SPB - Socially Connected & COVID-19 Prepared (#37891)

Author(s)
Veronica Lamarche (University of Essex) - v.lamarche@essex.ac.uk

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?
The purpose of this study is to examine whether feelings of social connection or disconnection motivate people's adherence to social distancing guidelines during the COVID-19/coronavirus outbreak. We expect that greater feelings of disconnection (i.e., greater social isolation) will be associated with less adherence and lower perceived importance of social distancing. We will test for both linear (i.e., as social disconnection increases, adherence decreases) and curvilinear (i.e., at high levels of disconnection and high levels of connection oversaturation, relative to moderate/satiated connection) effects of connection on adherence.

3) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.
1) Participants will rate the importance of adhering to 5 social distancing activities as identified by the NHS (as of 24-03-2020); 1=not at all important, 9=extremely important.

2) Participants will rate the efficacy of the same 5 social distancing activities (1=not at all effective, 9=extremely effective).

4) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?
This is a correlational study looking at the effect of social connection on adherence.

Social Connection will be measured using a single-item question looking at feelings of connection with others (-4= I feel complete disconnected and isolated from others, 0=i feel my level of connection with others is just right, 4=I feel completely overconnected and too close to others), and the Relatedness Needs Satisfaction Scale (Sheldon et al., 2011), a 6-item measure looking at satisfaction with connection with others (1=not at all true, 9=very true).

5) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.
Regression analyses will be used to test for the a) linear effects of the two social connection measures and b) the curvilinear effects of the single-item social connection measure predicting perceived importance and efficacy of social distancing in preventing the spread of coronavirus.

6) Describe exactly how outliers will be defined and handled, and your precise rule(s) for excluding observations.
Eligibility:
- UK citizens
- Over the age of 18
- Agree to provide their best answers on a data integrity question.

Exclusion:
- Participants who do not complete all parts of the survey.

Participants who are not eligible or who meet the exclusion criteria will be dropped prior to analyses.

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.
300 participants will be recruited via Prolific Academic.

8) Anything else you would like to pre-register? (e.g., secondary analyses, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)
The following exploratory analyses and secondary hypotheses will also be tested:

1) Are the effects of social connectedness stronger for people living alone vs. those living with family others? People living alone should be more susceptible to feelings of social isolation during a quarantine period and therefore may be especially motivated to derogate social distancing measures.
2) Do feelings of social connectedness influence perceived vulnerability to disease (specifically infectability) and worries regarding contacting the coronavirus? The motivation to connect with others (i.e. high social disconnection) make motivate people to see themselves as less vulnerable to the contraction of disease. This may further mediate the association between social disconnection and social distancing adherence.
3) Are feelings of social connectedness associated with self- versus other-motivations for adhering to social distancing regulations, and are these effects stronger for those living alone versus living with others? People who feel more socially disconnected and those who live alone, may have more self-focused

reasons for adhering (or not) to social distancing measures, whereas relatively more connected people and those living with others may have more other-focused motives for adhering to social distancing measures.

4) Are feelings of social connectedness associated with trust in the current government's handling of the coronavirus outbreak. People who feel more socially disconnected may disparage a government implementing what they perceive to be 'unnecessary' social distancing measures, or they may draw closer to a sociopolitical relationship who can offer them a sense of safety and security (consistent with past research).