

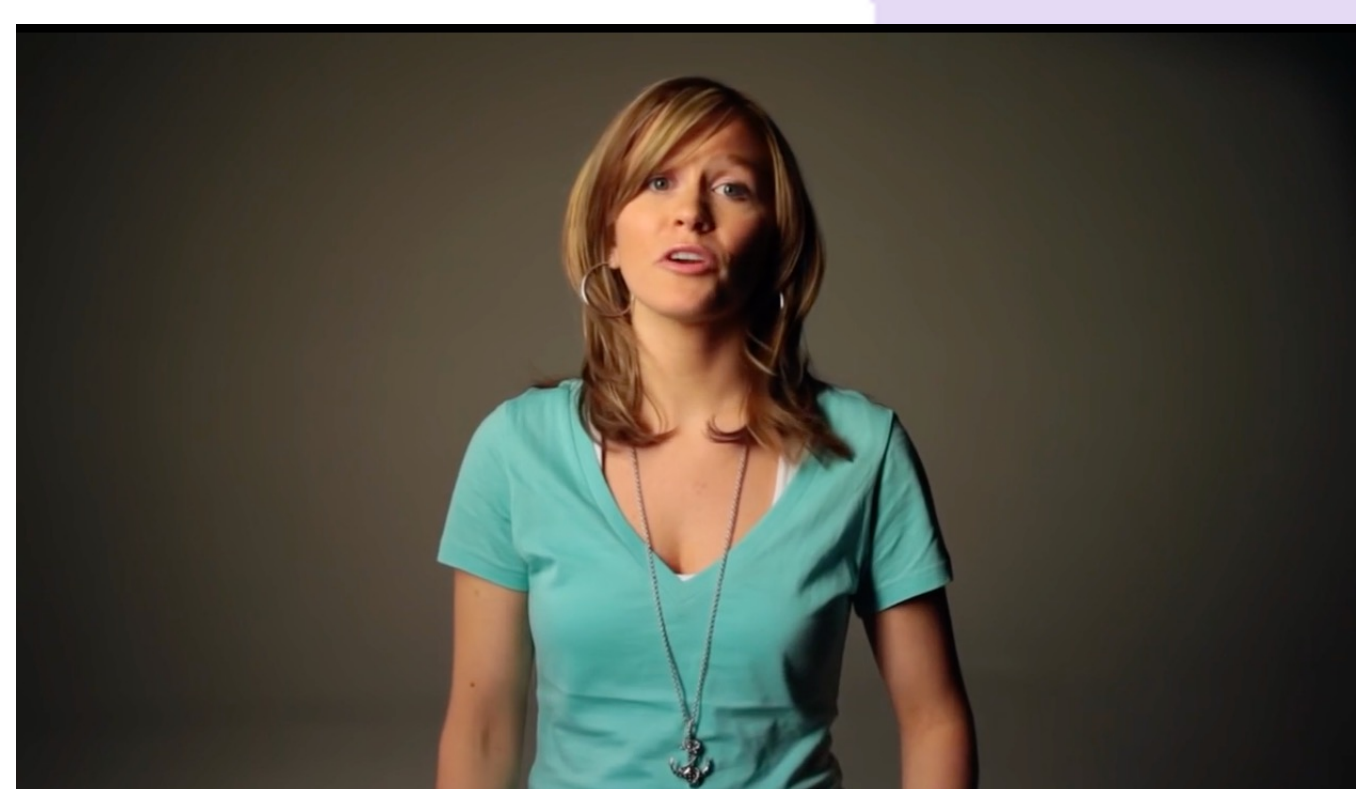
The Impact of Exemplars on Perception Gap of Risk and Behavioral Intentions

INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Individuals tend to believe that they are less susceptible to health threats than others, termed as unrealistic optimism.
- ❖ Exemplars in health messages often elicits a third-person effect (TPE, Zillmann, 2006; Zillmann & Brosius, 2000).
- ❖ If the increase of exemplars elevates the risk perception levels to both self and others, does it decrease the size of this TPE-like perception gap?

STIMULI

Condition One:
Control, no exemplars



Condition Two:
Exemplar intense



Condition Three
Non-exemplar intense



HYPOTHESES & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

H1: The more exemplars used in a health message, the more likely individuals will perceive risks to the health threat, regardless of the format.

H2: After exposure to health messages with exemplars, individuals would perceive others to be more susceptible to the health threat than themselves.

RQ1: Is the magnitude of TPE-like risk perception related to the amount of exemplars used in a health message?

RQ2: Does the risk perception gap predict behaviors/behavioral intentions above and beyond the influence of perceived risks to oneself and to others?

STUDY DESIGN

- ❖ An online experiment with three conditions (control condition, exemplar intense condition, non-exemplar intense condition) was conducted (N = 90).

- ❖ Age: 21 – 65 (M = 36.64, SD = 10.01)
- ❖ Males: 51%; Females: 49%

Dependent Variables:

- ❖ Perceived risk to self (M = 4.54, SD = 1.63, Cronbach's α = .91)
- ❖ Perceived risk to others (M = 4.81, SD = 1.21, Cronbach's α = .95)
- ❖ Prevention intention of self:
Use sunscreen (M = 5.78, SD = 1.61), decrease/avoid indoor tanning (M = 6.26, SD = 1.27), cover with clothes (M = 5.89, SD = 1.42), and check skin regularly (M = 5.63, SD = 1.58)
- ❖ Prevention intention of others:
Use sunscreen (M = 4.94, SD = 1.40), decrease/avoid indoor tanning (M = 5.12, SD = 1.23), cover with clothes (M = 4.60, SD = 1.50), and check skin regularly (M = 4.55, SD = 1.38).
- ❖ Perception gap of perceived risk (M = -.27, SD = 1.36)

Control Variables:

- ❖ Issue involvement (M = 5.43, SD = 1.00, Cronbach's α = .85)
- ❖ Multitasking (M = 3.92, SD = 1.08, Cronbach's α = .79)
- ❖ Video engagement (M = 4.77, SD = 1.01, Cronbach's α = .75)
- ❖ Response efficacy (M = 6.05, SD = 1.04, Cronbach's α = .89)
- ❖ Self efficacy (M = 5.90, SD = 1.03, Cronbach's α = .90)
- ❖ Perceived severity (M = 6.21, SD = 1.02, Cronbach's α = .90)

RESULTS

	Control	Exemplar-less-intense	Exemplar-intense
M	4.62 _{ac}	4.05 _{ac}	5.01 _a
SE	0.27	0.26	0.28

F(2, 84) = 3.17, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$.
Note. Means with no subscripts in common differ at $p < .05$. Means adjusted for issue involvement, video engagement, and multitasking.

	Control	Exemplar-less-intense	Exemplar-intense
M	4.94 _a	4.75 _a	4.74 _a
SE	0.18	0.18	0.19

F(2, 84) = 0.37, $p = .69$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$.
Note. Means with no subscripts in common differ at $p < .05$. Means adjusted for issue involvement, video engagement, and multitasking.

	Control	Exemplar-less-intense	Exemplar-intense
M	0.32	0.70	-0.27
SD	0.24	0.24	0.25

Note. N = 90.

	Sunscreen Use	Avoid Tanning	Clothing (Covering)	Self-Checking
First Block				
Issue Involvement	.17	-.06	-.01	.11
Video Engagement	.02	-.03	.22	.37**
Multitasking	.02	-.08	-.06	-.09
Second Block				
Perceived Severity	.05	.37*	-.09	.11
Response Efficacy	-.06	.13	.08	-.01
Self-Efficacy	.42**	-.27*	.40**	.22
Sum of Perceived Risks to Self and Others	.23*	.02	-.19	.17
Perception Gap of Risk	-.19*	-.04	-.09	-.001
R ² change ^a	.21***	.29***	.13*	.07*

Note. N = 90.
^aThe change of R² after adding the predictors in second block.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

DISCUSSION

- ❖ Using exemplars could enhance the persuasive power of health messages by elevating the health risk to themselves.
- ❖ However, this effect was not revealed when individuals were asked to report risk perceptions to others.
- ❖ Participants tended to believe that others were more susceptible to the threat than themselves.
- ❖ The exemplar-intense condition showed individuals perceived themselves to be more susceptible to the threat than others

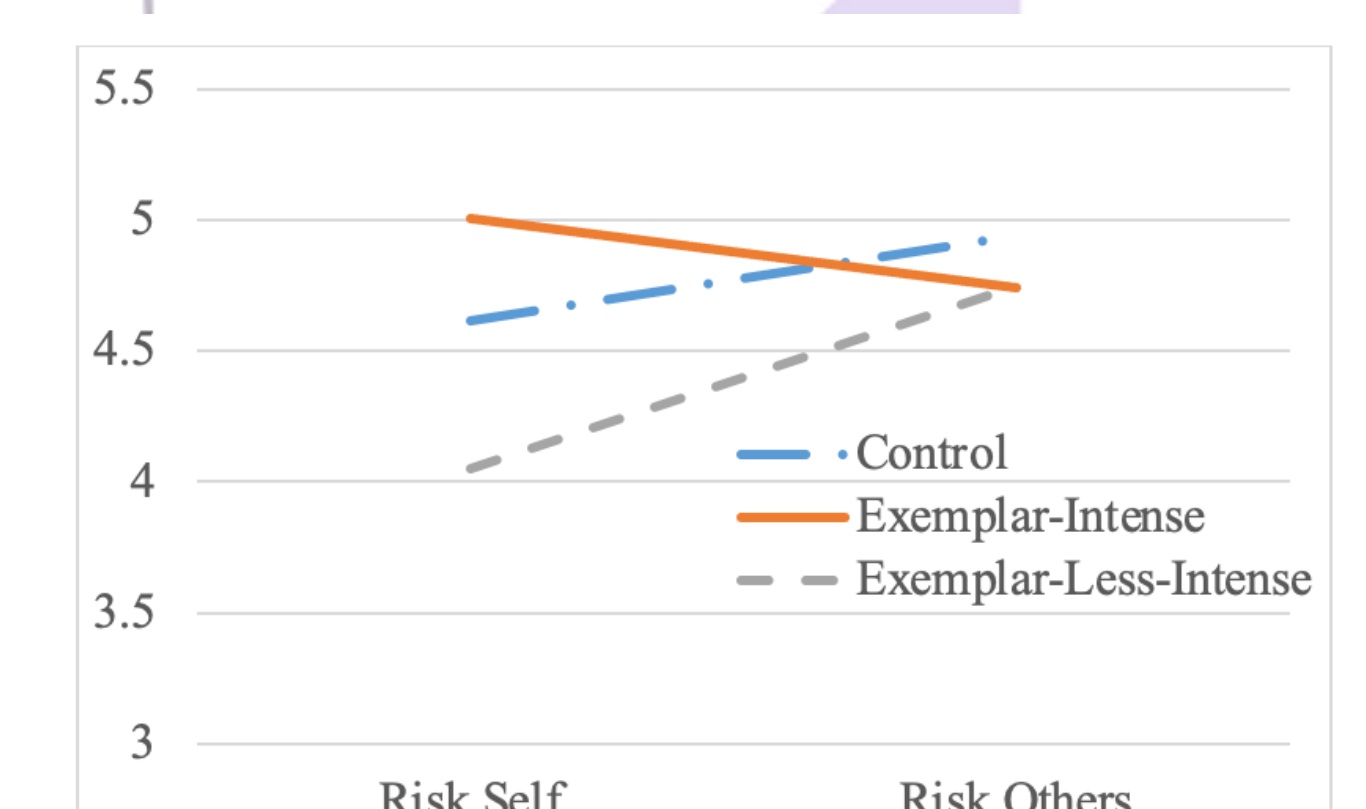


Figure 1. Perceived risks to self and to others across conditions.