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Feeling Right or Being Right:

When Strong Assessment Yields Strong Correction

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### Abstract

Negotiators in regulatory fit report *feeling right* about an upcoming negotiation more than those in non-fit, and this intensifies their responses to negotiation preparation (Appelt, Zou, Arora, & Higgins, 2009). High assessors emphasize critical evaluation and *being right* (Higgins, Kruglanski, & Pierro, 2003). This emphasis should motivate them to engage in correction processes when they only *feel* right—so strongly as to produce elimination, and perhaps even *overcorrection*, of the fit effects found previously. We found that low assessors replicated regulatory fit effects on negotiation preparation measures of anticipated performance and perceived assessment competence. For high assessors, however, these fit effects were eliminated and even reversed to some extent. This is consistent with the prediction that high assessors correct because they want to *be* right, and *not* just *feel* right, and correcting can result in *overcorrection*. Implications for understanding the trade-offs of a strong assessment orientation are discussed.

### Feeling Right or Being Right: When Strong Assessment Yields Strong Correction

Imagine you are pursuing a goal, perhaps preparing to negotiate over a used car. You feel optimistic and confident in your goal pursuit. If these feelings are the result of feeling right about what you are doing, would you want to correct them? When feelings are due to an integral source, a source that is relevant to the task at hand, people are unlikely to correct them (Wegener & Petty, 1997). The present study suggests, however, that there is an important exception to this rule. People with a strong assessment orientation, which emphasizes *being* right more than *feeling* right, could be motivated to correct such feelings. High assessors have a tendency to be self-critical (Higgins, Kruglanski, & Pierro, 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2000). The present study tests the possibility that they might eliminate or even *overcorrect* these feelings because they involve *feeling* right rather than *being* right. If so, this would identify a strong assessment orientation as a motivator of correction processes, thereby revealing something new about what it means to be a high assessor.

### Regulatory Mode Theory

Self-regulation requires two functions: an *assessment* function that makes comparisons (e.g., between the current state and the goal state, between different goal states, between different goal strategies) and a *locomotion* function that moves from state to state (Higgins et al., 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2000). Classic self-regulation theories have variously conceptualized the discrepancy-assessing and discrepancy-reducing processes (e.g., Gollwitzer, 1990; Heckhausen & Gollwitzer, 1987; Kuhl, 1985; Lewin, Dembo, Festinger, & Sears, 1944; Miller, Galanter, & Pribram, 1960). Regulatory mode theory (Higgins et al., 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2000) extends these theories by viewing the two processes or functions as general and independent concerns that can be differentially emphasized across individuals, as seen with chronic individual

differences (e.g., Kruglanski et al., 2000), and across situations, as seen with momentary context inductions (e.g., Avnet & Higgins, 2003). As chronic individual differences, assessment and locomotion concerns are relatively independent, such that individuals may be high on neither, one, or both orientations (see Higgins et al., 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2000).

For high locomotors, movement is an end in itself, as epitomized by the slogan, “just do it!” (Higgins et al., 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2000; Pierro, Kruglanski, & Higgins, 2006b).

Assessment, on the other hand, is “the comparative aspect of self-regulation concerned with critically evaluating entities or states, such as goals or means, in relation to alternatives in order to judge relative quality” (Higgins et al., 2003, p. 297). As evidenced by positive correlations with need to evaluate (Jarvis & Petty, 1996) and fear of invalidity (Thompson, Naccarato, & Parker, 1989), assessors want to evaluate all options, be accurate and right, and ensure that, if they act at all, they “do the right thing” (Higgins et al., 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2000). Although each orientation motivates different preferences and behaviors (e.g., Benjamin & Flynn, 2006; Kruglanski, Pierro, & Higgins, 2007), both assessment and locomotion are necessary for self-regulatory success (Kruglanski et al., 2000; Pierro, Kruglanski, & Higgins, 2006a). To date, however, research on regulatory mode has discovered relatively more about how the locomotion orientation functions (e.g., Kruglanski, Pierro, Higgins, & Capozza, 2007, Pierro et al., 2006a). In contrast, the present paper is primarily concerned with the motivational implications of an assessment orientation.

Assessment motivates comparison and critical evaluation, but high assessors can be driven beyond normal levels of these behaviors to excessive comparison and hypercriticism. High assessors detect more errors and generate more possible means (Kruglanski et al., 2000), and experience greater counterfactual thinking and regret (Pierro et al., 2008). High assessors’

hypercriticism negatively impacts their mental health (Kruglanski et al., 2000) and interpersonal regulation (Kumashiro, Rusbult, Finkenauer, & Stocker, 2007). High assessors' insistence on being right can be excessive as well. They want to be right even if it makes them feel bad, as indicated by a willingness to suffer negative affect from critical self-evaluations in order to be right (Higgins et al., 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2000). What are other consequences of high assessors' unique insistence on being right? We posited that an assessment orientation might be a moderator of regulatory fit. Therefore, we now turn to a discussion of regulatory fit, using the specific example of focus-role fit in negotiations.

### **Focus-Role Fit in Price Negotiations**

When people pursue a goal in a manner that sustains, rather than disrupts, their regulatory orientation, they experience regulatory fit (Higgins, 2000, 2005, 2006). Such a match between a goal orientation and its preferred strategic manner of goal pursuit strengthens engagement and creates a feeling of rightness about what one is doing. Feeling right from fit is a “nonemotional subjective experience” (Cesario, Grant, & Higgins, 2004, p. 388) in which people feel that their goal pursuit is correct and fitting. It can be distinguished from feeling *good* as a hedonically pleasant positive mood. Feeling right from fit intensifies evaluative responses to goal pursuit, whether the responses are positive or negative, and it has persuasion effects that are independent of feeling good (Cesario et al., 2004).

In the context of negotiation, there is evidence that regulatory fit is created by a match between negotiator role and chronic regulatory focus (Appelt, Zou, Arora, & Higgins, 2009). For negotiations emphasizing the issue of price, buyers seek to minimize monetary losses, adopt non-loss/loss frames, and prefer vigilant strategies that ensure against negative outcomes (losses; spending too much money). In these same negotiations, sellers seek to maximize monetary gains,

adopt gain/non-gain frames, and prefer eager strategies that ensure positive outcomes (gains; receiving as much money as possible) (Appelt & Higgins, 2010; Appelt et al., 2009).

Regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997; Higgins et al., 2001) describes two self-regulatory orientations: a prevention focus and a promotion focus. A chronic or momentary prevention focus has a strategic concern with non-losses (the absence of negatives) versus losses (the presence of negatives), is especially sensitive to the difference between “0” and “-1” (maintenance), and prefers vigilant strategies. In contrast, a chronic or momentary promotion focus has a strategic concern with gains (the presence of positives) versus non-gains (the absence of positives), is especially sensitive to the difference between “0” and “+1” (attainment), and prefers eager strategies (Brodscholl, Kober, & Higgins, 2007; Crowe & Higgins, 1997; Higgins, 1997, 2000). Importantly, regulatory focus is conceptually orthogonal to regulatory mode. Regulatory mode describes a relative emphasis on comparison and critical evaluation (assessment) versus initiating and maintaining movement (locomotion), whereas regulatory focus describes a relative emphasis on non-losses/losses (prevention) versus gains/non-gains (promotion).

Clearly, there are strategic complementarities between negotiator role and regulatory focus. In price-emphasizing negotiations, the buyer role and a prevention focus share a preference for vigilant strategies, whereas the seller role and a promotion focus share a preference for eager strategies (Appelt & Higgins, 2010). Prevention buyers and promotion sellers are in states of focus-role fit whereas promotion buyers and prevention sellers are in non-fit (Appelt et al., 2009). Regulatory fit intensifies responses, and focus-role fit impacts responses during strategic planning. Specifically, fit negotiators experience a greater subjective fit with their randomly assigned negotiator roles—they report feeling right about their role—and they

both plan to be and are more demanding in the upcoming negotiation than non-fit negotiators (Appelt et al., 2009).

In the case of focus-role fit, the feeling right experience is relevant and appropriate to the upcoming negotiation. Imagine that you feel optimistic and confident as you prepare for the negotiation because your role feels right for you. Although feeling right can bias your feelings about the upcoming negotiation, it is integral, relevant, and not likely to be considered a problem. That is, *unless* you have the motivational orientation of strong assessors who want to *be right* and not simply *feel* right. Feeling right could potentially bias you away from actually *being* right. Thus, if you are a high assessor, you would be motivated to correct biases from feeling right even though the source is integral and relevant. Indeed, unlike other negotiators, high assessors may not even consider feeling right to be integral and relevant, in which case it would be especially important for them to correct for this feeling.<sup>1</sup> We now consider what it means to correct.

### **Correction and Overcorrection**

Wegener & Petty's (1995, 1997) Flexible Correction Model posits that people may identify a perceived bias and respond using a naïve theory of bias. Because people often misjudge the extent, direction, and even existence of biases, they may inaccurately adjust, resulting in overcorrection, undercorrection, exacerbation or even bias creation. Overcorrection, where the original effect is not just eliminated but reversed, is a common mistake in domains ranging from priming to persuasion to impression formation (e.g., Martin, 1986; Wegener & Petty, 1995, 1997).

However, attempts at correction are anticipated only when people are motivated (Martin, 1986; Schwarz & Bless, 1992a, 1992b; Wegener & Petty, 1995, 1997). Certain situations

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<sup>1</sup> We thank a reviewer for suggesting this additional motivation for high assessors.



motivate correction attempts. People are motivated to correct biases when they are the result of an irrelevant source's inappropriate influence—when your momentary mood is influencing your evaluation of your general life satisfaction (Schwarz & Clore, 1983), an earlier prime or anchor is influencing your current judgment (Higgins, 1996; Murphy & Zajonc, 1993; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974), or the likability of a messenger is influencing your message evaluation (Petty, Wegener, & White, 1998). Likewise, certain individual differences motivate correction attempts, even in situations where biases are due to feeling right *about the current task*. Because high assessors are naturally motivated to critically evaluate their responses as well as to be right and accurate (Higgins et al., 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2000), an assessment orientation may be a source of a strong motivation to exert the extra cognitive effort to both identify and attempt to correct perceived biases. We predict that, in so doing, high assessors will produce a reduction of the perceived bias, which could lead to elimination or even reversal of the perceived bias.

### **The Present Research**

Even when the source of a bias is not irrelevant or extraneous but is appropriate and legitimate, strong assessment is a motivational orientation so concerned with the possibility of bias in evaluation that it will lead to an attempt to correct the possible bias, which will produce a reduction of the perceived bias that could lead to an elimination or even a reversal of the perceived bias. The reversal would be an *overcorrection*. The present study explored the interaction of assessment and focus-role fit. We predicted that the fit effects found previously by Appelt et al. (2009) would be replicated for low assessors. We did not expect these effects to be replicated for high assessors, however. Instead, we predicted that the strong motivation of high assessors to critically evaluate, to *be* right rather than just *feel* right, would make them suspicious of feeling right from regulatory fit. In the terms of Strack and Deutsch (2004), high assessors are

reflective; they would not trust a purely experiential, feelings-based system of judgment, such as feeling right from regulatory fit. Correcting the perceived bias could simply reduce the fit effect, but, if the correction was strong enough, it could eliminate and even reverse the fit effect, with the latter being a classic implicit *overcorrection* effect (Wegener & Petty, 1995, 1997).

To test these predictions we used a real negotiation with binding outcomes. We investigated the pre-negotiation planning stage, which emphasizes evaluating and comparing alternatives and is thus where the effects of an assessment orientation should be especially strong. Participants rated their pre-negotiation anticipated performance and perceived assessment competence.

Across measures, we expected main effects of assessment and locomotion. Because high assessors evaluate their positions extensively, they are more aware of both the pros and the cons of any evaluation target and therefore experience less optimism (Kruglanski et al., 2000). Therefore, we expected high (vs. low) assessors to have lower ratings of their anticipated performance and perceived assessment competence. High locomotors have positive expectancies (Kruglanski et al., 2000; Kruglanski, Pierro, Higgins, & Capozza, 2007), which may serve as a tactical ploy to help propel movement (see Higgins, 2008; Higgins, Pierro, & Kruglanski, in press). At the same time, high locomotors derive optimism and self-esteem from their sense of progress (Kruglanski et al., 2000). Hence, we expected high (vs. low) locomotors to have higher ratings of their anticipated performance and perceived assessment competence.

Our main hypothesis was that focus-role fit would be moderated by assessment. Across all measures, we predicted that low assessors would show the established price negotiation focus-role fit effects. If negotiators generally respond positively to their situation—anticipate good performances and perceive themselves as able to assess their positions—the intensification

of responses in focus-role fit should lead prevention buyers and promotion sellers (fit) to respond more positively than promotion buyers and prevention sellers (non-fit). In contrast, high assessors' distrust of feeling right in fit is predicted to yield a reduction of these fit effects, including the possibilities of elimination or even reversal (i.e., overcorrection). If overcorrection produced a reversal, then strong-assessment negotiators in fit would respond *less* positively than strong-assessment negotiators in non-fit. Because locomotion is not related to critical evaluation or a concern with being right, we did not expect locomotion to moderate focus-role fit.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

One hundred twelve students participated for \$8 or experiment credit. Data from ten participants was excluded for procedural reasons (e.g., misinterpreting experimenter instructions). This left 102 participants (56 women and 46 men). There were no effects of gender.

### **Procedure**

Participants signed consent forms before completing "Study 1," which consisted of the Regulatory Focus Questionnaire and the Regulatory Mode Questionnaire, both described below. For "Study 2," participants were randomly assigned to roles (buyer or seller) and pairs, and were told that they would be negotiating over a Columbia University notebook. Sellers were given a notebook and buyers were given \$5 in singles. The experimenter emphasized that the negotiated outcome, whether impasse or agreement, would be binding and was separate from compensation for participation. Outcomes were restricted to a range from \$0 and \$10, with any agreement over \$5 requiring additional money from the buyer above and beyond her endowment. Participants completed a pre-negotiation questionnaire. Although participants carried out the negotiation, our

hypotheses concerned participants' evaluative judgments during pre-negotiation preparation. At the end of the study, participants were compensated and debriefed.

## Materials

**Regulatory Focus Questionnaire.** We measured participants' chronic regulatory focus with the Regulatory Focus Questionnaire (RFQ; Grant & Higgins, 2003; Higgins et al., 2001). The RFQ obtains a subjective history of participants' prevention versus promotion success by asking 11 questions using five-point scales. Sample items include "Not being careful has gotten me into trouble at times" (prevention vigilance failure, reverse scored) and "How often have you accomplished things that got you 'psyched' to work even harder" (promotion eagerness success). An individual who has experienced more success with vigilant strategies will have a higher prevention pride score, and an individual who has experienced more success with eager strategies will have a higher promotion pride score. The prevention pride and promotion pride scales tend to be only slightly positively correlated (in the current study:  $r(102) = .10, p = .3$ ), such that an individual can score high on neither, one, or both scales.

To calculate predominant chronic regulatory focus we subtracted the prevention pride score ( $M = 3.39, SD = 0.85, \text{Cronbach's } \alpha = .83$ ) from the promotion pride score ( $M = 3.84, SD = 0.48, \text{Cronbach's } \alpha = .69$ ). Analyses are based on this difference score ( $M = 0.46, SD = 0.94$ ), for which a higher score indicates a greater relative promotion focus.

**Regulatory Mode Questionnaire.** We measured participants' chronic regulatory mode with the Regulatory Mode Questionnaire (RMQ; Kruglanski et al., 2000), which consists of 30 items using six-point scales. Sample items include "I often compare myself with other people" (assessment) and "When I finish one project, I often wait awhile before getting started on a new one" (locomotion, reverse scored). Previous studies (see Higgins et al., 2003; Kruglanski et al.,

2000) have found that assessment and locomotion orientations are orthogonal or uncorrelated.

This was also the case in the current study:  $r(102) = -.07, p = .5$ .

We separately calculated participants' assessment orientation scores ( $M = 4.06, SD = 0.68, \text{Cronbach's } \alpha = .79$ ) and locomotion orientation scores ( $M = 4.31, SD = 0.59, \text{Cronbach's } \alpha = .76$ ). All analyses use these two continuous measures, for each of which a higher score indicates a stronger orientation. Neither assessment nor locomotion was significantly correlated with predominant regulatory focus ( $r(102) = -.10, p = .3$  and  $r(102) = .08, p = .4$ , respectively).

**Negotiation Preparation Questionnaire.** Participants completed a questionnaire assessing their pre-negotiation preparation. Participants rated the strength of their pre-negotiation position (1 = *very weak* to 7 = *very strong*) and how well they expected to perform (1 = *very poorly* to 7 = *very well*). Participants also rated how confident (1 = *absolutely not* to 7 = *absolutely yes*) they felt in their prospective assessments of how well they would perform and how easy (1 = *extremely difficult* to 7 = *extremely easy*) it would be to assess their performance once the negotiation had concluded. Finally, to test for mood effects, participants rated their current mood (1 = *very bad* to 7 = *very good*) and state-of-mind (1 = *very negative* to 7 = *very positive*). Descriptive statistics and correlations for these measures are reported in Table 1.

## Results

In this price negotiation, we predicted that low assessors would demonstrate the standard focus-role fit effects (i.e., intensified responses) whereas high assessors would demonstrate a reduction of these effects, possibly eliminating or even reversing this pattern.<sup>2</sup> To test whether an assessment orientation moderated focus-role regulatory fit, we conducted a series of linear

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<sup>2</sup> This prediction assumes that negotiators generally respond positively to their situation. For each of the four dependent variables of interest, one-sample t-tests indicated that negotiators rated themselves significantly higher than the mid-point of the scale (all  $ps \leq .001$ ). Thus, the negotiators generally anticipated good performances and perceived themselves as able to assess their positions.

regressions, using standardized predictors to reduce multicollinearity. We included the following predictors: role (contrast coded: -1 = buyer, +1 = seller), predominant regulatory focus, locomotion, assessment, Regulatory Focus x Role, Regulatory Focus x Assessment, Role x Assessment<sup>3</sup>, and Regulatory Focus x Role x Assessment.<sup>4</sup>

### Anticipated Performance

We combined the perceived strength and expected performance measures ( $r(102) = .49, p < .001$ ) into an *anticipated performance* variable.<sup>5</sup> There was an unexpected significant main effect of role,  $B = -0.57, SE = 0.09, t(93) = -6.27, p < .001$ . Buyers anticipated better performance than sellers. Assessment and locomotion had significant main effects,  $B = -0.24, SE = 0.09, t(93) = -2.56, p = .01$  and  $B = 0.30, SE = 0.09, t(93) = 3.22, p = .002$ , respectively. Consistent with previous findings relating regulatory mode to optimism (see Kruglanski et al., 2000), higher assessors anticipated worse performance than lower assessors, whereas higher locomotors anticipated better performance than lower locomotors. The interaction of regulatory focus and role was not significant,  $p > .5$ . Most importantly, and as predicted, the three-way interaction between regulatory focus, role, and assessment was highly significant,  $B = -0.24, SE = 0.09, t(93) = -2.67, p = .009$ .<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The two-way interactions with assessment (Regulatory Focus x Assessment and Role x Assessment) were not significant in any of our regressions and thus will not be discussed further.

<sup>4</sup> The interactions with locomotion (Regulatory Focus x Locomotion, Role x Locomotion, and Regulatory Focus x Role x Locomotion) did not produce consistently significant results. The three-way interaction was notably non-significant indicating that, as predicted, locomotion did not moderate focus-role fit. Moreover, because the locomotion interactions did not change the pattern of results, they were excluded.

<sup>5</sup> For conceptual clarity, we divided the four questions into two dependent variables. Analyses using a single composite dependent variable (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .71$ ) yielded the same pattern of results with even greater significance.

<sup>6</sup> To ensure this was not merely a halo effect due to positive mood or positive state-of-mind, we regressed anticipated performance on affective state (the average of mood and state-of-mind,  $r(101) = .71, p < .001$ ). Affective state significantly predicted anticipated performance,  $B = 0.63, SE = 0.08, t(99) = 7.56, p < .001$ . We then regressed the residuals on our regular set of predictors. Regulatory Focus x Role x Assessment significantly predicted the remaining variance in anticipated performance,  $B = -0.16, SE = 0.08, t(92) = -2.02, p < .05$ . In a conservative test of our hypothesis, the three-way interaction had an effect over and above positive mood and positive state-of-mind.

To clarify this three-way interaction, we conducted linear regressions to look for different patterns for low assessors and high assessors.<sup>7</sup> Among low assessors, Regulatory Focus x Role was significant,  $B = 0.29$ ,  $SE = 0.13$ ,  $t(93) = 2.24$ ,  $p = .03$ . As predicted and as shown in Figure 1a, low assessors replicated the established pattern of focus-role fit effects with prevention buyers anticipating better performances than promotion buyers and promotion sellers anticipating better performances than prevention sellers. Among high assessors, Regulatory Focus x Role was a non-significant trend in the *opposite* direction,  $B = -0.18$ ,  $SE = 0.13$ ,  $t(93) = -1.44$ ,  $p = .15$ . For high assessors, as shown in Figure 1b, if anything, prevention buyers anticipated *worse* performances than promotion buyers and promotion sellers anticipated *worse* performances than prevention sellers.

### Perceived Assessment Competence

Next we combined the measures of confidence in prospective assessment and forecasted ease of retrospective assessment ( $r(102) = .37$ ,  $p < .001$ ) into a *perceived assessment competence* variable. There was a significant main effect of locomotion,  $B = 0.18$ ,  $SE = 0.09$ ,  $t(93) = 2.02$ ,  $p < .05$ , but not assessment ( $p > .15$ ). Higher locomotors perceived their assessment competence to be higher than lower locomotors. These results are generally consistent with previous findings that high locomotors have high confidence in their judgment (see Higgins et al., 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2000). The interaction of regulatory focus and role was non-significant,  $p > .2$ . Most importantly, and again as predicted, the three-way interaction between regulatory focus, role, and assessment was highly significant,  $B = -0.26$ ,  $SE = 0.09$ ,  $t(93) = -2.94$ ,  $p = .004$ .<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For low assessors, we conducted a regression that shifted the zero value for standardized assessment to +1 *SD*. For high assessors, we shifted the zero value for standardized assessment to -1 *SD*.

<sup>8</sup> To again rule out a halo effect due to positivity, we regressed perceived assessment competence on affective state. Affective state was a significant predictor,  $B = 0.47$ ,  $SE = 0.07$ ,  $t(99) = 6.45$ ,  $p < .001$ . We then regressed the residuals on our regular set of predictors. Regulatory Focus x Role x Assessment marginally significantly predicted the remaining variance in anticipated performance,  $B = -0.16$ ,  $SE = 0.09$ ,  $t(92) = -1.87$ ,  $p = .06$ . In a conservative test of our hypothesis, the three-way interaction had an effect over and above that of mood and state-of-mind.

To clarify this three-way interaction, we again conducted linear regressions to look for different patterns for low assessors and high assessors. Among low assessors, Regulatory Focus x Role was significant,  $B = 0.33$ ,  $SE = 0.13$ ,  $t(93) = 2.56$ ,  $p = .01$ . As predicted and as shown in Figure 2a, low assessors replicated the established pattern of focus-role fit effects; prevention buyers and promotion sellers perceived their assessment competence to be higher than promotion buyers and prevention sellers. Among high assessors, Regulatory Focus x Role was a non-significant trend in the *opposite* direction,  $B = -0.18$ ,  $SE = 0.12$ ,  $t(93) = -1.49$ ,  $p = .16$ . For high assessors, as shown in Figure 2b, if anything, prevention buyers and promotion sellers perceived their assessment competence to be *lower* than promotion buyers and prevention sellers.

### **General Discussion and Conclusions**

Regarding the main effects in our study, our overall results replicated past findings (see Higgins et al., 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2000). High (vs. low) assessors reported lower evaluations of their pre-negotiation positions. Because they compare their position against various standards of comparison (e.g., their ideal position, their past positions, their counterpart's assumed position), high assessors are aware of both their strengths and weaknesses; this variety of self-generated feedback causes high assessors to have a less positive outlook (Higgins et al., 2003). In contrast, high (vs. low) locomotors consistently reported higher evaluations of their pre-negotiation positions. Replicating past findings (Kruglanski et al., 2000), high locomotors were more optimistic and confident, perhaps reflecting a pre-negotiation preparatory tactic to help initiate and sustain action in the negotiation.

There was an unexpected main effect of role for anticipated performance; buyers expected better performance than sellers. This may reflect undergraduates' greater experience, as consumers, with buying versus selling. Alternatively, it may be a context-specific result due to



the greater perceived versatility or usefulness of the buyer's money versus the seller's notebook. Because money can be used for many purposes whereas the notebook has limited uses, the money may be seen as a greater source of power in the negotiation.

Most importantly for the objective of our study, across analyses, the predicted three-way interaction between regulatory focus, negotiator role, and assessment emerged. Low assessors replicated the pattern of focus-role fit found by Appelt et al. (2009), with focus-role fit negotiators reporting more positive preparatory responses—better anticipated performance and higher perceived assessment competence—than non-fit negotiators. In contrast, high assessors did not show this pattern. Instead, high assessors evidenced a trend toward overcorrection. The tendency of high assessors to overcorrect rules out a simple negativity explanation: It is not merely that high assessors were more negative. Instead, high assessors who were in *non-fit* reported more positive preparatory responses—better anticipated performance and higher perceived assessment competence—than high assessors who were in fit and tended to correct the “feeling right” bias from fit. High assessors were not simply negative, rather, they reversed the pattern—non-fit negotiators were more positive than fit negotiators.

This is the first study to suggest that an assessment orientation may induce correction processes. Motivation is a necessary condition for both detection and attempted correction of perceived biases (Wegener & Petty, 1995, 1997). Strong assessment may be a unique source of such motivation, even when the bias is due to a relevant, integral source. Alternatively or perhaps additionally, high assessors may have a stricter criterion for determining what is relevant and integral. In either case, when high assessors critically evaluate their position, they perceive a feeling of rightness (whether relevant and integral or not) that could bias their responding. With

their extreme motivation to *be* right rather than just *feel* right, high assessors are driven to correct for fit effects, which can eliminate or even *overcorrect* them.

Identifying an assessment orientation as a motivator of correction processes reveals something new about what it means to be a high assessor. Assessment is an important part of self-regulation. Indeed, it is a cross-cultural universal. Although there are different rates of predominance across cultures, there are high assessors in every culture, and assessment strength relates to central traits, such as the Big Five and self-esteem, similarly across cultures (e.g., in every culture studied, high assessors are more neurotic) (Higgins, 2008; Higgins et al., in press). Thus, understanding the benefits and costs of assessment is paramount.

A major benefit of high assessment is that, when combined with high locomotion, it produces higher achievement than low assessment (see Higgins et al., 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2000). This is precisely because high assessors are concerned with being right. High locomotors want to initiate and maintain movement—but toward what goal? Great things cannot be achieved without carefully evaluating the options. What is the right goal to pursue? What are the right means to use? The combination of high locomotion (“just do it!”) and high assessment (“be right”) uniquely creates a motivation to “just do the right thing!” and enables high achievement.

However, high assessment also has disadvantages, as illustrated by the main effects of the current study, which replicate high assessments costs (Higgins et al., 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2000): A decrease in anticipated success was a direct effect of strong assessment. There may be additional costs of high assessment that are the downside of its central benefit—that is, being right. While it is natural to correct biases from irrelevant sources (e.g., Higgins, 1996; Murphy & Zajonc, 1993; Schwarz & Clore, 1983; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974; Petty et al., 1998), only high assessors are motivated to correct biases from feeling right due to a relevant, appropriate

source—integral regulatory fit. High assessors are suspicious of feeling right, and may not even consider it to be relevant. To be right, they believe they need to correct biases from feeling right, and strong correction can produce not only elimination of a bias but also overcorrection. While correction may be beneficial when it yields more accurate responses, overcorrection creates the opposite bias. In the current study, high assessors' tendency toward overcorrection had the detrimental consequences of tending to lower performance expectations and to reduce confidence.

We investigated assessment-induced overcorrection in the strategic preparation phase of negotiation. Although negotiation planning is an important context where strategic assessment takes place in the real world, it is only one context. Would assessment moderate regulatory fit in other contexts, such as moral judgments or persuasion? If it did, this could be important. People experiencing regulatory fit sometimes confuse feelings of rightness from fit with feelings of moral rightness such that they judge something that feels right (fit) as morally right and something that feels wrong (non-fit) as morally wrong (Camacho, Higgins, & Luger, 2003). Would this effect be eliminated, or even reversed, for high assessors? In another vein, regulatory fit can increase persuasion when people feel right about message reception (Cesario et al., 2004; Cesario, Higgins, & Scholer, 2007). Would an assessment orientation protect consumers against regulatory fit manipulations? When regulatory fit is manipulated incidentally (i.e., separately from the focal context), the ensuing feeling of rightness can lead to a reliance on superficial, heuristic processing (Koenig, Cesario, Molden, Kosloff, & Higgins, 2009). Would high assessors correct and revert to deeper, more systematic processing? And if fit was manipulated integrally (i.e., inherent to the persuasive message), would high assessors still correct? These are interesting questions for future research.

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Table 1

*Summary Statistics and Correlations for Negotiation Preparation Measures*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1 State of mind	4.30	1.17	–				
2 Mood	4.42	1.13	0.71***	–			
3 Perceived strength Expected	4.53	1.46	0.50***	0.47***	–		
4 performance Assessment	4.83	1.04	0.45***	0.52***	0.49***	–	
5 confidence	4.78	1.11	0.36***	0.54***	0.29**	0.57***	–
6 Assessment ease	5.07	1.10	0.38***	0.41***	0.16	0.36***	0.37***

\*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Figure 1. Predicted values for anticipated performance by negotiator role and regulatory focus for (a) low assessors (-1 SD) and (b) high assessors (+1 SD).

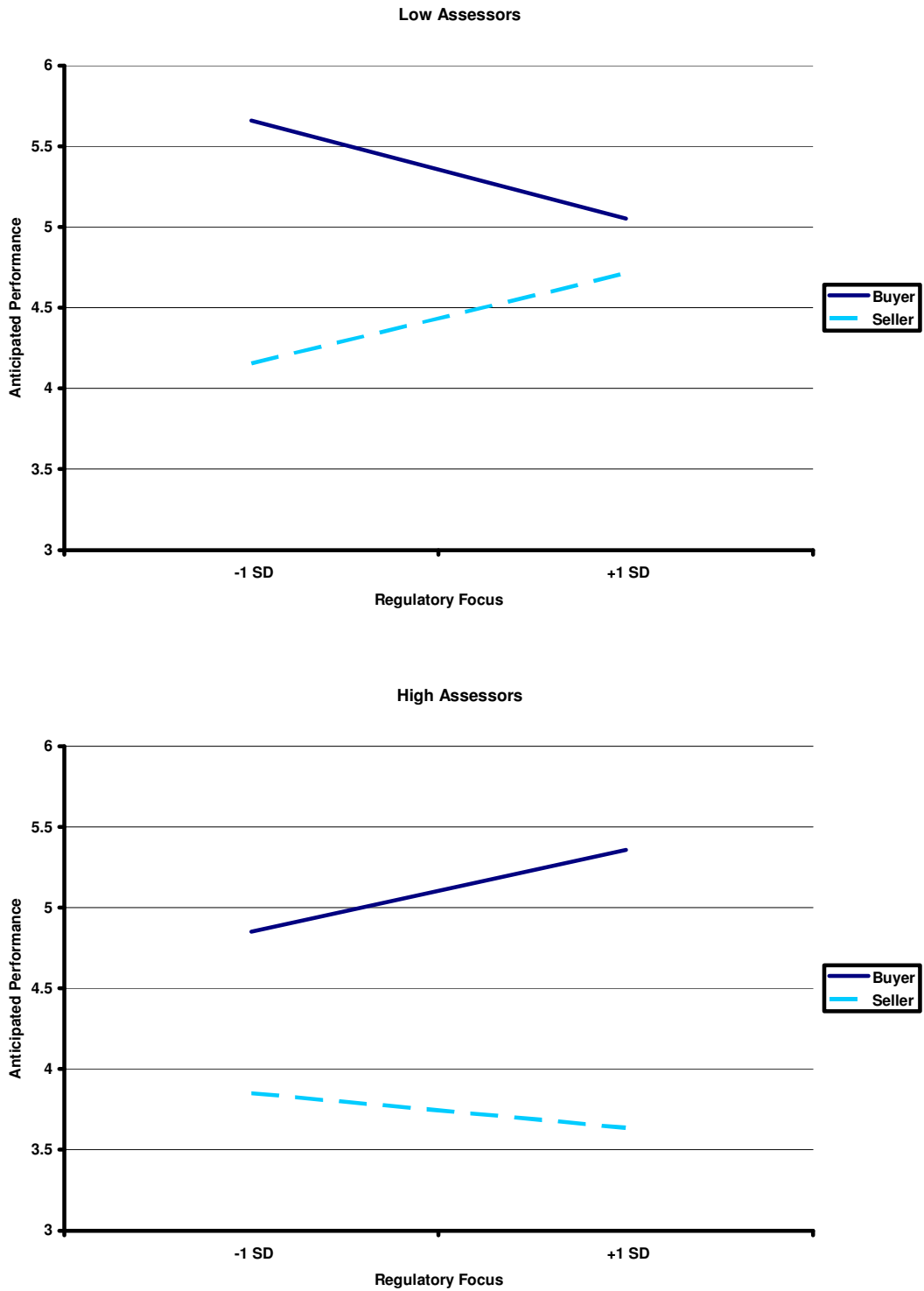


Figure 2. Predicted values of perceived assessment competence by negotiator role and regulatory focus for (a) low assessors (-1 SD) and (b) high assessors (+1 SD).

