



EVIDENCE-BASED PERSPECTIVE TAKING MITIGATES CONSPIRATORIAL BELIEFS

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01 Introduction

Conspiracy theories erode trust in science and democratic institutions, as seen in anti-vaccine movements and the Capitol attack, fueling public health risks and political violence. This study tries to explore whether engaging in evidence-based reasoning might help mitigate these kinds of conspiratorial beliefs.

02 Objective

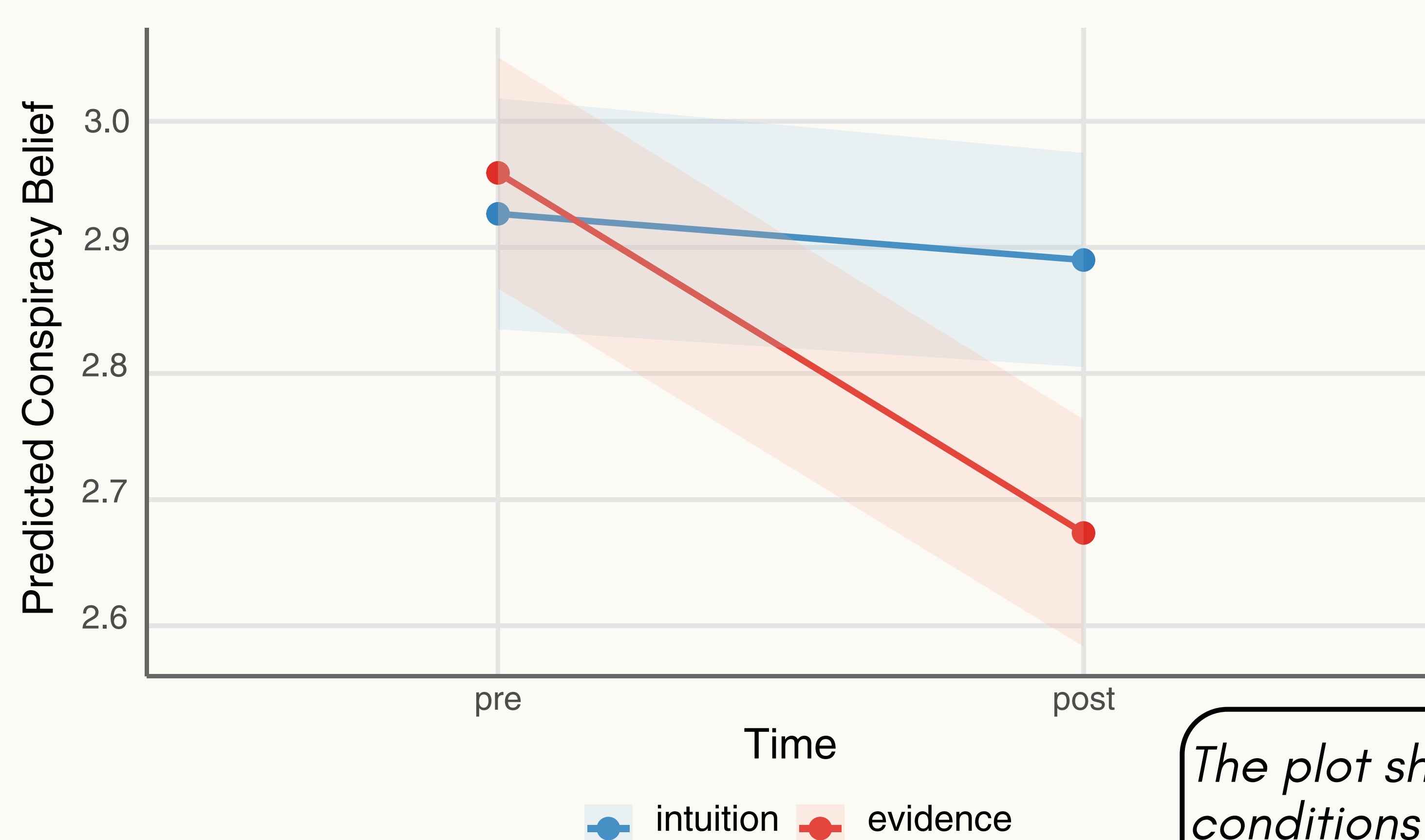
- Our research investigates whether engaging in epistemic perspective-taking influences the extent to which individuals endorse conspiracy beliefs.
- Prior studies have shown that intuitive thinking (vs. evidence-based reasoning) is associated with stronger endorsement of conspiracy theories.
- Building on this work, we tested whether fostering an evidence-based mindset can reduce susceptibility to conspiratorial thinking.

03 Methodology

- The experiment comprised two rounds. In the first, participants rated a series of conspiracy theories to assess baseline levels of conspiratorial thinking [1].
- In the second round, conducted one week later, participants were exposed to a vignette inducing either an intuition- or evidence-based mindset [2].
- Belief in a new set of conspiracy theories was then measured to assess the effect of this manipulation.

Analysis - We employed a linear mixed-effects regression model to examine the main effects, as well as the interaction between time and condition. Secondary analysis was made with Evidence-Intuition Scale [3] and political affiliation as covariates; no significant change was found

04 Results



| Predictor | Estimate | 95% CI | p |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------------|--------|
| Intercept | 2.93 | [2.75, 3.11] | <0.001 |
| Time | -0.04 | [-0.22, 0.14] | 0.691 |
| Condition [evidence] | 0.03 | [-0.16, 0.23] | 0.744 |
| Time * Condition [evidence] | -0.25 | [-0.49, -0.00] | 0.046 |

The plot shows average conspiracy rating between conditions from pre to post intervention with 95% confidence intervals. evidence-based perspective shows a significant 0.3 points reduction post-intervention

scan for supplementary data



05 Discussion

Participants exposed to the evidence-based perspective showed a significantly greater reduction in conspiracy belief endorsement. These results suggest that fostering evidence-based reasoning may help mitigate susceptibility to conspiratorial thinking.

1. Enders, A., Farhart, C., Miller, J., Uscinski, J., Saunders, K., & Drochon, H. (2023). Are Republicans and conservatives more likely to believe conspiracy theories? *Political Behavior*, 45(4), 2001-2024. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-022-09812-3>
2. Huttunen, K. J. A., & Lewandowsky, S. (2024). The evolution of truth in political discourse from fact to feeling and its implications for democracy. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/bwnp4>
3. Abels, C. M., & Lewandowsky, S. (2024). Development and validation of the Evidence Intuition Scale. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/u4xka>