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

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

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### Abstract

Based on the significance of 🔼 izens' trust in government in multiple contexts, including the public health crisis 272 the COVID-19 pandemic, the current study is established in good governance theory. It aims to examine the impact of citizens' risk perceptions of being infected on their trust in government, leading to their behavior change during COVID-19. In addition, the contingent impact of citizens' gender in shaping their behavioral changes during COVID-19 has also been assessed. Using a river sampling technique, data were collected from 505 respondents and analyzed using smart PS3 software. The results revealed a significant impact of citizens' risk perceptions of being infected on their trust in government and the change in behaviors during COVID-19. Moreover, results also reveal the intermediate treat role of trust in government and trust meeting the citizens' risk perceptions into their conscious behaviors during COVID-19. In addition, the results showed that females were more conscious of the risks of being infected associate 14 ith the pandemic and showed more responsible behaviors than males. Finally, the current study contributes to ge existing body of literature related to the effectiveness of governance attached development of trust among citizens based on responsible decisions of the government in the best interests of the citizens during the crisis.

**Keywords:** behavioral changes during covid-19; multigroup analysis; risks perceptions of being infected; trust in government gender.

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### Introduction

In the government's effectiveness, trust plays a vital role. Besides, trust-building has remained the priority among the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) governments for the last two demiles (Jennings et al., 2021). The crisis created by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic presented a stress test for all such trust buildings strategies and government levels worldwide (Mansoor, 2021b). Many nations were under pressure to build trust among the citizens to effectively respond to the pandemic and threats (Al-Okaily et al., 2020). Due to the sudden pandemic outbreak

December 2019, many nations have make bold decisions immediately curb the spread of the virus. Some of such decisions were even against the economy, i.e., closure business units, workplaces, educational institutions, restaurants, recreational places, etc. (Nishi et al., 2020). However, regardless of several hurdles, governments have to take stringent decisions to lockdowns all over the country. Some nations also opted for lockdowns. The most vulnerable areas were identified, and outdoor activates were restricted for a certain time to control the spread of the virus (Hassankhani et al., 2021).

Regardless various government initiatives, there are issues of trust among the public based on economic disturbance (Mansoor, 2021a). As a result, various levels of trust, mistrust, and distrust were raised among the public. In contrast, previous literature presented various approaches towards trust based on political, psychological, economic, and social terms (Huber & Wicki, 2021). Morezver, researchers also reported that trust in government is a function of responsiveness, transparency, and accountability (Hartanto & Siregar, 2021; Mansoor, 2021b). Besides, the government, which takes fair decisions in the best interest of the citizens, wins the citizens' trust (Dalle et al., 2021). The same case has been seen during the pandemic virus. Governments had to come on social media and continuously communicate with the citizens regarding the lethal impacts of COVID-19 and the significance of the measures taken by the government in the best interest of the citizens (Islm et al., 2021)

Based the variable on responses of the citizens towards government mossures for controlling the virus, the current study aims to examine the impact of citizens' personal risk perceptions of being infected for developing trust in government and the resultant change in behaviors during the COVID-19. Citizens' personal risk perceptions of being infected reflect how much they perceive that COVID-19 is lethal, and they can get affected by it based on non-compliance with the SOPs and not keeping the social distancing from others (He et al., 2021). Research shows that when individuals perceive risks associated with certain factors, they tend to avoid such factors and save themselves from being infected (Brown, Coventry, & Pepper, 2021). Hence, utilizing the same line of the

study, the current research aims to examine how much this perception of risk among the citizens led them to trust their governments for their security measures taken in favor of citizens.

Moreover, the current study aims to examine the impact of risk perceptions in the change in behaviors during COVID-19 among the citizens. Previously literature showed that individuals' behaviors are dependent upon various internal and external factors. For instance, explain Yahaghi et al. (2021) demonstrated the significant impact of others' perceptions in shaping individuals' behaviors during COVID-19. Likewise, Grounds and Joslyn (2018)reported that during emergencies, individuals become risk avoiders, and they tend to protect themselves from drastic situations. Simultaneously, the current study examines how the individuals' perceptions of risks linked with being infected with COVID-19 and te resultant change in their behaviors to control the spread of the virus and save their and their loved ones' lives from that deadly virus. The current study also explores what role gender played in changing the citizens' behaviors during COVID-19.

Furthermore, the current study has been conducted among the citizens of Indonesia, one of the developing nations. Like many other developing nations in Indonesia, people were of multiple views the regarding pandemic government measures based on the economic duation in the country (Hartanto et al., 2021). Hence, the current study 13 is valuable to understand the people's perceptions of the risks associated with COVID-19, how they behaved to mitigate such risks, and how their trust level in government **2**hanged over time. Finally, the current study is

established in good governance theory.

The good governance theory postulates that economic, social, and political priorities are based on societal welfare (Mansoor, 2021a; Nyarangaa, Hao, & Hongo, 2021). It further shows that the voices of the vulnerable and poor are hord at governmental levels while making decisions in the public's best interest (Seetharam Sriohar, Gadgil, Dhingra, 2020). Hence, in the current study contexts, it can be asserted that when citizens perceive that they are exposed to certain threats, the governments are responsibly helping the citizens come out of such threats. Their trust level in governments increases, and they tend to follow the government's rules and regulations. hence based on the good governance theory, the currest study aims;

- to examine the impact of citizens risk perception of being infected on their trust in government and changes in behaviors during the VID-19
- to investigate the mediating role
   of trust in government in
   between the association of
   citizens risk perceptions of being
   infected and their hanges in
   behaviors during the COVID-19
- to examine the contingent role of gender in examining the intensity of citizens' changes in behavior during COVID-19 based on their risk perceptions of being infected.

### Literature Review And Hypothesis Development

# Personal Risk Perceptions of being fected and Changes in Behaviors during the COVID-19

The personal risk of being infected reflects how much an individual is conscious of COVID-19 (Wise et al., 2020). Research shows two ways to create the perceptions of risks

of being infected among individuals. The first one is the prior risk assessment, based on an individuals' intellect level or their judgments regarding any phenomena. The second source is the individuals' experience (Converso et al., 2021). This experience can come from family members or peers around individuals. Hence, to avoid these risk perceptions, individuals tend to change their behaviors for security purposes. In the context of COVID-19. it can be stated that those who perceive the higher risks of being infected changed their behaviors. For instance, they restricted themselves in their homes, limited their visits to social gatherings, and reduced social interactions (Yahaghi et al., 2021). Research also shows that based on the stringent measures of lockdowns and restricting social interactions, noticeable reduction in the number of infected cases has been seen (Gosak et al., 2021). Hence, when individuals perceive a high risk of being infected, they tend to change their behaviors into responsible ones during COVID-19. Thus, it can be hypothesized that;

H1: Citizens' personal risk perceptions of being infected positively influence their behavioral changes during the COVID-19

### Personal Risk Perceptions, Trust in Government, and Changes in Behaviors during the COVID-19

COVID-19 The remained a major interpreting event for economies worldwide. This further challenged the ways individuals and societies deal with the risks (Wise et al., 2020). Besides, based on its suspicious nature, individuals were reluctant to follow the government measures taken to control the virus spread (Akour et al., 2021). As a result, individuals took small-scale decisions. Some of them favored controlling the virus, such as washing hands regularly, wearing face masks, limiting social interactions, visiting offices and public places, etc. (Kanozia & Arya, 2021). However, others showed a casual attitude and did not take the pandemic seriously, resulting in serious damage in various parts of the world (Hassankhani et al., 2021). At the same time, literature shows that people who highly perceive the risks of being infected with certain diseases or bad situations take precautionary measures and support their governments to control such diseases (Venema & Pfattheicher, 2021). Likewise, in the context of COVID-19, it is asserted that the people with high perceptions of risks of being infected trusted their government for its measures to control the virus, and hence they followed the SOPs (He et al., 2021) . Thus based on the good governance theory and the above arguments, it is hypothesized that;

**H2:** Citizens' personal risk perceptions of being infected positively influence their trust in government.

H3: Citizens' trust in government positively influence their behavioral changes during the COVID-19

### Trust in Government as a Mediator

Research shows the direct impact of risk perceptions with behavioral changes 24 n multiple circumstances (Brown et al., 2021; Wise et al 29 2020). Also, the trust in government has been associated with the people's perceptions of risk related to certain unwanted situations and government measures to stop their people from coming out of circumstances (Siegrist, such Luchsinger, & Bearth, 2021). Likewise, during COVID-19, research shows that government's responsiveness. accountability, and transparency led the citizens to flust the government for its decisions to minimize the damage caused by COVID-19 (Hartanto et al.,

2021; Mansoor, 2021b). At the same time, research shows that individuals' behaviors changed over time based on the variable nature of the risks associated with COVID-1914 (Acuff et al., 2021). Whereas, based on the good governance theory the current study postulates that citizens' trust in government acts as a bridge to transmit their risk perceptions linked with the pandemic to change their cautious behaviors to protect themselves and their loved ones. Hence, it is hypothesized that;

**H4:** Citizens' Trusting government positively mediates the association of their risks perceptions of being infected with their behavioral changes during COVID-19.

### The Moderating Role of Gender

Gender has been considered an important phenomenon based on variable behaviors among males and females regarding different matters (Aguglia et al., 2021; Gupta, Parra, & Dennehy, 2021). Research shows the significance of gender in establishing relationships between various communities (Papadopoulou et al., 2021), students and teachers (Tambak et al., 2021), etc. Literature also shows that women and men perceived the risks of various difficult situations differently (Schweda et al., 2021). Hence used on the same line of the study current study postulates that during COVID-19, men and women differently perceived the risk associated with being infected with COVID-19 as a result, they behave differently. Thus it is hypothesized that;

H5: Citizens' gender moderates the association of their risk perceptions of being infected with behavioral changes during the COVID-19

### Theoretical framework of the study

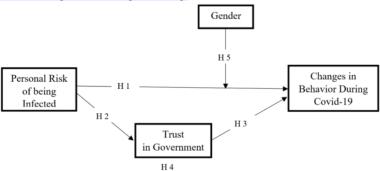


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of the study

### Research Methodology

The current study aims to examine the impact of citizens' perception of being infected and their resultant trust in government leading to their behavior changes during COVID-19. Moreover, the current study examined the contingent impact of gender determine the impact intensity citizens' perception of being infected on their behavior changes during COVID-19. A survey methodology has been utilized to fulfill the study objective were a questionnaire has been developed and disseminated to internet users. Hence, all the people who use the internet, pop-up windows, and banners in Indonesia are identified and recruited for data collection purposes. Besides river sampling technique was utilized to recruit the participants (Grant et al., 2021). Instead of utilizing the database panels to recruit the participants' river research sampling is an online methodology that involves selecting users of the internet in real-time (Natalya et al., 2021). Hence, it helps select participants from various demographic and social groups rather than focusing on paid respondents (Grant et al., 2021).

After dentifying the potential people who spend time on the internet, social networking sites, apps and games, thematic websites, news and portals, search engines, etc., they were briefed about the study's purpose. We

requested to participate in the survey.
The questionnaire was shared with those who agrest to participate in the survey. This whole data collection procedure started on July 15th, 2021.
Till December 15th, 2021, researchers were able to collect 532 responses.
After initial 20 reening, 27 responses were found with unengaged patterns and missing values; hence a final sample of 505 respondents was used in further analysis.

The questionnaire consisted of demographic characteristics of the respondents and items related to this study's constructs. For instance, the personal risk of being infected was measured with two items adapted from (Natalya et al., 2021). Thrust in government was measured with six items adapted from (Jennings et al., 2021). Finally, Ganges 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 at all true to 5 =very true." Moreover, 59% of males and 415 females participated in the survey. The average of participants was 37 years. Almost half of the respondents (52%) were Married. Moreover, 25% of respondents were undergraduates, 47% were graduates, and 28% postgraduates.

### Data Analysis And Results Measurement Model Assessment

The SmartPLS 3.0 software has been used to conduct the analysis. In the beginning, will validity and reliability of the study variables be calculated. For that purpose, "Cronbach's  $\alpha$  (CA)" and "composite reliability (CR)" were assessed (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015; Mansoor, Fatima, & Ahmed, 2020). The CR and C A values 4 all the study constructs are presented in Table

1, reflecting those measures are reliable based on both values 0.70. Additionally, the "convergent and discriminant validity" was calculated. As shown in Table 1, "factor loadings" of all indicator variables were > 0.70, and the "Average Variance Extracted" (AVE) of the study constructs were above 0 15. Therefore, "convergent validity" was established (Hair et al., 2017; Mansoor et al., 2020).

Table 1. Factor loadings, reliability, and validity

Table 1. Factor loadings, reliability, and validity							
Constructs/indicators	Fac	tor Loadi	ngs	AVE	CR	Cronbach's α	
	1	2	3				
Changes in Behavior During Covid-19				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 Infected				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."

Simultaneously, Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio has been sgarded as one of the best measures of discriminant validity of the constructs (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). The value of the HTMT ratio should be ss than 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015; Mansoor et al., 2020). In the current study context, the HTMT ratio of all the study constructs associations is less than

0.9 hence establishing the discriminal validity of the study constructs (see Table 2 and Figure 2).

Table 2. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio

Constructs
Changes in Behavior During Covid-19
Personal Risk of Being Infected
Thrust in Government

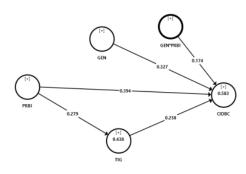


Figure 2. Full Measurement Model

### Structural Model Assessment Direct and Mediation Hypothesis

The study reserves revealed that citizens' prception of risks of being infected during COVID-19 had been Meansitisally and significantly related to their behavior change during the 3.81 COVID-19 ( $\beta^0 = 30.394***$ , t = 8.118), 4.12and troust in governmento(\$0 \div 0.279\*\*\*, t = 6.156). Likewise, results showed the 4.03 no.591 and significant impact of citizens' risk perceptions of being infected with their trust in government  $(\beta = 0.238 **, t = 5.358)$ . Thus, as shown in stable 3 and figure 3, hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 of the study are supported by the results. Simultaneously, an indirect positive association of citizens' perception of risks of being infected during COVID-19 with their behavior change during the COVID-19 ( $\beta = 0.214**, t = 4.893$ ) in the presence of trust in government as a mediator was found. Hence proving the hypothesis H4 of the study.

### Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Results

	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
Н3	$TIG \rightarrow CIDBC$	0.238	5.358	0.001	yes
H4	PRBI →TIG → CIDBC	0.214	4.893	0.005	Yes

Where: PRBI: Personal Risk of Being Infected; TIG: Thrust in Government; CIDBC: Changes in Behavior During Covid-19

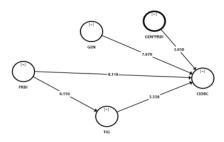


Figure 3. Full Structural Model

### **Predictive Power of the Model**

For calculating the 12 iance in trust in government and changes in behavior during Covid-19, "the Coefficient 10 determination (R<sup>2</sup>)" was assessed (Hair et al., 2017; Noor, Mansoor, & Rabbani, 2021). The results revealed a 48.3% variance in citizens' thrust in government based on their perceptions of personal risk of being infected. Simultaneously, citizens'

thrust in government and personal risk of being resulted in 58.3% variance in changes in their behavior during Covid-19. In addition, the blindfolded procedure has been applied to calculate productive relevance of the theoretical framework of the study. Besides, the value of cross-validation redundancy (Q<sup>2</sup>) must be above 0. simultaneously in the current study, Q<sup>2</sup> values of all the constructs are above 0, reflecting a good predictive relevance of the study's model.

### Multigroup Analysis (MGA)

To examine the contingent impact of gender in between the association of citizens' personal risk of being infected and their changes in behavior during Covid-19, we run a Multigroup Analysis (MGA) in SmartPLS 3.0 software. Before executing the MGA analysis between two groups, i.e., males and females, certain conditions need to be fulfilled (Cheah et al., 2020). Hence, first, we applied "the Measurement Invariance Technique (MICOM)," which assures that the difference existence (if any) among the groups is

not due to not categorization of those groups or survey content (Hair et al., 2019). To complete this process, we further applied three steps, including i) measuring the configural invariance (Step I). As we consider the moderating role of instructors' gender; hence, we categorized it into two categories (1= male, 2 = female). ii) Calculating the positional invariance (Step II) (Cheah et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2019). iii) The composites' equal variance or equal means across the groups (Step III). After conducting Steps I and II and getting favorable results that established the partial measurement invariants, Step III, was conducted by running "the Multi-Group Analysis MGA" (Cheah et al., 2020). Moreover, Tables 4 and 5 present the findings of the MICOM analysis. Researche also reported the significance of the PLS-MGA 18 sult at the 5% probability level (p-Value < 0.05 or >0.95) for the difference in group-specific path coefficients. Hence, the MGA helped us find out the moderating role of gender, proving the hypothesis H5 of the study based on significant results.

Table 4 Measurement Invariance of composite Model (Step II)

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

Table 5. Measurement Invariance of Composite Model (MICOM) (Step II)

	Mean Difference (Females-Males)				Variance Difference (Females-Males)				(lales)	
	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	800.0	-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."

Deserves for moderating role of citizens gender reveal a significant positive impact of gender in between the association of their perceptions of Personal risks of being infected and the resultant behavior change during the COVID-19. Moreover, results showed that Group 1 (females) had more influence on the change of behaviors during COVID-19 (B=0.174, p= .001) than males, as shown in Table 6. hence

it can be interpreted that females perceived more risks linked with the COVID-19. Hence, they depicted more precautious behaviors than males.

Table	6.	M	ndera	ation	path	co-efficient

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

### Discussion

### **Findings**

The current study was conducted among the citizens of Indonesia, where there were mixed responses that can be seen from the citizens (Hartanto & Siregar, 2021). Some of them showed a lot of concern towards COVID-19 and government hence followed the instructions related to social distancing and lockdowns (Sarnoto & Hayatina, 2021). On the other hand, there were a lot of people who did not take it seriously and showed a level of distrust of government measures and did not perceive the risk associated 19 vith COVID-19 seriously (Hutasoit et al., 2021). Therefore, the current study attempts to examine the impact of citizens' perception of risk of being infected with their vest in government, leading to their changes in behavior during COVID-19. Also, the differential role of gender has been assessed towards such behavioral changes.

The results revealed a significant positive impact of citizens' perceptions of risks of being infected by COVID-19 on their behavioral change. This further showed those who believed that COVID-19 is a serious pandemic that

left these drastic impacts all over the globe. They considered it a serious disaster and changed their behaviors from unhygienic to cautious and hygienic ones (Yahaghi et al., 2021). They also followed the strict lockdown instructions and tried to keep this social distancing to aval being infected (Mansoor, 2021a). These results are in line with the previous studies, which showed the positive impact individuals' perception of risks being infected with their cautious behaviors during COVID-19 (Mansoor, 2021a; Venema & Pfattheicher, 2021). This further reflects that these are the people who care for their health. These individuals also value their family and friends and try to keep them protected with positive changes in their behaviors.

Results also revealed significant impact of risks of being infected with trust in government. It further showed that the people who try to save themselves from being infected believed in the statistics provided by the government and believed in their government that whatever they are doing at the national level is in the best interest of the people. Hence, they followed the rules and regulations to support the government to curb the spread of this deadly virus (Siegrist et al., 2021). Likewise, the results also

revealed the mediatory role of trust in government in between the association of citizens' perception of risk of being infected and their behavioral changes during COVID-19. This further revealed that trust in government acts as a bridge between the people who cared for their and their loved ones' lives to persuade them to behave in such a manner that the damage caus by COVID-19 should be minimized. These results are in line with the previous studies that reflected the positive association of measures taken by government agencies and government individuals two for building trust among the citizens (Jennings et al., 2021; Natalya et al., 2021).

Finally, the results showed that females were more conscious of being infected with COVID-19, and hence they depicted such behaviors that could save them from this deadly virus. Results also show that women were more apt to follow government rules and regulations to protect themselves and their loved ones from being infected during COVID-19. These results can be ated to previous studies that show that women are more caring and healthconscious than men (Inoue et al., 2021). Hence, they take measures that keep themselves and their families protected from national disasters like a pandemic.

### Impligations of the Study

The current study is unique in integrating the good governance theory for examining the impact of risks of being infected in building trust among the citizens of Indonesia as a developing nation and the resultant changes in Previously, the behaviors. governance theory has been applied by several scholars to develop trust among the citizens based on government different measures in critical circumstances (Hartanto et al., 2025) Mansoor, 2021a; Seetharam Sridhar et al., 2020). Whereas the current study has extended that trust level 3 examine the change in behaviors among the

citizens following government rules and regulations. The current study is also incremental in the existing body of literature by reflecting how trust in government can translate into citizens' positive behaviors based on their belief in government decisions. Moreover, the 10 rent study is unique in assessing the moderating role of gender in between the association of citizens' perceptions of being infected and behavioral change during the drastic situations of COVID-19.

Furthermore, the current study's findings can be utilized academicians. practitioners. and policymakers in multiple ways. For instance, based on the significant impact of citizens' risk of being infected with trust in government. The government should spread awareness regarding COVID-19 among the citizens based on its lethal effects on health, leading to For death this purpose, advertisements regarding the life of loved ones can be highlighted with multiple scenarios to make people conscious of their actions that can affect their close ones. At the same time, themes various of automatic advertisements can be used to highlight the drastic consequences of COVID-19 and the positive sides of following the SOPs devised by the government bodies. Simultaneously, the current study can be utilized as a base to find out the factors that impact the citizens' perceptions to develop trust among them regarding their governments, leading to their behavioral changes.

### Limitations and Future Research Directions

Regardless of the unique contribution of the current study based on the factors that impact the citizens' trust in government and the resultant the phaviors during drastic situations, it has some limitations that can bring valuable insights if addressed in the future. The current study has only considered the citizens' risk perceptions

of being infected in developing trust in government and behavior changes. In contrast, future studies can explore the factors that lead to distrust or mistrust in government during the pandemic. This will further help the government bodies to work on that factor to remove the misperceptions among the citizens regarding health, safety, and security. Secondly, the current study has assessed the contingent impact of gender in examining the intensity of their behavioral change during COVID-19. In contrast, future studies can also assess the citizens' education level in examining their behavioral changes during COVID-19. Finally, the current study has utilized a cross-sectional research methodology where data has been collected at one point in time. In contrast, the mixed-method approach or experimental study can be performed to interviews conduct among respondents. Their behavioral changes can be assessed based on controlled and non-controlled groups to analyze the differences in individuals' thinking and behaviors.

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