Sustaining Exposure to Fact-checks: Misinformation Discernment, Media Consumption, and its Political Implications

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survey_data.dta

This file contains the survey data used for all the analysis in the regression-based tables and figures throughout the paper. Table 2 in the manuscript provides descriptive statistics for non-standardized variables.

id	: ID for participant.
block_id	: Randomization block for participant.
t0	: Treatment assignment (pooled treatment).
t0_2	: Treatment assignment (pooled podcast treatment used in Figure 4).
t5	: Treatment assignment (disaggregated treatment).
in_endline	: Participant completed endline survey.
end_icw_challenge	: ICW: Perceived difficulty of fact-checking.
end_icw_consume_close	: ICW: Consumption of news from friends and family.
end_icw_consume_sm	: ICW: Consumption of news from social media (excluding WhatsApp).
end_icw_consume_trad_media	: ICW: Consumption of news from traditional media.
end_icw_covid	: ICW: COVID-19 beliefs and preventative behavior.
end_icw_pod_takeup	: ICW: Takeup of treatment podcast.
end_icw_share	: ICW: Frequency of sharing stories on social media.
end_icw_trust_close	: ICW: Trust information sent by friends and family on social media.
end_icw_trust_sm	: ICW: Trust in information on social media (excluding WhatsApp).
end_icw_trust_trad_media	: ICW: Trust in information on traditional media.
end_icw_verifies	: ICW: Active efforts to verify information on social media.
end_icw_verify_know	: ICW: Knowledge of fact verification methods and strategies.
end_icw_alert_fakenews	: ICW: Frequency of alerting others about misinformation.
end_icw_attention	: ICW: Attention paid to veracity of information on social media.
end_icw_conspiracy	: ICW: Extent of beliefs in conspiracy theories.
end_icw_discernment	: ICW: Correct discernment of true and false news stories.
end_icw_discernment_f	: ICW: Correct discernment of true news stories.
end_icw_discernment_t	: ICW: Correct discernment of false news stories.
end_icw_future_takeup	: ICW: Intentions to continue consumption of treatments.
end_icw_govt	: ICW: Views and attitudes about the government.
end_icw_capacity	: ICW: Perceptions of the government's capacity to supply public goods.
end_icw_fake_news	: ICW: Frequency of being alerted about misinformation.
end_icw_verify_sources_which_FC	: ICW: Uses fact-checkers to verify information.

end_icw_verify_sources_which_Tr	: ICW: Uses traditional media to verify information.
end_icw_verify_sources_which_WCW	: ICW: Uses “What’s Crap on WhatsApp?” to verify information.
end_icw_verify_sources_which_On	: ICW: Uses online sources to verify information.
end_icw_populist	: ICW: Extent of populist sentiments shared by participant.
end_icw_trust_sm_true	: ICW: Perceived truthfulness of social media content.
end_icw_treat_knowledge	: ICW: Knowledge about fact-checks disseminated during study period.
end_icw_trust_sm_content	: ICW: Trust in social media content.
end_covid_beh_home	: Number of days stayed home in the past week.
end_covid_beh_mask	: Number of days wore mask in the past week.
end_covid_beh_visit	: Number of days visited others indoors in the past week [-].
end_news_sm	: Regularly go to for news: Other social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter).
end_pod_freq	: How often listens to podcasts.
end_pod_wcw	: How often listens to “What’s Crap on WhatsApp?”
end_trust_info_sm	: Trust: Information from other social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) (strongly distrust - strongly trust).
end_verify_ask	: Verification strategies: Talk to others in person [-].
end_verify_fam_wa	: How to verify info: Ask people I know through WhatsApp [-].
end_verify_fc_use	: How to verify info: Submit a fact-checker request.
end_verify_freq	: How often verify content seen on social media (never - always).
end_verify_internet	: How to verify info: Use the internet to fact-check yourself.
end_verify_others_wa	: How to verify info: Ask people I don’t know well on a WhatsApp group [-].
end_verify_sm	: How to verify info: Ask people I know by posting on social media [-].
end_avoid_check	: How to avoid being misled: Pay close attention to source.
end_important_verify	: How important to verify social media information.
end_think_twice	: How often pay close attention to social media information
end_personal_q1_1	: Primary language: Zulu.
end_personal_q1_2	: Primary language: Xhosa.
end_personal_q1_3	: Primary language: Afrikaans.
end_personal_q1_4	: Primary language: English.
end_personal_q1_5	: Primary language: Sotho.
end_personal_q1_6	: Primary language: Ndebele.
end_conspiracy_1	: AIDs intentionally created (not at all likely - very likely).
end_conspiracy_2	: Nelson Mandela died in 1985 (not at all likely - very likely).
end_conspiracy_3	: COVID-19 vaccines used to implant chips (not at all likely - very likely).
end_conspiracy_4	: Vaccines used to reduce world’s population (not at all likely - very likely).
end_covid_views_hoax	: View COVID-19 as a fake disease (strongly disagree - strongly agree) [-].
end_covid_views_lockdown	: View on COVID-19 lockdown (definitely necessary - definitely unnecessary) [-].

end_covid_views_vax_trust	: Trust that COVID-19 vaccines in South Africa are safe (strongly distrust - strongly trust).
end_covid_views_vax_yes	: Would take available COVID-19 vaccine (strongly disagree - strongly agree).
end_discernment_q1	: Alcohol decreases ability to fight COVID-19 infections (not at all likely - very likely) [true].
end_discernment_q2	: Almost 100% of workers in South Africa are foreign (not at all likely - very likely) [false] [-].
end_discernment_q3	: COVID-19 spreads by a person's mouth or nose (not at all likely - very likely) [true].
end_discernment_q4	: Matriculation scores to be inflated (not at all likely - very likely) [false] [-].
end_after_stay_subscribed	: Stay subscribed (or start subscribing) to "What's Crap on WhatsApp".
end_after_fact_subscribe	: Requested Africa Check's fact checking content.
end_after_reminder_subscribe	: Requested Africa Check reminders to pay attention to misinformation.
end_after_covid_subscribe	: Requested vaccine info from Africa Check.
end_performance_govt	: How well national government is performing in general (very badly - very well).
end_performance_covid	: How well national government is handling the COVID-19 pandemic (very badly - very well).
end_how_true_pols	: Likely to be true: Information from politicians and government officials (all fake - all truthful).
end_trust_most_govt	: Trust the most for information: Government officials.
end_trust_most_pols	: Trust the most for information: Politicians and other public figures.
end_trust_info_pols	: Trust: Information from politicians and government officials (strongly distrust - strongly trust).
end_vote_incumbent_nat	: Vote for national incumbent in a parliamentary election held tomorrow.
end_vote_incumbent_reg	: Vote for regional incumbent in a parliamentary election held tomorrow.
end_share_freq	: How often share social media content shared by others (never - always).
end_quiz_correct	: Number of correct responses from 6 questions on fact-checked content.
end_how_true_sm	: Likely to be true: Information from other social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) (all fake - all truthful).
end_trust_most_sm	: Trust the most for information: Other social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter).
end_avoid_ask	: How to avoid being misled: Ask other people [-].
end_avoid_orgs	: How to avoid being misled: Seek information from reputable organizations.
end_strat_experts	: Verification strategies: Ask experts.
end_strat_selves	: Verification strategies: Ask themselves [-].
end_strat_popular	: Verification strategies: Check source popularity [-].
end_strat_talk	: Verification strategies: Talk to others [-].
end_strat_img	: Verification strategies: Use reverse image searches.
end_verify_fc_request	: How to verify info: Submit a fact-checker request.
end_fc_requests_any	: Participant submitted any fact-check requests during study period (standardized).
dem_q2_1	: Gender: Female.
dem_q3_1	: Education: Primary.
dem_q3_2	: Education: Secondary.
dem_q3_3	: Education: University.
dem_q4_1	: Province: Eastern Cape.

dem_q4_2	: Province: Free State.
dem_q4_3	: Province: Gauteng.
dem_q4_4	: Province: KwaZulu-Natal.
dem_q4_5	: Province: Limpopo
dem_q4_6	: Province: Mpumalanga.
dem_q4_7	: Province: Northern Cape.
dem_q4_8	: Province: North West.
dem_q4_9	: Province: Western Cape.
dem_q5_1	: Locality: Urban.
dem_q5_2	: Locality: Peri-urban.
dem_q5_3	: Locality: Rural.
covid_beh_home	: Number of days stayed home in the past week [baseline].
covid_beh_mask	: Number of days wore mask in the past week [baseline].
covid_beh_visit	: Number of days visited others indoors in the past week [-] [baseline].
icw_challenge	: ICW: Perceived difficulty of fact-checking [baseline].
icw_consume_close	: ICW: Consumption of news from friends and family [baseline].
icw_consume_sm	: ICW: Consumption of news from social media (excluding WhatsApp) [baseline].
icw_consume_trad_media	: ICW: Consumption of news from traditional media [baseline].
icw_consume_whatsapp	: ICW: Consumption of news from WhatsApp [baseline].
icw_covid	: ICW: COVID-19 beliefs and preventative behavior [baseline].
icw_fs_placebo	: ICW: Consumption of other podcasts [baseline].
icw_misinfo	: ICW: Misinformation has harmful consequences [baseline].
icw_pod_takeup	: ICW: Takeup of treatment podcast [baseline].
icw_share	: ICW: Frequency of sharing stories on social media [baseline].
icw_trust_close	: ICW: Trust in information sent by friends and family on social media [baseline].
icw_trust_org	: ICW: Trust in information shared by organizations [baseline].
icw_trust_sm	: ICW: Trust in information on social media (excluding WhatsApp) [baseline].
icw_trust_trad_media	: ICW: Trust in information on traditional media [baseline].
icw_trust_whatsapp	: ICW: Trust in information on WhatsApp [baseline].
icw_verifies	: ICW: Active efforts to verify information on social media [baseline].
icw_verify_know	: ICW: Knowledge of fact verification methods and strategies [baseline].
news_sm	: Regularly go to for news: Other social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) [baseline].
pod_freq	: How often listens to podcasts [baseline].
pod_wcw	: How often listens to “What’s Crap on WhatsApp?” [baseline].
trust_info_sm	: Trust: Information from other social media (strongly distrust - strongly trust) [baseline].
verify_ask	: Verification strategies: Talk to others in person [-] [baseline].

verify_fam_wa : How to verify info: Ask people I know through WhatsApp [-] [baseline].
verify_fc_use : How to verify info: Submit a fact-checker request [baseline].
verify_freq : How often verify content seen on social media (never - always) [baseline].
verify_internet : How to verify info: Use the internet to fact-check yourself [baseline].
verify_others_wa : How to verify info: Ask people I don't know well on a WhatsApp group [-] [baseline].
verify_sm : How to verify info: Ask people I know by posting on social media [-] [baseline].

variable_map.csv
This file is used in the running of analysis.R to discern which variables are to be included on the same tables (e.g. endline variable families or the balance tests), provide labels for columns in these tables, define the preregistered effect direction, as well as providing automated references for some of the tables.

endline_var : Name of the variable in survey_data.dta (defined at endline).
baseline_var : Name of the variable in survey_data.dta (defined at baseline).
lab : Variable label to be used in table column headers.
index : Variable family (used to construct ICW index).
direction : Preregistered effect direction.
direction_pos : Preregistered effect direction is positive.
direction_neg : Preregistered effect direction is negative.
fig : Figure reference for ICW indexes.
tab : Table reference for ICW indexes.

topics.csv
This file characterizes the topics of the fact-checks delivered through the study period (see Figure 1).

accuracy : Fact being checked is true, false, or uncertain.
politics : Fact being checked is about politics.
economic : Fact being checked is about economic issues.
race_and_nationalism : Fact being checked is about race or issues relating to xenophobia.
health_covid : Fact being checked is about health issues relating to COVID-19.
health_noncovid : Fact being checked is about health issues unrelated to COVID-19.
crime : Fact being checked is about crime.
society : Fact being checked is about social issues.
fun_fact : Fact being checked is miscellaneous.

ab7.csv
Demographic data from Afrobarometer round 7 for South Africa (see Figure C2).

withinwt	: Survey weights.
Female	: Respondent is female.
Age	: Age of respondent.
Urban	: Respondent is in an urban enumeration area.
Uses_SM	: Respondent uses social media.
Education_Primary	: Respondent has primary education.
Education_Secondary	: Respondent has secondary education.
Education_University	: Respondent has university education.
Ethnic_*	: Respondent's ethnicity.
Province	: Province of respondent.

Quiz_completion.csv
This file provides data on quiz completion, as well as high incentive payments, for participants across the four quizzes administered during the study period (see Figure C3).

index	: Which quiz the observation relates to (1-4).
high	: Participant received high incentive payment for answering questions correctly.
Id	: ID of participant.