

The Rhetorical Effects of the Phrase “According to Science”

Rebecca Campbell, Dr. Ryan Weber, Dr. Candice Lanius

Overview

In an age of clickbait and misinformation, it is vital to get scientific information to the public in a way that is both trustworthy and easy to understand. Understanding how people interact with specific words and phrases can lead to improved scientific communication.

In order to better understand this relationship between people and specific word and phrase usage, we tested how participants would be affected by adding “According to Science” to an article.

Academic Context

There has been a lot of research done on how changing the tone, phrasing, or level of confidence in a scientific article will change participants’ understanding and opinions of the scientific information. This project furthers the knowledge in this area.

References

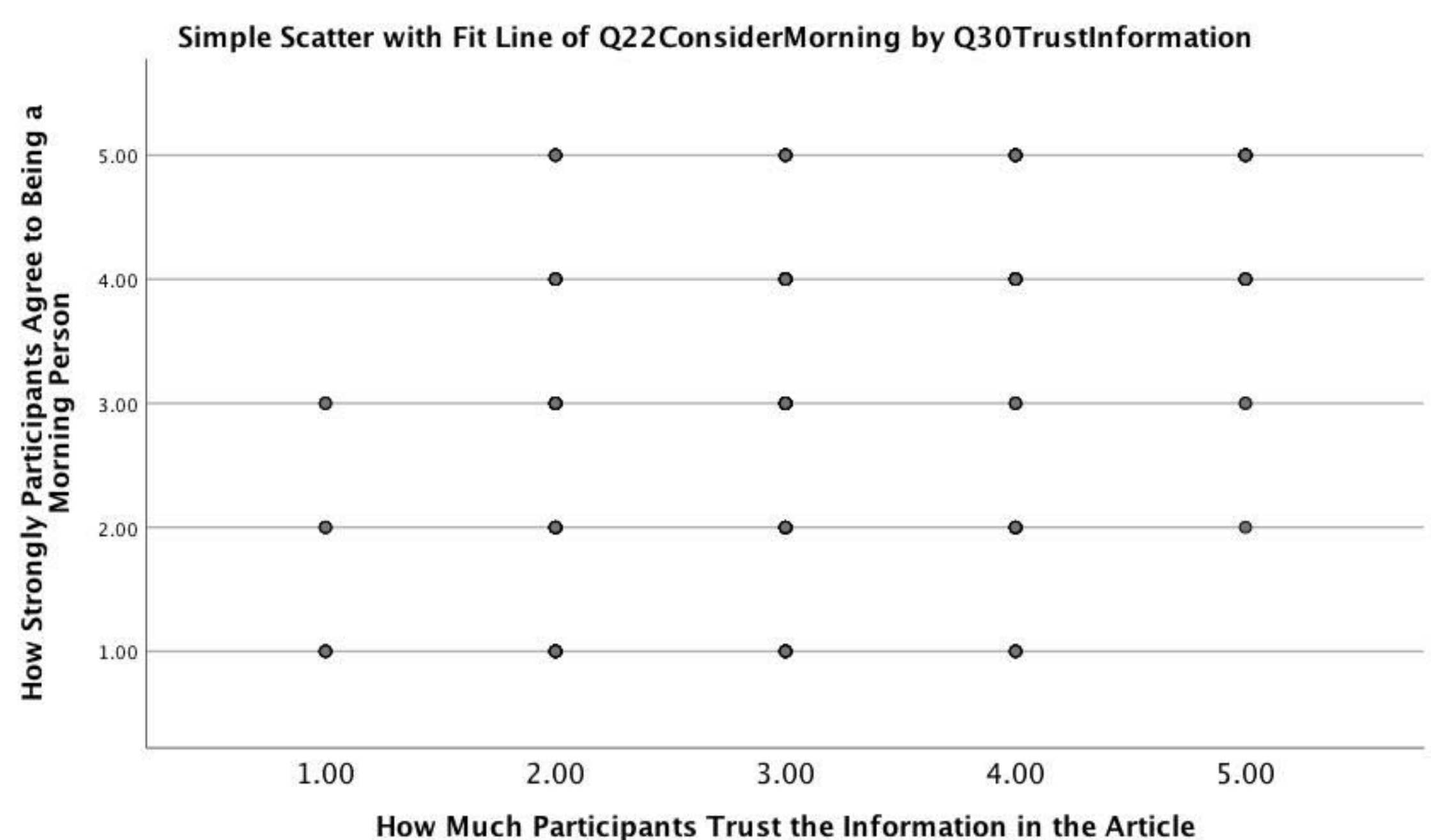
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Research Findings

We found that adding “According to Science” to an article did not have an effect on participants’ views of the article. However, people who were predisposed to agree with the article found it more credible with the “According to Science” phrase.



Recommendations for Further Study

Although we did not find what we expected, there is a huge opportunity for further research. The scientific quality of an article could be adjusted to determine if that changes participants reactions to an article touting, “According to Science.” The effects of confirmation bias could also be studied.