

# Information, Emotion & Perceptions about COVID-19

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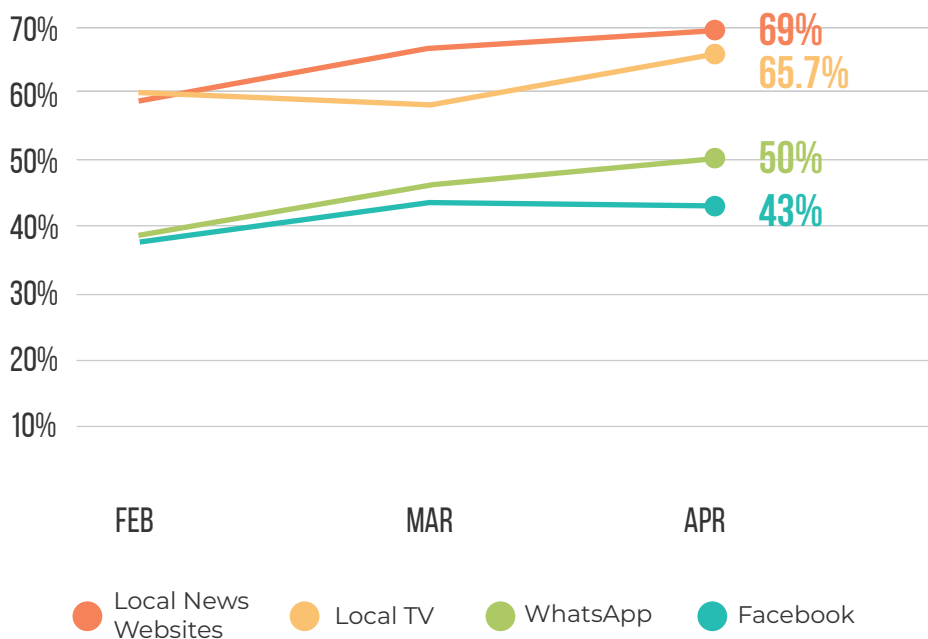
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# INFORMATION SEEKING

Singaporeans increased their information-seeking about COVID-19 as the outbreak unfolded.

## Most Frequently Used Information Sources



Older residents gravitated towards mainstream sources such as reading the newspaper. Younger residents flocked to social media sources.

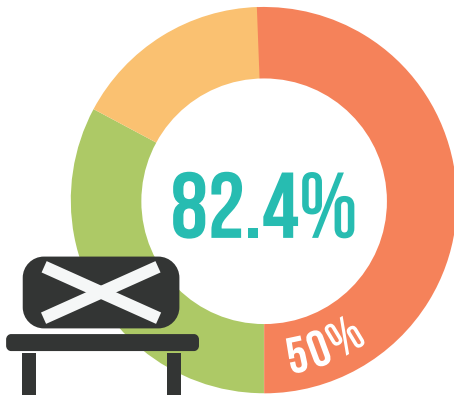


The only exception was WhatsApp, which was used more by older residents than younger ones to seek COVID-19 related information.

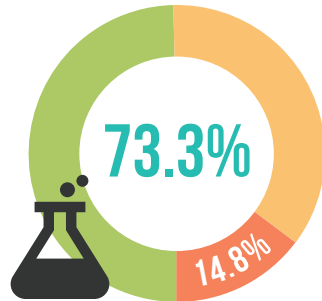
# FAKE NEWS

Singaporeans were exposed to fake news that spread on social media, with some of them believing in these posts.

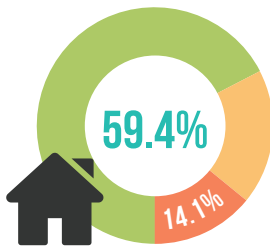
- % who saw at least once
- Knew it was false
- Not sure
- Thought it was true



“Safe-distancing ambassadors have fined some residents \$300 for sitting on marked seats.”



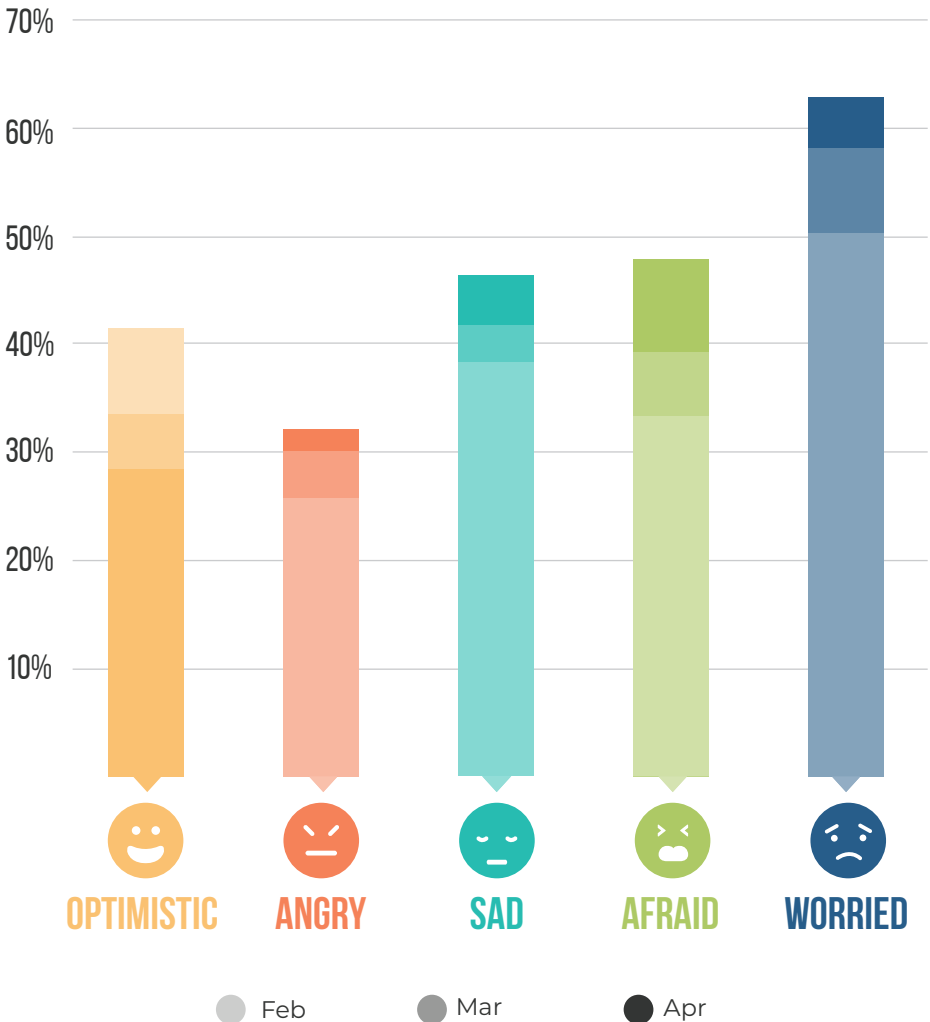
“Scientists have confirmed that the COVID-19 virus originated from a bio-warfare lab in



“Police are checking on residential units to enforce safe distancing measures.”

# EMOTIONS

Over time, residents generally felt increasingly more angry, afraid and sad about the COVID-19 situation. The greatest changes were seen in terms of increment of worry and decrease in optimism.

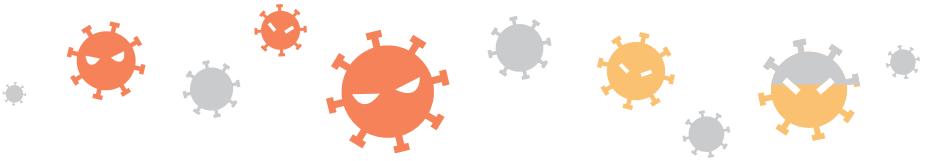




# RISK PERCEPTION

## IN FEBRUARY,

only 30% of the public felt that COVID-19 was a very dangerous disease.



## IN APRIL,

this figure rose to 46.7%.



In April,

# 65%

of the public also felt that there was a high probability of them contracting the virus.

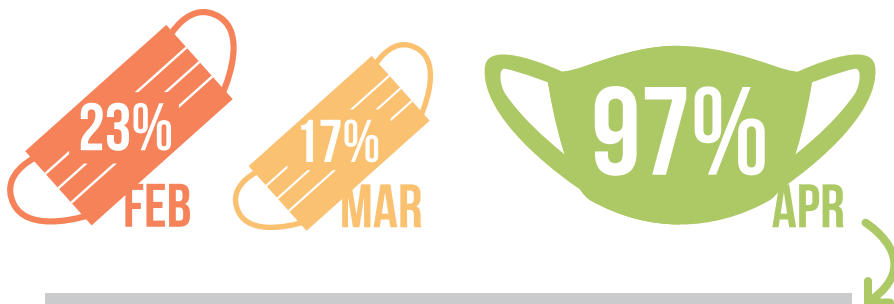
We found a positive relationship between emotional response and perception of risk:

Those who feel more afraid, sad and worried were also more likely to perceive higher risk of them catching the virus.



# BEHAVIOURS

## *Wearing a Face Mask When Going Out*



The spike happened during circuit breaker, when the government made mask-wearing mandatory. Most respondents also stayed home & maintained safe distancing.



Easy-to-do measures were consistently engaged in.

In the earlier stages of the outbreak, emotions drove some of these behaviours. Those feeling worried engaged more in preventive behaviours.

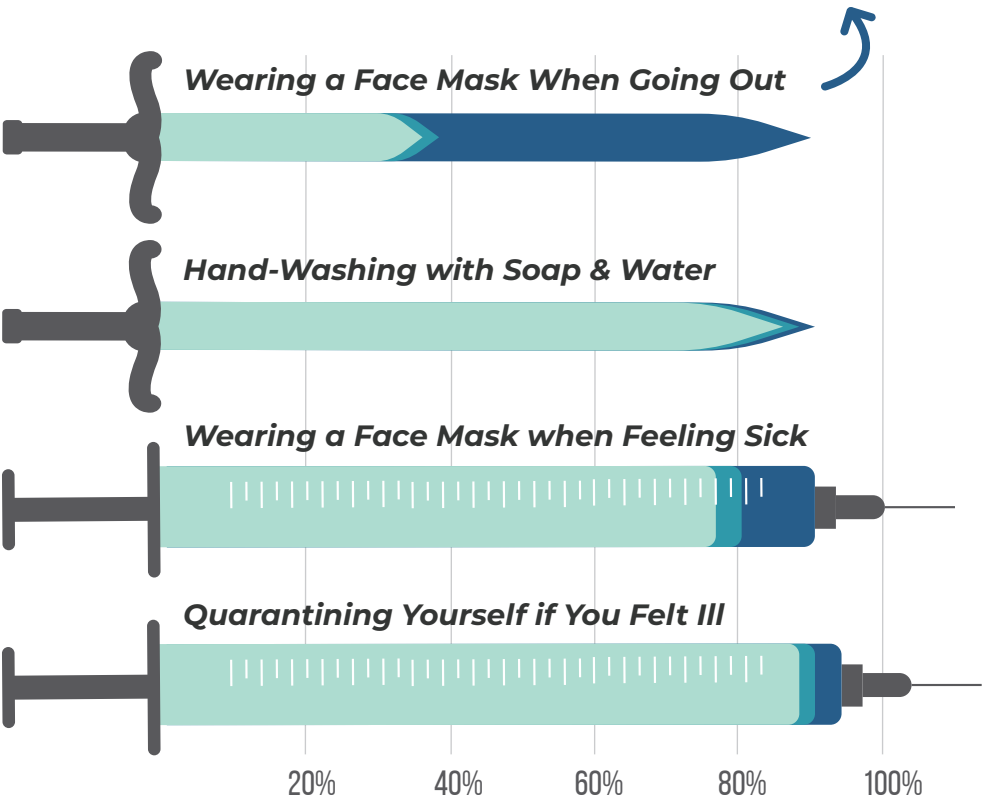
In the latter period, we found no link between emotions and behaviour, as mask-wearing, staying home and safe-distancing became compulsory and hence a default action.





# PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS

Skyrocketed from 36.2% in Feb to 85.9% in April, following directives given by Singapore's ministerial task-force to wear a face mask



Effective to prevent catching the virus



Effective to prevent transmission

● Feb

● Mar

● Apr



## **Edson C. Tandoc Jr.**

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## **Hye Kyung Kim**

(Ph.D., Cornell University) is an Assistant Professor at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. Her overarching research goal is to apply communication and social psychological theories to understand the processing and effects of communicative interactions in health.



## ***Research Design***

We conducted a three-wave national survey to track various indicators on public behaviour and response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supported by grants from the Ministry of Education, the Social Science Research Council in Singapore, and the WhatsApp Research Award, we polled 1,023 Singapore residents across three waves, from February to April 2020.

The retention rates of the participants were 75% from February to March (N=767) and 70% from March to April (N=540). Our recruited respondents closely resembled the national demographics profile of Singapore.

## ***Acknowledgments***

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