RSS | AIC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| + house | 3 | 22106.9 | 198600 | 1622.4 |
| <none> | | | 220707 | 1641.8 |
| + age | 1 | 0.9 | 220706 | 1643.8 |
| + gender | 3 | 2538.7 | 218168 | 1645 |
| - condition | 1 | 6890.8 | 227598 | 1647.1 |

**Appendix A**

**Consent Form**

**Title: Personality Traits of Harry Potter Fans**
Principal Investigator: Dr. William Swann
Undergraduate Student Investigator: Trisha Lobo


You are invited to be part of a research study. This consent form will help you choose whether to participate in the study. Feel free to contact the undergraduate student researcher, trisha.lobo@utexas.edu if anything is not clear in this consent form or if you have further questions.


The purpose of this study is to learn more about the personality traits of Harry Potter fans. To participate, you must be a Harry Potter Fan, be at least 18 years old, and be fluent in English. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete a screener to assess eligibility. If you qualify for participation, you will be asked to complete a survey that will consist of a questionnaire, and basic demographic information. If you qualify for participation, you will be asked to complete a brief personality questionnaire, questions about how you relate to the world of Harry Potter, basic demographic information, and a brief writing task. We will use a computer program to evaluate which Hogwarts house best matches your personality. You will then answer some questions about your results.


As MTurk does not link names and identifying information, none of your personal, identifying data will be collected. Data may be shared with researchers outside the current research team, however no personal, identifying information will ever be shared. The randomly assigned worker-ID that is generated by MTurk will only be used for compensation and will be removed from the final dataset prior to analysis. Participation should take no more than 15 minutes of your time, and we hope to enroll approximately 240 participants. Upon successful completion of this study, you will be provided $0.25 for your participation. Successful completion of the study includes completing all portions of the survey and accurately completing a majority of attention check questions, which are added to research studies to ensure the quality of responses. Risks associated with this study are minor and include minor discomfort from the results of the Hogwarts house personality quiz. Further, as the study team will briefly collect MTurk id information, there is a small risk of loss of confidentiality. There is no direct benefit from participating in the study and taking part in this research study is voluntary. You do not have to participate, and you can stop at any time. Your decision to participate will not affect your relationship with The University of Texas at Austin. You will not lose any benefits or rights you already had if you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study.


If you have questions regarding this research or if you feel you have been harmed due to participation, you may contact the researchers at trisha.lobo@utexas.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researchers,

please contact The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board by phone: 512-232-1543 or email: irb@austin.utexas.edu.

Do you consent to take part in this survey?
<Yes/ No>

## Appendix B

**Consent Form**

Please see **CONSENT FORM** in **IRB application**

<Yes/No>

--*page break--*

What is your age? *(numbers only)*

[fill in the blank]

--*page break--*

Is English your first or native language?
    <> Yes

    <> No

    <> Other (please specify)

      [fill in the blank]

--*page break--*

Have you heard of the Harry Potter series before today?
    <> Yes

    <> No

--*page break--*

Did you know there is a Harry Potter book series?

◇ Yes

◇ No

*--page break--*

Did you know there is a Harry Potter movie series?

◇ Yes

◇ No

*--page break--*

Have you either watched the Harry Potter movies or read the Harry Potter book series?

◇ No, I have not watched all the movies or read all the books

◇ Yes; I have watched all the movies

◇ Yes; I have read all the books

◇ Yes; I have done both

◇ Other [fill in the blank]

*--page break—*

Are you familiar with the four Hogwarts Houses from the Harry Potter series?

◇ Yes

◇ No

*--page break--*

Have you ever taken any quiz or survey that has sorted you into one of the four Hogwarts Houses?

◇ Yes

◇ No

*--page break--*

What was the result of the quiz or survey (if you have taken multiple, please select the most recent result)?

       ◇ Gryffindor

       ◇ Hufflepuff

       ◇ Ravenclaw

       ◇ Slytherin

--*page break*--

Which of the four Hogwarts Houses do you identify with the most?

       ◇ Gryffindor

       ◇ Hufflepuff

       ◇ Ravenclaw

       ◇ Slytherin

--*page break*--

Fans vary in their attachment to <<**Insert Hogwarts House>>**. Please indicate the extent to which you feel the following statements reflect your relationship with your << **Insert Hogwarts House >>**.

I am one with my << **Insert Hogwarts House>>**.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

I feel immersed in my << **Insert Hogwarts House>>**.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

I have a deep emotional bond with my **Insert Hogwarts House**.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

My << **Insert Hogwarts House>>** is me.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

I'll do for my << **Insert Hogwarts House>>** more than any other group members.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

I am strong because of my << **Insert Hogwarts House>>**.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

I make my << **Insert Hogwarts House>>** strong.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

--*page break*--

Fans vary in how they perceive their fellow Hogwarts House. Please indicate the extent to which you feel the following statements reflect your relationship with members of <<**Insert Hogwarts House>>**.

Members of my <<**Insert Hogwarts House>>** are like my family to me

| Disagree Strongly | Disagree | Disagree Somewhat | Neutral | Agree Somewhat | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

If someone in my << **Insert Hogwarts House>>** is hurt or in danger, it is like a family member is hurt or in danger

| Disagree Strongly | Disagree | Disagree Somewhat | Neutral | Agree Somewhat | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

I see other members of my << **Insert Hogwarts House>>** as brothers and sisters

| Disagree Strongly | Disagree | Disagree Somewhat | Neutral | Agree Somewhat | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

--*page break*--

According to the Harry Potter series, each Hogwarts House represents different personality traits, and a person's personality traits determine their Hogwarts House. Using a new

psychological personality assessment to understand your personality, we can determine whether the Hogwarts House you indicated as yours is the right fit for you.

I tend to manipulate others to get my way

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

I have used deceit or lied to get my way

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

I have used flattery to get my way

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

I tend to exploit others towards my own end

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

I tend to lack remorse

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

I tend to not be too concerned with morality or the morality of my actions

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

I tend to be callous or insensitive

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

I tend to be cynical

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

I tend to want others to admire me

| Strongly Disagree 1 | Disagree 2 | Somewhat Disagree 3 | Neutral 4 | Somewhat Agree 5 | Agree 6 | Strongly Agree 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

I tend to want others to pay attention to me

| Strongly Disagree 1 | Disagree 2 | Somewhat Disagree 3 | Neutral 4 | Somewhat Agree 5 | Agree 6 | Strongly Agree 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

I tend to seek prestige or status

| Strongly Disagree 1 | Disagree 2 | Somewhat Disagree 3 | Neutral 4 | Somewhat Agree 5 | Agree 6 | Strongly Agree 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

I tend to expect special favors from others

| Strongly Disagree 1 | Disagree 2 | Somewhat Disagree 3 | Neutral 4 | Somewhat Agree 5 | Agree 6 | Strongly Agree 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

--*page break*--

Please justify why you think your Hogwarts House is the correct one for you. Describe how the values your Hogwarts House stands for match your values, and how your personality aligns with your Hogwarts House. Take at least 5 minutes to write at least 200 words. Write continuously the entire time, and don't worry too much about spelling or punctuation errors.

Please note: As stated on the MTurk recruitment page, as part of our quality control we will not compensate participants who do not provide authentic responses.

--*page break*--

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 Hogwarts House **is not** your correct house.

--*page break*--

On this page, you will find words describing different moods and feelings. Please rate these words based on how well they describe how you feel now- today. Work rapidly.

## Response Options

| Does Not Describe Me at All | Does Not Describe Me Very Well | Does Not Describe Me Well | Describes Me Somewhat | Describes Me Well | Describes Me Very Well | Describes Me Extremely Well |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

## Scales

### Anxiety
<>Panicky

<>Tense

<>Impatient

<>Nervous

<>Agitated

### Depression
<>Miserable

<>Discouraged

<>Hopeless

<>Unhappy

<>Rejected

### Hostility
<>Annoyed

<>Angry

<>Discontented

<>Irritated

<>Offended

### Positive Affect
<>Cheerful

<>Contented

<>Happy

<>Pleased

     &lt;&gt;Satisfied

**Sensation-Seeking Affect**
     &lt;&gt;Energetic

     &lt;&gt;Lively

     &lt;&gt;Inspired

     &lt;&gt;Interested

     &lt;&gt;Enthusiastic

*--page break--*

Please indicate how interested you are in reading the computer program's rationale for why your Hogwarts House matched your personality

| Not at All Interested | Not Very Interested | Not Interested | Neutral | Interested | Very Interested | Extremely Interested |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

*--page break—*

Now indicate how interested you are in reading the computer program's rationale for why your Hogwarts House did not match your personality

| Not at All Interested | Not Very Interested | Not Interested | Neutral | Interested | Very Interested | Extremely Interested |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

*--page break—*

Do you agree with the results of the survey?

| Completely Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Completely Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

--*page break*—

How accurate do you think the computer program's assessment of your Hogwarts House was?

| Not at Accurate | Inaccurate | Somewhat Inaccurate | Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate | Somewhat Accurate | Accurate | Extremely Accurate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

--*page break*—

Where did you find this survey?

      <> MTurk

      <> SONA

      <> Redditt

--*page break*—

What is your gender?

      <> Female

      <> Male

      <> Transgender Female

      <> Transgender Male

      <> Gender non-conforming

      <> Not Listed

        [fill in the blank]

      <> Prefer not to say

--*page break*—

What is your ethnicity?

        <> Hispanic/Latinx

        <> Non-Hispanic/non-Latinx

--*page break*—

What is your race?

    (select all that apply)

        <> White/European American

        <> American Indian or Alaska Native

        <> Black/African American

        <> Asian/Asian American

        <> Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

        <> Middle Eastern/Arab American

        <> Not Listed

          [fill in the blank]

**Appendix C**

**Scales**

Anxiety, Depression, Hostility, Positive Affects, and Sensation-Seeking Affects.

**Composite Scales**

Negative Affect Response: Anxiety+ Depression+ Hostility scores

Positive Affect Response: Positive + Sensation-Seeking Affects scores

**Scoring**

Participant responses will be scored according to a scale which ranges from 0 (does not describe me at all) to 7 (describes me very well). The sum of the scores of each scale will be calculated. The compositive negative and positive scale scores will also be calculated by adding up the scores of the scales that comprise them.

**Classification**

**Anxiety:** Feelings of discomfort, unease and paranoia

**Depression:** Feelings of hopelessness and listlessness

**Hostility:** Feelings of anger and displeasure

**Positive Affects:** Feeling of joy, comfort, and happiness

**Sensation-Seeking Affects:** Feelings of adventure, strength and excitement (positive).

*Note*: Unlike the original MAACL-R these classifications are not diagnostic in nature and are solely based on synonyms and the explanation given above.

## Test Instructions

On this page, you will find words describing different moods and feelings. Please rate these words based on how well they describe how you feel now- today. Work rapidly.

### Response Options

| Does Not Describe Me at All | Does Not Describe Me Very Well | Does Not Describe Me Well | Describes Me Somewhat | Describes Me Well | Describes Me Very Well | Describes Me Extremely Well |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

## Scales

### Anxiety
      ◇Panicky

      ◇Tense

      ◇Impatient

      ◇Nervous

      ◇Agitated

### Depression
      ◇Miserable

      ◇Discouraged

      ◇Hopeless

      ◇Unhappy

      ◇Rejected

**Hostility**
<>Annoyed

<>Angry

<>Discontented

<>Irritated

<>Offended

**Positive Affect**
<>Cheerful

<>Contented

<>Happy

<>Pleased

<>Satisfied

**Sensation-Seeking Affect**
<>Energetic

<>Lively

<>Inspired

<>Interested

<>Enthusiastic

## Appendix D

The purpose of this research study is to learn more about the personality traits of adults. We are looking specifically for participants who are Harry Potter fans.

To participate, you must be at least 18 years old, be a Harry Potter fan (have either read the books or seen the movies and have taken a Hogwarts house sorting quiz) and speak English as a native/first language. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey that will consist of a brief questionnaire and basic demographic information. Please note: Your answers will be checked for authenticity. If you do not provide authentic answers, you will not be compensated. This survey should take you about 10-15 minutes. It times out in 1 hour. Please complete the survey in one sitting. If you feel like you will rush to finish, please do not take this survey. Although this is a fairly short survey, we expect thoughtful responses. As a token of our appreciation, we will pay you $0.25 for completion of the survey.

## Appendix E

**Debriefing Form**

**Title: Personality Traits of Harry Potter Fans**

**Purpose of the Study**

We would like to discuss with you in more detail the study you just participated in and explain exactly what we are trying to study. In the informed consent document you read and agreed to before the study started, you were told that the purpose of the study was to learn about the personality traits of Harry Potter fans. The real purpose of this study is to learn if confirming people's Hogwarts House identity affects their short-term emotional state. Specifically, we want to see if Harry Potter fans who strongly identify with their Hogwarts House have different emotional responses than people who weakly identify with their Hogwarts House. After taking a brief personality questionnaire, you were told that your answers were fed into a computer program that told you if your Hogwarts house was accurate based off of your personality assessment. This computer program does not exist and instead you were either randomly placed into an experimental condition where you had your Hogwarts House confirmed, or another condition where your Hogwarts House was not confirmed. By changing the conditions, we can tell if the experimental condition actually had an effect.

While we are not always able to disclose everything about a study before you start your participation, we do want to tell you everything about the study now that you have finished it. We do not always tell people the real purpose of the study because we do not want to influence your answers or study behaviors. If we disclose the real purpose of the study prior to participation, then participants' reactions are not a good indication of how they would react normally. If other participants knew the true purpose of the study, it might affect how they respond to our questions. Since this is an ongoing study, we ask that you do not share with others the real purpose of this study until the study is over and recruitment is complete.

**Permission to Use Data**

We hope that you enjoyed taking our survey. Now that you have been told the real purpose of this study, we want to make sure that you understand our study aims and ask for your permission to use your data. Remember, we want to understand how people act in general. We will never draw any results about you personally.

If you do not want your data included in this study, your data will be immediately destroyed and it will not be analyzed or included as part of the study report. Your refusal will not impact current or future relationships with The University of Texas at Austin. It will also not affect the compensation highlighted at the start of the study. We do not keep any personal identifying information as MTurk separates your personal details from the study data, and all study data is securely stored.

If you want more information about this study, you can talk to any of the investigators:

Dr. William Swann

Pelin Cunningham-Erdogdu

Trisha Lobo

trisha.lobo@utexas.edu


If you would like to talk about this study with someone not involved in the study, you can contact The Office of Research Support at The University of Texas at Austin by phone or e-mail at (512) 232-1542 or irb@austin.utexas.edu.


**Signature**

By checking the option below, you are indicating that you understand the real purpose of the study. Your acknowledgement does not mean you are waiving any legal rights. Please indicate if you do or do not agree for us to use your data now that you know the real purpose of the study.


Check one:


___ I understand the real purpose of the study and allow the researchers to use my data.


___ I understand the real purpose of the study and do NOT allow the researchers to use my data.