Appendix: Questionnaire items

Age
What is your age in years?

Gender
With which gender do you most identify?
1. Female
2. Male
3. Other
4. Prefer not to say

Education
Which is the highest degree you have finished (so far)?
1. Did not finish high school; or high school diploma or equivalent, no further schooling; or technical or vocational school after high school.
2. Some college, no degree; or Associate's or two-year college degree; or four-year college degree.
3. Graduate or professional school after college, no degree; or Graduate or professional degree; PhD or equivalent.

Negativity salience
Overall, in your experience, what percentage of all the news is about negative or positive events or topics? 0–100

Negativity threat
Next, we would like to ask you a few questions about your views on negativity in the news. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:
[1. Completely disagree… 7. Completely agree]
1. The amount of negativity in the news does not show an accurate view of the world.
2. The amount of negativity in the news makes people overly pessimistic regarding societal progress.
3. The amount of negativity in the news makes it difficult for audiences to make well-informed decisions.

Misinformation salience
Can you make an estimation of how much—in terms of percentages—the information available today consists of misinformation, also known as false or deceptive information or fake news, both for established news media and social media? 0–100

Misinformation threat
Could you indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements about the impact of misinformation on society? [1. Completely disagree… 7. Completely agree]

1. The dissemination of misinformation undermines democracy.
2. The dissemination of misinformation increases societal polarization.
3. The dissemination of misinformation distorts the truth.
4. The dissemination of misinformation results in misperceptions that endanger rational decision making.