# Appendix

“Reviewing Credibility Measures in Media Research”

# Literature search and Codebook

The subsequent table summarizes the keywords used for the literature search. We opted for a broad search strategy since credibility is related to other concepts such as “trust” and often conflated with these concepts. We therefore also included search terms related to these related concepts (e.g., “trust”). Manually filtering the results guaranteed that we could eliminate those contributions from the sample that were clearly talking about distinct concepts from credibility, while keeping those that despite using a different wording were talking about credibility.

Table A1. Search terms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Database | Search term |
| EBSCOhost | TI (Credibility OR credibl\* OR trust OR persuas\* OR attitude) AND AB (credibility OR credibl\* OR trust) AND AB (communication OR media OR news OR information) |
| Web of Science | TI=(credibility OR credibl\* OR trust OR persuas\* OR attitude) AND TS=(credibility OR credibl\* OR trust) AND TS=(communication OR media OR news OR information) |

Note: “TI” stands for title and the command returns results whose titles contain any one of the terms in the parentheses. The option “OR” allows us to search for multiple terms at the same time and returns either one or both keywords in the results. The star following a keyword allows us to broaden the search by finding words that start with the same letters. The “AND” command returns results that simultaneously satisfy the first the second, and the third conditions of the search. In the first particular case, results that contain the keywords, or variations thereof, in both their titles and their abstracts. Finally, “AB” stands for abstract. The Web of Science website does not provide the option of looking for keywords only in articles’ abstracts. The option “TS” looks for the keywords in articles’ titles, abstracts, and keywords.

Table A2. Codebook

| Variable name in dataset | Variable  | Operationalization | Example |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| id\_scale | Scale identification | Assigns each scale a unique identification number ranging from 1 to N\_scale | - |
| id\_article | Article identification | Assigns each article a unique identification number ranging from 1 to N\_article | - |
| author | Names of all authors | Lists the article’s author(s) | - |
| title | Article title  | Records the article’s full title | - |
| year | Article’s publication year | Records the article’s year of publication |  |
| abstract | Article abstract | Provides the article’s abstract |  |
| journal | Article journal | Records the full name of the journal the article appears in |  |
| pages | Article pages | Records the exact pages the article starts and ends on in the journal issue where it was published | - |
| jgnr | Article volume and issue | Records the journal volume and issue where the article appeared | e.g., 13(2) |
| keywords | Article keywords | Lists the article’s keywords | - |
| source | Article source  | Describes how the article was identified: 0=database search, 1=snowball system | - |
| coded | Article is coded | Reports whether the article is coded or not. The article is only coded if it meets the four criteria set for the first article selection: 0=not coded, 1=coded**Note about coding:**If different articles from the same authors use the same database (i.e., same sample) and the same measurement, the measurement is only coded once since, strictly speaking, the same observation would otherwise appear twice in the dataset. However, if the same measurement is applied to different samples in the same article, each scale that is applied to a distinct sample should be coded separately. |  |
| construct | Measured construct’s original name | Records the measured construct’s original name |  |
| construct\_cat | Attribution of the construct to source, media, or message | Attributes each construct to either source, message or medium: (.)=unclear, 1=source, 2=media, 3=message. **Note about coding:**Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between source and media, especially in the context of online media. Moreover, not all articles explicitly refer to source or media/medium or use the two words interchangeably. The variable is coded as “media” when author(s) are interested in the credibility of media types (e.g., the Internet) or subsystems of media types (e.g., blogs in general, online news in general, broadsheet vs. tabloid). It is coded as “source” if the author(s) are interested in the credibility of specific media products (e.g., a specific website), media organizations (e.g., the BBC), actors (e.g., a president in an interview), or presenters (e.g., the anchor of a TV show). Finally, “message” obtains if the author(s) are interested in the credibility of editorial units (e.g., a specific news item, an article).[[1]](#footnote-1) | See the note on the left  |
| source\_details1 | Details if construct\_cat=1: known or unknown source | Codes if the source is known or unknown:0=unknown, 1=known, 2=both (e.g., a known and an unknown source) | e.g., unknown=a journalist, known=Donald Trump |
| source\_details2 | Details if construct\_cat=1: individual or collective source | Codes if the source is an individual or a collective actor:0=individual, 1=collective, 2=both**Note about coding:**If the article’s author(s) refers to the source as a group of people (e.g., government officials), this variable obtains a value of 1 (collective). | e.g., collective=an organization/institution/website (several authors); individual=a person/journalist (single author) |
| source\_details3 | Details if construct\_cat=1: expert or non-expert | Codes if the source is an expert or not (i.e., authors have to refer to sources as professionals, experts, or scientists):0=no expert, 1=expert, 2=both | e.g., expert=a scientist; no expert=a friend |
| message\_details1 | Details if construct\_cat=3: type of message | Codes the type of the message:1=text (incl. illustration), 2=audio, 3=visual (moving), 4=various | e.g., text=news articles , audio=radio emission/speech, visual=TV clip |
| message\_details2 | Details if construct\_cat=3:message conveys expertise or not | Codes if the message conveys expertise:0=no expertise, 1=expertise, 2=both**Note about coding:**The variable obtains a value of 2 if only certain aspects of the message convey expertise (e.g., a message from a doctor vs. a message from a layperson) | e.g., expertise=study/statement from expert |
| media\_details | Details if construct\_cat=2: message comes from an expert medium or not | Codes if the message comes from an expert medium or not: 0=no expert medium, 1=expert medium, 2=both (e.g., an expert and a non-expert medium) | e.g., expert=science magazine |
| media\_newspaper | Details if construct\_cat=2:medium is a newspaper/magazine or not | 0=not a newspaper/magazine, 1=newspaper/magazine | e.g., NZZ |
| media\_internet | Details if construct\_cat=2:medium is part of the Internet or not | 0=not Internet 1=Internet**Note about coding:**Newspaper websites are coded as 1 (Internet) | e.g., blog, website, news sites (NBC, MSNBC, etc.) |
| media\_tv | Details if construct\_cat=2:medium is tv or not | 0=not tv, 1=tv | - |
| media\_radio | Details if construct\_cat=2:medium is radio or not | 0=not radio, 1=radio | - |
| media\_others | Details if construct\_cat=2:medium is other than the media mentioned above | 0=no others, 1=others  | e.g., interpersonal |
| comm\_context | Communication context | 1=online,2=offline (newspaper, magazines), 3=TV, 4=radio, 5=other/various | e.g., online=website credibility |
| def\_dummy | Definition available | Codes if the article’s theoretical part provides a definition of credibility: 0=no/not in theoretical part, 1=yes**Note about coding:**“Yes” only obtains if 1) the author(s) explicitly states that the provided definition is the one applied in the article (e.g., “In this study, credibility is understood as...”) and 2) the author(s) refers to how credibility is generally understood in the literature (e.g., “Perceived source credibility is typically understood as the believability or trustworthiness of information and/or its source.”). If the author(s) just provides an overview of other scholars’ definitions, this variable is coded as “no.”  |  |
| def\_literal | Original definition if def\_dummy=1 | Records credibility’s original definition. All relevant parts of the definition are captured. | e.g., “This study specifically tests the credibility of a news article, and defines it as the public perception of news story quality.” (Pjesivac & Rui, 2014, p. 646) |
| def\_dim | Dimensions of definition | Codes if the author(s) has a unidimensional or a multidimensional understanding of the construct: 0=unidimensional, 1=multidimensional**Note about the coding:**Multidimensionality is recorded only if the construct of source, message, or medium credibility is understood as consisting of different but related latent variables (e.g., expertise and trustworthiness) that are themselves measured with specific indicators. Our definition does not consider cases in which authors refer to a construct as multidimensional but measure these “dimensions” with a single item. Cases that do not analyze the different dimensions individually are not considered multidimensional either (for example, see Liu and Huang (2005)). | e.g., “Using past studies as a guide (…), credibility was measured as a multidimensional construct.” (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 107) |
| dim\_names | Names of dimensions if def\_dim=1 | Records the dimensions’ original names and lists the items for each dimension in brackets. **Note about coding:**If no items are reported or assigned to a particular dimension, the code reads “dimension (items not reported)”. |  |
| iv | List of independent variables | Lists the main independent variables of the study at hand. Does not list control variables/covariates. | e.g., racial prejudice, attitude |
| measure\_origin | Measurement origin | Defines the origin of the used measurement:1=own, 2=adapted replication, 3=replication**Note about coding:*** 1=no references given/various scales are combined/own items are developed/many items or whole dimensions are replaced or left out/major modification in question wording (code if more or equal to 1/3 of the total number of items was changed/adapted); also if there is no reference to other measurements
* 2=minor modifications in question wording; reliance on key scale but exchange of single items (less than 1/3 of the total number of items was changed/adapted)
* 3=no changes to the scale at all, except for translation (see below)

If the same authors repeatedly use the same scale for the same construct, but always refer to authors other than themselves when they speak about the scale’s origin, only the earliest article is coded as 1; subsequent articles are coded as 3 since they use a replication of the same scale. If one article uses the same scale on two or more different samples, only the first scale is coded as 1, 2, or 3; the remaining times the scale is applied to other samples in the article is coded as 3 (replication). |  |
| measure\_transl | Coded if measure\_origin=2 or measure\_origin=3: measurement translation  | Codes if the author(s) translated the measurement or not, but only in the case of (adapted) replications: (.)=not reported/unclear, 0=no, 1=yes**Note about coding:**If the study uses a scale that was developed in a specific language (e.g., English), we assume that the scale has been translated into the main language of the country in which the study was conducted, if the article does not state otherwise (e.g., German if the study was conducted in Germany). |  |
| measure\_ref | Measurement references | Records the references provided for the measurement (see the example on the right for a short reference); we code (.) if the article provides no references to the used measurement**Note about coding:**See remarks for measure\_origin | e.g., Gaziano and McGrath (1986) |
| measure\_type | Measurement type | Records the type of the measurement: (.)=not reported, 1=semantic differential scale, 2=scale (e.g., credibility index, subscales of credibility), 3= statement(s)/question(s) (not additive), 4=other **Note about coding:**By ‘scale’ we understand an “(…) inter-related set of items (…)” (Carifio & Perla, 2007, p. 112). That is, we only code a measurement as a scale if it is used in the form of an index or a subscale. | e.g., 2=“Respondents were asked how believable, fair, accurate, and in depth they judge blogs, online and traditionally delivered newspapers (…), using a five-point scale, with 1 indicating ‘not at all’ and 5 indicating ‘very’. The four measures were then combined into a credibility index.” (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 107) |
| measure\_language | Measurement’s original language | Codes the original language in which the measurement was developed: (.)=not reported, 1=German, 2=English, 3=other**Note about coding:**If cntry (see below) is provided, code for the main language of the provided country (e.g., English, if cntry=USA) |  |
| cntry | Country of the study | Codes the country in which the study was conducted. Provides the full name of the country in English. |  |
| measure\_length | Number of items | Codes the number of items used to measure credibility and uses (.) if the number is not reported.  |  |
| response\_format | Answer categories/points on response scale | Codes the number of answer categories or points on the response scale. Codes (.) if the number is not reported | e.g., do not agree, rather agree, agree=3 |
| item\_XX | Items used to measure | Enters a variable for each used item. Records the variable “item\_XX” and replaces XX with the name of the item: 0=not used, 1=used, (.)=not reported. Sorts these variables alphabetically into the SPSS-File.**Note about coding:**If questions or statements are used as measures, we use the relevant parts of the statements (see example). We code items that are similar in meaning but formulated slightly differently (e.g., “can be trusted” and “trustworthy”🡪item\_trustworthy) in the same way. Situations in which the coders were not certain whether the items were similar enough were coded separately.If a semantic differential scale was used, we noted the positively framed attribute as the item’s name. | e.g., item\_credible; item\_actsonbehalfofXe.g., semantic differential scale: “credible – incredible” (=item\_credible) |
| sample\_size | Sample size | Reports the size of the sample**Note about coding:**If more than one sample is used, we report the mean of all used samples. |  |
| sample\_type | Sample type | Codes the sample type used in the study: (.)=not reported, 1=student, 2=citizens (commercial), 3=citizens (non-commercial), 4=citizens (not random), 5=politicians (elites), 6=professionals, 7=other, 8=different samples/sampling modes | e.g., 2=survey with Amazon Mechanical Turk, 3=survey using population registers, 4=survey posted on a website, 5=politicians, 6=journalists |
| method | Method used | Records the method used to collect the data: 1=survey, 2=survey with an experiment, 3=experiment, 4=diverse methods (e.g., scale development), 5=other**Note about coding:**We only code studies that took place in a laboratory setting as experiments. | 3=“participants visited a laboratory, viewed a news story, and answered some questions” (Tewksbury et al., 2011, p. 335) |
| valid\_test | Validity tests  | Codes whether the study conducted validity tests for convergent and/or discriminant validity or factor analysis: 0=no/not reported, 1=yes | 1=“For a measure to possess good construct validity, it has to be statistically related to other constructs that are logically similar (convergent validity), without being identical to those other constructs (discriminant validity). We compared our credibility measure with other related constructs, including liking and newsworthiness.” (Appelman & Sundar, 2016, p. 72) |
| pretest | Measurement pretest  | Codes whether the measurement was pretested in cases that used an adapted scale or adopted a new scale: 0=no/not reported, 1=yes**Note about coding:**The variable only obtains a value of 1 if the pretest was intended to validate the measurement of credibility. Cases in which the pretest was made for an experiment or for a survey in general were not coded as 1. |  |
| reli\_alpha | Cronbach’s alpha | Records the Cronbach alpha measurement or (.)=not reported**Note about coding:**If more than one Cronbach alpha is reported but the author(s) only refers to one as the central dependent variable, we only code the Cronbach alpha for the construct. If more than one Cronbach alpha are reported and the author(s) refers to more than one central variable, we calculate the mean. If they only report ranges, we take the mean of the minimum and the maximum. If the alphas of the overall scale and subscales (e.g., in the case of source credibility) are reported, we only use the alpha for the overall scale. If only two items are used, we report the correlation coefficient if the latter was provided (e.g., r=0.74). |  |
| reli\_iic | Inter-item correlation | Codes the inter-item correlation or (.)=not reported |  |
| comment\_qual | Comment on quality | Reports coders’ reflections on the quality of the measure and focuses on whether the items suit the construct under investigation. |  |

Note: A description/example is only provided if the variable name is not self-explanatory. Not all coded variables are analyzed in the paper.

# Constructs

Table A3. List of the original names of measured constructs (without duplications)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ad c.\* | newscaster c. |
| advertiser c. | newspaper advertising c. |
| answer c. | newspaper and TV coverage |
| article c. | newspaper c. |
| assuror c. | online & offline media c. |
| author c. | online encyclopedic information c. |
| blog author c. | online health information c. |
| blog c. | online information c. |
| blog post c. | online news channel c. |
| book c. | online news content c. |
| brand c. | online news c. |
| cable news c. | online news sources c. |
| candidate's political c. | online newspaper c. |
| channel c. | online source c. |
| communicator c. | organizational c. |
| company denial c. | overall newscast c. |
| content c. | platform c. |
| corporate blog c. | political candidate c. |
| c. of company  | political candidate source c. |
| CSR report c. | politicians c. |
| customer review c. | PR practitioners c. |
| domain c. | press/news aggregator c. |
| domestic television c. | product advice c. |
| e-WOM channel c. | program c. |
| expert ratings c. | publisher c. |
| general and political news c. | relative media c. |
| general c. of political candidate | reporter c. |
| group c. | review c. |
| health information c. | reviewer c. |
| health statements c. | scholarly information c. on the web |
| hypothetical article c. | scientist c. |
| information c. | search result c. |
| information c. on microblog sites | site c. |
| information c. on website | social media c. |
| information source c. | social media c./other inform. source |
| information source medium c. | source c. |
| institutional gatekeeper c. | source c. of a government agency |
| instructor c. | source c. of twitter risk messages |
| interloper candidate c. | spokesperson c. |
| international television c. | sponsor c. |
| internet c. | sportscaster source c. |
| internet journalists c. | statement c. |
| journalist c. | story c. |
| LinkedIn profile c. | structural c. |
| location information c. | support group c. |
| Table A3 continued |  |
| media advertising c. | testimonial c. |
| media channel c. | trust in newspapers and television |
| media c. | TV news and net news c. |
| message c. | TV news c. |
| message-relevant issues c. | TV news industry c. |
| microblog information c. | tweet c. |
| news article c. | user rating c. |
| news c. | weblog c. |
| news media c. | webpage source c. |
| news organization c. | website content c. |
| news producer c. | website c. |
| news program c. | website structural c. |
| news report c. | Wikipedia article c. |
| news story c. |  |

Note: \*c.=credibility

Figure A1. Relevance of individual and collective source credibility over time



Figure A2. Relevance of different communication contexts over time



# Measurement items

Table A4. List of the original names of the items used for measurement

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| accurate | coherent |
| acceptable | colorful |
| active | competent |
| acts on behalf of | complete/provides complete information |
| aggressive | comprehensive |
| agreeable | concerned (about me) |
| (readers pay) attention to content | concern for readers/society etc. |
| attractive | concise |
| authentic | confident |
| author is affiliated with prestigious institution | considers xy’s interests |
| authoritative | (presence of) contact information |
| available | contains credential of author |
| balanced | contains picture of author |
| believable/believable information | content is consistent with what I believe |
| beautiful | contextual |
| bold | convenient |
| bright | convincing |
| caring (about me) | cool |
| caring (about people/society) | correct/provides correct information |
| charming | company's intentions correspond with text |
| classy | coverage |
| clean | credible |
| clear | creative |
| Table A4 continued |  |
| critical | kind |
| current | knowledgeable |
| delivering a diversity of opinions | (document has a) nice layout |
| dependable | leading/being a leader in one's area |
| descriptive | likeable |
| detailed | xy liked the story |
| diplomatic | likelihood to read something |
| direct | likelihood to use something |
| dynamic | (document contains) links that do not work |
| efficient | live |
| elegant | (document is) long |
| emphasis | meaningful |
| empathic | meek |
| endorsing (third party endorsement) | xy is motivated by money |
| entertaining | motivation |
| ethical | moral |
| even-handed | (document has) multiple authorship |
| evidence-based | neutral |
| experienced | newsworthy |
| expert | nice |
| factual | non-sensational |
| fair | not misleading |
| favorable | not opinionated |
| fresh | not seeking commercial profit |
| friendly | not self-centered |
| genuine | objective |
| good/good job/good spokesperson | open-minded |
| good natured | organized |
| has a hidden agenda | others should believe |
| held the respondent's attention | partial |
| (is of) high quality | partisan |
| honorable | personal |
| honest (campaign/intentions) | persuasive |
| immediate | pleasant |
| important | powerful |
| includes major facts/tables and graphs | presence of privacy policy |
| includes references | prestigious |
| in depth | professional |
| influential | protects the public interest |
| informative/good source of info | provides information needed |
| informed | prudent |
| integrity | published |
| intelligent | qualified |
| interactive | reads articles by authors printed in journals |
| has xy’s interests at heart | real |
| interesting | reasonable |
| intimate | recognized |
| involving | reflects things as they are |
| just | relevant |
| Table A4 continued |  |
| reliable | true/makes truthful claims |
| renowned | trustworthy |
| representative | (document has) typos |
| reputable | unbiased |
| respects people's privacy | understandable |
| responsible | understanding |
| safe | unselfish |
| sensitive | up to date |
| separates facts/opinions | useful |
| serious | valuable |
| sexy | verifiable |
| sincere | virtuous |
| site organization | (contains meter for) visit numbers |
| skilled/skills necessary | visual |
| slanted | vivid |
| sociable | warm |
| soft | watches out for xy’s interests |
| sophisticated | website architecture |
| straight | (issues are) well addressed |
| substantive | (posted in a) well respected website |
| successful | well written/written by prof. journalists |
| (products of) superior quality | willingly lie |
| tells the whole story | willingness to recommend |
| thoroughly (researched) | willingness to work for sponsor |
| timely | won't misuse personal information |
| tone | working for the public good |
| trained (reporters) |  |

Table A5. Frequency of item use by construct

| Item | N (total) |  source (n=125)  | media | message |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| individual | collective | both | (n=60) |  (n=74) |
| accurate | 97 | 5 | 18 | 4 | 27 | 43 |
| active | 6 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| aggressive | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| attractive | 7 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| authentic | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| authoritative | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| balanced | 13 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 8 |
| believable (information) | 78 | 8 | 11 | 4 | 24 | 31 |
| bold | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| bright | 13 | 10 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| caring (about me) | 13 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| caring (about people) | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| classy | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| clear | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| competent | 25 | 18 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| complete | 21 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 12 |
| comprehensive | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| concerned (about me) | 11 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| concern for readers etc. | 11 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 0 |
| convincing | 7 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| credible | 71 | 17 | 11 | 3 | 17 | 23 |
| current | 5 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| dependable | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| ethical | 15 | 11 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| experienced | 16 | 9 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| expert | 49 | 24 | 11 | 7 | 3 | 4 |
| factual | 10 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 5 |
| fair | 54 | 6 | 14 | 1 | 14 | 19 |
| friendly | 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| genuine | 14 | 10 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| good | 9 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| honorable | 13 | 10 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| honest  | 44 | 22 | 12 | 7 | 3 | 0 |
| includes major facts etc. | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| in depth | 11 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 1 |
| informative | 8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 5 |
| informed | 22 | 14 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| integrity | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| intelligent | 21 | 13 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| has xy’s interests at heart | 12 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| interesting | 6 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| intimate | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| involving | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| just | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| kind | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| knowledgeable | 8 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| moral | 15 | 10 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| newsworthy | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| nice | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| not self-centered | 12 | 9 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| objective | 7 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| open-minded | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| personal | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| pleasant | 8 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| professional | 5 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| qualified | 18 | 11 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| reliable | 27 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 7 |
| reputable | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| respects people's privacy | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| safe | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| sensitive | 12 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| separates facts/opinions | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| sincere | 12 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| skilled/skills necessary | 8 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| tells the whole story | 26 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 11 |
| trained (reporters) | 21 | 12 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| true/makes truthful claims | 11 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| trustworthy | 123 | 33 | 30 | 11 | 18 | 31 |
| unbiased | 50 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 11 | 20 |
| understanding | 7 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| unselfish | 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| valuable | 6 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| virtuous | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| watches out for xy’s interest | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| well written | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| other items (n=123)\* | 164 | 40 | 27 | 13 | 34 | 50 |
| Note: \*Items include all items that were only used once or twice |

Table A6. Frequency of item use by communication context

| Item | online (n=147) | offline (n=70) | other/various (n=34) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| accurate | 56 | 27 | 13 |
| active | 1 | 5 | 0 |
| aggressive | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| attractive | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| authentic | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| authoritative | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| balanced | 10 | 2 | 1 |
| believable (information) | 47 | 15 | 15 |
| bold | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| bright | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| caring (about me) | 12 | 1 | 0 |
| caring (about people) | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| classy | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| clear | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| competent | 20 | 4 | 1 |
| complete | 15 | 3 | 3 |
| comprehensive | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| concerned (about me) | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| concern for readers etc. | 3 | 6 | 2 |
| convincing | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| credible | 38 | 20 | 9 |
| current | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| dependable | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| ethical | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| experienced | 9 | 5 | 0 |
| expert | 35 | 6 | 3 |
| factual | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| fair | 28 | 18 | 7 |
| friendly | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| genuine | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| good | 6 | 3 | 0 |
| honorable | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| honest  | 30 | 13 | 0 |
| includes major facts etc. | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| in depth | 7 | 0 | 4 |
| informative | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| informed | 18 | 3 | 0 |
| integrity | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| intelligent | 18 | 2 | 0 |
| has xy’s interests at heart | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| interesting | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| intimate | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| involving | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| just | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| kind | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| knowledgeable | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| moral | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| newsworthy | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| nice | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| not self-centered | 11 | 1 | 0 |
| objective | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| open-minded | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| personal | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| pleasant | 5 | 3 | 0 |
| professional | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| qualified | 12 | 5 | 0 |
| reliable | 21 | 5 | 1 |
| reputable | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| respects people's privacy | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| safe | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| sensitive | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| separates facts/opinions | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| sincere | 7 | 5 | 0 |
| skilled/skills necessary | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| tells the whole story | 9 | 15 | 2 |
| trained (reporters) | 16 | 3 | 1 |
| true/makes truthful claims | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| trustworthy | 78 | 34 | 9 |
| unbiased | 25 | 17 | 7 |
| understanding | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| unselfish | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| valuable | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| virtuous | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| watches out for xy’s interests | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| well written | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| other items (n=123)\* | 91 | 57 | 8 |
| Note: \*Items include all items that were used only once or twice. The items competent, expert, informed, intelligent and trained are significantly (at least on the 10%-level) more frequent in online than in offline scales. The item “tells the whole story2 is significantly more common in the offline than in the online context (p=0.001). |

# Details on cluster analysis

Table A7. List of regrouped items

| New items | Regrouped items |
| --- | --- |
| accurate | accurate, correct, true, real, factual information |
| attractive | attractive, beautiful, sexy |
| authentic (II) | authentic, genuine |
| believable (II) | believable, believable information, others should believe something |
| caring | caring about me, about society, working for the public good, acts on behalf of its community |
| classy | classy, elegant |
| clear | clear, coherent, efficient, organized, site organization, understandable, well written |
| complete | complete, comprehensive, coverage, detailed, in depth, includes major facts, involving, reflects information as it is, provides information needed, tells the whole story, thoroughly, not partial, issues well addressed |
| concern | concern for the individual, the community, society, consider the reader's interests, has my interests at heart, watches out for people's interests |
| confident | confident, cool |
| convenient (II) | available, convenient, timely |
| current | current, up-to-date, fresh, immediate |
| ethical | moral, ethical, honorable, virtuous, good |
| evidence | contains credentials, third party endorsement, evidence-based, includes references, verifiable |
| honest | honest, runs an honest campaign, has honest intentions, direct, integrity, sincere, straight |
| informed | informed, knowledgeable |
| intelligent | intelligent, bright, reasonable |
| interesting (II) | interesting, newsworthy |
| likelihoodto do something | likelihood, willingness to read xx, use xx, recommend xx, to work for xx |
| objective (II) | balanced, unbiased, delivering a diversity of opinions, even-handed, fair, just, not opinionated, neutral, objective, separates facts and opinions, slanted, open-minded |
| personal | personal, intimate |
| persuasive (II) | convincing, effective, persuasive  |
| pleasant (II) | agreeable, charming, entertaining, likeable, nice, pleasant |
| powerful (II) | active, affiliated with a prestigious institution, dynamic, important, influential, leading, powerful, prestigious, renowned, reputable, well-respected, recognized |
| privacy | item invades privacy, respects people's privacy, won't misuse personal info |
| profit | not seeking commercial profit, motivated by money |
| qualified | trained, skilled, sophisticated, qualified, professional, expert, experienced, competent |
| quality | (products) are of superior, high quality |
| relevant (II) | meaningful, relevant |
| reliable (II) | reliable, dependable, authoritative, responsible |
| trustworthy (II) | trustworthy information/source, safe |
| understanding | diplomatic, kind, sensitive, understanding, empathetic, good natured |
| unselfish | unselfish, not self-centered |
| useful (II) | good source of information, informative, useful, valuable |
| vivid (II) | vivid, descriptive, colorful |
| warm | warm, sociable, friendly, soft |

Note: Items marked with (II) are items for which items that could refer to either source/media or message were also regrouped. These were used for a final cluster analysis (see Figure A5 and tables A13 to A16 in this document).

Figure A3. Dendrogram for the cluster analysis with the regrouped items (synonyms)

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Table A8. Frequency of item use by cluster (regrouped items)

| Item | N (total) | Cluster (regrouped items) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (N=156) | 2 (N=17) | 3 (N=68) |
| accurate\* | 109 | 43 | 0 | 66 |
| active | 6 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| aggressive | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| attractive\* | 7 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| authentic | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| authoritative | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| balanced | 13 | 2 | 0 | 11 |
| believable | 78 | 45 | 0 | 33 |
| bold | 5 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| caring\* | 19 | 9 | 10 | 0 |
| classy\* | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| clear\* | 13 | 6 | 2 | 5 |
| complete\* | 75 | 11 | 0 | 64 |
| concern\* | 23 | 9 | 11 | 3 |
| confident\* | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| convincing | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| credible | 71 | 66 | 2 | 3 |
| current\* | 7 | 4 | 0 | 3 |
| dependable | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| ethical\* | 26 | 11 | 15 | 0 |
| evidence\* | 6 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| fair | 54 | 11 | 0 | 43 |
| genuine | 14 | 3 | 11 | 0 |
| honest\* | 50 | 29 | 17 | 4 |
| informative | 8 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| informed\* | 30 | 13 | 17 | 0 |
| intelligent\* | 23 | 6 | 17 | 0 |
| interesting | 6 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| just | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| likelihood to do something\* | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| newsworthy | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| nice | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| objective | 7 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| open-minded | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| personal\* | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| pleasant | 8 | 1 | 6 | 1 |
| privacy\* | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| qualified\* | 65 | 41 | 17 | 7 |
| quality\* | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| reliable | 27 | 15 | 6 | 6 |
| reputable | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| safe | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| separates facts and opinions | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| trustworthy | 123 | 57 | 15 | 51 |
| unbiased | 50 | 7 | 0 | 43 |
| understanding\* | 19 | 5 | 13 | 1 |
| unselfish\* | 17 | 2 | 14 | 1 |
| valuable | 6 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| warm\* | 9 | 1 | 6 | 2 |
| other items (n=74)\*\* | 94 | 74 | 2 | 18 |

Note: \*These items were regrouped based on their meaning (synonyms);
 \*\*Items that include all items only used once or twice

# Additional cluster analysis I

Figure A4. Dendrogram for the cluster analysis with the original items

**

Table A9. Cluster attribution by construct (original items, row percent)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | sourceN (%) | media N (%) | message N (%) | Total |
| Cluster 1 | 81 (49.1) | 40 (24.2) | 44 (26.7) | 165 (100.0) |
| Cluster 2 | 13 (100.0) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 13 (100.0) |
| Cluster 3 | 19 (30.2) | 19 (30.2) | 25 (39.7) | 63 (100.0) |

Table A10. Cluster attribution by construct (original items, column percent)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | source N (%) | media(N (%) | message N (%) |
| Cluster 1 | 81 (71.7) | 40 (67.8) | 44 (63.8) |
| Cluster 2 | 13 (11.5) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) |
| Cluster 3 | 19 (16.8) | 19 (32.2) | 25 (36.2) |
| Total | 113 (100.0) | 59 (100.0) | 69 (100.0) |

Table A11. Cluster attribution by context (original items, row percent)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | online N (%) | offline N (%) | other/various N (%) | Total |
| Cluster 1 | 89 (56.7) | 43 (27.4) | 25 (15.9) | 157 (100.0) |
| Cluster 2 | 13 (100.0) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 13 (100.0) |
| Cluster 3 | 35 (55.6) | 19 (30.2) | 9 (14.3) | 63 (100.0) |

Table A12. Frequency of item use by cluster (original items)

| Item | N (total) | Cluster (original items) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (N=165) | 2 (N=13) | 3 (N=63) |
| accurate | 97 | 35 | 0 | 62 |
| active | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| aggressive | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| attractive | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| authentic | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| authoritative | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| balanced | 13 | 2 | 0 | 11 |
| believable (information) | 78 | 51 | 0 | 27 |
| bold | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| bright | 13 | 0 | 13 | 0 |
| caring (about me) | 13 | 3 | 10 | 0 |
| caring (about people) | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| classy | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| clear | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| competent | 25 | 12 | 13 | 0 |
| complete | 21 | 6 | 0 | 15 |
| comprehensive | 7 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| concerned (about me) | 11 | 0 | 11 | 0 |
| concern for readers etc. | 11 | 8 | 0 | 3 |
| convincing | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| credible | 71 | 68 | 0 | 3 |
| current | 5 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| dependable | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| ethical | 15 | 2 | 13 | 0 |
| experienced | 16 | 16 | 0 | 0 |
| expert | 49 | 33 | 13 | 3 |
| factual | 10 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| fair | 54 | 6 | 0 | 48 |
| friendly | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| genuine | 14 | 1 | 13 | 0 |
| good | 9 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| honorable | 13 | 0 | 13 | 0 |
| honest | 44 | 29 | 13 | 2 |
| includes major facts etc. | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| in depth | 11 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| informative | 8 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| informed | 22 | 9 | 13 | 0 |
| integrity | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| intelligent | 21 | 9 | 12 | 0 |
| has xy’s interests at heart | 12 | 1 | 11 | 0 |
| interesting | 6 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| intimate | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| involving | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| just | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| kind | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| knowledgeable | 8 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| moral | 15 | 2 | 13 | 0 |
| newsworthy | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| nice | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| not self-centered | 12 | 1 | 10 | 1 |
| objective | 7 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| open-minded | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| personal | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| pleasant | 8 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| professional | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| qualified | 18 | 18 | 0 | 0 |
| reliable | 27 | 22 | 0 | 5 |
| reputable | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| respects people's privacy | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| safe | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| sensitive | 12 | 1 | 11 | 0 |
| separates facts/opinions | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| sincere | 12 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| skilled/skills necessary | 8 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| tells the whole story | 26 | 3 | 0 | 23 |
| trained (reporters) | 21 | 5 | 13 | 3 |
| true/makes truthful claims | 11 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| trustworthy | 123 | 64 | 13 | 46 |
| unbiased | 50 | 8 | 0 | 42 |
| understanding | 7 | 2 | 5 | 0 |
| unselfish | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| valuable | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| virtuous | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| watches out for xy’s interests | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| well written | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| other items (n=123)\* | 164 | 140 | 0 | 24 |

Note: \*Items that include all items only used once or twice

# Additional cluster analysis II

Figure A5. Dendrogram for the cluster analysis with the regrouped items (II)

**

Table A13. Cluster attribution by construct (regrouped items II, row percent)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | source N (%) | media N (%) | message N (%) | Total |
| Cluster 1 | 43 (36.8) | 31 (26.5) | 43 (36.8) | 117 (100.0) |
| Cluster 2 | 42 (95.5) | 1 (2.3) | 1 (2.3) | 44 (100.0) |
| Cluster 3 | 28 (35.0) | 27 (33.8) | 25 (31.3) | 80 (100.0) |

Table A14. Cluster attribution by construct (regrouped items II, column percent)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | source N (%) | media N (%) | message N (%) |
| Cluster 1 | 43 (38.1) | 31 (52.5) | 43 (62.3) |
| Cluster 2 | 42 (37.2) | 1 (1.7) | 1 (1.5) |
| Cluster 3 | 28 (24.8) | 27 (45.8) | 25 (36.2) |
| Total | 113 (100.0) | 59 (100.0) | 69 (100.0) |

Table A15. Cluster attribution by context (regrouped items II, row percent)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | online N (%) | offline N (%) | other/variousN (%) | Total |
| Cluster 1 | 62 (56.4) | 29 (26.4) | 19 (17.3) | 110 (100.0) |
| Cluster 2 | 33 (76.7) | 8 (18.6) | 2 (4.7) | 43 (100.0) |
| Cluster 3 | 42 (52.5) | 25 (31.3) | 13 (16.3) | 80 (100.0) |

Table A16. Frequency of item use by cluster (regrouped items II)

| Item | N (total) | Cluster (regrouped items II) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 (N=110) | 2 (N=43) | 3 (N=80) |
| accurate\* | 109 | 39 | 0 | 70 |
| aggressive | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| attractive\* | 7 | 0 | 5 | 2 |
| authentic\* | 17 | 4 | 13 | 0 |
| believable\* | 78 | 48 | 2 | 28 |
| bold | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| caring\* | 19 | 2 | 13 | 4 |
| classy\* | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| clear\* | 13 | 4 | 2 | 7 |
| complete\* | 75 | 6 | 1 | 68 |
| concern\* | 23 | 4 | 12 | 7 |
| confident\* | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| convenient\* | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| credible | 71 | 53 | 9 | 9 |
| current\* | 7 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| ethical\* | 26 | 2 | 19 | 5 |
| evidence\* | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| honest\* | 50 | 4 | 37 | 9 |
| informed\* | 30 | 2 | 27 | 1 |
| intelligent\* | 23 | 0 | 22 | 1 |
| interesting\* | 9 | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| likelihood to do sth.\* | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| objective\* | 84 | 10 | 1 | 73 |
| personal\* | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| persuasive\* | 9 | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| pleasant\* | 11 | 0 | 7 | 4 |
| powerful\* | 17 | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| privacy\* | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| qualified\* | 65 | 15 | 34 | 16 |
| quality\* | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| reliable\* | 32 | 10 | 11 | 11 |
| trustworthy\* | 124 | 23 | 41 | 60 |
| understanding\* | 19 | 2 | 15 | 2 |
| unselfish\* | 17 | 0 | 16 | 1 |
| useful\* | 13 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| vivid\* | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| warm\* | 9 | 0 | 6 | 3 |
| other items (n=42)\*\* | 56 | 25 | 13 | 18 |

Note: \*These items were regrouped based on their meaning (synonyms).
 \*\*Items that include all items only used once or twice

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1. The categories of media type, subsystem of media type, etc., are borrowed from Schweiger (2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)