

Online Appendix: Supplementary Materials

Table S1: Sociodemographics of the Study Participants and Chinese Internet Users

| Sociodemographics | | Experiment 1 | Experiment 2 | Chinese Internet Users* |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Gender: Female | | 43.90% | 45.68% | 44.1% |
| Location: Rural | | 28.37% | 17.02% | 26.5% |
| Occupation | Student | 43.26% | 33.17% | 30.2% |
| | Manufacturing worker | 3.49% | 2.25% | 3.5% |
| | Service worker | 2.69% | 3.0% | 3.5% |
| | Migrant worker | 0.79% | 1.13% | 3.0% |
| | Self-employed | 9.19% | 10.26% | 16.0% |
| | Professional | 12.04% | 14.4% | 8.3% |
| | Corporate office worker | 16.96% | 20.78% | 9.9% |
| | Corporate management | 3.33% | 4.51% | 4.0% |
| | Government worker | 2.06% | 2.25% | 5.2% |
| | Government official | 0.16% | 0% | 0.7% |
| | Farmer | 0% | 0% | 4.0% |
| | Unemployed | 4.91% | 5.88% | 8.6% |
| | Retired | 0% | 0.13% | 1.8% |
| | Other | 1.1% | 2.0% | 1.3% |
| Education | Primary school | 0.16% | 0.21% | 8.5% |
| | Junior high | 3.65% | 2.93% | 35.7% |
| | Senior high | 11.09% | 18.29% | 33.3% |
| | 2-year college | 34.23% | 32.60% | 10.5% |
| | ≥ 4-year college | 50.87% | 45.98% | 11.9% |
| Age | ≤ 19 | 7.13% | 6.58% | 28.4% |
| | 20-29 | 78.13% | 78.9% | 29.8% |
| | 30-39 | 12.05% | 12.74% | 25.7% |
| | 40-49 | 2.53% | 1.78% | 11.4% |
| | 50-59 | 0.16% | 0% | 4.1% |
| | ≥ 60 | 0% | 0% | 0.7% |

*Because the experiments were conducted in 2012, the relevant statistics about Chinese Internet population were from *The 29th Statistical Report of Internet Development in China* of the China Internet Network Information Center (January 2012).

Table S2: Balance and Descriptive Statistics of Independent Variables

| | News | Poli Interest | Life Satisfaction | Pro- West | Age | Male | Edu | Income | CCP Member | Rumor A_{pe} | Rumor B_{pe} |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Experiment 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Control (N=125) | 3.93 (1.31) | 2.71 (.81) | 2.30 (0.66) | 3.07 (1.45) | 25.07 (4.90) | .59 (.49) | 4.46 (.88) | 2.86 (.65) | .15 (.36) | | |
| Rumors (N=127) | 3.98 (1.26) | 2.74 (.83) | 2.34 (0.75) | 2.95 (1.44) | 25.91 (6.39) | .60 (.49) | 4.28 (.94) | 2.69 (.62) | .15 (.36) | .80 (.40) | .55 (.50) |
| Rebut 1A (N=134) | 3.79 (1.26) | 2.61 (.79) | 2.41 (0.74) | 3.05 (1.35) | 23.51 (3.95) | .49 (.50) | 4.35 (.87) | 2.78 (.70) | .12 (.33) | .70 (.46) | .47 (.50) |
| Rebut 1B (N=127) | 3.87 (1.32) | 2.71 (.81) | 2.23 (0.73) | 2.69 (1.33) | 25.11 (5.02) | .54 (.50) | 4.46 (.82) | 2.78 (.62) | .13 (.34) | .72 (.45) | .54 (.50) |
| Rebut both (N=118) | 3.91 (1.25) | 2.66 (.87) | 2.40 (0.79) | 2.89 (1.42) | 24.31 (5.11) | .59 (.49) | 4.31 (.95) | 2.78 (.68) | .12 (.32) | .74 (.44) | .49 (.50) |
| F | 0.39 | 0.49 | 1.30 | 1.59 | 4.04 | 1.25 | 1.08 | 1.07 | 0.27 | 1.34 | 0.73 |
| $Prob > F$ | 0.817 | 0.741 | 0.267 | 0.175 | 0.003 | 0.288 | 0.365 | 0.369 | 0.896 | 0.260 | 0.535 |
| Experiment 2 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Control (N=177) | 4.21 (1.20) | 2.84 (.85) | 2.56 (0.91) | 2.95 (1.31) | 24.50 (4.23) | .51 (.50) | 4.21 (.89) | 2.77 (.63) | .12 (.33) | | |
| Rumors (N=167) | 4.08 (1.27) | 2.83 (.79) | 2.66 (0.89) | 2.84 (1.38) | 24.79 (4.98) | .59 (.49) | 4.27 (.87) | 2.77 (.74) | .16 (.37) | .51 (.50) | .50 (.50) |
| Rebut 2A (N=172) | 4.12 (1.19) | 2.82 (.92) | 2.64 (0.85) | 3.05 (1.36) | 24.67 (4.19) | .58 (.50) | 4.31 (.91) | 2.80 (.65) | .12 (.33) | .46 (.50) | .42 (.50) |
| Rebut 2B (N=133) | 4.02 (1.37) | 2.78 (.87) | 2.61 (0.84) | 2.83 (1.27) | 25.17 (5.70) | .51 (.50) | 4.29 (.93) | 2.80 (.69) | .11 (.32) | .40 (.49) | .44 (.50) |
| Rebut both (N=150) | 4.07 (1.22) | 2.83 (.83) | 2.61 (0.86) | 2.83 (1.29) | 24.60 (5.03) | .53 (.50) | 4.15 (.96) | 2.77 (.69) | .19 (.40) | .49 (.50) | .47 (.50) |
| F | 0.52 | 0.09 | 0.32 | 0.83 | 0.401 | 0.89 | 0.77 | 0.12 | 1.43 | 1.38 | 0.70 |
| $Prob > F$ | 0.724 | 0.985 | 0.87 | 0.507 | 0.808 | 0.467 | 0.543 | 0.975 | 0.224 | 0.247 | 0.553 |

Entries are group means for each covariate, with standard deviations in parentheses. Bartlett's test for equal variances is satisfied for all covariates except age. The F^* test¹⁰³ was used for age in lieu of the standard F test in the upper panel.

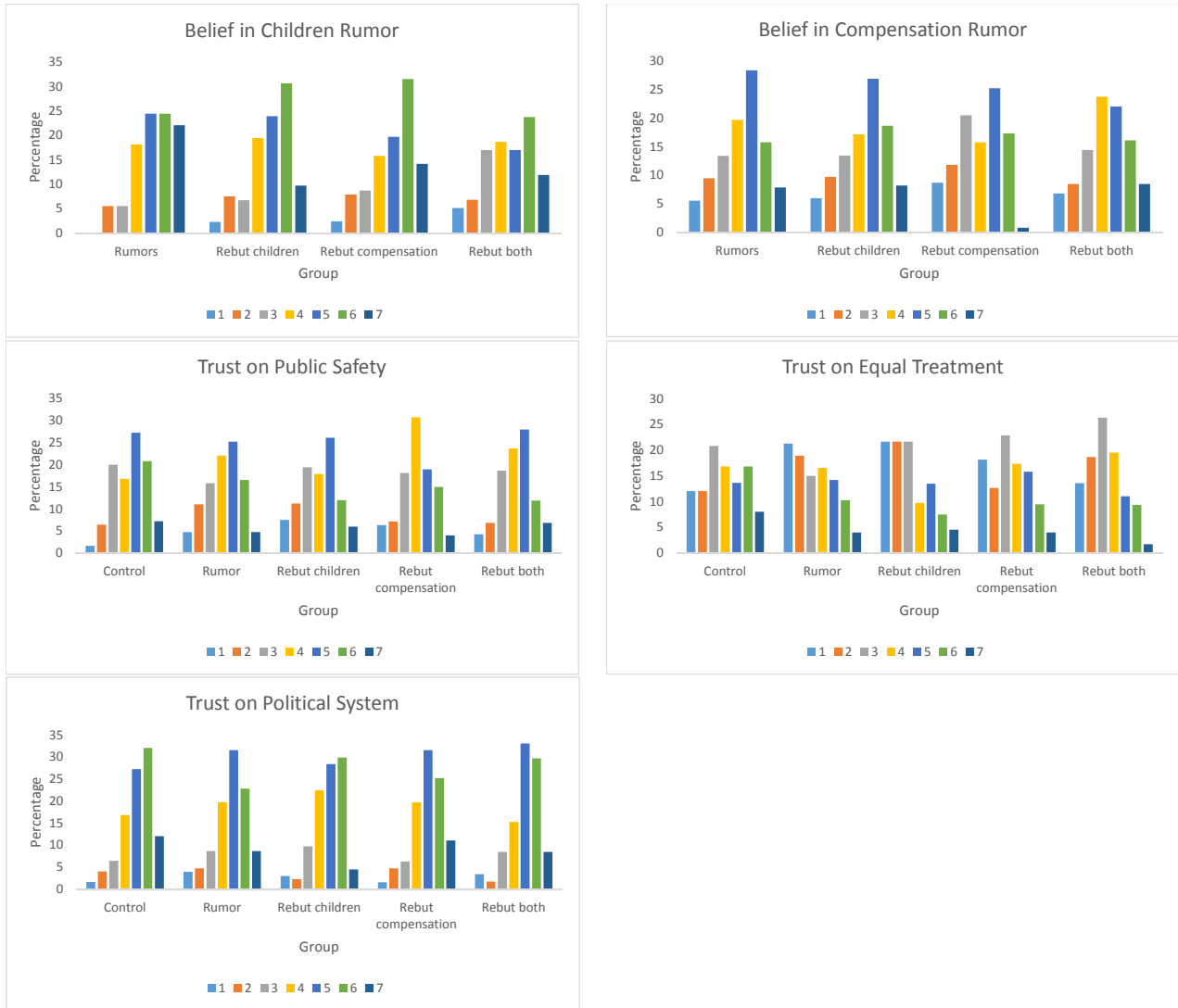


Figure S1: Distributions of Rumor Belief and Political Trust in Each Group (Experiment 1)



Figure S2: Distributions of Rumor Belief and Political Trust in Each Group (Experiment 2)