What to Trust on TikTok?: The Role of Authority, Jargon, and Prior Knowledge in Evaluating Trust in Political TikTok Content

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Abstract

As TikTok is becoming increasingly popular as a platform for political information, it is crucial to understand what factors influence users' trust in content. This study aimed to investigate how authority, jargon, and prior knowledge influence trust evaluations in political TikTok content. A 2 (source authority: yes or no) x 2 (use of jargon: yes or no) between-subject experimental design was employed, with 136 Dutch-speaking participants between the ages of 18 to 35 years. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the conditions and had to view a manipulated video. A questionnaire was used to measure trust and prior knowledge. The results showed that neither perceived authority nor use of jargon significantly influenced trust in the video. However, prior knowledge emerged as a significantly strong predictor of trust, suggesting that participants with more prior knowledge on the topic reported greater levels of trust in the content they were presented. No significant interaction effects were found between prior knowledge and the manipulated variables, suggesting that prior knowledge did not moderate the influence of authority or jargon. The findings show that authority and jargon may not be as effective in evaluating trust in TikTok's short-video format, but prior knowledge is. This demonstrates the value of political literacy in communication and indicates that platforms could benefit from integrating contextual information to enhance users' trust evaluations, ultimately leading to a more informed digital society.

Contents

Introduction

Next to traditional media like newspapers, there are many online social media outlets nowadays. Although social media can serve as a form of entertainment, platforms like TikTok are also used by young people to get news updates (Flynn, 2024). Whether users actively search for specific information or come across news through TikTok's algorithm, news outlets seem to provide them with videos as a "modern take on TV news" (Flynn, 2024, para. 4). But not only news outlets use TikTok, as politicians now include it into their campaigns; e.g., major political parties incorporate TikTok in their strategies (Grantham, 2024) and the US 2024 presidential election was even called a "TikTok election" (Murphy, 2024). Therefore, the platform increasingly influences users' beliefs about political topics, possibly affecting their political (voting) behavior.

TikTok differs from traditional media platforms in both its format and the way information is distributed. It shows its users short videos, often not longer than a minute, that can combine entertainment with a political message (D'Souza, 2025). The app uses an algorithm to provide its users with content based on their engagement, instead of letting users choose what they want to watch. This creates a platform where political information can be posted, shared, and discussed by anyone. As of 2024, TikTok had approximately two billion users worldwide (Ceci, 2025), which implies that the way political content is presented and interpreted on the platform can potentially influence a large part of the global population.

One of the main issues regarding political content on TikTok is the difficulty of distinguishing between reliable and fake information. Unlike traditional media sources, where information is often more regulated as they adhere to journalistic standards, anyone can post political content on TikTok (*Community Guidelines,* 2024). Although content is moderated, it is not consistently fact-checked and, therefore, not always accurate. In fast-paced environments like TikTok, users are exposed to a lot of information in a short amount of time.

This environment can lead to cognitive overload, which is a situation in which the brain receives more information than it is capable of processing (Sweller, 1988). When people become overwhelmed with information (cognitively overloaded), they struggle to critically analyze the information, making it more difficult for users to distinguish accurate information from false information. To manage this overload, individuals might rely on heuristics; simple mental shortcuts that help them make quick decisions without deep processing (e.g., video quality or perceived credibility) (Kahneman, 2011). This makes it more likely that misinformation is taken at face value, potentially leading to distorted ideas of political reality and thereby influencing political decision-making.

One of the heuristics users might use to assess whether content is trustworthy is the authority of a source. Authority in this case refers to the credibility of the source that is providing information in the video (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). In TikTok's environment, authority may be expressed through cues like the speaker's title (e.g., a political scientist) or professional presentation (Pornpitakpan, 2004). Because of TikTok's fast-paced environment, authority is considered a relevant heuristic, as users often lack the time or cognitive capability to verify claims.

Another heuristic that users might use to evaluate trust in political TikTok content is the use of political jargon. Jargon refers to complex terminology that fits a specific context, the use of which can increase a source's perceived level of expertise (Sundar, 2008). Thus, users might recognize jargon as a sign of credibility in TikTok content, especially as it might complement an authority. Lastly, the prior knowledge of a user may also be a helpful indicator in determining the reliability of a political TikTok video. Higher prior knowledge increases an individual's ability to recognize mistakes and makes them less dependent on heuristics like authority and jargon (Kumkale et al., 2010). Knowledge of a topic can help an individual confirm or refute information about that topic, and thereby influence trust levels.

To investigate the effects of these indicators on political content on TikTok, this research tries to answer the following question: “How do authority, jargon, and prior knowledge of the topic relate to how much people trust TikTok content?”.

By investigating these factors, this research aims to provide insights into how political information is processed on TikTok and how misinformation can spread on such platforms. Given the increasing popularity of TikTok as a political information source and the theoretical gap in heuristic processing and credibility in the context of short-form, fast-paced content, it's crucial to determine whether traditional credibility cues work differently in its environment.

This study contributes to creating interventions that encourage well-informed decision-making, making sure that people form their political opinions on factual information rather than misleading or manipulated content. The results may also be insightful to fact-checkers and policymakers who are looking for strategies to battle misinformation and improve media education.

Theoretical framework

This section discusses the key concepts that aim to explain how users evaluate the reliability of political TikTok content. As the quality and credibility of political information on social media can vary a lot, it is important to understand the indicators that individuals use to assess the reliability of content. Based on previous research, this theoretical framework emphasizes three key concepts that are expected to have an influence on the concept of trust in political TikTok content: authority, jargon, and prior knowledge. The hypotheses that are tested in this research are based on these concepts.

A theory that supports the idea that users rely on heuristics like these concepts to assess trust in TikTok content is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). According to ELM, individuals process information through either the central route, which requires careful and in-depth evaluation of arguments, or the peripheral route, which relies on superficial cues

such as source credibility or language style (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The decision between the two routes depends mostly on the individual's motivation and ability to process the message. On platforms like TikTok, where users are exposed to a lot of content in a short amount of time, both motivation and ability tend to be low, making the peripheral route more likely to be taken. In these situations, viewers might base their assessments of trustworthiness more on heuristic cues like the perceived authority of the speaker or the use of jargon than on the message's actual facts.

Kahneman (2011) explains this reliance on heuristics through two modes of thinking: System 1, which is fast, intuitive, and relies on mental shortcuts (heuristics), and System 2, which is slower and more analytical. Instead of analyzing more deeply, cognitively overloaded individuals are more likely to rely on System 1 thinking, thereby increasing the likelihood that superficial cues, such as perceived professionality, are used to assess trustworthiness instead of the accuracy of the content. This makes it more likely that misinformation is taken at face value, potentially leading to distorted ideas of political reality and thereby influencing political decision-making. Together, these theories provide a strong foundation for understanding why TikTok users may rely on such surface-level indicators instead of critical analysis when assessing the trustworthiness of political content.

Trust in Political TikTok Content

Trust can be considered an important factor in how users engage with and evaluate content on social media. Mayer et al. (1995) define trust as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party" (p.712). Based on this, this research defines trust as a reflection of an individual's confidence in the content. It can be considered as a multidimensional concept, shaped by dimensions like source credibility and pre-existing beliefs (Metzger & Flanagin, 2013). The

variables authority, jargon, and prior knowledge have emerged from these dimensions and will be explained later.

Trust plays a crucial role in how individuals engage with political content on social media. According to Sterrett et al. (2019), users are more likely to engage with content that they trust; they are more inclined to accept it as the truth and share it with others. In a political context, higher trust and engagement can lead to a change in beliefs and political behavior. On the other hand, when trust is low, it reduces the probability of cooperative engagement (Tsfati & Cappella, 2003). This means that users who do not trust content might ignore or reject it, even though the information might be accurate. Thus, the level of trust that individuals have in political content can influence their political ideas and behavior.

On platforms like TikTok, where political information is shown quickly and often out of context, the consequences of trust are especially relevant, as the environment challenges the users' ability to evaluate trust critically. And as social media has emerged as a primary source for younger audiences (Ceci, 2025), it is crucial to understand how trust is formed to prevent the spread of misinformation and strengthen democratic participation.

Authority as a Heuristic Cue in Evaluating Trust

The first heuristic that is expected to influence trust in political TikTok content is authority. Authority is often referred to as a part of source credibility, which conceptualizes the perceived knowledge or expertise of the source in a certain area (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). This study will use the definition of Hovland and Weiss (1951), where authority does not necessarily mean that the source is an expert in the topic, but just that it is perceived as that by individuals. However, what is perceived as an authoritative source can differ across contexts. In the context of political TikTok content, this study considers a politician, a government representative, or a news outlet as more authoritative than influencers or unknown users. On TikTok, such authority titles can be expressed through visual cues like name tags,

verifications, background, and more. Thus, authority on TikTok is not so much about actual expertise but more about how it is presented and how users perceive it.

Research on authority and source credibility has been conducted for a long time. Hovland and Weiss (1951) showed that sources perceived to come from an expert are significantly more persuasive than those perceived not to come from an authoritative source. This indicates that source credibility, and thus perceived authority, is crucial in shaping initial opinions, which supports the assumption that more authority leads to more trust in political TikTok content. Half a century later, Pornpitakpan (2004) studied more classic research on persuasion and found that a high-credibility source is more persuasive than a low-credibility source in influencing attitudes according to nearly all main effect findings in the paper. This shows that authority can not only shape opinions but can also lead to behavioral changes.

This dependence on authority as an influential heuristic is especially relevant in online environments such as TikTok, where users need to make quick judgments on what to trust while provided with a limited amount of context (Metzger & Flanagin, 2013). And as authority can be considered a peripheral cue, it relates to ELM, according to which users rely on such peripheral cues in an environment like this when they have limited capacity or motivation (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Therefore, it could mean that TikTok videos from sources with high perceived authority lead to more engagement than those from sources of lower perceived authority.

More recent research shows that trust in online environments is still affected by authority. For example, Shah and Wei (2022) found that their respondents indicated that they perceive credible, authoritarian sources as trustworthy on social networking sites. They also stated that respondents viewed information as useful when they associated it with a credible source. Chang et al. (2023) found a similar result, as they conducted a study on older social

media users and discovered that the vast majority of their participants said to have high trust in content that came from public accounts that were linked to the government.

Lin et al. (2016) also support these findings, as they showed that authority cues, such as verification status and professional appearance, can significantly impact perceived credibility and trust on social media platforms. With the help of these cues, users can make quick trust judgments without having to think critically, which is especially useful when users are cognitively overloaded because of TikTok's fast-paced format.

Considering the existing theory and research supporting authority as a credibility heuristic and the relevance of it in TikTok's environment, it is expected that political content coming from a perceived authority will result in more trust than when it comes from a non-authoritative source. Therefore, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

H1: Users are more likely to trust political TikTok content if it comes from an authoritative source compared to when it comes from a non-authoritative source.

The Interaction of Authority and Jargon

While it has already been stated that various researchers confirm the idea that authority influences trust, assessing authority is often done differently when dealing with online environments. As stated by Metzger et al. (2010), when deeper fact-checking is not possible, users often rely on surface-level indicators, such as whether an account is verified or if it has a professional tone, to assess credibility. This professional tone can also come from the use of jargon, which refers to specific, technical terms that can be linked to the context (Sharon & Baram-Tsabari, 2013). In political communication, jargon often involves complex terminology or formal language associated with expertise. According to Sundar (2008), effective use of such jargon can increase a source's perceived level of expertise, as individuals might interpret it as an indication of authority in the topic. Thus, when a source uses complex

language effectively, individuals might assume that the source knows what they are talking about.

Language Expectancy Theory (LET) can be linked to jargon as a variable in assessing trust. According to LET, a message is more likely to be persuasive when it matches the users' expectations regarding language (Burgoon et al., 2002). It can be assumed that users associate high-level authority sources with expertise and knowledge, and that they therefore make use of jargon. If this is linked to what LET explains, it can be expected that the use of jargon can make a TikTok video more persuasive (because it confirms the viewer's association), generating more trust and engagement, under the condition that the source is perceived as authoritative.

Jargon can also be linked to ELM; it can be expected that the use of jargon can serve as a peripheral cue, indicating expertise and authority, especially when users lack the motivation or capacity to process the message through the central route. In such situations, the use of jargon, when combined with a source that is perceived as authoritative, may enhance trust. This results in the following hypothesis:

H2: The effect of authority on trust in political TikTok content is stronger when the source uses jargon compared to when the source does not use jargon.

However, this cue is ambiguous: while jargon might indicate professionalism, it may also confuse users, especially on platforms like TikTok, where informal communication is the norm. As the use of jargon may increase perceived expertise, it can also reduce the clarity of the message. And this effect may become bigger on platforms like TikTok, where users are encouraged to scroll fast and therefore do not have the time to think deeply about what they see. Oppenheimer (2006) found that too much complexity in a message can make the source appear less intelligent. This again aligns with ELM, as too complex language may reduce the effectiveness of the message, because it can trigger confusion rather than perceived expertise.

Therefore, finding a balance between appearing intelligent and still being understandable is essential when wanting to use jargon effectively. This research will present jargon to a limited extent, so that too much complexity will be avoided and the use of jargon will be used effectively, resulting in the expected effect of H2.

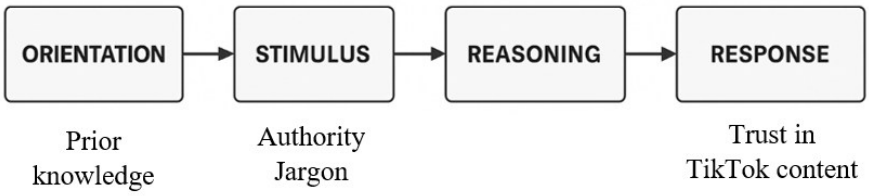
It is important to note that while jargon is often associated with expertise and professionalism (Sundar, 2008), this study does not expect a direct effect of jargon on trust in political TikTok content. Thus, it is not expected that jargon itself increases or decreases trust, but it is expected that the effect of jargon depends on contextual factors. Therefore, instead of hypothesizing a main effect of jargon, this study focuses solely on the interaction effects of jargon.

The Moderating Effect of Prior Knowledge

Prior knowledge refers to the extent to which individuals are familiar with the topic. The way that people process and evaluate information is expected to be affected by the level of this knowledge. According to the OSROR model (Orientation–Stimulus–Reasoning–Orientation–Response), people's preexisting beliefs influence how they perceive new information, such as political TikTok content (Cho et al., 2009). This phase is called "orientation". Stimuli then cause individuals to think and assess the message's credibility, clarity, and intent. This thinking leads to an updated orientation, where the initial beliefs may be reinforced or adjusted, ultimately resulting in a response, such as the level of trust in the content. Applying the OSROR model allows for a deeper understanding of how individual differences and message characteristics interact to shape trust in political content on social media platforms like TikTok. It specifically provides a base for the expected moderating role of prior knowledge, as users with higher political knowledge may engage in reasoning differently than those with less knowledge. The OSROR model is visualized in Figure 1.

Figure 1

OSROR Model with variables



According to Kumkale et al. (2010), those with more knowledge of the topic tend to be more capable of critically evaluating the accuracy and reliability of the content, and when individuals lack prior attitudes, the credibility and authority of the source have a bigger impact on persuasion. Thus, when individuals lack background knowledge or preexisting beliefs on a topic, they are more likely to be persuaded by sources with a higher level of authority. Similarly, Pornpitakpan (2004) found that when individuals lack knowledge, they may be more susceptible to the authority of the source rather than the strength of the arguments that are provided, indicating that source credibility becomes even more important in such situations.

This idea also relates to the Elaboration Likelihood Model because the lack of knowledge results in users not being able to critically process the information and therefore having to rely on heuristic cues like perceived authority. On the contrary, individuals with more prior knowledge might have enough capacity left to follow the central route, thereby evaluating the information more deeply and critically. This leads to the following hypothesis: *H3: The less prior knowledge users have, the stronger the effect of authority is on trust in political TikTok content.*

Next to authority and prior knowledge, it is also expected that there can be a relation between the use of jargon and prior knowledge when evaluating trust in political TikTok content. Bullock et al. (2019) observed negative effects as individuals who lack knowledge in a certain field are not able to fully understand information when it is full of jargon. Tan et al. (2016) found a similar result when investigating the effect of jargon on the willingness to

invest: investors without knowledge of the industry were less willing to invest when more jargon was included, while investors with more knowledge of the industry were more willing to invest when there was more jargon included. Thus, in a situation where jargon was included, people with low prior knowledge had less trust than people with high prior knowledge. Therefore, it is expected that users with lower prior knowledge of the topic are expected to trust political TikTok content less when jargon is involved, resulting in the following hypothesis:

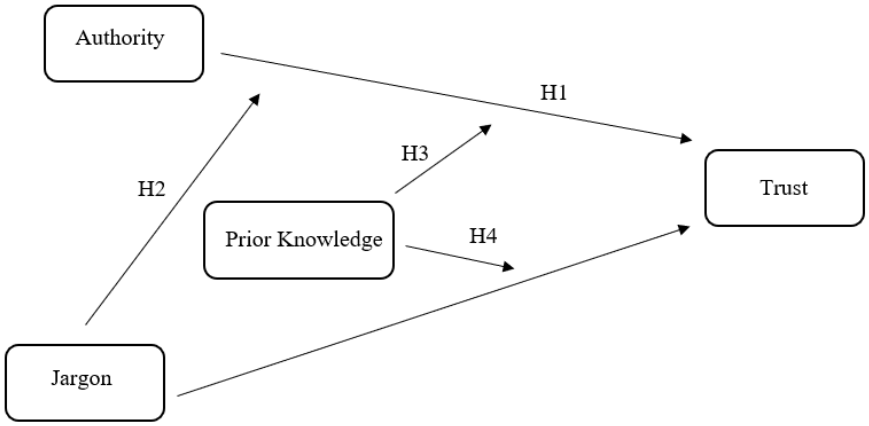
H4: Prior knowledge moderates the relationship between jargon and trust in political TikTok content, such that jargon reduces trust among users with low prior knowledge and increases trust among users with high prior knowledge.

Conceptual Model

To structure and visualize the variables and the expected relationships in this study, a conceptual model was developed (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Conceptual Model of Hypothesized Relationships



In this conceptual model, authority is treated as an independent variable that has a direct effect on the dependent variable trust (H1). The independent variable jargon is expected to moderate the effect of authority on trust (H2). Lastly, the independent variable prior knowledge, is treated as a moderator of two effects. To be specific, it is hypothesized that the

effect of authority on trust (H3), as well as the effect of jargon on trust (H4), both will depend on the level of prior knowledge.

Methods

This section explains the way this research investigates how authority, jargon, and prior knowledge relate to trust in political TikTok content. An experimental design was applied in which participants had to answer a list of questions, view manipulated TikTok videos, and then rate them. Everything will be discussed in detail in the following subsections.

Design

This research uses a 2 (source authority: yes or no) x 2 (use of jargon: yes or no) between-subjects experimental design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the conditions, in which they had to watch a video of a man talking about the war between Russia and Ukraine and how Russia received sanctions. This topic was selected as the Ukrainian war is a considerably current topic, making the chances of a user coming across it on TikTok quite high. It was chosen to do a between-subjects experiment as this mimics real-life TikTok use more (it is assumed that watching multiple political TikToks in a row does not reflect a real-life situation) and to avoid socially desirable or biased answers, as participants will not be able to compare videos. The dependent variable in this study was trust in political TikTok content, which was measured through the evaluations of the participants using a 5-point Likert scale. Next to the manipulations, the third independent variable, prior knowledge, was measured through self-reporting questions about the political topic. This made it possible to test for potential interaction effects between prior knowledge and the manipulations of authority and jargon. Other control measures included questions about demographics and TikTok habits.

Participants

A total of 202 individuals began the questionnaire. After data cleaning (removal of incomplete responses and failed attention checks), 136 complete and valid responses remained and were included in the final analyses. 35 of those participants were male and 101 of them were female. The ages ranged between 18 and 32. The participants ranged from individuals who are active TikTok users to those who have never seen a TikTok before. As the experiment was partially carried out in Dutch (the video had Dutch subtitles only), all participants were required to be proficient in the Dutch language to understand the content and instructions of the study. The participants were recruited through the University of Twente's Sona System and personal connections. Table 1 shows an overview of the demographics of the sample, and Table 2 shows the self-reported TikTok use in the sample.

Table 1

Sample Characteristics: Demographics

		N	%
Age	18 through 20 years	19	14%
	21 through 25 years	112	82%
	26 through 30 years	2	1%
	31 through 35 years	3	2%
Gender	Male	35	26%
	Female	101	74%
Nationality	Dutch	134	99%
	Other	2	1%

Table 2

Sample Characteristics: TikTok Use

		N	%
How often	Once a month or less	1	1%

	A few times per month	4	3%
	A few times per week	10	7%
	Every day	99	73%
	Does not use TikTok	22	16%
How many minutes per time	15 minutes or less	12	9%
	15-30 minutes	33	24%
	30-60 minutes	36	26%
	More than an hour	33	24%
	Does not use TikTok	22	16%
Main purpose	Entertainment	108	79%
	Keeping up with friends and/or family	1	1%
	As a source of information	3	2%
	Other	2	1%
	Does not use TikTok	22	16%

Stimuli

In order to investigate participants' trust in political TikTok content, four short videos were created. These videos were designed to mimic actual TikTok content and were manipulated through the authority of the source and whether or not it uses jargon. To control for bias, the basis of the video was the same: a video of a man speaking in Italian about the war. This video was an already existing TikTok video, and in order to be able to manipulate jargon, it was important that the spoken language was foreign, so that the participants' attention would go to the manipulated Dutch subtitles.

In the high authority conditions, a name tag was presented, stating: "Giovanni Bonetti, Minister van Defensie Italië", introducing the man as an authority. This name tag was absent in the low authority conditions, and other than that, there were no differences between the two

conditions. The man was labelled as an Italian authority in the high conditions, as it is expected to be more believable for an Italian-speaking man. Appendix C shows a visual comparison between the low and high authority conditions.

The use of jargon was manipulated in the script of the TikTok videos, using either simple, everyday language or more complex terminology. The high-jargon condition included words like *soevereiniteit* (sovereignty) and *multilaterale instituties* (multilateral institutions). The scripts were presented through the use of subtitles, and both scripts can be found in Appendix D.

All videos were 26 seconds long and shown in portrait mode so that they mimicked TikTok style closely. The quality of the videos (audio, visual, and editing-wise) was the same in all conditions to control for unintended effects from production quality. The experiment was executed using Qualtrics.

Procedure

Before the start of the experiment, it was made clear to the participants that their participation was voluntary and that all responses would be stored anonymously and safely. After signing an informed consent, participants started by answering questions about their demographics and TikTok use. Then, they watched a randomly assigned video with one of the experimental conditions, after which trust was measured and the manipulations for authority and jargon use were checked using self-report questions. The random assignment was carried out automatically through Qualtrics. Lastly, participants had to answer questions about their prior knowledge on the topic. All responses were collected anonymously, and the participants had the chance to withdraw from the experiment without any consequences. The entire experiment took around 5 to 10 minutes to complete. The sample characteristics per condition can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Distribution of Sample Characteristics across the Different Conditions

		High Jargon		*Low Jargon*	
High Authority	N	37		33	
	Age [a)]	M = 21.22 / SD = 1.69		M = 20.94 / SD = 4.06	
	Gender [b)]	Male	19%	Male	27%
		Female	81%	Female	73%
Low Authority	N	30		36	
	Age [a)]	M = 21.37 / SD = 2.61		M = 22.11 / SD = 2.89	
	Gender [b)]	Male	27%	Male	31%
		Female	73%	Female	69%

a) Mean + Standard Deviation of Age
b) Percentage division of Male / Female

Measures

To investigate the influence of authority, use of jargon, and prior knowledge on trust in political TikTok content, several variables were measured using self-report questionnaires. The items were initially created in English; however, participants were presented with the option to answer the translated items (in Dutch) instead. All items were based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. For trust, the four items were adapted from the "Trustworthiness Factor" from the Source Credibility scale (McCroskey & Teven, 1999), creating items like "I found the video trustworthy" and "The information seemed genuine to me". The trust scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .800.

The source's authority level was operationalized through the presence or absence of a name tag. To check for this manipulation, a scale was created. The five authority items were derived from the "Competence Factor" from the Source Credibility scale (McCroskey & Teven, 1999), developing items such as "The source appeared like an expert" and "The source

appeared intelligent". This authority scale demonstrated good reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .840. To check for the manipulation of use of jargon, 3 items were created, like "Some words or expressions used in the video were hard to understand without background knowledge" and "I did not understand all of the terminology used in the video". The jargon scale showed strong reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .850.

Lastly, to measure prior knowledge, five items were created. These items asked about the participants' knowledge of specific terminology as well as general knowledge about the topic. Items included "I understand the main reasons for the war between Russia and Ukraine" and "I can explain what NATO is and what it does". Higher scores indicate greater self-perceived prior knowledge. This measure allows for examining moderation effects in a statistical analysis. The prior knowledge scale also demonstrated strong reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of .840.

Data analysis

The data was imported from Qualtrics and analyzed using RStudio. Before the actual analysis, the dataset was cleaned; incomplete responses were deleted, and some items had to be reversed. Based on the condition to which the participant was assigned, the variables authority and jargon were created. The four different scales were created by calculating the mean of the items that belong to each other per participant, and the variable prior knowledge was standardized to improve the interpretability of the coefficients. Manipulation checks were performed in order to check if the manipulations of authority and jargon were interpreted as intended. To test the hypotheses, a multiple linear regression analysis was performed, as this allows for the estimation of the main effects as well as the interaction effects, such as whether the influence of authority or jargon on trust depends on a participant's prior knowledge of the topic. While ANOVA could be used to test H1 (main effect of authority on trust) and H2 (interaction effect of authority and jargon on trust), the multiple linear regression model was

used instead, because this can test all hypotheses in one model, avoiding redundant analyses that will provide the same outcome. Statistical significance was evaluated at $p = .05$.

Results

This section will present the results of the statistical analyses that have been conducted to test the four hypotheses about trust in political TikTok content. Descriptive statistics, manipulation checks, and a multiple regression analysis will be reported.

Descriptive statistics

For the key variables trust and prior knowledge, descriptive statistics were computed to characterize the sample before testing the hypotheses. The overall mean for trust was $M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.75$, based on a 5-point Likert scale. Table 4 shows the means and standard deviations by the four different conditions of the between-subjects design.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations of Trust by Conditions

Authority Level	Jargon Level	Mean [a)]	Standard Deviation
Low	Low	3.07	0.73
Low	High	3.08	0.66
High	Low	3.02	0.79
High	High	2.76	0.80

[a)] Mean of items based on a 5-point Likert scale

Table 2 indicates a slight variance in mean trust between the four situations, ranging from 2.76 to 3.08. It is interesting to observe that the high-authority, high-jargon condition showed notably lower trust scores. Next to that, the participants showed a moderate level of prior knowledge on the topic ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 0.84$).

Manipulation Checks for Authority and Jargon

The variables authority and jargon were manipulated through the videos that were randomly assigned to the participants. To verify whether the participants interpreted these manipulations as intended, t-tests were conducted as manipulation checks. Interestingly, for authority, it was found that participants in the low-authority condition rated the source significantly more authoritative ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.69$) than those in the high-authority condition ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.71$), $t\ (134) = 2.82$, $p = .006$, 95% CI [0.10, 0.58].

Because of this inverted interpretation, the values for authority have been reversed in order to conduct the analysis in the right direction. Thus, the original low condition has become the high condition and vice versa from this point on. This also explains the unexpected observation that the high-authority, high-jargon condition showed the lowest trust scores; after reversing, this condition scored the highest trust level, and the lowest mean belonged to the low-authority, high-jargon condition, as expected (see Table 5).

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations of Trust by Conditions with Reversed Authority

Authority Level	Jargon Level	Mean [a)]	Standard Deviation
High	Low	3.07	0.73
High	High	3.08	0.66
Low	Low	3.02	0.79
Low	High	2.76	0.80

[a)] Mean of items based on a 5-point Likert scale

Another t-test was conducted to compare the results of the self-reported jargon items between the low-jargon and the high-jargon conditions. It was found that participants in the low-jargon condition rated the video as having a lower level of jargon ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 0.94$) than the participants in the high-jargon condition ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.93$). This difference was

again statistically significant, with t (134) = -5.43, p = <.001, 95% CI [-1.19, -0.56]. Thus, while the authority manipulation worked the opposite way of what was expected, the jargon manipulation was successful.

Multiple Regression Analysis for Hypothesis Testing

One multiple linear regression model was built to test the four hypotheses simultaneously, with trust as the dependent variable and authority (low vs. high), jargon (low vs. high), and prior knowledge (mean-centered) as the independent variables. The overall model was statistically significant, F (7, 128) = 2.95, p = .007, and explained about 13.9% of the variance in trust (R^2 = .14). As this overall model already captures all effects, there was no need to use ANOVA to test the effects of authority, jargon and their interaction. The model assumptions for linearity, independence of residuals, equal variance, and normality of residuals were tested, and no violations were found.

To test whether authority influences trust in political TikTok content (H1), the coefficient for the high authority condition was examined. No significant effect was found that supports H1, b = -0.05, SE = 0.17, t (128) = -0.27, p = .784. Participants in the low-authority condition (M = 2.88, SD = 0.80) did report a lower level of trust than those in the high-authority condition (M = 3.08, SD = 0.70), but this effect was not significant. H1 is rejected, and thus, authority does not have an effect on trust in political TikTok content.

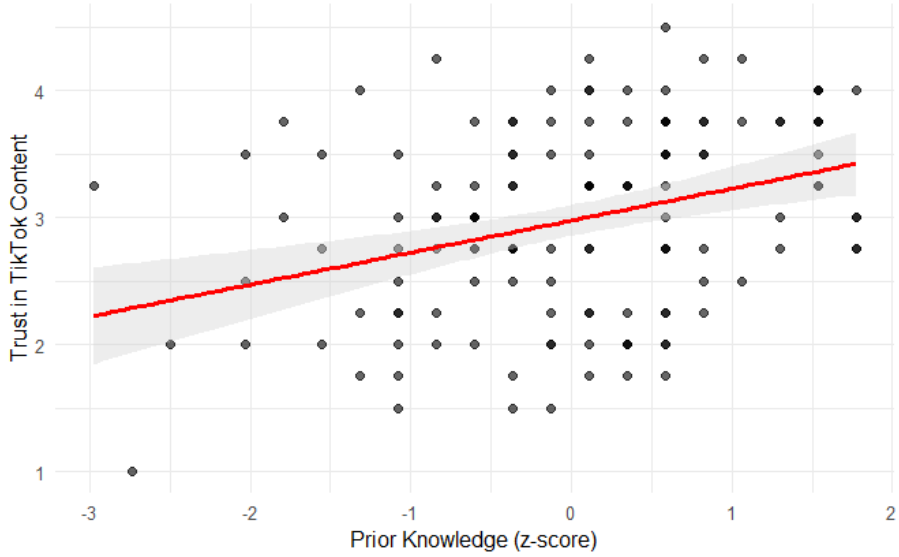
Next, to examine whether the effect of authority on trust depends on the use of jargon (H2), the model looked at the interaction effect of the independent variables, authority and jargon, on the dependent variable trust. In addition to the aforementioned main effect of authority, the main effect of jargon was also found to be not significant (b = 0.01, SE = 0.18, t (128) = 0.07, p = .946). The interaction between authority and jargon was found not significant (b = -0.20, SE = 0.25, t (128) = -0.80, p = .425), meaning that H2 is not supported.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of jargon does not strengthen the effect of authority on trust in political TikTok content.

For H3, it was tested whether prior knowledge moderates the effect of authority on trust. It was found that participants with higher prior knowledge significantly reported greater trust (b = 0.28, SE = 0.11, t (128) = 2.63, p = .010). However, the interaction between authority and prior knowledge was not significant (b = -0.12, SE = 0.17, t (128) = -0.68, p = .497), and thus prior knowledge does not moderate the effect of authority on trust in political TikTok content (H3 is not supported). The significant, direct effect of prior knowledge on trust is visualized in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Relationship Between Prior Knowledge and Trust in TikTok Content



Lastly, it was examined whether prior knowledge moderates the effect of jargon on the dependent variable trust (H4) by looking at the interaction effect of the two independent variables. However, the interaction between jargon and prior knowledge was not significant, b = -0.16, SE = 0.20, t (128) = -0.80, p = .426. This means that prior knowledge does not moderate the effect of jargon on trust in political TikTok content, and that, just like the other hypotheses, H4 is also not supported.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate how authority, use of jargon, and prior knowledge relate to how much individuals trust political TikTok content. It was hypothesized that content from an authoritative source would be more trusted than from a non-authoritative source (H1), and that this effect would be stronger when the source used jargon (H2). Furthermore, it was expected that the effect of authority on trust, as well as the effect of jargon on trust, would be stronger for users with less prior political knowledge (H3 and H4). Although the measured effects all portrayed the expectations of the hypotheses, none of them were present enough to be significant.

Rethinking the Concept of Authority

The concept of authority was a central element in this study, and it was manipulated through a name tag that presented the speaker as a minister. Based on previous research on source credibility, it was expected that individuals would perceive a source presented as a political figure or minister as more authoritative (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). However, the manipulation check showed the opposite, as the participants rated the low-authority condition as more authoritative than the high-authority condition.

One reason for this could be that a minister or other political figure could be perceived as biased, especially when discussing political topics. As the high-authority condition showed a speaker with the formal title of minister, participants may have interpreted the speaker as a political stakeholder instead of a neutral expert. According to Metzger and Flanagin (2013), perceived credibility can be weakened when a source is assumed to have a personal stake or interest in the topic that is being discussed. Therefore, politicians and government representatives are often considered suspicious in politically sensitive situations, especially if participants do not find them objective. For that reason, even though the source in the high-

authority conditions had a formal position of authority, this may not have resulted in perceived authority or trustworthiness among the participants.

Another factor that may have played a role in the ineffectiveness of the authority manipulation is the inconspicuousness of the visual cue. Lin et al. (2016) emphasized how noticeable visual cues are essential in influencing how people perceive authority on social media. As the only difference between the conditions was a name tag, participants might not have noticed or processed this detail while watching the short video. Thus, it's possible that the manipulation was too subtle to have the intended effect.

TikTok's format is different from traditional news sources, as it encourages users to scroll rapidly and exposes them only briefly, resulting in the fact that users often have to rely on peripheral cues (Pennycook & Rand, 2018; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Therefore, they may not register or prioritize the authoritarian labels in the same way they do traditional news sources. It is also important to note that the classic findings on source credibility from Hovland and Weiss (1951) and Pornpitakpan (2004) are based on platforms that present individuals with a different, longer form of media instead of a short and fast format, as found on TikTok.

Effects of Manipulated Variables Authority and Jargon

Surprisingly, this research did not find significant main effects for either jargon or authority. Contrary to expectations based on source credibility theory (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Pornpitakpan, 2004), there was no significant difference in trust between the high-authority condition and the low-authority condition. Thus, although the measured effects matched the hypothesis, the presence of a name tag that labels the source as an authority did not increase participants' trust significantly compared to when the name tag was absent, even after switching the condition after the inverted result of the manipulation check.

It was also hypothesized that jargon would increase the effect of authority on trust. However, the results did not support this prediction: neither the main effect of jargon nor its interaction with authority was found to be significant. This contradicts the assumption made regarding LET; users might not associate high-level authority sources with expertise, and therefore they do not expect them to use jargon. A possible explanation could come from the fact that too much complexity can make a source seem less intelligent (Oppenheimer, 2006). Additionally, TikTok content tends to be short, informal, and based on an algorithm, as opposed to traditional media. Instead of using traditional indicators of jargon or authority, users might rely their decisions more on other cues (e.g., presenting style, relatability, entertainment value, etc.). This could explain why neither authority nor jargon significantly influenced trust.

Prior Knowledge as an Indicator of Trust

It was expected that prior knowledge would moderate the effect of authority on trust because when individuals lack knowledge, they tend to rely more on the authority of the source (Kumkale et al., 2010; Pornpitakpan, 2004). Prior knowledge was considered a reliable predictor of trust across the models, as its effect was significant. Regardless of the level of authority or the use of jargon, participants who self-reported having more prior knowledge about the topic appeared to have significantly more trust in the TikTok content. Individuals with more prior knowledge may find it easier to process and evaluate content because they can quickly verify facts or use their knowledge as a heuristic (Kumkale et al., 2010; Pennycook & Rand, 2018). Thus, prior knowledge can provide individuals with a contextual understanding that makes evaluating trust easier.

However, the expected moderating effect of prior knowledge on the authority effect was not supported, contrary to the findings of previous studies. This suggests that even users with lower prior knowledge did not rely more on authority to evaluate their trust in the

TikTok content. There are multiple possible justifications for this, but it appears that it can be partially explained by the variable authority, as there was no main effect found of authority. Thus, authority itself may have been too weak to interact with prior knowledge. Next to that, it might have been difficult to find interaction between the two variables due to the low variance in prior knowledge.

Finally, it was hypothesized that participants with lower prior knowledge would be more influenced by jargon, due to the fact that the jargon might cause them to not fully comprehend the message (Bullock et al., 2019; Tan et al., 2016). Although prior knowledge again positively predicted trust, its interaction with jargon was not significant. Thus, jargon did not meaningfully influence trust for participants with either lower or higher levels of prior knowledge. This finding emphasizes the possibility that jargon might not function as a clear indicator of trust on TikTok, maybe because of users' preference for clear, casual messaging over complex terminology.

Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations of this study, affecting both internal and external validity, that should be acknowledged. First off, the authority manipulation was found to work in the opposite direction. This suggests that the name tags might not have been obvious enough or that the participants might not have interpreted the name tags as a sign of authority. Next to that, although the jargon manipulation check showed a significant difference, the effect was small. It is possible that the jargon manipulation was too subtle for the participants to actively consider in the evaluation of trust in the fast-paced TikTok format. It is suggested that future research implements stronger manipulations of both authority (e.g., more aesthetic cues) and jargon (e.g., more specific terminology) to create more noticeable differences, thereby increasing internal validity.

Another limitation of this study is that it only provided its participants with one short TikTok-style video; this might not have captured how trust would be developed in the users' daily use while scrolling through TikTok. Next to the fact that users are often exposed to multiple videos while on TikTok, they might also rely on several other factors when evaluating the trustworthiness of content, such as the number of likes or views, or the comments of a video. To mimic a more realistic setting, future research might consider presenting several videos back to back to its participants, or use actual TikTok and even include the likes, comments, etc., as it might change trust evaluations and increase external validity. Note that this study intentionally did not present its participants with multiple political TikToks to avoid socially desirable or biased answers, as participants would not be able to compare videos. This suggestion for future research recommends presenting multiple TikToks, but not to make all of them politically themed, to stay closer to a realistic situation.

It is important to note that this study used self-reporting questions rather than objective testing to determine prior knowledge. This might have resulted in socially desirable answers; participants might have felt that they should know about the topic and therefore did not answer the items on prior knowledge honestly. Because of this, the findings might not have identified the real moderation effects, as the variable may have been less accurate than when prior knowledge would have been measured differently. It is suggested that future research measures prior knowledge through objective quiz-style questions to capture the participants' actual understanding of the topic, rather than relying solely on self-reporting questions. This suggestion can help reduce measurement reliability threats.

Lastly, the sample size of this study was unfortunately limited to only 136 responses. This limits the statistical power to detect small (interaction) effects. Additionally, the participants were mainly recruited through the researcher's social circles, resulting in possible selection bias and limiting external validity, as it is likely that individuals in the same circles

share the same or similar characteristics. Because of these two reasons, the sample might not have been representative enough of the target group of 18- to 35-year-olds. To address these limitations, future research should look for a larger, more random sample with more variation.

Next to the suggestions for future research based on the limitations of this study, there are a few more suggestions that might find interesting results. First off, it might be intriguing to investigate more entertainment-based cues as variables, such as background music or editing style. Such cues can be examined on their own or in combination with the current independent variables. It could also be interesting to track the participants over a longer time, to see how repeated exposure to political TikTok content influences trust. This would address whether initial trust evaluations change over time. Lastly, this study only captured one aspect of trust, but future research could also investigate the behavioral consequences of trust, for example, by asking participants if they would share the content with others.

Practical Implications

Although the results did not support the hypothesized effects, and no effects were found for the variables authority and jargon on trust, it was found that prior knowledge is a strong predictor of trust in political TikTok content. These findings have several implications. First, they emphasize the importance of designing political communication in ways that support users' understanding. Political organizations, journalists, influencers, and other communicators of politics should aim to connect new information to what their audience already knows. This may result in more trust, especially on platforms like TikTok where content is short and fast-paced.

Second, social media platforms can also take advantage of this insight by including informational context to political content. While platforms like TikTok often already include verification badges or show when content is AI-generated, they might test adding the possibility of an information button, which can provide the user with contextual insights on

the topic. These insights can include definitions, timelines, or other statements that can serve as a form of background information. Similar to prior knowledge, these contextual facts can assist the users in making an informed trust evaluation without having to leave the app.

Campaigns and content creators also benefit from emphasizing clarity and context over authority and jargon. Creators should include essential information in their content and communication using simple explanations and/or visualizations rather than introducing themselves as an authority or relying on difficult terminology. For example, someone discussing climate policy might sketch a simple metaphor to help explain and back up the information. This technique might help users build trust more successfully in TikTok's fast-paced, entertainment-driven format by reinforcing their prior knowledge and encouraging them to comprehend new information.

Lastly, these findings can be used by policymakers to create awareness campaigns that increase the level of political literacy and help users to engage more critically with political content. Such campaigns should emphasize the importance of having prior knowledge and guide users into deeper fact-checking in order to critically assess the trustworthiness of content.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of trust in digital political communication by adding to established frameworks, such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and the OSROR model, through the context of short-form social media content. While previous research has commonly confirmed that peripheral cues like authority and jargon can enhance source credibility and persuasion (e.g., Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Pornpitakpan, 2004), the findings of this study suggest that such heuristics may not function effectively on platforms like TikTok, where users are exposed to fast and informal communication styles.

The generalizability of traditional persuasion theories in fast-paced, algorithm-driven media environments is challenged by the lack of significant impacts for authority and jargon. It might suggest that typical credibility cues lose their persuasive effectiveness when consumers lack the motivation or processing skills to analyze them, or when they are presented in uncommon formats. This calls for reassessing how peripheral cues function in social media and determining whether other heuristics, such as relatability, visual quality, and entertainment value, may be more relevant to users' assessments of trust on platforms like TikTok.

Lastly, the strong main effect of prior knowledge emphasizes how crucial it is to consider individual variations in cognitive ability and pre-existing schema when researching online trust and persuasion. This complements the ELM by demonstrating that prior knowledge may allow for a more central route of processing, even in settings that generally encourage judgments based on heuristics. It also supports the OSROR model's emphasis on the role of users' prior orientation in influencing media responses (Cho et al., 2009).

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to investigate how authority, use of jargon, and prior knowledge shape individuals' trust in political TikTok content. The findings show that, contrary to expectations, authority and jargon did not significantly affect trust. Instead, prior knowledge emerged as the only significant predictor. These results suggest that users rely less on traditional cues such as expert labels or complex language, and more on their own understanding when evaluating political content on TikTok.

In response to the central research question, "How do authority, jargon, and prior knowledge of the topic relate to how much people trust TikTok content?", it can be concluded that trust is primarily shaped by the level of prior knowledge individuals have. This highlights the importance of promoting political literacy for social media users in order to enable them to

assess content more critically. While authority and jargon may still play a role in shaping trust, this study emphasizes that empowering users with background knowledge is key for facilitating informed digital engagement in a fast-paced online environment.

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Appendix A

AI Statement

ChatGPT-4 has been used for creating a structure for this paper, as well as for coding and correcting errors in RStudio. Quillbot has been used for rephrasing sentences and searching for synonyms. After using this tool/service, I thoroughly reviewed and edited the content as needed, taking full responsibility for the final outcome.

Appendix B

Survey Questions in Dutch and English

Trust in Political TikTok Content

Start of Block: Introduction

U bent uitgenodigd om deel te nemen aan een onderzoek over hoe mensen politieke content op TikTok ervaren. Er wordt onderzocht hoe de bron en de taalstijl van politieke video's vertrouwen kunnen beïnvloeden, en hoe dit kan variëren afhankelijk van uw bestaande politieke kennis. Als U akkoord gaat met deelname, krijgt U een korte video in TikTok-stijl te zien (ongeveer 30 seconden) seconden en zal U een aantal vragen moeten beantwoorden over de video en uw kennis. In totaal zal dit onderzoek ongeveer 10 minuten duren. Weet dat uw deelname volledig vrijwillig is en dat U op elk moment, om wat voor reden dan ook, zonder gevolgen kunt stoppen. Alle antwoorden worden anoniem verwerkt en veilig bewaard. De gegevens worden uitsluitend gebruikt voor academisch doeleinden. Heeft U vragen of opmerkingen? Neem dan gerust contact op met: Thaïs Meijerink, University of Twente, t.s.meijerink@student.utwente.nl Zorg dat u de gewenste taal rechtsbovenin selecteert. Lees alstublieft de onderstaande verklaringen. Door het vakje aan te vinken, bevestigt U dat: - U de bovenstaande informatie hebt gelezen en begrijpt - U begrijpt dat uw deelname vrijwillig is en dat U zich op elk moment kan terugtrekken - U begrijpt dat uw antwoorden anoniem zullen zijn en alleen voor onderzoeksdoeleinden zullen worden gebruikt - U gaat ermee akkoord dat U deel wilt nemen aan dit onderzoek

○ Ik ga akkoord met al het bovenstaande en wil mee doen met dit onderzoek. (1)

You are invited to take part in a research study exploring how people perceive political content on TikTok. Specifically, we are investigating how the source and language style of political videos affect trust, and how this may vary depending on your existing political knowledge. If you agree to participate, you will have to watch one short, TikTok-style video (about 30 seconds) and complete a short survey about your impressions of the video and your background knowledge on the topic. In total, it will take about 10 minutes. Please know that your participation is entirely voluntary and that you can stop at any point, for any reason, without consequences. All responses will be anonymous and stored safely. The data will only be used for academic purposes. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact: Thaïs Meijerink, University of Twente, t.s.meijerink@student.utwente.nl Make sure to select your preferred language in the top right corner. Please read the statements below. By checking the box, you confirm that: - I have read and understood the information above - I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time - I understand that my responses will be anonymous and used only for research purposes - I agree to take part in this study

○ I agree to all of the above and want to participate in this research. (1)

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: Demographics

Gender Deze eerste vragen zullen gaan over U als persoon. Mijn geslacht is:

- Man (1)
- Vrouw (2)
- Non-binair / third gender (3)
- Zeg ik liever niet (4)

Gender These first questions will be about your demographics. My gender is:

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary / third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

Nationality Mijn nationaliteit is:

- Nederlands (1)
- Anders, namelijk: (2) _____

Nationality My nationality is:

- Dutch (1)
- Other: (2) _____

Age Mijn leeftijd is:

_____

Age My age is:

_____

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: TikTok use

How often Dit volgende deel gaat over uw TikTok gebruik en gewoontes. Hoe vaak gebruikt U TikTok?

- Een keer peer maand of minder (1)
- Een paar keer per maandd (2)
- Een paar keer per week (3)
- Elke dag (4)
- Ik gebruik geen TikTok (5)

How often The following section is about your TikTok use and habits. How often do you use TikTok?

- Once a month or less (1)
- A few times per month (2)
- A few times per week (3)
- Every day (4)
- I do not use TikTok (5)

Time spent Hoeveel tijd brengt U gemiddeld per keer door in de app?

- ○ 15 minuten of minder (1)
- ○ 15-30 minuten (2)
- ○ 30-60 minuten (3)
- ○ Meer dan een uur (4)
- ○ Ik gebruik geen TikTok (5)

Time spent How much time do you spend scrolling in the app per time on average?

- ○ 15 minutes or less (1)
- ○ 15-30 minutes (2)
- ○ 30-60 minutes (3)
- ○ More than an hour (4)
- ○ I do not use TikTok (5)

Interest What is uw belangrijkste reden voor het gebruiken van TikTok?

- ○ Vermaak (1)
- ○ Om in contact te blijven met vrienden en/of familie (2)
- ○ Als informatie bron (3)
- ○ Anders, namelijk: (4) _____
- ○ Ik gebruik geen TikTok (5)

Interest What is your main purpose when using TikTok?

- ○ Entertainment (1)
- ○ To keep up with friends and/or family (2)
- ○ As a source of information (3)
- ○ Other: (4) _____
- ○ I do not use TikTok (5)

End of Block: TikTok use

Start of Block: Video 1

Video 1 Bekijk alstublieft de volgende video. U kan de video opnieuw bekijken als U dat wilt. Als U deze video heeft gezien, antwoord dan het getal 1 bij de volgende vraag.

Video 1 Please watch the following video. You can rewatch it if you want to. If you saw this video, please enter the number 1 in the next question.

End of Block: Video 1

Start of Block: Video 2

Video 2 Bekijk alstublieft de volgende video. U kan de video opnieuw bekijken als U dat wilt. Als U deze video heeft gezien, antwoord dan het getal 2 bij de volgende vraag.

Video 2 Please watch the following video. You can rewatch it if you want to. If you saw this video, please enter the number 2 in the next question.

End of Block: Video 2

Start of Block: Video 3

Video 3 Bekijk alstublieft de volgende video. U kan de video opnieuw bekijken als U dat wilt. Als U deze video heeft gezien, antwoord dan het getal 3 bij de volgende vraag.

Video 3 Please watch the following video. You can rewatch it if you want to. If you saw this video, please enter the number 3 in the next question.

End of Block: Video 3

Start of Block: Video 4

Video 4 Bekijk alstublieft de volgende video. U kunt de video opnieuw bekijken als U dat wilt. Als U deze video heeft gezien, antwoord dan het getal 4 bij de volgende vraag.

Video 4 Please watch the following video. You can rewatch it if you want to. If you saw this video, please enter the number 4 in the next question.

End of Block: Video 4

Start of Block: Watched video

Watched video Vul hier alstublieft het getal in dat op de vorige pagina werd genoemd.

_____

Watched video Please enter the number mentioned at the previous page here.

_____

End of Block: Watched video

Start of Block: Trust

Authority and jargon De volgende vragen gaan over de video die je zojuist hebt bekeken.

	Sterk mee eens (1)	Mee eens (2)	Neutraal (3)	Mee oneens (4)	Sterk mee oneens (5)
De bron leek intelligent. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
De content leek oneerlijk. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Ik vond de video betrouwbaar. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
De bron leek ongetraind. (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Ik vond de terminologie complex. (5)	○	○	○	○	○
De informatie leek me oprecht. (6)	○	○	○	○	○
De bron leek een expert. (7)	○	○	○	○	○
Sommige woorden of uitdrukkingen in de video zijn moeilijk te begrijpen zonder achtergrondkennis. (8)	○	○	○	○	○
De bron leek geïnformeerd. (9)	○	○	○	○	○
Ik vond de informatie eervol. (10)	○	○	○	○	○
Ik begreep niet alle terminologie die in de video werd gebruikt. (11)	○	○	○	○	○
De bron leek bekwaam. (12)	○	○	○	○	○

Authority and jargon The following questions are about the video you just watched.

	Strongly agree (1)	Somewhat agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
The source appeared intelligent. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
The content appeared dishonest to me. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I found the video trustworthy. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
The source appeared untrained. (4)	○	○	○	○	○
I found the terminology complex. (5)	○	○	○	○	○
The information seemed genuine to me. (6)	○	○	○	○	○
The source appeared like an expert. (7)	○	○	○	○	○
Some words or expressions used in the video were hard to understand without background knowledge. (8)	○	○	○	○	○
The source appeared informed. (9)	○	○	○	○	○
I found the information honorable. (10)	○	○	○	○	○
I did not understand all of the terminology used in the video. (11)	○	○	○	○	○

The source appeared competent. (12)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Trust

Start of Block: Prior Knowledge

Prior Knowledge Dit laatste gedeelte gaat over uw kennis over de oorlog in Oekraïne.

	Sterk mee oneens (1)	Oneens (2)	Neutraal (3)	Eens (4)	Sterk mee eens (5)
Ik begrijp de belangrijkste redenen voor de oorlog tussen Rusland en Oekraïne. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Ik weet wat sancties zijn in de context van internationale relaties. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Ik kan uitleggen wat NAVO is en wat het doet. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Ik ben bekend met termen als "internationaal recht" en "soevereiniteit". (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Ik volg regelmatig het nieuws over internationale conflicten. (5)	○	○	○	○	○

Prior Knowledge This last section is about your knowledge on the war in Ukraine.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I understand the main reasons for the war between Russia and Ukraine. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I know what sanctions are in the context of international relations. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I can explain what NATO is and what it does. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I am familiar with terms like "international law" and "sovereignty". (4)	○	○	○	○	○
I regularly follow news about international conflicts. (5)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Prior Knowledge

Start of Block: Questions or remarks

Questions or remarks Mocht U nog vragen of opmerkingen hebben voor de onderzoeker, kunt U deze hier achterlaten.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Questions or remarks If you have any questions of remarks for the researcher, you can leave them here.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

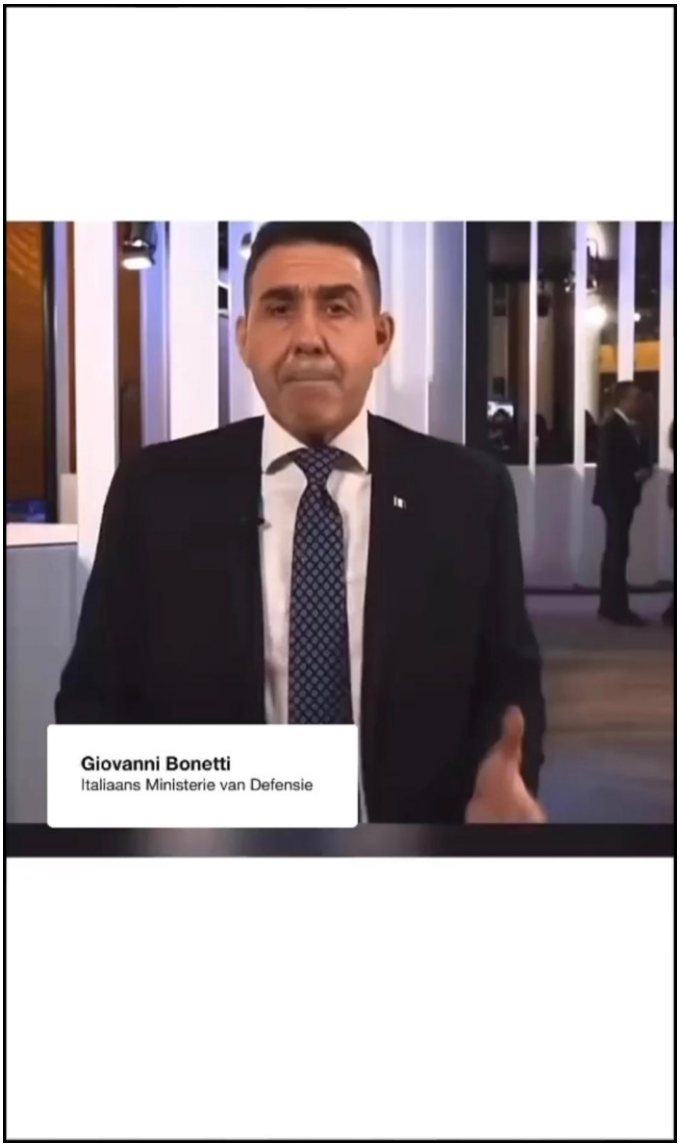
End of Block: Questions or remarks

Appendix C

Visual Presentation of Both Low and High Authority Conditions

Low Authority Visual

High Authority Visual



Appendix D

Video Script for Both Low and High Jargon Conditions

Low Jargon Script

En nu, over op het volgende, Rusland is Oekraïne binnengevallen, waardoor Oekraïne's rechten worden ontnomen en er oorlog is ontstaan. Als een gevolg, wordt Rusland straffen opgelegd, die we ook wel sancties noemen. Veel landen willen Rusland stoppen omdat dit over vrijheid van burgers gaat. Daarom helpen ze Oekraïne doormiddel van wapens en geld.

High Jargon Script

En nu, over op het volgende, de Russische invasie vormt een ernstige schending van de soevereiniteit en het internationaal recht van alle mensen in Oekraïne. Deze escalatie ondermijnt de Europese veiligheidsarchitectuur en zet grote druk op multilaterale instituties. Westerse sancties proberen Rusland economisch te isoleren, terwijl Oekraïne militair gesteund wordt door NAVO partners.