

Appendix A. Wording vignettes news items – sexual assault reporting program, an infant mortality reduction program, and a product recall

Topic	Manipulation	Headline	Subline
Sexual assault reporting program	Positive valence	Successful arrest in 25% of sexual assault allegations claims in US colleges	The latest data show that 25% of all reports on college campuses lead to an arrest. This is likely the positive result of new reporting systems that were put into place in schools across the country to make the reporting of assaults easier.
	Negative valence	Failure to arrest a suspect in 75% of sexual assault allegations in US colleges	The latest data data show that 75% of all reports on college campuses do not lead to an arrest of the alleged perpetrator. New reporting systems that were put into place in schools across the country to make the reporting of assaults easier seem unsuccessful.
	High negative valence	Failure to arrest a suspect in 90% of sexual assault allegations in US colleges	The latest data show that 90% of all reports on college campuses do not lead to an arrest of the alleged perpetrator. New reporting systems that were put into place in schools across the country to make the reporting of assaults easier seem highly unsuccessful.
Infant mortality reduction program	Positive valence	Addressing American infant mortality rates: a successful pilot program	Last year, California launched a two-year pilot program focused on lowering the infant mortality rate. So far, there has been a reduction, with a recent report showing that 995,7 per 1,000 live births survive.
	Negative valence	Addressing American infant mortality rates: a disappointing pilot program	Last year, California launched a two-year pilot program focused on lowering the infant mortality rate. So far, even though there has been a small reduction, a recent report still showed 4,3 deaths per 1,000 live births.
	High negative valence	Addressing American infant mortality rates: a highly disappointing pilot program	Last year, California launched a two-year pilot program focused on lowering the infant mortality rate. So far, there has been no reduction, with a recent report still showing 7,4 deaths per 1,000 live births.
Product recall	Positive valence	Popular toy shopping cart recalled, only few injuries reported	There were 22 reports of Step2's Little Helper's Shopping Cart, a popular toy shopping cart for children, breaking during play. Sharp edges caused a laceration hazard for children. Thankfully, in 20 of the reported cases no injuries occurred.
	Negative valence	Popular toy shopping cart recalled, injuries reported	There were 22 reports of Step2's Little Helper's Shopping Cart, a popular toy shopping cart for children, breaking during play. Sharp edges caused a laceration hazard for children. Sadly, in two of the cases, injuries were reported.
	High negative valence	Popular toy shopping cart recalled, several injuries reported	There were 22 reports of Step2's Little Helper's Shopping Cart, a popular toy shopping cart for children, breaking during play. Sharp edges caused a laceration hazard for children. Sadly, in six of the cases, serious injuries were reported.

Appendix B. Multilevel models predicting credibility and shareworthiness – split up for low versus high sensationalism

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Low sensationalism		High sensationalism	
	Credibility	Shareworthiness	Credibility	Shareworthiness
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Negative valence ^a	4.40 ^{***} (1.33)	2.11 (1.46)	-0.21 (1.55)	-0.86 (1.46)
High negative valence ^a	2.83 [*] (1.34)	1.64 (1.47)	0.09 (1.54)	-0.99 (1.45)
Frequency of news use	3.90 ^{***} (0.64)	2.52 ^{**} (0.85)	4.48 ^{***} (0.63)	3.46 ^{***} (0.75)
Dangerous world syndrome	3.46 ^{**} (1.07)	1.96 (1.42)	2.39 ^{**} (1.08)	9.83 ^{***} (1.28)
Stimuli: infant mortality ^b	-1.60 (1.13)	-2.95 ^{**} (1.23)	-1.23 (1.32)	-5.07 ^{***} (1.21)
Stimuli: Product recall ^b	2.40 [*] (1.13)	1.64 (1.23)	3.09 ^{**} (1.32)	-0.21 (1.21)
Age	0.08 (0.07)	-0.34 ^{***} (0.10)	-0.23 ^{**} (0.07)	-0.50 ^{***} (0.09)
Gender	-0.53 (2.09)	-0.82 (2.78)	-1.06 (2.22)	-2.02 (2.64)
Education	1.52 (1.67)	3.07 (2.23)	0.90 (1.79)	1.84 (2.13)
Constant	13.13 (8.01)	23.47 [*] (10.62)	30.48 ^{***} (9.23)	-11.36 (10.93)
Observations	1,035	1,035	1,053	1,053
Log Likelihood	-4,546.42	-4,699.04	-4,752.82	-4,753.19
Random intercept variance	343.6 (18.54)	650.5 (25.51)	352.7 (18.78)	557.0 (23.60)

†p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

a: reference category is positive valence condition

b: reference category is stimuli: Sexual assault reduction program

Appendix C. Multilevel models predicting credibility and shareworthiness – split up for low versus high news use

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Low news use		High news use	
	Credibility	Shareworthiness	Credibility	Shareworthiness
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Negative valence ^a	2.34 [†] (1.21)	1.65 (1.20)	1.15 (1.85)	-0.87 (1.92)
High negative valence ^a	1.15 (1.22)	1.10 (1.20)	2.30 (1.82)	-0.55 (1.90)
<i>Sensationalism</i>	-1.68 [†] (0.92)	-4.30 ^{***} (1.08)	-3.34 ^{**} (1.12)	-4.02 ^{**} (1.52)
Dangerous world syndrome	4.27 ^{***} (1.03)	7.26 ^{***} (1.20)	3.86 ^{**} (1.28)	7.32 ^{***} (1.73)
Stimuli: infant mortality ^b	-3.01 ^{**} (1.00)	-3.81 ^{***} (0.98)	1.79 (1.62)	-4.16 [*] (1.65)
Stimuli: Product recall ^b	0.20 (1.00)	-0.43 (0.98)	7.69 ^{***} (1.62)	2.94 [†] (1.65)
Age	0.001 (0.07)	-0.33 ^{***} (0.08)	-0.16 [†] (0.09)	-0.53 ^{***} (0.12)
Gender	0.32 (1.86)	-1.46 (2.17)	-4.72 (2.93)	-3.09 (3.96)
Education	1.65 (1.56)	1.94 (1.83)	4.71 [*] (2.17)	7.67 ^{**} (2.93)
Constant	36.67 ^{***} (7.88)	33.13 ^{***} (9.21)	62.69 ^{***} (11.18)	37.27 [*] (15.07)
<i>Observations</i>	1,350	1,350	738	738
<i>Log Likelihood</i>	-5,965.24	-6,013.30	-3,349.12	-3,431.63
<i>Random intercept variance</i>	382.7 (19.56)	555.7 (23.57)	385.9 (19.64)	789.0 (28.09)

[†]p<0.1; ^{**} p<0.05; ^{***} p<0.01

a: reference category is positive valence condition

b: reference category is stimuli: Sexual assault reduction program

Appendix D. Conflicting news stories

Protest stimuli – negative formulation

Hundreds arrested at violent labor law protests in Jakarta

Indonesian police arrested 200 people yesterday at protests in the country's capital, Jakarta. Workers and students were demonstrating against a contentious new job-creation law that critics say undermines workers' rights. Protests erupted in major cities across Indonesia after the law's passage in the House of Representatives last week.

At least 60 demonstrators and six police officers were injured at yesterday's protest near the Presidential Palace. Later in the evening the demonstration escalated and turned violent, with fights breaking out between police and demonstrators. Protesters began throwing stones, vandalizing public facilities, and setting fires, with police deploying water cannons and tear gas in an attempt to disperse the violent crowds. A number of police officers were injured as they attempted to restore order to the streets.

Protest stimuli – positive formulation

Peaceful demonstration against labor law held in Jakarta

Thousands of students and union members took to the streets yesterday for a peaceful protest in Jakarta, Indonesia. The protestors were voicing their opposition to a newly passed labor law, which they argue favors businesses over workers and removes labor and environmental protections. The protesters gathered in the afternoon near the Presidential Palace and urged that the controversial law be scrapped.

The protest passed off peacefully, with no injuries or arrests. The police did not have to intervene at any point during the event. After their peaceful protest, the protesters headed home. They dispersed at 8.30 p.m., stating that they would hold another rally soon.

Cease fire stimuli – negative formulation

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Libyan ceasefire is an agreement ‘born dead’

An United Nations official has described the ceasefire in Libya, which was reached this week after long negotiations, as a “joke” and said the ceasefire was “hanging by a thread”, in a gloomy assessment of the prospects for peace in the North African country. Previous ceasefires have repeatedly been violated, raising doubts as to whether a lasting truce can be reached. Even small breaches have frequently led to immediate heavy retaliation. A UN official said: “While everyone was happy that the ceasefire was signed, no one trusts it to last; the humanitarian crisis in Libya continues.”

Cease fire stimuli – positive formulation

A step towards a resolution – ceasefire negotiations in Libya

Peace talks in Geneva between the UN-backed Libyan government and representatives of military commander Khalifa Haftar are progressing well. All parties agreed to enforce a ceasefire and push for greater political dialogue between the parties to the conflict. One UN official said he was encouraged by the new developments: “The path we have taken is the right one, and the diplomatic engagement of the last few weeks is working.” The ceasefire could be an important first step in reaching peace in the ongoing Libyan conflict.

Appendix E. Multilevel regression models explaining credibility and shareworthiness for Part 2 regarding conflicting news exposure

Topic Dependent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Ceasefire Credibility	Ceasefire Credibility	Protest Credibility	Protest Credibility	Ceasefire Shareworthiness	Ceasefire Shareworthiness	Protest Shareworthiness	Protest Shareworthiness
Valence of article (positive items) ^a	0.03 (1.53)	-12.43 (7.48)	3.19 (1.78)	-7.25 (8.79)	-3.83*** (1.11)	-9.93 (5.48)	1.35 (1.30)	-3.12 (6.46)
Perceived news sensationalism	-2.14* (0.88)	-3.47*** (1.05)	-1.67* (0.86)	-2.08 (1.11)	-3.30** (1.20)	-3.94** (1.27)	-1.42 (1.17)	-1.44 (1.27)
Frequency of news use	4.45*** (0.61)	4.56*** (0.75)	3.12**** (0.54)	2.51*** (0.72)	2.93*** (0.83)	2.97*** (0.89)	2.54*** (0.74)	2.12** (0.81)
Interaction: valence of article * sensationalism		2.68* (1.17)		0.82 (1.40)		1.27 (0.86)		0.04 (1.03)
Interaction: valence of article * news frequency		-0.22 (0.86)		1.23 (0.93)		-0.07 (0.63)		0.84 (0.68)
Dangerous world syndrome	2.81** (1.00)	2.81** (1.00)	2.79*** (0.98)	2.79** (0.98)	4.14** (1.36)	4.14** (1.36)	6.35*** (1.33)	6.35*** (1.33)
Age	-0.18** (0.07)	-0.18** (0.07)	-0.15** (0.07)	-0.15* (0.07)	-0.51*** (0.09)	-0.51*** (0.09)	-0.52*** (0.09)	-0.52*** (0.09)
gender	-2.69 (1.96)	-2.69 (1.96)	0.18 (1.93)	0.18 (1.93)	-5.88* (2.67)	-5.88* (2.67)	-1.41 (2.61)	-1.41 (2.61)
education	0.19 (1.57)	0.19 (1.57)	5.12*** (1.57)	5.12** (1.57)	3.24 (2.14)	3.24 (2.14)	5.10* (2.12)	5.10* (2.12)
Order (positive item first)	4.33* (2.08)	4.33* (2.08)	1.43 (2.01)	1.43 (2.01)	-0.85 (2.83)	-0.85 (2.83)	0.80 (2.72)	0.80 (2.72)
Constant	34.61*** (7.92)	40.83*** (8.73)	21.66*** (8.30)	26.88** (9.35)	44.02*** (10.75)	47.07*** (11.08)	10.21 (11.18)	12.45 (11.62)
Observations	688	688	668	668	688	688	668	668
Log Likelihood	-	-	-	-	-3,124.20	-3,121.88	-3,062.24	-3,060.00
Akaike Inf. Crit.	6,279.74	6,274.81	6,155.42	6,153.14	6,270.40	6,269.76	6,146.48	6,146.00
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	6,329.61	6,333.75	6,204.97	6,211.69	6,320.27	6,328.70	6,196.02	6,204.56
Random	163.1	164.9	64.75	64.81	567.1	567.1	459.2	459.0

intercept	(12.77)	(12.84)	(8.046)	(8.05)	(23.81)	(23.81)	(21.43)	(21.42)
variance								

† p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

a: Reference category is assessment of negative news item