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Lucerne, October 17th 2021

Dear Professor Gross,

Please find enclosed our manuscript entitled “Believing in Credibility Measures: Reviewing Credibility Measures in Media Research from 1951 to 2018” for consideration at *International Journal of Communication (IJoC)*.

Our manuscript provides a systematic review of almost seven decades of quantitative research on one of the most studied construct in media and communication research, i.e., the construct of *credibility*. Since the turn of the millennium, scholars have repeatedly questioned how traditional credibility measures fit the then-new web-based communication context. Moreover, questions around conceptualization and measurement of credibility have gained renewed attention in light of the recent discussions about the advent of a post-factual era and the spread of mis- as well as disinformation.

Our quantitative analysis is based on of 259 measurement scales from 181 articles published in 66 different communication journals, including *IJoC*. Our review explores the state-of-the-art in defining and measuring credibility constructs and yields two main findings. First, most studies assume a conceptual difference between source, media, and message credibility without providing detailed definitions for the respective constructs. Second, we cannot reproduce this conceptual trinity in our quantitative analysis of the measurement scales, where we find that especially media credibility is not empirically distinct from source or message credibility. We therefore propose a dual credibility model consisting of source and message credibility. We do not see a need for the third construct of media credibility given that it is mostly used to measure credibility of an objectified and collective source. In the other cases, scholars conceptualize media credibility as a more general attitude towards a medium (e.g., the internet), which corresponds more strongly to the concept of trust than credibility.

We are convinced to provide useful insights for moving forward in the debate revolving around the conceptualization and measurement of credibility in both, online and offline, contexts.

This manuscript is the first time the dataset is being used. The material contained in this manuscript has not been published or submitted elsewhere. However, earlier versions of this article have been presented at WAPOR 65th Annual Conference in Hong Kong in 2012 and at the 69th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association in 2019 in Washington D.C..

Thank you for considering our contribution for publication.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anina Hanimann', with a large, stylized initial 'A'.

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