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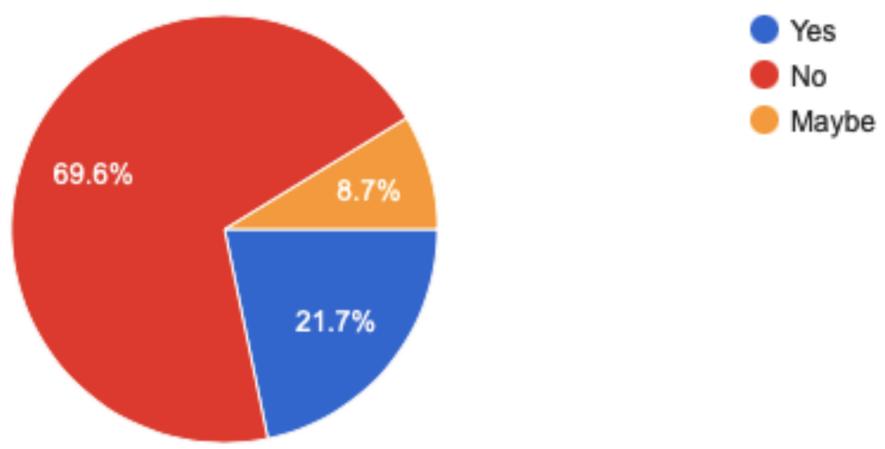
PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to determine how COVID-19 has affected African American educators and staff members ages 25-65 at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and Chattanooga State Community College. The objective of this study is to explore how COVID-19 has affected African American educators and staff members financially, mentally, and socially while also examining their thoughts and beliefs on the flu and COVID-19 vaccines.

DEMOGRAPHIC

The target demographic for this project is African American professors and staff members ages 25-65 on the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and Chattanooga State Community College campuses.

Financial Impacts of COVID-19



METHODS

This research was approved by UTC IRB after a week-long review.

To recruit interviewees for the listening sessions, emails were sent to individuals with a statement describing the purpose of the experiment along with the informed consent. Only 8 out of 41 people participated in the listening session.

For the survey, mass emails were sent out and only 14 out of 117 people participated in the survey. A grand total of 22 people participated in this research.

The listening sessions were conducted on ZOOM with the average of 30 minutes per session. Google form was utilized for the production and collection of the survey and its results.

OUTCOMES

The outcomes of the listening sessions and the surveys:

- 1) General consensus that the government had a poor and ill-equipped response to the pandemic.
- 2) Most of the participants, in general, were more cautious during the pandemic and avoided visiting relatives and practiced good personal hygiene. Many had to readjust their teaching methods and were feeling overwhelmed with the amount of work in addition to feeling "Zoom fatigued".
- 3) **70%** reported COVID did not impact them financially while **22%** reported COVID had a financial impact while **9%** reported maybe. **83%** reported receiving stimulus checks while **9%** did not.
- 4) **100%** participants reported COVID had affected their mental health negatively with increased anxiety and stress due to increased workloads. In addition, many are missing the pre-COVID social interactions.
- 5) **74%** participants reported had taken the flu vaccine while **22%** haven't. Additionally, there were mixed reactions regarding the COVID-19 vaccines and people would like to know about the safety (**93%**) and efficacy (**57%**) before taking the vaccine.
- 6). Majority received their news from cable news networks, social media, and online news articles.

STUDENT LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons learned from this project are:

- 1) Obtaining participation for either the listening sessions or the surveys were difficult possibly due to a lack of interest, conflict of time, poor communication through emails, or due to a negative view and distrust towards research in general partly by the Tuskegee experiment.
- 2) Scheduling the listening sessions were difficult due to the busy schedules of both the interviewee and the interviewer.
- 3). Keeping track of all the data like the informed consent to the listening session responses and surveys in addition to keeping track of the email invitations which can be challenging.
- 4). Overall, the target demographic had not been affected financially but rather mentally. Therefore, solutions should include ways to relieve stress, anxiety, or to decrease workload to help improve the negative impact of COVID on mental health. In addition, the information related to the COVID-19 vaccines should include efficacy and safety to address the concerns some may have in deciding to take the vaccine.

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