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為人為己：新聞關注和文化取向如何影響 美國民眾對新冠病毒的認知與防疫行為

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摘要

本研究檢視接觸新冠病毒相關新聞如何影響美國閱聽人的認知與行為。根據對1,094名美國民眾進行的在線調查數據，本研究探索新聞關注和文化取向如何塑造美國民眾對新冠病毒新聞的第三人效果認知。研究結果發現，受訪者普遍認為其他人比自己更易受相關新聞影響。然而，閱聽人對新冠病毒新聞的關注及集體主義價值觀會降低他們對新聞影響的第三人效果認知偏差。此外，集體主義價值觀和新聞對自我影響的認知，是受訪民眾採取防疫措施(例如戴口罩和保持社交距離)的重要預測變項。綜上所述，本研究顯示，集體主義價值觀是預測病毒風險認知和採取預防措施的關鍵變項。本研究從文化價值觀角度，解釋閱聽人對新冠病毒相關新聞之第三人效果，對第三人效果理論具有相當的貢獻。

關鍵詞：新冠病毒、第三人效果、個人主義、集體主義、防疫行為

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For the Greater Good: The Role of News Attention and Culture in Affecting Americans' Biased Perceptions of News about Coronavirus Pandemic and Effecting Prevention

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Abstract

The novel coronavirus (a.k.a. COVID-19) pandemic has hit America hard. This study examines the perceptual and behavioral effects of up-to-date news about confirmed COVID 19 cases and deaths. Using data collected from an online survey of 1,094 Americans, the role of media use pattern and cultural orientations in shaping Americans' perception of the pandemic and behavioral responses was explored. Results show that respondents generally believed other Americans were more impacted by the latest news on infections and mortalities. However, the more they paid attention to the news, and the more they were oriented toward collectivist values, the less biased were their perceptions of the impact of such news. Finally, collectivist value orientation and perceived effects of the news on the self are significant predictors of adopting preventive measures, such as masking up and keeping social distance. Taken together, the results show that collectivist value

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orientation is a key micro-psychometric level predictor of risk perceptions and adoption of preventive actions. This study contributes to the third-person effects theory by offering a cultural explanation of biased perception concerning the impact of pandemic news and behavioral consequences of that biased perception.

Keywords: coronavirus pandemic, third-person effects, individualism, collectivism, preventive measures

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研究動機與目的

新冠病毒 (COVID-19) 在2019年12月爆發，而後疫情擴散至世界各國。儘管美國於2020年3月13日宣布全國進入緊急狀態以對抗疫情，新冠病毒仍在美國持續蔓延，並迅速取代中國和歐洲，成為全球確診人數最多的國家。截至2020年8月，美國受感染病例已達500萬，死亡人數超過16萬 (World Health Organization, 2020)。在疫情如此嚴峻的情況下，許多人認為人們未能遵循防疫措施的基本原則，是造成美國成為疫情重災區的主要原因。例如，配戴口罩和維持社交距離被視為有效減緩疫情蔓延的基本措施，但這兩項措施卻因為可能「影響個人和公民自由」，在美國受到質疑與挑戰。與長期以來視「配戴口罩」為社會規範的亞洲國家不同，不少美國人認為配戴口罩是對人身自由的侵犯 (McKelvey, 2020)，儘管遵循這些防疫措施是為了公共利益，但為了保障個人自由，政府不應該強迫所有人配戴口罩。有評論指出 (Andrew, 2020)，以上觀點是被自我個人思想誤導的產物，且已深植於美國的個人主義文化。一項新研究將這種文化價值觀視為新冠病毒在美國持續蔓延的主要原因之一 (Biddlestone, Green, & Douglas, 2020)。

持續激增的病例以及抗疫的失敗也引起媒體的廣泛關注。大量持續的報導佔滿各大媒體版面、頻道。例如，《紐約時報》的動態圖表每日更新各州最新的感染病例和死亡情況，而電視新聞也不斷播報疫情的相關數據。各級政府更因此必須頻繁地舉行記者會，以回應媒體對於疫情資訊的需求 (Shearer, 2020)。這些新聞凸顯美國疫情規模不斷擴散蔓延。根據風險社會擴大效應理論 (social amplification of risk framework) (Kasperson et al., 1988)，大量的新聞報導可能增加公眾對於緊急狀況風險程度的認知 (Kasperson & Kasperson, 1996)。基於媒體在疫情控管中所扮演的重要角色，本研究以這項空前的公共衛生危機為背景，嘗試檢視疫情新聞對於美國民眾的風險認知以及防疫行為可能產生的影響。

具體而言，在第三人效果理論的引導下 (Davison, 1983)，本研究探討美國民眾認為疫情新聞對他們自己和其他人的影響，並分析美國民眾對於媒體報導影響的認知如何影響他們的防疫行為。此外，考慮

到美國社會中濃厚的個人主義價值觀在防疫過程中所扮演的重要角色，本研究著重探討這種文化價值觀如何塑造美國人對於疫情新聞的認知和行為反應。

通過整合第三人效果理論與個人價值取向，本研究結果將有助於增進在公共衛生危機背景下對媒體第三人效果的理解，並協助回答《紐約時報》記者的問題 (Leonhardt, 2020)：為什麼美國未能及時控制這種獨特的病毒蔓延？此外，本研究亦提供理論見解，為日後改善疫情新聞報導與疫情控管提供建議。

相關文獻及研究假設

第三人效果理論

在公共衛生風險或危機事件發生時，新聞媒體不僅是重要的信息管道 (Liu & Lo, 2014)，更是疫情爆發期間重要的社會影響力來源。過去的研究發現，疫情爆發或公共衛生突發事件的相關報導可能會影響公眾的認知與行為，接觸有關公共衛生風險的新聞報導會影響民眾的風險認知及防疫行為 (Choi, Yoo, Noh, & Park, 2017; Coleman, 1993; Lin & Lagoe, 2013)。

傳播學者因而提出偏差認知理論，認為人們傾向於相信有關疫情爆發或健康風險的新聞對他人的影響大於對自己的影響 (Lee & Park, 2016; Ludolph, Shultz, & Chen, 2018; Wei, Lo, & Lu, 2008)。這種偏差認知源自 Davison (1983) 的第三人效果假設，Davison (1983, p. 3) 認為大多數人都會「高估大眾傳播對他人的態度和行為的影響」。換句話說，其他人 (即第三人) 被認為更容易受到有關疫情或風險新聞的影響，而我們 (第一人) 則比較不會受到這類新聞的影響。

公共衛生新聞的第三人效果

過去累積的相關研究可以證明，人們在解讀公共衛生新聞影響的過程中，常出現偏差認知的現象 (Golan & Banning, 2008; Lo, Wei, Guo, &

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Zhang, 2016)。雖然有關公共衛生事件的新聞報導不一定是負面的，但疫情爆發的報導通常會引起公眾的焦慮、恐懼、甚至恐慌。而這種「使人不安、增加焦慮感」的新聞可能導致第三人效果(Wei et al., 2008)。正如Gunther和Mundy(1993)所說，當媒體資訊涉及嚴峻的風險時，就可以觀察到偏差認知現象。

過去對於流行病毒的研究，例如SARS、H1N1流感、MERS和伊波拉病毒(Ebola Virus)都證明，人們對於病毒新聞的影響的確持有偏差認知(Lee & Park, 2016; Lim, Lee, Kim, & Chang, 2017; Lo, Wei, Lu, & Hou, 2015; Wei, Lo, & Lu, 2008)。大多數人都會傾向認為病毒相關新聞對自己的影響較小，而那些「易受傷害的其他人」則會受到疫情新聞比較大的影響。Liu和Lo(2014)在H1N1流感疫情報導影響的相關研究中發現，受訪者認為疫情新聞對自己的影響較小，對其他人的影響較大。根據不斷增加的相關文獻，我們認為人們對於新冠病毒疫情新聞影響的判斷中將存在偏差認知。因此，提出以下假設：

假設一：受訪者會認為新冠病毒病例和死亡人數的新聞對自己的影響較小，對他人的影響較大。

影響第三人效果認知的因素

過去的研究在試圖解釋為什麼人們會對於媒體影響產生偏差認知時，已經發現不同的心理機制或媒介使用模式會加強或降低第三人效果認知(Perloff, 1999; Wei et al., 2008)。本研究根據過去的相關研究探討三個可能影響第三人效果認知的因素，以評估有關新冠病毒疫情新聞所造成的影響。這三個因素為：對有關新冠病毒疫情新聞的關注、自我效能評估，以及文化價值取向(個人主義或集體主義)。

新聞關注

在媒體對人們的認知影響的相關研究中，傳播學者把觀眾對於公共衛生突發事件或疫情新聞的關注，視為一種收看公共衛生新聞或處理此類新聞的機制。有趣的是，新聞關注一直被視為可以降低第三人

效果認知的重要因素。把新聞關注視為聚焦媒體使用的研究指出 (Chaffee & Schleuder, 1986)，人們傾向認為新聞使用等同於新聞影響。由於有關疫情爆發的新聞可能會影響社區或國家中的每個人，包括觀眾自己，人們對於疫情新聞的關注因而可能減少自我與他人之間的認知鴻溝。許多與禽流感 (Wei et al., 2008) 和 H1N1 流感 (Liu & Lo, 2014) 相關的第三人效果研究就指出，對於疫情新聞的關注和新聞接觸能夠降低第三人效果認知差距。

同樣的，注意力也被認為是一個認知過程，人們在此過程中將自己的精神能量和精力放在他們閱讀的資訊上 (Perse, 2001)，這樣的認知過程會影響疫情新聞對自己和他人影響的認知 (Wei, Lo, & Lu, 2010; Wei, Lo, Lu, & Hou, 2015)。由於新聞關注往往會促使人們作出符合現實的風險判斷 (Slater & Rusinski, 2005)，人們對於公共衛生風險新聞的關注越高，就越能夠意識到自己會受到新聞的影響。當人們對於疫情的關注程度增高，他們可能不再認為此類新聞對於自己沒有影響，這樣的想法會改變或降低新聞對自己與他人影響的認知差距。根據過去的相關研究文獻，以及新冠病毒疫情新聞遍布全美新聞媒體，我們提出下列假設：

假設二：受訪者對新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞的關注程度越高，對這種新聞的第三人效果認知差距越小。

自我效能感

Bandura (1997, p.12) 將自我效能視為一種個人信念，即人們有能力擁有應付不可預測或具有挑戰性的情況時所需的動力與行動能力。在風險和公共衛生傳播研究中，自我效能被視為能激發人們實現預期結果的主要因素。在風險感知的情況裡，「自我效能涉及人們對於可阻止或避免威脅的建議行為的有效性、可行性和難易程度感知」(Witte, 1994, p. 114)。由於較高的自我效能感與人們的較強的無畏感有關，而較低的自我效能感可能導致宿命感，過去的研究認為自我效能感是預測偏見認知的指標 (Salwen & Dupagne, 2003; Wei, Lo, & Lu, 2010)。Lee 與 Tamborini (2005) 指出，網路自我效能感與網路色情內容的第三

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人效果認知有顯著的關聯。Lee和Park(2016)在一項關於H1N1新聞的實驗研究中發現，自我效能感影響受訪者對於媒體對自我及他人影響的認知。因此，在研究美國新冠病毒疫情新聞所造成的影響時，自我效能感較高的人們可能會認為其他人受到新聞的影響較大，自己受到的影響較小。基於上述分析，我們提出下列假設：

假設三：受訪者的自我效能感越強，對新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞的第三人效果認知差距越小。

文化取向

Hofstede(1980, p. 21)將文化定義為「一種區分人類差異的集體思維」。因此，文化可以理解為一種社會信仰體系，而文化價值則指「對於思想和行動的統治概念和指導原則」(Srikandath, 1991, p. 166)，代表著個人的取向或認知傾向。在Hofstede的文化取向體系裡，其中一項關鍵文化價值為個人主義和集體主義。Hofstede(1980, p. 221)稱「個人主義」是脫離「團體、組織或其他集體」的情感獨立性。個人主義的反差則為集體主義。Hui(1988, p. 17)將其定義為「一系列與團結和關心他人有關的感覺、信念、行為意圖和行為」。在宏觀文化層面上，集體主義代表著一種個人需求須臣服於團體需求的取向(Kim, Sherman, & Updegraff, 2016)。在微觀心理學的層面上，集體主義可以被看作是Ting-Toomey和Dorjee(2018, p. 67)強調的「廣泛價值趨勢」，包括「我們」的身份大於「我」的身份、群體權利大於個人權利，以及群體需求大於個人需求和慾望。

學者(Schwartz, 1990)認為，個人主義和集體主義作為文化取向的維度之一，應被視為互相牽連，而不是兩極對立的二分法。與本研究相關且值得注意的是，文化價值能夠影響第三人效果認知(Lee & Tamborini, 2005)。過去的研究顯示(Hong, 2020)，亞洲國家在第三人效果認知方面沒有很大差異，然而西方國家對第三人效果認知的差異則相當明顯。其他學者則認為(Kim et al., 2016; Lee & Tamborini, 2005)，集體主義在評估媒體對社會的影響時，會降低自我－他人的認知差異。也就是說，人們能夠分享集體主義價值觀的機會越多時，就越不會認為與他們文化取向接近的親朋好友會受到媒體的影響。

此外，過去的研究表明，懷有個人主義文化的人傾向表現出較高的自我增強偏見 (self-enhancing bias)，這種偏見使他們相信他們本身不太可能受負面的生活事件影響 (Heine & Lehman, 1995; Lee & Tamborini, 2005)。這些研究進一步顯示，來自集體主義文化地區的人自我增強偏見較低，也因此比較可能認為自己會受到負面生活事件的影響。其他學者也發現 (Lo, So, & Zhang, 2012)，個人主義取向較高的人傾向表現出較高的自我增強偏見，因而使他們認為自己比較不會受到網路色情資訊的影響，因而相信網路色情內容對自己的負面影響較小，對他人的影響較大，進而使網路色情資訊負面影響的第三人認知差距變得更大。然而，具有較高集體主義價值觀的人往往具有較低的自我增強偏見，他們比較可能承認網路色情資訊對自己的影響，自我與他人的認知差距也因此變小。

此外，許多學者從根本上將第三人效果認知看作是人們自利偏誤的傾向 (Gunther & Mundy, 1993; Perloff, 1993; Tal-Or, Tsifti, & Gunther, 2009)。正如 Gunther 和 Mundy (1993, p. 58) 所言，「人類傾向通過樂觀或自利的眼光看待世界」，因而認為自己比較聰明，能力比其他人高，也比較不會受媒介信息的影響，這樣的價值觀是造成第三人效果的根本原因。因此，本研究根據相關文獻提出以下假設，以檢驗個人主義和集體主義價值取向，在影響美國民眾對新冠病毒疫情新聞影響的認知中所產生的作用。

假設四 a：受訪者的個人主義價值取向越高，對新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞所產生的第三人效果認知越強。

假設四 b：受訪者的集體主義價值取向越高，對新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞所產生的第三人效果認知越弱。

依據相同的邏輯，我們進一步建議，在嚴重打擊美國的新冠病毒疫情背景之下，比起那些持有高度個人主義價值取向的人，懷有較高集體主義價值觀的美國人在應對疫情新聞時，擁有較低的自我增強偏見。因此，我們可以合理地假設，比起個人主義水平較高的美國人來說，集體主義程度較高的美國人更容易認為，自己和其他美國人比較容易受到那些不斷更新的感染數據以及病例激增新聞的影響。

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假設四c：集體主義價值取向較高的受訪者，比個人主義取向較高的受訪者，更可能認為新冠病毒病例和死亡人數的新聞對自己和他人有較大的影響。

第三人效果與防疫行為

第三人效果是一種媒體效果理論，因為新聞對自己和他人造成不同影響的認知可能促使人們採取行動。Mutz (1989, p. 3) 認為，第三人效果意味著「對媒體影響認知的影響」。換句話說，對新聞影響的第三人效果認知，可能促使人們採取預防或保護行為。然而以往的研究表明 (Tewksbury, Moy, & Weis, 2004; Wei et al., 2008)，對疫情新聞的第三人效果認知差距並未促使人們採取防疫措施，反而是當人們認為自己容易受到疫情新聞影響時，比較可能採取行動。正如 Price、Tewksbury 和 Huang (1998) 所解釋的那樣，人們最了解自己。他們在評估媒體對自己和他人的影響時，將自己的認知作為可信賴的衡量標準，因此新聞對自己的影響更可能促使人們採取應對行動。事實上，過去研究顯示 (Wei et al., 2008, 2010)，關於禽流感等疫情新聞對自己認知的影響，是採取防疫措施的可信預測變項，而食物污染新聞對人們自身的影響，則是避免食用被污染食物的有力預測變項。

此外，風險預防理論如延伸平行過程模型 (The Extended Parallel Process Model) 指出 (Witte, 1994)，當人們認為新聞報導的事件風險很嚴重或者與自身利益息息相關時，會激發他們採取預防措施來控制風險、降低威脅 (Smith, Ferrara, & Witte, 2007; Witte & Morrison, 2000)。一項針對 H1N1 新聞報導的研究發現 (Liu & Lo, 2014)，對於自身健康的憂慮，而非對於他人健康的憂慮，可以預測人們採取防疫措施的意願。考慮到資訊尋求行為是公共衛生傳播研究中最常見的行為變項 (Carpenter, 2010)，過去的研究曾探討第三人效果認知如何影響疫情和健康資訊的尋求行為 (Wei, Lo, & Lu, 2007; Wei et al., 2008)。在控制公共衛生風險時，尋求健康資訊和採取防疫措施可以使人們減少不確定性，並形成對疫情的控制感，因此是最常見的行為反應。上述文獻為本研究最後一組假設提供了理論基礎，這一組假設主要檢驗美國民眾對新冠病毒疫情新聞影響的認知和他們的資訊尋求與防疫行為的關係。

假設五 a：當受訪者認為新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞對自己的影響大於對他人的影響時，就比較可能尋求新冠病毒相關資訊。

假設五 b：當受訪者認為新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞對自己的影響大於對他人的影響時，就比較可能分享新冠病毒相關資訊。

假設五 c：當受訪者認為新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞對自己的影響大於對他人的影響時，就比較可能採取防疫措施。

研究方法

抽樣程序

於2020年4月的第二個星期，即美國聯邦政府實施居家避疫令，美國疾病預防控制中心強烈建議進行社交距離後的第二週 (Mervosh, Lu, & Swales, 2020)，本研究通過 Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) 招募受訪者進行網路問卷調查。受訪者在完成此10分鐘的在線調查後可獲得1美元的報酬。由於本研究涉及特定國家針對新冠病毒疫情的問題，受訪者必須註冊為美國居民。

研究證明，MTurk平台的問卷填寫者有效呈現美國人口分佈比例 (Casler, Bickel, & Hackett, 2013)，並且比傳統抽樣方法的樣本更多樣化 (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011)。本研究採取分層隨機抽樣，以確保樣本有效反映美國國家人口分佈比例，包括年齡、性別和種族族裔等條件。本研究共有1,094名受訪者完整填答問卷。

這1,094名受訪者中的平均年齡為40.24歲 (標準差 = 13.07，範圍為18至76歲)，其中52%為男性 (n = 570)，76%為白人 (n = 831)，其次為非洲裔美國人 (n = 87, 8%)、西班牙裔/拉丁美洲人 (n = 77, 7%)、亞裔美國人 (n = 80, 7%)，以及其他族裔 (n = 18, 2%)。在教育程度方面，大約66.4%的受訪者 (n = 727) 擁有學士或碩博士學位。此外，有45.7% (n = 500) 的受訪者家庭收入超過60,000美元，16%的受訪者居

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住在加利福尼亞州 (n = 122)。就COVID-19相關的健康狀況而言，有89%的受訪者表示從未感染過該病毒 (n = 974)，有4%的受訪者表示已經確診，目前正在接受治療 (n = 44)。

變項測量

對於有關新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞的關注。本研究測量對於新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞關注程度的方式，是以五點量表(1代表沒有任何關注，5代表非常關注)，詢問受訪者對於報紙、電視、網路和社群媒體(如Twitter、Facebook、Instagram和YouTube)等七種不同媒體所呈現的新冠病毒報導的關注程度。我們用以上七種項目的平均值組合成一個指標，建構了「對於新冠病毒病例和死亡新聞的關注」的綜合指標(平均數 = 2.76, 標準差 = .93, 信度 = .80)。

新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞對自己 and 他人影響的認知。本研究以五點量表(1沒有任何影響，5非常影響)詢問受訪者以下問題：有關新冠病毒病例和死亡人數的新聞是否使「您」擔心(1)被病毒感染；(2)您的家人被病毒感染；以及(3)新冠病毒的蔓延。我們把這三個「自己」項目取平均值，以創建「對自己影響的認知」的指標(平均數 = 3.71, 標準差 = .97, 信度 = .81)。衡量有關新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞對他人的影響，也包括三個相同的項目(用「其他人」代替「您」)。使用相同的五點量表，本研究將這三個「其他人」項目取平均值，以形成「對他人影響的認知」的綜合指標(平均數 = 4.14, 標準差 = .82, 信度 = .87)。

第三人效果認知。第三人認知是第三人效果和第一人效果的認知差距，也就是新聞對其他人的負面影響和對自己的負面影響間的認知差距。計算方法是把受訪者認為新聞對其他人的負面影響的得分，減去受訪者認為新聞對自己的負面影響的得分。因此，第三人效果和第一人效果的認知差距越大，第三人效果認知越強。

自我效能感。自我效能感是指個人對自己成功完成某項行為的能力的認知(Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008)。參考先前研究採用的四個項目(Wei et al., 2008)，本研究根據新冠病毒疫情的情境修改，以五點量表(1非常不同意，5非常同意)詢問受訪者對於以下陳述的同意程

度，以了解他們面對新冠病毒威脅的自我效能感：(1) 我確信有多種方法可以有效地保護自己免受新冠病毒的感染；(2) 我了解有效保護自己免受新冠病毒感染的方法；(3) 我可以保護自己免受新冠病毒的侵害；(4) 我已採取防疫措施，可以有效地保護自己免受新冠病毒的感染。本研究將這四個項目取平均值，以創建「自我效能感」的綜合指標(平均數 = 4.22, 標準差 = .63, 信度 = .78)。

文化價值取向。我們將個人主義和集體主義視為在統一社會中並存的兩種文化取向，並採用 Chirkov、Ryan、Kim 和 Kaplan (2003) 構建的 12 個項目量表，衡量受訪者的個人價值觀(個人主義或集體主義價值取向)，並以五點量表(1 非常不同意，5 非常同意)詢問受訪者對於以下陳述的同意程度：(1) 我相信人們應該做自己的事；(2) 我相信人們大多數時候應該依靠自己，很少需要依靠別人；(3) 我相信人與人進行討論時，應該表現出直接和坦率的舉止；(4) 我相信人們應該依靠自己而不是別人；(5) 我認為人們應該相信發生在人們身上的事情，是根據他們自己的所作所為；(6) 我相信人們應該樹立一個獨立於他人的個人身份；(7) 如果親戚有經濟問題，我相信人們應該幫助親戚；(8) 我相信人們應該在一個人所屬的任何群體中保持和諧；(9) 我相信人們應該採取一些措施來保持同事/同學的健康；(10) 我相信人們應該在作出決定之前諮詢親朋好友並了解他們的想法；(11) 我相信人們應該與鄰居分享一些小東西；(12) 我相信人們應該與他人合作並與他人共度時光。本研究對前六個項目用平均值以獲取「個人主義價值取向」的指標(平均數 = 3.63, 標準差 = .70, 信度 = .76)，並通過對項目 7 到 12 用平均值(平均數 = 3.82, 標準差 = .60, 信度 = .71)來創建「集體主義價值取向」的指標。

資訊尋求行為。本研究用五點量表(1 從來沒有，5 經常)詢問受訪者從事以下行為的頻率：(1) 積極搜索有關新冠病毒的資訊；(2) 積極尋找有關如何預防新冠病毒的資訊；(3) 積極尋找有關新冠病毒爆發最新情況的資訊；(4) 嘗試搜索有關新冠病毒的更多資訊。本研究用這四個項目的平均值建立「資訊尋求行為」的綜合指標(平均數 = 3.63, 標準差 = .82, 信度 = .87)。

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資訊分享行為。我們用五點量表(1從來沒有, 5經常)詢問受訪者從事以下行為的頻率:(1)分享有關如何預防新冠病毒的資訊;(2)分享有關新冠病毒爆發當前進展的資訊;(3)分享有關新冠病毒的科學資訊。本研究用這三個項目的平均值構建「資訊共享」的綜合指標(平均數 = 3.09, 標準差 = 1.16, 信度 = .92)。

防疫行為。參考先前的研究(Ho, Peh, & Soh, 2013; Ludolph, Schulz, & Chen, 2018),我們用五點量表(1從來沒有, 5經常)要求受訪者指出他們遵守以下防疫措施的頻率:(1)遵循防疫原則,避免不必要的旅行;(2)遵循防疫原則,配戴口罩;(3)遵循防疫原則,與他人保持至少六英尺的距離;(4)遵循防疫原則,比平時更常用水和肥皂洗手;(5)遵循防疫原則,避免觸摸眼睛,鼻子或嘴巴。我們用這五個項目的平均值建立「防疫行為」的綜合指標(平均數 = 4.13, 標準差 = .72, 信度 = .75)。

控制變項。由於先前的研究表明性別、年齡、種族、教育程度與收入和第三人效果認知有關(Andsager & White, 2007; Wei et al., 2008, 2010),本研究把他們列為迴歸分析中的控制變項。

結果與分析

假設一預測,受訪者會認為新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞對他人的影響要大於對自己的影響。為了檢驗這個假設,我們進行了一系列配對的t檢驗。如表一呈現,分析結果支持了針對單個指標和綜合指標的第三人效果假設($t(1,093) = 15.81, p < .001$)。正如預期,受訪者認為其他人受到新冠病毒新聞的影響大於對自己的影響,因此產生第三人效果認知。

表一 新冠病毒大流行新聞對自己及他人影響的認知之平均值及t檢定

樣本	人數	自己	他人	t數值
擔心自己受感染	1,094	3.48 (1.16)	4.14 (.88)	18.57 ***
擔心家人受感染	1,094	3.81 (1.15)	4.17 (.93)	11.17 ***
擔心大流行蔓延	1,094	3.84 (1.11)	4.12 (.96)	8.86 ***
綜合效果	1,094	3.71 (.97)	4.14 (.82)	15.81 ***

註: 括弧中的數值為標準差; *** $p < .001$

假設二預測，對新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞的關注將與此類新聞造成的第三人效果認知呈現負相關。為了檢驗這個假設，本研究進行三個階層的迴歸分析，其中第一階層輸入性別、年齡、種族、教育程度和收入作為控制變項，第二階層輸入新聞關注程度，第三階層輸入個人主義和集體主義價值取向，最後一階層則輸入自我效能感。依變項包括新冠病毒新聞對自己的影響、對他人的影響，以及第三人效果認知。如表二所示，在控制了人口變項、個人主義和集體主義，以及自我效能感的影響之後，受訪者對新冠病毒疫情新聞的關注與第三人效果認知呈現顯著負相關。這些結果表明，當受訪者更加關注新冠病毒疫情新聞時，這類新聞對他們自己與他人影響之間的認知差異越小。造成第三人效果認知差異縮小的原因，是新聞關注使受訪者認為新聞對自己有較大的影響。假設二因而得到支持，表明人們對於新冠病毒新聞的關注降低了對此類新聞影響的第三人效果認知。

表二 階層迴歸分析預測新冠病毒新聞對自己影響的認知、對他人影響的認知，以及第三人效果認知

自變項	對自己影響的認知	對他人影響的認知	第三人效果認知
第一階層：人口變項			
性別 (男性)	.00	.00	.02
年齡	-.03	.02	.05
種族 (白人)	.00	.01	.01
教育程度	-.04	-.04	.01
收入	-.03	-.04	-.01
Adjusted R ²	0.9%	2.7%	0.7%
第二階層：資訊處理			
新聞關注	.09**	-.16***	-.24***
Incremental adjusted R ²	1.3%	0.7%	4.3%
第三階層：文化價值取向			
個人主義取向	-.09**	.06*	.15***
集體主義取向	.22***	.23***	-.03
Incremental adjusted R ²	4.9%	9.1%	3.09%
第四階層：效能感			
自我效能感	.01	.17***	.15***
Incremental adjusted R ²	0.0%	2.2%	1.7%
Total adjusted R ²	7.0%	14.7%	9.7%

註：上面各欄表格內的Beta值是所有變項均輸入迴歸方程式後的最後Beta值；*** $p < .001$;

** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$. N = 1,094

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假設三預測，自我效能感與對新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞的影響的第三人效果認知呈正相關。本研究採取先前的階層迴歸分析對此假設進行驗證(請參閱表二)。在控制了人口變項、個人主義、集體主義，以及新聞關注程度後，本研究發現，懷有較高的自我效能感的人更加會認為，比起對於自己的影響($B = .01, p > .05$)，新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞對其他人的影響更大($B = .17, p < .001$)。因此，就新冠病毒新聞的影響而言，自我效能與第三人效果認知顯著正相關($B = .15, p < .001$)。這樣的研究發現與文獻結果一致，證明自我效能感可加深人們對此類新聞影響的第三人效果認知，因為它使人們更相信此類新聞對於自己的影響較小，對別人的影響較大。假設三因而成立。

假設四a預測，關於新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞的影響，個人主義價值取向與第三人效果認知成正相關。先前的階層迴歸分析結果進一步顯示(如表二第三列)，就新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞對自己的影響而言，個人主義價值取向是第三人效果認知顯著且正向的預測變項($B = .15, p < .001$)。這些結果顯示，個人主義價值取向越高，越可能認為疫情新聞對自己的影響較小，對他人的影響較大，從而造成較大的第三人效果認知偏見。假設四a因而成立。

假設四b預測，關於新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞的影響，集體主義價值取向將與第三人效果認知成正相關。如表二第三列所示，集體價值取向並不是自我和他人認知差異的顯著預測變項($B = -.03, p > .05$)。假設四b因此沒有得到支持，表明即使人們具有較高的集體主義取向，也不會因此影響第三人效果認知。

假設四c預測，比起個人主義價值取向，懷有較高集體主義價值取向的人，更可能認為新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞對自己和他人具有較大的影響。先前的階層迴歸分析結果顯示(如表二)，集體主義價值取向與對自我影響的認知($B = .22, p < .001$)及對他人影響的認知($B = .23, p < .001$)均呈現顯著正相關。因此，集體主義價值取向與第三人效果認知沒有顯著相關性($B = -.03, p > .05$)。然而，個人主義價值取向與對自我影響的認知呈現顯著負相關($B = -.09, p < .001$)，卻同時與對他人影響的認知呈現顯著正相關($B = .06, p < .05$)。因此，當人們懷有

較大個人主義價值取向時，較可能認為其他人比自己更容易受到新冠病毒疫情新聞的影響。

此外，本研究使用Cohen和Cohen (1983)的方法，分析兩個迴歸係數之間的差異是否達到統計上的顯著水準。結果顯示，在第三人效果認知方面，個人主義價值取向和集體主義價值取向beta值之間的差異非常顯著($t = 4.55, p < .001$)。不出所料，與個人主義價值取向相比，集體主義價值取向與新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞對自己以及他人影響的認知之間，具有更強的正相關性。這些結果表明，在疫情大規模爆發的背景下，具有較高集體主義價值觀的受訪者對新冠病毒新聞影響的第三人效果認知差異，往往比具有較高個人主義價值觀的受訪者小。因此假設四c得到支持。

假設五a、假設五b和假設五c與對新冠病毒病例和死亡人數新聞的認知所引起的行為反應有關。這些假設預測，比起此類新聞對他人的影響，受訪者認為疫情新聞對自己影響的認知將與資訊尋求行為、資訊分享行為，以及防疫行為成顯著正相關。迴歸分析結果顯示(結果匯總於表三)，新聞關注和自我效能感是三個行為變項的重要預測變項。也就是說，受訪者對疫情新聞的關注度越高，或具有較高的自我效能感，就會越頻繁地尋求有關疫情的資訊，並與他人分享此類資訊，同時遵循政府實施的防疫措施。此外，集體主義價值取向可以顯著預測人們遵循防疫措施的頻率，但個人主義價值取向則對遵循防疫措施的頻率具有負面影響，並且無法顯著預測資訊尋求和分享行為。

綜合上述的分析，本研究發現新冠病毒新聞對自己影響的認知與三個行為變項皆呈現顯著正相關，包括尋求疫情資訊($B = .24, p < .001$)、與他人分享相關資訊($B = .13, p < .001$)，以及採取配戴口罩和社交距離等防疫措施($B = .24, p < .001$)。這些發現和先前的研究結果一致(Liu & Lo, 2014; Wei et al., 2010)，當受訪者認為疫情新聞對自己產生影響時，就會越頻繁地搜尋和分享有關疫情的資訊，並且更願意遵循一些強制性的防疫措施，例如配戴口罩、勤洗手和保持社交距離。然而，新聞對其他人影響的認知對三個行為變項均無正向的預測力：資訊搜索($B = -.04, p > .05$)、資訊分享($B = -.11, p < .001$)、採取

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防疫措施 ($B = -.03, p > .05$)。上述發現顯示，本研究的迴歸模型可分別解釋三個行為變項中高達三分之一的變異量。

此外，在資訊尋求、分享、防疫行為方面，對自己影響的認知和對他人影響的認知兩者的beta值之間的差異皆為顯著 ($t = 5.45, p < .001; t = 4.79, p < .001; t = 5.08, p < .001$)。這些結果表明，比起疫情最新消息對他人的影響，對自己的影響確實可以更有效、正向預測這三種行為變項。假設五a、假設五b和假設五c因此均獲得支持。

表三 階層迴歸分析預測新冠病毒資訊尋求、分享、防疫行為

自變項	資訊尋求	資訊分享	防疫行為
第一階層：人口變項			
性別(男性)	-.04	-.04	-.11***
年齡	.02	-.03	.04
種族(白人)	-.03	-.05	-.05
教育程度	.01	-.03	-.01
收入	.02	.00	.10***
Adjusted R ²	1.4%	3.1%	4.0%
第二階層：資訊處理			
新聞關注	.41***	.50***	.12***
Incremental adjusted R ²	19.9%	31.7%	2.2%
第三階層：文化價值取向			
個人主義取向	-.05	-.01	-.07**
集體主義取向	.12***	.08**	.11***
Incremental adjusted R ²	5.2%	1.9%	7.5%
第四階層：效能感			
自我效能感	.20***	.09**	.40***
Incremental adjusted R ²	3.1%	0.6%	12.9%
第五階層：第三人效果			
對自己的影響	.27***	.13***	.26***
對他人的影響	-.02	-.11***	-.02
Incremental adjusted R ²	6.3%	1.6%	5.5%
Total adjusted R ²	35.9%	38.9%	32.5%

註：上面各欄表格內的Beta值是所有變項均輸入迴歸方程式後的最後Beta值；*** $p < .001$;

** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$. N = 1,094

討論與建議

在新冠病毒演變成美國公共衛生災難的背景下，我們試圖通過探討有關受感染病例和死亡人數新聞的第三人效果認知，分析美國人面對新冠病毒的應對方式和行為。本研究發現，受訪者傾向相信他人受到新冠病毒新聞的影響較大，自己受到的影響較小。這項發現不僅和過去的研究結果相似 (Coleman, 1993; Wei et al., 2008)，也進一步驗證第三人效果理論在公共衛生新聞領域的適用性 (Wei et al., 2008)。此外，本研究的迴歸分析結果顯示，新聞關注可以顯著降低第三人效果認知。新聞關注一方面正向預測人們認為新聞對自己影響的認知，另一方面也負向預測人們認為新聞對他人影響的認知。這些研究結果指出，對於感染和死亡人數新聞更加關注的受訪者，認為疫情新聞對自己的影響較大，因此降低第三人效果認知差距。這些研究發現顯示，新聞報導會影響美國民眾對於疫情的反應。對新聞的關注使他們將疫情視為影響自己的風險，因而有助於減緩人們認為他人比自己更容易受新聞影響的認知偏見。

雖然新聞關注可以降低第三人效果認知差距，但自我效能感和個人主義價值取向卻可以增強人們自認為不易受到影響的特性，導致第三人效果認知加大。本研究結果發現，當人們的自我效能或個人主義價值取向較高時，他們傾向認為新聞對自己影響較小、對他人的影響較大，因而擴大了自己與他人之間的第三人效果認知差距。這些結果揭示自我效能與文化取向會影響美國民眾應對疫情的心態。較高的自我效能以及個人主義價值取向似乎導致了一種自認為比較不受疫情新聞影響的認知，這樣的認知不僅對於疫情控管沒有幫助，更可能造成新冠病毒在美國擴散蔓延。

對疫情新聞影響的自我認知也會影響人們是否遵循防疫措施。具體而言，迴歸分析的結果指出，疫情新聞對自己影響的認知可以有效預測三種行為：尋求疫情的相關資訊、與他人分享此類資訊、佩戴口罩且保持社交距離。換句話說，新冠病毒新聞對自己影響的認知似乎促使受訪者更願意遵循防疫措施，這些發現揭示不斷更新的疫情新聞的確會對受訪者的防疫行為產生影響。

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綜上所述，這些研究結果不僅幫助釐清為什麼新冠病毒疫情會在美國擴散，也同時說明新聞媒體在疫情控管中的重要作用。Markus和Kitayama (1991)指出，文化價值會影響人們的認知、情感和動機。本研究通過解釋文化價值對於第三人效果認知和行為的影響，擴展了第三人效果研究的範疇。相對於個人主義價值取向較高的受訪者，集體主義價值觀較高的受訪者較傾向認為新冠病毒的最新消息，對所有美國人包括他們自己都有影響，也因此比較願意搜集、分享疫情相關資訊，並採取防疫措施。

實際上，在本研究所有變項中，集體主義價值取向是對於新冠病毒新聞對自身和他人影響最有力的變項。這樣的文化價值取向有助於降低人們對於新聞影響的認知偏見。由於具有較高集體主義價值觀的受訪者，並未像個人主義價值觀較高的受訪者那樣，懷有自認為不受新聞影響的認知，他們似乎對不斷更新的疫情新聞產生了一種「我們都可能受影響」的認知，因而傾向認為疫情新聞對自己及他人都有相當的影響，造成第三人效果認知差距縮小。另一方面，個人主義價值取向會強化新聞對他人影響的認知，並降低對自己影響的認知，因而加強人們對於新聞影響的第三人效果認知。

就防疫行為而言，本研究發現，具有較高個人主義價值觀的受訪者往往很少或根本沒有採取防疫措施。因此，我們可以合理地推論，這些人對於疫情的無所作為，或許可歸因於他們的自我效能感及因個人主義而產生的自認為不受影響的認知。這些受訪者並不在乎、也不願採取任何防疫行為。相對而言，集體主義價值觀較高的受訪者採取了許多防疫行為，包括搜索和分享如何預防新冠病毒的資訊，並遵循配戴口罩、保持社交距離等規定。他們採取這些防疫措施也可能是為了大局著想，不僅保護自己，也保護他人避免感染新冠病毒。這些研究結果不僅和過去的研究發現相同(Lee & Tamborini, 2005)，並且進一步表明，文化價值不僅塑造了人們對於風險的第三人效果認知，更影響人們對於風險的反應與行為。

最後，我們也依據研究結果針對疫情新聞報導提供實務建議。我們認為，疫情新聞應平衡報導個人健康風險和社區或社會團體風險。

此外，記者也應擴大新聞報導範圍，從更新關鍵數據擴展到討論疫情對社會構成的風險，例如探討那些沒有感染病毒但也因此受到牽連的人所面臨的困境，因為本研究顯示，疫情新聞報導對受訪者自己的影響促使人們採取防疫措施，有助於控管疫情，並降低感染病毒的風險。自本研究於2020年4月完成以來，美國的感染病例總數和死亡人數持續增加。我們相信這項研究有助於了解人們對新冠病毒風險的認知以及採取防疫措施的行為，並對文化價值取向與第三人效果研究有一些貢獻。然而，本研究探討的變項關係只是變項之間的相關，並非因果關係。未來的研究應嘗試進行貫時性 (longitudinal) 研究，以探討變項的因果關係，使研究結果更具理論價值。

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For the Greater Good: The Role of News Attention and Culture in Affecting Americans' Biased Perceptions of News about Coronavirus Pandemic and Effecting Prevention

Ran WEI, Queenie Jo-Yun LI

Introduction

The 2019 novel coronavirus (a.k.a. COVID-19), an influenza pandemic that is thought to have originated as early as December 2019, has wrought havoc in the world. The United States declared a national emergency to combat the pandemic on March 13, 2020. However, the pandemic continued to surge across the nation and the number of confirmed cases in the U.S. has topped all other countries since May 12, 2020. As of August 2020, infected cases numbered five million with more than 160,000 deaths (World Health Organization, 2020).

Failure to follow the basics of pandemic preventive measures has been viewed as the primary reason for the rampant spread of the coronavirus in the U.S. For example, before they were made mandatory, face covering and social distancing, the essential measures to slow the spread of the virus, were debated and challenged in the name of personal freedom and civic liberty across the country. Unlike those countries in Asia where wearing a face mask has long been a social norm, some Americans viewed mandatory masking up as a violation of personal freedom (McKelvey, 2020). Others considered following these preventive measures as a tradeoff between individual freedom and public good. Critics (Andrew, 2020) have argued that this self-individuality is misguided and probably rooted in the Americans' "can-do spirit." A new study (Biddlestone, Green, & Douglas, 2020) identified such a cultural orientation as one of the causes of America's failure to contain the pandemic.

The virus surge and the failure to contain the pandemic in the United States have garnered wide media attention, dominating individuals' news consumption and resulting in frequent government press briefings (Shearer, 2020). The major media outlets in the U.S. have been providing daily

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updates on the pandemic. For instance, *The New York Times* publishes a set of dynamic infographics of the latest infected cases and deaths in each state. In addition, television stations run tickers of those updates on a daily basis.

The daily news updates about the latest number of affections and mortalities highlight an evolving situation regarding the scale of the pandemic in the United States. According to the social amplification of risk framework (Kasperson et al., 1988), the media can cause an augmentation of publicly perceived risk in an emergency due to its high value of newsworthiness (Kasperson & Kasperson, 1996). Therefore, news updates of the coronavirus provide a fitting context to examine the effects of such up-to-date news concerning the pandemic on Americans' risk perceptions and their willingness or failure to take preventive measures facing such an unprecedented public health crisis.

Specifically, guided by the third-person effect framework (Davison, 1983), this study looks into the thought processes of Americans in perceiving up-to-date news about the pandemic as a risk to themselves and to other Americans, and how their perceptions affect their behavioral responses to contain the spread of the virus. Moreover, considering the important role of individualist beliefs in adopting or rejecting recommended or mandatory preventive measures, this study focuses on exploring how cultural values may shape Americans' attitudinal and behavioral responses stimulated by the up-to-date news about the pandemic.

By integrating individual value orientations into the third-person effects theory, the results of this study will advance the understanding of media power in the context of a global public health crisis. The results will also shed some light on the question raised by *The New York Times* reporter (Leonhardt, 2020)—*Why the U.S. failure to control the virus was unique?* In addition, insights will be generated from the results of this study for the benefit of improving news reporting of a global pandemic.

Literature Review and Development of Hypotheses

The Third-Person Effects

The news media are not only an important source of information about public health risks or crisis (Liu & Lo, 2014), they are also a source of

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social influence during outbreaks of infectious diseases. For instance, coverage of outbreaks of infectious disease or a public health emergency may trigger public panic buying behavior. More importantly, past research (Choi, Yoo, Noh, & Park, 2017; Coleman, 1993; Lin & Lagoe, 2013) shows that exposure to news reports about public health risks shapes risk perceptions and affects preventive behavior.

Media scholars (Lee & Park, 2016; Ludolph, Shultz, & Chen, 2018; Wei, Lo, & Lu, 2008) have documented a biased perception that people tend to believe news about public health outbreaks or risks influences others more than themselves. The biased perception is in line with Davison's (1983) third-person effect hypothesis. He (1983, p. 3) stated it as people's disposition "to overestimate the influence that mass communications have on the attitudes and behavior of others." In other words, others (i.e., third persons) are considered as vulnerable to the influence of news about public health outbreaks or risks, whereas we (the first persons) are invulnerable.

Third-Person Effect of Health News

Past research (Golan & Banning, 2008; Lo, Wei, Guo, & Zhang, 2016) has accumulated sufficient evidence that biased perception is a widely observed phenomenon in the domain of health news. News reports about public health issues are not necessarily negative due to its informational nature. However, the coverage of outbreaks of public health pandemic often causes public anxiety, fear and even panic. Under these circumstances, Wei and his colleagues (2008, p. 263) argued that third-person perception would be present because such news may "upset people, contributing to their anxiety." This argument is consistent with that made by Gunther and Mundy (1993)—when a media message involves a large risk, biased perception could be observed.

Research on previous public health pandemics like SARS, H1N1 Flu, MERS, and Ebola (Lee & Park, 2016; Lim, Lee, Kim, & Chang, 2017; Lo, Wei, Lu, & Hou, 2015; Wei, Lo, & Lu, 2008) indicate that the biased perception regarding news about those epidemics was empirically supported. When people believe themselves invulnerable, the proverbial "vulnerable others" are thought to be influenced by news about the epidemics. In their study of the influence of media coverage of the H1N1

swine flu pandemic, Liu and Lo (2014) found that respondents reported self-perceived invulnerability to the influence of news about the pandemic. Considering news updates about the coronavirus outbreaks inform Americans about a raging public health crisis, and being affected is highly undesirable, we expected perceptual bias (i.e., others as more vulnerable to the influence of pandemic news than the self) to be found in appraising the impact of updated news about the pandemic. The following hypothesis is proposed.

H1: Respondents will perceive up-to-date news of coronavirus cases and deaths to have a greater influence on others than on themselves.

Factors that Mitigate Third-person Perception

In searching for cognitive or motivational explanations of the biased perception of media influences in society, past research (Perloff, 1999; Wei et al., 2008) has identified various psychological mechanisms and patterns of media use that amplify or mitigate third-person perception. In this study, we focus on three such variables as mechanisms that affect the perceptual discrepancy between the self and others in estimating the influence of up-to-date news about coronavirus pandemic: attention to latest news about coronavirus cases and deaths, self-efficacy, and cultural value orientation (individualism vs. collectivism).

Attention to health news. In the context of examining the perceived influence of news in society, media scholars have treated attention to news about a public health emergency or outbreaks of pandemic as either exposure to health news or a mechanism of processing such news. It is interesting to note that news attention was consistently found an antecedent that mitigates third-person perception. In studies that treated attention to news as focused exposure (Chaffee & Schleuder, 1986), people tended to heuristically think news exposure the same as influence. Since news about outbreaks of a public health pandemic may affect everyone in a community or country, including the self, attention to pandemics news reduces the self-other perceptual gap. A number of third-person effect studies of avian flu news (Wei et al., 2008) and H1N1 swine flu (Liu & Lo, 2014) reported that greater exposure to news of pandemics resulted in reduced third-person perception.

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Similarly, attention, which refers to a cognitive process in which an individual allocates his/her mental energy and efforts to stimulus and messages (Perse, 2001), was found to be negatively related to perceived effects of news about public health pandemics on oneself and others (Wei, Lo, & Lu, 2010; Wei et al., 2015). Because news attention tends to result in realistic risk judgements (Slater & Rusinski, 2005), the more that people paid attention to news about social and health risks, the more they would acknowledge that they would be affected by the news. Thus, attention to pandemic news reduces the self-other perceptual gap due to reduced biased perception of the self as invulnerable.

Drawing on the literature, and the fact that up-to-date news of coronavirus cases and mortality is all over the news media around the clock in America, we hypothesize that:

H2: Attention to up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths will be negatively related to third-person perception regarding the impact of these news updates.

Self-efficacy. Bandura (1997, p. 12) defined self-efficacy as personal beliefs that one is capable of executing the courses of action required to manage unpredictable or challenging situations. It is a widely applied antecedent that motivates people to feel they can achieve their expected outcomes in risk and health communication. In the context of risk perception, “efficacy pertains to the effectiveness, feasibility, and ease with which a recommended response impedes or averts a threat” (Witte, 1994, p. 114).

Considering that a higher level of self-efficacy is related to one’s greater sense of invulnerability, and a lower level of self-efficacy leads to feelings of fatalism, past research found self-efficacy as a predictor of biased perception (Salwen & Dupagne, 2003; Wei et al., 2010). Lee and Tamborini (2005) reported that Internet self-efficacy was significantly related to third-person perception of Internet pornography. In an experiment study of H1N1 news, Lee and Park (2016) found that self-efficacy affected participants’ perception of media influence on the self and others. Accordingly, in perceiving effects of up to date news about the coronavirus pandemic in America, those who hold self-efficacious views would be likely to perceive others as more impacted by the news than themselves.

H3: Self-efficacy will be positively related to third-person perception regarding the impact of up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths.

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Culture. Hofstede (1980, p. 21) defined culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others.” Thus, culture can be understood as a social beliefs system, while cultural values, which refer to “the governing ideas and guiding principles for thoughts and action” (Srikandath, 1991, p. 166), represent an individual’s orientation or cognitive predisposition. One of the key cultural values in Hofstede’s system is individualism and collectivism. Hofstede (1980, p. 221) termed “individualism” as the emotional independence from “groups, organizations, or other collectivities.”

The opposite of individualism is collectivism. Hui (1988, p. 17) defined it as “a set of feelings, beliefs, behavioral intentions, and behaviors related to solidarity and concern for others.” At the macro-cultural level, collectivism represents an orientation by which people’s individualistic needs are subordinated to those of the group (Kim, Sherman, & Updegraff, 2016). At the micro-psychometric level, collectivism can be viewed as cognitively “the broad value tendencies in emphasizing the importance of what Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2018, p. 67) called the ‘we’ identity over the ‘I’ identity, group rights over individual rights, and in-group-oriented needs over individual wants and desires.”

Critics (Schwartz, 1990) argued that the cultural dimension of individualism and collectivism as a cultural orientation should be viewed as relative, not a dichotomy in polar opposition. According to Triandis (1995), most cultures include a mixture of individualistic and collectivistic elements. Within the same culture, most people have both individualistic and collectivistic tendencies (Triandis, 1994). In fact, past research (Kim, Triandis, Kagitcibasi, Choi, & Yoon, 1994; Lo, So, & Zhang, 2012) has shown that the two cultural orientations coexist in the same cultural system. Therefore, we believe that in the United State, there are people who are more individualistic and others who are more collectivistic. Even among Americans who tend to be individualistic, they may be collectivist oriented during a public health crisis in the spirit of helping people to help themselves. In the present study, we are interested in examining how American respondents’ individualist and collectivist orientation influence their perceived effects of news updates about coronavirus cases and deaths.

It’s worth noting and relevant to the present study that cultural values play a role in shaping third-person perception (Lee & Tamborini, 2005). Past research (Hong, 2020) reported that Asian countries did not show much

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difference in third-person perception. However, third-person perception was found unequivocal in Western countries. Others (Kim et al., 2016; Lee & Tamborini, 2005) suggested that collectivism moderates the self-other perceptual discrepancy in appraising media influence in society. That is, the more they share the collectivist values in a society, the less likely that they will perceive culturally close others to be impacted by the media.

In addition, past research has shown that people from individualistic cultures tended to exhibit a higher level of self-enhancing bias, which leads them to believe they were less likely to suffer from negative life events (Heine & Lehman, 1995; Lee & Tamborini, 2005). The research further showed that people from collectivistic cultures were found to have a lower level of self-enhancing bias; they were then more likely to perceive themselves to be more affected by negative life events. Others (Lo et al., 2012) also reported that people with high levels of individualist orientation tend to display higher levels of self-enhancing bias, which leads them to believe they were less likely to be impacted by Internet pornography. As a result, the third-person perceptual gap regarding the negative impact of Internet pornography became larger. On the other hand, people with high levels of collectivist values tended to have lower levels of self-enhancing bias; they were more likely to acknowledge the influence of Internet pornography on themselves. As such, the self-other perceptual gap became smaller.

Furthermore, several scholars have viewed third-person perception fundamentally as a human tendency of self-serving bias (Gunther & Mundy, 1993; Perloff, 1993; Tal-Or, Tsfati, & Gunther, 2009). As Gunther and Mundy (1993, p. 58) put it, that “a human tendency to see the world through optimistic or self-serving lenses” was the underlying cause of the third-person phenomenon. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are developed to examine the role of individualist and collectivist value orientation in affecting Americans’ perceptions of the impact of up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths.

H4a: Individualist value orientation will be positively related to third-person perception regarding the impact of up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths.

H4b: Collectivist value orientation will be negatively related to third-person perception regarding the impact of up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths.

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Following the same logic, we further propose that in the context of the coronavirus pandemic that has hit American hard, Americans who are high in values oriented toward collectivism will have lower level of self-enhancing bias in response to COVID-19 news than others who are high individualist value orientation. Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesize that Americans with high level of collectivism are more likely to perceive themselves and other Americans to be more vulnerable to the influences of the constantly updated news of statistics and spikes in infected cases than those with high level of individualism.

H4c: Collectivist value orientation will be more strongly and positively related to perceived effects of up-to-date news about the coronavirus cases and deaths on oneself and others than will individualist value orientation.

Preventive Behavior Triggered by Perception

The third-person effect hypothesis is considered a leading media effect theory because the differential perceived effects of news on the self and on others prompt people to take action. As Mutz (1989, p. 3) argued, the third-person effects mean “the influence of perception of media influence.” In other words, third-person perception of news prompts people to engage in preventive or protective behaviors.

In the context of coping with public health pandemics, past research (Tewksbury, Moy, & Weis, 2004; Wei et al., 2008) shows that people who have biased perception of pandemic news are not motivated to engage in any action. However, they are more likely to take action if they believe themselves vulnerable to the influence of the news. As Price, Tewksbury and Huang (1998) explained, people know themselves the best, and they apply their knowledge about the self as a trustworthy gauge when assessing media impact on themselves relative to others. Evidence (Wei et al., 2008, 2015) shows that perceived influence of news about public health pandemics on oneself such as avian flu is a reliable predictor of taking protective action. The perceived effects of tainted food news on the self was a stronger predictor of intention to take action to avoid consuming the food products.

In addition, risk prevention models such as the extended parallel process model (Witte, 1994) suggests that a risk message, when viewed as

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severe or relevant personally, will motivate people to take preventive measures to gain control over the threat (Smith, Ferrara, & Witte, 2007; Witte & Morrison, 2000). A study of news coverage of H1N1 (Liu & Lo, 2014) found that concern for their own health rather than others predicted people's intention to take protective measures.¹

Considering information-seeking as the most studied outcome variable in health communication (Carpenter, 2010), information-seeking about a pandemic and about vaccines (Wei, Lo, & Lu, 2007; Wei et al., 2008) were added to the taxonomy of behavioral responses to third-person perception. In containing a public health risk, seeking information makes sense because the action enables people to reduce uncertainty and develop a sense of control over the pandemic. The literature provides the ground for the last set of hypotheses to examine the influence of perceived effects of up-to-date news about coronavirus on Americans' information-seeking behavior and adoption of preventive measures.

H5a: Perceived effects of up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths on oneself will be more strongly and positively related to searching for information about the pandemic than will perceived effects on others.

H5b: Perceived effects of up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths on oneself will be more strongly and positively related to sharing information about the pandemic than will perceived effects on others.

H5c: Perceived effects of up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths on oneself will be more strongly and positively related to adoption of preventive measures than will perceived effects on others.

Method

Sampling Procedures

An online survey (i.e., Qualtrics) was conducted with participants in the United States in the second week of April 2020, the week after the stay-at-home order was implemented by the federal government and social distancing was strongly recommended by the CDC (Mervosh, Li, & Swales,

2020). Participants were recruited through a post on Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). They were compensated with \$1 for completing this 10-minute online survey. The participants had to be registered as residents of the United States because this survey was concerning the issue of the COVID-19 pandemic in this specific country. In addition, participants had to have at least 90% or higher approval ratings from their requesters to ensure the quality of responses.

The population of Mturk workers was shown to represent the demographic distribution in the United States (Casler, Bickel, & Hackett, 2013) and was found to be more diverse than the sample recruited from traditional survey methods (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). An increasing body of research suggests that samples recruited from MTurk are valid and reliable for studies that involve normal or clinical populations (Casler et al., 2013). Informed by prior research that has demonstrated the quality of samples recruited from online data collection, particularly via MTurk, we deemed it appropriate to apply inferential statistics to the sample.

From the online panel, a total of 1,094 sampled respondents successfully completed the survey. Of the 1,094 respondents, the mean age was 40.24 ($SD = 13.07$, ranging from 18 to 76). Gender was about even with 52% of them were male ($n = 570$). Among the respondents, 76% were Caucasian ($n = 831$), followed by African American ($n = 87$, 8%), Hispanic/Latino ($n = 77$, 7%), Asian American ($n = 80$, 7%), and others ($n = 18$, 2%). In terms of education, approximately 66.4% of the participants ($n = 727$) held bachelors or post-graduate degrees. Among the respondents, 45.7% ($n = 500$) had more than \$60,000 of household income. About 16% of the participants currently live in the state of California ($n = 122$). In terms of health conditions related to COVID-19, 89% of participants indicated that they had never been infected with the virus ($n = 974$) and 4% said that they were confirmed positive and currently were under medical treatment ($n = 44$).

Measurement

Attention to up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths. Respondents were asked to indicate how much attention they paid to up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths respectively in newspapers, on television, and on the Internet and social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. These items were scaled from “1” (“no

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attention at all”) to “5” (“a great deal of attention”). A composite measure of “attention to news updates about coronavirus cases and deaths” was constructed by averaging the seven items ($M = 2.76$, $SD = .93$, $\alpha = .80$).

Perceived effects of up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths on oneself and others. On a 5-point scale, where “1” meant “not at all” and “5” meant “a great deal,” respondents were first asked to indicate whether up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths made “you” concerned about (1) getting infected with the virus, (2) your family members getting infected with the virus, and (3) the spread of the pandemic. The three “self” items were averaged to create a measure of “perceived effects on oneself” ($M = 3.71$, $SD = .97$, $\alpha = .81$).

The measure of the perceived effect of up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths on others consisted of three parallel items (replacing “you” with “others”). The same five-point scale was used. The three “others” items were averaged to form a composite measure of “perceived effects on others” ($M = 4.14$, $SD = .82$, $\alpha = .87$).

Third-person perception. Third-person perception scores were derived by subtracting the perceived effect of up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths on oneself from the score of perceived effect of the news updates on others.

Self-efficacy. This construct refers to an individual’s perception of his or her competence to successfully perform a behavior (Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008). It was measured with four items adopted from previous studies (Wei et al., 2008) to fit the content of the coronavirus pandemic. Using the 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1” (strongly disagree) to “5” (strongly agree), respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with the following statements reflecting their efficacy to cope with the threat of coronavirus: (1) I am sure there are ways to effectively protect myself from getting coronavirus; (2) I understand the methods to effectively protect myself from getting coronavirus; (3) I can protect myself from getting coronavirus; and (4) I have taken precautionary actions that can effectively protect myself from getting coronavirus. The four items were averaged to create a composite measure of “self-efficacy” ($M = 4.22$, $SD = .63$, $\alpha = .78$).

Cultural value orientation. We treated individualism and collectivism as two cultural tendencies that coexist in the same culture. To measure individualism and collectivism as personal traits, we used a 12-item scale constructed by Chirkov, Ryan, Kim and Kaplan (2003). Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement (5 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree)

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with the following statements: (1) I believe people should do one's own thing; (2) I believe people should rely on oneself most of the time and rarely rely on others; (3) I believe people should behave in a direct and forthright manner when they have discussions with people; (4) I believe people should depend on oneself rather than on others; (5) I believe people should believe that what happens to people is their own doing; (6) I believe people should cultivate a personal identity, independent of others; (7) I believe people should help a relative, if the relative has financial problems; (8) I believe people should maintain harmony within any group that one belongs to; (9) I believe people should do something to maintain coworker's/classmates' well-being; (10) I believe people should consult close friends and get their ideas before making a decision; (11) I believe people should share little things with one's neighbors; and (12) I believe people should cooperate with and spend time with others. The first six items were averaged to form an index of "individualist value orientation" ($M = 3.63$, $SD = .70$, $\alpha = .76$). A measure of "collectivist value orientation" was created by averaging items 7 to 12 ($M = 3.82$, $SD = .60$, $\alpha = .71$).

Information searching. Using a 5-point scale (1 meant "never" and 5 meant "always"), respondents were asked to indicate how often they had done the following: (1) actively searching for information regarding coronavirus; (2) actively searching for information in terms of how to prevent coronavirus; (3) actively searching for information regarding the updated situation of coronavirus outbreak; and (4) attempting to search more information regarding coronavirus. A composite measure of "information searching" was built by averaging the four items ($M = 3.63$, $SD = .82$, $\alpha = .87$).

Information sharing. Respondents were asked to indicate how often they had engaged in these activities: (1) sharing information about how to prevent coronavirus; (2) sharing information regarding the current developments of the coronavirus outbreak; and (3) sharing scientific information regarding coronavirus. A composite measure of "information sharing" was built by averaging the three items ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.16$, $\alpha = .92$).

Adoption of preventive measures. The measures of this dependent variable were adapted from previous research (Ho, Peh, & Soh, 2013; Ludolph, Schulz, & Chen, 2018). On a 5-point scale, where "1" meant "never" and "5" meant "often," respondents were asked to indicate how often they had (1) followed the prevention guidelines to avoid non-essential traveling; (2) followed the prevention guidelines to wear a facial mask; (3) followed the prevention guidelines to stay at least six feet away from

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others; (4) followed the prevention guidelines to wash hands more often than usual with water and soap; and (5) followed the prevention guidelines to avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth. A composite measure of “*adoption of preventive measures*” was built by averaging the five items ($M = 4.13$, $SD = .72$, $\alpha = .75$).

Control variables. Respondents were asked about their gender, age, race, education and income. These variables were used as controls in regression analyses because previous studies indicated that they were related to news attention, self-efficacy and the third-person effects (Andsager & White, 2007; Wei et al., 2008, 2010).

Results

H1 predicted that respondents would perceive up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths to have a greater impact on others than on themselves. To test the hypothesis, we conducted a series of paired *t*-tests. Table 1 presents the results, which supported the baseline third-person effect hypothesis for both individual measures and the combined effects index [$t(1,093) = 15.81$, $p < .001$]. As expected, respondents believed that others were more impacted by up-to-date coronavirus news than they were, hence a biased perception was documented.

Table 1 Mean Estimates of Perceived Effects of Up-to-Date News about the Coronavirus Pandemic on Self and Others

Samples	N	Oneself	Others	t-values
Concerned about getting infected	1,094	3.48 (1.16)	4.14 (.88)	18.57***
Concerned about family members getting infected	1,094	3.81 (1.15)	4.17 (.93)	11.17***
Concerned about the spread of the pandemic	1,094	3.84 (1.11)	4.12 (.96)	8.86***
Combined effect	1,094	3.71 (.97)	4.14 (.82)	15.81***

Notes: Figures in parentheses are standard deviations; *** $p < .001$

H2 predicted that attention to up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths would be negatively related to third-person perception concerning the impact of such news. To test it, three hierarchical regression analyses were performed, in which gender, age, race, education, and income were entered first as control variables. The second block entered attention. The third block entered individualist value orientation and collectivist value

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orientation. The final block entered self-efficacy. The dependent variables included perceived effects of the news updates about the coronavirus on oneself, perceived effects of such news updates on others and third-person perception.

As shown in Table 2, after controlling the influences of demographics, individualism, collectivism, and self-efficacy, attention to news updates on the coronavirus cases was significantly and negatively related to third-person perception. These results indicate that the more respondents paid attention to the latest news on the coronavirus pandemic, the smaller the perceptual discrepancy between the self and others, largely due to the fact that they perceived a stronger impact of the news on themselves. H2 was supported, suggesting attention to updated coronavirus news attenuates the biased perception of the impact of such news.

Table 2 Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Perceived Effects on Oneself, Perceived Effects on Others and Third-Person Perception

Independent Variables	Perceived Effects		Third-Person Perception
	on Oneself	on Others	
Block 1: Demographics			
Gender (male)	.00	.00	.02
Age	-.03	.02	.05
Race (White)	.00	.01	.01
Education	-.04	-.04	.01
Income	-.03	-.04	-.01
Adjusted R ²	0.9%	2.7%	0.7%
Block 2: Information Processing			
News attention	.09**	-.16***	-.24***
Incremental adjusted R ²	1.3%	0.7%	4.3%
Block 3: Cultural Value Orientation			
Individualist orientation	-.09**	.06*	.15***
Collectivist orientation	.22***	.23***	-.03
Incremental adjusted R ²	4.9%	9.1%	3.09%
Block 4: Efficacious View			
Self-efficacy	.01	.17***	.15***
Incremental adjusted R ²	0.0%	2.2%	1.7%
Total adjusted R ²	7.0%	14.7%	9.7%

Notes: Beta weights are from final regression equation with all blocks of variables in the model; *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$. N = 1,094

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H3 predicted that self-efficacy would be positively related to third-person perception regarding the impact of up-to-date news about the coronavirus cases and deaths. Results of the previous hierarchical regression analyses were also used to test it (refer to Table 2). After controlling the influences of demographics, individualist value orientation, collectivist value orientation, and news attention, self-efficacy was a stronger predictor of perceived effects of news updates about coronavirus cases and deaths on others ($B = .17, p < .001$) than perceived effects of such news on the self ($B = .01, p > .05$). As a result, self-efficacy was significantly and positively related to third-person perception regarding the impact of the latest coronavirus news ($B = .15, p < .001$). Consistent with the literature, this result indicates that self-efficacy deepens the biased perception of the impact of such news because of it leads to self-perceived invulnerability. H3 was supported.

H4a predicted that individualist value orientation would be positively related to third-person perception regarding the impact of up-to-date news of coronavirus cases and deaths. Results of the previous hierarchical regression analyses were used to test it. As Table 2 (column 3) further shows, individualist value orientation was a significant and positive predictor of third-person perception regarding the impact of up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths on the self ($B = .15, p < .001$). These results indicate that individualist value orientation was associated with self-perceived invulnerability, resulting in forming biased perception of others as being more vulnerable. H4a was supported.

H4b predicted that collectivist value orientation would be negatively related to third-person perception regarding the impact of up-to-date news about the worsening coronavirus pandemic. As shown in Table 2 (column 3), collectivist value orientation was not a significant predictor of the self-other perceptual gap ($B = -.03, p > .05$). H4b was not supported, indicating stronger orientation toward collectivism does not result in biased perception.

H4c predicted that collectivist value orientation would be more strongly and positively related to perceived impact of up-to-date news of coronavirus cases and deaths on the self and on others than will individualist value orientation. Results of the previous hierarchical regression analyses were used to test it. As shown in Table 2, collectivist value orientation was significantly and positively related to both perceived effects on the self ($B = .22,$

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$p < .001$) and on others ($B = .23, p < .001$). Thus, collectivist value orientation was not significantly related to third-person perception ($B = -.03, p > .05$). On the other hand, individualist value orientation was a negative predictor of perceived effects of such news on the self ($B = -.09, p < .001$) but a positive predictor of perceived effects on others ($B = .06, p < .05$). As a result, individualist value orientation turned out to be a positive predictor of biased perception of others as being impacted by the latest updates on the coronavirus pandemic ($B = .15, p < .001$).

Additional tests for the difference between two regression coefficients using Cohen and Cohen's (1983) method show that the difference between the betas of individualist value orientation and collectivist value orientation on third-person perception was significant ($t = 4.55, p < .001$). As expected, collectivist value orientation was more strongly and positively related to perceived effects of up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths on the self as well as on others than was individualist value orientation. These results suggest that in the context of the massive outbreaks across America, respondents with collectivist values have tended to have a less biased perception about the impact of the latest coronavirus news than those with individualist values. Facing the pandemic, they seem to have a sense of "we are in this together." H4c was supported.

H5a, H5b and H5c, which were concerned with the behavioral responses to perceived effects of up-to-date news about coronavirus cases and deaths, predicted that perceived effects of the news on the self would be more strongly and positively related to information searching, information sharing, and adoption of preventive measures than would perceived effects of such news on others. More regression analyses were performed to test them. Results of which are summarized in Table 3.

As Table 3 shows, news attention and self-efficacy were significant predictors of the three behavioral outcome variables. That is, the more attention respondents paid to up-to-date news about infections, and the more they were self-efficacious, the more often they sought information about the pandemic, shared such information with others, and took mandated preventive action. Further, it's interesting that collectivism is a positive predictor, while individualism is a negative or non-significant predictor, of the adoption of these measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

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With the influences of the above predictors being taken into account, perceived effects of up-to-date coronavirus news on the self were significantly and positively associated with information searching about the pandemic ($B = .24, p < .001$), sharing such information with others ($B = .13, p < .001$), and adoption of preventive measures ($B = .24, p < .001$) such as masking up and social distancing. Consistent with previous research (Liu & Lo, 2014; Wei et al., 2010), the more that respondents acknowledged being impacted by the up-to-date news, the more frequently they engaged in seeking and sharing information about the pandemic. In addition, they adopted some of the mandated preventive measures such as wearing masks, washing hands, and keeping social distance. However, perceived effects of the news on others were negatively related to all three dependent variables, namely information searching ($B = -.04, p > .05$), information sharing ($B = -.11, p < .001$), and adoption of mandated preventive measures ($B = -.03, p > .05$). Thanks to these significant predictors, the regression models succeeded in accounting for one-third of the variance of the three behavioral variables.

The differences between the betas of perceived effects on the self and perceived effects on others for information searching ($t = 5.45, p < .001$), information sharing ($t = 4.79, p < .001$), and adoption of preventive measures ($t = 5.08, p < .001$) were all significant. These results indicate that perceived effects of latest updates on the pandemic on the self were indeed a stronger predictor of the three behavioral measures than perceived effects on others. H5a, H5b and H5c were all supported.

Table 3 Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Information Searching, Information Sharing and Adoption of Preventive Measures

Independent Variables	Information Searching	Information Sharing	Preventive Measures
Block 1: Demographics			
Gender (male)	-.04	-.04	-.11***
Age	.02	-.03	.04
Race (White)	-.03	-.05	-.05
Education	.01	-.03	-.01
Income	.02	.00	.10***
Adjusted R ²	1.4%	3.1%	4.0%
Block 2: Information Processing			
News attention	.41***	.50***	.12***
Incremental adjusted R ²	19.9%	31.7%	2.2%
Block 3: Cultural Value Orientation			
Individualist orientation	-.05	-.01	-.07**
Collectivist orientation	.12***	.08**	.11***
Incremental adjusted R ²	5.2%	1.9%	7.5%
Block 4: Efficacious View			
Self-efficacy	.20***	.09**	.40***
Incremental adjusted R ²	3.1%	0.6%	12.9%
Block 5: Perceived Effects on			
The self	.27***	.13***	.26***
Others	-.02	-.11***	-.02
Incremental adjusted R ²	6.3%	1.6%	5.5%
Total adjusted R ²	35.9%	38.9%	32.5%

Notes: Beta weights are from final regression equation with all blocks of variables in the model;
 *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$. $N = 1,094$

Discussion

In the context of the coronavirus pandemic that turned into a public health disaster in America, we have attempted to study the reasons why and how Americans responded to the pandemic by examining the perceived effects of up-to-date news reports about infected cases and deaths. Consistent with the literature (Coleman, 1993; Wei et al., 2008), our results

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show that respondents tend to have a biased perception by believing others are more impacted by latest updates on coronavirus than themselves, further validating the applicability of third-person effects theory in the domain of public health news (Wei et al., 2008).

However, results of regression analyses reveal that news attention plays a significant role in attenuating the biased perception because it is a positive predictor of perceived effects of the news on the self, but a negative predictor of perceived effects on others. What these results mean is that surveyed Americans who paid attention to up-to-date news about the infections and mortalities tended to be open about being impacted by the updated news on the pandemic. As expected, focused exposure to the news updates mitigates third-person perception. This particular result suggests how up-to-date news reports, such as infographics, news tickers on TV screen, and flashing digital signs on social media, influence Americans—attention paid to up-to-date news about the pandemic helps reduce their biased perception of others as being more impacted by the news than themselves. At the same time, attention to the news makes them acknowledge the pandemic as a risk to themselves.

However, unlike the effect of media use patterns on mitigating biased perceptions of latest coronavirus news, efficacious attitude and individualist value orientation tend to enhance the self-perceived invulnerability because the more surveyed Americans considered themselves as self-efficacious and individualistic in value orientation, the greater their perceived effects of the news updates on others. These two variables enhanced the biased perception, thus widening the self-other perceptual gap. These results reveal the mind-set of the surveyed Americans in coping with the pandemic: their can-do spirit and an individualist value orientation seem to result in a sense of self-perceived invulnerability, which turned out to be unfounded, because the pandemic became more infectious and deadly in America since this survey in April 2020.

The self-perceived invulnerability then has consequences for adoption of mandated preventive measures. Specifically, the results show that perceived effects of news updates about the pandemic on the self are a consistent and positive predictor of three preventive measures: seeking more information about the pandemic, sharing such information with others, and wearing face masks, keeping social distancing, etc. Then, perceived effects of updated coronavirus news on oneself seem to motivate respondents to

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take preventive actions, revealing the influences of constantly updated news of the pandemic on respondents' preventive behavior.

Taken together, these results shed some light on the why and how some Americans failed to contain the coronavirus pandemic in spring 2020. They also suggest how news media play an important role in helping contain the pandemic. By influencing respondents' risk perceptions and behavioral responses triggered by the perceptions, our study generates some fresh evidence in support of the thesis (Kasperson & Kasperson, 1996) that news media are an important source of social influence in a public health crisis.

More importantly, Markus and Kitayama (1991) suggested that culture has implications for understanding people's cognition, emotion, and motivation. Our study contributes to the third-person effects research by offering a cultural explanation of the perceptual bias and behavioral consequences of the biased perception. Compared to respondents of individualist value orientation, those Americans in our study who scored high on collectivist values show no self-perceived invulnerability. They perceived the up-to-date news about the coronavirus as impactful on all Americans, including themselves.

In fact, collectivist value orientation is the strongest and positive predictor of perceived effects of the latest coronavirus news on oneself and on others, reducing the biased perception. These results indicate that the respondents with high collectivist values do not have the perceptual bias of invulnerability like those with high individualist values. It seems that they have a sense of "we're in this all together" in evaluating the pandemic that is constantly updated in the news media. On the other hand, individualist value orientation is a positive predictor of perceived effects on others but a negative predictor of perceived effects on the self, enhancing the biased perception. These results reveal that the effect of individualistic mentality on the formation of biased perception of risks posted by the coronavirus pandemic.

Behaviorally, it is not surprising that respondents with high individualist values tend to do little or nothing to combat the spread of the virus. Based on our results, it is reasonable to attribute their inaction to their self-efficacy and the sense of self-perceived invulnerability. These respondents simply did not care and bother to engage in any preventive behavior. Respondent with collectivist values, on the other hand, engaged in a number of preventive behaviors, including searching and sharing information about how to prevent coronavirus and followed the mandates in wearing masks, sanitizing, and so

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on and so forth. They take those measures to protect themselves, and probably they do this for the greater good. Consistent with the literature (Lee & Tamborini, 2005), results of this study show that culture not only shapes third-person perception of risks, but also has consequence for behavioral responses to the risk.

Findings of this study have theoretical significance. In the context of a global public health crisis, our findings provide new empirical evidence in support of the robustness of third-person effects in explaining why individuals differed in their behavioral responses to the public health crisis in terms of searching and sharing information as well as adopting preventive measures. These findings contribute to risk communication. Furthermore, we incorporated cultural orientations in the third-person framework. Cultural orientation was found as an important underlying mechanism that affects individuals' processing of pandemic news and subsequently their risk-preventive behaviors. Thus, incorporating culture in the analytic framework enhances the predictive power of perceptions of public health news over individuals' behavioral responses in the contexts of a global pandemic. Hence, another contribution to health communication.

Our findings also have practical implications for reporting of the pandemic. For instance, news reports should balance health risks to a person with risks to community or social groups. Also, reporters should broaden the scope of reporting beyond updates of key statistics to the notion of the pandemic as a risk to society. That is, the predicament of those who are not infected but implicated by those infected members in society. Our results suggest that the social aspect of perceived health risks reported in the news motivate people to engage in preventive behavior.

The total of infected cases and death toll continue to increase in the United States since this study was completed in April 2020. The results of this one-shot study offer some insights into the perception of the risk posed by coronavirus and the motivation of taking preventive action associated with that risk perception, but they should be interpreted as relational, not causal. Future research should attempt a longitudinal design to ascertain the causality.

Moreover, using a Caucasian-dominated sample from an online panel may limit the extent to which the findings can be generalizable. Future search should consider sampling from the American general population. In addition, as the pandemic raged on in America in the rest of 2020 and

beyond, it would be derisible to replicate the present study with longitudinal data. Long-term data will not only help track change in Americans' perceptions of news influences on their preventative behavior, but also validate the observed relationships reported in this one-shot study. This is yet another direction for future research.

Notes

- 1 We did not use third-person perception as a predictor of behavioral outcomes because it is methodologically an unreliable predictor of behavioral component of third-person effect. As Lo and Wei (2002) argued, the self-other perceptual gap does not distinguish between those who perceive media messages to have high influence on themselves and on others and those who perceive media messages to have low influence on themselves and on others.

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