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Moderated Mediation Between Disaster News Overload and Avoidance: The Role of Compassion Fatigue and Collectivism Value

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Introduction

- **Disaster News Overload & News Avoidance**
 - The bad news triggers emotional responses, leading us to avoid further distressing information (Narayan et al., 2011).
 - **Journalism Practice in Disaster:** the more media coverage, the better?
 - The news might also simply be “too much”, therefore leading people to tune out from it (de Bruin et al., 2021).
 - Disaster news and cognitive overload



32%

of avoiders avoid some topics. e.g. topics that bring down mood or increase anxiety.

Introduction

- **Compassion Fatigue & Disaster News Avoidance**

- One death is a tragedy, a million is a statistic.
- “Concerned” photography has done at least as much to deaden conscience as to arouse it (Santag, 1977) .
- People avoid news to get rid of cognitive burden caused by news fatigue (Song et al., 2017).
- Compassion fatigue as a kind of affective burden.

Introduction

- **Confucianism & Collectivism**

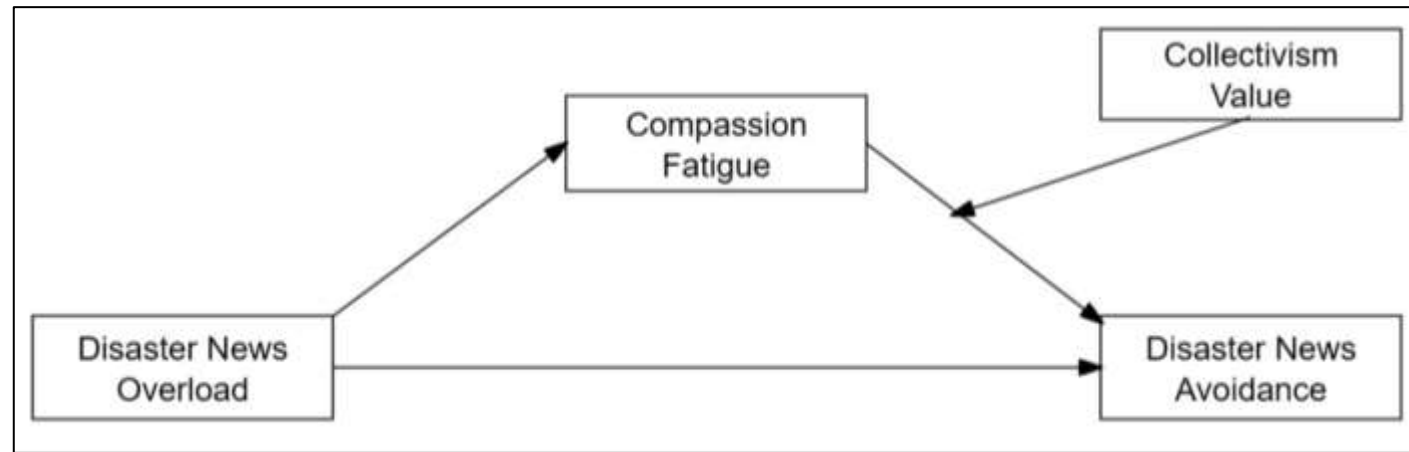
- **Chinese Collectivism & Confucianism Tradition:** Individuals exist in relation to others.
- Individuals with a collectivist orientation tend to exhibit higher levels of tolerance in political discussions, which is inversely associated with information avoidance behaviors (Skoric et al., 2018).
- Disaster coverage can frequently invoke the compassionate mechanisms of collectivists, considering the concept of 'self' is defined by 'we' rather than 'I'.



Portrait of Confucius

Methodology

- A survey conducted in Mainland China in August-September 2023 and the structural equation modeling was employed in PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2009).
- Participants were 621 university students at Beijing (71.2% female) aged from 18 to 33.
- Key measures included **disaster news overload** ($a = .83$), **disaster news avoidance** ($a = .82$), **compassion fatigue** ($a = .84$), and **collectivism value** ($a = .76$).



Proposed Research Model

Results and Discussion

- A positive association between **disaster news overload and disaster news avoidance** ($\beta=.187, p<.001$).
- **Compassion fatigue mediated this relationship** (Indirect effect = .034, 95%CI = [.008, .064]), indicating that higher levels of disaster news overload resulted in increased compassion fatigue ($\beta=.120, p<.01$), subsequently intensifying intentions of disaster news avoidance ($\beta=.284, p<.001$).
- **Collectivism positively moderated** the relationship between compassion fatigue and disaster news avoidance ($\beta_{CF*CV}=.124, p<.01$) with the association being stronger for individuals with high collectivism ($M+1SD, \beta=.408, p<.01$) compared to those with low collectivism ($M - 1SD, \beta=.159, p<.001$).

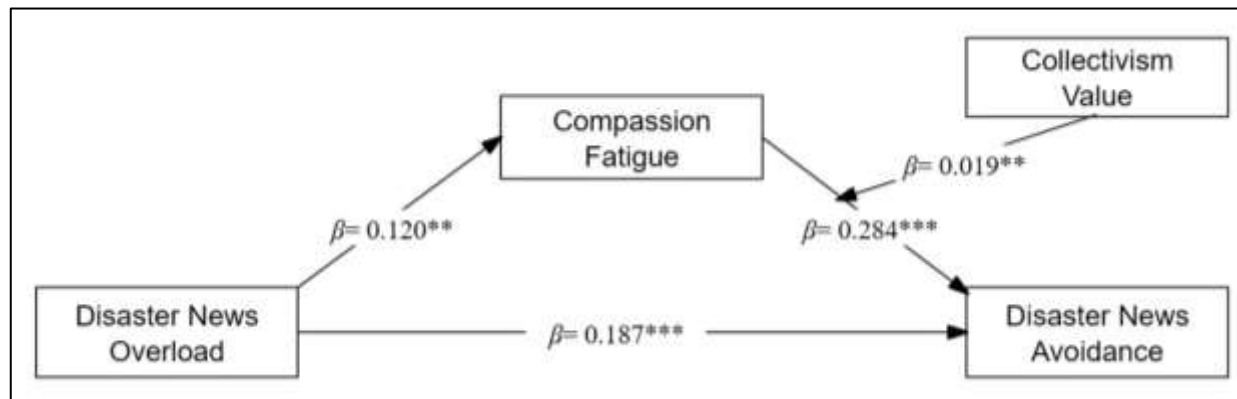


Figure. 4. Research model with path coefficients.
 Note. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

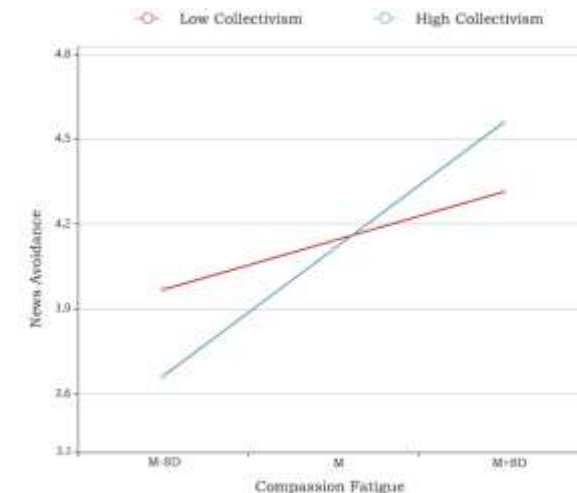


Figure. 5. The moderating effect of collectivism

Conclusion and Discussion

- **News Censorship and Disaster Journalism in China**
 - The more media coverage, the better ?
 - Compassion fatigue in the context of censorship?

- **Cross-National Comparative Research**
 - Cross-national differences in collectivism-individualism.
 - Culture is a complex, multidimensional structure.

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Thank you

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