

Information: This file contains the codebook for the data file Scharrer et al_2021_Easiness_Prior Beliefs_DATA.csv (Table 1) and an overview of the different questionnaire versions used in the experiment (Table 2).

Table 1: Codebook

Variable	Description
Participant_ID	Participant's ID
Duration	Duration of participation (in sec) -1 = Missing value
Version	Version of the questionnaire 8 versions, counterbalancing order of exposure to experimental conditions and combination of experimental condition and topic, see Table 2 for an overview
Consent_pre	Informed consent at the beginning of the experiment 1 = consent
Prior_beliefs1	Statement 1 measuring prior beliefs: "The currently observed climate change is a result of natural causes that have nothing to do with humans" 1 = don't believe at all 7 = strongly believe
Prior_beliefs2	Statement 2 measuring prior beliefs: "The present climate change is mainly caused by human behaviour" 1 = don't believe at all 7 = strongly believe
Prior_beliefs3	Statement 3 measuring prior beliefs: "The climate currently changes due to natural fluctuations" 1 = don't believe at all 7 = strongly believe
Prior_beliefs4	Statement 4 measuring prior beliefs: "The current climate change is primarily caused by humans" 1 = don't believe at all 7 = strongly believe
Prior_beliefs5	Statement 5 measuring prior beliefs: "Human behaviour is the major cause of the currently observed climate change" 1 = don't believe at all 7 = strongly believe
Prior_beliefs6	Statement 6 measuring prior beliefs: "The current climate change can be attributed primarily to natural causes" 1 = don't believe at all 7 = strongly believe
Prior_beliefs7	Statement 7 measuring prior beliefs: "Natural factors that are independent of human behaviour are the major cause of the current climate change"

	1 = don't believe at all 7 = strongly believe
Prior_beliefs8	Statement 8 measuring prior beliefs: "Essentially, the current climate change is caused by humanity" 1 = don't believe at all 7 = strongly believe
SCORE_belief_human_causes	arithmetic mean of Prior_beliefs2, 4, 5, 8
SCORE_belief_natural_causes	arithmetic mean of Prior_beliefs1, 3, 6, 7
PriorKnowledge_climate_change	How would you describe your knowledge about the topic "climate change"? 1 = very good 2 = good 3 = satisfactory 4 = sufficient 5 = poor
Gender	1 = male 2 = female 3 = diverse
Age	Age
Native_language	1 = German 2 = other
Study_major	Study major
Study_semester	Current semester of studies
Relevance_climate_change	How relevant do you personally find the topic of "climate change"? 1 = not at all relevant 7 = very relevant
consistent_comprehensible_AGREE_PRE	Condition belief-consistent, comprehensible: agreement with the text claim before reading "Please indicate, whether in your opinion, the statement [claim inserted] is correct or incorrect." 1 = I don't agree at all 7 = I fully agree
inconsistent_comprehensible_AGREE_PRE	Condition belief-inconsistent, comprehensible: agreement with the text claim before reading "Please indicate, whether in your opinion, the statement [claim inserted] is correct or incorrect." 1 = I don't agree at all 7 = I fully agree
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consistent_comprehensible_ REASON	Condition belief-consistent, comprehensible: Reasons for the claim judgement (“Please tell your friend the reasons for your judgement”)
consistent_comprehensible_ STRATEGY1	Condition belief-consistent, comprehensible: Strategy 1: Trust in one’s own judgement based on present knowledge (“Based on my present knowledge about the topic, I am confident about deciding whether it is correct that [claim statement inserted].”) 1 = don’t agree 7 = strongly agree
consistent_comprehensible_ STRATEGY2	Condition belief-consistent, comprehensible: Strategy 2: Trust in one’s own judgement based on further information (“I want to obtain further information about [topic] that I shall then use to decide myself whether it is correct that [claim statement inserted].”) 1 = don’t agree 7 = strongly agree
consistent_comprehensible_ STRATEGY3	Condition belief-consistent, comprehensible: Strategy 3: Desire to outsource the judgement to an expert (“I want to obtain information about experts in the field in order to identify a particularly competent and credible expert. I would then consult this expert and rely on their judgement as to whether it is correct that [claim statement inserted].”) 1 = don’t agree 7 = strongly agree
consistent_comprehensible_ CREDIBLE	Condition belief-consistent, comprehensible: Author credibility (“Please indicate how credible you find the author of the text you’ve just read.”) 1 = not at all credible 7 = very credible
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inconsistent_lesscomprehensible_CREDIBLE	Condition belief-inconsistent, less comprehensible:

Distracter texts (for each version, three distracter texts were selected randomly from a pool of four distracter texts):

- 1: vaccination I (less comprehensible)
- 2: gm food (comprehensible)
3. vaccination II (comprehensible)
- 4: vaccination III (less comprehensible)