

Gender Role Concerning Trust of the Public Sector to Awareness of the Covid-19: A Multigroup Analysis

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Received: 1 March 2022; Revised: 8 April 2022; Accepted: 22 April 2022

Abstract

This study was based on good governance theory, which considers the importance of citizens' trust in government in multiple contexts, including the public health crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Various studies have been conducted to determine the factors that influence people's behavior in times of contagion. This study looked at how citizens' risk perceptions of being infected and trust in government influenced their behavior. Additionally, gender role was assessed to see if it shaped behavioral changes. Data was collected from 505 respondents by a river sampling technique and analyzed using SmartPLS 3.0 software. The study found that the onset of coronavirus had a significant impact on citizens' risk perceptions of being infected, change of behaviors, and trust in government. Moreover, it was revealed that females were more conscious of the infection risks associated with the pandemic and, as such, behaved responsibly than their male counterparts. This study adds to the existing body of literature that government decisions in the best interests of citizens can help foster trust among citizens throughout a crisis.

Keywords: Behavioral Changes During COVID-19; Multigroup Analysis; Risks Perceptions of Being Infected; Trust in Government; Gender

How to Cite: Musa, A. E. Z. (2022). Gender Role Concerning Trust of the Public Sector to Awareness of the Covid-19: A Multigroup Analysis. *Otoritas : Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan*, 12(1), 16-29.

Permalink/DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26618/ojip.v12i1.7172>

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INTRODUCTION

Trust plays a vital role in the effectiveness of any government. For the last two decades, building trust has been the core factor among the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) governments (Jennings, Stoker, Valgarðsson, Devine, & Gaskell, 2021). The COVID-19 crisis presented a test for trust-building strategies at all government levels worldwide (Mansoor, 2021a). In a bid to respond to the threats of the pandemic, many nations struggled to build trust among their citizens (Al-Okaily, Alqudah, Matar, Lutfi, & Taamneh, 2020). From the outset, all countries took bold decisions to help avert the spread of the virus. However, such decisions, including the closure of business units, workplaces, educational institutions, restaurants, and recreational places, were detrimental to the economy (Moosa, 2020). With the impending adverse effects resulting from the pandemic, governments across the globe had to apply stringent measures, including lockdowns. Some countries opted for smart lockdowns. This led to the zoning of the most vulnerable regions and the halting of all outdoor activities halted to control the spread of the virus (Hassankhani, Alidadi, Sharifi, & Azhdari, 2021).

Regardless of various government initiatives, trust issues still lingered in many people's minds due to economic disturbance (Mansoor, 2021b). Previous literature presented different approaches toward trust-based issues in political, psychological, economic, and social terms (Huber & Wicki, 2021). The available literature shows that trust in government is a function of responsiveness, transparency, and accountability (Hartanto & Siregar, 2021; Mansoor, 2021a). Governments making decisions in the best interest of the citizens wins public trust (Dalle et al., 2021). The same had been witnessed during the pandemic, whereby governments

had to use the media to continuously warn people against the impacts of COVID-19 and the significance of the measures taken by the government to compare the effects (Islm et al., 2021).

This study examined the impact of the citizen's risk perceptions of infection on developing trust in government and the resultant change in behaviors during COVID-19. The risk of being infected reflects their perception of COVID-19 as a lethal disease influenced by non-compliance with the SOPs and lack of adherence to social distance directives (He, Chen, Kong, & Liu, 2021). Studies have shown that people try to avoid risky instances (Brown, Coventry, & Pepper, 2021). There are two ways to create risk perceptions. First, prior risk assessment involves a person's intellect level or judgments regarding any phenomena, and second, an individual's experience (Converso et al., 2021). This experience emanates from family members or peers around individuals. Hence, to avoid these risk perceptions, individuals tend to change their behaviors for security purposes.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, people who perceived higher infection risks changed their behaviors. Some people avoided crowds during the pandemic by staying indoors and limiting their visits to social gatherings (Yahaghi et al., 2021). Due to the stringent measures of lockdowns and social interaction restrictions, a noticeable reduction in infections is evident (Gosak, Duh, Markovič, & Perc, 2021). The study aimed to examine how much this perception of risk among the citizens led them to trust their governments for the deterrence measures taken in favor of citizens.

It also delved into the impact of risk perceptions on behavior change during COVID-19 among citizens. Previous studies showed that a person's behavior depends on various internal and external factors. Yahaghi et al., (2021) demonstrat-

ed the significant impact of others' perceptions in shaping individual behaviors during COVID-19. Grounds & Joslyn (2018) observed that individuals avoid risks during emergencies. This study examined people's perceptions of risks linked with the COVID-19 infection and the resultant change in their behaviors to control its spread. The pandemic challenged the ways in which individuals and societies deal with the risks (Wise, Zbozinek, Michelini, Hagan, & Mobbs, 2020). Some people were reluctant to follow the government's measures to control the spread of the virus (Akour et al., 2021). However, others harkened to the call to prevent the spread of the virus by washing hands regularly, wearing face masks, limiting social interactions, avoiding visiting offices and public places, and more (Kanozia & Arya, 2021). Others showed a casual attitude and did not take the pandemic seriously, resulting in the spreading of the virus to different parts of the world (Hassankhani et al., 2021). Literature showed that cautious people who highly perceive the infection risks with certain diseases take precautionary measures and support their governments

to control them (Venema & Pfattheicher, 2021). People who perceive a high risk of virus infection trust the government for its measures to contain the virus. As a result, they follow the SOPs (He et al., 2021).

Studies showed the direct impact of risk perceptions on behavioral changes in multiple circumstances (Brown et al., 2021; Wise et al., 2020). Trusting the government has been associated with the people's perceptions of risk, specifically in certain unwanted situations, and government measures to help people overcome such circumstances (Siegrist, Luchsinger, & Bearth, 2021). Furthermore, the government's responsiveness and transparency during the COVID-19 pandemic has led to citizens trusting its decisions to minimize the adverse effects caused by the virus (Hartanto & Siregar, 2021; Mansoor, 2021a). The study showed that individual behaviors change over time based on the variable nature of the risks associated with COVID-19 (Acuff, Strickland, Tucker, & Murphy, 2022). This study hypothesizes that trust in government will help citizens feel more comfortable with risks related to the pandemic, leading to more cautious behaviors to protect them-

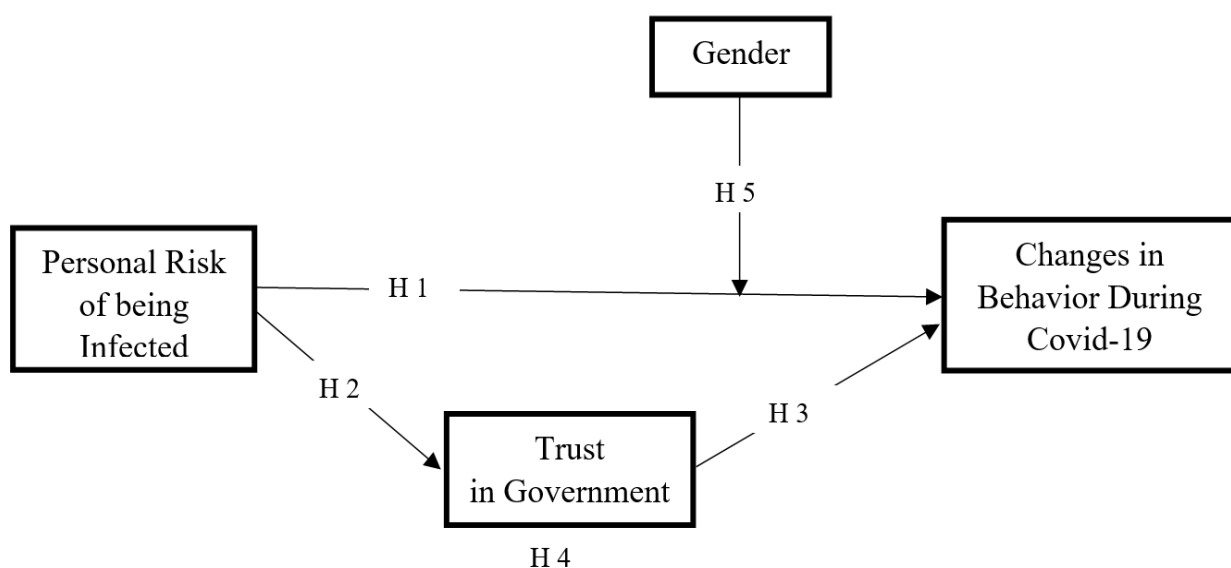


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of the Study
Source: Processed by the Author (2022)

selves and their loved ones. In addition, it explores the role of gender in changing the behaviors of people during COVID-19. Gender has been considered a vital phenomenon based on varied behaviors among males and females on different matters (Aguglia et al., 2021; Gupta, Parra, & Dennehy, 2021). Previous examinations indicated the significance of gender in establishing relationships between various communities as well as students and teachers (Papadopoulou et al., 2021; Tambak, Mahfud, Latipah, & Sukenti, 2021). It is alleged that men and women perceive risks differently (Schweda et al., 2021). Therefore, it is assumed that during COVID-19, men and women perceived the risk associated with being infected with COVID-19 differently; as a result, exhibiting diverse behavior.

Similar to many other developing nations, people were of different views regarding the pandemic and government measures based on the economic situation in Indonesia (Hartanto & Siregar, 2021). Therefore, this current study seeks to understand people's perceptions regarding the risks associated with COVID-19, how they behaved to mitigate such risks, and how their trust level in government changed over time as established by good governance theory.

The good governance theory postulates that economic, social, and political priorities are based on societal welfare (Mansoor, 2021b; Reed et al., 2018). It further shows that the government addresses the voices of the vulnerable and poor in light of the best interest of all people (Seetharam Sridhar, Gadgil, & Dhingra, 2020). This study asserts that when citizens perceive exposure to specific threats, the government is mandated to shelve them from any danger. Their level of trust in the government increases, and as such, they tend to follow the government's rules and regulations. This study investigated how citizens' risk perception of being infected and their trust in

government affect their behavior. It also looked at the role of trust in government in the association between citizens' risk perceptions and their changes in behavior. Finally, it examined the contingent role of gender in influencing citizens' behavior changes during COVID-19 based on their risk perceptions of being infected.

RESEARCH METHODS

The objective of this study was to scrutinize the impact of citizens' perception of being infected and their resultant trust in government leading to behavior changes during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also examined whether gender affects people's perception of being infected and their consequent behavior changes during COVID-19. A survey methodology approach has been utilized to fulfill the study objective by developing and disseminating a questionnaire to internet users. People accessible to the internet were identified and recruited for data collection using the river sampling technique (Grant, Scalvedi, Scognamiglio, Turrini, & Rossi, 2021). It is an online study methodology that involves selecting internet users in real-time (Moore et al., 2021). It helps select participants from various demographic and social groups rather than focusing on paid respondents (Grant et al., 2021).

After identifying the potential people who spend time on the internet, social networking sites, apps and games, thematic websites, news and portals, and search engines, a briefing was made regarding the study objectives. The questionnaire was shared with those who agreed to participate in the survey. Data collection started on July 15th, 2021, to December 15th, 2021, with 532 responses participating. After initial screening, 27 replies were found with unengaged patterns and missing values leading to disqualification. Only 505 responses were used for results analysis.

The questionnaire consisted of the

respondents' demographic characteristics and items related to the study constructs. For instance, the personal risk of being infected was measured with two items adapted from Moore et al., (2021), while trust in government was measured with six items adapted from Jennings et al., (2021). Finally, changes in behavior during COVID-19 were measured with seven items adapted from Jennings et al., (2021). All the responses were reported using "a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = not true to 5 = very true." The majority of participants were male (59%), while the rest were female. Participants' average number of years was 37, with more than half of the participants (52%) being married. The respondents consisted of 25%, 47%, and 28% of undergraduates, graduates, and postgraduates, respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement Model Assessment

The SmartPLS 3.0 software was used to conduct the analysis. The PLS approach is appropriate when the purpose of this study is to predict or explore a path model and causal analysis to determine the relationship between variables for hypothesis testing (Mansoor, 2021b). Since the objective was to test causal relationships between the predictor and response variable and run mediation and moderation, a SEM was conducted through SmartPLS 3.0 (Noor, Mansoor, & Rabbani, 2022; Sarstedt & Cheah, 2019). The variables were calculated to establish the discriminant validity and composite reliability of the study constructs. This further presented the normality of the data set. Therefore, Cronbach's α (CA) and composite reliability (CR) were assessed (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015; Mansoor & Wijaksana, 2022). The CR and CA values of all the study constructs are presented in Table 1, proving that the measures are reliable based on 0.70

values. The convergent and discriminant validity was also calculated. Table 1 shows that factor loadings of all indicator variables were > 0.70 , and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) constructs were above 0.50, establishing convergent validity (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019; Mansoor & Wijaksana, 2022).

The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio has been regarded as one of the best measures of discriminant validity of the constructs (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). This implies that the value of the HTMT ratio should be less than 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015; Mansoor & Wijaksana, 2022). The HTMT ratio of all the constructs' associations is less than 0.9, establishing discriminant validity (Table 2 and Figure 2).

Structural Model Assessment

Direct and Mediation Hypothesis

The study reserves revealed that citizens' perception of risks of being infected had been positively and significantly related to their behavior change during the COVID-19 ($\beta = 0.394^{***}$, $t = 8.118$), and trust in government ($\beta = 0.279^{***}$, $t = 6.156$). Furthermore, results showed the positive and significant impact of citizens' risk perceptions of being infected irrespective of their trust in government ($\beta = 0.238^{**}$, $t = 5.358$). As shown in Table 3 and Figure 3, hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 are supported. There is an indirect positive association of citizens' perception of the risks of being infected pegged on behavior change during the COVID-19 ($\beta = 0.214^{**}$, $t = 4.893$) having trust in the government as a mediator. This proved the H4 hypothesis.

Predictive Power of the Model

The Coefficient of determination (R^2) was assessed in a bid to calculate the variance in trust in government and changes in behavior during COVID-19 (Hair et al., 2019; Noor et al., 2022). The study found a 48.3% variance in citizens'

Table 1. Factor Loadings, Reliability, and Validity
Source: Processed by the Author (2022)

Constructs/indicators	Factor Loadings			AVE	CR	Cronbach's α
	1	2	3			
Changes in Behavior				0.693	0.911	0.831
CIDBC1	0.797					
CIDBC2	0.744					
CIDBC3	0.809					
CIDBC4	0.773					
CIDBC5	0.756					
CIDBC6	0.781					
CIDBC7	0.729					
Personal Risk of Being				0.648	0.786	0.810
PRBI1		0.816				
PRBI2		0.794				
Trust in Government				0.635	0.913	0.834
TIG1			0.780			
TIG2			0.812			
TIG3			0.823			
TIG4			0.806			
TIG5			0.788			
TIG6			0.771			

Note: CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted.

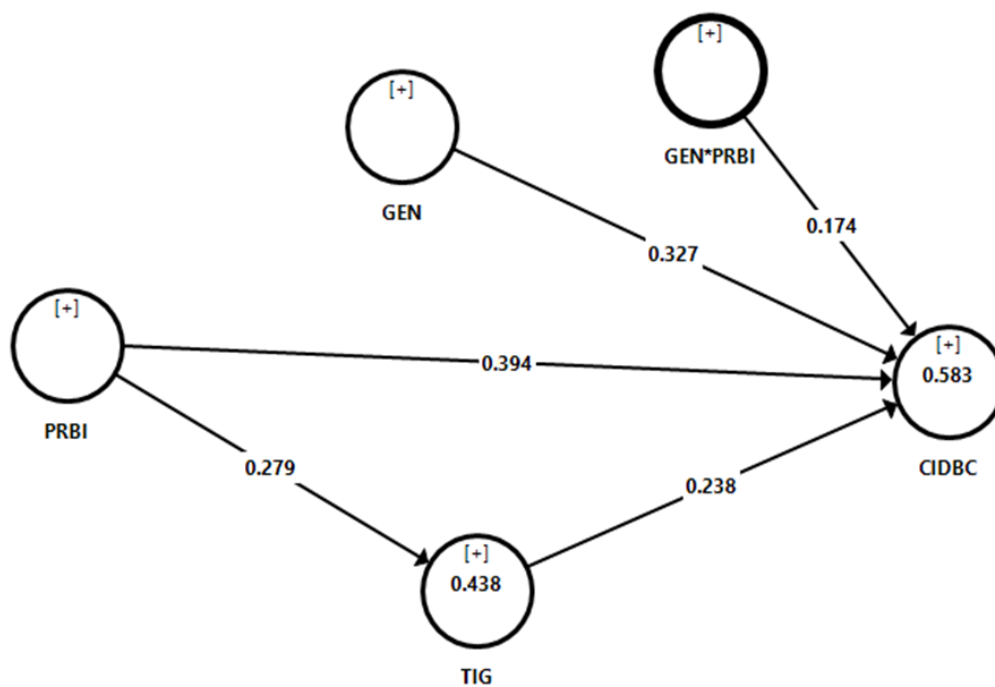


Figure 2. Full Measurement Model
Source: Sarstedt & Cheah (2019)

trust in government based on their perceptions of being infected. It was indicated that citizens' trust in government and personal risk of being infected could lead to different behavior changes during a crisis. Furthermore, the study's theoretical framework was measured using a blindfolded procedure. The Q^2 values of all the constructs were above 0, reflecting an excellent predictive relevance of the study's model.

Multigroup Analysis (MGA)

A Multigroup Analysis (MGA) in SmartPLS 3.0 software was conducted to examine the impact of gender roles associated with citizens' risk of being infected and behavior changes. However, certain conditions had to be met before executing the MGA analysis between the two groups (Cheah, Thurasamy, Memon, Chuah, & Ting, 2020). The Measurement Invariance Technique (MICOM) was applied to confirm that the difference (if any) among the groups was not due to a lack of categorization of the groups or survey content (Hair et al., 2019). Three steps were applied to complete this process. Step I involved measuring the configural invariance. This step was further subdivided into two categories to consider the moderating role of instructors' gender (1= male, 2 = female). Step II involved calculating the compositional invariance (Cheah et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2019). Step III was about the composites' equal variance or equal means across the groups. After conducting Steps I and II and getting favorable results that established the partial measurement invariants, Step III was performed by running the Multi-Group Analysis MGA (Cheah et al., 2020). Tables 4 and 5 present the findings of the MICOM analysis. The significance of the PLS-MGA result at the 5% probability level was observed (p -Value < 0.05 or > 0.95) for the difference in group-specific path coefficients. The MGA was instrumental in finding the moderating role of gender and

proving hypothesis H5 based on significant results.

There is a significant positive impact of gender on citizens' perceptions of personal infection risks and resultant behavior change. The results showed that Group 1 (females) had more influence on the shift in behaviors ($B=0.174$, $p= .001$) than males, as shown in Table 6. It is clear that females exhibited a higher level of caution than males.

Discussion

Findings

Mixed responses were recorded regarding the study subject (Hartanto & Siregar, 2021). Some people were concerned about the COVID-19 spread and, as a result, adhering to the government instructions, such as social distancing and lockdowns (Sarnoto & Hayatina, 2021). However, many people did not consider the pandemic a severe issue. This led to distrust in the government's measures since they did not perceive the risk associated with COVID-19 seriously (Riefky, Hutasoit, Nopiyanto, Nugrahani, & Zulkarnain, 2021). This study attempted to examine the impact of citizens' perception of the risk of being infected and their trust in government, leading to behavior changes during COVID-19. Also, it delved into the differential role of gender in such behavioral changes.

This study integrated good governance theory to examine the impact of risks of being infected in building trust among the Indonesian and the resultant changes in behaviors. Previously, the theory has been applied to develop confidence among the citizens based on the measures undertaken by the government during critical times (Hartanto & Siregar, 2021; Mansoor, 2021b; Seetharam Sridhar et al., 2020). It also examined the change in behaviors among the citizens following government rules and regulations. It has reflected ways in which trust in government leads to positive behaviors

Table 2. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio
Source: Processed by the Author (2022)

Constructs	Mean	STD.	1	2	3
Changes in Behavior during COVID-19	3.81	1.01	0.832		
Personal Risk of Being Infected	4.12	0.87	0.612	0.804	
Trust in Government	4.03	0.91	0.595	0.5.78	0.796

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Results
Source: Processed by the Author (2022)

Hypotheses	Std. Beta	t-Value	p-values	Supported
H1 PRBI → CIDBC	0.394	8.118	0.000	Yes
H2 PRBI → TIG	0.279	6.156	0.000	Yes
H3 TIG → CIDBC	0.238	5.358	0.001	Yes
H4 PRBI → TIG → CIDBC	0.214	4.893	0.005	Yes

Note: PRBI: Personal Risk of Being Infected; TIG: Trust in Government; CIDBC: Changes in Behavior during COVID-19.

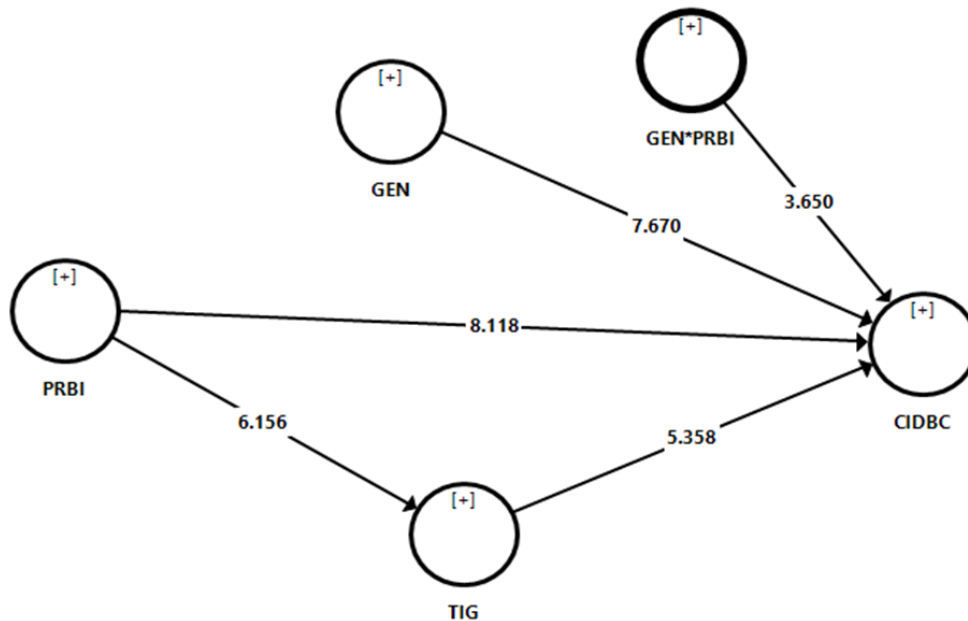


Figure 3. Full Structural Model
Source: Sarstedt & Cheah (2019)

Table 4. Measurement Invariance of composite Model (Step II)
Source: Processed by the Author (2022)

Constructs	Original	Permutation	5.00%	p-Value
	On Gender			
PRBI	0.992	0.987	0.984	0.439
CIDBC	0.990	0.989	0.980	0.295

based on their belief in government decisions. Moreover, the role of gender to determine people's perceptions of infection and behavioral change during a severe period such as the COVID-19 pandemic was moderated.

A river sampling technique was used to collect data from 505 respondents, which was then analyzed using SmartPLS 3.0 software. The results showed that people's infection risk perceptions, trust in government, and behaviors changed significantly during COVID-19 (Yahaghi et al., 2021). They also followed other government measures, such as strict lockdown instructions and keeping social distance to avoid infection (Mansoor, 2021b). These findings are consistent with previous studies, which showed that individuals' perception of the risk of being

infected led them to adopt more cautious behaviors during COVID-19 (Mansoor, 2021a; Venema & Pfattheicher, 2021). This is a reflection of people who care about their health. These individuals also value their family and friends and try to keep them protected by practicing positive behavior change.

This study found a significant relationship between the belief that one will be infected with a disease and trust in the government. This implies that people who tried to avoid getting infected during the pandemic believed in the statistics released by the government and what the state did in the best interest of its citizens. As a result, they followed the rules and regulations to support the government in curbing the deadly virus (Siegrist et al., 2021). It also found that trust in govern-

Table 5. Measurement Invariance of Composite Model (MICOM) (Step II)
Source: Processed by the Author (2022)

	Mean Difference (Females-Males)					Variance Difference (Females-Males)				
	Original	Perm	LL	UL	p-Values	Original	Perm	LL	UL	p-Values
PRBI	0.007	0.002	-0.167	0.157	0.868	0.097	0.005	-0.176	0.136	0.293
CIDBC	0.016	0.004	-0.139	0.159	0.792	0.049	0.008	-0.324	0.316	0.278

Note: Step 3 Results Concluded that Not All the Composite Mean Values and Variances were Equal; Only Partial Measurement Invariance was Supported.

Table 6. Moderation Path Co-Efficient
Source: Processed by the Author (2022)

	PLS MGA Path-coefficient			Bootstrapping Path-coefficient		
	(Females - Males)	(Females vs. Males)		Original		
Hypothesized Links	Path-Coeff. diff.	p-Value original	p-Value new	Support	Female	Male
H2a GEN*PRBI → CIDBC	0.174	0.001	0.000	Yes	0.476	0.302

ment played a role in how people reacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, people who trusted the government were more likely to take precautions against getting infected. This showed that people who trusted the government were more likely to take precautions to prevent the spread of the virus, which persuaded them to behave in a way that would help protect others. These results align with the previous studies that reflected the positive association of measures taken by government agencies to build trust among the citizens (Jennings et al., 2021).

Finally, the analysis indicated that female was more conscious of being infected with the virus. They were more apt to follow government rules and regulations to protect themselves and their loved ones from being infected. These results can be related to previous studies indicating that women are more caring and health-conscious than men (Inoue et al., 2021). This implies that they take measures to keep themselves and their families protected from national disasters, such as the pandemic.

The findings from this study can be utilized by academicians, practitioners, and policymakers in multiple ways. For instance, based on the significant impact of citizens' trust in government and the risk of being infected, there is a need for the government to be at the forefront in creating awareness regarding the virus. For this purpose, the advertisements regarding the life of loved ones can be highlighted with multiple scenarios to make people conscious of their actions. Also, various advertisement themes can highlight the drastic consequences of COVID-19 and the need to follow the SOPs devised by government bodies. This study can be the base to find out the factors that impact the citizens' perceptions to develop their trust in government, leading to change in behaviors.

CONCLUSION

This study found that the good governance theory applies when it comes to risk perception and trust in government. Therefore, citizens who trust their government are more likely to take precautions against infections. It also delved into the impact of citizens' gender in shaping their behavioral changes. A river sampling technique was used to collect data from 505 respondents, which was then analyzed using SmartPLS 3.0 software. The results showed that people's infection risk perceptions and trust in government led to significant behavior changes during COVID-19. Moreover, the results revealed the underlying mechanism of trust in government. The females were more conscious of the infection risks associated with the pandemic and showed more responsible behaviors than males. This study was faced with some limitations that should be addressed in the future. For instance, there is a need to explore factors that lead to distrust or mistrust in government during the pandemic. This will help the government bodies to work on such factors to avoid misperceptions among the citizens regarding health, safety, and security. This study also assessed the role of gender in examining the intensity of their behavioral change during the pandemic. Future studies should assess the citizens' education level in examining their behavioral changes during COVID-19.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my very great appreciation to Director of Politeknik Maritim AMI Makassar, Indonesia who gave me enough space to do research and to write a paper for publication. Apart from that, great appreciation goes to anonymous reviewers who have provided constructive comments and critiques in improving the quality of the paper.

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