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Which article titles come from an unreliable site?

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Are fake news in a bad mood ?

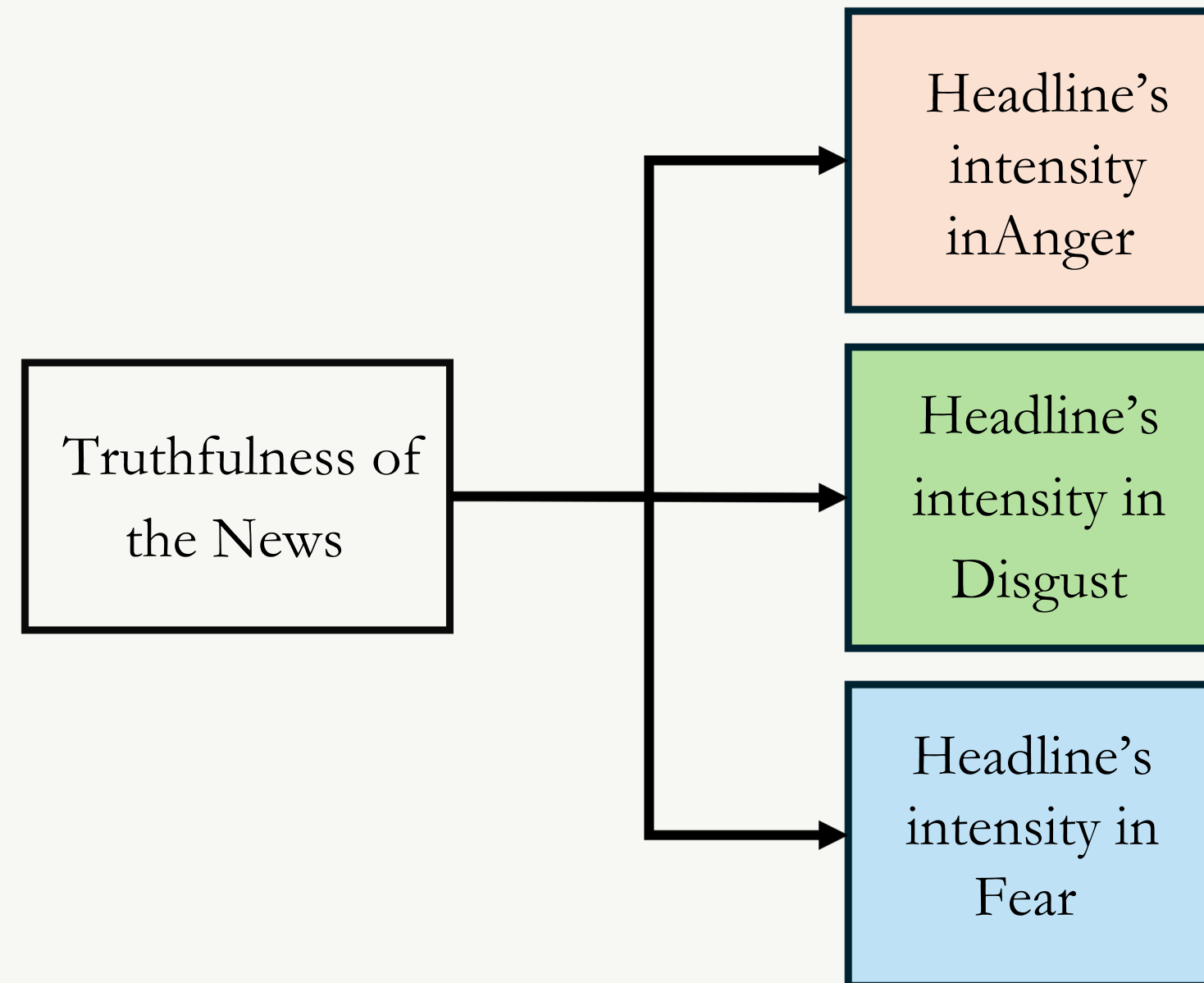
Do the headlines of unreliable news sites convey more negative emotions than those found on truthful news sites?

Prediction: At least one negative emotion is more present in unreliable news than in real news

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Data

- Two datasets previously used in studies on opinion spam detection and fake news classification (25,000 news articles between 2016-2017)
- Title, Full text, Subject, Publication Date and Veracity label (truthful or unreliable)

Sample used in our study:

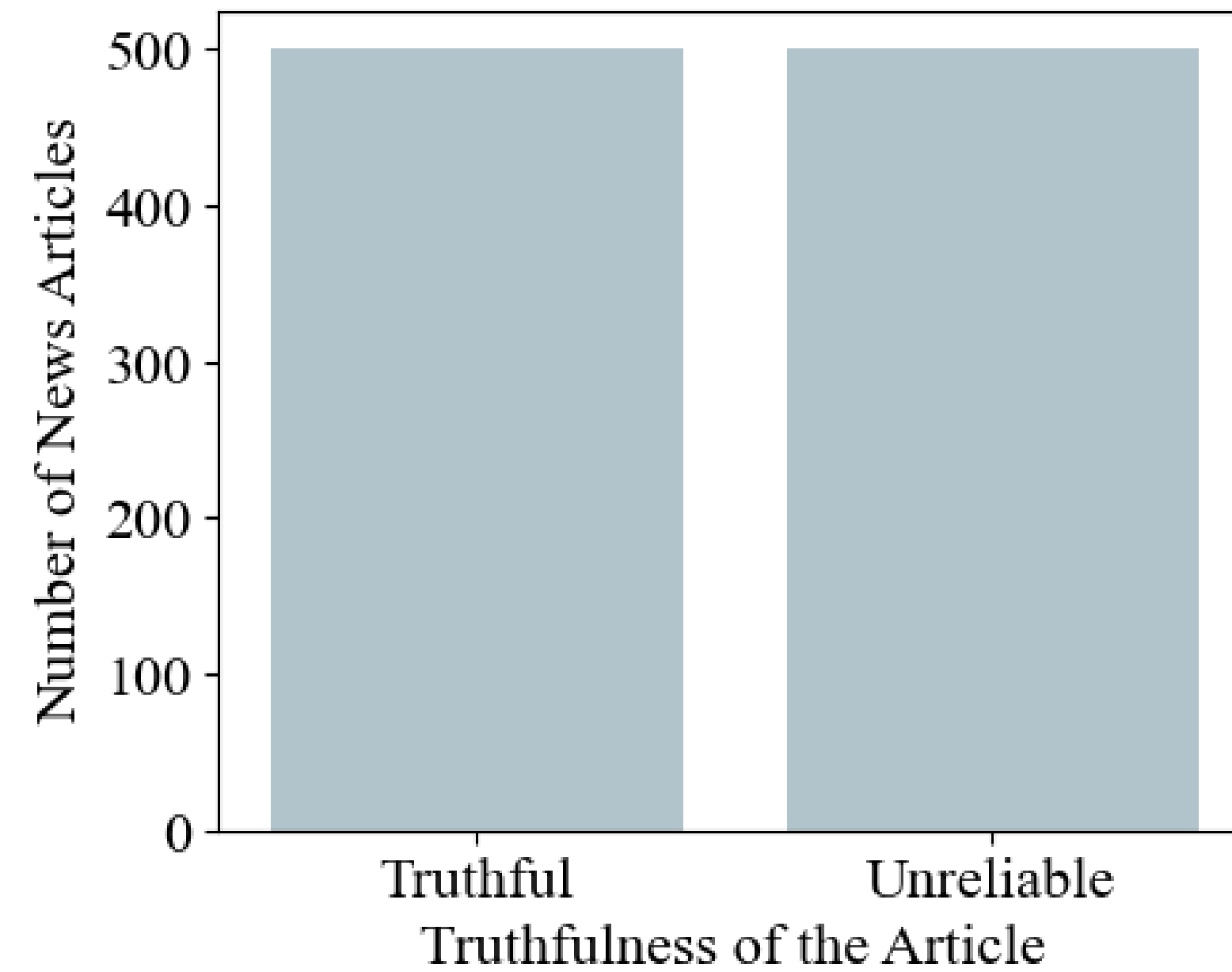
- 1000 headlines annotated
- 500 from truthful news
- 500 from unreliable news

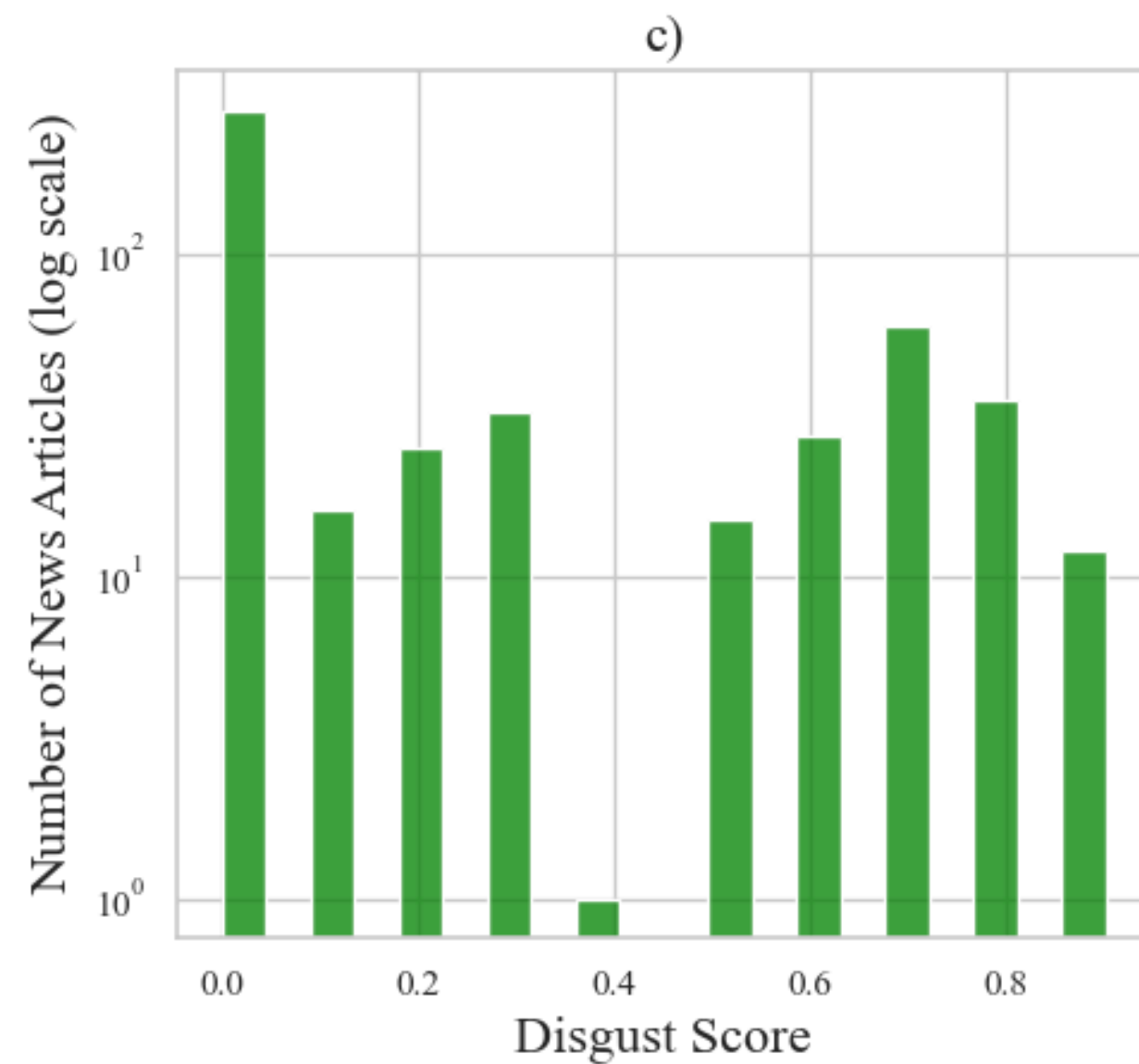
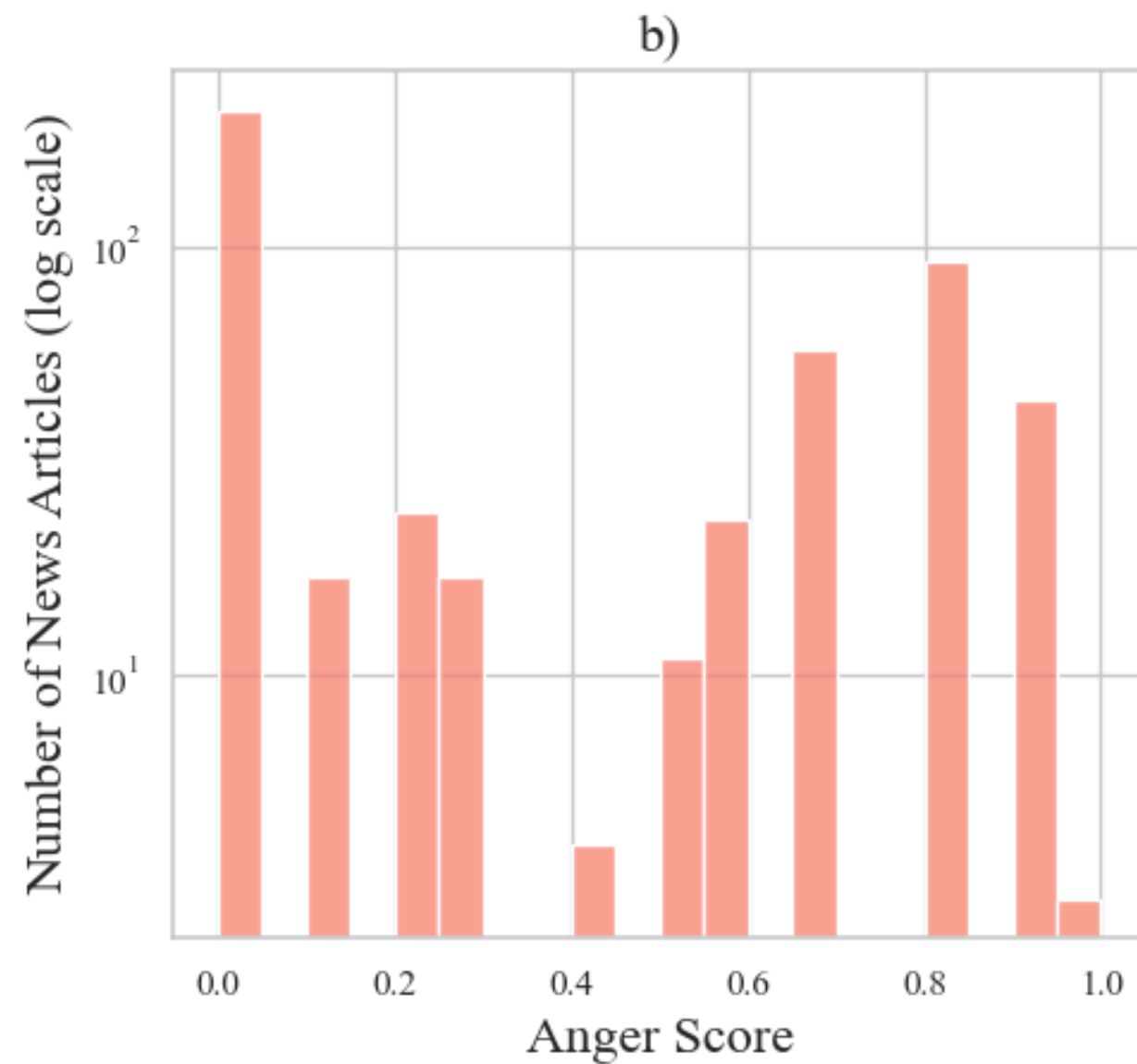
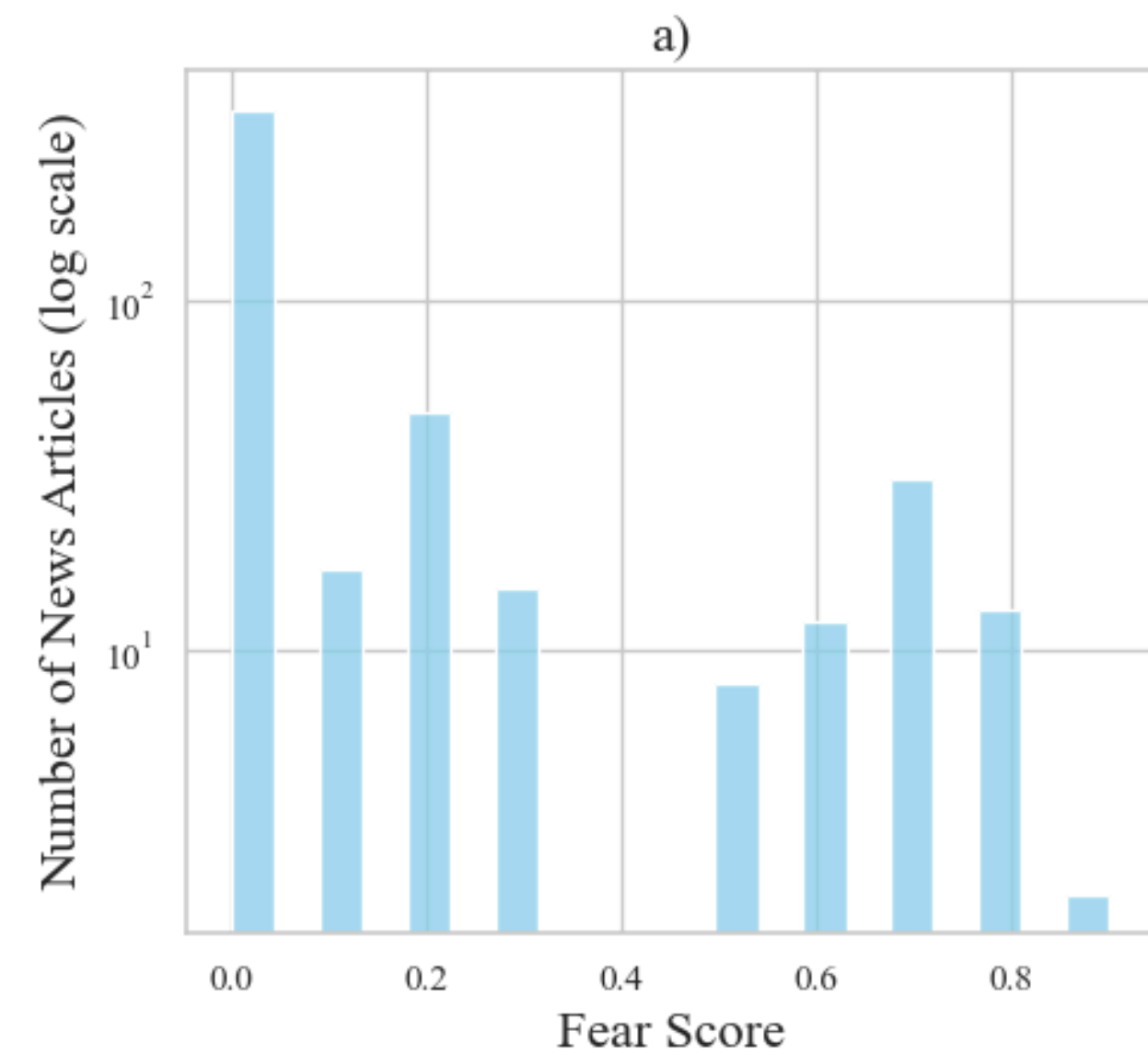
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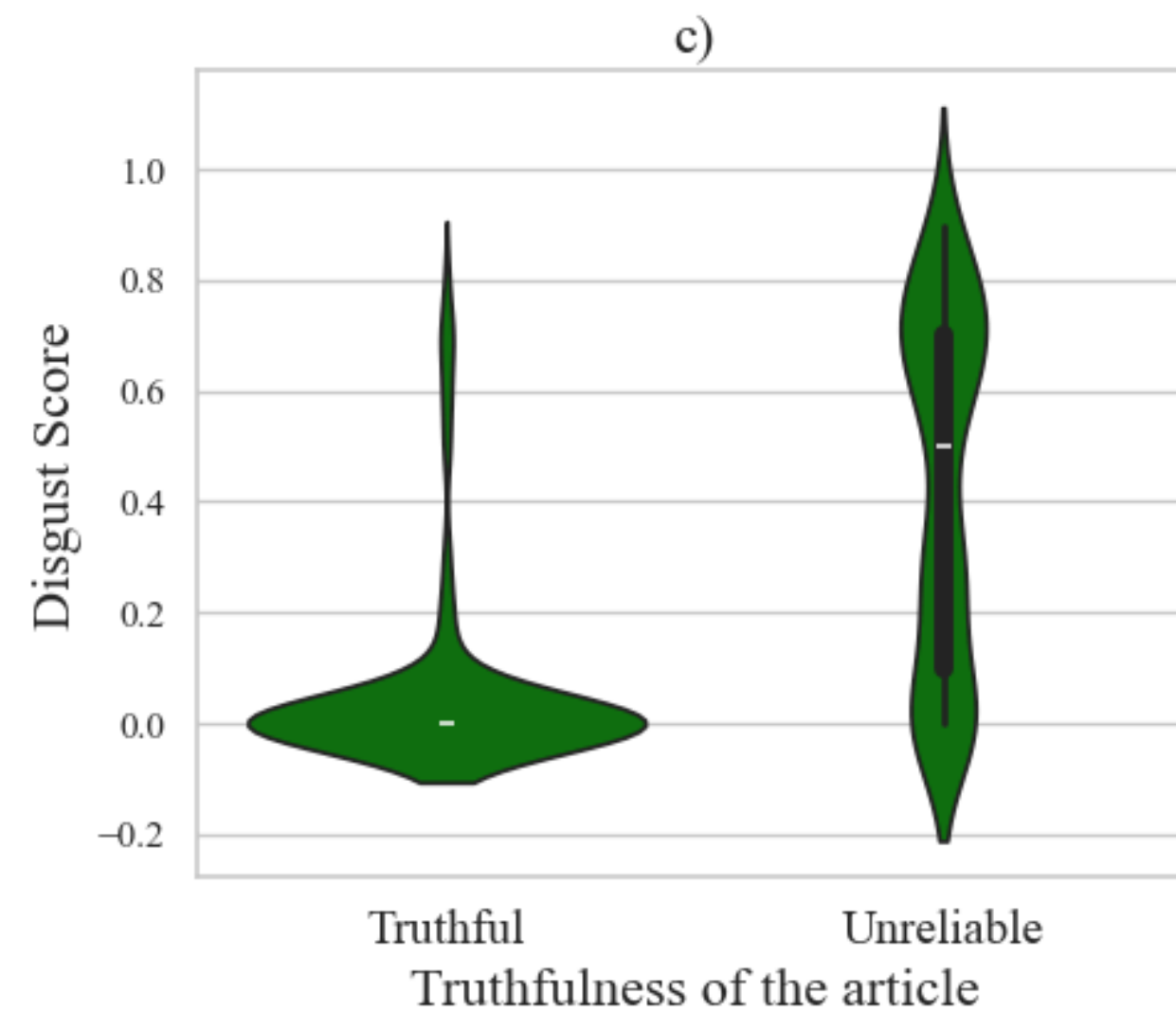
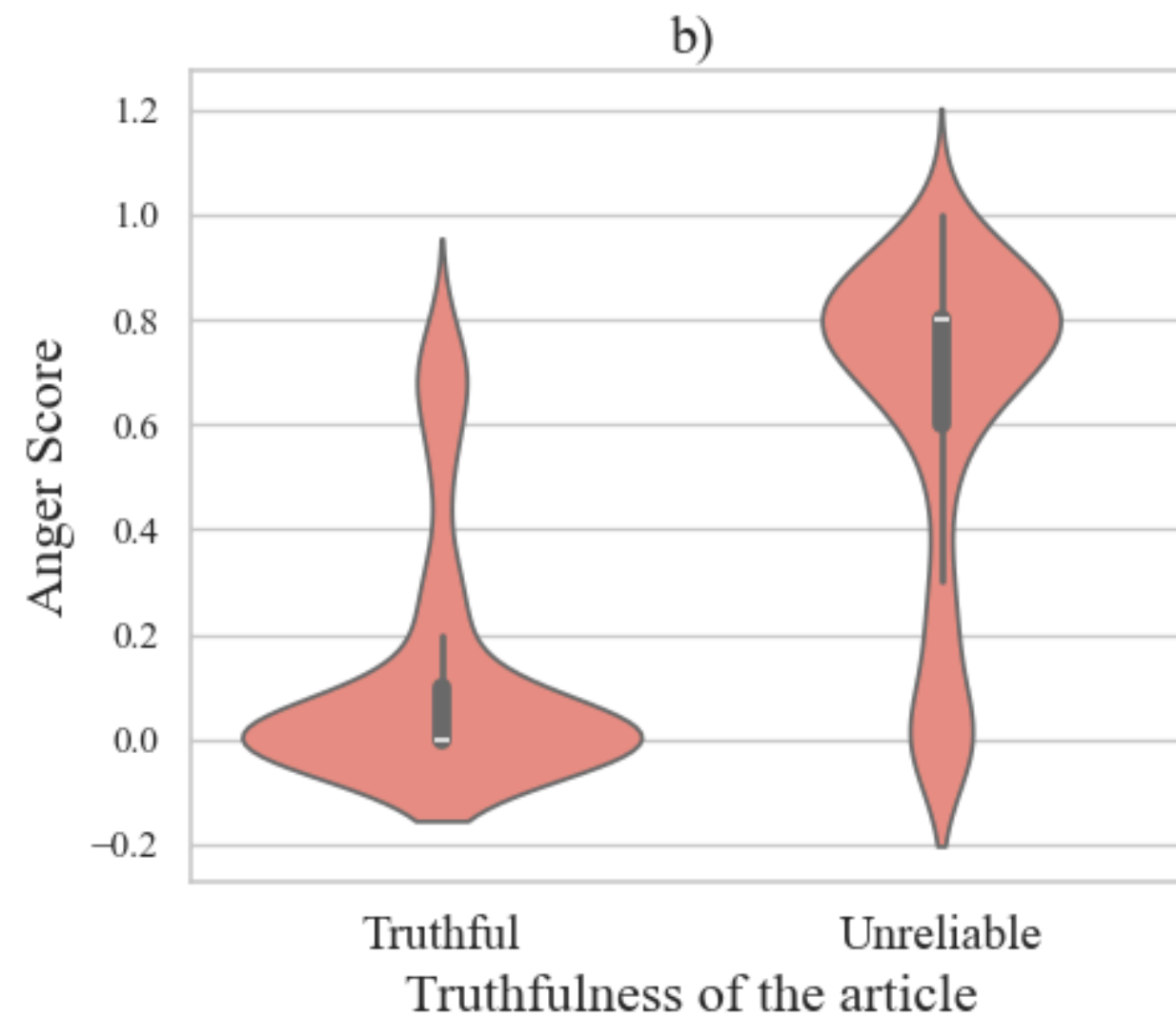
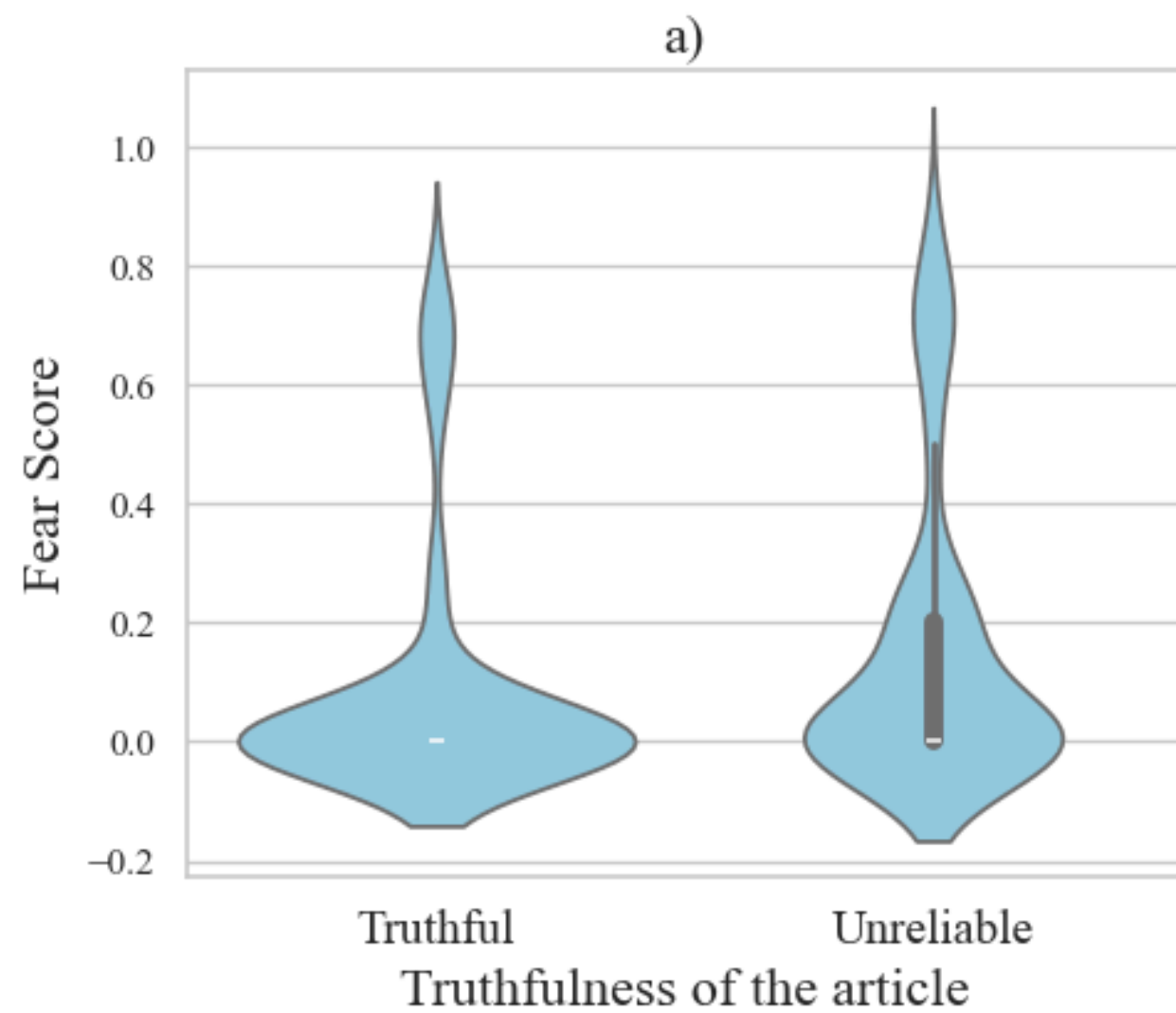
- Fear : 0
- Anger : 0.8
- Disgust : 0.7

“Senate Republican Murkowski leaning yes on tax reform budget”

- Fear : 0
- Anger : 0
- Disgust : 0







Results

| | β | p -value |
|----------------|---------|------------|
| Fear | -0.19 | 0.124 |
| Anger | 1.33 | < 0.001 |
| Disgust | 0.80 | < 0.001 |

Conclusion

- Negatively charged emotional language helps distinguish fake news from real news
- Anger and disgust are significantly more present in unreliable headlines
- Our findings align with previous studies (Farhoudinia et al., 2024; Alonso et al., 2021)
- Fear, though often discussed in misinformation literature, did not significantly predict fake news in our model
- Not all negative emotions play the same role in fake news spread

Perspective

- Expand emotion categories beyond fear, anger, and disgust (e.g., surprise, joy, sadness)
- Analyze larger and more diverse datasets across time periods, cultures, and media platforms
- Develop and refine automated fake news detection tools using emotional profiling as a signal
- Investigate how emotional tone interacts with cognitive biases and user behavior online.