

Key Findings Released of First COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Study of Actions by Young Americans

*First in a Series of Research Briefs by Cause and Social Influence Initiative
Reveals Behaviors By and Influences on Young Americans (18-30)*

INDIANAPOLIS (MARCH 25, 2020) – The Cause & Social Influence initiative has released *Influencing Young Americans to Act: Special COVID-19 Research Report, Spring 2020*, revealing key findings from the first of a series of research studies to track young Americans' (ages 18-30) actions and attitudes related to COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

The first nationally representative study – a 24-hour online survey fielded March 20 to March 21 – reveals that a pandemic may call forth more traditional influences than other social issues.

Key Findings:

1. Traditional news media, not online influencers or celebrities, have driven awareness of COVID-19. TV news and their websites are the top sources, with a national or cable news network the most frequent.

2. The top action taken to support others during the pandemic has been to change consumer buying habits. Giving and volunteering for causes, even online, is low.

3. Family and friends are playing a huge role in whether young people are slowing the spread of the virus. At the same time the vast majority of young people are taking actions like social distancing (77%), frequent handwashing/hand sanitizing (67%) and self-isolation (53), nearly a third reported doing nothing to slow the spread.

4. Young Americans think companies can powerfully influence attitudes toward COVID-19 measures. 80% believe companies can exert some or a great deal of influence over people's attitudes toward preventing the spread of COVID-19. However, young people are uncertain whether to trust companies to exert their influence for the public good (see #6, below).

5. The vast majority of young Americans think fake news about COVID-19 exists and that social media is a haven for it. Almost 90% think social media contains fake news about COVID-19 (Coronavirus) very often (20%), often (30%) or somewhat often (37%).

6. Young people are split on whether local government or nonprofits are the most trusted entity during the pandemic. Local government and nonprofits garnered the highest trust rankings for doing what's right. While half of respondents said President Trump has addressed the pandemic extremely, very or moderately well, only 16% have a lot of trust in the federal government to do what's right in this situation.

Methodology

For this phase of the research, a quantitative approach was taken with an online survey fielded from 6 PM EST on March 20, 2020, to 6 PM EST on March 21, 2020, to collect data about the actions taken by young Americans (ages 18-30) related to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) during the preceding week. The survey generated 1,105 responses from a nationally representative panel based on census-projected ethnic and demographic composition. With this response rate, the data presented has a 95% confidence interval and 3% margin of error. Visit causeandsocialinfluence.com/2020research for more information on the survey panel.

This is the first in a series of research studies on the pandemic to be conducted by Cause and Social Influence, an initiative launched by INFLUENCE|SG in 2018 to examine how Americans 18-30 years old are influenced by and influence others to intentional action on social issues and analyze how those actions become a community of supporters for an issue.

The research team will field this same survey 30, 60, and 90 days from now to understand changes in attitude and behaviors.

To download the full research brief, visit causeandsocialinfluence.com/download-latest-research.

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About the Cause & Social Influence Initiative: The Cause & Social Influence Initiative, a program of INFLUENCE|SG, delivers insights into how young Americans (18-30) are moved to action for today's social issues and movements by companies and causes. By analyzing the movements, moments and campaigns that engage young Americans, leaders of brands and causes can have a greater influence on the issues affecting the largest generation in America. Find more information about our research at causeandsocialinfluence.com and [@causeinfluence](https://twitter.com/causeinfluence).