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Influence of Mass Media Channels on Health-Related Risk Perception

The case of Fukushima

Research Question

Can the use of specific media channels predict the long-term health-related risk perception of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear accident?

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Method

Dataset

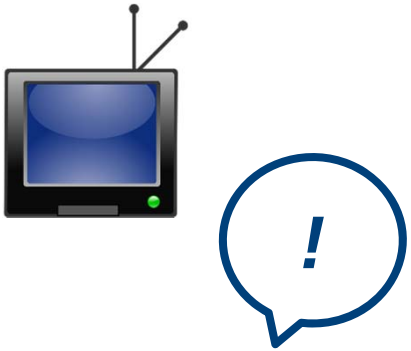
SCK•CEN Barometer 2013
(Turcanu & Perko, 2014)

- *N* = 1,002
- Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews

Methods

- Linear Regression Analyses
  (12 media channels and 5 controlling variables)
- Bivariate Correlations

Results



Television (β = 0.064, p = 0.048) and **interpersonal communication** (β = 0.117, p < 0.001) were associated with higher risk perception

The category of **miscellaneous online sources** (β = -0.186, p = 0.002) was associated with lower risk perception

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Results

Lower **satisfaction with the coverage** was a predictor of higher perceived risk (β_1 = -0.120; β_2 = -0.204; $p \leq 0.001$)

Interpersonal communication used more by people who were unsatisfied with the media coverage (r = -0.113, p = 0.001)

Conclusion

It is evident that the media indeed play a role in shaping the risk perception of a nuclear accident.

Even so, the general attitude towards nuclear energy is a more powerful predictor.

Practical Implications

The focus should be on traditional media

- TV: used by over 90% of the people
- Radio and newspapers each used by about 50%
- Small number of people named social media as an important source of information

Satisfactory information is important

- Blogs could provide understandable information
- (Non-)governmental agencies could provide complete information

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