

ENGAGING INDIVIDUALS in DISEASE PREVENTION BEHAVIOURS during a PANDEMIC

While research has shown that individuals' belief in a dangerous world can lead to disease prevention behaviours, the combined effects of this belief and the perception of the effectiveness of government's messages in adopting disease prevention behaviours were not known previously.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided **SMU Associate Professor Yeo Su Lin** and her collaborators the opportunity to study the influence of the two constructs and the effectiveness in driving disease prevention behaviours.

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INSIGHTS

Media plays an important role in shaping public perception of COVID-19

A content analysis of news headlines on COVID-19 revealed that 90% of the headlines were framed to suggest that COVID-19 is a dangerous disease.

Study 1

It confirmed that the media was indeed communicating messages that the world was in danger because of the pandemic.



Study 2

Perceived effectiveness of government's pandemic communication trumped effect of individuals' belief in a dangerous world

A survey involving 453 Singaporeans revealed that when individuals did not perceive the government's communication to be effective, the adoption of disease prevention behaviours was due to their belief in a dangerous world.

On the other hand, individuals who perceived the government's communication as effective were likely to adopt disease prevention behaviours, regardless of whether they believed the world was dangerous.

IMPLICATIONS

The government can enhance its communication effectiveness during a pandemic by providing messages that are:

1

INFORMATIVE and OBJECTIVE



2

PERSONAL and RELEVANT to the different population groups

