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Is the structure of the belief in conspiracy theory equivalent across cultures?

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Abstract

In the literature, scholars often postulate a uni-dimensional structure of beliefs in conspiracy theory except for the Generic Conspiracist Belief scale (GCB, Brotherton et al., 2013) which posits a five-factor structure of the belief. On the other hand, a recent study extending the GCB to non-Western population proposed a two-factor structure which dissociates extraterrestrial conspiracy from other beliefs and suggested that the belief structure might not be equivalent across Western and non-Western population. In this study, 616 participants from two cloud-sourcing pools (309 Westerners / 307 Japanese) answered to questionnaires including GCB. A multi-group confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the validity of two-factor structure across two pools, however only partial metric invariance has been achieved. Results suggests that overall structure of conspiracy belief is similar across cultures, however several aspects of beliefs might not be equivalent.