This study investigated to what extent the audience believed media covering an international conflict that involved Russia, particularly whether the news was attributed to U.S. or Russian outlets depending on the news source. In order to analyze U.S. and Russian media perception, the following outlets were chosen: CNN, Fox News, and RT (Russia Today). The level of believability was measured by conducting a paper survey experiment.

The study did not find strong evidence in support of a difference in believability between U.S. and Russian news sources. However, the results, in particular, partially demonstrated a statistically significant difference between CNN and RT. Additionally, the news source trust scale showed that U.S. citizens trusted a source more when they did not see a direct attribution to Russia in its name (Russia Today vs. RT). In addition, the study looked into the interaction between news source trust and news source expectancy. The influence of the interaction on believability, however, was only partially supported for the CNN condition.

This study contributed to a better understanding of what makes people believe some news sources and not others. The findings of the study can help to further teach news consumers critical thinking and dealing with misinformation.