

## Age and Information Avoidance During COVID19 (Online 2020) (#43225)

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### 1) Have any data been collected for this study already?

No, no data have been collected for this study yet.

### 2) What's the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?

Hypothesis 1: Age predicts avoidance of media and information related to COVID-19.

Question 1: Does age predict endorsement of different information avoidance motives?

Question 2: Do COVID-19-related factors (i.e., experience, exposure, risk factors, and worry), demographic variables, personality, socioemotional and health variables, or cognitive measures predict avoidance of media and information related to COVID-19?

### 3) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.

age (1 continuous variable)

media consumption questions (averaged across 7 items measuring increases or decreases in media consumption for TV, radio, online news sites/magazines, social media, government websites, government briefings/conferences, 1-5 scale)

media avoidance questions (averaged across 7 items measuring avoidance of TV, radio, online news sites/magazines, social media, government websites, government briefings/conferences, 0 = not avoided, 1 = avoided somewhat, 2 = avoided completely)

website avoidance questions (number of avoided websites (0-7): Online assessment for COVID-19 symptoms and risk, Information about symptoms and health consequences of COVID-19, Data reports for infection rate, death rate by state in the US, Rate of positive tests by US state, Comparing testing efforts by US state, State government response and regulation, Infographic of number of hospital beds by US county)

avoidance motives (9 separate variables, 1-5 scale: feel bad, not trustworthy, distracting, not relevant, unimportant, would not use, influence behavior, challenge view of self, challenge worldview)

### 4) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?

N/A

### 5) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: We will regress media consumption, media avoidance, and website avoidance on age.

Question 1: We will regress each of the 9 avoidance motives on age.

Question 2: We will regress media consumption, media avoidance, and website avoidance on 5 blocks of predictors (for details, please see 8):

- Block 1: COVID-19-related factors
- Block 2: Demographics
- Block 3: Personality
- Block 4: Socioemotional and health variables
- Block 5: Cognitive measures

### 6) Describe exactly how outliers will be defined and handled, and your precise rule(s) for excluding observations.

We winsorize all univariate outliers to values equaling z-scores of +/- 3.30, 3.31, etc. Multivariate outliers are cases where Mahalanobis Distance =  $X^2 < .001$ .

Participants are excluded if age is missing, below 18, over 120, or does not match birth year (1 year error margin). Participants must pass attention checks to be included: "Please select 'Fair' to show you are paying attention." and "At the FUN IN THE SUN music festival, everybody gets a door prize. Out of 1,000 visitors, how many are expected to get a door prize?"

**7) How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size? No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.**

We aim to collect data from 500 participants. 450 participants will be recruited through the Qualtrics.com Recruitment Services (150n 18-35 years, 150n 36-65 years, 150n 66+ years). 33 participants will be recruited through the Cornell University LEEDR Lab SONA panel. 17 participants will be recruited through the Cornell University Healthy Aging Lab contact list. Recruitment will be selective to yield comparable gender and race/ethnicity composition across age groups.

**8) Anything else you would like to pre-register? (e.g., secondary analyses, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)**

We will collect data on COVID-19-related factors, demographic, personality, socioemotional/ health, and cognitive covariates (listed below).

In addition, we will report means and standard deviations for the following measures, as well as their correlation with age.

COVID-19 background measures

- Self or close other has had COVID-19 (0 = no, 1 = yes, 2 = don't know)
- Contact to others while working (0 = no, 1 = yes)
- Health-related risk factors (0 = no, 1 = yes)
- Worried about pandemic-related health risks (1 variable indexed on 1-5 scale)

Demographics

- Gender (1 dummy-coded variable: 0 = Male, 1 = Female)
- Race/Ethnicity (1 dummy-coded : 0 = Non-Hispanic White, 1 = Other)
- Income (1 variable indexed on a 1-7 scale)
- Education (1 variable indexed on a 1-5 scale)
- Political orientation (0 democrat, 1 republican, 2 independent, 3 other)

Personality

- Neuroticism (2 items, measured on 5-point Likert scales, averaged)
- Agreeableness (2 items, measured on 5-point Likert scales, averaged)
- Openness (2 items, measured on 5-point Likert scales, averaged)
- Extraversion (2 items, measured on 5-point Likert scales, averaged)
- Conscientiousness (2 items, measured on 5-point Likert scales, averaged)

Socioemotional and health variables

- Subjective physical health (4 variables rated on a 5-point Likert scale)
- Subjective emotional health (4 variables rated on a 5-point Likert scale)
- Incidental Affect (1 item to measure valence of affect, 1 item to measure activation level, both variables are measured on 7-point Likert scales)
- Self-continuity (6 items measuring perceived continuity with past and future self at 1, 5, and 10 years)
- Life position (1 continuous variable, 0-100)
- Focus on affect versus information in decision making (1 continuous variable, 0-100)
- Focus on growth versus maintenance goals (1 continuous variable, 0-100)

Cognition

- Subjective memory (1 item measured on a 5-point Likert scale)
- Subjective learning ability (1 item measured on a 5-point Likert scale) Cognitive reflection ability (3 items summed up into 1 variable, with 0-3 correct responses)
- Vocabulary (12 items; 0-12 correct answers)
- Numeracy (3 items summed up into 1 variable, with 0-3 correct responses)

Exploratory analyses will be conducted to assess whether age is associated with interest in a COVID-19 tracking app (1 item, 1-5 scale), willingness to share between 0 and 9 pieces of personal information with that app, and mask wearing habits (7 questions).