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# The Effect of Affirming Scientific Belief on Existential Anxiety

Trimby MaGarity and Shelby Russell



## Research Question

Can reaffirming scientific belief affect existential anxiety?

## Introduction

- ❖ Belief in science can be defined as seeing science as a reliable guide to the world around us (Farias et al. 2013)
- ❖ This belief in science can have a positive effect on people's mindsets and lives (Dagnall et al. 2019)
- ❖ The comfort, and sense of control religiosity gives can be present in those who are less religious and believe more in science (Aghababaei et al. 2016)
- ❖ Physical stress results in an increased belief in science (Farias et al. 2013)

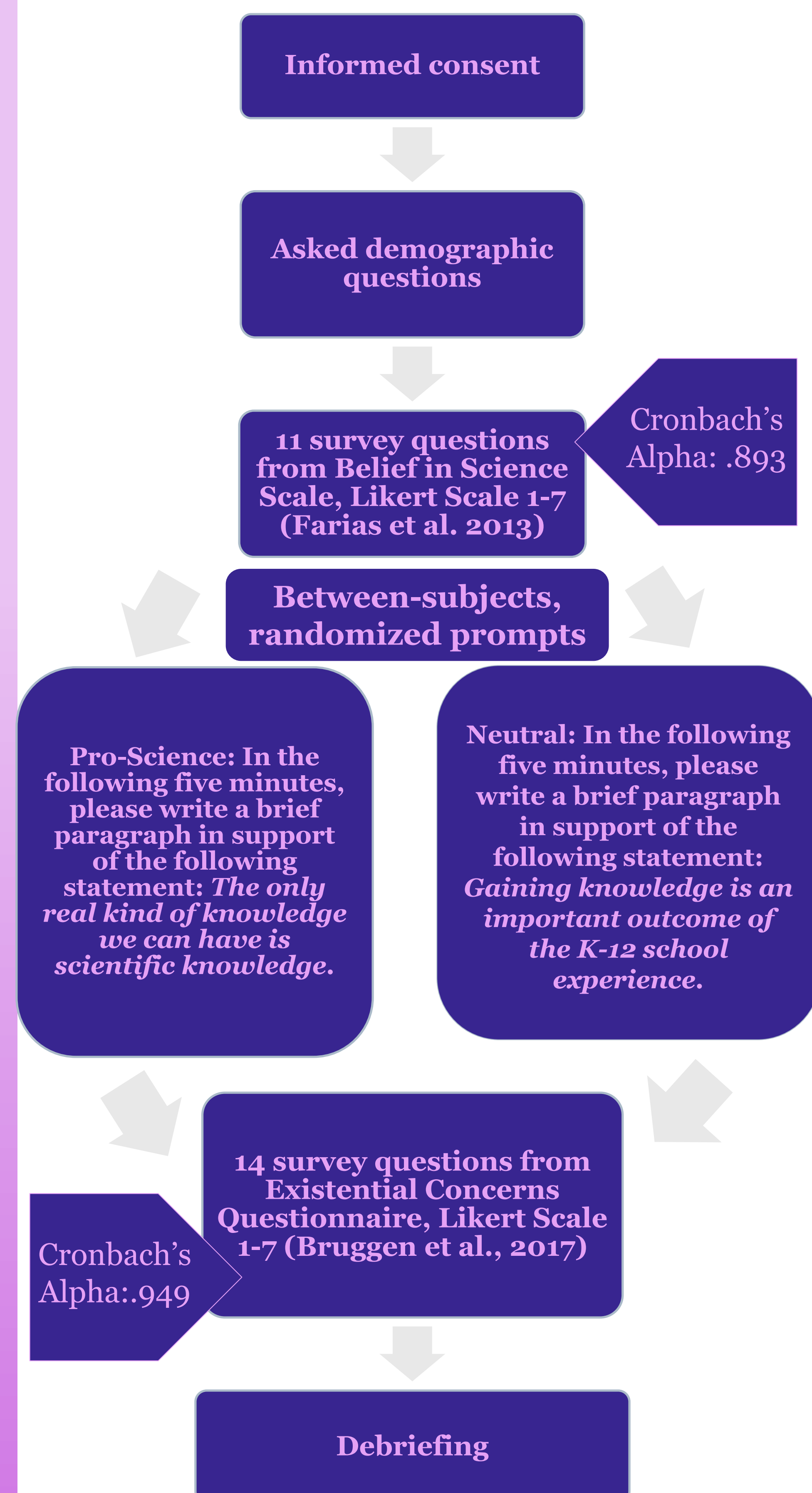
## Hypothesis

Those who reaffirm high scientific belief will rank lower in existential anxiety than those who reaffirm no beliefs and those low in scientific belief

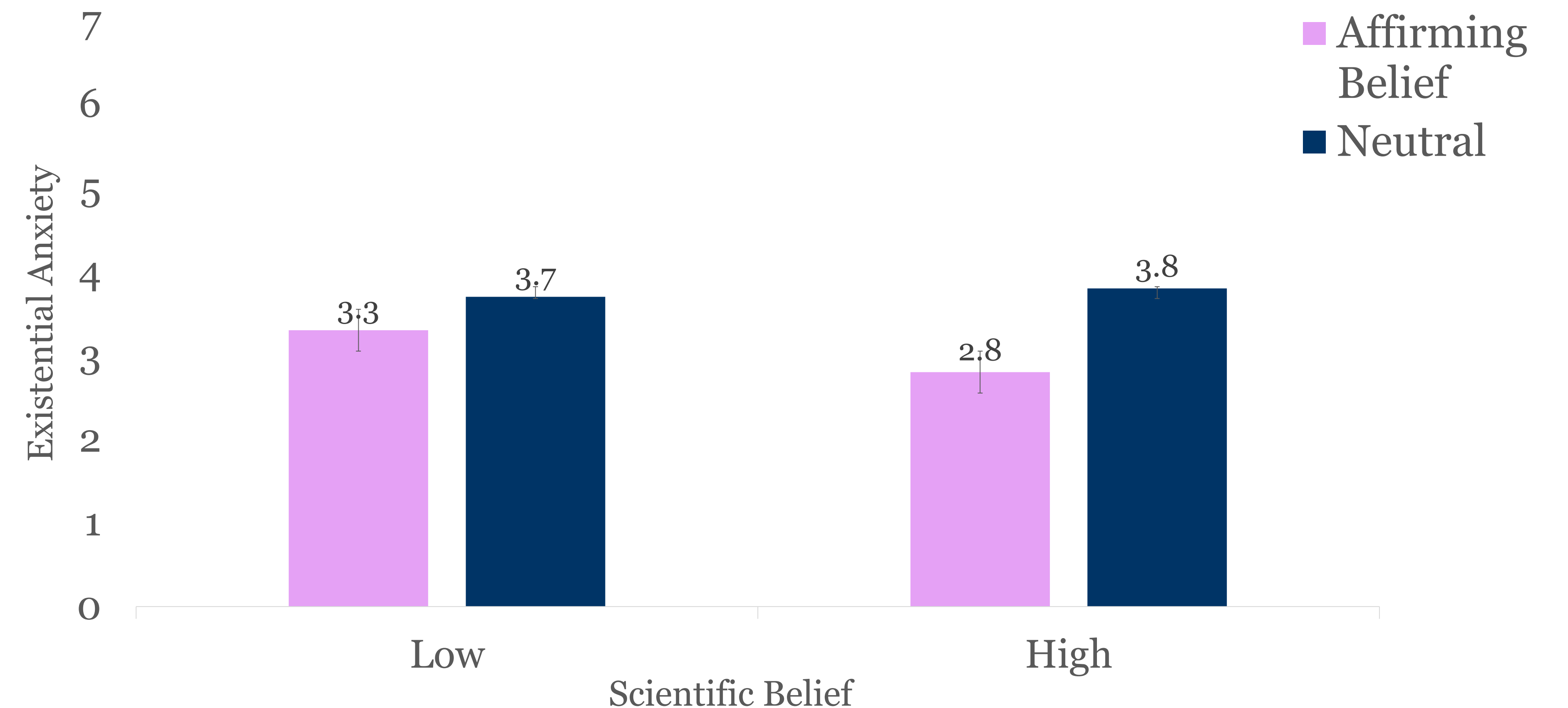
## Participants (53)

<b>Gender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Male – 39.6%</li> <li>• Female – 56.6%</li> <li>• Other/Prefer not to say – 3.8%</li> </ul>
<b>Race</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black or African American – 7.5%</li> <li>• Non-Hispanic White – 60.4%</li> <li>• Asian – 13.2%</li> <li>• Hispanic/Latino – 9.4%</li> <li>• Other – 9.4%</li> </ul>
<b>Age</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average Age: 28</li> <li>• From 18-73</li> </ul>

## Procedure



## Results



- ❖ No main effect for scientific belief,  $F(1, 49) = .233, p = .63, \text{partial } R^2 = .01$ , but it was trending in the anticipated direction
- ❖ No main effect for reaffirming belief,  $F(1, 49) = 3.42, p = .07, \text{partial } R^2 = .07$
- ❖ No significant interaction between scientific faith and reaffirming belief  $F(1, 49) = .789, p = .38, \text{partial } R^2 = .02$

## Discussion

### Implications

- Scientific faith may not influence hope for the future
- Affirmation may not affect the strength of beliefs

### Limitations

- Small sample size, not many responses for one prompt
- Many participants had high belief, restricting range

### Future Research

- Study should be done face to face
- Even sample size
- If scientific belief specifically decreases belief in other concepts, and how that influences existential anxiety

## References

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