Response to Comments from Reviewer 2 and Revisions

□ **Comment 1**

Reviewers' comment: (Abstract)

1. The background is not appropriate for the purpose of the study. It would be more appropriate to emphasize the health recommendations and hygiene measures adopted during COVID-19 (for example, frequent handwashing), as reported in the introduction of the main text.
2. Participant information should be more detailed (gender distribution, age range)
3. Authors should specify the type of tool used and what characteristics it investigated.

Response: We appreciate your reviews and agree with the comments. In response to the reviewers' comments, the ABSTRACT has been revised as follows. However, participant information is briefly presented by referring to the regulations and other published articles in this journal(Sustainability)(please see page 1, lines 10-17):

'Since there is no cure for the COVID-19 pandemic yet, personal hygiene management is important for protecting oneself from the deadly virus. Personal hygiene management comes from personal hygiene habits**.** Thus, this study investigated the association between personal hygiene habits, consumers' infection-prevention behaviors, and the effects of social support on the latter. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire survey from 620 Korean adults. An online survey agency was used to conduct the questionnaire over 8 days, from May 18 to May 25, 2020. Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling.'

□ **Comment 2**

Reviewers' comment : (Method)

1. Methods should be repeatable. Therefore, please specify the online platform used. Furthermore, it is not clear how the sample was recruited. The authors stated that they distributed the questionnaire by mail. Were the recipients of the emails part of a specific mailing list?
2. The authors stated that they collected 620 questionnaires. All completed questionnaires were valid or some questionnaires were removed in the cleaning process? For example, for multiple submissions of the same respondent or for lack of all responses within the questionnaire

Response: Yes, you are right. We fully agree with you. The 3.1 Data Collection section in the METHOD has been revised as follows (please see page 5, lines 194-205):

'We collected data using a self-report questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to adults for 8 days, from May 18 to 25, 2020, by an online survey agency called Macomil Embrain. This agency has a survey panel of 1,249,392 adults, accounting for 3.5% of the Korean adult population. The questionnaire was revised to a web survey for the convenience of online responses. The web survey was developed such that missing responses or outliers were not allowed. The survey was randomly sent via email to the adult panels of the agency. The questionnaires were retrieved in order depending on the

sample allocated based on sex, age, and area of residence. A total of 620 questionnaires were collected, and we checked for any missing responses, outliers, and duplicate responses. We used the data for analysis after confirming that the data had no problems.'

□ **Comment 3**

Reviewers' comment : (Discussion) The discussion does not represent a considerable extension of the results. Authors should argue the results found by referring to the scientific literature in agreement and in contrast.

Response: Yes, you are right. The DISCUSSION section has been revised as follows (please see page 13, lines 402-416):

The results were as follows. First, personal hygiene habits had a positive effect on self-efficacy for infection prevention and had an indirect positive effect on infection prevention behaviors through self-efficacy for infection prevention. This highlights the importance of complying with personal hygiene practices in daily life, regardless of whether there is an outbreak happening at the time. This is supported by the studies by Kim and Yun[23], Stuckey et al.[27], Kerstin et al.[58] that health-related habits affect health promotion behavior. Second, the public demonstrated a higher self-efficacy for infection prevention and compliance with infection-prevention behaviors when combined with higher perceived social support for infection prevention. Furthermore, informational support increased the effect of the public's self-efficacy for infection prevention on viral spread-prevention behaviors. These findings are supported by the findings of Yoo and Joo[59], Kim et al.[60] that information support for risk factors affects individuals' risk response actions. This result confirms the importance of informational support.

++ references

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□ **Comment 4**

Reviewers' comment : (Limitation) Among the limitations of the study, authors should report that personal hygiene habits were assessed through a self-reported questionnaire increasing the risk of self-reporting bias.

Response: Yes, you are right. The following sentence has been added to the LIMITATION section (please see page 14, lines 445-447):

'Lastly, all variables, including personal hygiene habits, were assessed through a self-reported questionnaire that increased the risk of self-reporting bias.'

++We appreciate the constuctive comments of the reviewers,

which have helped us improve the quality of our manuscript. Thank you! ++