Fake News - Familiarity Induction (#2775)

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1) What's the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?
We are interested in whether familiar news headlines (both real and fake) are rated as more accurate and are more likely to be shared on social media.

2) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.
Participants will be presented with fake and real news headlines. They will be asked to indicate 1) how accurate they think the headlines are (i.e., whether the headlines describe a real event) and 2) whether they would consider sharing the story on social media.

3) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?
Participants will be presented with 8 news stories (4 real, 4 fake) and asked to indicate whether they are familiar with the stories or not. This is intended to make participants familiar with the news stories. After an intervening period (where participants complete demographic questions and the PANAS), participants will be presented with 16 news stories (the 8 that were previously presented, and 8 new news stories - 8 will be fake and 8 will be real, all counterbalanced). Participants should rate the "old" news stories as more accurate than the "real" news stories (regardless of whether they are fake or real). At the end of the survey, the 8 "new" items will be presented and participants will indicate whether they were familiar with them prior to completing the study. Participants will then be asked to complete the study again a week later. In this follow-up, the 16 news stories from the first treatment will be presented alongside 8 new news stories. Here, again, we are interested in whether participants will rate the familiar ("old") news stories as more accurate than the new ones.

Participants will complete one of two conditions: 1) A control condition (as described above) and 2) An experimental condition where the 4 fake news stories in the initial phase have been tagged as "disputed by 3rd party fact checkers".

4) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.
Accuracy ratings will be scored 0 if "not at all accurate" or "not very accurate" are selected and 1 if "somewhat accurate" or "very accurate" are selected when used as an IV. Accuracy will be scored continuously when used as DVs. Familiarity ratings will be scored 0 if "no" or "unsure" are selected and 1 if "yes" is selected when used as IV. Social media ratings will be scored 0 if "no" is selected and 1 if "maybe" or "yes" is selected (cases where people indicate that they would never share something political online or who don't use social media will be removed).

Accuracy ratings and (separately) sharing on social media will be entered into a 2 (Type: Real, Fake) x 2 (Familiarity: Old, New) x 2 (Warning: No warning, warning) mixed design ANOVA. Interactions will be further explored with follow-up ANOVA's and t-tests. Planned post hoc analysis irrespective of null interactions: Old v. new fake news stories will be compared (via t-test) separately for warning and no-warning conditions. This will occur in both the original session (comparing the 8 old with 8 new) and the follow-up session (comparing the 16 old with the 8 new).

5) Any secondary analyses?
News stories will be coded in terms of "political concordance"; i.e., the pro-Republican items for Trump supporters and the pro-Democrat items for Clinton supporters (based on a forced choice between the two). The goal is to investigate if familiarity has an effect even if the analysis is separated based on political concordance (i.e., the familiarity effect is evident in both cases).

We will also look at the effects with cases where participants were familiar with the news stories removed.

6) How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size? No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.
1000 participants on Mechanical Turk.

7) Anything else you would like to pre-register? (e.g., data exclusions, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)
The Cognitive Reflection Test is being included at the end of the study because it has relevance for another set of studies. We do not intend to include it in the current work.

Participants will be removed if they answered affirmatively to any of the following questions: a) Did you respond randomly at any point during the study?, b) Did you search the internet (via Google or otherwise) for any of the news headlines?, or c) At the beginning of the survey (when you were asked whether you were familiar with the stories), did you just skip through without reading the headlines?

8) Have any data been collected for this study already?

No, no data have been collected for this study yet