Peer Review Report

Review Report on Factors Associated with Trust in Public Authorities Among Adults in Norway, UK, US, and Australia Two Years after the COVID-19 Outbreak

EVALUATION

Q 1   Please summarize the main findings of the study.

The main contribution of the study is the identification of factors associated with trust in information provided by authorities and financial measures in four Western countries at the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q 2   Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

A strength of the manuscript is the search for contexts of trust in institutions as a means of protecting public health in times of pandemic. The results also document perceptions of pandemic management in selected countries as well as sociodemographic predictors of trust in authorities. A limitation of the study is the conduct of research on a non-representative sample of respondents as well as an incorrectly chosen analysis of the predictors of trust.

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.

The introduction should include the current state of knowledge at the time of writing the study. However, the text contains only the general reactions of the authorities after the pandemic outbreak. I recommend that the introduction should be modified by describing the measures taken or not taken in the selected countries. This will create a good starting point for the discussion of the findings. This section also lacks more detailed findings on predictors and correlates of trust in authority from other research.

In the Methods section, the sample selection is only marginally described. Who do these respondents represent? How were the respondents recruited? How was the sample size determined? Why did women make up 75% of the sample? This is a very important section that has implications for the results, so the sampling needs to be described in detail.

Measures

Why has trust in public authorities been measured through trust in information? The ambiguity regarding the terms Trust in Public Authorities vs. Trust in information needs to be resolved. Willingness to take a vaccine is incorrectly named instead of vaccination status.

The big limitation is the analysis. The authors chose ANOVA and t-tests, which identified differences in almost all the variables studied. In the second part, they created models for each dependent variable. In the model thus presented, vaccination appears to be a predictor of institutional trust, but in fact, the opposite is true. I recommend the use of regression models, excluding vaccination and focusing more on sociodemographic variables. Socio-demographic variables are not included in the discussion at all.

PLEASE COMMENT

Q 4   Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

I recommend considering the title "...Trust in Public Authorities information..."

Q 5 Are the keywords appropriate?

Yes.

Q 6 Is the English language of sufficient quality?

Yes.

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?)

Yes.

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:

Major revisions.