

Impact of Patriotism on Motives for COVID-19 Prevention: An Experimental Survey

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This study investigates the possibilities of plausible impact from patriotism on the pro-sociality and the motives of citizens towards COVID-19 prevention. The study focuses on the empirical evidence of plausible motivations of Sri Lankan citizens to cooperate with the State in minimising the socio-economic and health costs of the pandemic. Thus, the role and significance of patriotism, pro-sociality, attitudes, and beliefs of Sri Lankan citizens in COVID-19 prevention is examined. Accordingly, the study was designed as an online experiment consisting of two simultaneous trials to test two broad hypotheses. Accordingly, the initial objective of this study was to observe whether the pro-sociality of subjects improves the intentions and effort of Sri Lankan citizens in adopting COVID-19 prevention behaviour. This led to observing whether patriotism mediates the pro-sociality of citizens and affects their intentions and efforts in following COVID-19 prevention behaviour. The sample of the study consisted of 320 undergraduates representing 40 each per session. The experimental design consisted of two scenarios consisting a baseline and three treatments each of which represented situations with and without patriotism as an effect. Further, the differences across treatments were followed by self, close-prosocial and distance-prosocial concerns. The analysis averages the responses collected via 10-point Likert scales to observe the treatment effects and, clustered regressions to identify the significances and their magnitudes. Results verify that pro-sociality improves the intentions and effort on COVID-19 prevention behaviour. Further, we observed that the perceived public threat is more strongly associated with COVID-19 prevention intentions than the perceived personal threat when patriotism appeared. Thus, the results highlight the relative importance of pro-social motives and patriotism for COVID-19 prevention.

Keywords: COVID-19, Effort, Patriotism, Prevention intentions, Pro-sociality