

## Peer Review Report

# Review Report on Trust in government, perceived integrity and food safety protective behavior: The mediating role of risk perception

Original Article, Int J Public Health

Reviewer: Finaba Berete

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### EVALUATION

#### **Q 1** Please summarize the main findings of the study.

This is an interesting study on a hot topic concerning trust in government, especially in this Covid-19/post-Covid-19 period. The authors have done a solid statistical analysis. The paper is generally well written and structured. However, I have some comments that could improve the report.

I recommend publication in the IJPH. following revisions by the authors.

#### **Q 2** Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

No answer given.

#### **Q 3** Please provide your detailed review report to the authors. The editors prefer to receive your review structured in major and minor comments. Please consider in your review the methods (statistical methods valid and correctly applied (e.g. sample size, choice of test), is the study replicable based on the method description?), results, data interpretation and references. If there are any objective errors, or if the conclusions are not supported, you should detail your concerns.

Abstract:

The authors stated 'This study examined the correlations between trust in government, risk perceptions of food safety, and the public's four types of protective behaviors regarding food safety'. I suggest that the authors drop the "four types of" and be more general. So rephrased as follows: 'This study examined the correlations between trust in government, risk perceptions of food safety, and the public's protective behaviors regarding food safety'

Please clarify that you conducted mediation analysis using the bootstrap method. If possible, specify the role of each of the four variables mentioned in the objective.

Main comments

Please move the section 'literature review and hypotheses' at the section 'introduction' and merge them. This could avoid repetitions.

Lines 44 to 48: Are these assumptions or results? Please leave them out or rephrase them if they are assumptions.

Line 156-157: Why do the authors take an average of the three item if there is a question about trust in government in general? I assume that this question was also represented on a scale of 1 to 5.

Line 261 to 262: "...indicating that perceived integrity influences food protective behaviors both directly and indirectly". On what basis? In fact, based on the evidence presented, both the total effect (Table 2) and the indirect effect (Table 3) of perceived integrity are estimated. No direct effect is measured.

Could the authors also present the percentage mediated, i.e. how much of the total effect operates through the mediator?

Among the limitations of this study, the authors must mention the number of dropouts due to missing values (29% in 2013 and 34% in 2019) which could have an impact on the final results.

In this study, the authors explore the influence of trust in government on food protection behaviors. However, trust in other components of the food supply chain (such as trust in the food industry and its communication) may also play a crucial role in food protection behaviors. This could be an avenue for future research in this area.

#### Minor comments

Line 145 to 148: 'Four food safety protective behaviors were used in this survey: "If media reported that there would be food safety issues, will you try to avoid eating it?"; "Will you bring your food kit when you eating out due to food safety concerns?"; "Will you try your best to eat organic food?". What media are they? Those related to government communication or food industry communication? Please specify.

Line 173 to 182: Control variables – I suggest that the authors either specify all categories of education, employment status, marriage and place of residence or discard them all and refer to Table 1 for more information on the categories. As currently stated in the text, they are understood as binary variables.

Lines 194–223: I suggest that the authors present only the main/key results and refer to Table 1 for more information. Also, keep only one decimal place for figures in the text.

For OLS regression and mediation analysis, which of the four categories of food protection behaviors are considered? For example, do you recode 'definitely not' (1) and "probability not" (2) as "not eat"? Please specify.

Mention beta in Table 2.

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#### PLEASE COMMENT

**Q 4** ▶ Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

No answer given.

**Q 5** ▶ Are the keywords appropriate?

No answer given.

**Q 6** ▶ Is the English language of sufficient quality?

No answer given.

**Q 7** ▶ Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?

Yes.

**Q 8** Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner?)

No answer given.

#### QUALITY ASSESSMENT

**Q 9** Originality

**Q 10** Rigor

**Q 11** Significance to the field

**Q 12** Interest to a general audience

**Q 13** Quality of the writing

**Q 14** Overall scientific quality of the study

#### REVISION LEVEL

**Q 15** Please make a recommendation based on your comments:

Minor revisions.