Similar advisers are more persuasive when advice-takers rely on their feelings

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Similar Advisers Are More Persuasive when Advice-takers Rely on Their Feelings

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Abstract

We propose that an advice-taker's perceived similarity with an adviser creates a momentary subjective "feels right" experience towards the advice. The advice-taker incorporates this feeling, as information, into a judgment about topics of advice. Thus, persuasiveness of the advice is increased. Across six studies, we show that reliance on feelings moderates the effect of perceived similarity on advice persuasiveness. A similar adviser is more persuasive when advice-takers are instructed to use their feelings (vs. logic), when they have experiential (vs. functional) motives, when they are making a decision for near future (vs. distant future), when they see the topic of the advice as being more (vs. less) within reach, and when their cognitive resources are limited (vs. not limited). Moreover, we show that participants' self-reported "feels right" experience while receiving the advice mediates this moderation.

Keywords: advice, persuasion, similarity, feelings

We seek other people's advice for many decisions in life. Whether or not the advice we receive is influential can depend on the characteristics of the advice giver. In the broad area of interpersonal influence, these 'source characteristics' have traditionally received ample attention (Chaiken, 1980; Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984, 1986; Wilson & Sherrell, 1993). We have long known that similarity is an influential source characteristic (Hovland et al., 1953). But why is a similar adviser more persuasive? Other than influencing what we *think*, does similarity to an adviser also influence how we *feel* towards the advice?

Surprisingly, the ample prior research on source effects has rarely considered the experiential nature of persuasion.¹ Researchers have mainly focused on cognitive processes and rule based thinking to explain source effects (Chaiken, 1980; Gino et al., 2009; Kang & Herr, 2006; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). A common property of the assumed explanatory mechanisms is that they concentrate on the "if ... then ..." rules people use in decision-making (e.g., a heuristic such as, "Similar people have similar goals; therefore, their evaluations are relevant to me."). Using some of these rules may be considered slower, or to require more processing resources, while using others may be considered faster or to require less processing resources. However, neither of these two types of rules relate to people's feelings and subjective experiences.

The exclusive focus on rule-based mechanisms in studying source effects seems to ignore prior research showing that judgments are often feeling-based (Damasio, 1994; Epstein, 1994; Greifender, Pham, & Bless, 2011; Zajonc, 1980). Moreover, the influence of feelings in persuasion is not limited to affective feelings (Bless, Mackie, & Schwarz, 1992), but also includes cognitive feelings (Cesario, Higgins, & Scholer, 2008; Wanke, Bless, & Biller, 1996), such as certainty or doubt.

In this paper, we propose that, over and above rule-based inferences, feelings contribute to a similar adviser's persuasiveness. People incorporate into their judgments their momentary subjective experience from receiving and processing another person's advice. Specifically, we propose that perceived similarity with an adviser will contribute to the advice-taker's cognitive feeling of certainty. In other words, similarity will cause the advice to "feel more right." This feeling is incorporated, as information (Schwarz & Clore, 1983), into the advice-taker's evaluation of the topic of the advice, increasing persuasion. As the main empirical contribution of this paper, we will show that similar advisers are more persuasive in situations where people rely more on their feelings. This approach to investigating source effects contributes to the persuasion and advice literature by enabling us to propose and test new predictions that would be hard to accommodate using a rule-based model.

In the following, we will first introduce our conceptual argument. Then, we will present our empirical findings. Finally, we will discuss our findings and their implications.

When Advice "Feels Right"

An impressive stream of research has shown that the self-concept is expansive (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992; Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991). As people feel psychologically closer to each other, the boundaries between the self and the other becomes blurry and people start to project aspects of themselves onto others (Davis, Conklin, Smith, & Luce, 1996) and aspect of others onto themselves (Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce, & Neuberg, 1997). People's overlapping mental representations cause them to confuse their own attributes, cognitions, and emotions with others' (Aron et al., 1992; Aron et al., 1991; Galinsky, Wang, & Ku, 2008; Gino & Galinsky, 2012; Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007; Jackson, Brunet, Meltzoff, & Decety, 2006; Norton, Monin, Cooper, & Hogg, 2003; Smith & Henry, 1996).

Multiple influences can affect people's feeling of closeness with others and consequently lead to overlapping mental representations. These influences include close relationships (Aron et al., 1991; Cialdini et al., 1997), similarity (Berger & Heath, 2008), perspective-taking (Davis et al., 1996; Gino & Galinsky, 2012), membership in similar groups (Norton et al., 2003; Smith & Henry, 1996), and even subtle influences such as an interdependent mindset and sharing the same birth date (Gino & Galinsky, 2012). For example, Goldstein and Cialdini (2007) observed that participants who had taken the perspective of a helpful person in a prior task, considered themselves more helpful. Also, Gino and Galinsky (2012) showed that students who shared the same birth date and school year with an immoral confederate adjusted their moral behavior and thoughts to the confederate's.

How would such overlapping mental representation cause a similar adviser's persuasiveness? We believe advice-takers are more likely to perceive a similar adviser's advice as their own opinion. In other words, in the same manner that people unconsciously consider themselves more helpful by observing a similar other's helpfulness (Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007), they will unconsciously consider the expressed opinion of a similar other as their own opinion. Consequently, advice-takers will feel more certain and confident of their subsequent reaction to the advice and of their judgment based on the advice. In other words, the advice will "feel right."

The "feels right" experience argued for here, although generated through a different mechanism, is parallel to what researchers have argued for in earlier work. Prior research has shown that regulatory fit (Cesario & Higgins, 2008), a match between people's mental dispositions and external factors (Kim, Rao, & Lee, 2009; Mayer & Tormala, 2010), and confirmation of people's prior mood states by external information (Adaval, 2001) can generate a "feels right" experience. Although subtle differences exist among the processes leading to such

experiences, these experiences seem to share the property of increasing people's feelings of certainty and confidence in their judgments, and therefore, the perceived correctness, validity, and truthfulness of those judgments (Higgins, 2012, p. 249).

Importantly, similar to "feels right" experiences identified in prior research (Adaval, 2001; Cesario, Grant, & Higgins, 2004; Kim et al., 2009), the "feels right" sensation caused by similarity of an adviser is subject to as-information processing (Schwarz & Clore, 1983). Therefore, people use this feeling more in situations where they have a higher likelihood of relying on their feelings (e.g., when feelings are considered more relevant). Thus, advice from a similar adviser is more persuasive when people have a higher reliance on their feelings.

Overview of Studies

We use a similar paradigm for all six studies reported in this paper. In each study, we test our predictions in the context of receiving advice from an online hotel reviewer. We ask participants to read and imagine a scenario in which they will book a hotel online. Next, they read one or two reviews of an anonymous hotel, and then evaluate the hotel based on the review(s). Each review includes a profile of the reviewer. Importantly, other than the review(s), we give participants no information regarding the hotel. We use negative online reviews as the focal review in all our studies. Therefore, a lower hotel evaluation implies higher persuasiveness.

In this paper, we will rule out several potential alternative explanations by comparing our findings across multiple studies. Thus, we need to ensure that different stimuli do not drive the various effects found in multiple studies. By using a single context and relatively homogenous stimuli throughout our studies, we ensure that the studies are comparable and therefore that context-driven factors are not the cause of the different effects. In addition, by choosing negative (instead of positive) reviews, we ensure that our effects are driven by a non-hedonic (i.e., "feels

right”) sensation rather than a hedonic (i.e., “feels good”) sensation (Higgins, 2012). Such a hedonic sensation could, for example, be caused by being informed that a similar other has experienced an enjoyable time. Therefore, using negative reviews in our studies yields a more conservative test of our conceptualization.

In Study 1, we test our basic proposition that feelings associated with receiving advice from a similar adviser contribute to that adviser’s persuasiveness. We show that when participants are instructed to use their logic, and thereby ignore their feelings, the persuasiveness of a similar adviser is attenuated. In Studies 2 and 3, we build on research showing that people will consider feelings less relevant and will therefore rely less on their feelings when they have functional motives than when they have experiential motives (Pham, 1998). Here, we show that a similar (vs. dissimilar) adviser is more persuasive when people’s motive is experiential (vs. functional). In Studies 4A and B, we make more novel predictions based on our feeling-based account of the role of similarity in persuasion. Specifically, in Study 4A, we build on research suggesting that the affective system is a decision-making system of the present (Chang & Pham, 2012), and show that adviser similarity enhances persuasion if people plan to use the hotel in the near future versus the distant future. In Study 4B, we present the hotel visit as a lottery prize. We show that similarity enhances persuasiveness more if people have higher, versus lower, odds of visiting the hotel. We argue that people with a higher chance of visiting the hotel will perceive the visit to be more within reach and will therefore rely more on their feelings when evaluating the hotel (Metcalf & Mischel, 1999; Mischel & Shoda, 1995). We base Study 5 on the notion that even in situations where feelings are irrelevant, ignoring feelings when making a judgment is contingent on availability of substantial cognitive resources (Avnet, Pham, & Stephen, forthcoming). We show that even when people’s motives are functional, a similar (vs. dissimilar)

adviser is more persuasive if people have limited (vs. substantial) cognitive resources available. Moreover, in Studies 3 and 4A and B, we provide mediational evidence for our conceptualization and show that the interaction between reliance on feelings (i.e., motive in Study 3, time focus in Study 4A, and chance of winning a hotel visit in Study 4B) and similarity in predicting the advice's persuasiveness is mediated by participants' self-reported "feels right" experience while being advised.

Insert Figure 1 about here.

Study 1

We argue that subjective experiences (i.e., feelings) associated with a similar other's advice lead to that advice's greater persuasiveness. If our argument is correct, the persuasiveness of a similar adviser should be attenuated when people are induced to rely on their logic instead of their feelings. In Study 1, we use direct instructions to manipulate the degree to which participants rely on their logic versus feelings. We hypothesize that perceived similarity with an adviser enhances the persuasiveness of the advice when participants are instructed to rely on their feelings while evaluating the hotel, but not when instructed to rely on their logic. Importantly, we expect the instructions to change only the strategy participants pursue in evaluating the hotel (i.e., degree of reliance on feelings), and not the utilitarian versus hedonic nature of their expectations of the hotel. Also, we measure perceived reviewer credibility, trustworthiness, and expertise, and expect that our hypothesis will hold while controlling for these source characteristics. We did not want participants' perceived similarity to the reviewer to affect participants' perceptions of reviewer expertise, credibility, or trust. Therefore, other than designing our stimuli to serve this purpose, we controlled for these co-variates in the analyses.

Design and Procedure

One hundred and nine participants (median age of 30, and 60% females) from an online panel participated in a “survey about the hotel industry” and were randomly assigned to either the reliance-on-feelings instruction condition or the reliance-on-logic instruction condition. At the beginning of the session, depending on their condition, participants received specific instructions to rely either on their feelings or on logical considerations while evaluating the hotel. We adopted the two sets of instructions from Pham, Cohen, Pracejus, and Hughes (2001), who showed that these specific instructions elicit distinct feeling-based versus reason-based modes of evaluation.

After participants read the instructions, we asked them to imagine searching online for a hotel for a trip to London with their partner and to imagine trying to choose a fun, romantic, exiting, and enjoyable hotel. We further asked participants to imagine that they had found a hotel matching their criteria and that they were considering to book it, but that they had also found a review about the hotel on a credible hotel review website. Then, we presented participants with a review of the hotel that included a rating, a comment about the hotel, and the reviewer’s profile. The reviewer’s profile was presented before the reviewer’s comment, but on the same page as the comment. The reviewer, whose gender was not specified, had commented negatively about the hotel as evidenced both by the rating (2, ostensibly from a range between 1 and 7) and by the comment itself (“It is relatively average compared to other hotels in the same class. The service didn’t impress me either. Overall, I was disappointed. Would I return? Probably not.”). The profile was a short self-description of the reviewer (“I am 25 years old and currently I am an MBA student. I really like my studies and hope to get a great job after graduating. I love traveling.”). After participants read the review, we measured their evaluation of the hotel using

three items (1 = totally unfavorable / 9 = totally favorable, 1 = bad choice / 9 = good choice, and 1 = totally dislike / 9 = totally like). Next, we measured perceived reviewer similarity, expertise, credibility, and trustworthiness using six items (1 = totally disagree / 7 = totally agree). We measured perceived similarity with three items (“Is like me.”; “Behaves like me.”; and “Is similar to me.”), which were averaged into a composite measure ($\alpha = .95$) of perceived similarity. We measured other source characteristics with one item each (“The reviewer has the expertise to review the hotel.”; “The reviewer has the credibility to review the hotel.”; and “The reviewer is trustworthy.”). Then, two items ($r = -.677$, 1 = not at all / 7 = very much) measured participants’ self-reported reliance on logic (“How much did you rely on your logical considerations while evaluating the hotel?”), and reliance on feelings (“How much did you rely on your feelings while evaluating the hotel?”). The former item was subtracted from the latter to give an overall reliance-on-feelings measure, such that a higher score is indicative of higher reliance on feelings. We used two items (1 = strongly disagree / 7 = strongly agree) to measure participants’ hedonic expectations (“I will be looking for a hotel that will be fun to stay in.”; and “I will be looking for an exciting hotel where I can enjoy myself.”) and two items (1 = strongly disagree / 7 = strongly agree) to measure participants’ utilitarian expectations of the hotel (“I will be looking for a hotel that will cover my functional needs.”; and “I will be looking for a hotel that will meet my practical considerations.”). We averaged each of these pairs to have a hedonic expectations ($r = .91$) and a utilitarian expectations ($r = .91$) measure. Finally, one item (1 = not at all / 7 = very much) measured engagement with the task (“How engaged were you in completing this survey?”).

Results

Participants in both conditions reported being equally similar to the reviewer (3.27 vs. 3.07), being equally engaged (6.37 vs. 6.33), and having equal hedonic (5.14 vs. 4.90) and utilitarian (5.68 vs. 5.45) expectations of the hotel (all t -values < 1). However, compared to those in the reliance-on-logic condition ($M = -2.68$), participants in the reliance-on-feelings condition reported higher overall reliance on their feelings while evaluating the hotel ($M = 1.20$, $t(107) = -8.408$, $p < .001$).

A regression analysis with hotel evaluation as the dependent variable and similarity, instructions ($-1 = \text{logic}$, $1 = \text{feelings}$), and the interaction of similarity and instructions as predictors, while controlling for expertise, credibility, and trustworthiness, showed a marginally significant main effect of similarity ($\beta = -.233$, $t(102) = -1.831$, $p < .07$) and an interaction between similarity and instructions ($\beta = -.228$, $t(102) = -2.195$, $p < .03$).² No other significant effects emerged (all p -values $> .18$). As expected, simple slope analysis (Aiken & West, 1991) revealed that when participants were instructed to rely on their feelings, hotel evaluation was negatively associated with perceived similarity with the reviewer ($\beta = -.461$, $t(102) = -2.577$, $p < .01$). However, when participants were instructed to rely on their logical considerations, hotel evaluation was not associated with perceived similarity ($\beta = -.005$, $t(102) < 1$).

Discussion

In Study 1, we found evidence that feelings associated with perceived similarity of an adviser can lead to that adviser's greater persuasiveness. We showed that if participants are instructed to use their logic (ignore their feelings) while evaluating a hotel, the association between perceived similarity and adviser's persuasiveness is attenuated. Importantly, results from the hotel-expectations measures showed that our reliance on feelings or logic manipulation did not change the hedonic or utilitarian nature of expectations of the hotel, but rather changed

the strategy used to evaluate the hotel. We also demonstrated that our effects hold while controlling for perceived reviewer expertise, credibility, and trustworthiness, thereby dissociating similarity from these source effects.

Study 1 is interesting because, in addition to demonstrating the moderation of reliance on feelings, it shows that within the context of our study, participants do not consider it logical (rational) to be influenced more by a similar adviser. A cognitive account of similarity effects, for example, would assert that advise-takers are more likely to consider similar advisers credible sources because advice-takers assume that similar advisers share their tastes, interests, or perspectives and therefore are able to give better advice (Hovland et al., 1953). If our participants where making such assumptions it would be logically justifiable to find a similar adviser's advice more persuasive. However, participants do not seem to rely on such assumptions because as shown in Figure 2, there is no relationship between similarity of the adviser and the persuasiveness of the advice among participants who were asked to rely on logic.

Insert Figure 2 about here.

A possible alternative explanation for the results of Study 1 is that by asking participants to use their logic instead of their feelings, we have increased the extent of elaboration (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) in the reliance-on-logic condition more than in the reliance-on-feelings condition. Therefore, lower elaboration, instead of reliance on feelings, could have led to similar adviser's persuasiveness. However, for two reasons, elaboration likelihood does not seem to account for the effects found here. First, even if our instructions did affect participants' degree of elaboration in the different conditions, it is unclear how different levels of elaboration might lead to the effects described in this paper (i.e., what serves as a strong or a weak

argument). Second, as we will see, in Studies 2 and 3, elaboration likelihood is less likely to covary with reliance on feelings, and in Studies 4A and B, higher elaboration is more likely to be associated with reliance on feelings. Thus, across studies, we will see that different degrees of elaboration cannot be a plausible explanation for the effects described in this paper.

Another possible alternative explanation for the results of Study 1 could be related to the fact that perceived similarity was measured, and not manipulated. Because similarity was measured after asking participants to evaluate the hotel, participants who were initially persuaded more by the review, post hoc, might have reported more similarity with the reviewer. Although this explanation would predict a main effect of similarity, it would not be able to account for the interaction between similarity and reliance on feelings. In addition, such an explanation could be used to make the same predictions for the other source characteristics measured in Study 1 (i.e., participants who were persuaded more would also perceive the reviewer to be more credible, trustworthy, and expert). However, in Study 1 we did not find a similar pattern of results between similarity and expertise, credibility, and trustworthiness. Therefore, the abovementioned alternative explanation does not seem plausible; yet, to rule out this reverse-causality-based explanation completely, in Study 2 we manipulate similarity instead of measuring it.

Study 2

In Study 1, we found evidence for our proposition that lower (vs. higher) reliance on feelings attenuates a similar adviser's persuasiveness. In Study 2, we use a more subtle manipulation to provide further evidence for the moderating effect of reliance on feelings on a similar adviser's persuasiveness. Previous research has shown that people will rely less on their feelings if they have functional motives than if they have experiential motives (Pham, 1998).

This lesser reliance on feelings is because of an assessment of relevance of feelings, such that compared to people who have experiential motives, people who have functional motives will consider feelings less relevant, and therefore ignore feelings in making the judgment at hand (Avnet et al., forthcoming). Therefore, we can hypothesize that a similar (vs. dissimilar) adviser's persuasiveness will be attenuated if people have functional (vs. experiential) motives. In Study 2, we test this prediction. In addition, in Study 2 we experimentally manipulate similarity, as opposed to measuring for a correlational analysis.

Design and Procedure

One hundred and eleven undergraduate students (median age of 20, and 56% females) participated in a 2 (experiential vs. functional motive) $\times$ 2 (similar vs. dissimilar reviewer) between-subjects pen and paper experiment in class. We randomly assigned the participants to conditions and handed them a booklet supposedly containing a study "about the hotel industry." Depending on their condition, participants had to imagine trying to book a hotel for either a trip with functional motives, or a trip with experiential motives. In the functional condition, participants imagined a trip to Frankfurt with a colleague, and their stated purpose of stay was to take part in job interviews. We told them that they would be busy during their stay and would not have time for having fun. In the experiential condition, participants imagined going to Paris with their partner and choosing a fun, romantic, exiting, and enjoyable hotel. In a pretest, participants from the same population had indicated significantly higher hedonic expectations of a hotel after they had read the experiential scenario ($M = 5.0$) than after reading the functional one ($M = 2.3$, $t(31) = 7.7$, $p < .001$). And participants had indicated marginally significant higher utilitarian expectations if they had read the functional scenario ($M = 6.2$) than if they had read the

experiential scenario ($M = 5.6$, $t(31) = -1.84$, $p < .07$). Hedonic and utilitarian expectations were measured similar to how they were measured in Study 1.

After reading the scenarios, each participant read two online reviews, which were accompanied by the reviewers' profiles. The first review, a neutral review by a journalist, was constant among the four experimental conditions, and therefore was used to give the study a more realistic setting and to avoid floor effects. The comment by the second reviewer was identical to the comment used in Study 1 and was also constant among the four conditions. However, similarity was manipulated using the second reviewer's profile such that the reviewer was either a male business student with a lifestyle description similar to an average participant's in our study (similar-reviewer condition) or a male PhD in molecular biology who worked as a researcher for "a major" chemical company and had a lifestyle different from an average participant's in our study (dissimilar-reviewer condition). In a pretest, we used three items similar to the ones used in Study 1 to measure participants' perceived similarity to either of the reviewers. The similar reviewer ($M = 3.26$) was perceived as being significantly more similar to the participants than was the dissimilar reviewer ($M = 2.28$, $t(31) = 2.36$, $p < .02$).

After reading the reviews, participants had to evaluate the hotel using two 7-point items (1 = totally disagree / 7 = totally agree), where they indicated their agreement or disagreement with two sentences ("I think that the hotel is a good choice for me."; "I have a favorable attitude towards the hotel."). Next, we measured perceived similarity using items similar to those used in Study 1 and in the pretest. Participants also had to rate the reviewers' expertise² ("The reviewer has the expertise to review the hotel.") using a 7-point item (1 = totally disagree / 7 = totally agree).

Results

An ANOVA with perceived similarity as dependent variable and similarity and motive as independent factors showed a main effect of similarity ($F(1,107) = 75.4, p < .001$) such that perceived similarity was higher in the similar-reviewer condition ($M = 4.42$) than in the dissimilar-reviewer condition ($M = 2.34$). No other significant effects emerged (p -values $> .13$).

An ANCOVA with hotel evaluation as dependent variable, similarity and motive as independent factors, and expertise as a covariate revealed a significant interaction between similarity and motive ($F(1,106) = 4.51, p < .04$), a significant main effect of motive ($F(1,106) = 4.23, p < .05$), and a marginally significant main effect of similarity ($F(1,106) = 2.83, p < .1$), and a marginally significant effect of expertise ($F(1,106) = 3.88, p < .06$). Follow-up planned contrasts revealed that when motive was experiential, hotel evaluation was significantly lower in the similar-reviewer condition ($M = 3.46$) than in the dissimilar-reviewer condition ($M = 4.25, F(1,106) = 7.36, p < .01$), but when motive was functional, there was no significant difference between the similar-reviewer ($M = 4.25$) and the dissimilar-reviewer ($M = 4.12, F < 1$) conditions.

Discussion

Study 2 supports our hypothesis that a similar (vs. dissimilar) adviser's persuasiveness will be attenuated if people have functional (vs. experiential) motives. We attribute this interaction to higher (vs. lower) reliance on feelings by participants with experiential (vs. functional) motives. By manipulating similarity instead of measuring it, this study ruled out a potential reverse causality explanation for the results of Study 1. However, a possible alternative explanation for the interaction found in Study 2 could be that in matters of taste, people ignore advice from others who, they believe, have a taste dissimilar to theirs. However, they would be less selective when taste is not important (Spears, Ellemers, & Doosje, 2009). Therefore, one

could suggest that the dissimilar reviewer was perceived to possess dissimilar taste to the participants', and therefore in the experiential group (where taste could be perceived as being important) the advice from the dissimilar reviewer was less persuasive. This explanation is not consistent with the results of Study 1 or with the results of the studies we plan to report later (i.e., Studies 4A and B, and 5). In all those studies, the degree of participants' reliance on feelings does not co-vary with their hedonic versus utilitarian expectations of the hotel (i.e., the differential importance of taste). Yet, even the pattern of data in Study 2 does not support the abovementioned alternative explanation. If the alternative explanation were true, we would see higher hotel evaluation in the condition where the reviewer is dissimilar and the motive is experiential, but lower and similar hotel evaluation in the other three conditions. However, as shown in Figure 3, in our actual results, hotel evaluation is similarly high in all conditions except in the condition where the motive is experiential and the reviewer is similar.

Insert Figure 3 about here.

Study 3

In Studies 1 and 2, we showed that a similar adviser is more persuasive when people rely more (vs. less) on their feelings. We have argued that the interaction is because an advice coming from a similar source “feels right,” which leads to a similar adviser’s greater persuasiveness in situations where people have a higher (vs. lower) reliance on their feelings. In Study 3, we add mediational evidence to our findings by replicating the findings of Study 2 while measuring participants’ self-reported “feels right” experience from receiving the advice. We predict mediated moderation (Muller, Judd, & Yzerbyt, 2005) such that participants’ self-reported “feels right” experience will mediate the interaction between motive and similarity.

In addition, because in Study 2 we manipulated similarity experimentally, one could argue that rather than differential reliance on feelings, some specific associations between either of the reviewers and the two different motives have affected the persuasiveness of the reviews—leading to our observed effects (e.g., people who are traveling for fun, generally, might consider a student to be more persuasive than a biologist). In Study 3, we planned to rule out this alternative explanation by making some design changes relative to Study 2. First, as in Study 1, instead of university students, we used a more heterogeneous sample of online participants, and instead of manipulating similarity experimentally, we measured it continuously. Second, we used two different profiles similar to the ones we used in Study 2, and we expected the same pattern of results for both of these profiles. By showing that there is no systematic difference in the persuasiveness of these two profiles per se, we ruled out alternative explanations pertaining to perceived associations made between the persons described in the profiles and the motives described in the scenarios.

Design and Procedure

One hundred and eighty participants (aged between 18 and 59, median age of 30, and 57% females) from an online panel participated in a 2 (experiential vs. functional motive) $\times$ 2 (student vs. professor reviewer) between-subjects experiment. Similarity was measured as a continuous variable. We asked participants, randomly assigned to the conditions, to imagine booking a hotel for either experiential or functional purposes. The scenarios we used here were identical to the ones we used in Study 2 with the exception that in both conditions, participants had to imagine traveling to London instead of Frankfurt or Paris. We asked participants to imagine that they had already found a hotel that matched their criteria, but then saw one review on a credible hotel review website. Both the negative comment and the rating in the review were

identical to those in the review used in Study 1. However, we used two different profiles for the reviewer, and randomly assigned each profile to half of the participants. One of these profiles was the same as that used in Study 1 (an MBA student) while the other profile belonged to a researcher (“I am 60 years old and a professor of molecular biology at a major university. I am interested in both research and teaching, and I love traveling.”). Then we used items identical to those used in Study 1 to measure our variables. We also added two items ($r = -.730$, 1 = totally disagree / 7 = totally agree) to measure participants’ self-reported “feels right” experience from the advice: “The review feels right.”; and “The review feels wrong.” The latter item was subtracted from the former to give an overall “feels right” measure, with higher values indicating that overall, the review felt more right (Cesario & Higgins, 2008).

Results

An ANOVA analysis with engagement as the dependent variable and reviewer and motivation as independent factors revealed no significant differences between participants’ self-reported engagement in different conditions (all F s < 1). Similar ANOVA analyses revealed higher hedonic expectations of the hotel among participants in the experiential-motive condition ($M = 4.70$) than among participants in the functional-motive condition ($M = 2.84$, $F(1,176) = 58.79$, $p < .001$). Utilitarian expectations of the hotel were directionally higher among participants in the functional motive group ($M = 5.66$) than among those in the experiential motive group ($M = 5.35$, $F(1, 176) = 1.78$, $p < .19$). No other effects were observed (F s < 1). An ANOVA with similarity as the independent variable, and motive and reviewer as independent factors, revealed only a main effect of reviewer (3.58 vs. 2.86, $F(1,176) = 11.05$, $p < .001$), such that the student was perceived more similar. No other effects emerged (all p -values > .15).

To test our main hypotheses, we mean-centered³ all our independent variables to run several regression analyses, which are shown in Table 1. The first regression had hotel evaluation as the dependent variable and similarity, motive (-1 = functional, 1 = experiential), the interaction of similarity and motive, reviewer (-1 = student, 1 = professor), the interaction of reviewer and motive, the interaction of reviewer and similarity, and also the three-way interaction of reviewer, similarity, and motive as predictors while controlling for perceived reviewer expertise, credibility, and trustworthiness. Table 1 shows that, as predicted, we did not find any main effects or interaction effects associated with reviewer type (p -values > .23). However, we found a predicted significant interaction of similarity with motive ($\beta = -.150$, $t(169) = -1.97$, $p < .05$). Simple slope analyses revealed a simple effect of similarity both when motive was experiential ($\beta = -.596$, $t(169) = -5.370$, $p < .001$) and when motive was functional ($\beta = -.295$, $t(169) = -2.475$, $p < 0.01$). However, as indicated by the interaction, the slope was significantly steeper in the experiential condition. A second regression with similar predictors as those of the first regression and with the self-reported “feels right” measure as the predicted variable resulted in a main effect of perceived similarity ($\beta = .776$, $t(169) = 5.881$, $p < .001$). Finally, a third regression similar to the first regression, but with “feels right” and the interaction of “feels right” and motive added to the predictors, yielded the predicted interaction of motive and “feels right” ($\beta = -.086$, $t(167) = -1.953$, $p < .05$).

These three regressions map onto our conceptualized model, which is depicted in Figure 1. The first regression shows that participants’ motive moderates the effect of adviser similarity on adviser’s persuasiveness and that the relationship between similarity and persuasiveness is higher when participants have experiential (vs. functional) motives. The second regression shows that there is an overall relationship between perceived similarity and the self-reported “feels

right” experience, and shows that this relationship is *not* moderated by participants’ motive (similarity feels right regardless of motive). The third regression shows that, even when controlling for similarity and similarity’s interaction with motive, motive moderates the effect of “feels right” on the adviser’s persuasiveness, such that the relationship between “feels right” and persuasion is higher when people have an experiential motive than when they have a functional motive. Based on Muller et al. (2005), the results of these three regressions fulfill the conditions of a mediated moderation and indicate that the overall interaction between motive and similarity in predicting advice persuasiveness (shown in the first regression) is mediated by participants’ “feels right” experience.

Insert Table 1 about here.

Discussion

In Study 3, we were able to replicate the results of Study 2 and to provide mediational evidence for our conceptualization. We showed that the interaction between similarity and motive in predicting the adviser’s persuasiveness is mediated by participants’ self-reported “feels right” experience. It is also important that the interaction of motive and similarity does not predict participants’ “feels right” experience. These results show that similarity “feels right” regardless of participants’ motive, and that people will use this feeling unless their functional motives render the use of feelings irrelevant.

Finally, in Study 3, we used an online sample of heterogeneous participants, treated similarity as a continuous measure, administered two profiles similar to the previous study’s, and showed that these two profiles per se are not systematically different in terms of

persuasiveness. Thus, we ruled out potential alternative explanations related to perceived differences in associations made between the reviewers described in the profiles and the motives expressed in the scenarios.

Studies 4A and B

So far, we manipulated the degree to which participants relied on their feelings, using direct instructions and by changing the nature of their motives. Across both types of manipulations, we showed that lower (vs. higher) reliance on feelings attenuates a similar adviser's persuasiveness. To further test the explanatory power of our conceptualization, in Studies 4A and B we use more subtle ways to manipulate the degree to which participants rely on their feelings and we show that our results hold for such manipulations.

Recent research (Chang & Pham, 2012) suggests that the affective system is the decision-making system of the present. Therefore, people tend to rely more on their feelings when making decisions for the near future than when making decisions for a more distant future. If the affective system is the decision-making system of the present, and if reliance on feelings increases a similar adviser's persuasiveness, we may hypothesize that a similar adviser is more persuasive if people are making a decision for their near future than if making the same decision for a more distant future. We test this hypothesis in Study 4A.

In Study 4B we manipulate participants' chances of winning a lottery for a hotel visit. In this study, we predict that participants will rely more on their feelings in evaluating a hotel package that is more within reach (higher chance of winning) than they will in evaluating one that is less within reach (lower chance of winning) (Metcalf & Mischel, 1999; Mischel & Shoda, 1995). Therefore, a more similar reviewer will be more persuasive when participants have a higher (vs. lower) chance of winning the package.

In addition, in these two studies, as in Study 3, we measure participants' self-reported "feels right" experience, and show that the interaction of reliance on feelings (i.e., near vs. distant future in Study 4A and high vs. low chance in Study 4B) with similarity is mediated by the participants' "feels right" experience.

Study 4A

Design and procedure

We randomly assigned one hundred and two participants from an online panel (median age of 30, and 57% females) to either the near-future condition or the distant-future condition. All participants had first to read a scenario asking them to imagine that in a credible travel website's lottery they had won a Paris trip for two. The scenario explained that per the lottery's terms, participants had to choose one among several travel packages offered by the website, and that the website would pay all expenses and provide all services. The lottery cover kept the imaginability of the scenarios constant across conditions. Participants in the near-future condition read that they would go on the trip "a week from now" while participants in the distant-future condition read that they would go "a year from now." Participants had to imagine trying to find a fun, beautiful, enjoyable, and memorable hotel. To reinforce our manipulation, we asked participants to imagine for one minute (as vividly as possible) the thoughts and feelings they would have if going on the trip in a week/year. The remainder of the study was conducted similarly to Study 3, except that participants saw only an MBA student's negative opinion about the hotel and that we also used one item (1 = very near future / 9 = very distant future) to measure participants' time focus while evaluating the hotel.

Results

Participants in both conditions reported being equally similar to the reviewer (3.14 vs. 3.59, $t(100) = -1.2$, $p > .23$), equally engaged (6.22 vs. 6.45, $t(100) = 1.307$, $p > .19$), and having equal hedonic (4.72 vs. 4.85) and utilitarian (5.51 vs. 5.49) expectations of the hotel (both t -values < 1). But participants in the near-future condition reported closer time focus ($M = 2.02$) than did participants in the distant-future condition ($M = 5.53$, $t(100) = 8.873$, $p < .001$).

To test our hypotheses, we mean-centered all independent variables and ran several regressions (Table 2). A first regression analysis with hotel evaluation as the predicted variable, and similarity, time (-1 = distant-future, 1 = near-future), and the interaction of similarity and time as predictors while controlling for expertise, credibility, and trustworthiness showed the predicted interaction effect between similarity and time ($\beta = -.207$, $t(95) = -2.390$, $p < .02$). Slope analysis revealed a significant effect of similarity both when participants expected to go on the trip in a week ($\beta = -.672$, $t(95) = -4.961$, $p < .001$) and when they expected to go in a year ($\beta = -.259$, $t(95) = -2.053$, $p < .05$). Although, as evident from the interaction, the slope was steeper in the near-future condition than in the distant-future condition. A second regression, similar to the first but with the “feels right” measure as the predicted variable, showed the predicted significant main effect of similarity ($\beta = .991$, $t(95) = 5.53$, $p < .001$). A third regression, similar to the first, but additionally including “feels right” and the interaction of “feels right” and time as predictors, revealed a significant interaction of “feels right” and time ($\beta = -.114$, $t(93) = -2.037$, $p < .05$). Similar to Study 3’s results, the results of these three regressions suggest a mediated moderation (Muller et al., 2005) such that the overall interaction of similarity and time in the first regression is mediated by participants’ self-reported “feels right” experience.

Insert Table 2 about here.

Study 4B

Design and procedure

We randomly assigned one hundred and two participants from an online panel (median age of 27, and 57.8% females) to either the high-probability condition or the low-probability condition. All participants first had to imagine being eligible to participate in a credible travel website's lottery for a London trip for two. The scenario explained that the lottery worked such that participants first chose the hotel package and submitted it to the website, and if they won the lottery, the website paid for the package. We told participants in the high-probability condition that the odds of winning were 1 in 5; we told those in the low-probability condition that the odds were 1 in 5000. Participants had to imagine trying to find a fun, beautiful, enjoyable, and memorable hotel. The rest of the study was conducted similarly to Study 4A, except that instead of measuring participants' time focus, we measured their perceived chance of winning the lottery (1 = very low / 9 = very high).

Results

Participants in both conditions reported being equally similar to the reviewer (3.47 vs. 3.34) and being equally engaged (6.13 vs. 5.98) during the study (all t -values < 1). Belonging to either of the experimental conditions did not affect participants' hedonic (4.46 vs. 5.01, $t(100) = -1.56$, $p > .12$) or utilitarian (5.36 vs. 5.64, $t(100) < 1$) expectations of the hotel. However, compared to participants in the low-probability condition ($M = 2.88$), participants in the high-probability condition reported a higher perceived chance of winning the lottery ($M = 5.12$, $t(100) = -5.353$, $p < .001$).

To test our hypotheses, we mean-centered all independent variables and ran the three regression analyses shown in Table 3. A first regression analysis with hotel evaluation as the dependent variable and similarity, chance (-1 = low probability, 1 = high probability), and the interaction of similarity and chance as predictors while controlling for reviewer expertise, credibility, and trustworthiness, showed the predicted interaction effect ($\beta = -.211$, $t(95) = -2.021$, $p < .05$). Simple slope analysis revealed only a simple effect of similarity in the high-probability condition ($\beta = -.569$, $t(95) = -3.339$, $p < .001$), but not in the low-probability condition ($\beta = -.147$, $t(95) = -1.015$, $p > .3$). A second regression analysis with all predictors similar to those in the first regression, but with the “feels right” measure as the predicted variable, showed a predicted significant main effect of similarity ($\beta = .534$, $t(95) = 2.988$, $p < .005$). A third regression, similar to the first, but with “feels right” and the interaction of “feels right” and probability added as predictors, revealed a significant interaction of “feels right” with probability ($\beta = .112$, $t(93) = 1.985$, $p < .05$), and also revealed a significant interaction of similarity with probability ($\beta = -.247$, $t(93) = -2.393$, $p < .02$). As in Studies 3 and 4A’s regressions, from these three regressions we can conclude mediated moderation (Muller et al., 2005) such that the overall interaction between similarity and probability is mediated by participants’ self-reported “feels right” experience while receiving the advice.

Insert Table 3 about here.

Discussion of Studies 4A and B

We showed that a similar adviser’s persuasiveness is greater when people are evaluating the target object of the advice for the near future than for a more distant future (Study 4A). We

also showed that a similar adviser's persuasiveness is greater when people have a higher chance of winning the target object than when they have a lower chance of winning it (Study 4B). We attributed these findings to decreased use of feelings in more (vs. less) temporally distant evaluations (Chang & Pham, 2012), and decreased use of feelings in evaluating targets that are less (vs. more) within reach (Metcalf & Mischel, 1999; Mischel & Shoda, 1995). We argued that lower reliance on feelings contributes to less reliance on the "feels right" experience associated with adviser similarity. This lesser reliance on the "feels right" experience attenuates the persuasiveness of a similar adviser.

In both Studies 4A and B, we replicated the mediational evidence found in Study 3, and demonstrated that higher perceived similarity with the adviser increases the self-reported "feels right" experience associated with receiving an advice from a similar source. We showed that this feeling mediates the interaction of similarity and reliance on feelings in predicting the adviser's persuasiveness. Moreover, we observed no interaction between similarity and time focus (Study 4A), or between similarity and probability of winning the hotel package (Study 4B) in predicting the self-reported "feels right" experience. Therefore, we can conclude that similarity "feels right" regardless of the situation, and that people fail to use this feeling in evaluating the target of the advice only when they have lower reliance on feelings.

An alternative explanation for the findings of Studies 4A and B is that manipulating the probability of winning the hotel package (Study 4A) and the time focus (Study 4B) might have increased the likelihood of elaboration of the advice (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Therefore, higher elaboration in the near-future condition of Study 4A and in the high-probability condition of Study 4B increased a similar adviser's persuasiveness. For several reasons, we find this explanation implausible. First, if anything, source effects have traditionally

been amplified under conditions of low elaboration (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). Furthermore, we showed that neither manipulating time focus in Study 4A, nor manipulating the probability of winning the hotel package in Study 4B influences participants' self-reported engagement with the task. Therefore, the effects found in Studies 4A and B cannot be attributed to differential task involvement. Also, as discussed, in Study 1 and Study 5 (reported next), a more similar source is more persuasive in conditions where we expect participants to elaborate *less* on the advice, while in Studies 4A and B, a similar source is more persuasive in conditions where we expect participants to elaborate *more* on the advice. Therefore, across studies, different levels of elaboration cannot be a compelling explanation for the effects found.

Study 5

In Studies 2 and 3, we showed that a similar reviewer's persuasiveness is attenuated when people evaluate the hotel based on functional motives rather than on experiential motives. We argued that this attenuation is because people consider feelings irrelevant in situations where they have functional rather than experiential motives. However, assessing the relevance of feelings for the judgment at hand requires the availability of cognitive resources (Avnet et al., forthcoming). Therefore, even in situations where using feelings would normally be irrelevant, if people's cognitive resources are constrained, they will still rely on their feelings. In Study 5, we hypothesize that even when people have functional motives, if their cognitive resources are constrained, a similar adviser's advice is more persuasive. However, if people's cognitive resources are not constrained, we do not expect an effect of similarity. In addition, in this study, as in Study 2, we manipulated similarity instead of measuring it as a continuous variable.

Design and Procedure

One hundred and fifteen undergraduate students (median age of 21, and 62.6% females), randomly assigned to each of the four conditions, participated in a 2 (similar vs. dissimilar reviewer) $\times$ 2 (high vs. low availability of cognitive resources) between-subjects lab experiment. First, under the guise of a memory task, we asked participants to memorize a two-digit (low cognitive-load group) or a seven-digit (high cognitive-load group) number. We told them to keep the number in mind throughout the lab session. After the memory task, we asked all participants to read a scenario identical to the functional scenario used in Study 2. Then, as in Study 2, all participants read a neutral review by a journalist. We manipulated reviewer similarity through a second review and its corresponding profile. The second reviewer was either a 22-year-old student (similar) or a 51-year-old researcher at a chemical company who has a PhD in molecular biology (dissimilar). In addition, we used the name of the second reviewer to manipulate the reviewer's gender, which was similar to each participant's in the similar-reviewer condition and opposite to each participant's in the dissimilar-review condition. We provided no other information about the second reviewer. The second reviewer's comment about the hotel was identical to the one used in the previous studies. After participants read the scenarios and reviews, we first asked them to recall the number they had memorized, and then, as a manipulation check, we asked them to indicate how difficult it was to memorize it (1 = very difficult / 9 = not difficult at all) and how busy they were while memorizing it (1 = not busy at all / 9 = very busy). Then, participants evaluated the hotel using two items (1 = bad choice / 9 = good choice; 1 = totally unfavorable / 9 = favorable attitude). Finally, we measured perceived similarity and expertise using items similar to those used in Study 2.

Results

ANOVA analyses showed that it was significantly harder for the participants to remember the number (3.37 vs. 1.76, $F(1, 111) = 32.368, p < .001$), and that they felt significantly busier in the high cognitive-load condition than in the low cognitive-load condition (4.25 vs. 3.14, $F(1, 111) = 5.608, p < .02$). No other factors or their interactions were significant (all p -values $> .2$). An ANOVA with perceived similarity as the dependent variable and cognitive load and similarity as independent factors revealed a main effect of similarity (5.05 vs. 3.84, $F(1, 111) = 18.402, p < .001$) and a main effect of cognitive load (4.83 vs. 4.10, $F(1, 111) = 6.784, p < .02$), but revealed no interaction between cognitive load and similarity ($F < 1$).

An ANCOVA with hotel evaluation as the dependent variable, similarity and cognitive load as fixed factors, and expertise as a covariate revealed a significant interaction between similarity and cognitive load ($F(1, 110) = 4.563, p < .04$). No main effects of either similarity ($F(1, 110) = 2.038, p > .15$) or cognitive load ($F < 1$) were observed. Follow-up planned contrasts revealed that when cognitive load was high, hotel evaluation was significantly lower in the similar condition ($M = 4.96$) than in the dissimilar condition ($M = 5.81, F(1, 110) = 5.77, p < .02$). However, if cognitive load was low there was no significant difference between the similar ($M = 5.8$) and dissimilar ($M = 5.4$) conditions ($F < 1$).

Discussion

In this study, we showed that even in situations where feelings are normally considered irrelevant (i.e., when people have functional motives), if people's cognitive resources are constrained, they will incorporate into their judgment the "feels right" experience generated by the adviser's similarity. Therefore, a similar (vs. dissimilar) adviser will be more persuasive when people's cognitive resources are constrained (vs. not constrained). Consistent with the findings of previous studies, this study's findings suggest that an experience of "feeling right"

towards a similar advice is created regardless of the advice-taker's goals, and that people will incorporate this feeling into their judgment unless they can assess the irrelevance of feelings to the situation at hand.

General Discussion

An important aspect of any communication message (including advice) is the source of that message. We have known this at least since Aristotle defined *ethos*, the character of the communicator, as one of the three modes of persuasion (Aristotle, 1926). Yet, despite more than 60 years of investigation (e.g., Hovland et al., 1953), we have not been particularly good at predicting how and under what circumstances different source characteristics influence persuasion (Wilson & Sherrell, 1993). Interestingly, persuasion research has usually taken a computation-like, rule-based approach to studying source effects (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Chaiken, 1980; Kang & Herr, 2006) leading researchers to overlook how source characteristics change people's subjective experiences (i.e., feelings). In this research, we tried to fill the current void in the literature, and provided evidence for the role of feelings in source effects. Across six studies, we showed that a similar adviser is more persuasive when people rely more (vs. less) on their feelings: when people are instructed to use their feelings (vs. logic), when they have experiential (vs. functional) motives, when they are making a decision for the near future (vs. distant future), when they see the target of the advice as being more (vs. less) within reach (high probability of winning the target in a lottery), and finally, when their cognitive resources are limited (vs. not limited).

Also in Studies 3 and 4A and B, we showed that the overall moderation of reliance on feelings is mediated by participants' self-reported "feels right" experience while receiving the advice. This latter data are encouraging, because similar to previous research (Cesario &

Higgins, 2008) they suggest that self-reports can capture people's "feels right" experiences while people are receiving an advice from a similar other. However, one could argue that the self-reported "feels right" experience is just another measure for persuasiveness. In other words, participants might have simply reported feeling more right about the review if the review persuaded them more. This argument would be more valid if we had observed only a simple correlation between "feeling right" and persuasion. However, as shown in our mediated moderation analyses, the correlation between "feeling right" and persuasion is moderated by people's reliance on their feelings. Therefore, the advice "feels right" regardless of the condition, but participants seem to ignore this feelings if making judgments when they have lower reliance on their feelings.

Could a heuristic-systematic processing account (Chaiken, 1980), rather than a feeling-based account, explain our findings? While in Study 5 and, to a lesser extent, in Study 1, a similar adviser was more persuasive in conditions where we could expect participants to process information more heuristically, in Studies 2 and 3, it is harder to argue for a more heuristic processing of information in either of the experimental conditions. Moreover, in Studies 4A and B, a similar adviser was more persuasive in conditions where we could expect people to process information more systematically (i.e., people have higher motivation to process the information when they have higher chances of winning the hotel package, or when their trip is closer). Therefore, across our studies, a heuristic-systematic account cannot be a plausible explanation of the effects.

Our research contributes to source similarity research specifically, and to source characteristics research generally. We contribute to source similarity research by illuminating the mechanism and conditions under which source similarity enhances an adviser's persuasiveness.

Although the effect of source similarity on persuasion has been taken for granted for decades (Hovland et al., 1953), until recently (Gino et al., 2009; Jiang et al., 2010) research was somewhat negligent in investigating the processes by which the effect occurs. Therefore, our conceptualization is important in that it enabled us to test predictions that would not have been possible using earlier conceptualizations of source effects. While we tested several moderators of reliance on feelings to show that similar advisers are more persuasive when people rely more on their feelings, we do not believe that the moderators are limited to those we tested. Future research could use our conceptualization to make further predictions regarding moderators of similar advisers' persuasiveness. For example, previous research has shown that, compared to novices, experts rely less on their feelings (Srull, 1987). Therefore, we expect a similar adviser to be less persuasive if the advice-taker is an expert (vs. a novice). Similarly, we expect a similar adviser to be more persuasive if the advice-taker receives the advice in his native language rather than in a second language (Puntoni, de Langhe, & van Osselaer, 2009) or if the advice-taker is deciding for himself rather than for a third person (Raghunathan & Pham, 1999).

Our research also provides further insight into the broader area of source effects research by acknowledging that source effects can contribute to the persuasiveness of messages by influencing people's subjective experience while receiving them. We do not see similarity to be the only source characteristic affecting people's subjective experiences towards persuasive messages. As an example, consider an advice-taker who is experiencing a lack of control over his environment. In this case, an authoritative adviser's advice (even if the adviser's authority is in a domain unrelated to the topic of the advice), could "feel more right" by serving as an instrument in giving more order and structure to the advice-taker's perception of his environment.

Some limitations of our research must be acknowledged. The first is that across studies we used a single context (i.e., hotel reviews) to test our effects. Using only one context does not allow us to test the generalizability of our effects. Given the purpose of our research, we opted for replicating our effects across different operationalizations of reliance on feelings versus logic, instead of across different contexts. This choice gave us a greater ability to support a unique feeling-based explanation across studies, which would not have been possible if we had used different contexts.

Another limitation related to the generalizability of our research is that we used only negatively valenced advice in our studies. We did this to eliminate a possible confound of a positive hedonic feeling (“feels good”) resulting from receiving a positively valenced advice from a similar source, with a non-hedonic feeling (“feels right”) towards the advice. Using appropriate control groups, further research should test if our predictions will hold for positively valenced advice. Conceptually, we do not predict that the valence of advice per se will influence the predictions made in this paper. However, one could speculate that our predictions will not hold if the valence of the advice is incongruent with the advice-taker’s strongly held prior opinions about the topic of the advice. In such cases, the advice-taker could in fact experience higher dissonance (Festinger, 1957) or imbalance in his thought structure (Heider, 1946) because of perceived similarity with the person who is expressing the attitude-incongruent opinions. Thus, in such situations, similarity will lead to a subjectively experienced aversive state. To circumvent such an aversive state, the advice-taker could indeed try several strategies, one of which is to distance himself from the adviser and strengthen his prior opinions about the target object of the advice—leading similarity to reduce the adviser’s persuasive power. Given the subjective nature of the aversive responses created in such situations (van Veen et al., 2009), one

would speculate that they would influence advise-takers' behavior more in situations where the advise-takers have higher propensity to use their feelings—causing an advice from a similar (vs. dissimilar) adviser to be less persuasive in situations where people have higher (vs. lower) propensity to use their feelings.

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Footnotes

¹ By experiential we mean genuine, subjective experiences (as when someone says, “I’m feeling sad”), rather than thoughts about specific objects, events, or emotions (as when someone calmly says, “The crusades were a sad chapter in human history”) (Russell & Carroll, 1999).

² Studies 2 and 5 were conducted before the rest of the studies but are presented in the current order for clarity of presentation. Credibility and trustworthiness were not measured in Studies 2 and 5 and were later added to the rest of the studies.

³ Mean-centering of the independent variables in Studies 3 and 4A and B is based on recommendations by Muller et al. (2005) for running mediated moderation analyses.

Table 1

Mediated Moderation Analysis (Study 3)

Predictor		Equation 1 (Hotel evaluation)		Equation 2 ("Feels right")		Equation 3 (Hotel evaluation)	
		β	$t(169)$	β	$t(169)$	β	$t(167)$
Expertise		.192	1.550	-.095	-.503	.160	1.403
Credibility		-.180	-1.305	.602	2.860**	-.042	-.325
Trustworthiness		-.67	-.502	.266	1.304	.010	.081
Similarity		-.445	-5.167**	.776	5.881**	-.231	-2.633**
Motive		.108	.936	.009	.053	.111	1.053
Reviewer		-.085	-.740	.065	.368	-.065	-.619
Reviewer Motive	×	.023	.200	-.034	-.193	.032	.305
Reviewer Similarity	×	-.091	-1.202	.172	1.486	-.053	-.757
Similarity Motive	×	-.150	-1.970*	.013	.110	-.060	-.724
Similarity Reviewer Motive	×	-.042	-.544	.018	.156	-.029	-.413
"Feels Right"						-.265	-5.664**
"Feels Right" × Motive						-.086	-1.952*

Note. *: $p < .05$; **: $p < .01$

Table 2

Mediated Moderation Analysis (Study 4A)

	Equation 1 (Hotel evaluation)		Equation 2 ("Feels right")		Equation 3 (Hotel evaluation)	
Predictor	β	$t(95)$	β	$t(95)$	β	$t(93)$
Expertise	.136	.890	-.256	-.923	.133	.887
Credibility	-.433	-2.502*	.557	1.772	-.309	-1.772
Trustworthiness	-.065	-.450	.458	1.752	-.027	-.193**
Similarity	-.466	-4.735**	.991	5.538**	-.351	-3.169*
Time	-.104	-.814	-.607	-2.614*	-.184	-1.427
Similarity $\times$ Time	-.207	-2.390*	.141	.898	-.028	-.242
"Feels Right"					-.129	-2.242*
"Feels Right" $\times$ Time					-.114	-2.037*

Note. *: $p < .05$; **: $p < .01$

Table 3

Mediated Moderation Analysis (Study 4B)

Predictor	Equation 1 (Hotel evaluation)		Equation 2 ("Feels right")		Equation 3 (Hotel evaluation)	
	β	$t(95)$	β	$t(95)$	β	$t(93)$
Expertise	-.127	-.706	.549	2.028*	.116	.720
Credibility	.064	.313	-.065	-.213	.009	.050
Trustworthiness	-.202	-1.252	.359	1.483	-.058	-.410
Similarity	-.358	-3.013**	.534	2.988**	-.231	-2.104*
Probability	.085	.513	-.398	-1.595	-.033	-.231
Similarity × Probability	-.211	-2.021*	.189	1.203	-.247	-2.393*
"Feels Right"					-.329	-5.589**
"Feels Right" × Probability					.112	1.985*

Note. *: $p < .05$; **: $p < .01$

Figure 1. General model.

Figure 2. Results of study 1. Effect of perceived similarity and instructions on hotel evaluation.

The values of covariates are set to their respective means.

Figure 3. Results of study 2. Hotel evaluation as a function of reviewer similarity and motive.