Hope buffers the depression and anxiety via motiving proactivity in preventive health behavioral engagement: moderating effects of contextual and perceived severity of the COVID-19

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Introduction

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has posited prolonged and unequal impacts on the worldwide prevalence of depression and anxiety (depression-anxiety). Therefore, we explored the protective effect of hope thought on depression-anxiety, preventive proactivity, and behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Serial multiple mediating effects of preventive proactivity and behaviors were also explored.

Method

- We conducted an online questionnaire in July 2020.
- Participants included two nationally representative samples in China (n = 2955, 53.1% man, aged 18-95 years) and the United States (the US, n=1,345, 51.6% man, aged 18-79 years).
- We used the Dispositional Hope Scale (DHS) and Patient Health Questionnaire-4 (PHQ-4) to measure hope and the prevalence of depression-anxiety, respectively.

Results：

- First, 43.08% of US participants had moderate to severe intensity of depression-anxiety which was prominently severer than that found in China with 5.68%.
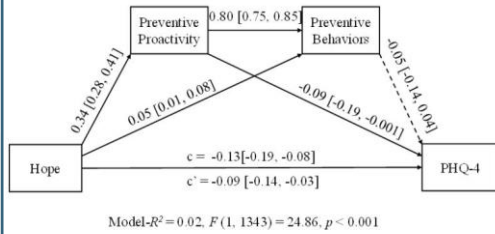

Figure 1 The serial multiple mediation model in the US
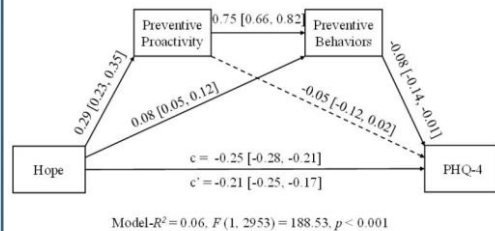

Figure 2 The serial multiple mediation model in China
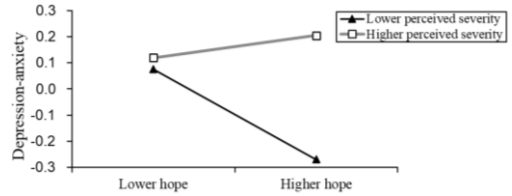

Figure 3.1 The moderate effect of individual-level perceived severity on the relationship of hope and depression-anxiety in the US
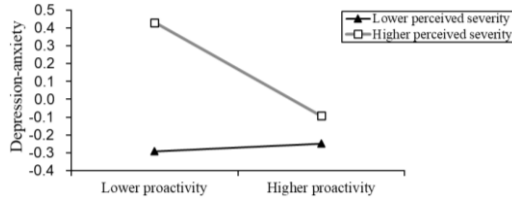

Figure 3.2 The moderate effect of individual-level perceived severity on the relationship of preventive proactivity and depression-anxiety in the US
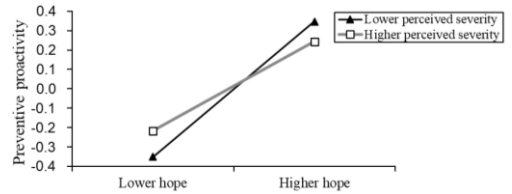

Figure 3.3 The moderate effect of individual-level perceived severity on the relationship of hope and depression-anxiety in China

- Second, hope could mitigate severe depression-anxiety and be mediated by the serial mediating role of preventive proactivity and preventive behaviors.
- Third, the nation-level severity of the COVID-19 moderated the abovementioned mediation model. A prominent mediating effect of preventive proactivity was found for the US, while the preventive behavior showed a larger mediating function for China.
- Fourth, individual-level perceived severity of the COVID-19 also moderated the abovementioned model in each nation, regardless of the multiple demographic characteristics.

Conclusion

The hope-based interventional implications on depression-anxiety might work well via improving the preventive intentions in the US and encouraging the preventive performances in China during the era of the COVID-19 pandemic.