CULTURE AND POSTDECISIONAL CONFIRMATION BIAS

by

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Abstract

The present research explored cross-cultural differences in postdecisional confirmation bias. I hypothesized that, following a personal decision—one that entails consequences for the decision maker only, Euro-Canadians would be more likely to seek out confirmatory information than would Japanese, whereas following an interpersonal decision—one that entails consequences for those closest to the decision maker, Japanese would be more likely to do so than Euro-Canadians. In Study 1, Euro-Canadians and Japanese university students were randomly assigned to either the self or friend condition. Participants in the self and friend condition selected a movie for which they or their friend would ostensibly receive a free pass to see in theatres, respectively. After selecting a movie, participants were presented with a list of 12 movie reviews that either confirmed or disconfirmed their choice. Participants then indicated which of the reviews they wanted to read further. Study 2 employed the same paradigm as did Study 1 and also included a measure of participants’ information processing goals. For Study 1, the results of a series of one-sample t tests revealed that Euro-Canadians in the self condition exhibited confirmation bias as well as did those in the friend condition, albeit this latter trend was not significant. In contrast, Japanese in both conditions showed no preference for confirmatory or disconfirmatory information. For Study 2, Japanese continued to exhibit a balanced search. However, Euro-Canadians in the friend condition preferred confirmatory information, whereas Euro-Canadians in the self condition exhibited a slight, non-significant preference for disconfirmatory information. Regarding participants’ information processing goals, those in the friend condition were more concerned with affirming and convincing others of the correctness of their choice than were those in the
self condition. Also, Euro-Canadians indicated that they were motivated to be accurate more than did Japanese. The present research indicates that Euro-Canadians and Japanese differ in terms of the decisions that they seek to confirm (albeit not in the predicted direction). Reasons for such discrepant findings and limits of the present research are discussed.
Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review

Day in and day out, we make a countless number of decisions both big (e.g., What car should I buy? What university should I attend?) and small (e.g., How should I style my hair today? Where should my friends and I eat lunch?). Following these decisions, we often encounter further information, some of which suggests that our decision was good and some of which suggests that our decision was not good. How do we attend to and interpret postdecisional information given that once a decision is made, it most often cannot be undone? Research suggests that we exhibit confirmation bias following our decisions—we selectively seek out or attend to information we know to be supportive of our decision and avoid information we know to be unsupportive of our decision (Frey, 1986; Jonas, Schulz-Hardt, Frey, & Thelen, 2001).¹ Confirmatory information seeking has been observed following a variety of decisions, including those that are not yet final (e.g., Jonas, Graupmann, & Frey, 2006; Jonas, Traut-Mattausch, Frey, & Greenberg, 2008); do not directly implicate the decision maker (e.g., Frey, 1981b); and are made by professional decision makers, such as managers from banks and industrial companies (Schulz-Hardt, Frey, Luthgens, & Moscovici, 2000), leading scholars to conclude that, “biased searching for supportive information is a widespread phenomenon in decision making” (Jonas et al., 2001, p. 558).

¹ Traditionally, the tendency to prefer confirmatory as opposed to disconfirmatory information has been termed selective exposure (Festinger, 1957, 1964). However, this term is somewhat ambiguous because the tendency to prefer unsupportive rather than supportive information is also a form of selective exposure. Therefore, in this paper, I use the term confirmation bias or confirmatory information seeking, not selective exposure, to refer to the preference for supportive rather than unsupportive information following a decision. Furthermore, with regards to hypothesis testing, confirmation bias has been defined in a slightly different manner. The strategy to ask questions that are consistent with the hypothesis being tested has also been labelled confirmation bias. However, asking questions that are consistent with the direction of the hypothesis does not guarantee that the hypothesis will be confirmed. As Klayman and Ha (1987) suggest, this tendency is better termed positive test strategy.
However, a plethora of cross-cultural research involving Westerners\textsuperscript{2} and Japanese, which I will review shortly, suggests that the tendency to prefer supportive rather than unsupportive postdecisional information may be subject to cultural variation and thus may not be as prevalent as some scholars contend. Are Westerners more or less likely to seek out confirmatory information than are Japanese? Does the strength in which members of these culture groups exhibit confirmation bias vary according to who is affected by the decisions that they make? The purpose of the present research was to determine the answers to these questions by examining the degree to which Euro-Canadians and Japanese exhibit confirmation bias following decisions that they make for themselves and others.

\textit{Previous Research on Culture, Decision Making, and Information Seeking}

Despite social psychology’s burgeoning interest in the influence of culture on various psychological phenomenon such as self-esteem, emotions, attributions, and motivation, culture has received little attention in the area of judgment and decision making (JDM; Choi, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2004). Indeed, the number of studies examining culture as a factor in the decision making process is quite limited (Weber & Hsee, 1999). According to Choi et al., a lack of viable theoretical frameworks, combined with the assumption held by decision making investigators that the heuristics and cognitive processes involved in decision making are universally shared, has prevented cultural research in JDM from progressing. Recent research has examined cultural differences in the amount of information that East Asians and Westerners consider before making a final decision, discovering that, due to their holistic way of thinking, East

\textsuperscript{2} In the present research, I apply the term “Westerner” to people from North America or Western Europe who are of European decent and Caucasian ethnicity (Markus & Kitayama, 1991)
Asians consult more information than do Westerners (Choi, Dalal, Kim-Prieto, & Park, 2003). Other research has investigated cultural differences in the type of information that people favour when formulating impressions of others, noting that East Asians prefer relational information (i.e., information concerning another’s family and social class) over individuating information (i.e., information concerning another’s interests and accomplishments), albeit the reverse is true for Westerners (Gelfand, Spurlock, Sniezek, & Shao, 2000). However, no research to date has examined the differences (or similarities) between East Asians and Westerners in their preference for confirmatory and disconfirmatory postdecisional information.

Possible Reasons for Confirmatory Information Seeking and Related Cross-Cultural Research

Given that it is adaptive for people to possess accurate, reality-based evaluations of the decisions that they make, people should, by default, seek out and process all relevant postdecisional information (Smith, Fabrigar, & Norris, 2008). Indeed, doing so ensures that information asserting the risks and dangers associated with one’s decision is not overlooked (Jonas et al., 2001; Jonas, Schulz-Hardt, & Frey, 2005). As I have already noted, research indicates that people rarely take an objective, even-handed approach when processing such information. Rather, people’s subjective goals and desires often influence their reasoning and information processing (Kunda, 1990; Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1987). Why, then, do people seek out confirmatory information (and even disregard disconfirmatory information) after they have made a decision? What goals or motivations does this behaviour satisfy?
The need to feel consistent. One reason why people exhibit confirmation bias following their decisions is to maintain a sense of cognitive consistency. This explanation of confirmation bias was originally forwarded by Festinger (1957, 1964) in the context of cognitive dissonance theory. Following a decision, feelings of psychological discomfort or dissonance arise when one becomes aware of the disadvantages associated with the chosen option (because this is inconsistent with having chosen it) and the advantages associated with the nonchosen option (because this is inconsistent with not having chosen it). Dissonance is reduced and a sense of consistency is restored when one selectively attends to information that endorses the selected alternative and degrades the nonselected alternative. For example, Frey and Wicklund (1978) discovered that participants who chose to carry out a boring task (writing random numbers) were more likely to expose themselves to essays emphasizing the advantages of the task than were participants who were forced to do so, presumably to maintain a sense of consistency between information regarding the task and having chosen to complete the task.

Cross-cultural research and the need to feel consistent. Previous cross-cultural research suggests that not all people are concerned with the maintenance of internal consistency (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). To begin, available literature suggests that Japanese’ self-concepts are more variable and multifaceted than are North Americans’ self-concepts. For example, employing the Twenty Statements Test (TST; Kuhn & McPartland, 1954), Cousins (1989) discovered that Euro-Americans were three times more likely to describe themselves using abstract, enduring personality traits (i.e., “I am sincere” or “I am curious”) than were Japanese, whereas Japanese described themselves in terms of specific, contextualized characteristics (i.e., “I am one who plays Mah-Jongg
on Friday nights”). In corroboration of these findings, Kanagawa, Cross, and Markus (2001) demonstrated that when participants competed the TST in one of four different situations (i.e., alone, with a peer, in a large group of peers, or with a higher status peer), the content of Japanese’ self-descriptions varied across these situations more than did Euro-Americans’ self-descriptions. Thus, the experience of inconsistency involving the self-concept appears to be more commonplace for Japanese than for Westerners and, as such, may not be associated with feelings of discomfort or dissonance for Japanese in the same way that it is for Westerners.

Additional research indicates that Japanese people indeed feel less threatened by and even anticipate inconsistency. Heine and Lehman (1999) found that although Japanese reported a greater degree of discrepancy between their actual and ideal selves than did Euro-Canadians, this discrepancy was more weakly correlated with depressive symptoms for Japanese than for Euro-Canadians. Also, Kashima, Siegal, Tanaka, and Kashima (1992) found that Japanese did not expect their attitudes and behaviours to correspond to the same degree as did their Euro-American counterparts. In research more germane to the cognitive dissonance perspective, Heine and Lehman (1997) discovered that, after selecting one of two similarly desirable CDs as compensation for their participation, Japanese exhibited the choice justification effect (or spread of alternatives) to a lesser degree than did Euro-Canadians. Choice justification refers to the tendency to increase in one’s liking of the chosen alternative after having chosen it and to decrease in one’s liking of the nonchosen alternative after having rejected it (Brehm, 1956). In other words, Japanese were less likely than were Euro-Canadians to bring their evaluations of the chosen CD in line with having chosen it, demonstrating further their lack of concern
with the existence of incongruency between their actions and attitudes. In sum, it appears that, after making a decision, Japanese may be less likely than Westerners to exhibit a preference for confirmatory information because they may be less concerned about maintaining a sense of consistency between their decision and information concerning their decision than Westerners do.

The need to feel good about the self. Another reason why people prefer confirmatory rather than disconfirmatory postdecisional information is because such information serves to uphold people’s positive views of the themselves. Indeed, people are motivated to view themselves as good, worthy, and competent beings (Aronson, 1968; Steele, 1988). A host of research demonstrates that, in service of this goal, people tend to take credit for successes but shirk responsibility for failures (Campbell & Sedikides, 1999), perceive themselves as better than average on almost any dimension that is both subjective and socially desirable (Alicke, Klotz, Breitenbecher, Yurak, & Vredenburg, 1995), and believe that they are more likely to experience positive events and less likely to experience negative events than are most other people (Weinstein, 1980). With regards to examining extraneous information, people may seek out information that reinforces their positive self-concept and ignore information that undermines it. To illustrate, university students who were given negative intelligence feedback preferred test-disparaging information over test-supporting information (Frey, 1981a), and this tendency was particularly true of students who were told that the test produced reliable as opposed to unreliable results (Frey & Stahlberg, 1986). Furthermore, people seek out information that is consonant with their pre-existing attitudes (Brannon, Tagler, & Eagly, 2007; Lundgren & Prislin, 1998), stereotypes (Johnston, 1996), and
self-serving perceptions (Brown, 1990; Holton & Pyszczynski, 1989) because such information allows people to conclude that their views and opinions are correct. Similarly, attending to confirmatory postdecisional information allows people to maintain the perception that they have made the “right” choice and to conclude that they are indeed capable and competent decision makers. In short, postdecisional confirmation bias fulfills people’s self-enhancement objectives.

Cross-cultural research and the need to feel good about the self. A plethora of cross-cultural research demonstrates that self-enhancement is of greater concern among Westerners than it is among East Asians (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). For example, Euro-Americans tend to evaluate themselves more positively than do others, whereas Japanese view themselves less positively than do others (Heine & Renshaw, 2002). Although research concerning the better-than-average effect (BAE; Kobayashi & Brown, 2003) and the prediction of negative life events (Chang, Asakawa, & Sanna, 2001) contests this claim, a recent meta-analysis conducted by Heine and Hamamura (2007) determined that 88 out of 91 studies concerning self-enhancement indicate that Westerners enhance the self to a greater degree than do East Asians and that the effect sizes associated with this cultural difference are large ($d > .70$) for 58% of these studies. Based on this body of literature, then, just as Westerners desire to enhance the self, so too might they desire to enhance their decisions. Thus, Westerners may be more likely to seek out confirmatory information after they have made a decision than may Japanese.

However, other research suggests that this supposition may be too coarse. As I have already noted, scholars contend that all people desire to see themselves as good,
moral, and competent beings (e.g., Steele, 1988). Cultural variability exists, however, in people’s understanding of what it means to be such a person (Markus, Mullally, & Kitayama, 1997). A vast amount of research demonstrates that Western culture, given its emphasis on independence, prizes those who are unique, efficacious, and self-sufficient. In contrast, Japanese culture, with its emphasis on interdependence, values those who are considerate and harmonious group members and mindful of their position within the group and of their group members’ goals and preferences (see Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). Feeling good about the self in the Western cultural context, then, necessitates that one enhances one’s abilities and attributes, whereas in the Japanese cultural context, positive feelings about the self stem from the knowledge that one has successfully fulfilled those tasks associated with being a good group member (Heine, 2005; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Hence, cultural variability should also exist in the type of decisions that people feel the need to confirm and feel good about.

Cross-Cultural Differences in the Importance of Personal and Interpersonal Decisions

Returning to Heine and Lehman’s (1997) study, Westerners may seek to confirm and feel positively about personal decisions—those that reflect the preferences of and entail consequences for the decision maker only. An alternate interpretation of Heine and Lehman’s results is that, rather than to abate their feelings of inconsistency, Euro-Canadians increased in their liking of the chosen CD to convince themselves that they had indeed made a “correct” decision. Making a good personal decision, of course, signifies that one is efficacious and autonomous (i.e., an adequate member of a culture that values independence). Japanese, on the other hand, did not increase in their liking of
the chosen CD because making a good personal decision is of little importance to their self-concept and ability to be a good group member.

In contrast, other research suggests that Japanese may seek to confirm and feel positively about interpersonal decisions—those that reflect the preferences of and involve consequences for those closest to the decision maker. Hoshino-Browne et al. (2005) observed that, after choosing one of two meal coupons to give to a close friend as a gift, Japanese justified their choices; that is, they indicated that their friend would like the chosen meal more and the nonchosen meal less than they had indicated their friend would prior to making the decision. Euro-Canadians, in contrast, did not justify their choices after making a decision for a friend, albeit they did after making a decision for themselves. In the Japanese cultural context, good interpersonal decisions are likely to be met with positive social consequences such as approval and acceptance, whereas poor interpersonal decisions are likely to bring about rejection and feelings of shame and embarrassment. Therefore, Japanese were motivated to prove to themselves that the meal that they had selected for their friend was indeed superior. Because making a good (or bad) interpersonal decision has little to do with their attainment of independence, Euro-Canadians did not attempt to convince themselves of the correctness of the decision that they made for their friend. Regarding confirmatory information seeking, then, whereas Westerners may exhibit confirmation bias following decisions that they make for themselves, Japanese may exhibit confirmation bias following decisions that they make for others.

The respective importance of personal and interpersonal decisions to Westerners and East Asians has been demonstrated in a variety of contexts. For example, Euro-
American children perform better and persist longer on anagram tasks that they choose for themselves, whereas Asian-American children do so on tasks that are chosen for them by their mothers or other ingroup members (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). Also, the attainment of goals pursued for personal reasons (i.e., to please or benefit the individual) is related to increased subjective well-being for Euro-Americans, whereas the attainment of goals pursued for interpersonal reasons (to please or benefit the individual’s parents and friends) is related to subjective well-being for Asian-Americans (Oishi & Diener, 2001). Finally, compared to people who endorse an independent view of the self, those who endorse an interdependent view of the self are more attentive to and process more deeply their options when choosing for a close other than for themselves, as well as favour items they choose for a close other more than items they choose for themselves (Poehlmann, Carranza, Hannover, & Iyengar, 2007).

The Present Research and Hypotheses

The purpose of the present research was to investigate cultural variation in postdecisional confirmation bias. People seek out confirmatory information following their decisions in order to maintain a sense of consistency and/or to feel good about themselves, among other reasons. Research regarding cross-cultural differences in self-consistency (e.g., Cousins, 1989) and self-enhancement (e.g., Heine & Renshaw, 2002) suggests that because Japanese apparently value consistency and enhancement less than do Westerners, Japanese may be less likely to exhibit postdecisional confirmation bias than may Westerners. However, other research suggests that it is important to consider who the decision concerns when formulating hypotheses about cross-cultural differences in confirmatory information seeking (e.g., Heine & Lehman, 1997; Hoshino-Browne et
al., 2005). My analysis suggests that whereas making good personal decisions is crucial for Westerners, making good interpersonal decisions is crucial for Japanese. This difference is due to personal and interpersonal decisions implicating aspects of the self that are sanctioned by Western and Japanese culture, respectively, and thus whether or not these decisions prove to be beneficial has greater bearing on Westerners and Japanese status as good cultural members. As such, I propose that Euro-Canadians may be biased to seek out confirmatory information more than Japanese do following personal decisions, whereas Japanese may be biased to seek out confirmatory information more than Euro-Canadians do following interpersonal decisions.

Of course, I do not anticipate that Euro-Canadians making decisions for others and Japanese making decisions for themselves will completely disregard confirmatory information; I merely expect that this tendency will be attenuated compared to Euro-Canadians and Japanese making personal and interpersonal decisions, respectively. Furthermore, although my hypotheses concerning postdecisional confirmatory information seeking are analogous to those forwarded by Hoshino-Browne et al. (2005), the present research goes beyond that of Hoshino-Browne et al. by examining how people attempt to confirm the correctness of their decisions not by altering their subjective evaluations, but rather by selectively attending to information that exists outside of their cognitive systems. Confirmatory information seeking involves a number of processes that are not necessarily implicated in confirmatory thinking, such as selectively obtaining, evaluating, and utilizing novel stimuli (Frey, 1986). Thus, unlike previous research, the results of present research promise to shed light on the degree to which further cultural differences and/or similarities exist among these information processing mechanisms.
Chapter 2: Study 1

The purpose of Study 1 was to investigate cultural differences in postdecisional confirmation bias following personal and interpersonal decisions. In this study, Euro-Canadian and Japanese participants were assigned to either the self or friend condition. Participants in the self condition selected a movie for which they would ostensibly receive a free pass to see in theatres, whereas participants in the friend condition selected a movie for which their friend would ostensibly receive a free pass (Hoshino-Browne et al., 2005; Jonas et al., 2008). After selecting the movie that they or their friend would like to see, participants were exposed to a list of brief movie review summaries describing an equal number of confirmatory (pro-choice and anti-alternative) and disconfirmatory (anti-choice and pro-alternative) movie review articles. I predicted that, among participants in the self condition, Euro-Canadians would select more confirmatory and less disconfirmatory reviews than would Japanese, whereas among participants in the friend condition, Japanese would select more confirmatory and less disconfirmatory reviews than would Euro-Canadians.

Previous research also indicates that decisions to which people feel strongly committed are more likely to be followed by a preference for consonant information than those to which they feel less committed (Frey, 1986; Hart et al., 2009; Jonas et al., 2001; Jonas et al., 2008). Consequently, participants should be more committed to those decisions that are important to their self-concepts in comparison to those that are less relevant. Therefore, I further expected that Euro-Canadians in the self condition would be more committed to their decisions than would Japanese in the self condition, but that the opposite would be true for Euro-Canadians and Japanese in the friend condition.
Method

Participants

One hundred and sixty-two undergraduate students participated in this study. Six participants (5 women) were excluded from the Queen’s University sample because they either did not follow instructions properly or did not meet the ethnicity requirements of the study. The final sample consisted of 82 Euro-Canadians (71 women) from Queen’s University in Canada and 74 Japanese (27 women) from Hokkaido University in Japan. Euro-Canadian participants were recruited from a pool of introductory psychology students and received course credit (0.5) in exchange for their participation. Japanese participants were recruited from a university-wide paid participant pool and received 500¥ (approximately $5.00 CAD) for participating. The majority of Euro-Canadian participants were in first year, whereas the majority of Japanese participants were in second year. All participants were tested individually. The mean age of Euro-Canadian and Japanese participants was 18.1 (SD = 1.11) and 19.6 (SD = 0.76) years, respectively. This age difference was significant, $F(1, 154) = 83.29, p < 01$; however, age did not correlate significantly with any of the dependent variables (all $r$s between -.12 and .11, $ps > .14$).

Materials and Procedure

This study followed a 2 (culture: Euro-Canadian or Japanese) x 2 (condition: self or friend) between-subjects factorial design. All study materials were developed in English and then translated into Japanese by a bilingual research assistant. The Japanese materials were then reviewed by Dr. Keiko Ishii to ensure that they were equivalent to the English materials.
This study involved two phases: a decision phase and an information search phase. The entire study was administered on computer using MediaLab (Jarvis, 2008). Upon arrival to the laboratory, participants were seated in front of a desktop computer in a private cubicle. After completing a consent form, all participants were informed that a fictitious marketing company from Toronto (Tokyo), Mobile Life Media Company, was conducting research on young people’s movie preferences in conjunction with Queen’s (Hokkaido) University. Participants were then randomly assigned to either the self or friend condition.

For the decision phase, participants were told that they would indicate their own (self condition) or their friend’s (friend condition) movie preferences by selecting a movie that they or their friend would like to see, respectively. All participants were informed that they would soon read two short descriptions of the movies that they had to choose from. They were also told that, although both films were scheduled to be released next month, neither of them had yet been advertised to the public.

Prior to receiving the instructions for the decision phase, participants in the friend condition were informed that past research had shown that survey responses were more meaningful and more accurate when respondents imagined themselves making a decision for one of their friends (Hoshino-Browne et al., 2005), and so after reading through the movie descriptions, they would choose the movie that they thought their friend would like to see. Also, after receiving the instructions for the decision phase, participants in this condition were instructed to think of a friend whose movie preferences they knew very well. To ensure that participants had a friend in mind before proceeding, they were instructed to enter their friend’s name and to rate, using an 8-point scale, how close they
were to their friend (1 = not close at all to 8 = extremely close) and how well they knew their friend’s movie preferences (1 = not well at all to 8 = extremely well). See Appendices A and B for the decision phase instructions for the self and friend condition, respectively.

Next, all participants were presented with the plot summaries of two fictitious action movies entitled “The Passengers” and “Identity.” The plot of “The Passengers” was loosely based on the movie “Runaway Train” released in 1985, and “Identity” was based on the movie “North by Northwest” released in 1959 (see Appendix C for plot summaries). The movie summaries were presented on the screen at the same time, and the position in which they appeared (i.e., top or bottom) was counterbalanced. After participants examined the summaries, participants were informed that, in appreciation of their participation, they (self condition) or their friend (friend condition) would receive a free pass to the see the movie that they select when it opens in theatres. Participants then entered the name of the person for whom the movie pass would be for (i.e., their name or their friend’s name) so that, supposedly, this name could be printed on the pass at the end of the experiment. To bolster the cover story, participants were told that they or their friend would have to present some form of photo identification along with the movie pass for it to be valid for use. Then, participants selected the movie that they or their friend would like to see and provided three reasons for their decision.

After making their decision, participants responded to the question “How committed are you to your decision?” using an 8-point scale (1 = not committed at all to 8 = extremely committed) and then completed the information search phase (see
Appendix D for instructions). Participants were then informed that film critics and movie experts had watched and critiqued the movies that they had just chosen from, and that for the next part of the study they would have the opportunity to read some of these reviews. Participants were then presented with a list of 12 movie review summaries (see Appendix E for the list of reviews). Each summary was one sentence long and clearly pertained to either “The Passengers” or “Identity.” Six of the review summaries were confirmatory (3 pro-choice and 3 anti-alternative), and six were disconfirmatory (3 anti-choice and 3 pro-alternative). Three versions of the list were created. Each version presented the summaries in a different random order and was presented to an equal number of participants. Participants were instructed to read through the list of review summaries and to select those reviews that they wanted to read in their entirety. They were told that they could read up to six reviews and that each review was approximately one quarter of a page long. Ostensibly, the reviews that participants selected would be retrieved for them by the computer. During the review selection process, participants were reminded that enough time remained in the study for them to read six reviews. After participants submitted their review selections, they completed a series of demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, major, and year in school), and the study was terminated. Participants were then debriefed, thanked, and dismissed.

3 For exploratory purposes only, participants in Study 1 and 2 also completed a series of items designed to assess their postdecisional attitudes toward their selected movie. These items were completed following the decision phase and prior to the information search phase. Unfortunately, the results produced by these items were not consistent across both studies and thus were difficult to interpret. Also, only the elaboration item (i.e., “How carefully have you thought about the movie descriptions that you read?”) was found to correlate with the main dependent variables of Study 2, but this only was true for participants in particular conditions. That is, elaboration correlated positively with the proportion of confirmatory reviews that Euro-Canadians in the self condition selected, \( r(26) = .38, p = .04 \), and did so also with the proportion of choice relevant confirmatory reviews that Japanese in the friend condition selected, \( r(21) = .45, p = .03 \). Because these items did not produce any reliable or meaningful results, I will not discuss them further.
Results

Preliminary Analyses

Closeness and knowledge of movie preferences ratings. Among participants in the friend condition, Euro-Canadians ($M = 7.44, SD = 0.81$) and Japanese ($M = 7.11, SD = 0.90$) were equivalent in terms of how close they considered themselves to be to their friend, $F(1, 74) = 2.75, p = .10$, although Euro-Canadians ($M = 6.76, SD = 0.83$) indicated that they knew their friend’s movie preferences better than did Japanese ($M = 5.43, SD = 1.04$), $F(1, 74) = 38.40, p < .01$.

Choice of movie. Table 1 depicts the number of participants in each condition who selected “The Passengers” and “Identity.” A chi-square test of independence indicated that these frequencies did not differ from one another, $\chi^2 (3) = 2.00, p = .57$, suggesting that the movies were equally popular among both culture groups regardless of condition.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>The Passengers</th>
<th>Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euro-Canadian</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euro-Canadian</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of reviews selected. Overall, Euro-Canadians ($M = 5.41, SD = 1.01$) chose to read slightly fewer reviews than did Japanese ($M = 5.68, SD = 0.70$), albeit this difference was marginal, $F(1, 154) = 3.46, p = .07$. With regards to the number of choice relevant reviews that participants selected (i.e., reviews that concerned participants’ chosen movie regardless of valence), no cultural differences emerged (Euro-Canadian $M = 2.90, SD = 0.80$; Japanese $M = 3.03, SD = 0.72$), $F(1, 154) = 1.04, p = .31$.

Main Analyses

Confirmation bias as revealed by the proportion of confirmatory reviews participants selected. To recall, I hypothesized that Euro-Canadians in the self condition would select more confirmatory and less disconfirmatory reviews than would Japanese in this condition, whereas Japanese in the friend condition would select more confirmatory and less disconfirmatory reviews than would Euro-Canadians in this condition. Because Euro-Canadians selected slightly fewer reviews than did Japanese, I elected to test my hypotheses using the proportion of confirmatory reviews participant selected. To compute this proportion, I divided the total number of confirmatory reviews (i.e., pro-choice and anti-alternative reviews) that participants selected by the total number of reviews that they selected. I then entered this proportion into an ANOVA with culture (Euro-Canadian or Japanese) and condition (self or friend) as between-subjects factors. When I included participants’ chosen movie as a factor in this analysis, only a main effect involving participants’ chosen movie emerged, $F(1, 148) = 18.68, p < .01$. Participants who chose “Identity” ($M = .58, SD = 0.15$) selected a greater proportion of confirmatory reviews than did those who chose “The Passengers” ($M = .48, SD = 0.14$).
respectively. Also, inconsistent with my hypotheses, the interaction between culture and condition was not significant, $F < 1.0$.

Table 2

*Mean proportion of reviews selected by Euro-Canadians and Japanese in both the self and friend conditions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Proportion of Confirmatory Reviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euro-Canadian</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>.55 (0.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.53 (0.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euro-Canadian</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>.54 (0.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.51 (0.12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Values enclosed in parentheses represent standard deviation

However, a different picture emerged when I compared each of the proportions depicted in Table 2 to 0.5 (which indicates an equal preference for confirmatory and disconfirmatory reviews) using a series of one-sample $t$ tests. As expected, the proportion of confirmatory reviews selected by Euro-Canadians in the self condition differed from 0.5, $t(40) = 2.29$, $p = .03$, indicating the presence of confirmation bias. In contrast, the proportion of confirmatory reviews selected by Japanese in this condition did not differ from 0.5, $t(38) = 1.06$, $p = .30$. Among participants in the friend condition, neither Euro-

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5 To be sure, I also examined the number of confirmatory and disconfirmatory reviews that participants selected in a mixed-design ANOVA with culture and condition as between-subjects factors and review type (confirmatory and disconfirmatory) as the within-subjects factor. A main effect of review type was found, $F(1, 152) = 7.29$, $p = .01$, such that participants chose more confirmatory ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 0.93$) than disconfirmatory ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 0.90$) reviews; however, analogous to the results involving the proportion of confirmatory reviews selected, no other significant effects emerged.
Canadians nor Japanese exhibited a preference for confirmatory information, \( t(40) = 1.44, p = .16 \) and \( t < 1.0 \), respectively.

To be thorough, I also entered the proportion of pro-choice, anti-choice, pro-alternative, and anti-alternative reviews that participants selected into a mixed-design ANOVA with culture and condition as between-subjects factors and review target (choice and alternative) and review valence (pro and anti) as within-subjects factors. This analysis revealed that participants selected more reviews concerning their chosen movie \( (M = .27, SD = 0.05) \) than the alternative movie \( (M = .23, SD = 0.05) \), \( F(1, 152) = 15.25, p < .01 \), and that participants selected more “pro” \( (M = .27, SD = 0.10) \) reviews than they did “anti” reviews \( (M = .23, SD = 0.05) \), \( F(1, 152) = 7.02, p = .01 \). Also, a significant interaction involving target and condition emerged, \( F(1, 152) = 5.86, p = .02 \), such that participants in the self condition selected more “choice” reviews \( (M = .28, SD = 0.05) \) than “alternative” reviews \( (M = .22, SD = 0.05) \), \( t(152) = 3.11, p < .01 \), whereas those in the friend condition selected an equal amount of “choice” \( (M = .26, SD = 0.05) \) and “alternative” \( (M = .24, SD = 0.05) \) reviews, \( t < 1.0 \). No other significant effects involving culture and/or condition emerged.

**Gender effects.** Because the final sample consisted of only 11 male Euro-Canadians, I could not test meaningfully for gender differences by including gender as a factor in the aforementioned ANOVA. Instead, I focused solely on Japanese participants and analyzed the proportion of confirmatory reviews that they selected in a gender by condition ANOVA. This analysis indicated that Japanese men \( (M = .53, SD = 0.15) \) and women \( (M = .50, SD = 0.13) \) did not differ from one another, \( F < 1.0 \). Also, the main effect of condition and the interaction between gender and condition were not significant,
These findings indicate that, among Japanese, men and women did not differ with regards to their information seeking tendencies. In addition, I examined the proportion of confirmatory reviews that women selected in a culture by condition ANOVA. Euro-Canadian women (M = .55, SD = 0.16) and Japanese women (M = .50, SD = 0.13) did not differ, F(1, 94) = 1.52, p = .22. Also, the main effect of condition and the interaction were not significant, Fs < 1.0. Thus, the pattern of means produced by female participants did not deviate from that which was produced by the entire group.

**Commitment.** I entered participants’ responses to the commitment item into a culture by condition ANOVA. I expected that Euro-Canadians in the self condition would be more committed than would Japanese in this condition, whereas Japanese in the friend condition would be more committed than would Euro-Canadians in this condition. Euro-Canadians (M = 5.12, SD = 1.58) and Japanese (M = 5.08, SD = 1.79) were similarly committed to the decisions that they made, F < 1.0. Furthermore, the effect of condition and the interaction between culture and condition were not significant, F(1, 152) = 1.20, p = .28 and F < 1.0, respectively. Also, commitment was not predictive of the proportion of confirmatory reviews that participants selected, β = .05, t(154) = 0.56, p = .58.

**Discussion**

According to the results of the one-sample t tests, Euro-Canadians in the self condition sought out more confirmatory than disconfirmatory information, whereas Japanese in this condition sought out an equivalent amount of confirmatory and disconfirmatory information. Among participants in the friend condition, Euro-Canadians exhibited a slight, non-significant preference for confirmatory information, but Japanese did not exhibit such a trend. Of course, because the ANOVA concerning the proportion
of confirmatory reviews that participants selected did not reveal any between-culture differences or the predicted culture by condition interaction, I cannot conclude that the proportions associated with each of these groups are different from each other. Why did the ANOVA not reveal any significant effects? Perhaps the decision making scenario was not strong or engaging enough to bring about the proposed cultural differences. Indeed, participants were only moderately committed to their decisions, suggesting perhaps that they did not take the decisions that they made seriously. Also, Study 1 did not reveal anything about participants’ underlying motivations and how these motivations influenced their information seeking behaviours. Did Euro-Canadians in the self condition (and possibly those in the friend condition) select more confirmatory than disconfirmatory reviews because they desired to convince themselves of the correctness of their choice? Did Japanese in both conditions consult both types of information because they wanted to form an accurate view of the movie that they selected? In Study 2, I made several modifications to the experimental procedure in order to address these issues and questions.
Chapter 3: Study 2

The purpose of Study 2 was to once again investigate the possibility that Euro-Canadians would confirm personal decisions more than would Japanese, but that Japanese would confirm interpersonal decisions more than would Euro-Canadians. Study 2 employed the same paradigm as did Study 1 with the exception of the following modifications: First, after they made a decision, participants were presented with an authentic-looking, fictitious movie pass on which they wrote their name (self condition) or their friend’s name (friend condition). I reasoned that giving participants a physical representation of their decision would not only increase their awareness of their decision (i.e., the movie that they selected) but also of the consequences associated with their decision (i.e., that they or their friend would soon go to see the movie that they selected). To that same end, participants were also subtly informed that they or their friend would be contacted following the release of the film that they selected to complete a follow-up opinion survey.

Second, during the information search phase, participants were given only 10 minutes to make their review selections and to read those reviews that they had selected. Previous research indicates that confirmation bias is more likely to occur when people’s capacity to process all relevant information is hindered (e.g., Fischer, Jonas, Frey, & Schulz-Hardt, 2005; Smith, Fabrigar, Powell, & Estrada, 2007). In Study 1, participants were limited only in terms of the amount of information that they could process rather than in terms of their ability to process information, and thus they may have been less likely to invoke information processing biases or heuristics (such as confirmation bias) to aid them in doing so. I reasoned that added time pressure would yield greater
confirmation bias among Euro-Canadians and Japanese alike but particularly following personal and interpersonal decisions, respectively.

Third, researchers have suggested that a more sensitive measure of confirmation bias is the amount of time that people spend attending to consonant information and/or avoiding dissonant information (Smith et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2007). This measure allows investigators to determine which of the selected pieces of information people consider to be most crucial. To approximate this suggestion, after they made their review selections, participants rank ordered all of the reviews from least to greatest in terms of how much they wanted to read each review. This task forced participants to distinguish among all of the reviews and allowed me to discern which of the reviews participants considered to be most important, regardless of whether they chose them or not.

Finally, I included a measure of the motivations underlying participants’ information seeking behaviours. This measure included items designed to assess the degree to which participants’ wanted to affirm the correctness of their decision, to convince others of the correctness of their decision, and to form an accurate view of the movie that they selected. These motivations map onto the defense, impression, and accuracy motivations, respectively, as they have been conceptualized by Chaiken and her colleagues in the context of the heuristic systematic model (HSM) of information processing (Chaiken, Giner-Sorolla, & Chen, 1996; Chen & Chaiken, 1999). Based on the reasons why people exhibit confirmation bias, the extent to which people desire to ensure that their decisions are correct (so that in turn they may feel good about themselves) may be the most relevant motivation driving participants’ information search
in Study 2; however, given the results of Study 1, participants’ accuracy and impression management goals may also exert an influence on their information seeking tendencies.

**Hypotheses**

Once again, I expected that Euro-Canadians in the self condition would seek out more confirmatory and less disconfirmatory reviews than would Japanese in this condition, but that Euro-Canadians in the friend condition would seek out less confirmatory and more disconfirmatory reviews than would Japanese in this condition. I made analogous predictions regarding participants’ rankings of the reviews, hypothesizing that Euro-Canadians would give greater priority to confirmatory reviews than would Japanese in the self condition, whereas Euro-Canadians would give less priority to confirmatory reviews than would Japanese in the friend condition.

Concerning commitment, I again suspected that Euro-Canadians in the self condition would be more committed to their decisions than would Japanese in the self condition, but that the opposite would be true for the friend condition. I also predicted that, among participants in the self condition, Euro-Canadians should experience a greater desire to uphold the correctness of their decisions (i.e., experience greater affirm/defense motivation) than should Japanese, whereas among participants in the friend condition, Japanese should experience a greater desire to uphold or defend their decisions than should Euro-Canadians. As I reasoned earlier, because personal and interpersonal decisions implicate aspects of the self that are sanctioned by Western and Japanese culture, Euro-Canadians and Japanese should feel particularly committed to and motivated to ensure that they have made good personal and interpersonal decisions, respectively. Of course, I do not expect that Euro-Canadians making decisions for others
and Japanese making decisions for themselves will not feel committed to and desire to affirm such decisions; rather, I merely expect that their experiences of commitment and affirm/defense motivation will be attenuated in comparison to the experiences of Euro-Canadians and Japanese in the self and friend condition, respectively. Finally because my intent was to explore the extent to which accuracy and impression management motivations influenced participants’ information search, I made no firm predictions regarding cross-cultural differences in the experience of these motivations following personal and interpersonal decisions.

Method

Participants

One hundred and four undergraduate students participated in this study. Two Euro-Canadians and one Japanese were excluded from the sample because they did not follow instructions properly. The final sample consisted of 55 Euro-Canadians (45 women) from Queen’s University in Canada, 32 Japanese (30 women) from Kyoto University, and 14 Japanese (9 women) from Kobe University in Japan. All participants were recruited from university-wide paid participant pools at their respective universities. Euro-Canadians were paid $5.00 CAD and Japanese were paid 500¥ (approximately $5.00 CAD) for participating. Most Euro-Canadian participants were in third or fourth year, whereas most Japanese participants were in first year. All participants were tested individually. The mean age of Euro-Canadian and Japanese participants was 20.4 ($SD = 1.69$) and 18.9 ($SD = 1.09$) years, respectively. This age difference was found to be significant, $F(1, 99) = 27.78, p < .01$; however, age did not correlate significantly with any of the dependent variables (all $r$s between -0.14 and -0.17, $ps > .16$).
Pretest 1

Participants. Twenty Euro-Canadian (13 women) and 20 Japanese (9 women) students from Queen’s University and Kobe University, respectively, participated in a short pretest to determine at least two culturally equivalent movies for use in Study 2. Participants completed the pretest online at their own convenience for a chance to win $25.00 CAD (2500¥).

Procedure. Participants read through the plot summaries of eight different dramatic movies. Each plot summary was approximately 130 words in length. All of the movies that appeared in the pretest were foreign films that had been nominated (winning films were excluded) for an Academy Award® between 2000 and 2005. I selected movies from this category for use in the pretest to ensure that they would be appealing yet relatively unfamiliar to the majority of respondents. The plot summaries were adapted from those found on the International Movie Database website (www.imbd.com), and each movie was given a new, fictitious title. Following each movie, participants responded to the following questions: “How much would you like to see this movie?” “How much does this movie interest you?” “How familiar does the storyline of this movie seem to you?” and “Have you ever seen this movie before?” Participants responded to first three items using an 8-point scale (1 = not at all to 8 = very much), and for the last item, participants indicated “yes” or “no.” Three versions of the pretest were created, each of which presented the plot summaries in a different random order. Once participants read through all eight plot summaries and answered all corresponding questions, the study was terminated.
Results. I computed an index of desirability for each movie by averaging participants’ responses to the questions “How much would you like to see this movie?” and “How much does this movie interest you?” (all rs between .76 and .95, ps < .01). I then examined each composite score using a series of separate independent-samples t tests comparing Euro-Canadians with Japanese. Table 3 depicts Euro-Canadians’ and Japanese’ mean desirability ratings for each movie and the t-values associated with each comparison. All of the movies were rated similarly by both culture groups (i.e., no significant cultural differences were detected). Also, a follow-up Tukey HSD test revealed that no movie was rated significantly more desirable than any other movie. Therefore, to reduce the pool of eligible movies for use in Study 2, I selected two movies that were associated with relatively low mean differences between Euro-Canadians and Japanese and comparably high mean desirability ratings. Based on visual inspection, two films that met this criteria were “Good Boy” (M = 4.45, SD = 1.36) and “The Stars and the Sea” (M = 4.35, SD = 1.60). See Appendix H for the plot summaries. Furthermore, no cultural differences were uncovered for participants’ familiarity ratings of “Good Boy” (Euro-Canadian M = 3.35, SD = 1.27; Japanese M = 3.80, SD = 1.28) and “The Stars and the Sea” (Euro-Canadian M = 3.10, SD = 1.77; Japanese M = 3.77, SD = 1.68), t(38) = 1.16, p = .27 and t(38) = 1.19, p = .24, respectively, and no participants indicated that they had seen these movies before. Although “Voices from the Well” and “Deep Waters” also met my criteria for inclusion, 20% of Euro-Canadians indicated that they had seen “Voices from the Well” before, and Euro-Canadians (M = 4.60, SD = 2.06) were more familiar with “Deep Waters” than were Japanese (M = 2.55, SD = 1.40), t(38) = 3.68, p < .01.
Table 3

*Euro-Canadians and Japanese mean desirability ratings of each movie and associated t-values.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movie</th>
<th>Euro-Canadian</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good Boy</td>
<td>4.68 (1.22)</td>
<td>4.23 (1.49)</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sisters</td>
<td>5.03 (1.36)</td>
<td>4.43 (1.53)</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voices from the Well</td>
<td>4.68 (1.63)</td>
<td>4.40 (1.59)</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Stars and the Sea</td>
<td>4.25 (1.65)</td>
<td>4.45 (1.59)</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Final Days</td>
<td>5.15 (1.32)</td>
<td>4.30 (2.08)</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep Waters</td>
<td>4.58 (1.73)</td>
<td>4.75 (1.36)</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Baron and Brown</td>
<td>4.28 (2.11)</td>
<td>3.55 (2.25)</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Turning Back</td>
<td>4.03 (1.40)</td>
<td>3.88 (1.71)</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Values enclosed in parentheses represent standard deviations.

**Prestest 2**

*Participants.* Additionally, while Study 2 was being administered, 26 Euro-Canadians (25 women) from Queen’s University and 22 Japanese (19 women) from Kyoto (16 participants) and Kobe University participated in a short study to investigate participants’ perceptions of the reviews involved in Study 2. Participants completed the study in the lab and received $5.00 CAD (500¥) for participating.

*Procedure.* To begin, participants read the plot summaries of “Good Boy” and “The Stars and the Sea” and then rated how appealing they found each film to be using an 8-point scale (*1 = not appealing at all* to *8 = extremely appealing*). Next, participants were presented with a list of 12 movie review summaries (see Appendix L for the list of reviews). This list was identical to that which was given to participants in the main study. Participants were told to select those reviews that they wanted to read in their entirety (participants could choose as few or as many of the reviews as they would like). After
doing so, participants were given the same list or reviews and instructed to rate each review in terms of how positive or negative they perceived it to be using a 9-point scale (-4 = extremely negative to 4 = extremely positive, with “0” representing neutral). After completing this task and a number of other measures not germane to the focus of the present study, the study was terminated.

**Results.** Were positive and negative reviews regarded to be comparably positive and negative, respectively, by Euro-Canadians and Japanese? I compared Euro-Canadian and Japanese participants’ ratings of each of the reviews using separate independent-samples *t* tests. Table 4 depicts Euro-Canadians and Japanese mean ratings of each review and the *t*-values associated with each comparison. Based on an alpha level of .05, all reviews were rated equivalently by members of both culture groups with the exception of two reviews (both of which pertained to “The Stars and the Sea”): “Intelligent and captivating, this movie is one of the most memorable films of the year” and “A superbly crafted drama, with excellent performances, cinematography, and sophistication.” Euro-Canadians rated both of these reviews more positively than did Japanese. However, one must exercise caution when interpreting these results because the chances of finding a significant difference drastically increases as the number of comparisons that one makes also increases. Based on the Bonferroni correction method, only *p*-values less than .01 should be deemed significant, and none of the *p*-values associated with cultural comparisons described above meet this criteria. It is also noteworthy that an equal proportion of Euro-Canadians and Japanese selected the “intelligent” review (Euro-Canadian 34.6%; Japanese 40.9%), $\chi^2 (1) = 0.20, p = .65$, and the “superbly crafted” review (Euro-Canadian 42.3%; Japanese 22.7%), $\chi^2 (1) = 2.06, p = .15$. In fact, a series of
chi-square tests of independence indicated that an equal proportion of Euro-Canadians and Japanese involved in Pretest 2 selected each of the reviews ($\chi^2$s between 0.01 and 2.80, $ps > .09$). In conclusion, Euro-Canadians and Japanese evaluated the reviews involved in Study 2 comparably.

Table 4

*Euro-Canadians and Japanese mean ratings of each review and associated t-values.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review</th>
<th>Euro-Canadian</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.12 (0.71)</td>
<td>3.36 (0.95)</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.96 (1.67)</td>
<td>3.41 (0.91)</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.46 (1.30)</td>
<td>2.50 (1.26)</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-1.96 (1.25)</td>
<td>-1.91 (1.51)</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-2.77 (1.58)</td>
<td>-2.77 (1.58)</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-2.08 (1.50)</td>
<td>-2.08 (1.50)</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.38 (0.90)</td>
<td>2.45 (1.34)</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.96 (0.82)</td>
<td>3.00 (1.88)</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.69 (0.55)</td>
<td>2.77 (1.80)</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-3.15 (0.78)</td>
<td>-2.64 (1.56)</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>-2.12 (1.14)</td>
<td>-1.64 (1.05)</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>-3.69 (0.88)</td>
<td>-3.64 (0.85)</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Values enclosed in parentheses represent standard deviations. Each number that appears in the “Review” column corresponds with the similarly numbered review found in Appendix L.

*Materials and Procedure*

This study followed a 2 (culture: Euro-Canadian or Japanese) x 2 (condition: self or friend) between-subjects factorial design. Once again, all study materials were developed in English and then translated into Japanese by a bilingual research assistant. Dr. Keiko Ishii then reviewed the Japanese materials to ensure that they were equivalent to the English materials.
This study involved a decision phase and an information search phase. All key study instructions and questions were presented to participants via paper questionnaires. Upon arrival to the laboratory, participants were seated in a private cubicle and given a consent form. The consent form informed participants that a fictitious marketing company from Toronto (Osaka), Mobile Life Media Company, was conducting research on young people’s movie preferences in conjunction with Queen’s (Kyoto or Kobe) University. After signing the consent form, participants were then randomly assigned to either the self or friend condition.

The decision phase procedure of Study 2 closely mirrored that of Study 1. At the start of the decision phase, all participants were told that they would soon read through the descriptions of two soon-to-be-released films. Participants in the self condition were then informed that, after reading through the movie descriptions, they would choose the movie that they thought was best and, in appreciation of their participation, would receive a free pass to see their chosen movie. In contrast, participants in the friend condition were informed that past research had shown that survey responses were more meaningful and more accurate when respondents imagined themselves making a decision for one of their friends (Hoshino-Browne et al., 2005), and so after reading through the movie descriptions, they would choose the movie that they thought their friend would like the best. As such, participants in the friend condition were informed that, in appreciation of their participation, their friend would receive a free pass to see the movie that they selected. Similar to Study 1, participants in the friend condition were then instructed to think of a friend whose movie preferences they knew very well, to write down their friend’s name, and to rate using an 8-point scale how close they were to their friend (1 =
not close at all to 8 = extremely close) and how well they knew their friend’s movie preferences (1 = not well at all to 8 = extremely well). See Appendices F and G for the decision phase instructions for the self and friend condition, respectively.

Next, participants were presented with the movie descriptions of “Good Boy” and “The Stars and the Sea” (see Appendix H). The order in which the movie descriptions appeared on the page was counterbalanced. After reading through the descriptions, participants were given a separate piece of paper on which they were to make their decision. After indicating which movie they thought was best, participants were presented with a fictitious movie pass (see Appendix I). Participants in the self condition were instructed by the experimenter to write their name on the “Ticket Holder” line, whereas participants in the friend condition were instructed to write their friend’s name on the “Ticket Holder” line and their name on the “Compliments of” line. After filling out the movie pass, participants were told that, because the pass had a monetary value, they were required to fill out a receipt. The purpose of filling out the receipt was to emphasize the decision that participants had just made. To complete the receipt, participants had to write down the serial number that appeared on their pass, the name that they had entered on the ticket holder line, and beside the title of each movie, check off whether the movie had been “selected” or “not selected.” Also, a note from Mobile Life Media Company appeared at the bottom of the receipt, indicating that the ticket holder might be contacted three weeks following the release of the selected movie to complete a short, follow-up survey (see Appendix J for movie pass receipt). Next, participants responded to the question “How committed are you to your decision?” using an 8-point scale (1 = not committed at all to 8 = extremely committed).
After making their decision and receiving a “movie pass,” participants were provided with the instructions for the information search phase (see Appendix K for instructions). Participants were informed that they would soon be presented with a list of 12 movie review summaries concerning the movies that they had just chosen from. In contrast to Study 1, participants were told that they could read as few or as many of the reviews as they would like, albeit each review was almost a page long and they had only 10 minutes to select the reviews that they wanted to read and to read those that they had selected. After receiving these instructions, participants were given the list of movie review summaries by the experimenter (see Appendix L). Each summary was one sentence long and clearly pertained to either “Good Boy” or “The Stars and the Sea.” Six of the review summaries were confirmatory (3 pro-choice and 3 anti-alternative) and six were disconfirmatory (3 anti-choice and 3 pro-alternative). Two versions of the list were created. Each version presented the summaries in a different random order and was presented to an equal number of participants. The experimenter then started a timer that counted down from 10 minutes and was clearly visible to participants. Participants were left alone to make their review selections.

Once participants selected the reviews that they wanted to read, the experimenter was notified, and the timer was stopped. While the experimenter ostensibly compiled participants’ chosen reviews, participants completed a questionnaire booklet involving two tasks. First, participants were provided with the same list of reviews that they had just selected from and were instructed to rank all of the reviews from 1 to 12, with 1 representing the review that they wanted to read the most and 12 representing the review that they wanted to read the least (see Appendix M). Second, participants responded to a
series of items designed to measure the motivations that influenced their choice of reviews. All of the items appear in Appendix N. Two of the items assessed affirm/defense motivation, another two items measured accuracy motivation, and one item captured impression motivation. An additional item assessed how bothered participants would be if their choice of movie turned out to be a bad one. Participants responded to these questions using a separate 8-point response scale (1 = not at all to 8 = very much).

After completing these tasks, participants answered some demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, major, year in school, and number of psychology courses taken), and indicated how familiar they found each of the films to be (1 = not at all to 8 = very much) and whether or not they had seen “Good Boy” or “The Stars and the Sea” before. Then, the study was terminated, and participants were debriefed, thanked, and dismissed.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Closeness and knowledge of movie preferences ratings. Identical to the results obtained in Study 1, Euro-Canadians ($M = 7.37, SD = 0.69$) and Japanese ($M = 7.09, SD = 0.73$) in the friend condition were equal to each other in terms of how close they felt to their friend, $F(1, 48) = 1.83, p = .18$; however, Euro-Canadians ($M = 6.63, SD = 1.01$) indicated that they were more knowledgeable about their friend’s movie preferences than were Japanese ($M = 5.17, SD = 1.47$), $F(1, 48) = 17.17, p < .01$.

Choice of movie. Table 5 indicates how many participants in each condition selected “Good Boy” and “The Stars and the Sea.” According to a chi-square test of independence, the frequency with which participants selected each movie did not vary across conditions, $\chi^2 (3) = 3.78, p = .29$. 

35
Table 5

*Number of participants who selected “Good Boy and “The Stars and the Sea”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Good Boy</th>
<th>The Stars and the Sea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euro-Canadian</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euro-Canadian</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Number of reviews selected.* Euro-Canadians ($M = 3.80, SD = 1.01$) and Japanese ($M = 4.22, SD = 1.91$) selected an equal number of reviews, $F(1, 99) = 1.98, p = .16$, albeit the pattern of means obtained for this analysis closely resembled the cultural difference that was obtained in Study 1. For choice relevant reviews, no cultural differences emerged, $F < 1.0$ (Euro-Canadian $M = 2.15, SD = 0.70$; Japanese $M = 2.33, SD = 1.33$).

*Familiarity ratings.* “Good Boy” ($M = 4.57, SD = 2.01$) was rated more familiar than was “The Stars and the Sea” ($M = 4.04, SD = 2.08$), $F(1, 99) = 8.80, p < .01$; however, this effect did not interact with culture, $F < 1.0$. In the end, all participants indicated that they had never seen either “Good Boy” or “The Stars and the Sea” before.

**Main Analyses**

*Confirmation bias as revealed by the proportion of confirmatory reviews participants selected.* I expected that Euro-Canadians would exhibit greater confirmation bias than would Japanese in the self condition, but that Japanese would exhibit greater
confirmation bias than would Euro-Canadians in the friend condition. For the sake of consistency, I tested my hypotheses using the proportion of confirmatory reviews that participants selected. I entered this proportion into a culture (Euro-Canadian or Japanese) by condition (self or friend) between-subjects ANOVA. The mean proportions generated by this analysis are depicted in Table 6. Participants in the friend condition ($M = .54, SD = 0.15$) selected a greater proportion of confirmatory reviews than did those in the self condition ($M = .45, SD = 0.17$), $F(1, 97) = 7.01, p = .01$; however, the effect of culture and the interaction between culture and condition did not reach significance, $Fs < 1.0$.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Proportion of Confirmatory Reviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euro-Canadian</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>.46 (0.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>.45 (0.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euro-Canadian</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>.55 (0.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>.53 (0.19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Values enclosed in parentheses represent standard deviations.

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6 I also included participants’ chosen movie (“Good Boy” or “The Stars and the Sea”) as a factor in the ANOVA described here. A marginal main effect of participants’ choice emerged, $F(1, 93) = 3.54, p = .06$, such that those who selected “Good Boy” ($M = 0.54, SD = 0.13$) chose more confirmatory reviews than did those who selected “The Stars and the Sea” ($M = 0.46, SD = 0.19$). No other effects were significance.

7 When I examined the number of confirmatory and disconfirmatory reviews that participants selected in a mixed-design ANOVA with culture and condition as between-subjects factors and review type (confirmatory and disconfirmatory) as the within-subjects factor, a significant interaction between condition and review type emerged, $F(1, 97) = 5.71, p = .02$. Follow-up tests revealed that participants in the friend condition ($M = 2.23, SD = 0.91$) selected more confirmatory reviews than did those in the self condition ($M = 1.77, SD = 0.93$), $t(97) = 2.95, p < .01$, although these groups did not differ with regards to the number of disconfirmatory reviews that they selected, $t < 1.0$. No other significant effects occurred.
Surprisingly, when I compared each of the proportions to 0.5 using separate one-sample t tests, Euro-Canadians in the friend condition were found to exhibit confirmation bias, $t(26) = 2.13, p = .04$, whereas those in the self condition were not, $t(27) = 1.43, p = .17$. Similar to Study 1, Japanese in both the self and friend condition exhibited a relatively balanced search, $t(22) = 1.33, p = .20$ and $t < 1.0$, respectively. Furthermore, an independent-samples t test revealed that Euro-Canadians in the friend condition selected a greater proportion of confirmatory reviews than did those in the self condition, $t(97) = 2.03, p = .05$, but that Japanese in the self and friend condition did not differ from each other, $t(97) = 1.65, p = .10$.

Similar to Study 1, I also examined the proportion of pro-choice, anti-choice, pro-alternative, and anti-alternative reviews that participants selected in a mixed-design ANOVA with culture and condition as between-subjects factors and review target (choice and alternative) and review valence (pro and anti) as within-subjects factors. A main effect of review target was uncovered, $F(1, 97) = 10.14, p < .01$, such that participants selected more reviews concerning their choice ($M = .28, SD = 0.09$) than the alternative ($M = .22, SD = 0.09$). Also, a main effect of review valence was found, $F(1, 97) = 7.16, p = .01$, such that participants selected more “pro” reviews ($M = .28, SD = 0.12$) than they did “anti” reviews ($M = .22, SD = 0.12$). However, these main effects were qualified by a three-way interaction involving target, valence, and condition, $F(1, 97) = 7.01, p = .01$. Concerning “pro” reviews, across both conditions, participants selected more pro-choice reviews ($M = .31, SD = 0.16$) than they did pro-alternative reviews ($M = .25, SD = 0.18$), $F(1, 97) = 5.27, p = .02$. In contrast, concerning “anti” reviews, a significant interaction involving condition and target, $F(1, 97) = 6.89, p = .01$, indicating that participants in the
self condition selected more anti-choice \((M = .28, SD = 0.19)\) and fewer anti-alternative \((M = .15, SD = 0.14)\) reviews than did those in the friend condition \((anti-choice M = .22, SD = 0.16; \text{anti-alternative } M = .22, SD = 0.19)\), \(t(97) = 1.90, p = .06\), and \(t(97) = 1.99, p = .05\), respectively. Thus, the main effect of condition uncovered by the ANOVA concerning the proportion of confirmatory reviews that participants selected was driven mainly by the number of anti-choice and anti-alternative reviews that they selected.  

Confirmation bias as revealed by participants’ mean rankings of confirmatory reviews. Participants also ranked all of the reviews from 1 to 12, with 1 representing the review that appealed to them the most and 12 representing the review that appealed to them the least. As such, I expected that Euro-Canadians in the self condition would assign lower rankings to confirmatory reviews than would Japanese in this condition, whereas Japanese in the friend condition would assign lower rankings to confirmatory reviews than would Euro-Canadians in this condition. To examine this hypothesis, I averaged participants’ rankings of all of the reviews that were in support of their chosen movie (regardless of whether or not they had been selected) and submitted this average into an ANOVA with culture and condition as between-subjects factors.  

A main effect of culture emerged, \(F(1, 97) = 6.09, p = .02\), such that Euro-Canadians \((M = 6.20, SD = 0.97)\) gave higher priority to those reviews that confirmed their decision than did Japanese. I also included participants’ chosen movie as a factor in the analysis reported here. In doing so, a main effect of participants’ decision emerged, such that those who selected “Good Boy” \((M = 6.02, SD = 0.20)\) wanted to read confirmatory reviews more than did those who selected “The Stars and the Sea” \((M = 6.83, SD = 0.93)\), \(F(1, 93) = 18.78, p < .01\). Also the interaction between culture and participants’ decision was significant, \(F(1, 93) = 6.93, p = .01\). Japanese who chose “Good Boy” \((M = 5.95, SD = 0.72)\) wanted to read confirmatory reviews more than did those who chose “The Stars and the Sea” \((M = 7.19, SD = 0.78)\), \(t(93) = 4.77, p < .01\); however, no differences were detected between Euro-Canadians who chose “Good Boy” \((M = 6.07, SD = 0.97)\) and those who chose “The Stars and the Sea” \((M = 6.39, SD = 0.94)\), \(t(93) = 1.37, p = .17\).
Japanese ($M = 6.68, SD = 0.97$). However, the effect of condition and the interaction between culture and condition were not significant, $Fs < 1.0$.

**Commitment.** I examined participants’ responses to the commitment item using a culture by condition ANOVA. Recall that I expected that Euro-Canadians would feel more committed than would Japanese in the self condition, whereas Japanese would feel more committed than would Euro-Canadians in the friend condition. A main effect of condition emerged, $F(1, 97) = 5.47, p = .02$, which was further qualified by the interaction between culture and condition, $F(1, 97) = 7.05, p = .01$. Follow-up tests revealed that, contrary to my predictions, Euro-Canadians in the self condition ($M = 5.04, SD = 1.73$) were less committed than were Japanese in the self condition ($M = 6.00, SD = 1.28$), $t(97) = 2.49, p = .01$, but that Japanese ($M = 5.91, SD = 1.31$) and Euro-Canadians ($M = 6.41, SD = 1.05$) in the friend condition did not differ from each other, $t(97) = 1.27, p = .21$. Also, Euro-Canadians in the friend condition were more committed than were those in the self condition, $t(97) = 3.70, p < .01$, but Japanese in the self condition did not differ from those in the friend condition, $t < 1.0$. I also examined whether or not commitment predicted participant’s information search. Similar to Study 1, two separate regression analyses revealed that commitment was not a significant predictor of the proportion of confirmatory reviews that participants selected, nor of their mean rankings of confirmatory reviews, $\beta = .02, t(99) = 0.20, p = .85$, and $\beta = .14, t(99) = 1.37, p = .18$, respectively.

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9 I tested the main effects of culture and condition non-parametrically using two separate Mann-Whitney U tests. I uncovered results identical to those uncovered by the ANOVA. Euro-Canadians assigned lower rankings to confirmatory reviews than did Japanese ($U = 868.00, p = .01$), and participants in the self condition did not differ in their rankings from those in the friend condition ($U = 1203.00, p = .62$).
**Affirm/Defense motivation.** I expected that, among participants in the self condition, Euro-Canadians would experience greater defense motivation than would Japanese; however, among participants in the friend condition, I expected that Japanese would experience more defense motivation than would Euro-Canadians. I averaged participants’ responses to the questions “How much did you want to convince yourself that the movie you selected was the best movie to select?” and “How motivated were you to consider only information that discussed the positive qualities of the movie that you chose?”, \( r(99) = .40, p < .01 \), and entered this average into a culture by condition ANOVA. A marginal effect of condition emerged, such that participants in the friend condition \( (M = 4.93, SD = 1.59) \) wanted to convince themselves of the superiority of their decision more than did those in the self condition \( (M = 4.34, SD = 1.63) \), \( F(1, 97) = 3.20, p = .07 \). However, the main effect of culture and the interaction between culture and condition were not significant, \( Fs < 1.0 \).

Just as I did with commitment, I examined whether or not affirm/defense motivation predicted participants’ information search. I discovered that this motivation predicted participants’ mean rankings of confirmatory reviews, \( \beta = -.23, t(99) = -2.34, p = .02 \), but not the proportion of confirmatory reviews that they selected, \( \beta = .11, t(99) = 1.13, p = .26 \). Thus, as participants’ experience of defense motivation increased, so too did their overall desire to read confirmatory reviews. To explore the relationship between affirm/defense motivation and participants’ rankings further, I also conducted a moderated (self versus friend) mediation analysis to examine whether or not defense motivation mediated the relationship between culture and participants’ mean rankings of confirmatory reviews. Culture was found to be a marginal predictor of participants’ mean
rankings for the self condition, $\beta = .26, t(49) = 1.88, p = .07$, but not for the friend condition, $\beta = .23, t(48) = 1.60, p = .12$. Japanese in the self condition were less inclined to read confirmatory review than were Euro-Canadians in this condition; that is, Japanese applied higher-value rankings to confirmatory reviews than did Euro-Canadians. However, culture did not predict the experience of defense motivation for the self condition, $\beta = .08, t(49) = 0.53, p = .60$, and so I did not investigate this model further. I did not perform this same mediation analysis with the proportion of confirmatory reviews that participants selected because the ANOVA that I reported earlier indicated that culture did not produce any significant differences involving this variable.

**Impression motivation.** To explore participants’ experience of impression motivation, I submitted participants’ responses to the item “How much did you want to show others that the movie that you chose was the best movie to choose?” into a culture by condition ANOVA. Participants in the friend condition ($M = 4.74, SD = 1.70$) were more interested in convincing others of the correctness of their decision than were those in the self condition ($M = 3.51, SD = 1.85$), $F(1, 97) = 11.38, p = .01$; however, the effect of culture and the interaction between culture and condition were not significant, $F < 1.0$ and $F(1, 97) = 1.10, p = .30$, respectively. Did participants’ experience of impression motivation predict their information seeking strategies? Unfortunately, regression analyses revealed that impression motivation did not predict the proportion of confirmatory reviews that participants selected, nor their mean rankings of confirmatory reviews, $\beta = .09, t(99) = 0.93, p = .36$, and $\beta = -.08, t(99) = -0.84, p = .40$, respectively.

**Accuracy motivation.** Based on the results of Study 1 and those of Study 2 thus far, contrary to my original predictions, Japanese may be more concerned with being
accurate than are Euro-Canadians. To examine this supposition, I averaged participants’ responses to the questions “How much did you want to form an accurate view of the movie that you chose?” and “How motivated were you to consider both favourable and unfavourable information about the movie that you selected?”, $r(99) = .36, p < .01$, and entered this composite score into a culture by condition ANOVA. Contrary to my observations, Euro-Canadians ($M = 6.15, SD = 1.33$) indicated that they were more motivated to form an accurate impression of their selected movie than were Japanese ($M = 5.47, SD = 1.32$), $F(1, 97) = 6.52, p = .01$. No other significant effects were uncovered, $Fs < 1.0$. Also, similar to impression motivation, accuracy was not predictive of the proportion of confirmatory reviews that participants selected, nor was it predictive of their rankings of confirmatory reviews, $\beta = -.01, t(99) = -0.11, p = .91$, and $\beta = .03, t(99) = 0.31, p = .76$, respectively.

**Consequences associated with decision.** Participants were also asked how bothered they would be if their decision turned out to be a bad decision. Euro-Canadians ($M = 4.04, SD = 1.94$) indicated that they would be less disappointed if their choice of movie turned out to be a bad choice than did Japanese ($M = 5.30, SD = 1.90$), $F(1, 97) = 13.69, p < .01$. Also, participants in the friend condition ($M = 5.54, SD = 1.57$) indicated that they would be more bothered by a bad decision than did those in the self condition ($M = 3.71, SD = 2.00$), $F(1, 97) = 29.83, p < .01$. The interaction between culture and condition, however, did not reach significance, $F(1, 97) = 0.91, p = .34$.

**Discussion**

The results of Study 2 revealed that, contrary to my hypotheses and the results of Study 1, Euro-Canadians in the friend condition exhibited confirmation bias, whereas
those in the self condition did not. In fact, Euro-Canadians in the self condition were slightly more interested in disconfirmatory reviews than confirmatory reviews, albeit this trend did not quite reach significance. In contrast, Japanese in both conditions selected a relatively equal number of confirmatory and disconfirmatory reviews. Unfortunately, similar to Study 1, Study 2 did not reveal any between-culture differences concerning the proportion of confirmatory reviews that participants selected; therefore, I cannot conclude that the members of one culture group exhibited more or less confirmation bias than did the members of the other culture group. However, a different picture emerged when I examined participants’ responses to the review ranking task. Indeed, this measure revealed that, regardless of whether participants made a decision for themselves or their friend, Euro-Canadians were more interested in reading confirmatory reviews than were Japanese. Although this finding is contrary to my hypotheses, it is consistent with the implications of other research concerning further cross-cultural differences in the need for consistency (e.g., Heine & Lehman, 1999) and self-enhancement (e.g., Heine et al., 1999).

In Study 2 I also explored participants’ sense of commitment and motivational concerns following their decisions. The commitment question was the only dependent variable in Study 2 that revealed a significant culture by condition interaction, but when I explored this interaction further, I discovered that Japanese were more committed than were Euro-Canadians in the self condition, whereas Euro-Canadians and Japanese were equally committed in the friend condition. Also, contrary to previous research (e.g., Hart et al., 2009), commitment was not related to participants’ preferences for confirmatory and disconfirmatory information. Regarding participants’ information processing goals,
participants in the friend condition were more interested in convincing themselves of the correctness of their decision than were those in the self condition; however, contrary to my expectations, this effect was not qualified by culture. Similarly, participants in the friend condition were more concerned with convincing others of the correctness of their decision than were those in the self condition. Perhaps, then, the decisions that participants made for their friends involved “higher-stakes” than those that they made for themselves, but based on Markus and Kitayama’s (1991) conceptualization of the independent and interdependent self common among Westerners and Japanese, respectively, I would have anticipated that decisions made for others would be of greater risk for Japanese than for Euro-Canadians. Also, although participants’ experience of affirm/defense motivation positively predicted their desire to read confirmatory reviews, this motivation did not account for the relationship between culture and participants’ interest in reading such reviews. Finally, Euro-Canadians indicated that they were more concerned with accuracy than were Japanese.
Chapter 4: General Discussion

Summary of Findings

The purpose of the present research was to examine cross-cultural differences in the degree to which people seek out supportive information and avoid unsupportive information after they have made a decision. I hypothesized that, following a decision that participants made for themselves, Euro-Canadians would seek out more confirmatory information than would Japanese, whereas following a decision that participants made for their friend, Japanese would seek out more confirmatory information than would Euro-Canadians. Across two studies, no between-culture differences nor interactions involving culture were found; therefore, my findings speak to cultural differences in confirmation bias in absolute rather than relative terms—whether Euro-Canadians and Japanese in the self and friend conditions exhibited confirmation bias or not.

In Study 1, based on the results of the one-sample t tests, Euro-Canadians in the self condition exhibited a preference for confirmatory information, whereas Japanese in this condition did not. Although these results are not indicative of any between-culture differences, they are consistent with research demonstrating the traditional confirmation bias effect among Westerners (e.g., Frey, 1986; Jonas et al., 2001) and other research showing that Westerners are more likely than are Japanese to increase in their liking of items that they choose for themselves (Heine & Lehman, 1997; Hoshino-Browne et al., 2005). I reasoned that Westerners should feel particularly motivated to confirm personal decisions because making a good personal decision demonstrates that one is an adequate member of a culture that values independence (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Given other research showing that Japanese are more likely than are Westerners to improve in their
evaluations of items that they choose for others (Hoshino-Browne et al.), and the emphasis that Japanese place on demonstrating their abilities as competent and considerate group members (Markus & Kitayama), I anticipated that Japanese would seek to confirm a decision that they made for their friend more than would Euro-Canadians. However, contrary to my predictions, Japanese in the friend condition of Study 1 did not show a preference for confirmatory information, whereas Euro-Canadians showed a slight, albeit non-significant, preference for such information. Surprisingly, this pattern of findings was maintained in Study 2, with the exception of Euro-Canadians in the self condition. That is, the results of the one-sample t tests (which, once again, cannot attest to any between-culture differences) revealed that Japanese continued to seek out an equivalent amount of supportive and unsupportive information across both conditions, whereas Euro-Canadians in the friend condition exhibited confirmation bias. In contrast to my predictions and the results of Study 1, Euro-Canadians in the self condition of Study 2 exhibited a non-significant preference for disconfirmatory information.

In contrast, the results concerning participants’ mean rankings of confirmatory reviews in Study 2 indicated that, regardless of whether participants made a decision for themselves or their friend, Euro-Canadians assigned higher priority to confirmatory reviews than did Japanese. The review ranking task was designed to be a more sensitive measure of participants’ information seeking tendencies, and it thus may provide a more valid depiction of cultural differences in postdecisional confirmation bias than may participants’ review selections. Certainly, the results obtained by this measure are consistent with the notion that Japanese are less inclined to confirm their decisions than are Westerners because they are less concerned with maintaining a sense of consistency.
(Heine & Lehman, 1997; Kashima et al., 1992) and enhancing their views of themselves than are Westerners (Heine et al., 1999). However, based on other previous research (e.g., Hoshino-Brown et al., 2005; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), one might expect that this cultural difference would vary according to who participants’ decisions concerned, but the ranking measure did not capture this effect. Further research is required, then, to determine the robustness this cultural main effect.

**Gender Effects**

In Study 1 culture was confounded with gender; that is, whereas the Euro-Canadian group consisted of mostly women, the Japanese group consisted of mostly men. A series of ANOVAs indicated that Japanese men and women did not differ from each other in terms of their postdecisional information search, and that female participants did not produce results that varied from those produced by the entire sample. These results suggest that, among participants in Study 1, men were not more or less likely to seek out confirmatory information than were women. In Study 2, the majority of participants were female and this was true of both culture groups. It is noteworthy, then, that Japanese participants in this study (which consisted mostly of women) did not respond differently from those involved in Study 1 (which consisted mostly of men), further corroborating the evidence garnered by Study 1 suggesting that gender does not influence people’s postdecisional information seeking. Of course, as I just discussed, Euro-Canadians behaved inconsistently across Studies 1 and 2; however, this difference cannot be attributed to gender because the majority of participants in both Euro-Canadian samples were female.
Discussion of Current Findings in Relation to Previous Research

Why did Euro-Canadians exhibit confirmation bias following a decision that they made for their friend? Previous research has documented the occurrence of confirmation bias among Westerners following interpersonal decisions. For example, Jonas et al. (2005) discovered that German participants who made a binding decision for a newly acquainted partner exhibited greater confirmation bias than did those who made a decision for themselves. Interestingly, when participants who made a binding decision did not have to personally inform their partner of their choice, they exhibited a preference for disconfirmatory information. Also related, Kitayama, Snibbe, Markus, and Tomoko (2004) discovered that, using the same paradigm as did Heine and Lehman (1997), Euro-Americans who were led to worry about what others might think of their final CD selection, whether by considering the preferences of others or a priming technique involving a poster of schematic human faces, increased in their liking of their chosen CD just as much as did Euro-Americans for which this concern was not made salient. It is likely that the procedures used in both of these studies heightened Western participants’ awareness of their self-image, and thus participants confirmed and justified their decisions so as to improve other people’s actual or hypothetical evaluations of them. Indeed, Jonas et al. reasoned that participants who had to inform their partner of their decision sought out supportive information to “help them to present themselves in a positive light” (p. 986). One plausible explanation for Euro-Canadians’ behaviour in the friend condition of Study 2 (and to an extent that of Euro-Canadians in the friend condition of Study 1), is that their awareness of their self-image was similarly, albeit not intentionally, heightened. Going to see a movie at a theatre is not something that people
typically do on their own. As such, while selecting a movie for their friend, Euro-Canadians may have imagined themselves going along with their friend to see the selected movie and perhaps explaining to their friend why they selected the movie that they did. This mental exercise likely increased Euro-Canadians’ cognizance of what their friend might think of their choice, prompting them to seek out information that confirmed their selected movie so as to maintain their friend’s positive regard. In support of this explanation, participants in the friend condition were found to be more motivated to convince others of the correctness of their choice than were those in the self condition, albeit this motivation did not predict participants’ choice of reviews.

However, the findings associated with Euro-Canadians in the present research are inconsistent with those associated with Euro-Canadians in Hoshino-Browne et al.’s (2005) research. Recall that after selecting an item for themselves, Euro-Canadians increased in their liking of the chosen item, whereas after selecting an item for their friend, Euro-Canadians did not alter their evaluations of the chosen item. Participants in the friend condition of Hoshino-Browne et al.’s studies were required to select either a menu item (Study 1) or a take-out food item (Study 2) for their friend. One possible reason for the disparate results is that deciding on a food item for their friend did not heighten Euro-Canadians’ self-presentational motives to the same degree as did deciding on a movie for their friend. However, this explanation is not completely satisfying because eating out at a restaurant (or ordering take-out) is also an activity that people typically partake in with others. A more plausible explanation concerns further differences in the studies’ dependent variables. Hoshino-Browne et al. reasoned that Euro-Canadians did not engage in efforts to justify the decision that they made for their
friend because the idea of making a suboptimal decision for their friend did not threaten their self-concepts. Both past and the research suggests that making a poor decision for their friend is threatening to Euro-Canadians because doing so may damage their self-images. However, subjectively changing one’s attitudes concerning the chosen item for another does little to convince the other of the correctness of one’s choice. In contrast, seeking out information that confirms one’s choice increases one’s knowledge of the advantages associated with one’s choice, and this knowledge may potentially be utilized to demonstrate to the other that one has indeed made a good choice. Thus, perhaps Euro-Canadians in both lines of research experienced similar worries after making a decision for their friend, but whereas the present research provided Euro-Canadians with a viable way in which to overcome their self-presentational concerns, Hoshino-Browne et al.’s research did not.

*Why did Euro-Canadians in the self condition behave inconsistently across both studies?* Euro-Canadians in the self condition of Study 1 exhibited confirmation bias, whereas those in the self condition of Study 2 exhibited a non-significant disconfirmation bias. This pattern of results suggests that, perhaps, the null hypothesis is not false; that is, it may be that Euro-Canadians do not bias their information search following decisions at all. However, this suggestion does not seem entirely plausible given the plethora of research demonstrating that Westerners do indeed prefer to expose themselves to confirmatory rather than disconfirmatory information following decisions (see Jonas, Schulz-Hardt, Fisher, & Frey, 2006 for a review). Rather, the present findings may be due to a particular, unintended discrepancy between the two studies’ procedures, participants, or testing environments. Scholars contend that confirmation bias is most likely to occur
when the decision maker’s capacity to process all relevant information is restricted and the goals or motivations that the decision maker wishes to fulfil at the time the information is encountered are best served by consulting confirmatory information (Smith et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2007). Based on this theorizing, I made several modifications to the design of Study 2 to make confirmation bias more likely to occur among all participants, such as limiting the amount of time that they had to review relevant material and heightening their awareness of the decision that they made to invoke a desire to defend it. Although these modifications were successful in increasing participants’ engagement in the decision making task, Euro-Canadians in the self condition behaved in a manner almost opposite of that which would be expected based on psychologists’ current understanding of the conditions under which confirmation bias is most likely to occur. Perhaps Euro-Canadians involved in Study 2 were more sophisticated (indeed, the majority of Euro-Canadians were upper-year students) and knowledgeable of confirmation bias because many of them had taken a number of psychology courses and consequently may have been determined to behave otherwise. However, when I excluded those participants who were familiar with confirmation bias and the reasons behind this bias, the pattern of results did not change. Thus, at this point, it is difficult to understand why Euro-Canadians in Study 1 behaved so differently from those in Study 2.

Why did Japanese, regardless of condition, seek out both confirmatory and disconfirmatory information? Across two studies and two different types of decisions, Japanese sought out a relatively equal amount of confirmatory and disconfirmatory

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10 Overall, participants in Study 2 ($M = 5.82, SD = 1.45$) were more committed than were those in Study 1($M = 5.10, SD = 1.68$), $F(1, 255) = 12.50, p < .01$. 

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information. Although I predicted that Japanese would respond in this way after making a personal decision, I did not expect that this pattern of results would also be true of Japanese after making an interpersonal decision. Why, then, did Japanese in the present research behave in this manner? As I noted earlier, people seek out supportive information after they have made a decision to maintain a sense of consistency between having chosen an item and information concerning the item (Festinger, 1957, 1964), and to feel good about their decision and certain about their competency (Aronson, 1968; Steele, 1988). Previous research reveals that Japanese self-concepts involve a greater deal of flexibility than do Westerners’ self-concepts (e.g., Cousins, 1989) and that Japanese are less likely to bring their attitudes in line with their behaviours than are Westerners (Heine & Lehman, 1997). Furthermore, Japanese do not share in Westerners’ proclivity toward self-enhancement (Heine et al., 1999). Given their lack of concern with maintaining self-consistency and experiencing self-enhancement, it is perhaps not surprising that Japanese in either condition of the present research did not exhibit confirmation bias. Certainly, the results concerning participants’ rankings of confirmatory reviews corroborate this explanation. Thus, Japanese may not feel the need to confirm the decisions that they make, regardless of who their decisions concern.

However, it is puzzling that, although Japanese did not differentiate between personal and interpersonal decisions in the present research, they have been found to do so in other research (e.g., Hoshino-Browne et al., 2005). As I have already discussed, going to see a movie at a theatre is a social activity, and thus regardless of whether Japanese selected a movie for themselves or their friend, they may have anticipated that both they and their friend would be affected by their decision. In other words, regardless
of condition, Japanese in the present research made an interpersonal decision. This explanation is particularly likely given that the distinction between the self and close others is chronically blurred among those who possess an interdependent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The question remains, then, as to why Japanese did not seek to confirm a decision that they made for their friend or that which they made for themselves but would likely affect their friend(s)? One plausible explanation is that Japanese were deeply invested in the outcome of their decision. Within the Japanese cultural context, making a poor decision for a close other indicates that one is an insensible and insensitive group member and may bring about negative social consequences, such as disapproval or rejection (Hoshino-Brown et al., 2005; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Therefore, Japanese in the present research may have been more concerned about their friend’s enjoyment of the movie that they selected and the repercussions associated with having potentially made a poor choice than were Euro-Canadians. In line with this reasoning, Japanese indicated that they would be more bothered if their decision turned out to be a bad one than did Euro-Canadians. Scholars suggest that people are likely to take an objective, even-handed approach to processing decision relevant information when they have a vested interest in the outcome of the decision that they make (i.e., experience outcome-relevant involvement; Chaiken, Wood, & Eagly, 1996; Johnson, 1994; Johnson & Eagly, 1989). Those who are highly concerned with the outcome of their decision desire to ensure that they have indeed made the best decision rather than to feel that they have made the best decision, which in turn necessitates the examination of all relevant information. Thus, Japanese may have
consulted both pro and con information because they felt strongly invested in the outcome of their decision.

A Speculative Comment on Between-Culture Differences Concerning the Utility of Confirmatory and Disconfirmatory Information

Given that the decisions that participants made in the present research were final prior to them engaging in the information search phase, it is perhaps worthwhile to speculate on cross-cultural differences concerning the potential utility of confirmatory and disconfirmatory information when Westerners and Japanese communicate their choices to the recipients of their decisions. Previous research indicates that close relationships are important to individuals of most cultures (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002), and that people’s relationships with others shape their views of themselves (Leary, & Baumeister, 2000) because people incorporate others’ perceptions of themselves into their self-concepts (Aron & Aron, 1996). Thus, Westerners and Japanese alike are motivated to maintain the positive regard of those who are affected by their decisions; however, the results of the present research imply that Westerners and Japanese differ from each other in terms of how they achieve this goal.

The results of the present research suggests that, following an interpersonal decision, Westerners may maintain close others’ positive regard by highlighting the advantages associated with their decision. Previous research demonstrates that Westerners value and report experiencing positive affect more than do East Asians (Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000; Mesquita & Karasawa, 2002; Tsai, 2007). Consequently, Westerner decision makers may attempt maintain or bolster their friends’ or family members’ positive regard by informing their friends and family members of the
benefits or enjoyment that will befall them as a result of the decisions that they have made. Thus, it may be important for Westerners to consult confirmatory information so as to equip themselves with the type of information necessary to convey such a positive message.

In contrast, Japanese may maintain close others’ positive regard by preparing close others for both the good and bad experiences associated with their decisions. Japanese are motivated to maintain a sense of harmony and cohesiveness with their ingroup members (Heine, 2005; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). Forewarning the recipient of one’s decision of any disadvantages that may accompany one’s decision serves to decrease the likelihood that the recipient will complain or feel discontented should any unpleasant outcomes actually occur. Thus, following an interpersonal decision, Japanese may express the advantages and disadvantages associated with their decision so as to curb complaints and maintain a harmonious relationship between themselves and the recipient(s) of their decision. Consequently, Japanese may increase their knowledge of the pros and cons associated with their decision by consulting both supportive and unsupportive information. Of course, Westerners should also wish to avoid their friends’ and family members’ complaints. However, it may be that the social consequences associated with disappointing one’s ingroup members are more dire for Japanese than they are for Westerners, and thus Japanese may be more motivated to avoid such occurrences than may Westerners.

Once again, my conjectures regarding cultural differences in the use of confirmatory and disconfirmatory information are purely speculatory and are hinted but not supported by the findings of the present research. Future research might inform these
hypotheses by examining whether the cultural differences in information seeking uncovered by the present research change or vanish if, following an interpersonal decision, Western and Japanese decision makers do not have to inform the close other of their choice. Also, other research might examine the extent to which Westerners and Japanese verbally inform those who are affected by their decision of the advantages and disadvantages associated with their choices, and how Westerners and Japanese respond when those close others experience disappointment as a result of their choices.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Despite this intriguing implication, the present research is not without its limitations. Although consistent across two studies, the results concerning Japanese in both conditions and Euro-Canadians in the friend condition are contrary to my original hypotheses; thus, further replication is required to determine the robustness of these findings. Furthermore, it is unclear whether or not the results of the present research will generalize to other decision making contexts. The decision that participants made in the present research involved a small, relatively inconsequential matter. How would Euro-Canadians and Japanese respond if the decision that they made for themselves or their friend involved a more serious matter? Also, how might the results of the present study change if Euro-Canadians and Japanese made a decision for an outgroup rather than an ingroup member? Future research is warranted to explore the answers to these questions.

Concerning the design of the study, as I have already discussed, having participants select a movie for themselves or their friend to see in theatres appears to have been a less than ideal operationalization of personal and interpersonal decisions, respectively. As such, the results of the present study may have more to do with decisions
involving the self and one’s social network as opposed to separate decisions involving the self or one’s friend only. Future research should incorporate decisions that more cleanly implicate the decision maker or decision maker’s friend only, such as choosing a book or a piece of clothing. Also, it is difficult to know which dependent variable (i.e., participants’ review selections or their rankings of confirmatory reviews) represents Euro-Canadians’ and Japanese true postdecisional information seeking tendencies as neither one of these measures captured the proposed interaction involving culture and condition. It may be that this interaction does not exist or that the measures of confirmation bias employed in the present research were not sensitive enough to detect it. Future research might inform this issue by documenting the length of time that Euro-Canadians and Japanese spend processing confirmatory and disconfirmatory information (Smith et al., 2007), the way in which they interpret ambiguous information (Lord, Ross & Lepper, 1979), or their abilities to recall supportive and unsupportive information (Jonas et al., 2008). Indeed, previous research suggests that retrospective reports may be more sensitive to cultural differences than may online measures (e.g., Oishi, 2002).

Lastly, it may be advantageous to manipulate as opposed to measure the motivations underlying participants’ information seeking behaviours. Indeed, it may be difficult for participants to accurately report on their motivational experiences because such experiences may be occurring beyond their awareness. Also, measures of people’s motivations may yield socially desirable responses that are not reflective of people’s true goals or concerns. For example, Euro-Canadians in the present study indicated that they were more concerned with accuracy than did Japanese even though they were more biased in their information search than were Japanese. Of course, it is socially desirable
for participants to report being concerned with accuracy immediately following a
decision, and that Euro-Canadians may have bolstered the degree to which they
experienced this concern more than did Japanese to fulfil their self-enhancement motives.
Future research, then, might examine the role that relevant postdecisional motivations
play in Euro-Canadians’ and Japanese information seeking behaviours by manipulating
their knowledge of the objective of the study (e.g., Lundgren & Prislin, 1998), their
awareness of who will be informed of their decision (e.g., Jonas et al., 2005), or their
experience of self-affirmation (e.g., Hoshino-Browne et al., 2005) prior to engaging in the
information search phase.

Conclusion

The present research sought to determine whether Westerners are more or less
likely to exhibit postdecisional confirmation bias than are Japanese, and whether the
degree to which members of these culture groups seek out confirmatory information
varies according to who is affected by the decisions that they make. Across two studies,
the ANOVAs concerning the proportion of confirmatory reviews that participants
selected did not reveal any between-culture differences, nor did they reveal any culture
by condition interactions. As such, the present research provides no evidence that Euro-
Canadians and Japanese differ from each other in terms of the amount of confirmatory
information that they consult after having made a decision, and that the target of the
decisions that they make does not differentially influence their postdecisional information
seeking tendencies. The null findings produced by the present research may represent the
true state of affairs concerning Euro-Canadians’ and Japanese confirmatory information
seeking; however, perhaps the contextual and motivational factors necessary to bring
about confirmation bias were inadvertently absent in the present study. Indeed, Euro-
Canadians in the present research only slightly exhibited this tendency, despite the fact
that a plethora of previous studies suggests that Euro-Canadians should exhibit
confirmation bias following their decisions. Thus, at second glance, the results of the
present research appear to be inconclusive and further experimentation is required to fully
explore the nature of the relationship between culture and postdecisional confirmation bias.
References


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context: Culture, experience, self-understanding (pp.13-61). New York: Cambridge University Press.


Appendix A

For this part of the survey, you will indicate your movie preferences. To do so, you will choose a movie that you would like to see. We have selected two movies for you to choose from. The movies you will select from are not currently in theatres, but are scheduled to be released next month. None of the movies have been advertised to the public. Before making your decision, you will read two short descriptions about the movies you have to choose from. Only information about the genre and plot of each movie will be available to you. We have removed the names of the director of the films and the actors/actresses who star in the films to prevent such factors from influencing your decision.
Appendix B

Past research has shown that survey responses are more meaningful and more accurate when respondents imagine themselves making a decision for one of their friends.

Therefore, for this part of the survey, you will indicate your friend’s movie preferences. To do so, you will choose a movie that your friend would like to see. We have selected two movies for you to choose from. The movies you will select from are not currently in theatres, but are scheduled to be released next month. None of the movies have been advertised to the public. Before making your decision, you will read two short descriptions about the movies you have to choose from. Only information about the genre and plot of each movie will be available to you. We have removed the names of the director of the films and the actors/actresses who star in the films to prevent such factors from influencing your decision.

Please take the time now to think of a friend, someone whose movie preferences you feel you know very well. Once you have thought of someone, please complete the following questions:

1. What is the person’s name? ________________________________.

2. How close would you say you are to this person?

   1. Not close at all
   2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. Extremely close

3. How well would you say you know this person’s movie preferences

   1. Not well at all
   2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. Extremely well
Appendix C

THE PASSENGERS

The Passengers is an action thriller about two escaped convicts from a remote northern prison – Jake, a hardened lifer, and Perry, a petty criminal. Hopping aboard a freight train, they head full-steam ahead toward freedom; but when the engineer dies of a heart attack, they find themselves trapped, alone, and speeding toward certain disaster. Pursued by a brutal prison warden who will stop at nothing until they're caught, Jake and Perry struggle to bring the train under control. As the train hurdles through the frozen wilderness, they discover a third passenger, a beautiful railroad worker who is just as desperate to survive as they are. Ironically, in leaving the prison, Jake and Perry find themselves headed toward both their freedom and death.

IDENTITY

Identity is an action thriller that finds New York advertising executive Brandon Stocke mistaken for an American intelligence agent. Stocke is kidnapped by a gang of spies who believe Stocke is CIA agent named James Blackwell, who has been accused of killing a foreign diplomat. Stocke escapes, but must find Blackwell in order to clear himself of the murder he is believed to have committed. Following Blackwell to Chicago as a fugitive from justice, Stocke is helped by his former lover, a beautiful cigar lounge singer. All of Stocke’s attempts to straighten things out only make matters worse and soon the desperate man is on the run from murderous foreign operatives, the CIA, and the police.
Film critics and movie experts were also asked to watch and critique the two movies you had to choose from. Before you finalize your decision regarding which movie you / your friend would like to see, you will have the opportunity to read some of the reviews written by these movie experts.

Next, you will see a list of 12 movie reviews. You may select to read up to a total of 6 reviews. To help you decide which reviews will be most useful to you, we have provided a one-sentence summary of each review. Each of the reviews is approximately a quarter of a page long.

Before proceeding, please read the following instructions carefully:

Please complete the next part of the study in the following way:

1. First, read ALL of the review summaries carefully.

2. Then, if you would like to read the entire review, please click the box beside the review you would like to read. You may choose to read up to a total of 6 reviews.

After you submit your selections, the computer will retrieve the reviews that you have chosen to read.
Appendix E

1. The Passengers – “Thanks to its grand scale and great central performances, this film is a fantastic thrill-ride.”

2. The Passengers – “A smart script, an attractive cast, some very creative action, with a dash of romance.”

3. The Passengers – “A superbly crafted action thriller, with excellent performances, cinematography and tension.”

4. The Passengers – “It is not effective as an action thriller film. Aside from one or two sequences, it doesn't work at all.”

5. The Passengers – “This film is a canned experience, a film that flails around awkwardly trying to find a reason to exist.”

6. The Passengers – “An assault to your intelligence and an assault to your ears and eyes.”

7. Identity – “Thrilling, funny, and romantic; it elevates popcorn adventure to art.”

8. Identity – “An expertly paced film that delivers wit, glamour, and sophistication.”

9. Identity – “An exhilarating, sweeping ride that begs to be seen on the largest possible screen.”

10. Identity – “Woefully short on originality, intelligibility, and anything resembling good taste.”

11. Identity – “By the end, the film has gone from being a mindless delight to an aimless, tired display of empty action scenes.”

12. Identity – “The only remarkable thing about this film is how dull and predictable the entire production is.”
To begin, we would like you to read through the descriptions of two soon-to-be-released films and to decide which of the two movies you think is best. The movies you will read about are not currently in theatres, but are scheduled to be released next month. These movies have not been advertised to the public. Only information about the genre and plot of each movie will be available to you. We have removed the names of the directors of the films and the actors / actresses who star in the films to prevent such factors from influencing your impression of the movies.

After you have read through each of the movie descriptions, you will choose the movie that you like the best. In appreciation of your participation, you will receive a free movie pass to see the movie that you select when it is released in theatres.
Appendix G

To begin, we would like you to read through the descriptions of two soon-to-be-released films and to decide which of the two movies you think is best. The movies you will read about are not currently in theatres, but are scheduled to be released next month. These movies have not been advertised to the public. Only information about the genre and plot of each movie will be available to you. We have removed the names of the directors of the films and the actors / actresses who star in the films to prevent such factors from influencing your impression of the movies.

Now, past research has shown that survey responses are more accurate when respondents imagine themselves making a decision for one of their friends.

Therefore, after you have read through each of the movie descriptions, you will choose the movie that you think your friend would like the best. In appreciation of your participation, your friend will receive a free movie pass to see the movie that you select when it is released in theatres.

Please take the time now to think of a friend, someone whose movie preferences you feel you know very well. Once you have thought of someone, please complete the following questions:

1. What is the person’s first name? ________________________________.

2. How close would you say you are to this person?
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8
   Not close at all Extremely close

3. How well would you say you know this person’s movie preferences?

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8
   Not well at all Extremely well
Appendix H

GOOD BOY

Erik is a 16-year-old boy who, after being tormented by his stepfather for most of his life, responds in the only way he knows how—by giving a good thrashing to anyone in his way. When he is expelled from public school, Erik is given one last chance to make something of himself and is sent to a prestigious private school. This time he is determined not to mess up. Initially, Erik is overjoyed to escape his unhappy home, but he soon discovers that he has merely substituted one prison for another. The school is run by a rigorous and unjust code, enforced by senior students rather than the faculty. In fact, the teachers prefer to ignore what goes on among the students, including beatings and humiliating rituals. Soon, Erik is faced with a dangerous choice: to confront his oppressors and risk expulsion, ignore them and suffer humiliation, or to let his friends suffer for him.

THE STARS AND THE SEA

The Stars and the Sea is the life story of Ramón Sanpedro who, at the age of 26, becomes a quadriplegic. From then on, Ramón is dependent on his family to survive. Although he is grateful for the help of his family, Ramón comes to see his life as frustrating and pointless and wishes to die with what little dignity he has left. Ramón decides to launch a campaign to be granted legal permission to end his life. The film goes on to explore Ramón's relationships with two women: Julia, a lawyer who supports his cause and also suffers from a degenerative fatal disease, and Rosa, a local woman who wants to convince him that life is worth living. Through the gift of his love, these two women are inspired to accomplish things they never previously thought possible. Despite his wish to die, Ramón teaches everyone he encounters the meaning, value, and preciousness of life.
Dear Vender: Mobile Life Media Company® will provide you with a monetary reimbursement equivalent to the price of one adult general admission ticket plus applicable taxes upon receipt of this coupon. Please mail coupon to Mobile Life Media Company®, 759 Bay Street, Unit 31, Toronto, Ontario, M6H 2T7. Coupon valid at participating theatres only. Not valid with any other offer. Please present coupon before ordering.

Check out goodboymovie.com for upcoming show times!
Appendix J

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Movie Pass Receipt
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Serial Number: ______________________
Ticket Holder: ______________________
Signature: ______________________

Movies:

**The Stars and the Sea**  **Good Boy**

☐ Selected  ☐ Selected
☐ Not selected  ☐ Not selected

Note: The ticket holder may be contacted by Mobile Life Media Company® to complete a short, follow-up survey three weeks following the release of the film selected above.

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Film critics and movie experts were asked to watch and critique the movies that you had to choose from. For the next part of the study, you will have the opportunity to read and evaluate some of the reviews written by these movie experts.

Soon, you will be presented with a list of 12 movie reviews. To help you decide which reviews you would like to read, we have provided you with a one-sentence summary of each review.

You may read as few or as many of these reviews as you would like. Each review is almost a page long. **Please note that you will have 10 minutes to select the reviews that you would like to read and to read the reviews that you selected.**

If you would like to read a review in its entirety, please check the line beside the review that you would like to read. After you have made your selection, the reviews that you have chosen to read will be given to you.
Appendix L

1. Good Boy - “Far from being a standard drama, this picture rises above its generic roots to emerge as a powerful human drama.”

2. Good Boy - “This film is so well executed and hugely enjoyable it is hard for even cynics to resist.”

3. Good Boy - “A thoughtful, emotional exploration of hope and resilience that does not turn sappy or unbelievable.”

4. Good Boy - “A dull and predictable film, one that avoids digging too deeply into its subject matter.”

5. Good Boy - “Woefully short on originality, intelligibility, and anything resembling good taste.”

6. Good Boy - “The film’s dry performances keep audiences at a distance, unmoved and uninvolved.”

7. The Stars and the Sea - “A superbly crafted drama, with excellent performances, cinematography, and sophistication.”

8. The Stars and the Sea - “A good, inspiring film with terrific directing, wonderful acting, and a great script.”

9. The Stars and the Sea - “Intelligent and captivating, this movie is one of the most memorable films of the year”

10. The Stars and the Sea - “An obvious and emotionally unsatisfying film that fails to hold you from start to finish.”

11. The Stars and the Sea - “Mediocre at best, this film delivers sham art and questionable entertainment.”

12. The Stars and the Sea - “This film is a waste of time; it that crawls around slowly while trying to find a reason to exist.”
Appendix M

We would like to know, in general, which of the reviews you find most appealing and which of them you find least appealing. Below is the list of reviews that you just selected from. To indicate your general preferences, please rank the reviews from 1 (*most want to read*) to 12 (*least want to read*). You should place a “1” beside the review that you want to read the most, a “2” beside the review you want to read second most, a “3” beside the review that you want to read third most, and so on, until you have ranked all of the reviews with the numbers from 1 to 12. Please use each number (from 1 to 12) only once.

_____ Good Boy - “Far from being a standard drama, this picture rises above its generic roots to emerge as a powerful human drama.”

_____ Good Boy - “This film is so well executed and hugely enjoyable it is hard for even cynics to resist.”

_____ Good Boy - “A thoughtful, emotional exploration of hope and resilience that does not turn sappy or unbelievable.”

_____ Good Boy - “A dull and predictable film, one that avoids digging too deeply into its subject matter.”

_____ Good Boy - “Woefully short on originality, intelligibility, and anything resembling good taste.”

_____ Good Boy - “The film’s dry performances keep audiences at a distance, unmoved and uninvolved.”

_____ The Stars and the Sea - “A superbly crafted drama, with excellent performances, cinematography, and sophistication.”

_____ The Stars and the Sea - “A good, inspiring film with terrific directing, wonderful acting, and a great script.”

_____ The Stars and the Sea - “Intelligent and captivating, this movie is one of the most memorable films of the year”

_____ The Stars and the Sea - “An obvious and emotionally unsatisfying film that fails to hold you from start to finish.”

_____ The Stars and the Sea - “Mediocre at best, this film delivers sham art and questionable entertainment.”

_____ The Stars and the Sea - “This film is a waste of time; it that crawls around slowly while trying to find a reason to exist.”
Appendix N

1. After you chose the movie that you did, how much did you want to form an accurate view of the movie that you chose? (accuracy)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
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<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very much</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. After you chose the movie that you did, how much did you want to convince yourself that the movie you selected was the best movie to select? (affirm/defense)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
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3. After you chose the movie that you did, how much did you want to show others that the movie that you chose was the best movie to choose? (impression)

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4. After you chose the movie that you did, how motivated were you to consider both favourable and unfavourable information about the movie that you selected? (accuracy)

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5. After you chose the movie that you did, how motivated were you to consider only information that discussed the positive qualities of the movie that you chose? (affirm/defense)

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6. How much would you be bothered if your choice of movie turned out to be a bad choice (for your friend)?

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