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THE EFFECT OF

CONSPIRACY THEORISTS' INCOME

ON THEIR CREDIBILITY

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF CONSPIRACY THEORISTS' INCOME ON THEIR CREDIBILITY

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Belief in conspiracy theories may be influenced not just by what people hear, but by who they believe is delivering the message. This thesis examines the impact of income on the perceived credibility of conspiracy theorists through two experimental studies. Research in social psychology suggests that individuals are more likely to trust sources they perceive as credible, and financial status can influence this perception: sources known to earn money are often regarded as less credible. Study 1 found that, in general, conspiracy theorists with income were perceived as more credible, inconsistent with previous findings. Study 2 extended this investigation by assessing perceptions of warmth and competence using the Stereotype Content Model. Interestingly, the results revealed that income had a positive effect on overall credibility, while it did not significantly affect perceived warmth or competence. These findings highlight the complexity of factors shaping credibility judgments and suggest that the relationship between financial status and trustworthiness may not be straightforward. Despite some unexpected results, this thesis contributes to the literature by experimentally examining conspiracy beliefs and integrating insights from multiple fields. The study concludes with a discussion of its limitations and directions for future research, offering valuable implications for understanding the psychological mechanisms underlying belief in conspiracy theories.

Keywords: conspiracy theorists, conspiracy beliefs, conflict of interest, sources credibility, warmth, competency, Stereotype Content Model

ÖZ

KOMPLO TEORİSYENLERİNİN GELİR DURUMLARININ GÜVENİLİRLİKLERİNE ETKİSİ

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Komplo teorilerine olan inanç, insanların ne duyduğundan ziyade, mesajı kimin iletmesine inanıp inanmadıklarıyla da etkilenebilir. Bu tez, gelir durumunun komplo teorisyenlerinin algılanan güvenilirliği üzerindeki etkisini iki deneysel çalışma aracılığıyla incelemektedir. Sosyal psikoloji araştırmaları, bireylerin kendilerine güvenilir olarak görünen kaynaklara daha fazla inandığını ve finansal durumun bu algıyı etkileyebileceğini öne sürmektedir: gelir elde ettiği bilinen kaynaklar genellikle daha az güvenilir olarak değerlendirilir. Çalışma 1’de genel olarak, gelir sahibi komplo teorisyenlerinin daha güvenilir algılandığı bulunmuş olup, bu sonuç önceki bulgularla tutarsızdır. Çalışma 2, Stereotip İçerik Modeli kullanılarak sıcakkanlılık ve yetkinlik algılarını değerlendirerek bu incelemeyi genişletmiştir. İlginç bir şekilde, sonuçlar gelir durumunun genel güvenilirlik üzerinde pozitif bir etkisi olduğunu gösterirken, sıcakkanlılık veya yetkinlik algıları üzerinde anlamlı bir etkisi bulunmamıştır. Bu bulgular, güvenilirlik yargılarını şekillendiren faktörlerin karmaşıklığını vurgulamakta ve finansal durum ile güvenilirlik arasındaki ilişkinin basit bir şekilde açıklanamayabileceğini öne sürmektedir. Beklenmedik bazı sonuçlara rağmen, bu tez, komplo inançlarını deneysel olarak inceleyerek ve farklı alanlardan elde edilen bulguları bir araya getirerek literatüre katkı sağlamaktadır. Çalışma, sınırlılıklar ve gelecekteki araştırmalar için önerilerle sonlandırılmakta ve komplo teorilerine olan inancın altında yatan psikolojik mekanizmaların anlaşılmasına değerli çıkarımlar sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: komplo teorisyenleri, komplo inançları, çıkar çatışması, kaynak güvenilirliği, sıcakkanlılık, yetkinlik, Stereotip İçerik Modeli

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Gülben Bağlıcakoğlu

İzmir, 2025

TEXT OF OATH

I declare and honestly confirm that my study, titled “THE EFFECT OF CONSPIRACY THEORISTS’ INCOME ON THEIR CREDIBILITY” and presented as a Master’s Thesis, has been written without applying any assistance inconsistent with scientific ethics and traditions. I declare, to the best of my knowledge and belief, that all content and ideas drawn directly or indirectly from external sources are indicated in the text and listed in the list of references.

Gülben Bağlıcakođlu

August 2025



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SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

SYMBOLS:

M Mean

SD Standard Deviation

N Sample Size

CL Confidence Interval

LL Lower Limit

UL Upper Limit

α Alpha

η^2 Partial Eta Square

SS Sum of Squares

SE Standard Error

MS Mean Square

ABBREVIATIONS:

SCM Stereotype Content Model

FCB Fictitious Conspiracy Beliefs

GCBS Generic Conspiracist Beliefs Scale

SES Socioeconomic Status

ANCOVA Analysis of Covariance

1. CHAPTER: LITERATURE REVIEW

In the social psychology literature, various research areas examine the credibility of sources, including institutions and individuals. These sources can be categorized as organizations (e.g., governments, institutions, charities), types of information (e.g., scientific facts, health, or political news), and individuals (e.g., academics, conspiracy theorists). Despite extensive literature on conspiracy theories and conspiracy beliefs, there is still a lack of understanding of certain concepts related to conspiracy beliefs. Key gaps in the literature include the definition of conspiracy theories, the theoretical framework, and a limited number of experimental studies (Douglas et al., 2019). Additionally, an important missing point is the characteristics of conspiracy theorists, such as their credibility levels and the factors influencing credibility, including income. To address these gaps, this thesis investigates how income levels affect perceptions of the credibility of conspiracy theorists through two experiments. Before conducting these studies, the thesis reviews the literature on sources' credibility, the effects of credibility, and predictors of perceived credibility. The review also covers the Stereotype Content Model (SCM; Fiske et al., 2002; Fiske, 2018). Finally, the studies will explore how conspiracy theorists' incomes influence conspiracy beliefs via their credibility (Study 1) and through sources' warmth and competence levels (Study 2).

1.1. Importance of Credibility of Sources

The term source credibility, which refers to how believable or trustworthy a source is (Brigham, 1991), has been studied from various perspectives across different fields over the years. Besides this definition, credibility has also been understood in other ways. For example, Valentini (2018) described it as the quality of being believed by someone or perceived as honest, genuine, and truthful. Similarly, Metzger (2007) defined perceived credibility as the judgment of both trustworthiness and expertise of information and its sources.

Analyzing the literature reveals that both the factors that lead to credibility (antecedents) and its effects (consequences) have been explored to understand how credibility functions. Before addressing the factors that influence source credibility, it is important to consider its consequences to grasp its significance. To appreciate the importance of source credibility, its impacts on various concepts must be examined thoroughly. According to Jakob (2008), findings in persuasion research have been inconsistent. Most studies compare highly credible sources to those with low credibility. Despite these inconsistencies, many studies report positive effects of credibility on persuasion and attitude change.

Multiple studies (Hass, 1981; Luchok & McCroskey, 1978; Sternthal et al., 1978) found that credible sources are more persuasive in changing attitudes; people tend to believe messages from credible sources. For instance, early research by Berlo et al. (1969) showed that a highly credible source positively influenced message receivers, increasing message effectiveness. Similarly, Hovland and Weiss (1951) demonstrated that people believed messages from highly credible sources, leading to attitude changes contrasted with messages from less credible sources. Their experiment involved presenting questions (e.g., *Should anti-histamine drugs be sold without a doctor's prescription?*) to participants, who rated sources based on credibility, with one source labeled as highly credible (e.g., *New England Journal of Biology and Medicine*) and another as low credible (a mass circulation pictorial magazine). Results showed that participants preferred answers from high-credibility sources (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). However, the persuasive effect diminished over time, according to their findings.

Later research yielded both supporting and contradictory results. For example, Eisend (2004) and Pornpitakpan (2004) highlighted the importance and influence of credible sources in information processing and decision-making, asserting that credible sources are more effective than less credible ones (Eisend, 2004; Pornpitakpan, 2004). Contrary to Hovland and Weiss's (1951) results, Eisend (2004) found that the effect of a credible source can increase over time. Moreover, credible sources also impact behaviors such as volunteering and donations (Wheeler, 2009). However, this was supported only in Study 1, not in Study 2 (Wheeler, 2009). Additionally, the perceived credibility of charities influences donor behavior; more credible charities tend to receive larger donations (Banks & Raciti, 2014). These studies involved experiments

where the dependent variable was an intentional self-report, establishing a causal relationship between source credibility and behavior or intentions (Banks & Raciti, 2014).

Similar patterns are observed in the science community, where scientists and institutions perceived as credible are more trusted (Gauchat, 2011, 2012; Nadelson et al., 2014). During the COVID-19 pandemic, higher credibility of governments and science led to lower mortality rates in Europe (Oksanen et al., 2020) and increased compliance with preventive behaviors (Plohl & Musil, 2021). Likewise, in the Netherlands, perceived credible authorities prompted people to follow COVID-19 rules (Oude Groeniger et al., 2021).

Besides government credibility, trust in institutions also affects political attitudes and behaviors. For example, in the US, conspiracy theories and vaccine opposition grew stronger during Trump's presidency because people trusted him as an information source (Devine et al., 2024). These findings underscore the importance of credibility for a source. It can influence and alter people's attitudes (Banks & Raciti, 2014; Eisend, 2004; Giffen, 1967; Hass, 1981; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Kenton, 1989; Luchok & McCroskey, 1978; Pornpitakpan, 2004; Sternthal et al., 1978), social behaviors such as volunteering and donating (Wheeler, 2009), health-related outcomes like COVID-19 mortality rates (Oksanen et al., 2020), preventive actions against COVID-19 (Oude Groeniger et al., 2021), vaccination attitudes (Devine et al., 2024), consumer decisions (Tormala & Petty, 2004), and more.

Despite these positive effects, the literature also presents conflicting results (Jackob, 2008). Some studies find little to no direct or indirect impact of source credibility on behaviors, attitudes, or related outcomes. Various factors, such as message content and audience characteristics, can influence these results (Jackob, 2018; O'Keefe, 2002). Moreover, the effects of credibility may change over time; for example, an experiment by Hovland & Weiss (1951) showed that highly credible sources lose their persuasive power as time passes. One explanation is that people tend to remember the message itself better than the source over time because of better memory for the message than the source's characteristics (Jackob, 2018).

In line with this, Perloff (2003) noted that many questions about credibility remain unanswered, despite consensus on its significance and effects. Key points about

credibility include: it is not only a characteristic of a source but also involves perception processes; it has multiple dimensions; and its effects on audiences are not always linear (Jackob, 2008). Sternthal et al. (1978) also argued that different levels of credibility can have varying impacts depending on timing: when audiences favor the source, moderately credible sources may be more effective than highly credible ones; if the message precedes the source, credibility level doesn't matter; and when audiences hold negative attitudes, highly credible sources are most influential (Sternthal et al., 1978).

Taking these inconsistencies into account, there is more to believing information and changing attitudes than just the credibility levels of sources. Considering this, the antecedents and dimensions should be examined in more detail within this thesis to better understand the sources' credibility, as well as the conspiracy theorists' credibility levels and their predictors.

1.1.1. The Antecedent of Sources' Credibility

Throughout the years, researchers have examined the characteristics of credible sources to better understand why some people believe a message or source while others do not, and how source credibility influences this process. In studies on credibility, researchers have also investigated what makes a source credible, identifying numerous predictors. According to the literature, some predictors of a credible source include attractiveness (Berlo et al., 1969; Hovland et al., 1953; Joseph, 1977; Ohanian, 1990, 1991), trustworthiness and expertise (Berlo et al., 1969; Flanagin & Metzger, 2020; Hovland, 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Marquart et al., 1995; McCallum et al., 1991; Ohanian, 1990, 1991; Wiener, 1986), trustworthiness and professionalism (Whitehead, 1968), or trustworthiness, expertise, and competence (Eisend, 2006). Other factors include message certainty regarding climate change (Lombardi et al., 2014), being a source from traditional or online media (Johnson & Kaye, 2000, 2004), indirect sources (e.g., scientists cited in news; Dunwoody & Ryan, 1987), and past experiences with the sources (Reich, 2011).

Additionally, some studies have specified six aspects of credibility: goodwill, morality, fairness, expertise, rank, and image (Munter, 1986, 1987). However, it is important to note that certain studies found no association between some of these aspects and credibility. For instance, the attractiveness of sources was not consistently

linked to credibility (Baker & Churchill, 1977; Cooper et al., 1974; Holahan & Stephen, 1981; Maddux & Rogers, 1980).

In the context of effective persuasion, the source itself is a key factor. Expert sources are generally more persuasive than non-expert sources (Frankel & Kassinove, 1974; Pornpitakpan, 2004; Sternthal et al., 1978; Wasserman & Kassinove, 1976). However, expertise alone is insufficient; high levels of credibility or trustworthiness are also critical (Aaker & Myers, 1982; Birnbaum et al., 1976; Birnbaum & Stegner, 1979; McGinnies & Ward, 1980; McGuire, 1968; Pornpitakpan, 2004). This raises the question: what characteristics define a trustworthy source in persuasion?

These characteristics can be categorized into three main dimensions (Pornpitakpan, 2004): the physical attractiveness of the source (Mills & Aronson, 1965); the similarity between the source and receiver (Feldman, 1984); and the gender of the source (Pornpitakpan, 2004). The trustworthiness and expertise aspects of credibility align with the Stereotype Content Model (SCM), one of the most influential theoretical frameworks in social psychology. SCM suggests that people evaluate others—both individuals and groups—based on warmth and competence cues (Fiske et al., 2002; Fiske, 2018). Warmth encompasses traits such as trustworthiness, friendliness, and kindness, whereas competence reflects expertise, skill, and effectiveness.

SCM studies have examined stereotypes of specific groups, including scientists (Fujiwara et al., 2022; Zahry & Besley, 2021), women (Aktan, 2016), and LGBT individuals (Clausell & Fiske, 2005; Madon, 1997; Mize & Manago, 2018; Preddie & Biernat, 2020), based on perceived warmth and competence. For example, feminine gay men are perceived as warmer than competent, while masculine gay men are seen as more competent than warm (Clausell & Fiske, 2005). Similarly, scientists are stereotyped as highly competent but lower in warmth (Fujiwara et al., 2022). SCM further posits that warmth cues indicate potential intentions toward others, while competence cues reflect the ability to achieve these intentions (Cuddy et al., 2007; Fiske et al., 2002; Fiske & Cuddy, 2006).

As discussed above, people use trustworthiness and expertise cues to assess source credibility (Berlo et al., 1969; Flanagan & Metzger, 2020; Hovland, 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Ohanian, 1990, 1991; Wiener, 1986; Marquart et al., 1995; McCallum et al., 1991). Considering the overlap between credibility and SCM, this thesis examines

sources' warmth and competence levels to understand how trust in others develops and how it affects conspiracy beliefs.

Another important characteristic of sources is income. This encompasses earning money, generating profits, receiving public or private funding, sponsorship, or financial conflicts of interest. Studies across various fields indicate that income levels can influence source credibility. Specifically, higher income or private funding is often negatively associated with the credibility of health-related information. For instance, government support and public trust decrease when scientific studies are financed by private biotechnology companies (Chalmers & Nicol, 2004). Similarly, private sector involvement reduces the credibility of biotechnology and stem cell research (Chalmers & Nicol, 2004).

From a broader perspective, Hayward (2002) compared services provided by private and public sectors and their effects, arguing that private sector services might lack credibility due to financial conflicts of interest. Public sector services, in contrast, focus on the public good, whereas private sector services primarily aim for profit. Credibility is essential for public understanding both individually and collectively. In scientific research, trustworthiness depends on the proper production of knowledge (Fernández Pinto, 2020). Financial conflicts of interest can bias research in areas such as hypothesis formulation, evidence selection, methodology, data interpretation, and statistical analysis (de Melo-Martín & Intemann, 2018; Fernández Pinto, 2020). Resnik and Elliott (2013) emphasized that scientists should consider financial relationships, as these can influence study results, methods, and overall objectivity.

People generally perceive science, scientists, or studies as less credible when financial conflicts of interest are present. For example, Critchley (2008) examined public trust in publicly versus privately funded stem cell researchers in Australia. Participants trusted publicly funded scientists more and perceived them as motivated by public interest rather than profit. Critchley and Turney (2004) also found that participant characteristics, such as religiosity, affected trust in publicly and privately funded researchers, with both religious and non-religious participants showing higher trust in publicly funded research. Similarly, other studies found publicly funded scientists more credible than privately funded ones (Krimsky et al., 1998; Marquart et al., 1995).

Comparable findings have been observed in online platforms: websites ending in .edu, .org, or .gov were perceived as more credible than commercial .com sites, reflecting non-profit or government affiliations versus commercial motives (Rieh & Belkin, 1998, 2000). These findings demonstrate that both funding and the type of funding are critical to trust and perceived credibility. When traditional sources such as governments or scientists are not trusted, people are more likely to rely on alternative sources, including conspiracy theorists (Albarracín, 2022; Constantinou et al., 2021; Miller et al., 2016; Pimenta, 2024; Tonkovic et al., 2021).

1.2. Conspiracy Theorists as Sources

There is another important type of source: conspiracy theorists (Douglas et al., 2019). Before discussing conspiracy theorists as sources, it is necessary to define the term due to a lack of consensus in the literature (Douglas et al., 2019). Some studies describe conspiracy theorists as individuals who have a strong tendency to believe in conspiracy theories or generally think in a conspiratorial manner (Douglas et al., 2019). In contrast, other studies define them as creators, producers, or propagators of conspiracy theories in a professional capacity, often profiting from this activity. A notable example is Alex Jones, a well-known American conspiracy theorist who operates the InfoWars platform (Demata, 2025). Since the COVID-19 pandemic, he has been spreading misinformation and conspiracy theories through this channel (Demata, 2025). He is also the origin of several high-profile conspiracy claims, such as asserting that the Sandy Hook elementary school shooting was staged with actors (Douglas et al., 2019). Another example is Piers Corbyn, who claimed that climate science deceives the public (Douglas et al., 2019).

Despite the extensive literature on conspiracy beliefs in social psychology, gaps remain regarding both antecedents and consequences. Conspiracy beliefs are influenced by various predictors, which can be specific to particular theories or generalized across multiple theories. Detailed research indicates that conspiracy beliefs are associated with intuitive thinking styles (Mikušková, 2018; Swami et al., 2014; Ståhl & van Prooijen, 2018), political ideologies (Bruder et al., 2013; Mancosu et al., 2017; Galliford & Furnham, 2017; Miller et al., 2016; van Prooijen et al., 2015), right-wing authoritarianism (Bruder et al., 2013; Grzesiak-Feldman & Irzycka, 2009), social dominance orientation (Bruder et al., 2013), religiosity (Douglas et al., 2016;

Newheiser et al., 2011), general lack of trust (Lamberty, 2016), feelings of uncertainty (van Prooijen & Jostmann, 2013), social prestige concerns (Abalakina-Paap et al., 1999; Cichocka et al., 2016; Crocker et al., 1999; Goertzel, 1994; Uscinski & Parent, 2014), corruption levels in countries (Alper, 2023; Cordonier & Cafiero, 2024; Cordonier et al., 2021), low interpersonal trust (Goertzel, 1994; Dyrendal, 2021), political trust (Miller et al., 2016; Pimenta, 2024), mistrust in social media (Xiao et al., 2021), being young (Bordeleau & Stockemer, 2024; Byrne et al., 2024; Duplaga, 2020; Galliford, 2017), low education levels (Bogart & Bird, 2003; Douglas et al., 2016; Duplaga, 2020; Goertzel, 1994; Mancosu et al., 2017; Oliver & Wood, 2014; Uscinski & Parent, 2014; van Prooijen, 2017), and racial or political powerlessness, such as being Black and feeling politically marginalized (Crocker et al., 1999).

Douglas et al. (2017, 2019) categorize these antecedents into three main groups: epistemic, existential, and social motives. A critical factor in believing conspiracy theories is an individual's general tendency or mindset to believe in them. Research consistently shows that individuals who believe in one conspiracy theory are likely to believe in others, even if the theories are contradictory (Brotherton et al., 2013; Douglas et al., 2019; Goertzel, 1994; Imhoff & Bruder, 2014; Moscovici, 1987; Uscinski & Parent, 2014; Wood et al., 2012). For example, some people simultaneously believe that Princess Diana was murdered and that she is still alive (Wood et al., 2012).

Considering findings from different research areas and the discussion of sources in the conspiracy beliefs literature, two key questions arise: what are the credibility levels of conspiracy theorists, and what factors predict this credibility? It is well-known that people perceive some sources as more credible than others due to factors such as trustworthiness, expertise (Berlo et al., 1969; Flanagin & Metzger, 2020; Hovland, 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Marquart et al., 1995; McCallum et al., 1991; Ohanian, 1990, 1991; Wiener, 1986;), or attractiveness (Berlo et al., 1969; Hovland et al., 1953; Joseph, 1977; Ohanian, 1990, 1991). However, only a limited number of studies examine the credibility of conspiracy theorists and its predictors.

An important study investigated the credibility of Alex Jones (Madison et al., 2019). In this study, the credibility of Alex Jones and InfoWars was the dependent variable, while the predictors were dimensions of parasocial relationships (PSR), referring to the unidirectional relationship between audiences and media sources (Perse & Rubin,

1989). The study found that the variability dimension, which reflects the diversity of imagined interactions the audience has with Alex Jones, predicted his credibility (Madison et al., 2019).

Unlike general source credibility studies, research has yet to examine the relationship between conspiracy theorists' credibility and their incomes. However, some studies focus on the sources of conspiracy theories. For instance, social media as a source of COVID-19-related conspiracy theories influenced conservative individuals' beliefs (Romer & Jamieson, 2020). The authors suggested that politically powerless individuals are more likely to believe in conspiracy theories (Crocker et al., 1999; Uscinski & Parent, 2014). Moreover, the identity of the source plays a crucial role in conspiracy beliefs. Party leaders and celebrities may produce conspiracy theories or misinformation, and their supporters are more likely to believe these claims (Swire et al., 2017).

1.3. The Current Study

To understand the credibility level of a source, various studies have investigated different predictors and consequences of credibility, similar to research on conspiracy theories. All types of information, including conspiracy theories, have identifiable sources. Studies on general sources, as discussed in the previous paragraphs, and studies on conspiracy theories share common aspects, such as information or beliefs, antecedents, and the consequences of those beliefs. These parallels provide a solid basis for examining the credibility of conspiracy theorists as sources.

In the existing literature, there are no studies that specifically investigate the relationship between income and the credibility of conspiracy theorists. Additionally, only a limited number of studies have examined conspiracy theories through experimental manipulations (Douglas et al., 2019). Likewise, research focusing directly on conspiracy theorists is scarce. Considering these gaps, this thesis explores the relationship between having income and the credibility levels of conspiracy theorists across two experimental studies. The experiments manipulate income conditions through narratives (volunteer versus paid) before measuring source credibility and participants' beliefs in the presented statements (i.e., fictitious conspiracy theories).

Furthermore, both experimental analyses will include additional examinations of demographic variables, such as gender, age, socioeconomic status (SES), and the general tendency to believe in conspiracy theories.

Study 1 specifically investigates the relationship between conspiracy theorists' income and their perceived credibility. Based on previous findings regarding the influence of income on perceived credibility and participants' belief in the messages of conspiracy theorists, the hypotheses for Study 1 are as follows:

H1: The sources who do not have income will be perceived as more credible than the sources who have income.

H2: The statements of the sources who do not have income will be more believed than the sources who have income.

H3: The credibility of sources will mediate the relationship between sources' income and beliefs in the statements.

Moreover, Study 2 will examine the relationship between conspiracy theorists' income and their perceived warmth and competence, as well as participants' belief in the fictitious conspiracy theories. Considering different aspects of source credibility and the dimensions of the Stereotype Content Model (SCM), and their potential effects on belief formation, the hypotheses for Study 2 are as follows:

H4: The sources who have income will be perceived as more competent than the sources who do not have income.

H5: The sources who do not have income will be perceived as warmer than the sources who have income.

H6: The statements of the sources who do not have income will be more believed than the sources who have income.

H7: The warmth and competency of sources will mediate the relationships between sources' income and beliefs in the statements.

2. CHAPTER: STUDY 1

2.1. Method

2.1.1. Participants

Before data collection, the estimated sample size was calculated using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007). According to G*Power calculations, the required number of participants was at least 620 for an independent samples t-test analysis with a small effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.20$), power = 0.80, and alpha = 0.05. For this reason, it was aimed to reach 620 participants during data collection. The data collection process lasted for one month. After one month, the number of participants was 206. To evaluate the implications of this sample size, a sensitivity analysis was conducted using G*Power. The results showed that with 206 participants, the study had sufficient power (power = .80, $\alpha = .05$) to detect effects of at least $d = 0.35$, corresponding to a medium effect size. This means that this study was well-positioned to detect medium-sized effects, whereas smaller effects may have remained undetected.

Two of the participants did not consent to participate (see Appendix 1 for the informed consent form and questionnaire). For this reason, they were unable to respond to the survey. Also, 3 participants were removed from the dataset of the study because of not meet the criteria of being older than 18. As a result, the final number of participants was 201. In addition to this, an incentive was used for participation; extra points were given to the students of two different classes (Social Psychology and The Science of Psychology) of the Psychology Program, Yaşar University. The detailed descriptive information about the participants will be mentioned in the Descriptive Statistics section below.

2.1.2. Materials

2.1.2.1 The experiment

In Study 1, the experiment had two conditions: The income and the control conditions. The narratives that were used at the beginning of the survey were different from each

other. The experiment was conducted to manipulate participants' information about the incomes of the sources of the conspiracy theories in the questionnaire. More detailed information for each condition will be mentioned below. In more detail, it was required that the narratives emphasize the income of the conspiracy theories' sources. For both of the conditions, the participants were asked to read the narrative and then rate the items by considering the credibility level of the source and the level of their beliefs in the statements (items of fictitious conspiracy beliefs-FCB; Alper et al., 2025).

In the income condition, the narrative gave information about having income. The narrative for this condition was as *“Each statement you will read below was shared by different people on different social media platforms (Instagram, YouTube, X, Facebook, TikTok, etc.). As a result of these social media shares, those people earn about 1 million \$ per year.”*.

Besides all of these, the control condition had only one difference from the income condition. The narrative of the control condition gave information about not having any income. The narrative was as *“Each statement you will read below was shared by different people on different social platforms (Instagram, YouTube, X, Facebook, TikTok, etc.). As a result of these social media shares, those people do not earn money; they make this completely voluntarily.”*.

After the narratives, two questions for each item (the statements) of the FCB subscale of the Fictitious Epistemically Suspect Beliefs (Alper et al., 2025) were rated in both conditions. For the deception, the term of *statement* was used instead of *conspiracy theories items*. It was required that the participants think that these items were about different statements and their sources' income. It was not desired that the participants know or think that these statements were conspiracy theories, even though they were fictitious. Before the narratives, an explanation was given to the participants for their responses to the items by considering the narratives in both conditions. The explanation was as follows: *Below, there are some of information were shared recently by different users on different social media platforms. All you are asked to do is read each statement carefully and answer the relevant questions.”*.

2.1.2.2 The Fictitious Conspiracy Beliefs subscale items

After the narratives, two different questions were presented to the participants. In both conditions, each item of the *FCB* subscale of the Fictitious Epistemically Suspect Beliefs (Alper et al., 2025) was rated based on the sources' credibility and belief level questions by considering the income situations that were in the narrative. These two questions will be explained in more detail in the next two sections.

In more detail, the *FCB* subscale is one of the three different subscales of Fictitious Epistemically Suspect Beliefs. It was developed by Alper et al. (2025) to measure people's beliefs in epistemically suspect beliefs, even if they are fictitious. For the present study, only the *FCB* subscale was used. It was needed to ensure that the participants did not know or hear the conspiracy theories before, because of the experimental design of the study. In this subscale, there are 8 items; an example item is "*South Korea secretly provides North Korea with intelligence on military technology to ensure the continued US military presence in the region.*". The reliability coefficient was reported as .894 (Alper et al., 2025). Also, the full set of items can be reached from Appendix 2.

2.1.2.3 The credibility of the conspiracy theorists' sources

There were two dependent variables in Study 1. One of these was the credibility level of the conspiracy theories' source. To measure the dependent variable, one question was asked after the narratives, which were in both conditions. After the narratives, items of the *FCB* subscale of Fictitious Epistemically Suspect Beliefs (Alper et al., 2025) were presented to the participants, and they were asked to rate all of the items of the subscale based on the credibility question. This question was as "*How credible is the person who shared this statement to you?*". It was rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*completely not credible*) to 5 (*completely credible*). The sources' credibility scale was highly reliable, with Cronbach's α is .882 for 8 items.

2.1.2.4 The beliefs in *FCB*

The other dependent variable was people's beliefs in the statements (*FCB*). To measure the level of beliefs in the *FCB* items, one question was presented after the narratives in the two conditions, like the credibility question. The question was as "*How true is this statement to you?*". The participants rated the questions by using a 5-point Likert scale (1: *completely wrong*; 5: *completely true*). The narratives of the

conditions, the FCB subscale, and the questions can be found in Appendix 2 (income condition) and Appendix 3 (control condition). The Cronbach coefficient of beliefs in the FCB subscale for eight items is .847, which means the subscale is highly reliable.

2.1.2.5 Attention check

To control whether the participants paid attention to the narratives, just one question was asked. It was as “*What is the income of the people who claimed the statements on the previous page?*”. There were two options to respond; the first one was “*The people earn about 1 millions \$ per year*” whereas the other option was “*The people do not have any income, they do this voluntarily.*”. The question can be seen in Appendix 4.

2.1.2.6 The Generic Conspiracist Beliefs Scale

To measure predisposition of the participants to beliefs on conspiracy theories, The Generic Conspiracist Beliefs Scale (GCBS; Brotherton et al., 2013) was used. It was important to know the conspiracist mindset of the participant because it was needed to ensure the effectiveness of the manipulation in the experiment. As mentioned in the Chapter 1, believing in the conspiracy theories -even if they are contradictory each other (Wood et al, 2012)- might be a predisposition of people or a general mindset (Brotherton et al., 2013; Imhoff and Bruder, 2014; Moscovici, 1987; Uscinski and Parent, 2014). Considering this issue, the conspiracist mindset was measured by GCBS. The scale was developed by Brotherton et al. (2013) and translated into Turkish by Alper et al. (2021). There are 15 items that were rated from 1 (*definitely not true*) to 5 (*definitely true*). The reliability coefficient (Cronbach α) was reported as .90 by Alper et al. (2021), while it was found .903 in Study 1. It is an example item: “*New and advanced technology which would harm current industry is being suppressed.*”. The scale items can be found in Appendix 5.

2.1.2.7 Demographic questionnaire

The demographic questionnaire was formed to collect the demographic information of the participants. The questionnaire includes four different questions about age, gender, education level, and socioeconomic status (SES) of the participants.

More detailly, gender was asked of the participants as three choices: female, male, and the other option. The third choice was needed to specify as an open-ended response. These three options were coded: female as 1, male as 2, and the other as 3. The second coded variable was the educational level. It was asked as “*What is your last graduated*

school?”. There were seven stages for the education level: primary school, secondary school, high school, associate degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctorate. These seven stages were coded from 1 (primary school) to 7 (doctorate). Forth question was about the SES of the participants. It was asked by a subjective social status question. In the questions, there was a ladder, and the participants were asked to imagine that this ladder represents the socioeconomic level of the people in Türkiye. Those who are at the top (10) have the best living conditions (the most of the money, the best education, and the most prestigious jobs), whereas in the bottom (1), there are people who have the worst conditions (the least of the money, the worst of the education, and the least prestigious jobs). The participants responded to this question by writing a number which symbolized their SES. The SES variable was asked in an open-ended question. For this reason, 4 participants gave their answers as 4-5, 5-6, and 6-7 (2 participants). These answers were corrected by using the mean of the points, like 4.5, 5.5. The demographic questionnaire is presented in Appendix 6.

2.1.3. Procedure

After the approval of the Ethics Committee of Yaşar University, the data collection was started. To collect the data, a survey was created on an online survey tool (Qualtrics). The announcement of the study was spread by sharing the survey link on different online platforms like Instagram, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp chat groups. In addition to this, the survey link was shared with psychology program students of Yaşar University within Social Psychology and The Science of Psychology classes. The students were given extra points for their participation in the study.

At the beginning of the survey, the consent form was presented, which informed the participants of various information about the study, like the aim of the research, data privacy, and the contact information. It was requested to confirm participation in the study by choosing “*I confirm to participate.*” choice. People who did not confirm to participate were directed to the final page (thank you page) of the survey. After the consent form, the participants were assigned to one of the two conditions of the experiment. The assignment of people to the conditions was run randomly by the Qualtrics randomization tool. During the experiment, people were asked to read the narrative and then rate the items of the FCB subscale based on two questions, which were mentioned in the earlier section. Following the experiment, an attention check

question was asked to ensure that the participants remembered the narratives correctly. After the experiment, the Turkish version of The GCBS (Alper et al., 2025) was shown to respond. The final step of the survey was the demographic questionnaire, which asked the participants' age, gender, education level, and SES. At the end of the survey, the participants were thanked for their participation in the survey.

2.1.4. Data Analysis

As the first step of the analyses, descriptive statistics, reliability, and normality analyses for each scale, correlation analysis, and attention check analysis were conducted. Secondly, two different independent samples t-test analyses were run to see whether the experimental manipulation works for two questions (credibility of the sources and beliefs in the FCB items). In addition to this, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) test was conducted to see whether the effects of GCBS as a covariate. Also, mediation analysis was run to check the effects of sources' credibility on the relationship between the manipulation and beliefs in FCB. Lastly, to explore the moderating effects of SES on the relationship between the experiment and sources' credibility levels, a moderation analysis was conducted. Additionally, another moderation analysis was performed to evaluate the effect of GCBS on the relationship between the experiment and beliefs in FCB. All of the analyses were run by IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 25.0) and Jamovi Software (Version 2.3.28).

2.2. The Results of Analyses

2.2.1. Normality Tests

To see whether the dataset was distributed normally, normality tests were run for the variables. First of all, the sample size of Study 1 ($N = 201$) is larger than 50; the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results were investigated. According to the results of normality tests, only GCBS was normally distributed ($D(201) = .044, p = 200$); the rest of the scales did not have normal distributions. You can see all the results of the normality tests in more detail in Appendix 7.

2.2.2. Descriptive Statistics

First of all, descriptive statistics analyses were conducted to see the several characteristics of the sample. The results showed that 163 participants were female

(81.1%), while there were 36 male participants. Also, 2 participants defined their gender as the other. The second characteristic of the sample is age. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 50 ($M = 22.90$ $SD = 4.613$). The education levels of the participants were from high school ($N = 134$, 66.7%) to master's degree ($N = 11$, 5.5%). Additionally, their education levels were associate degree ($N = 5$, 2.5%), bachelor's degree ($N = 51$, 25.4%). The SES of the sample ranged from 1 to 10 ($M = 6.27$, $SD = 1.549$). All of the participants were assigned to one of the two conditions; there were 97 participants in the income condition, whereas 104 participants were in the control condition. All information can be seen in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Descriptive Statistics

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender			
Female	163		
Male	36		
The other	2		
Education			
High school	134		
Associate degree	5		
Bachelor degree	51		
Master degree	11		
Age	201	22.90	4.613
SES	201	6.27	1.549

Note. SES: Socioeconomic Status.

Source: Author

2.2.3. Correlational Analyses Among Variables

In the statistical procedure, the following analyses were the correlations among the variables. Before the details, it is important to note that variables in the dataset, except for GCBS did not have normal distributions (Please, see the normality results in Appendix 7). Considering this, Spearman Correlational (Spearman, 1961) was conducted. According to the results, credibility of the sources and beliefs in FCB were positively and significantly correlated ($r = .846, p < .001$). The second significant correlation is between GCBS and credibility of the sources ($r = .545, p < .001$). The last significant correlational ($r = .517, p < .001$) relation is between GCBS and beliefs in FCB. In addition, all of the correlation coefficients and the significance values can be seen in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2. Descriptive Statistics and Spearman Correlation Coefficients Among Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Age	22.90	4.613	-				
2. Education	-	-	.604***	-			
3. SES	6.27	1.549	-.069	-.122	-		
4. Credibility of the source	18.03	6.599	-.112	-.053	-.006	(.882)	
5. Beliefs in FCB	19.24	6.069	-.137	-.072	.012	.846***	(.847)
6. GCBS	45.47	11.022	-.062	-.041	-.024	.545***	.517***

Note. SES: Socioeconomic Status, FCB: Fictitious Conspiracy Beliefs, GCBS: Generic Conspiracist Beliefs Scale. *** $p < .001$.

Source: Author

2.2.4. Attention Check Analysis

To control the attention of the participants during the experiment, an attention check was run with one question. The results showed that 72,1% ($N = 147$) of the participants remembered the narratives (sources' income situation) successfully, whereas 54 people could not remember the narratives/income situation of the sources.

While analyzing the attention check, the people who remembered the income situation were coded as true, and the others were coded as false. It is important to note that there is an interaction between conditions and attention check results. Considering this interaction, a chi-square test was run. According to the results, attention did not differ significantly by the condition, $\chi^2(1, N = 201) = .000, p = .985$. Also, it is important to look at the frequencies based on the interaction. In the control condition, there were 76 participants who remembered the narrative, while 71 people were in the income condition. However, 28 people in the control condition could not remember the narrative correctly, while 26 participants could not remember in income condition.

2.2.5. Independent Samples T-Test Analysis

2.2.5.1 Sources' credibility

To test the effects of the experiment on the sources' credibility, it was planned that an independent samples t-test analysis would be run to compare the means of conditions. Because of the normality results of scales, Welch's Test was conducted for comparison of the conditions. The results indicated that there was a significant difference between the groups, $t(199) = -2.22, p = .027$, Cohen's $d = -0.313$. The sources in the income condition ($M = 19.1, SD = 6.19$) were more credible than the control condition ($M = 17.0, SD = 6.84$).

2.2.5.2 Beliefs in FCB

To see the effects of experimental manipulation on beliefs in FCB, Welch's Test was conducted. The results demonstrated that the participants of the income condition ($M = 20.4, SD = 5.37$) significantly believed more when compared to the control condition ($M = 18.2, SD = 6.51$), $t(196) = -2.56, p = .011$, Cohen's $d = -0.360$.

As both of Welch's Tests show that the experimental manipulation worked on the levels of sources' credibility and beliefs in FCB. All the Welch's t-test results can be seen in Table 2.3. In addition to these, two more Welch's Tests were run to compare sources' credibility and beliefs in FCB scores of conditions by using the data of only remembered correctly in the attention check analysis. Due to having similar results, you can see all the results in Appendix 8.

2.2.1. The Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA)

The next step of the analysis procedure, ANCOVA was conducted to check the effects of GCBS scores as a covariate variable. As aforementioned, FCB were believed more in the income condition when compared to the control group. However, this difference was not significant, $F(1) = 1.298, p = .077, \eta p^2 = .016$. Additionally, the results of ANCOVA demonstrated that GCBS was significantly associated with belief in FCB, $F(1, 198) = 73.339, p < .001, \eta p^2 = .270$. After controlling for the effects of GCBS scores, it can be said that the manipulation did not have a significant effect on beliefs in FCB. In addition to this, there was no significant effect of the experiment on the scores of beliefs in FCB after controlling for the effect of GCBS scores, $F(1, 198) = 3.156, p = .077, \eta p^2 = .016$. All the results can be seen in Table 2.4.

Table 2.3. Differences Between Conditions on Sources' Credibility and Beliefs in FCB

	Income		Control		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
Credibility of the sources	19.1	6.19	17.0	6.84	199	-2.22	.027	-0.313
Beliefs in FCB	20.4	5.37	18.2	6.51	196	-2.56	.011	-0.360

Note. FCB: Fictitious Conspiracy Beliefs.

Source: Author

2.2.2. The Mediation Effect of Sources' Credibility

As the last step of the analysis procedure in Study 1, mediation analysis was run to see the effect of credibility levels on the relationship between the experimental manipulation and beliefs in FCB. The mediation analysis was conducted by using the GLM Mediation Model with Bias Corrected Bootstrap in Jamovi Software (Version 2.3.28). As the results demonstrated that there was a significant indirect effect of

experimental manipulation on beliefs in FCB through sources' credibility, $B = 1.583$, $SE = .062$, $\beta = 0.131$, 95% CI [0.231, 2.844], $p = .020$. However, the direct effect of experimental manipulation on the belief level was not statistically significant, $B = 0.565$, $SE = 0.463$, $\beta = 0.047$, 95% CI [-0.326, 1.497], $p = .222$. These results indicated that the relationship between experimental manipulation and beliefs in FCB was fully mediated by sources' credibility. Please, look at Figure 2.1. to see the mediational model of the study, and all the mediation analysis results can be seen in Table 2.5.

Table 2.4. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Summary Table

Dependent variable: Beliefs in FCB.

Source	SS	df	MS	F	<i>p</i>	ηp^2
GCBS	1928.450	1	1928.450	73.339	.000	.270
Experiment conditions	82.976	1	82.976	3.156	.077	.016
Error	5206.392	198	26.295			
Total	7366.537	201				

Note. GCBS: Generic Conspiracist Beliefs Scale.

Source: Author

2.2.3. The Moderating Effect of SES

To determine whether SES levels influence the relationship between the experimental manipulation and sources' credibility, a moderation analysis was conducted. The results showed no significant interaction between the conditions and SES, $b = .372$, 95% CI [1.090, 1.835], $t = 0.503$, $p = .616$. Therefore, the connection between the experiment and sources' credibility levels was not affected by participants' SES levels. Please, see Appendix 9 for the moderation table and simple slopes plot, which display the relationship between the experiment and sources' credibility across SES in Study 1.

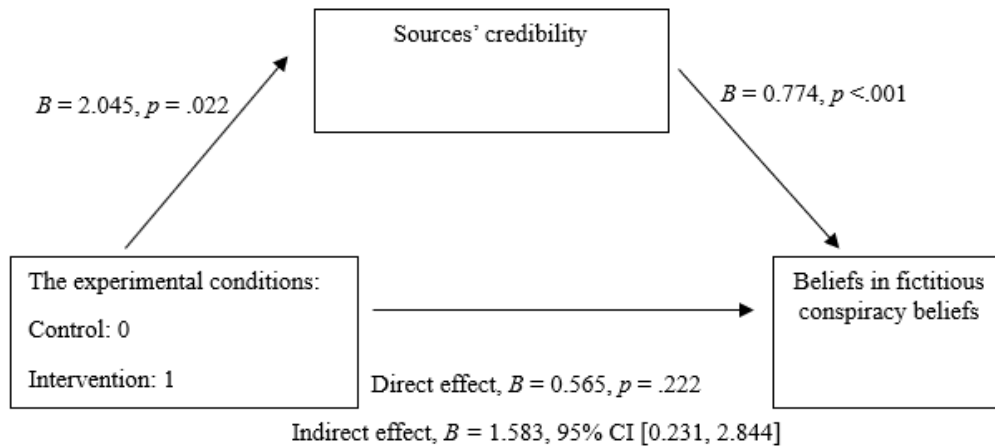


Figure 2.1. The Mediation Model of Study 1.

Source: Author

Table 2.5. The Direct and Indirect Effects of the Experiment on Beliefs in FCB

Type	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI		β	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>			
Indirect- Credibility	1.583	0.682	0.231	2.844	0.131	2.32	.020
Direct	0.565	0.463	-0.326	1.497	0.047	1.22	.222
Total	2.149	0.875	0.445	3.790	0.177	2.46	.014

Source: Author

2.2.4. The Moderating Effect of GCBS

To examine the moderating effect of GCBS on the relationship between the experiment and beliefs in FCB, a moderation analysis was conducted. The results showed no significant moderating effect of GCBS on the relationship between the experiment and beliefs in FCB, $b = .083$, 95% CI [-0.239, 0.073], $t = -1.057$, $p = .292$. You can find the moderation table and simple slopes plot that illustrate the relationship between the experiment and beliefs in FCB at different GCBS levels in Appendix 10.

2.3. Discussion

The results of the Welch tests indicated that the experimental manipulation was effective, producing significant effects on both the perceived credibility of the sources and participants' beliefs in FCB. However, there is a critical point regarding the direction of these effects. Although the manipulation influenced the variables, the observed relationships differed from the initial hypotheses.

First, it was hypothesized that sources in the control condition would be perceived as more credible than those in the income condition. Contrary to this expectation, participants rated sources with income as more credible than volunteer sources. Therefore, H1 was not supported.

Second, it was expected that participants in the control condition would report higher levels of belief in FCB, whereas the income group would exhibit lower belief levels. Similar to the credibility results, participants in the income condition demonstrated stronger beliefs in FCB than those in the control condition. Consequently, H2 was not supported.

Mediation analyses revealed that the perceived credibility of the sources mediated the relationship between the experimental conditions and beliefs in FCB items. As hypothesized in H3, the effect of the experimental conditions on participants' FCB beliefs was mediated by source credibility. Thus, H3 was supported. These findings suggest that participants believed in the FCB of sources with income because these sources were perceived as more credible.

Lastly, two different moderation analyses were conducted as exploratory analyses. The results indicated that there were no significant moderation effects of either SES or GCBS on the relationships between various variables. The first analysis showed that the relationship between the experiment and the credibility of sources did not differ across different levels of participants' SES. Additionally, it was observed that the relationship between the experimental manipulation and beliefs in FCB levels did not depend on participants' different GBS levels.



3. CHAPTER: STUDY 2

3.1. Method

3.1.1. Participants

Similar to Study 1, the number of participants was calculated by G*Power (Faul et al., 2007). G*Power estimation gave the number of participants as at least 620 for an independent samples t-test analysis with a small effect size Cohen's $d = .20$, power = .80, and alpha = 0.05. Therefore, it was aimed to recruit 620 participants who would respond to the survey in Study 2. The data was collected for fifteen days. After fifteen days, the number of participants was 300. A sensitivity analysis was conducted to assess the adequacy of the sample size. The results indicated that the study was sufficiently powered (power = .80, $\alpha = .05$) to detect effects as small as $d = 0.29$, corresponding to a small-to-medium effect size. This suggests that Study 2 was capable of identifying effects of practical relevance, although very small effects may still have remained undetected.

For several reasons, the data of some participants were removed. In more detail, 4 participants did not sign the consent form (in Appendix 11), while one participant was not older than 18 years old. Hereby, the sample size of Study 2 was 295. Like in Study 1, an incentive was used. Amazon Gift Cards which priced at 500 TRY, were given to 10 participants who were selected from the sample. The information about the sample will be given in the Descriptive Statistics section below in more detail.

3.1.2. Materials

3.1.2.1 The experiment

In Study 2, there were two different conditions -the income and the control- the same as Study 1. Before the survey, different narratives were given before the questions. There were two differences in Study 2 from Study 1. The first one is the dependent variable. The credibility of the sources was not measured at this time; sources' warmth and the competency levels were measured as dependent variables. In addition, the

statements (items of the FCB subscale) were presented one by one after the narratives. The narratives were given just at the beginning of the survey. For this reason, the participants could not see the explanations and the narratives while rating the FCB items.

Both Study 1 and Study 2 had two experimental conditions: income and control. With some differences, the studies were similar to each other. The experimental manipulations (explanations and narratives) were the same. However, the dependent variables differed from Study 1. The sources' credibility was removed, and the warmth and competency levels of the sources were measured after the experimental manipulations. The belief level of the statement (items of FCB subscale) was measured in both Study 1 and Study 2. In Study 2, the explanations and the narratives were presented to the participants, and then it was asked to rate each item based on the warmth and competency level of the source and the belief level in the statements (FCB items).

In the income condition of Study 2, the narratives for the manipulation were the same as Study 1. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the narrative of the income condition was given to the participants on the first page. After that, FCB items were presented one by one in different pages of the survey. With each item, warmth and competency, and belief questions were asked on the same page.

For the control condition, the narratives for the experimental manipulation were the same as Study 1. Like the income condition of Study 2, the dependent variables of the study were presented on the same page as the FCB items.

3.1.2.2 The Fictitious Conspiracy Beliefs subscale items

Because of the same reasons in Study 1, the FCB subscale of the Fictitious Epistemically Suspect Beliefs (Alper et al., 2025) was used to rate the items after the experimental manipulation.

3.1.2.3 The warmth and competency levels of the conspiracy theories' sources

Study 2 has three dependent variables. First of all, it was the warmth level of the conspiracy theories' source. To measure the competency levels of the sources, just one question was asked of the participants. The question was adapted for this study from different Stereotype Content Model research (like Cuddy et al., 2007; Fiske et al.,

2002). It was as “*According to you, how competent and skillful is the person who claimed this statement?*”. This question was ranked from 1 (*Not competent or skillful at all*) to 5 (*Completely competent and skillful*). The Cronbach’s α is .855 for 8 competency items.

The second dependent variable of the study is the warmth levels of the sources of conspiracy theories. It was measured by the question, “*According to you, how warm and sincere is the person who claimed this statement?*”. Also, this question was adapted for the paper, like the competency question. The participant answered the question on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*Not warm and sincere at all*) to 5 (*Completely warm and sincere*). The Cronbach α coefficient is .887, which indicates it is highly reliable.

3.1.2.4 The beliefs in the FCB

The participants were asked to rate their beliefs in FCB. All the details are the same as Study 1. The narratives of the conditions, the FCB subscale, and the questions can be seen in Appendix 12 (income condition) and Appendix 13 (control condition). For eight items, the reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s α) is .820, which shows it is highly reliable.

3.1.2.5 Attention check

To check the participants’ attention during the experimental manipulation attention check question was presented after the experiment. The question was the same in Study 1, and it can be seen in Appendix 14.

3.1.2.6 The Generic Conspiracist Beliefs Scale

As mentioned in Study 1, it is important to know the participants’ predisposition to believe in conspiracy theories for the same reasons. To understand their tendency, the Turkish version (Alper et al., 2021) of The GCBS (Brotherton et al., 2023) was used. The Cronbach’s α is .922 for 15 items. These items can be reached from Appendix 15.

3.1.2.7 Demographic questionnaire

The same demographic form in Study 1 was used to collect participants' information, like gender, age, education level, and SES. The questionnaire is presented in Appendix 16.

3.1.3. Procedure

The data of Study 2 was collected online by using Qualtrics. The survey link was shared on different social media accounts of the author and the supervisor. The incentive was used for participation; Amazon Gift Cards with 500 TRY were given to 10 participants from the sample. First of all, the consent form was shown, which consisted of different information about the study, such as the aim of the survey, data privacy policy, and contact information. The confirmation was needed to rank the survey. The participants who did not confirm were taken to the last page (thank you page) of the survey. Following the consent form, the experimental manipulation narratives were shown. The participants were assigned to one of the conditions by the Qualtrics randomization tool. After that, the FCB subscale (Alper et al., 2025) items were presented to rated based on three questions, one by one. The items and the three questions were shown page by page. The questions were about belief levels in the item, warmth, and competency levels of the sources. After this, an attention check question was asked. Following these, the Turkish version of the GCBS (Alper et al., 2021) was given to the participants. The final page was about the demographic questionnaire. On the last page, it was thanked for their participation.

3.1.4. Data Analyses

For analyses of Study 2, descriptive statistics, reliability, and normality analyses for all the scales, correlation analysis between variables, and attention check analysis were conducted. Followingly, three independent samples t-test analyses were run to compare the two experimental groups of the study. After these, ANCOVA were run to see the effects of GCBS as a covariate, like Study 1. After these, mediation analysis was run to check the effects of warmth and competency levels on the relationship between the experiment and the beliefs in FCB. Lastly, to explore the moderating effects of SES on the relationship between the experiment and sources' competency and warmth levels, two moderation analyses were conducted same manner as Study 1. Additionally, another moderation analysis was performed to evaluate the effect of GCBS on the relationship between the experiment and beliefs in FCB. Like Study 1, IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 25.0) and Jamovi Software (Version 2.3.28) were used for all the analyses.

3.2. The Results of Analysis

3.2.1. Descriptive Statistics

To see the different characteristics of the sample, descriptive statistics were run. According to the results, 143 participants were female (48.5%), whereas 152 participants were male. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 75 ($M = 34.41$, $SD = 11.432$). Participants' education levels were from primary school ($N = 1$, 3%) to a doctorate degree ($N = 22$, 11.2%). Their SES ranged from 1 to 10, similar to Study 1 ($M = 5.46$, $SD = 1.629$). The sample was divided into two experimental conditions; 148 participants were assigned to the control condition, while 147 were in the income condition. All descriptive information can be found in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Descriptive Statistics

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender			
Female	143		
Male	152		
Education			
Primary school	1		
High school	40		
Associate degree	7		
Bachelor's degree	147		
Master's degree	67		
Doctorate degree	33		
Age	295	34.41	11.432
Socioeconomic Status	295	5.46	1.629

Source: Author

3.2.2. Correlational Analyses Among Variables

The next statistical analyses were conducted to see correlations among the variables. Similar to Study 1, it is important to emphasize that the variables did not distribute normally, except for GCBS (You can reach all normality results from Appendix 17). For this reason, correlational analysis was run by Spearman Correlation (Spearman, 1961). The results showed that there were some statistically significant relationships between the variables in Study 2. First of all, GCBS was positively correlated with belief in FCB ($r = .671, p < .001$), warmth level ($r = .391, p < .001$), and competency level of the sources ($r = .557, p < .001$). Secondly, beliefs in FCB were negatively related to SES ($r = -.121, p = .022$) while positively related to both competency ($r = .792, p < .001$) and warmth ($r = .598, p < .001$) levels of the sources. The third significant correlation was between the variables of warmth and competency levels of the sources, $r = .633, p < .001$. Please, see Table 3.2. for all the correlations in Study 2.

Additionally, to examine whether the strength of the correlations differed significantly, a test of dependent correlations was conducted. The results indicated that the correlation between sources' competency and beliefs in FCB ($r = .792$) was significantly stronger than the correlation between sources' warmth and beliefs in FCB ($r = .598$), $z = 6.093, p < .001$. This finding suggests that the sources' competency was more closely related to beliefs in FCB than the sources' warmth in this sample.

3.2.3. Attention Check Analysis

To check whether the participants remembered the income of the sources correctly, an attention check question was shown right after the experimental manipulation. The results demonstrated that 67,8 % ($N = 200$) of the participants could remember the narratives about the sources' income, while 95 of them could not remember the narratives.

Similar to Study 1, considering conditions and attention check results interaction, a chi-square test was run. As the results showed that participants' attention were significantly different across conditions, $X^2(1, N = 295) = .8.445, p = .004$. Also, it is important to look at the frequencies based on the interaction. In the control condition, there were 112 participants who remembered the narrative, while 88 people were in

the income condition. Also, there were 36 people who could not remember in the control condition, while there were 59 participants in the income condition.

Table 3.2. Descriptive Statistics and Spearman Correlation Among Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Age	34.41	11.432	-					
2.Education	-	-	.298**	-				
3.SES	5.46	1.629	-.125*	.290**	-			
4.Competency of the sources	15.34	5.370	-.018	-.045	-.101			
5.Warmth of the sources	16.14	5.580	-.079	-.086	-.050	.633***		
6.Beliefs in FCB	15.55	4.906	-.080	-.075	-.121*	.792***	.598***	
7.GCBS	41.06	11.762	.001	-.076	-.076	.557***	.391***	.671***

Note. SES: Socioeconomic Status, FCB: Fictitious Conspiracy Beliefs, GCBS: Generic Conspiracist Beliefs Scale. * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$.

Source: Author

3.2.4. Independent Samples T-Test Analyses

3.2.4.1 Competency levels of the sources

To compare the sources' competency levels based on experimental conditions groups, it was planned that an independent t-test analysis would be run. However, it is important to note that Welch's Test was conducted because of the normality results similar to Study 1. According to the results, there was no significant difference between sources' competency scores of the groups, $t(293) = 0.809$, $p = .419$. Despite this non-significant difference, the sources in the income condition ($M = 15.1$, $SD = 5.45$) were less competent than the control condition ($M = 15.6$ $SD = 5.29$).

3.2.4.2 Warmth levels of the sources

The second Welch's Test was conducted to see the difference between the sources' warmth levels. The results showed that the sources in the control condition ($M = 16.5$, $SD = 5.69$) were warmer than income condition ($M = 15.8$, $SD = 5.29$), whereas this difference was not statistically significant, $t(293) = 0.969$, $p = .333$, $d = 0.113$.

3.2.4.3 Beliefs in FCB

The last Welch's test was run to see the difference between conditions' beliefs in FCB. As the Welch's Test indicated that there was not a significant difference ($t(292) = 0.065$, $p = .949$, $d = 0.008$) between the income ($M = 15.5$, $SD = 4.77$) and the control group's beliefs levels ($M = 15.6$, $SD = 5.05$).

As these three Welch's tests results indicated that the experiment did not work well to manipulate the participants in Study 2. Also, all the results of Welch's Tests can be found in Table 3.3. Due to having similar results, you can see all the results in Appendix 18.

3.2.5. The Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA)

The next analysis of the statistical procedure in Study 2, ANCOVA was run to check the effects of GCBS as a covariate variable. According to the results of ANCOVA, GCBS was significantly associated with beliefs in FCB, $F(1, 292) = 240.635$, $p < .05$, $\eta p^2 = .452$. Besides that, it was seen that the experiment did not have any significant effect on the beliefs in FCB, after controlling for the effect of GCBS ($F(1, 292) = .646$, $p = .422$, $\eta p^2 = .002$). Additionally, the participants in the income believed in FCB more than the control group, even though this difference was not statistically significant, $F(1) = .646$, $p = .422$, $\eta p^2 = .002$. The results indicated that the experimental manipulation did not affect beliefs in FCB, after controlling for the effects of GCBS. All the results can be reached from Table 3.4.

3.2.6. The Mediation Effect of Sources' Competency and Warmth

The last analysis of Study 2 was running a mediation analysis to understand the effect of warmth and competency scores on the relationship between the experiment and beliefs in FCB. The analysis was conducted by GLM Mediation Model in Jamovi Software (Version 2.3.28), like Study 1. The mediation analysis results showed that there was a non-significant indirect effect of experiment on beliefs in FCB though

neither warmth levels of the sources ($B = -0.091$, $SE = 0.112$, $\beta = -0.009$, 95% CI [-0.447., 0.046], $p = .426$) nor competency levels of the sources ($B = -0.319$, $SE = 0.401$, $\beta = -0.033$, 95% CI [-1.108, 0.435], $p = .418$). Similarly, there was not a significant direct effect of the experiment on beliefs in FCB, $B = 0.373$, $SE = 0.331$, $\beta = -0.004$, 95% CI [-1.174, 0.975], $p = .947$. The results indicated that there were no indirect or direct effects of the experiment on beliefs in FCB. The mediational model of Study 2 can be seen in Figure 3.1. And all the mediation analysis results can be reached from Table 3.5.

Table 3.3. Differences Between Conditions on Warmth, Competency Levels, and Beliefs in FCB

	Income		Control		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
Competency levels of the sources	15.1	5.29	15.6	5.45	293	.809	.419	.094
Warmth levels of the sources	15.8	5.47	16.5	5.69	293	.969	.333	.113
Beliefs in FCB	15.5	4.77	15.6	5.05	292	.065	.949	.008

Note. FCB: Fictitious Conspiracy Beliefs.

Source: Author

3.2.7. The Moderating Effect of SES

Similar to Study 1, two moderation analyses were conducted to examine whether SES moderated the relationship between the experimental condition and perceptions of sources' competence and warmth. The results indicated that participants' SES did not significantly moderate the relationship between the experiment and competence levels, $b = 0.839$, 95% CI [-0.090, 1.768], $t = 1.782$, $p = .076$. Likewise, SES did not significantly moderate the relationship between the experiment and warmth levels, $b = 0.899$, 95% CI [-0.097, 1.894], $t = 1.781$, $p = .077$. You can see Appendix 19 for the

tables, and the simple slopes provide further illustration of how different SES levels relate to the experiment’s effect on perceptions of both competence and warmth.

3.2.8. The Moderating Effect of GCBS

As a final step in Study 2, a moderation analysis was conducted to examine whether GCBS moderated the relationship between the experimental condition and beliefs in FCB. The results indicated that GCBS did not significantly moderate this relationship, $b = 0.009$, 95% CI [-0.090, 0.106], $t = 0.173$, $p = .863$. The results table and the simple slope figure illustrating this analysis can be found in Appendix 20.

Table 3.4. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Summary Table
Dependent variable: Beliefs in FCB.

Source	SS	df	MS	F	<i>p</i>	ηp^2
GCBS	3196.331	1	3196.331	240.635	.000	.452
Experiment conditions	8.586	1	8.586	.646	.422	.002
Error	3878.605	292	13.283			
Total	78399.000	295				

Note. GCBS: Generic Conspiracist Beliefs Scale, FCB: Fictitious Conspiracy Beliefs.

Source: Author

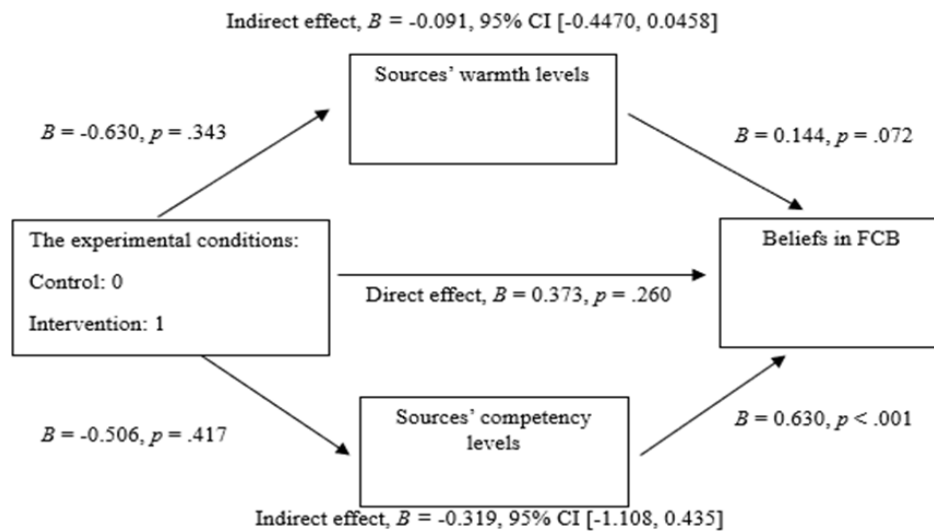


Figure 3.1. The Mediation Model of Study 2.

Source: Author

Table 3.5. The Direct and Indirect Effects of the Experiment on Beliefs in FCB

Type	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI		β	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>			
Indirect- Competency	-0.319	0.401	-1.108	0.435	-0.033	-0.796	.426
Indirect- Warmth	-0.091	0.112	-0.447	0.046	-0.009	-0.810	.418
Direct	0.373	0.331	-0.269	1.028	0.038	1.126	.260
Total	-0.037	0.559	-1.174	0.975	-0.004	-0.066	.947

Source: Author

3.3. Discussion

As in Study 1, a series of Welch tests were conducted to compare the experimental groups across different variables. First, the results indicated that the competency levels of sources with income were lower than those of volunteer sources; however, this difference was not statistically significant. Therefore, H4 was not supported.

Second, the analysis revealed no significant differences in sources' warmth levels across the conditions, mirroring the results for competency. It had been hypothesized that volunteer sources would be perceived as warmer than sources with income. Thus, H5 was not supported.

In addition to Study 1, participants' beliefs in FCB were compared across conditions using a Welch test. The results demonstrated no significant differences in FCB scores between conditions, consistent with the findings for competency and warmth. For this reason, H6 was not supported.

Moreover, H7 proposed that sources' warmth and competency would mediate the relationship between the experimental conditions and participants' beliefs in FCB. However, mediation analyses indicated that neither competency nor warmth significantly mediated this relationship. Consequently, H7 was not supported.

Overall, the moderation analyses indicated that neither SES nor GCBS had significant moderating effects. Specifically, the relationship between the experiment and perceptions of sources' competence and warmth did not vary across SES levels. Likewise, consistent with the findings of Study 1, the relationship between the experiment and beliefs in FCB did not differ by GCBS levels.

4. CHAPTER: GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

4.1. Summary and Interpretation of the Results

As mentioned in previous chapters, there are many different kinds of antecedents to believe in conspiracy theories. It is vital to know and understand why people believe in conspiracy theories when considering the consequences.

Similar to the antecedents, there are various serious and critical consequences (mostly negative) both at the individual and social levels across different areas such as politics (Douglas, 2021), health-related behaviors and attitudes (Douglas, 2021), personal health (Jolley et al., 2022; K1sa & K1sa, 2025; Kroke & Ruthig, 2021), decreased trust in science and scientists (Constantinou et al., 2021; Pummerer et al., 2022; Vranić et al., 2022), denial of climate change (Biddlestone et al., 2022; Chan et al., 2023; Nöth & Zander, 2025), relations between groups (Jolley et al., 2022) etc. For instance, people who believe in general conspiracy theories and COVID-19-related conspiracy theories hesitate to get the vaccine (Devine et al., 2024). Taking all of these into consideration, it is highly critical to understand the ways of believing in conspiracy theories and to prevent the spread and support of such beliefs. To understand the reasons for having conspiracy beliefs, researchers have been studying the antecedents and the predictors. In the literature, the psychological predictors are existential, social, and epistemic and thousands of studies have examined these antecedents (Douglas et al., 2019).

Another critical predictor is the source of conspiracy theories, conspiracy theorists. In the literature, a limited number of studies investigated the association between the characteristics of conspiracy theorists and conspiracy beliefs. Looking at the features of conspiracy theorists, their credibility can be important for conspiracy beliefs. In similar areas, the credibility affected the believability of the sources. The more credible the sources are, the more likely to people are believe in their information, messages, etc. (Berlo et al., 1969; Einsend, 2024; Gauchat, 2011, 2012; Hass, 1981; Hovland & Weiss; 1951; Luchok & McCroskey, 1978; Nadelson et al., 2014; Pornpitakpan, 2004; Sternthal et al., 1978). Also, some researchers (Berlo et al., 1969; Flanagan & Metzger,

2020; Hovland, 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Marquart et al., 1995; McCallum et al., 1991; Ohanian, 1990, 1991; Wiener, 1986) divided credibility into 2 parts: trustworthiness and expertise similar to Stereotype Content Model dimensions (Fiske et al., 2002; Fiske, 2018), which suggests that people are looking for the signs of warmth and competency of people and groups while they are assessing them for anything (trust in them, cooperation with them).

However, a main question in the literature has been: why are some people perceived as more credible than others? One of the answers is having income. The literature provides the information that having income decreases trustworthiness and credibility while increasing the competency levels of sources (Durante et al., 2017; Fiske et al., 2002; Tao et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2018). Considering all the things, this thesis examined the relationship between having income and the credibility of conspiracy theorists in Study 1 and Study 2.

First of all, the results of Study 1 showed that having income was related to the credibility of sources. However, this association was not in the expected direction. Surprisingly, the sources with income were perceived as more credible than the volunteer sources. These experimental findings were inconsistent with the literature. According to the prior research, people who have the money are perceived as less credible due to the conflicts of interest (de Melo-Martín & Intemann, 2018; Fernández Pinto, 2020; Friedman & Richter, 2004, 2005; Oreskes & Conway, 2010; Proctor, 2011; Resnik & Elliott, 2013). People do not trust these sources because they think that their information is biased due to their profit (de Melo-Martín & Intemann, 2018; Friedman & Richter, 2004, 2005). These inconsistent findings of Study 1 can be explained by several reasons.

To begin with, people's assessments of the sources' credibility depend on evaluations of the credibility dimensions: expertise, and trustworthiness (Berlo et al., 1969; Flanagin & Metzger, 2020; Hovland, 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Marquart et al., 1995; McCallum et al., 1991; Ohanian, 1990, 1991; Wiener, 1986). These dimensions influence perceived credibility levels of sources in different ways. For instance, some sources could be perceived as more trustworthy while others as more expert (Wiener & Mowen, 1986; Yang & Beatty, 2016). Variations of trustworthiness and expertise aspects might influence the credibility perceptions of the participants. Moreover, the

sources could be perceived as expert due to their income. People might assume that the sources are earning money via these social media contents; therefore, they should be experts. Thus, the sources who had income were perceived as more credible than the volunteer sources.

Similar to the results of credibility comparison of the conditions, people who knew that sources had income believed in FCB items more than the people who knew that the sources were volunteer. The results for beliefs in FCB were inconsistent with the previous findings. People tend to be concerned about the conflicts of interest of sources when the sources are earning money (de Melo-Martín & Intemann, 2018; Fernández Pinto, 2020; Friedman & Richter, 2004, 2005; Oreskes & Conway, 2010; Proctor, 2011; Resnik & Elliott, 2013). This is because such information is thought to be biased due to the income (de Melo-Martín & Intemann, 2018; Friedman & Richter, 2004, 2005). In spite of these expected results, there are still some explanations to understand the reasons why people believed in FCB items from sources who had income. First of all, the credibility of messages/information might not depend on the sources, the information could be trusted or believed on its own (Hsieh & Li, 202; Westerwick et al., 2013). Before discussing potential explanations for beliefs in FCB difference, it is necessary to examine the mediational effect of sources' credibility on the relationship between the experiment and belief levels in FCB. The findings indicated that the relationship between the experimental conditions and beliefs in FCB was fully mediated by the sources' credibility. These results partially align with the prior findings, while contradicting others. The results are supported by the different studies because the information and messages were more believed when the people perceived the sources as highly credible. In a similar vein, the participants believed in FCB via their sources' credibility perception. However, these mediation effects can be found when the sources do not have income (de Melo-Martín & Intemann, 2018; Friedman & Richter, 2004, 2005). The messages or information were believed if the sources were not funded, commercialized or did not have conflicts of interest (de Melo-Martín & Intemann, 2018; Fernández Pinto, 2020; Friedman & Richter, 2004, 2005; Oreskes & Conway, 2010; Proctor, 2011; Resnik & Elliott, 2013). This is because these sources were perceived as more credible. Therefore, their information and messages were more effective. These mixed findings might be reached because of the credibility aspects, trustworthiness, and expertise. Having income might be

perceived as more expert in the study. Previous findings can support this explanation for the results. Because, the sources are perceived as credible when they are perceived as expert (Willemsen et al., 2012). Having money through a profession can be associated with being perceived as an expert. The FCB items could be believed because of the expert sources.

In short, the reason for the inconsistent findings of the study could be related to the different aspects of credibility. Trustworthiness and expertise can lead to being or not being a credible source. These aspects were similar to the two dimensions of SCM. Because both of the credibility aspects and SCM dimensions were measured by using the adjectives that are associated. For example, Fiske et al. (2002) showed that being friendly, being trustworthiness are related to being warmth while the different studies (Berlo et al., 1969; Eisend, 2006; Flanagin & Metzger, 2020; Hovland, 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Marquart et al., 1995; McCallum et al., 1991; Ohanian, 1990, 1991; Wiener, 1986; Whitehead, 1968) showed that being trustworthiness associated with being credible. In the same vein, credibility researchers also suggested that being expert or perceived as expert was related to being credible (Berlo et al., 1969; Eisend, 2006; Flanagin & Metzger, 2020; Hovland, 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Marquart et al., 1995; McCallum et al., 1991; Ohanian, 1990, 1991; Wiener, 1986; Whitehead, 1968) and the similarity can be seen in the SCM theory. Because Fiske et al. (2002) and Fiske (2018) showed that having status, power are related to being perceived as competent. Based on the similarity and the results of Study 1, the relationship between having income and dimensions of SCM were examined in Study 2. Considering the findings of Study 1 and the literature of credibility and SCM theory, it was expected that the sources who had income would be perceived as more competent, whereas the sources who do not have income would be perceived as warmer.

As the second experiment of the thesis, the findings of Study 2 were surprisingly inconsistent with the literature. The findings of the competency comparison showed that there was no significant difference between experimental conditions. In Study 2, it was hypothesized that the sources who had income were perceived as more competent whereas the results did not support the hypothesis. The findings were surprising because most of the findings of other studies (Durante et al., 2017; Fiske et al., 2002; Tao et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2018) showed that having money is linked to

being competent. People may perceive the sources who had income as competent because having income may signal being an expert.

These inconsistent findings can be explained by the way the experimental questions was presented. Each item of the FCB was presented individually during the experiment, whereas the narratives providing information about the sources' income were shown at the beginning. For this reason, the participants may have forgotten whether the source was a volunteer or had income. Considering this issue, competency variables were analyzed again after eliminating the scores of the people who could not remember the condition. However, the analysis results showed that the difference in competence scores was not statistically significant.

In the experiment, the narratives emphasized that the sources were sharing diverse content on various social media platforms such as X, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, etc. This aspect can affect participants' assessments of the sources' competencies. Perceiving an expert and/or competent source depends on the various factors on social media platforms (Broussard et al., 2013; Hamshaw et al., 2019). These factors can be listed as professional background, experience of individuals, and behaviors on online platforms. Furthermore, there is a difference between expertise on social media and expertise in traditional contexts. Expertise on social media was perceived as less credible by the undergraduate students (Broussard et al., 2013). Considering these additional factors, like background and previous experiences, the only information about the sources' money might not be sufficient to perceive them as competent.

Similar to the competency results, the warmth levels of the sources did not differ across the experimental conditions. However, it was hypothesized that volunteer sources would be perceived as warmer than the others. Volunteering may align with being more friendly, more helpful, etc., which are related to being warm as defined by SCM (Fiske et al., 2002; Fiske, 2018). As a potential explanation, the participants could not remember the narratives that informed them about the sources' money. Taking this into account, the analysis was repeated after excluding the data of participants who forgot the sources' income condition. The results of this analysis demonstrated that the volunteer sources were warmer than the others, as supported by previous findings.

One of the findings of Study 2, the relationship between the experiment and the beliefs in FCB was not mediated by the sources' warmth levels or the competency levels of

the sources. These results might be explained by the way of presenting narratives are presented and the questions. The participants may have failed to remember the narratives while responding to the belief questions.

An alternative explanation for the observed results is that participants' SES might shape their perceptions of the sources' credibility, competence, and warmth across conditions. This consideration stems from evidence suggesting that individuals' income levels influence how they evaluate information sources. For example, Fareed et al. (2021) reported that low- and middle-income individuals seek health-related information less frequently than high-income individuals and exhibit lower trust in these sources. Likewise, participants' wealth may affect their judgments regarding others' competence and warmth (Chan et al., 2011). Guided by this reasoning, we examined the potential moderating role of SES in both Study 1 and Study 2. The results, however, indicated that participants' SES did not significantly alter the relationships between experimental conditions and the sources' perceived credibility, competence, or warmth.

Briefly, all tense results from both Welch test, mediation ana moderation analysis were inconsistent with the literature. Different factors may have contributions to the findings. For example, being young (Bordeleau & Stockemer, 2024; Byrne et al., 2024; Duplaga, 2020; Galliford, 2017) and having a low level of education (Bogart & Bird 2003; Douglas et al., 2016; Duplaga, 2020; Goertzel 1994; Mancosy et al., 2017; Oliver and Wood, 2014; Usckinski & Parent, 2014; van Prooijen, 2017) are related to believing in conspiracy theories. As mentioned in the results chapters, most of the participants were young and most of them were college students during the experiment. Moreover, the ANCOVA results can support the findings of FCB beliefs for both studies. In Study 1 and Study 2, ANCOVA results indicated that there was no significant difference between FCB scores of experimental groups after controlling for GCBS. As aforementioned, some people tend to believe in conspiracy theories (Brotherton et al., 2013; Douglas et al., 2019; Goertzel, 1994; Imhoff & Bruder, 2014; Moscovici, 1987; Uscinski & Parent, 2014; Wood et al., 2012). In both Study 1 and Study 2, beliefs in FCB items were positively correlated with GCBS. Beyond these correlation results, GCBS did not exhibit any moderating effect on the relationship between the experimental conditions and beliefs in FCB. These findings suggest that,

despite the significant correlations and its role as a covariate, the relationship between the experiment and FCB beliefs was not contingent upon participants' GCBS levels.

4.2. The Contributions of the Findings

This thesis makes several contributions to the literature on conspiracy beliefs. First, it examined the characteristics of conspiracy theorists, such as credibility and income. Although numerous studies have investigated source credibility, income, and their effects, the credibility of conspiracy theorists has been examined in only one study (Madison et al., 2019). Understanding the effects of conspiracy theorists' features, including their credibility and income, on beliefs in conspiracy theories—even fictitious ones—is important because conspiracy beliefs are associated with various detrimental outcomes. For example, conspiracy beliefs have been linked to hesitancy toward preventive behaviors, such as those related to COVID-19 and the anti-vaccination movement (Devine et al., 2024). Additionally, people who endorse conspiracy theories may doubt climate change-related behaviors (Biddlestone et al., 2022; Douglas & Sutton, 2015; Tyagi & Carley, 2021). By understanding these effects, individuals, academics, researchers, governments, scientists, and policymakers can take actions to reduce conspiracy beliefs and their social and individual consequences.

The second contribution of this thesis relates directly to the experimental findings, even though the results did not fully support the hypotheses. As discussed in the introduction, the literature reports inconsistent findings regarding source credibility (Eisend, 2004; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Jakob, 2008). This thesis aimed to shed light on these debated results, particularly in the context of sources' income. From this perspective, the thesis provides a modest contribution to the literature.

The third contribution concerns the experimental manipulations. Douglas et al. (2019) emphasized the need for more experimental studies in the conspiracy beliefs literature. The scarcity of experimental research is problematic because it limits understanding of the causal mechanisms underlying why people believe in conspiracy theories and how such beliefs can be reduced. As noted by Douglas et al. (2019), most studies on conspiracy beliefs are correlational and therefore cannot determine exact causal relationships.

Finally, this thesis integrates multiple research areas, including conspiracy beliefs, persuasion and information processing, trust, credibility, and the Stereotype Content Model (SCM). Identifying the commonalities and overlaps among these areas allows for a deeper understanding of the antecedents and consequences of conspiracy beliefs. Notably, the dimensions of credibility and SCM theory overlap: SCM emphasizes warmth and competence, while credibility involves trustworthiness and expertise. These aspects are crucial in determining whether a source is trusted. Integrating these perspectives provides a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between these concepts and their outcomes.

4.3. Limitations and Future Directions

In spite of the contributions, this thesis still has various limitations. First limitation is about the design of the studies. Douglas et al. (2019) advised that more experimental and longitudinal studies should be conducted in conspiracy theories research. The experiments of Study 1 and Study 2 have several limitations. For example, online survey tools were used for the experiments. The participants were randomly assigned to the conditions by the randomization tool of Qualtrics. The experiment context might be enhanced by using a laboratory setting with an experiment room, the researcher, etc. Besides that, Douglas et al. (2019) also emphasized that more longitudinal studies should be conducted to understand conspiracy beliefs. In the thesis, Study 1 and Study 2 recruited different participants. It is suggested that Study 2 could be conducted with the same sample as Study 1. This longitudinal study can allow a more precise examination of the influences of variables on credibility and beliefs in FCB items. Moreover, the time effect on the design could be investigated. For instance, the credibility of the sources decreased over time because people forget the sources while they remember the information itself (Hovland & Weiss, 1951).

Another limitation concerns that the materials of the experiments might be different. The narratives in the experiments may not have a sufficient effect on the participants. It is suggested that the different materials, such as videos, podcasts, etc., could be used in future studies. These materials can be more effective in manipulating the participants during the experiments. Additionally, all the statements can be presented in different ways, such as a media, an image, a poster that shows a YouTube video, X or Instagram platform posts. In this way, manipulation could be more effective and

persuasive. Text-based materials might have limited effects in the studies. For instances, features such as gender, race (Choi et al., 2025), and representation of faces (Imhoff et al., 2013) were effective on perceptions of SCM dimensions. Additionally, face recognition was important for sources' credibility (Brown et al., 2002; Chen et al., 2010; Karduni et al., 2023). Also, it is important to note that different social media platforms can affect conspiracy beliefs in different ways; YouTube and Facebook were linked to increased conspiracy beliefs while X (Twitter) did not have the same association with conspiracy beliefs (Stecula & Pickup, 2021; Theocharis et al., 2021). Such as Facebook and YouTube, TikTok and Snapchat (Nugent et al., 2025) are related to endorsement of conspiracy beliefs and low levels of getting vaccinated where Instagram is linked to high levels of vaccinated. Considering this, future experiments could be replicated to examine the effects of social media platforms. Narratives can differ through the conditions of the experiments. Different narratives could emphasize specific platforms to examine whether the social media platforms have effects on people's conspiracy beliefs and sources' credibility levels.

The third limitation of this thesis is that the majority of participants in both Study 1 and Study 2 were university students from İzmir. This homogeneity is particularly important to consider when interpreting the results, as it may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations within Türkiye or internationally. The demographic characteristics of the samples, including age, education, and SES, were relatively similar across the studies. Additionally, the sample sizes in both studies were modest, and sensitivity analyses indicated that small effects could not be reliably detected in either Study 1 or Study 2. Future research should aim to include larger, more diverse, and representative samples to enhance the robustness and generalizability of the findings.

A further suggestion for future research is to examine and compare the distinct effects of income and funding. While previous studies in the literature have often focused on the effects of funding or the differences between types of funding, this thesis concentrated on the income of the sources. It is plausible that funding and personal income may influence perceptions of a source's credibility, competence, and warmth in different ways, and future studies could explore these potential distinctions.

Lastly, lack of trust in general is related to conspiracy beliefs (Dyrendal & Hestad, 2021; Goertzel, 1994; Jennings et al., 2021; Stojanov & Douglas, 2021). Some individuals tend to believe in conspiracy theories. Therefore, measurement of general trust is important as a covariate to control and eliminate its effects when examining the relationship between credibility and conspiracy beliefs. Additionally, political ideology (Bruder et al., 2013; Galliford & Furnham, 2017; Grzesiak-Feldman & Irzycka, 2009; Mancosu et al., 2017; Miller et al., 2016; van Prooijen et al., 2015) and religiosity (Douglas et al., 2016; Newheiser et al., 2011) are important factors for conspiracy beliefs. These variables should be measured and used as covariates when examining the relationship between credibility and conspiracy beliefs. All of these suggestions could improve the understanding of conspiracy beliefs, sources' credibility, and their various relationships. Attending to these suggestions can benefit social psychology literature across different subfields in the future.

4.4. Conclusion

In conclusion, several key points emerge from the literature on conspiracy theories and beliefs. One of these is the role of conspiracy theorists themselves. To understand why people believe in conspiracy theories and how such beliefs might be reduced, it is essential to examine the characteristics of conspiracy theorists. Income status is one such characteristic that can influence perceptions of a source's credibility. Source credibility, in turn, may affect individuals' beliefs in conspiracy theories. Moreover, the main dimensions of the Stereotype Content Model (SCM)—warmth and competence—may play important roles in shaping these beliefs. This thesis demonstrated that these three factors are crucial for addressing new questions and gaining a deeper understanding of conspiracy beliefs, as evidenced by two experimental studies. Nevertheless, future research is needed to further explore the associations between conspiracy theorists' characteristics and conspiracy beliefs.

5. REFERENCES

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. INFORMED CONSENT FORM AND CONSENT QUESTION-STUDY 1

Bu çalışma, Yaşar Üniversitesi Psikoloji Bölümü Yüksek Lisans tezi kapsamında Doç. Dr. Sinan ALPER danışmanlığında, Gülben BAĞLİCAKOĞLU tarafından yürütülmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, belirli koşullarda belirli anlatımlara inancınıza dair bilgi toplamaktır. Çalışma kapsamında kişisel bilgileriniz istenmeyecektir. Çalışmada sorulara verdiğiniz yanıtlar gizli tutulacak; veriler sadece bilimsel amaçlar doğrultusunda kullanılacaktır. Çalışmaya katılım gönüllülük esasına dayanmakta olup çalışma kapsamında, sizlere rahatsızlık verecek sorulara yer verilmemiştir; ancak yine de herhangi bir rahatsızlık duymanız durumunda çalışmadan istediğiniz zaman ayrılabilirsiniz.

Katılımınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Daha fazla bilgi için Gülben BAĞLİCAKOĞLU (*****@gmail.com) ile iletişime geçebilirsiniz.

(ÖNEMLİ NOT: Formu cep telefonunuzdan dolduruyorsanız telefonunuzu yatay konuma getirerek tüm seçenekleri ekrana sığdırabilirsiniz.)

Yukarıda okuduğunuz bilgilendirme doğrultusunda;

Çalışmaya katılmayı,

- Onaylıyorum.
- Onaylamıyorum.



APPENDIX 2. FICTITIOUS CONSPIRACY BELIEFS ITEMS IN INCOME CONDITION-STUDY 1

Aşağıda, son zamanlarda farklı sosyal medya platformlarında, farklı kullanıcılar tarafından paylaşılan bazı bilgiler sunulmaktadır. Sizden istenilen, aşağıda bulunan her ifadeyi dikkatli bir şekilde okumanız ve ilgili soruları cevaplamanızdır.

"Aşağıda okuyacağınız ifadelerin her biri farklı kişiler tarafından farklı sosyal medya platformlarında (Instagram, Youtube, X, Facebook, Tiktok, vb.) paylaşılmıştır. Bu kişiler, sosyal medya paylaşımları sayesinde yılda yaklaşık 1 milyon Dolar gelir elde etmektedir."

	Bu ifadeyi paylaşan kişi sizin için ne kadar güvenilir? (1-Kesinlikle güvenilir değil, 5-Kesinlikle güvenilir)	Bu ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur? (1-Kesinlikle yanlış, 5-Kesinlikle doğru)
ABD'de, zengin ailelerin büyük bir kaos durumunda hayatta kalmasını sağlamak amacıyla, Xioya isimli gizli yer altı şehri inşa edilmiştir.		
1890'lı yıllarda, Fransa'da işçilerin patronlara karşı daha uysal olmasını sağlamak amacıyla bazı toz kimyasallar fabrika		

bacaları vasıtasıyla havaya karıştırılmıştır.		
Bazı güçlü ülkeler, diğer ülkelerin tarım faaliyetlerine zarar vererek ekonomik kriz yaşanmasını sağlamak amacıyla, o ülkelerin tarım alanlarına laboratuvarlarda üretilmiş robot sinekler ile saldırılar düzenlemektedir.		
Hindistan ve Pakistan tüm Asya'yı egemenlikleri altına almalarını sağlayacak gizli bir kitle imha silahı üzerinde beraber çalıştıklarını gizlemek için, birbirlerine düşmanmış gibi davranmaktadır.		
Orta Asya'daki boy ortalamasının dünya geneline göre kısa olma sebebi, Çin'in 1940'lı yıllarda Orta Asya'da kısa boy geni üzerinde yürüttüğü deneylerdir.		
İsviçreli bilim insanları, belirli aralıklarla		

<p>atmosfere kimyasal gazlar salınımını sağlayarak canlıların evrimleşme sürecini istedikleri gibi yönlendirmektedirler.</p> <p>Artık birçok insanın yirmilik dışının çıkmama sebebi budur.</p>		
<p>1960'larda büyük ilaç şirketleri, evlere sipariş edilen yemeklere çeşitli kimyasallar karıştırarak gizli bir deney yürütmüşlerdir.</p>		
<p>Güney Kore, bölgede kendisini koruyan ABD askeri varlığının devam etmesini sağlamak için Kuzey Kore'ye gizli şekilde askeri teknolojilere dair istihbarat vermektedir.</p>		



APPENDIX 3. FICTITIOUS CONSPIRACY BELIEFS ITEMS IN CONTROL CONDITION-STUDY 1

<p>Aşağıda, son zamanlarda farklı sosyal medya platformlarında, farklı kullanıcılar tarafından paylaşılan bazı bilgiler sunulmaktadır. Sizden istenilen, aşağıda bulunan her ifadeyi dikkatli bir şekilde okumanız ve ilgili soruları cevaplamanızdır.</p> <p><u>"Aşağıda okuyacağınız ifadelerin her biri farklı kişiler tarafından farklı sosyal medya platformlarında (Instagram, Youtube, X, Facebook, Tiktok, vb.) paylaşılmıştır. Bu kişiler, sosyal medya paylaşımları sayesinde herhangi bir gelir elde etmemektedir; bu işi tamamıyla gönüllü bir şekilde yapmaktadırlar."</u></p>		
	<p>Bu ifadeyi paylaşan kişi sizin için ne kadar güvenilirdir? (1-Kesinlikle güvenilir değil, 5-Kesinlikle güvenilir)</p>	<p>Bu ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur? (1-Kesinlikle yanlış, 5-Kesinlikle doğru)</p>
<p>ABD'de, zengin ailelerin büyük bir kaos durumunda hayatta kalmasını sağlamak amacıyla, Xioya isimli gizli yer altı şehri inşa edilmiştir.</p>		
<p>1890'lı yıllarda, Fransa'da işçilerin patronlara karşı daha uysal olmasını sağlamak amacıyla bazı toz kimyasallar fabrika</p>		

bacaları vasıtasıyla havaya karıştırılmıştır.		
Bazı güçlü ülkeler, diğer ülkelerin tarım faaliyetlerine zarar vererek ekonomik kriz yaşanmasını sağlamak amacıyla, o ülkelerin tarım alanlarına laboratuvarlarda üretilmiş robot sinekler ile saldırılar düzenlemektedir.		
Hindistan ve Pakistan tüm Asya'yı egemenlikleri altına almalarını sağlayacak gizli bir kitle imha silahı üzerinde beraber çalıştıklarını gizlemek için, birbirlerine düşmanmış gibi davranmaktadır.		
Orta Asya'daki boy ortalamasının dünya geneline göre kısa olma sebebi, Çin'in 1940'lı yıllarda Orta Asya'da kısa boy geni üzerinde yürüttüğü deneylerdir.		
İsviçreli bilim insanları, belirli aralıklarla		

<p>atmosfere kimyasal gazlar salınımını sağlayarak canlıların evrimleşme sürecini istedikleri gibi yönlendirmektedirler.</p> <p>Artık birçok insanın yirmilik dışının çıkmama sebebi budur.</p>		
<p>1960'larda büyük ilaç şirketleri, evlere sipariş edilen yemeklere çeşitli kimyasallar karıştırarak gizli bir deney yürütmüşlerdir.</p>		
<p>Güney Kore, bölgede kendisini koruyan ABD askeri varlığının devam etmesini sağlamak için Kuzey Kore'ye gizli şekilde askeri teknolojilere dair istihbarat vermektedir.</p>		



APPENDIX 4. ATTENTION CHECK QUESTION-STUDY 1

Bir önceki sayfada okuduğunuz ifadeleri iddia eden kişilerin kazanç durumları nedir?

- Yılda yaklaşık 1 milyon Dolar kazanmaktadır.
- Bir kazancı yoktur; gönüllü yapmaktadır.





APPENDIX 5. GENERIC CONSPIRACIST BELIEFS SCALE- STUDY 1

<p><u>Bazı önemli konularda halka bütün gerçeklerin anlatılıp anlatılmadığı hakkında sık sık tartışmalar ortaya çıkmaktadır. Aşağıda bu konuların bazılarına ilişkin çeşitli görüşler yer almaktadır.</u></p>	
<p>Lütfen aşağıdaki her bir görüşün <u>size göre gerçek olma ihtimalinin</u> ne kadar olduğunu belirtiniz.</p> <p>(1: Kesinlikle gerçek değil; 5: Kesinlikle gerçek)</p>	
	<p>Lütfen aşağıdaki her bir görüşün <u>size göre gerçek olma ihtimalinin</u> ne kadar olduğunu belirtiniz.</p> <p>(1: Kesinlikle gerçek değil; 5: Kesinlikle gerçek)</p>
Birçok önemli bilgi kasıtlı olarak, kişisel çıkarlar amacıyla halktan gizlenmektedir.	
Bazı hastalık veya virüsler, gizli örgütler tarafından kasıtlı olarak yayılmaktadır.	
Devlet, kendi çıkarlarını korumak için topraklarında gerçekleşen terörist eylemlere müsamaha gösterir.	
Şu anki endüstriye zarar verebilecek yeni ve gelişmiş teknolojiler gizli tutulmaktadır.	
Savaş çıkarmak gibi dünyayla ilgili bütün büyük kararları küçük, gizli bir grup insan almaktadır.	

<p>Zihin kontrolü gibi yüksek teknolojiler, insanlar farkına bile varmadan üzerlerinde kullanılmaktadır.</p>	
<p>Uzaylılarla iletişime geçildiğine dair kanıtlar halktan gizlenmektedir.</p>	
<p>Devlet masum vatandaşların ve/veya tanınmış ünlü kişilerin ölümünden sorumludur ve bunları gizlemektedir.</p>	
<p>Gizli kurumlar uzaylılarla iletişim halindeler fakat bu bilgiyi halktan gizli tutuyorlar.</p>	
<p>Devlet dahil olduğu suçları saklamak için insanları kurban olarak kullanmaktadır.</p>	
<p>Bazı UFO görüntüleri ve dedikoduları, halkın dikkatini uzaylılarla gerçekte olan iletişimden uzaklaştırmak için planlanmakta ve sahnelenmektedir.</p>	
<p>Devletin sahip olduğu güç, aslında dünyayı yöneten küçük ve bilinmeyen bir grubun kontrolü altındadır.</p>	
<p>Yeni ilaç ve teknolojik deneyler rutin olarak, halkın izni ve haberleri olmadan, onlar üzerinde yapılmaktadır.</p>	
<p>Bazı önemli olaylardan, dünyadaki olayları gizlice manipüle eden küçük bir grup sorumludur.</p>	

Bir grup bilim insanı, halkı kandırmak için kanıtları deęiřtirmekte, kanıtlar uydurmakta veya var olan kanıtları gizlemektedir.	
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APPENDIX 6. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE-STUDY 1

Yaşınız.

Cinsiyetiniz.

- Kadın
- Erkek
- Diğer:

En son tamamladığınız eğitim seviyesi nedir?

- İlkokul
- Ortaokul
- Lise
- Ön lisans
- Lisans
- Yüksek lisans
- Doktora

Aşağıdaki merdivenin Türkiye'deki insanların ekonomik açıdan bulunduğu seviyeyi temsil ettiğini düşünün.

Merdivenin tepesindekiler (10) her şeyin en iyisine (en çok paraya, en iyi eğitime ve en saygın mesleklere) sahip insanlardır. Merdivenin en altındakiler (1) ise en kötü koşullara (en az paraya, en az eğitime ve en az saygın mesleklere) sahip insanlardır. Merdivende daha yüksek bir konuma sahip olmanız en tepedeki insanlara daha yakın olduğunuz, daha aşağıda olmanız ise en alttaki insanlara daha yakın olduğunuz anlamına gelmektedir. Bu merdivende kendinizi hangi konuma yerleştirirdiniz?





APPENDIX 7. NORMALITY TESTS RESULTS-STUDY 1

To see whether the dataset was distributed normally, normality tests were run for the variables. First of all, the sample size of Study 1 ($N = 201$) is larger than 50; the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results were investigated. According to the results, the sources' credibility ($D(201) = .064$, $p = .043$), beliefs in FCB ($D(201) = .073$, $p = .010$), age ($D(201) = .237$, $p < .001$), gender ($D(201) = .491$, $p < .001$), education ($D(201) = .418$, $p < .001$) and SES ($D(201) = .186$, $p < .001$) did not have normal distributions. However, GCBS was normally distributed ($D(201) = .044$, $p = .200$).

In addition to these normality results, one more normality test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) was run considering two groups of participants. For the income condition; the variables of GCBS ($D(97) = .095$, $p = .031$), age ($D(97) = .275$, $p < .001$), gender ($D(97) = .494$, $p < .001$), education ($D(97) = .438$, $p < .001$) and SES ($D(97) = .191$, $p < .001$) did not distribute normally. In contrast, the variables of sources' credibility ($D(97) = .064$, $p = .200$) and beliefs in FCB ($D(97) = .074$, $p = .200$), had normal distributions. Besides all of these for the control condition, sources' credibility ($D(104) = .093$, $p = .028$), beliefs in FCB ($D(104) = .099$, $p = .014$), age ($D(104) = .206$, $p < .001$), gender ($D(104) = .490$, $p < .001$), education ($D(104) = .398$, $p < .001$) and SES ($D(104) = .182$, $p < .001$) did not show normal distributions. However, GCBS ($D(104) = .076$, $p = .159$) distributed normally in the control condition.



APPENDIX 8. WELCH'S TESTS RESULTS BY USING ONLY TRUES IN ATTENTION CHECK-STUDY 1

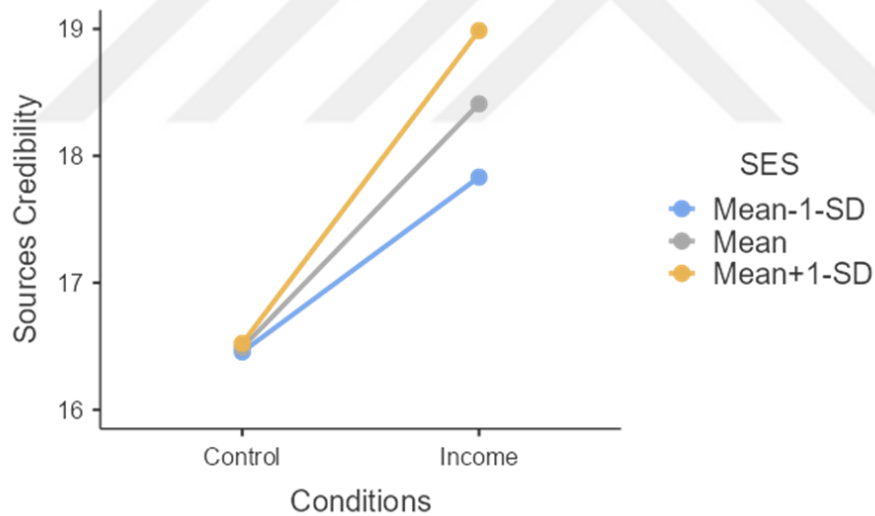
For Study 1, two more Welch's Tests were run to compare the sources' credibility and beliefs in FCB scores between conditions by using only the data of people who remembered the narrative correctly. Firstly, the results indicated that there was no significant difference between the conditions, $t(145) = -1.84, p = .068$, Cohen's $d = -0.304$. Besides that, the sources in the income condition ($M = 18.5, SD = 6.32$) were more credible than the control condition ($M = 16.5, SD = 6.62$).

Similarly, one more Welch's Test was conducted to compare beliefs in FCB scores. The results demonstrated that the participants in the income condition ($M = 20.3, SD = 5.37$) significantly believed in FCB more than the people in the control condition ($M = 18.2, SD = 6.01$), $t(145) = -2.26, p = .025$, Cohen's $d = -0.373$.



APPENDIX 9. THE MODERATING EFFECT OF SES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EXPERIMENT AND SOURCES' CREDIBILITY-STUDY 1

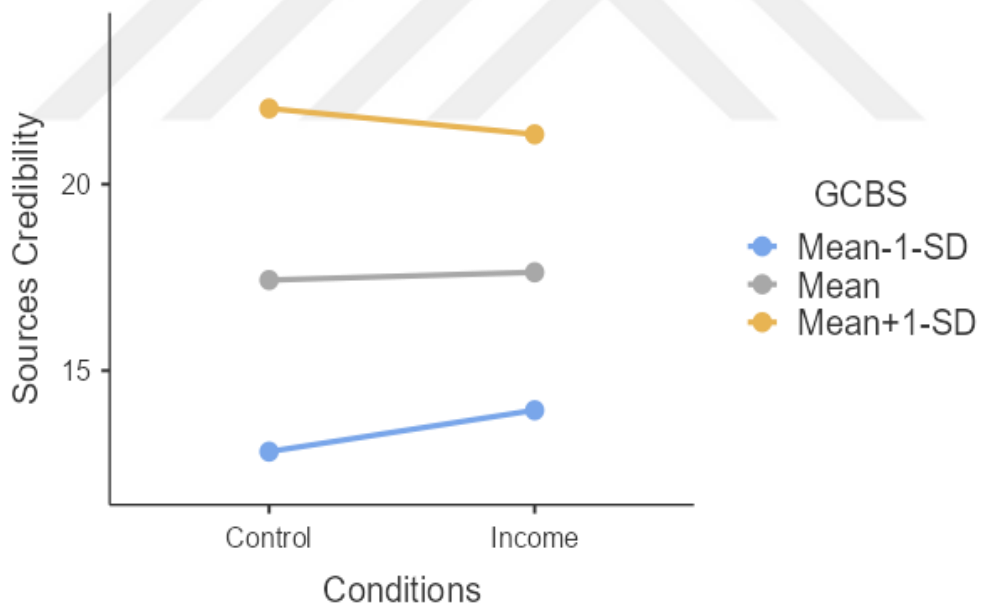
Effect	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>		
Constant	17.449	0.538	16.385	18.513	32.415	.001
SES	0.209	0.370	-0.525	0.941	0.566	.572
The Experiment	1.921	1.077	-0.207	4.049	1.784	.077
SES*The Experiment	0.372	0.740	-1.090	1.835	0.503	.616





APPENDIX 10. THE MODERATING EFFECT OF GCBS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EXPERIMENT AND BELIEFS IN FCB

Effect	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>		
Constant	17.565	0.435	16.694	18.375	41.2422	.001
GCBS	0.383	0.039	0.305	0.461	9.727	.001
The Experiment	0.208	0.850	-1.473	1.889	0.245	.807
GCBS*The Experiment	0.083	0.079	-0.239	0.073	1.057	.292





APPENDIX 11. INFORMED CONSENT FORM AND CONSENT QUESTION-STUDY 2

Bu çalışma, Yaşar Üniversitesi Psikoloji Bölümü Yüksek Lisans tezi kapsamında Doç. Dr. Sinan ALPER danışmanlığında, Gülben BAĞLİCAKOĞLU tarafından yürütülmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, belirli koşullarda belirli anlatımlara inancınıza dair bilgi toplamaktır. Çalışma kapsamında kişisel bilgileriniz istenmeyecektir. Çalışmada sorulara verdiğiniz yanıtlar gizli tutulacak; veriler sadece bilimsel amaçlar doğrultusunda kullanılacaktır. Çalışmaya katılım gönüllülük esasına dayanmakta olup çalışma kapsamında, sizlere rahatsızlık verecek sorulara yer verilmemiştir; ancak yine de herhangi bir rahatsızlık duymanız durumunda çalışmadan istediğiniz zaman ayrılabilirsiniz.

Çalışmayı tamamlayan tüm katılımcılar arasından kura ile seçilecek 10 kişiye 500 TL değerinde Amazon (amazon.com.tr) hediye çeki verilecektir. Gerçekleştirilecek kuraya katılımınız e-posta yoluyla sağlanacağı için, çalışmanın sonunda e-posta adresinizi belirtmeyi unutmayınız.

Katılımınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Daha fazla bilgi için Gülben BAĞLİCAKOĞLU (*****@gmail.com) ile iletişime geçebilirsiniz. (ÖNEMLİ NOT: Formu cep telefonunuzdan dolduruyorsanız telefonunuzu yatay konuma getirerek tüm seçenekleri ekrana sığdırabilirsiniz.)

Yukarıda okuduğunuz bilgilendirme doğrultusunda; Çalışmaya katılmayı,

- Onaylıyorum.
- Onaylamıyorum.



APPENDIX 12. FICTITIOUS CONSPIRACY BELIEFS ITEMS IN INCOME CONDITION-STUDY 2

Birazdan okuyacağınız ifadeler, son zamanlarda farklı sosyal medya platformlarında, farklı kullanıcılar tarafından paylaşılan bazı bilgiler içermektedir. Sizden istenilen, her ifadeyi dikkatli bir şekilde okumanız ve ilgili soruları cevaplamanızdır.

"Okuyacağınız ifadelerin her biri farklı kişiler tarafından farklı sosyal medya platformlarında (Instagram, Youtube, X, Facebook, Tiktok, vb.) paylaşılmıştır. Bu kişiler, sosyal medya paylaşımları sayesinde yılda yaklaşık 1 milyon Dolar gelir elde etmektedir."

1. ABD'de, zengin ailelerin büyük bir kaos durumunda hayatta kalmasını sağlamak amacıyla, Xioya isimli gizli yer altı şehri inşa edilmiştir.

Yukarıda okuduğunuz ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur? (1: Kesinlikle yanlış, 5: Kesinlikle doğru)

- 1-Kesinlikle yanlış
- 2-Yanlış
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Doğru
- 5-Kesinlikle doğru

Size bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar yetkin ve beceriklidir?

- 1-Hiç yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 2-Yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Yetkin ve becerikli
- 5-Kesinlikle yetkin ve becerikli

Size bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar sıcakkanlı ve samimidir?

- 1-Hiç sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 2-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi
- 5-Kesinlikle sıcakkanlı ve samimi

2. 1890'lı yıllarda, Fransa'da işçilerin patronlara karşı daha uysal olmasını sağlamak amacıyla bazı toz kimyasallar fabrika bacaları vasıtasıyla havaya karıştırılmıştır.

Yukarıda okuduğunuz ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur? (1: Kesinlikle yanlış, 5: Kesinlikle doğru)

- 1-Kesinlikle yanlış
- 2-Yanlış
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Doğru
- 5-Kesinlikle doğru

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar yetkin ve beceriklidir?

- 1-Hiç yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 2-Yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Yetkin ve becerikli
- 5-Kesinlikle yetkin ve becerikli

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar sıcakkanlı ve samimidir?

- 1-Hiç sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 2-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi
- 5-Kesinlikle sıcakkanlı ve samimi

- 3. Bazı güçlü ülkeler, diğer ülkelerin tarım faaliyetlerine zarar vererek ekonomik kriz yaşanmasını sağlamak amacıyla, o ülkelerin tarım alanlarına laboratuvarlarda üretilmiş robot sinekler ile saldırılar düzenlemektedir.**

Yukarıda okuduğunu ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur? (1: Kesinlikle yanlış, 5: Kesinlikle doğru)

- 1-Kesinlikle yanlış
- 2-Yanlış
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Doğru
- 5-Kesinlikle doğru

Sizece bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar yetkin ve beceriklidir?

- 1-Hiç yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 2-Yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Yetkin ve becerikli
- 5-Kesinlikle yetkin ve becerikli

Sizece bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar sıcakkanlı ve samimidir?

- 1-Hiç sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 2-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi
- 5-Kesinlikle sıcakkanlı ve samimi

- 4. Hindistan ve Pakistan tüm Asya'yı egemenlikleri altına almalarını sağlayacak gizli bir kitle imha silahı üzerinde beraber çalıştıklarını gizlemek için, birbirlerine düşmanmış gibi davranmaktadır.**

Yukarıda okuduğunu ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur?

- 1-Kesinlikle yanlış
- 2-Yanlış
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Doğru
- 5-Kesinlikle doğru

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar yetkin ve beceriklidir?

- 1-Hiç yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 2-Yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Yetkin ve becerikli
- 5-Kesinlikle yetkin ve becerikli

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar sıcakkanlı ve samimidir?

- 1-Hiç sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 2-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi
- 5-Kesinlikle sıcakkanlı ve samimi

5. Orta Asya'daki boy ortalamasının dünya geneline göre kısa olma sebebi, Çin'in 1940'lı yıllarda Orta Asya'da kısa boy geni üzerinde yürüttüğü deneylerdir.

Yukarıda okuduğunu ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur?

- 1-Kesinlikle yanlış
- 2-Yanlış
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Doğru

- 5-Kesinlikle doğru

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar yetkin ve beceriklidir?

- 1-Hiç yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 2-Yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Yetkin ve becerikli
- 5-Kesinlikle yetkin ve becerikli

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar sıcakkanlı ve samimidir?

- 1-Hiç sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 2-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi
- 5-Kesinlikle sıcakkanlı ve samimi

6. İsviçreli bilim insanları, belirli aralıklarla atmosfere kimyasal gazlar salınımını sağlayarak canlıların evrimleşme sürecini istedikleri gibi yönlendirmektedirler. Artık birçok insanın yirmilik dişinin çıkmama sebebi budur.

Yukarıda okuduğunu ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur?

- 1-Kesinlikle yanlış
- 2-Yanlış
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Doğru
- 5-Kesinlikle doğru

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar yetkin ve beceriklidir?

- 1-Hiç yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 2-Yetkin ve becerikli değil

- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Yetkin ve becerikli
- 5-Kesinlikle yetkin ve becerikli

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar sıcakkanlı ve samimidir?

- 1-Hiç sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 2-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi
- 5-Kesinlikle sıcakkanlı ve samimi

7. 1960'larda büyük ilaç şirketleri, evlere sipariş edilen yemeklere çeşitli kimyasallar karıştırarak gizli bir deney yürütmüşlerdir.

Yukarıda okuduğunu ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur?

- 1-Kesinlikle yanlış
- 2-Yanlış
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Doğru
- 5-Kesinlikle doğru

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar yetkin ve beceriklidir?

- 1-Hiç yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 2-Yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Yetkin ve becerikli
- 5-Kesinlikle yetkin ve becerikli

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar sıcakkanlı ve samimidir?

- 1-Hiç sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 2-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil

- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi
- 5-Kesinlikle sıcakkanlı ve samimi

8. Güney Kore, bölgede kendisini koruyan ABD askeri varlığının devam etmesini sağlamak için Kuzey Kore'ye gizli şekilde askeri teknolojilere dair istihbarat vermektedir.

Yukarıda okuduğunu ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur?

- 1-Kesinlikle yanlış
- 2-Yanlış
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Doğru
- 5-Kesinlikle doğru

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar yetkin ve beceriklidir?

- 1-Hiç yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 2-Yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Yetkin ve becerikli
- 5-Kesinlikle yetkin ve becerikli

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar sıcakkanlı ve samimidir?

- 1-Hiç sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 2-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi
- 5-Kesinlikle sıcakkanlı ve samimi



APPENDIX 13. FICTITIOUS CONSPIRACY BELIEFS ITEMS IN CONTROL CONDITION-STUDY 2

Birazdan okuyacağınız ifadeler, son zamanlarda farklı sosyal medya platformlarında, farklı kullanıcılar tarafından paylaşılan bazı bilgiler içermektedir. Sizden istenilen, her ifadeyi dikkatli bir şekilde okumanız ve ilgili soruları cevaplamanızdır.

"Okuyacağınız ifadelerin her biri farklı kişiler tarafından farklı sosyal medya platformlarında (Instagram, Youtube, X, Facebook, Tiktok, vb.) paylaşılmıştır. Bu kişiler, sosyal medya paylaşımları sayesinde herhangi bir gelir elde etmemektedir; bu işi tamamıyla gönüllü bir şekilde yapmaktadırlar."

1. ABD'de, zengin ailelerin büyük bir kaos durumunda hayatta kalmasını sağlamak amacıyla, Xioya isimli gizli yer altı şehri inşa edilmiştir.

Yukarıda okuduğunuz ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur? (1: Kesinlikle yanlış, 5: Kesinlikle doğru)

- 1-Kesinlikle yanlış
- 2-Yanlış
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Doğru
- 5-Kesinlikle doğru

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar yetkin ve beceriklidir?

- 1-Hiç yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 2-Yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Yetkin ve becerikli
- 5-Kesinlikle yetkin ve becerikli

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar sıcakkanlı ve samimidir?

- 1-Hiç sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 2-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi
- 5-Kesinlikle sıcakkanlı ve samimi

2. 1890'lı yıllarda, Fransa'da işçilerin patronlara karşı daha uysal olmasını sağlamak amacıyla bazı toz kimyasallar fabrika bacaları vasıtasıyla havaya karıştırılmıştır.

Yukarıda okuduğunu ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur? (1: Kesinlikle yanlış, 5: Kesinlikle doğru)

- 1-Kesinlikle yanlış
- 2-Yanlış
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Doğru
- 5-Kesinlikle doğru

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar yetkin ve beceriklidir?

- 1-Hiç yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 2-Yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Yetkin ve becerikli
- 5-Kesinlikle yetkin ve becerikli

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar sıcakkanlı ve samimidir?

- 1-Hiç sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 2-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi
- 5-Kesinlikle sıcakkanlı ve samimi

- 3. Bazı güçlü ülkeler, diğer ülkelerin tarım faaliyetlerine zarar vererek ekonomik kriz yaşanmasını sağlamak amacıyla, o ülkelerin tarım alanlarına laboratuvarlarda üretilmiş robot sinekler ile saldırılar düzenlemektedir.**

Yukarıda okuduğunu ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur? (1: Kesinlikle yanlış, 5: Kesinlikle doğru)

- 1-Kesinlikle yanlış
- 2-Yanlış
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Doğru
- 5-Kesinlikle doğru

Size bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar yetkin ve beceriklidir?

- 1-Hiç yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 2-Yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Yetkin ve becerikli
- 5-Kesinlikle yetkin ve becerikli

Size bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar sıcakkanlı ve samimidir?

- 1-Hiç sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 2-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi
- 5-Kesinlikle sıcakkanlı ve samimi

- 4. Hindistan ve Pakistan tüm Asya'yı egemenlikleri altına almalarını sağlayacak gizli bir kitle imha silahı üzerinde beraber çalıştıklarını gizlemek için, birbirlerine düşmanmış gibi davranmaktadır.**

Yukarıda okuduğunu ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur?

- 1-Kesinlikle yanlış
- 2-Yanlış
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Doğru
- 5-Kesinlikle doğru

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar yetkin ve beceriklidir?

- 1-Hiç yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 2-Yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Yetkin ve becerikli
- 5-Kesinlikle yetkin ve becerikli

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar sıcakkanlı ve samimidir?

- 1-Hiç sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 2-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi
- 5-Kesinlikle sıcakkanlı ve samimi

5. Orta Asya'daki boy ortalamasının dünya geneline göre kısa olma sebebi, Çin'in 1940'lı yıllarda Orta Asya'da kısa boy geni üzerinde yürüttüğü deneylerdir.

Yukarıda okuduğunu ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur?

- 1-Kesinlikle yanlış
- 2-Yanlış
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Doğru

- 5-Kesinlikle doğru

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar yetkin ve beceriklidir?

- 1-Hiç yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 2-Yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Yetkin ve becerikli
- 5-Kesinlikle yetkin ve becerikli

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar sıcakkanlı ve samimidir?

- 1-Hiç sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 2-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi
- 5-Kesinlikle sıcakkanlı ve samimi

6. İsviçreli bilim insanları, belirli aralıklarla atmosfere kimyasal gazlar salınımını sağlayarak canlıların evrimleşme sürecini istedikleri gibi yönlendirmektedirler. Artık birçok insanın yirmilik dışının çıkmama sebebi budur.

Yukarıda okuduğunu ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur?

- 1-Kesinlikle yanlış
- 2-Yanlış
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Doğru
- 5-Kesinlikle doğru

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar yetkin ve beceriklidir?

- 1-Hiç yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 2-Yetkin ve becerikli değil

- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Yetkin ve becerikli
- 5-Kesinlikle yetkin ve becerikli

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar sıcakkanlı ve samimidir?

- 1-Hiç sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 2-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi
- 5-Kesinlikle sıcakkanlı ve samimi

7. 1960'larda büyük ilaç şirketleri, evlere sipariş edilen yemeklere çeşitli kimyasallar karıştırarak gizli bir deney yürütmüşlerdir.

Yukarıda okuduğunu ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur?

- 1-Kesinlikle yanlış
- 2-Yanlış
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Doğru
- 5-Kesinlikle doğru

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar yetkin ve beceriklidir?

- 1-Hiç yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 2-Yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Yetkin ve becerikli
- 5-Kesinlikle yetkin ve becerikli

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar sıcakkanlı ve samimidir?

- 1-Hiç sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 2-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil

- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi
- 5-Kesinlikle sıcakkanlı ve samimi

8. Güney Kore, bölgede kendisini koruyan ABD askeri varlığının devam etmesini sağlamak için Kuzey Kore'ye gizli şekilde askeri teknolojilere dair istihbarat vermektedir.

Yukarıda okuduğunu ifade sizin için ne kadar doğrudur?

- 1-Kesinlikle yanlış
- 2-Yanlış
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Doğru
- 5-Kesinlikle doğru

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar yetkin ve beceriklidir?

- 1-Hiç yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 2-Yetkin ve becerikli değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Yetkin ve becerikli
- 5-Kesinlikle yetkin ve becerikli

Sizce bu iddiada bulunan kişi ne kadar sıcakkanlı ve samimidir?

- 1-Hiç sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 2-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi değil
- 3-Kararsızım
- 4-Sıcakkanlı ve samimi
- 5-Kesinlikle sıcakkanlı ve samimi



APPENDIX 14. ATTENTION CHECK QUESTION-STUDY 2

Bir önceki sayfada okuduğunuz ifadeleri iddia eden kişilerin kazanç durumları nedir?

- Yılda yaklaşık 1 milyon Dolar kazanmaktadır.
- Bir kazancı yoktur; gönüllü yapmaktadır.





**APPENDIX 15. GENERIC CONSPIRACIST BELIEFS SCALE-
STUDY 2**

<p><u>Bazı önemli konularda halka bütün gerçeklerin anlatılıp anlatılmadığı hakkında sık sık tartışmalar ortaya çıkmaktadır. Aşağıda bu konuların bazılarına ilişkin çeşitli görüşler yer almaktadır.</u></p>	
<p>Lütfen aşağıdaki her bir görüşün <u>size göre gerçek olma ihtimalinin</u> ne kadar olduğunu belirtiniz.</p> <p>(1: Kesinlikle gerçek değil; 5: Kesinlikle gerçek)</p>	
	<p>Lütfen aşağıdaki her bir görüşün <u>size göre gerçek olma ihtimalinin</u> ne kadar olduğunu belirtiniz.</p> <p>(1: Kesinlikle gerçek değil; 5: Kesinlikle gerçek)</p>
Birçok önemli bilgi kasıtlı olarak, kişisel çıkarlar amacıyla halktan gizlenmektedir.	
Bazı hastalık veya virüsler, gizli örgütler tarafından kasıtlı olarak yayılmaktadır.	
Devlet, kendi çıkarlarını korumak için topraklarında gerçekleşen terörist eylemlere müsamaha gösterir.	
Şu anki endüstriye zarar verebilecek yeni ve gelişmiş teknolojiler gizli tutulmaktadır.	
Savaş çıkarmak gibi dünyayla ilgili bütün büyük kararları küçük, gizli bir grup insan almaktadır.	

Zihin kontrolü gibi yüksek teknolojiler, insanlar farkına bile varmadan üzerlerinde kullanılmaktadır.	
Uzaylılarla iletişime geçildiğine dair kanıtlar halktan gizlenmektedir.	
Devlet masum vatandaşların ve/veya tanınmış ünlü kişilerin ölümünden sorumludur ve bunları gizlemektedir.	
Gizli kurumlar uzaylılarla iletişim halindeler fakat bu bilgiyi halktan gizli tutuyorlar.	
Devlet dahil olduğu suçları saklamak için insanları kurban olarak kullanmaktadır.	
Bazı UFO görüntüleri ve dedikoduları, halkın dikkatini uzaylılarla gerçekte olan iletişimden uzaklaştırmak için planlanmakta ve sahnelenmektedir.	
Devletin sahip olduğu güç, aslında dünyayı yöneten küçük ve bilinmeyen bir grubun kontrolü altındadır.	
Yeni ilaç ve teknolojik deneyler rutin olarak, halkın izni ve haberleri olmadan, onlar üzerinde yapılmaktadır.	
Bazı önemli olaylardan, dünyadaki olayları gizlice manipüle eden küçük bir grup sorumludur.	

Bir grup bilim insanı, halkı kandırmak için kanıtları deęiřtirmekte, kanıtlar uydurmakta veya var olan kanıtları gizlemektedir.	
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APPENDIX 16. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE-STUDY 2

Yaşınız.

Cinsiyetiniz.

- Kadın
- Erkek
- Diğer:

En son tamamladığınız eğitim seviyesi nedir?

- İlkokul
- Ortaokul
- Lise
- Ön lisans
- Lisans
- Yüksek lisans
- Doktora

Aşağıdaki merdivenin Türkiye'deki insanların ekonomik açıdan bulunduğu seviyeyi temsil ettiğini düşünün. Merdivenin tepesindekiler (10) her şeyin en iyisine (en çok paraya, en iyi eğitime ve en saygın mesleklere) sahip insanlardır. Merdivenin en altındakiler (1) ise en kötü koşullara (en az paraya, en az eğitime ve en az saygın mesleklere) sahip insanlardır. Merdivende daha yüksek bir konuma sahip olmanız en tepedeki insanlara daha yakın olduğunuz, daha aşağıda olmanız ise en alttaki insanlara daha yakın olduğunuz anlamına gelmektedir. Bu merdivende kendinizi hangi konuma yerleştirirdiniz?





APPENDIX 17. NORMALITY TESTS RESULTS-STUDY 2

To test the normality distribution levels of the dataset, a series of normality tests were run. As similar Study 1, a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was run because of the sample size of Study 2 ($N = 195$). As the results investigated that competency level of the sources ($D(295) = .098, p < .001$), warmth level of the sources ($D(295) = .086, p < .001$), beliefs in FCB ($D(295) = .091, p < .001$), age ($D(295) = .114, p < .001$), gender ($D(295) = .349, p < .001$), education ($D(295) = .287, p < .001$) and SES ($D(295) = .160, p < .001$) were not distributed normally whereas GCBS ($D(295) = .045, p = .200$) had normal distribution.

In addition, one more Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was conducted based on two condition groups. In the control condition, competency level of the sources ($D(148) = .112, p = .018$), warmth level of the sources ($D(148) = .093, p = .003$), beliefs in FCB ($D(148) = .081, p = .018$), GCBS ($D(148) = .077, p = .032$), age ($D(148) = .136, p < .05$), gender ($D(148) = .341, p < .05$), education ($D(148) = .296, p < .05$) and SES ($D(148) = .138, p = .018$) had normal distributions. For the income condition the results showed that the competency ($D(147) = .116, p < .05$) and warmth levels ($D(147) = .090, p < .05$) of the sources, beliefs in FCB ($D(147) = .110, p < .05$), age ($D(147) = .107, p < .05$), gender ($D(147) = .356, p < .05$), education ($D(147) = .278, p < .05$) and SES ($D(147) = .181, p < .05$) were not distributed normally. In contrast, only GCBS ($D(147) = .054, p = .200$) had normal distribution.



APPENDIX 18. WELCH'S TESTS RESULTS BY USING ONLY TRUES IN ATTENTION CHECK-STUDY 2

For Study 2, three more Welch's Tests were run to compare the sources' warmth and competency levels, and beliefs in FCB scores between conditions by using only the data of people who remembered the narrative correctly. First of all, the results showed that the sources' competency levels were not significantly different, $t(184) = 0.067$, $p = .947$, Cohen's $d = 0.010$.

Secondly, the results of Welch's Test indicated that the sources in the control condition ($M = 16.5$, $SD = 5.82$) were significantly warmer than the income condition ($M = 14.8$, $SD = 5.38$), $t(193) = 2.114$, $p = 0.036$, Cohen's $d = 0.300$.

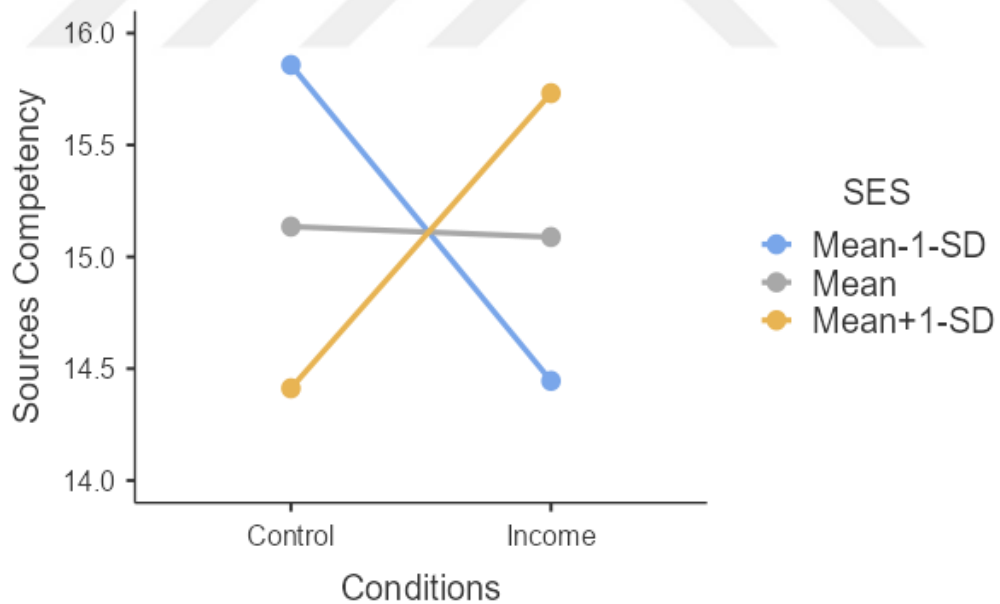
Last but not least, the Welch's Test results demonstrated that there was no significant difference between beliefs in FCB scores of the conditions, $t(188) = 0.124$, $p = .901$, Cohen's $d = 0.018$.



APPENDIX 19. THE MODERATING EFFECT OF SES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EXPERIMENT AND SOURCES' COMPETENCY AND WARMTH LEVELS

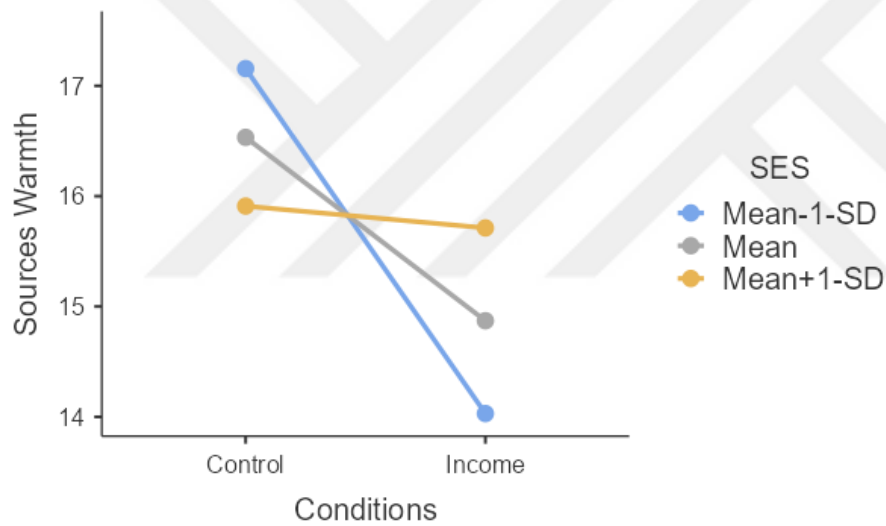
Competency

Effect	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>		
Constant	15.112	0.373	14.376	15.848	40.483	.001
SES	-0.025	0.235	-0.489	0.440	0.104	.917
The Experiment	0.047	0.747	-1.519	1.426	-0.062	.950
SES*The Experiment	0.839	0.471	-0.090	1.768	1.782	.076



Warmth

Effect	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>		
Constant	15.702	0.400	14.913	16.491	39.238	.001
SES	0.067	0.252	-0.431	0.565	0.265	.791
The Experiment	1.662	0.800	-3.241	-0.084	-2.077	.039
SES*The Experiment	0.899	0.505	-0.097	1.894	1.781	.077



APPENDIX 20. THE MODERATING EFFECT OF GCBS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EXPERIMENT AND BELIEFS IN FCB

Effect	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>		
Constant	15.333	0.279	14.782	15.885	54.870	.001
GCBS	0.276	0.025	0.227	0.325	11.153	.001
The Experiment	0.181	0.559	-1.283	0.921	0.0324	.746
GCBS*The Experiment	0.009	0.050	-0.089	0.106	0.173	.863

