

Fear Versus Efficacy: Evaluating Dual-Process Models with Workplace Safety Messages

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Abstract Threat messages are often used to try to change people's behavior. Several dual-process models propose that threats can either cause people to control their fear or mitigate the danger. A critical review of these dual process models suggest that severe threats or susceptibility are more likely to result in fear control while self-efficacy should result in the more adaptive outcomes. An online experiment tested these predictions with 1802 men across four English-speaking countries—Australia, Canada, the UK and the US. Path analysis results supported a strong relationship between gore and defensive reactions consistent with the fear control process while efficacy shows a closer relationship with protection motivation and the danger control process. The results provide strong support for this revision of the dual process approach, with fear provoking defensive motivations, and efficacy resulting in self-protection. These results show scaring people is less effective than providing options to avoid the danger.

References: Available upon request

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