

Introduction

Extensive research has been conducted regarding the impacts of manmade and natural disasters on economic well-being. Nonetheless, these preestablished crucial steps toward disaster mitigation and management have failed to reach the most socio-economically vulnerable in the United States. These shortcomings have a compounded impact on Americans with lower levels of education and income. This project identifies the variances in **perception, preparation, and impact** of the Covid-19 public health disaster across levels of income and education. Findings suggest a negative correlation between low income and disaster vulnerability as well as a positive correlation between levels of education and the ability to avoid risks associated with the 2020 Coronavirus.

Objectives

- Identify how education and income effect COVID-19 perception
- Evaluate how perception and economic vulnerability effect preparation for COVID-19
- Apply findings to explain the observed pattern of emphasized inequality

Results

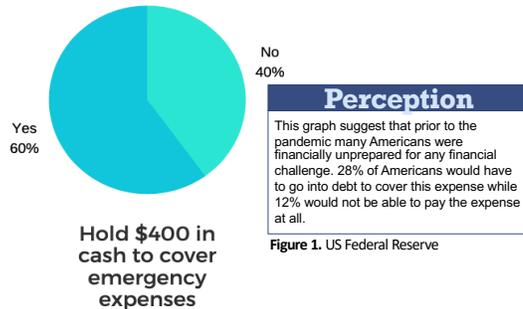
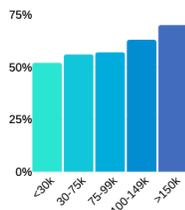


Figure 1. US Federal Reserve

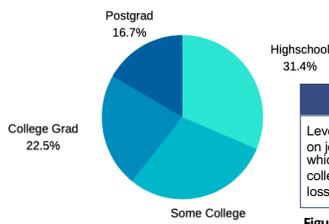


Preparation

There is a positive correlation between income and attentiveness to Covid-19 news. The more money one makes, the more informed they where on the progression and status of the disease and were able to better prepare themselves for the pandemic.

Figure 2. Pew Research

% who have been following news about COVID-19



They or someone in their household has been laid off or lost a job because of the coronavirus outbreak

Impact

Levels of education have a strong impact on job stability and income. Households in which breadwinners had not completed a college degree account for 60% of job losses and lay-offs in the U.S.

Figure 3. Pew Research

Discussion

I grounded my research in past literature regarding the effects of mass-impact disasters on economically vulnerable populations. These writings informed my evaluation of economic detriments we would traditionally expect to see during such emergencies. I find that many are facing the same life-threatening challenges that have plagued Americans for centuries, yet policy has changed little to address these fiscal needs. Although this paper focuses mainly on education and income levels as signifiers of economic well-being, there are many other factors that have a compounding effect on levels of perception, preparation, and impact such as race, age and location.

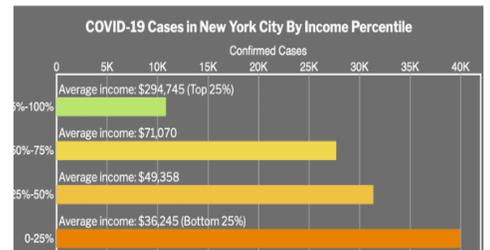


Figure 4. NY Times

Income and likelihood of Covid infection negatively correlated

Conclusions

Individuals with lower income and/or education are more likely to perceive hazards as risky; less likely to prepare for hazards or buy insurance; less likely to respond to warnings; more likely to die, suffer injuries, and have proportionately higher material losses as well as have more psychological trauma; and face more obstacles during the phases of response, recovery, and reconstruction.

Other important points that are crucial to this story but fell outside the bounds of my research include the long-term monetary effects of natural disasters on individual economic mobility.

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