

Boredom leads to the endorsement of conspiracy theories

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INTRODUCTION

- The absence of meaning in an individual's life may lead to boredom (Barbalet, 1999).
- Boredom may be a motivational factor to seek new information to escape the state of boredom (Bench & Lench, 2019; Eastwood et al., 2012).
- Conspiracy offer alternative solutions to events that are beyond common knowledge (Uscinski, 2018; Evans, 2020; Billig, 1987).
- Conspiracy theories (CTs) may provide a person with meaning (Billig, 1987).

MAIN HYPOTHESIS:

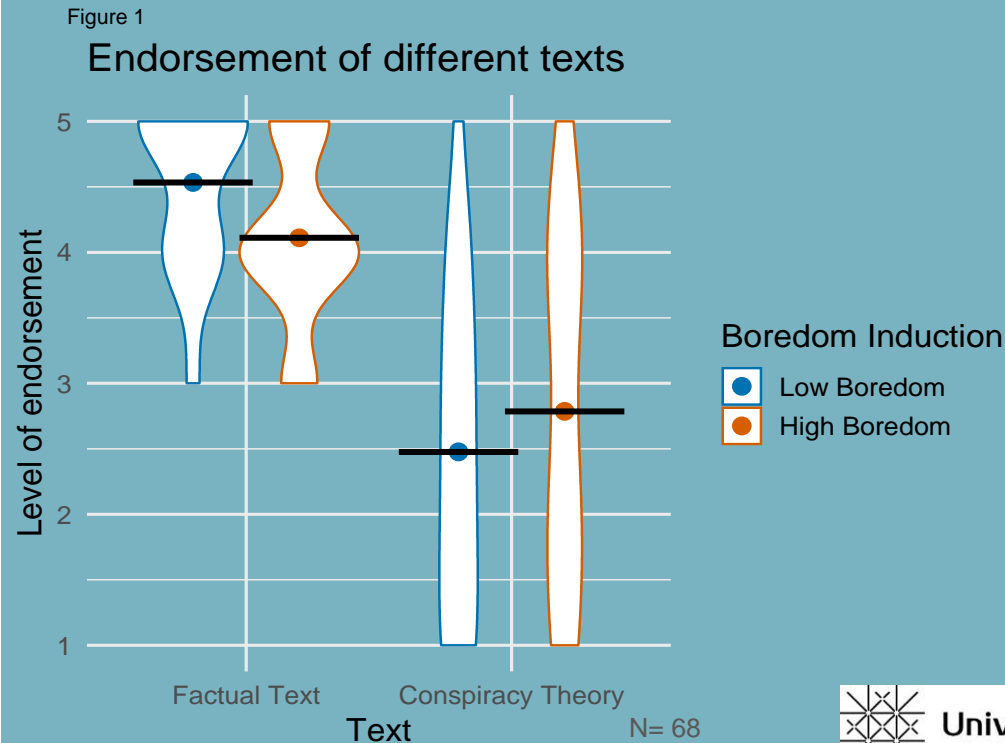
- **Boredom leads to the endorsement of CTs.**
- Participants who are bored endorse a CT at a higher level than a factual text, while non-bored people endorse a factual text at a higher level than a CT.

METHODS

- Experiment with 2x2 (boredom Induction [High boredom vs. low boredom] * text[conspiracy vs. official]) between subject's design.
- N=70, 52 men, 20 - 69 years old ($M=40.14$, $SD=11.83$)
- Analyzed using a multiple linear regression with endorsement of text (1= do not agree, 5=totally agree) as DV and boredom induction and text as interaction term (e.g., IV).
- The text were an official statement or a conspiracy about a fire at the Notre Dame cathedral in Paris. (Van Prooijen et al., 2021).

Results do not support the hypothesis.

Nevertheless, this study shows that there might be a connection between boredom and the endorsement of CTs based on the results shown in Figure 1: Participants in the high boredom group endorsed the conspiracy on a higher level compared to participants in the low boredom group. This connection needs further investigation



RESULTS

- Interaction effect was not significant ($\beta = 0.73$, $SE = 0.53$; $t(64) = 1.39$, $p = 0.17$)
- A negative trend of boredom ($\beta = -0.42$, $SE = 0.24$; $t(64) = -1.78$, $p = 0.08$)
- A significant negative main effect of text, $\beta = -2.06$, $SE = 0.33$; $t(64) = -6.28$, $p = 3.36e-08$
- The results show no significant effect for the interaction between boredom and text.

DISCUSSION

- The findings show no significant effect that supports the hypotheses. However, as displayed in figure1 there might be a connection. A larger sample may lead to more profound results. Furthermore, the questionnaires may have influenced participants answers. Moreover, an online evaluation has some limitations towards the controllability of the participants which may lead to different results.

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