J. Disability Stud.

Research Article

JOURNAL OF DISABILITY STUDIES

Unmasking Economic Mobility Barriers for Black Women with Disabilities Post Covid-19

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Received on: 14 Feb 2025 Accepted on: 28 March 2025

ABSTRACT

The study explores the economic mobility barriers experienced by Black women with disabilities, with particular attention to the intersection of disability, race, and gender. Utilizing a logistic regression model, the study analyzed data from 472 participants to understand how these challenges intersect and compound, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings reveal that these women face unique barriers that were further exacerbated during the pandemic, including limited access to healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. This research underscores the urgency of addressing the compounded effects of race, gender, and disability in creating effective policies that promote economic mobility for marginalized groups. In light of these findings, the study advocates for targeted policy interventions that dismantle systemic barriers, encourage inclusive economic growth, and foster equitable opportunities. By focusing on the intersectional nature of these disparities, the research highlights the need for more nuanced, community-centered approaches to combat economic inequality and promote upward mobility for Black women with disabilities.

Keywords: Disabilities, women, economic, barriers, post-Covid-19

INTRODUCTION

The American Dream is often touted as the ability to pull oneself out of poverty and achieve greatness despite the economic status from which one originates. However, there is increasing economic evidence to support that this long-held dream is truly unattainable. Economic mobility is relatively simple: Over time, one can advance one's quality of living, or economic status, through growing income or financial-based gains. This ability to advance economically, which is termed "intergenerational mobility," is no longer occurring in the United States (Chetty et al., 2014). This assertion can be seen nationwide and is further backed by local evidence.

Economic mobility is lowest in the South where pressing historical roots, discrimination, stereotypes, divestments, and expropriation continue to present as problems (Network for Southern Economic Mobility, 2024). In a southeastern state, the prospects for upward economic mobility are particularly bleak for individuals born in the lowest income percentile. Research indicates that individuals from the lowest 20th percentile of income face significant barriers, with some counties ranked among the worst in the nation for economic mobility for this demographic (Chetty et al., 2014). For instance, certain counties within this state have been identified as the third least favorable for economic mobility, highlighting the severe challenges faced by those starting from a disadvantaged economic position. Furthermore, these economic disparities are exacerbated when factoring in race/ethnicity, gender, and disability status. Studies have shown that individuals from marginalized racial and ethnic backgrounds, as well as those with disabilities, often experience compounded disadvantages that hinder their ability to ascend the economic ladder (Buncher & Daston, 2022; Cohen et al., 2020). These intersecting factors contribute to a cyclical pattern of poverty, making it imperative to address the unique challenges faced by these groups in efforts to promote equitable economic opportunities.

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Cite as: Rogers, K. G., Becton, A. B., Thomas, T., Blizzard, Z, & Brown, L. (2025). Unmasking Economic Mobility Barriers for Black Women with Disabilities Post Covid-19. *Journal of Disability Studies*, Epub.

 ISSN: 2454-6623 http://pubs.iscience.in/jds

Disparities Among Marginalized Groups

Scholars agree that significant disparities exist in employment practices, particularly concerning pay gaps associated with gender and race. However, the link between poverty, gender, and disability has remained wholly underexplored. Persons with disabilities are one of the most marginalized and impoverished populations in the United States (Bonaccio et al., 2020). Notably, one in four Blacks has a disability (CDC, 2019) and according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) (2019), the unemployment rate among women with disabilities is 9.4%, whereas the unemployment rate for women without disabilities is 4%. Further, those individuals with disabilities who were employed were most likely to be self-employed (BLS, 2019). In terms of education, persons with disabilities are less likely to have completed a bachelor's degree or higher than those with no disability (BLS, 2019). It would stand to reason that being Black, a woman, and having a disability would pose a triple threat in the pursuit of attaining economic growth and stability.

Gender

The gender pay gap, defined as the difference in earnings between men and women, continues to persist despite progress over time. In 2023, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that women earned 83.6% of what men made. However, this figure varies based on factors such as education, occupation, race, and disability. Women often need at least one more degree than men to earn equivalent wages, and even when working in the same field, they earn less (U.S. Department of Labor Blog, 2024). These disparities contribute to persistent poverty and hinder upward mobility.

Chronic poverty is often prolonged, leading to intergenerational transmission of poverty (IGT), where poverty is passed from one generation to the next. The Chronic Poverty Research Center (CRPC) explains that IGT can result in limited access to education, healthcare, and opportunities, perpetuating cycles of disadvantage (Bonaccio et al., 2020; Matin et al., 2021). Without the opportunity to accumulate wealth or assets, families struggle to pass down financial security, making upward mobility even more difficult. Women, especially those with children under 18, are increasingly becoming the primary financial providers for their families. However, the wage gap for mothers is even larger than that for women in general, leading to a lifetime earnings loss of up to $295,000 (U.S. Department of Labor Blog, 2024). Many women, particularly those raising children alone, bear the burden of providing economic stability, underscoring the need for accessible, competitive employment opportunities.

Gender and Race

According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR, 2016), 60.9% of Black women in the United States are single parents and the primary breadwinners in their households. This figure is significantly higher than that of other ethnic groups, including Native American (44.2%), Multiracial or Other (36.6%), Hispanic (31.2%), White (20.6%), and Asian/Pacific Islanders (10.8%). Single Black mothers, as heads of households, disproportionately experience persistent poverty and rely more heavily on public assistance compared to single-mother households of other racial backgrounds (Franklin, Smith & McMiller, 1995; Randle & Combs, 2016). These statistics highlight the struggles Black women face in not only competing in the workforce but also in providing for their families.

For example, Black women continue to face significant wage disparities, earning approximately 69 cents for every dollar earned by comparable White men in full-time positions in 2022 (National Women's Law Center, 2024). This gap increases to 66 cents for Black women working part-time. Additionally, Black women are disproportionately represented in the service sector, which is historically associated with lower wages and fewer benefits. These factors, among others, contribute to higher poverty rates among Black communities. In 2022, the median household income for Black Americans was $51,286, compared to $80,404 for non-Hispanic White households (Office of Minority Health, 2024). The poverty rate for Black families was 17.5%, compared to only 5.9% for White families in the same year. These figures are even more dire for Black women, especially those with disabilities.

Gender, Race, and Ability Status

The term disability often refers to physical or mental impairments that restrict a person's ability to engage in daily activities, hence often impacting one's ability to gain and maintain employment (Bonaccio et al., 2020). Unemployment rates for workers with disabilities were almost twice that of nondisabled workers in 2023 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2024). In 2022, individuals with disabilities reported annual median earnings at $28,438 compared to $40,949 for those without a disability (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). For Black women with disabilities between the ages of 16-64, 35% were employed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic; however, at its end, less than 30% were (Ditkowsky, Majumder, Ahmed, & Robbins; National Partnership for Women and Families, 2024). This report also brings to the forefront that for every dollar paid to a White, non-Hispanic, nondisabled men, Black women are paid forty-five cents.

In consideration of the previously stated facts regarding Black women and people with disabilities, it is evident that Black women with disabilities remain one of the most vulnerable groups regarding economic advancement and poverty. For example, while the poverty rate for non-Hispanic whites with disabilities was 24 percent in 2015, nearly 40 percent of Blacks with disabilities lived in poverty during the same time frame (Randle & Combs, 2016). In addition, Black women with disabilities experience compounded barriers that hinder their access to economic mobility, including limited employment opportunities, wage disparities, and workplace discrimination (Buncher & Daston, 2022). These challenges are not isolated but are instead deeply entrenched in the broader socio-economic structures that perpetuate inequality. This leads us to the following research question: What challenges do Black women with disabilities face in achieving economic mobility in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic?

The Impact of COVID-19 on People with Disabilities

The increased risks associated with COVID-19, compounded with unmet health needs, have significantly and disproportionately affected the socioeconomic lives of people with disabilities (Bonaccio et al., 2020; Shakespeare et al., 2021). Though the initial wave has passed, the factors present at the onset of the pandemic continue to shape employment for people with disabilities today. The unemployment rate for people with disabilities increased from 7.8% at the beginning of the year to 12.6% by the end of 2020 (Buncher & Datson, 2022). In addition, people with disabilities were more likely to have unstable employment and not receive employment benefits and protections when the pandemic first arrived, creating additional ongoing barriers (Wong et al., 2022).

People with disabilities were forced to contend with new challenges in the post-pandemic economic climate, especially those of racial and ethnic minority groups (Buncher & Datson, 2022). Exposure to COVID-19 became a new barrier Black workers faced that directly affected their employability. Black families were deprived of safe housing that allowed for physical distancing due to systematic racism. In addition, they also had to maintain their high public contact jobs, elevating their risk of succumbing to the coronavirus (Thomas, 2021). Both factors left racial and ethnic minorities with disabilities to choose between employment or health, as they continually faced a higher risk of contracting COVID-19. Studies have shown that Black families experienced a disproportionate number of deaths from the virus, resulting in a prediction of a surge of post-pandemic mental health disorders in the bereaved family members that were left behind (Thomas, 2021). The creation of these new challenges as a direct result of COVID-19's impact contributed to decreasing the presence of Black people with disabilities within the workforce.

Supportive Employment and Resources

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted supportive employment systems, particularly for women with disabilities. Rehabilitation services, including vocational rehabilitation, were delayed or restricted, leaving many unable to access programs that assist with securing or maintaining employment (Wong et al., 2022). Despite more than half of unemployed individuals with disabilities filing for unemployment, only 18.6% received pay or benefits during their unemployment period. Even when individuals with disabilities secured employment, additional challenges arose, especially for women. Limited access to healthcare and community support services directly impacted their ability to maintain employment (Matin et al., 2021; Wong et al., 2022). Many women rely on personal care workers and public transportation, both of which were disrupted during the pandemic, preventing them from commuting or feeling safe at work (Cohen et al., 2020).

The shift to remote work helped reduce unemployment rates by creating new job options, especially for people with disabilities, including women. The World Health Organization endorsed telework as a viable option during the pandemic (Schur et al., 2020). While remote work increased job opportunities, it did not eliminate wage disparities without further systemic changes (Schur et al., 2020). Racial and ethnic disparities also affect women with disabilities. Black and Hispanic/Latino workers with disabilities were less likely to hold remote jobs, and even when they did, their wages were often lower than those of their counterparts without disabilities (Buncher & Datson, 2022; Schur et al., 2020). Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing effective interventions and policies aimed at promoting economic equity and improving the overall well-being of Black women with disabilities. To address these disparities, the B.I.G. Idea framework provides a useful approach.

The B.I.G. Idea

The B.I.G. Idea framework stands for Business, Individual, and Government, emphasizing the need for collaboration to overcome the systemic barriers hindering economic mobility, especially for Black women with disabilities. This approach highlights the

roles of each sector in promoting economic equity. The disparities in employment and career progression faced by this group are linked to both individual challenges and broader systemic obstacles. However, with innovation and cooperation, businesses, individuals, and the government can be incentivized to adopt strategies that enhance upward mobility for marginalized populations.

Business

Despite barriers faced by marginalized groups, it is essential to create multiple pathways to economic opportunity. Innovation and collaboration will be key in providing diverse routes to employment. Creating clear pathways into various occupations or entrepreneurial opportunities will enable individuals to enter competitive fields or start businesses. Meyer (1994) identifies four fundamental principles of the business system: a) freedom of choice, b) private property rights, c) profit motives, and d) owner control. He asserts that free enterprise allows individuals to make their own economic decisions, providing greater access to employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. By creating jobs and fostering entrepreneurship, businesses can contribute to community revitalization and enhance economic mobility prospects.

Individual

This intervention is crucial for Black women with disabilities, who face compounded challenges due to their economic, racial, and disability status. These factors often limit access to financial stability and growth opportunities. Systemic discrimination within services and employment patterns, especially against Black consumers, further exacerbates this situation (Reed et al., 2005). The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defines systemic discrimination as a pattern that impacts a profession or company, manifesting in barriers such as exclusion from management programs or discriminatory practices based on disability (Blustein, 2008).

Government

The entrepreneurial spirit, central to the nation's growth, relies on innovation and risk-taking. For individuals, especially those with disabilities, entrepreneurship fosters self-esteem, initiative, and financial independence, benefiting both individuals and the broader economy. Encouraging participation in the workforce reduces reliance on government support, creating a “win-win” for both the individuals and the nation (Douglas & Shepherd, 2002; McMullen & Shepherd, 2006). Building on the importance of entrepreneurship and workforce participation, the study also focuses on how employment status and career advancement impact economic mobility for Black women with disabilities. The authors measured mobility by examining employment status (employed/ unemployed), part-time vs. full-time work, hours worked, wages, and job promotions to understand these factors.

METHODS

The initial goal of the study was to explore how various variables impacted employment and economic growth for Black women with disabilities, with a focus on the intersectionality of gender, race, and disability. However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 forced researchers to adapt and examine how the pandemic exacerbated barriers for this vulnerable population. In 2022, a follow-up study was launched to investigate the economic impact of COVID-19.

In the first sample, aim was to identify the characteristics, specifically gender, race, disability status, and education related to unemployment and whether respondents had been affected by COVID-19. A logistic regression model was employed to analyze unemployment status and the impact of COVID-19, with marginal effects calculated from the coefficients to determine the probability of these outcomes. In the second sample, the goal was to examine factors influencing access to public health information, again using logistic regression. Covariates -marital status, children, age, employment status, and mode of transportation, were controlled in all models.

Data Collection and Participants

The study utilized two datasets. The first dataset originated from a 2020 survey focusing on race, gender, and disability statuses in a southeastern state, with a particular emphasis on Black women with disabilities. Participants were recruited through local Chambers of Commerce. However, data collection was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a final sample size of 85 respondents. Around 115 individuals began the survey, but 30 did not complete it fully. A follow-up survey was administered in the later years of the pandemic, focusing on the economic impact of COVID-19. This survey had 472 respondents, with over 500 participants initially; 35 were excluded due to missing responses. Descriptive statistics for both datasets are summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

For the first analysis sample, most participants were Black women between 40 and 59 years old (M=40.00, SD=49.28), with at most a high school education, unmarried, unemployed, and with no vocational rehabilitation experience. Approximately 89% reported having a disability, with common conditions including ADHD (20%), developmental disabilities (15%),

Table 1: ***Descriptive Statistics for Dataset 1 (N = 85)***

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age		
18 to 39	0.3647	0.4842
40 to 59	0.4000	0.4928
60 and over	0.2353	0.4267
Gender		
Female	0.6471	0.4807
Male	0.3529	0.4807
Race		
Black	0.8353	0.3731
White	0.1176	0.3241
Other	0.0471	0.2130
Education		
Less than High School	0.2471	0.4339
High School	0.4235	0.4971
More than High School	0.3294	0.4728
Marital Status		
Currently Married	0.0941	0.2937
Not Currently Married	0.9059	0.2937
Employment Status		
Full-time, Part-time, or Self-Employed	0.2706	0.4469
Unemployed	0.4706	0.5021
Not Employed	0.2588	0.4406
Vocational Rehab Participation		
Have Participated	0.2824	0.4528
Never Participated	0.7176	0.4528
Regular Internet Access		
Has Access	0.6471	0.4779
No Access	0.3529	0.4779
Impacted COVID-19		
Yes, Impacted	0.4118	0.4922
No, Not Impacted	0.5882	0.4922
Disability		
ADHD	0.2000	0.4024
Developmental	0.1529	0.3621
Deaf	0.0235	0.1525
Mobility Impairment	0.1529	0.3621
Traumatic Brain Injury	0.0471	0.2130
Substance Use	0.1765	0.3835
Psychiatric	0.2706	0.4469
Systemic	0.1529	0.3621
Temporary Condition	0.1294	0.3376
Chronic Health	0.3176	0.4683
Visual	0.1765	0.3835
Other	0.0941	0.2937
Primary Mode of Transportation		
Public Bus	0.7059	0.4583
No Public Bus	0.2941	0.4583

Table 2: ***Descriptive Statistics for Dataset 2 (N = 472)***

Variable		Mean	SD
Age	18 to 29	0.3305	0.4709
	30 to 39	0.2775	0.4483
	40 to 49	0.1525	0.3599
	50 to 59	0.1568	0.3640
	60 and over	0.0826	0.2756
Gender	Female	0.6059	0.4892
	Male	0.3941	0.4892
Race	Black	0.6144	0.4873
	White	0.2542	0.4359
	Biracial	0.0593	0.2365
	Other	0.0720	0.2588
Education	Upto High School	0.4174	0.4936
	Some College	0.2669	0.4428
	College Graduate	0.1822	0.3864
	Post College	0.1186	0.3237
	Other	0.0148	0.1210
Marital Status	Married	0.1631	0.3699
	Divorced	0.0742	0.2623
	Single	0.6377	0.4812
	Other	0.1250	0.3311
Children	None	0.4407	0.4970
	1 to 2	0.3305	0.4709
	3 or More	0.2288	0.4205
Employment Status	Full time	0.4174	0.4936
	Part Time	0.1780	0.3829
	Unemployed	0.2966	0.4572
	Other	0.1081	0.3108
Employment Type	Salary	0.1822	0.3864
	Hourly	0.4153	0.4933
	Other	0.4025	0.4909
Vocational Rehab Participation	Participated	0.2076	0.4060
	Never	0.7924	0.4060
Food Stamp Use	Have Received	0.5085	0.5005
	Never Received	0.4915	0.5005
Health Insurance	Yes	0.7373	0.4406
	No	0.2627	0.4406
Disability	ADHD	0.1356	0.3427
	Developmental	0.1017	0.3026
	Deaf	0.0169	0.1292
	Mobility Impairment	0.0275	0.1638
	Traumatic Brain Injury	0.0148	0.1210
	Substance Use	0.2839	0.4514
	Psychiatric	0.1801	0.3847
	Systemic	0.0678	0.2517
	Temporary Condition	0.0487	0.2155
	Chronic Health	0.1695	0.3756
	Visual	0.0763	0.2657
County Residence	Forsyth	0.1949	0.3966
	Guilford	0.6610	0.4739
	Other	0.1441	0.3515
Primary Mode of Transportation	Taxi/Uber/Lyft	0.0254	0.1576
	Public Bus	0.1419	0.3494
	Personal Automobile	0.6462	0.4787
	Friend/Family Vehicle	0.0996	0.2998
	Other	0.0572	0.2325
	None	0.0297	0.1698

mobility impairments (15%), and psychiatric disabilities (27%). About 65% of the sample had regular internet access, and 41% indicated COVID-19 had impacted them.

In the second analysis sample, most were Black women between 18 and 39 years old (M=36.47, SD=48.42), single, with no children, and had at most a high school education. They typically worked full-time jobs, never participated in vocational rehabilitation, and had used food stamps. About 67% reported having a disability, with conditions like those in the first sample, including ADHD (14%), psychiatric disabilities (18%), and mobility impairments (3%). Regular internet access was reported by 89%, 90% had smartphones, and 73% had computers.

RESULTS

Table 4 contains the results of logistic regression estimation of the model for public health information access. Out of the 41 covariates included in the model, eight were statistically significantly related to whether a participant report has access to public health information. Three of the eight were related to disability status, including mobility impairment, TBI (traumatic brain injury), and chronic health disabilities. The first two are negatively related to whether a respondent reported access to public health information, while the third is positively related. The marginal effect estimate associated with the mobility impairment estimate is -0.1019. Interpreting this suggests that the probability of having access to public health information decreases by 0.10 if they have a mobility impairment, holding all else constant. The marginal effect estimate associated with the TBI estimate is -0.1215. Moreover, interpreting this suggests that the probability of having access to public health information decreases by around 0.12 if he/she has TBI. The marginal effect estimate associated with the chronic health disability estimate is 0.0970. Interpreting this suggests that the probability that a respondent report having access to public health information increases by around 0.09 if he/she has a chronic health disability.

To summarize the key findings from the first analysis, the variables significantly related to being unemployed include being 40 to 59 years old, having more than a high school education, having a mobility impairment, having a psychiatric disability, having a systemic disability, and having a temporary condition. The variables significantly related to being impacted by COVID-19 include having ADHD, having a systemic disability, having a temporary condition, and having some other disability not captured in the survey. To summarize the key findings from the second analysis, the variables significantly related to access to public health information include mobility impairment, TBI, and chronic health disabilities. They also include being 30 to 39 years old, being single, being from a county other than Forsyth or Guilford, and having a primary mode of transportation falling in the other category.

Table #3. Logistic Regression Results: Being Unemployed and Being Impacted by COVID-19

Variable	Dependent Variable = Unemployed								Dependent Variable = Impacted by COVID-19							
	Logit				Marginal Effect				Logit				Marginal Effect			
	Coeff.	Std. Err.	Z	P	Dy/dx	Std. Err.	Z	P	Coeff.	Std. Err.	Z	P	Dy/dx	Std. Err.	Z	P
Age (ref. = Less than 40)																
40 to 59	2.2569	0.9390	2.40	0.016	0.5551	0.2310	2.40	0.016	-0.4408	0.8090	-0.54	0.586	-0.1003	0.1840	-0.54	0.586
Over 59	-1.4120	1.1958	-1.18	0.238	-0.3473	0.2940	-1.18	0.237	0.3721	1.1105	0.34	0.738	0.0847	0.2526	0.34	0.738
Gender (ref. = Male)																
Female	1.1502	0.8763	1.31	0.189	0.2829	0.2160	1.31	0.190	-0.3850	0.8084	-0.48	0.634	-0.0876	0.1837	-0.48	0.634
Race (ref. = White)																
Black	-0.6168	1.3679	-0.45	0.652	-0.1517	0.3365	-0.45	0.652	0.8727	1.2798	0.68	0.495	0.1986	0.2902	0.68	0.495
Other	0.0726	1.7068	0.04	0.966	0.0179	0.4198	0.04	0.966	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Education (ref. = Less than High School)																
High School	0.1635	0.8080	0.20	0.840	0.0402	0.1987	0.20	0.840	-1.0165	0.9172	-1.11	0.268	-0.2313	0.2062	-1.11	0.268
More than High School	-2.5898	1.1341	-2.28	0.022	-0.6370	0.2763	-2.31	0.021	1.4144	0.9557	1.48	0.139	0.3218	0.2202	1.48	0.139
Marital Status (ref. = Not Married)																
Married	0.4751	1.2569	0.38	0.705	0.1169	0.3090	0.38	0.705	-0.6859	1.2650	-0.54	0.588	-0.1561	0.2891	-0.54	0.588
Vocational Rehab Participation (ref. = Never Participated)																
Have Participated	-0.2139	0.7657	-0.28	0.780	-0.0526	0.1884	-0.28	0.780	-0.1769	0.7279	-0.24	0.808	-0.0403	0.1657	-0.24	0.808
Disability																
ADHD	0.5831	1.0911	0.53	0.593	0.1435	0.2688	0.53	0.594	1.7850	0.8773	1.81	0.071	0.4061	0.2227	1.81	0.071
Deaf	2.7020	1.9583	1.38	0.168	0.6646	0.4793	1.39	0.166	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Developmental	0.8368	1.0513	0.80	0.426	0.2058	0.2580	0.80	0.425	-0.4100	1.1878	-0.35	0.730	-0.0933	0.2702	-0.35	0.730
Mobility Impairment	2.3690	1.3134	1.80	0.071	0.5827	0.3219	1.81	0.070	0.5868	1.0696	0.55	0.583	0.1335	0.2440	0.55	0.583
Traumatic Brain Injury	0.7820	1.5481	0.51	0.613	0.1924	0.3805	0.51	0.613	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Substance Use	-0.4330	0.8189	-0.53	0.597	-0.1065	0.2018	-0.53	0.598	0.0401	0.9373	0.04	0.966	0.0091	0.2133	0.04	0.966
Psychiatric	2.0173	0.9951	2.03	0.043	0.4962	0.2455	2.02	0.043	1.4685	0.9219	-1.63	0.103	0.3341	0.2727	-1.63	0.103
Systemic	1.8727	1.1113	1.69	0.092	0.4606	0.2752	1.67	0.094	-1.9876	1.2197	1.59	0.111	-0.4522	0.2095	1.59	0.111
Temporary Condition	-3.2335	1.1935	-2.71	0.007	-0.7954	0.2938	-2.71	0.007	1.6926	1.0178	1.66	0.096	0.3851	0.2330	1.66	0.096
Chronic Health	0.8683	1.0131	0.86	0.391	0.2136	0.2486	0.86	0.390	1.3723	0.9042	1.52	0.129	0.3122	0.2037	1.52	0.129
Visual	-0.3958	1.1123	-0.36	0.722	-0.0973	0.2737	-0.36	0.722	-0.2715	0.9143	-0.30	0.767	-0.0618	0.2086	-0.30	0.767
Other	2.0509	1.3450	1.52	0.127	0.5045	0.3286	1.54	0.125	2.2319	1.2517	1.78	0.075	0.5078	0.2843	1.78	0.075
Primary Mode of Transportation (ref. = Not the public bus)																
Public bus	1.0039	1.0409	0.96	0.335	0.2469	0.2556	0.97	0.334	0.0955	1.0111	0.09	0.925	0.0217	0.2301	0.09	0.925
Intercept	-2.4109	2.1041	-1.15	0.252	X	X	X	X	-2.3364	1.7878	-1.31	0.191	X	X	-1.31	0.191
N	85								85							
LR Ch—squared (p-value)	47.19 (0.0014)								30.37 (0.0472)							

Table 4: Logistic Regression Results: Access to Public Health Information

Variable	Logit				Marginal Effect			
	Coeff.	**Std. Err.**	**Z**	**P**	**Dy/dx**	**Std. Err.**	**Z**	**P**
Age (ref. = 18 to 29)								
30 to 39	1.0020	0.5022	2.00	0.046	0.0688	0.0341	2.02	0.044
40 to 49	0.7723	0.5794	1.33	0.183	0.0530	0.0397	1.33	0.182
50 to 59	0.6003	06143	0.98	0.328	0.0412	0.0421	0.98	0.328
60 and over	-0.2049	0.7358	-0.28	0.781	-0.0141	0.0506	-0.28	0.781
Gender (ref. = Male)								
Female	-0.4723	0.4106	-1.15	0.250	-0.0324	0.0279	-1.16	0.246
Race (ref. = White)								
Black	-0.2064	0.4691	-0.44	0.660	-0.0142	0.0321	-0.44	0.659
Biracial	-0.5641	0.7212	-0.78	0.434	-0.0387	0.0491	-0.79	0.430
Other	-0.3028	0.7890	-0.38	0.701	-0.0208	0.0540	-0.39	0.700
Education (ref. = High School or Less)								
Some College	0.6890	0.4533	1.52	0.128	0.0473	0.0304	1.56	0.120
College Graduate	0.3711	0.5031	0.74	0.461	0.0255	0.0344	0.74	0.459
Post College	0.8485	0.7372	1.15	0.250	0.0582	0.0503	1.16	0.247
Marital Status (ref. = Divorced)								
Married	0.5103	0.6251	0.82	0.414	0.0350	0.0431	0.81	0.416
Single	1.1752	0.5983	1.96	0.049	0.0806	0.0412	1.96	0.050
Other	0.9070	0.6624	1.37	0.171	0.0622	0.0455	1.37	0.171
Children (ref. = None)								
1 to 2	-0.2307	0.4512	-0.51	0.609	-0.0158	0.0310	-0.51	0.609
3 or More	-0.1408	0.5301	-0.27	0.791	-0.0097	0.0364	-0.27	0.791
Employment Status (ref. = Unemployed)								
Full time	-0.2346	1.9391	-0.12	0.904	-0.0161	0.1330	-0.12	0.904
Part Time	0.0673	1.8997	0.04	0.972	0.0046	0.1304	0.04	0.972
Other	1.2107	0.6902	1.75	0.079	-0.0007	0.1378	-0.00	0.996
Employment Type (ref. = Salary)								
Hourly	1.0994	0.6338	1.73	0.083	0.0754	0.0429	1.76	0.079
Other	-0.0097	2.0084	-0.00	0.996	-0.0007	0.1378	-0.00	0.996
Vocational Rehab Participation (ref. = Never Participated)								
Have Participated	-0.2023	0.4505	-0.45	0.653	-0.0139	0.0309	-0.45	0.653
Food Stamp Use (ref. = Never Received)								
Have Received	-0.1130	0.3693	-0.31	0.760	-0.0078	0.0254	-0.31	0.760
Health Insurance (ref. = No)								
Yes	0.4377	0.4434	0.99	0.324	0.0300	0.0304	0.99	0.323
Disability								
ADHD	-0.6719	0.4730	-1.42	0.155	-0.0461	0.0320	-1.44	0.149
Developmental	0.1399	0.6260	0.22	0.823	0.0096	0.0429	0.22	0.823
Mobility Impairment	-1.4850	0.8715	-1.70	0.088	-0.1019	0.0591	-1.73	0.084
Traumatic Brain Injury	-1.7711	1.0773	-1.64	0.100	-0.1215	0.0746	-1.63	0.103
Substance Use	0.1487	0.5113	0.29	0.771	0.0102	0.0351	0.29	0.771
Psychiatric	-0.0246	0.4826	-0.05	0.959	-0.0017	0.0331	-0.05	0.959
Systemic	-0.1400	0.7048	-0.20	0.843	-0.0096	0.0483	-0.20	0.842
Temporary Condition	1.5067	1.2764	1.18	0.238	0.1034	0.0856	1.21	0.227
Chronic Health	1.4135	0.5925	2.39	0.017	0.0970	0.0385	2.52	0.012
Visual	-0.8423	0.6559	-1.28	0.199	-0.0578	0.0444	-1.30	0.193
County Residence								
Forsyth	0.7581	0.5469	1.39	0.166	0.0520	0.0368	1.41	0.158
Other	-0.9686	0.4411	-2.20	0.028	-0.0665	0.0305	-2.18	0.029
Primary Mode of Transportation (ref. = Public Bus)								
Taxi/Uber/Lyft	-0.3606	0.9390	-0.38	0.701	-0.0247	0.0644	-0.38	0.701
Personal Automobile	0.5364	0.4899	1.09	0.274	0.0368	0.0337	1.09	0.274
Friend/Family Vehicle	0.6178	0.7052	0.88	0.381	0.0424	0.0482	0.88	0.380
Other	1.7847	1.0025	1.78	0.075	0.1225	0.0680	1.80	0.072
None	-1.2821	0.8118	-1.58	0.114	-0.0880	0.0563	-1.56	0.118
Intercept	-0.0268	2.1935	-0.01	0.990	X	X	X	X
	LR chi-squared = 61.06, p-value = 0.0226							

DISCUSSION

As evidenced by the survey findings, there exists a significant correlation between individuals' employment status, disability status, and the extent to which the COVID-19 crisis impacted them. This correlation is notably influenced by additional factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, and educational attainment. Research has long emphasized that women, particularly women of color, face unique challenges when navigating the labor market due to the intersecting forces of gender, race, and other social factors.

Moreover, the data suggests a notable link between an individual's ability to access public health information and their disability status, particularly among those with mobility impairments, traumatic brain injuries, or chronic health conditions. The intersection of gender, race, and disability exacerbates these challenges, as black with disabilities are often disproportionately affected by systemic barriers to healthcare and employment (Shakespeare et al., 2018). For instance, studies have shown that Black women with disabilities are less likely to have consistent access to healthcare and are often underrepresented in studies that explore health disparities and employment outcomes (Matin et al., 2021).

The findings emphasize the need for continued discussions on intersectionality, focusing on factors like race, age, and disability, as they influence economic recovery after the pandemic. Limited access to essential public health resources compelled many individuals to confront challenging decisions regarding their health and livelihood, exacerbating the pandemic's impact. The intersectionality framework provides a critical lens for understanding how these factors converge, influencing the lived experiences of marginalized individuals. This perspective is essential for addressing the unique challenges faced by Black women with disabilities and developing targeted interventions.

Furthermore, the findings highlight the urgent need for comprehensive reform of existing employment frameworks in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Reforms should specifically consider the compounded challenges faced by Black women with disabilities and aim to create policies that promote inclusive, accessible, and equitable opportunities in both healthcare and the labor market (Matin et al, 2021). Addressing these intersecting inequalities is critical to promoting economic mobility and improving the overall quality of life for these individuals.

Implications for Practice

To effectively address the systemic challenges faced by individuals with disabilities, particularly Black women, practical solutions for securing and sustaining gainful employment must be both accessible and impactful. As noted in the B.I.G. Ideas framework, recent initiatives have focused on enhancing employment opportunities for people with disabilities, especially in the wake of the pandemic. Bonaccio et al. (2020) highlight several strategies that have emerged, including the establishment of advocacy organizations such as the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) and the Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN). These organizations aim to eliminate barriers and exclusionary language in job applications, provide free consulting services through the U.S. Office of Disability Employment, and facilitate workplace inclusion training.

Moreover, implementing partnership programs within institutions of higher education can foster a pipeline of talent, while creating incentives for employers to hire individuals with disabilities can enhance workforce diversity (Bonaccio et al., 2020). These efforts are crucial, but they must be tailored to address the unique needs of Black women with disabilities. There is a notable gap in the literature concerning this specific demographic, emphasizing the necessity for targeted research on effective strategies that communities and employers can utilize to support them.

The specificity and effectiveness of services are paramount; individuals with disabilities do not uniformly have access to resources and career support that meet their diverse needs. Disparities rooted in the intersectionality of disability, race, and gender further complicate these issues. For example, Black women may face additional challenges in accessing employment due to stereotypes and biases that intersect with their disability status. Therefore, acquiring more data on the experiences and needs of Black women with disabilities is essential. This can inform the development of targeted interventions and policies that not only improve access to gainful employment but also promote lasting changes in economic status. Ultimately, such efforts can provide these individuals with opportunities for generational wealth and enhanced personal well-being, thus contributing to a more equitable society overall. Further research should explore community-driven initiatives and employer practices that effectively support this demographic, ensuring that they are equipped with the necessary tools and resources to thrive in the workplace.

Limitations

The study had a few limitations. First, its generalizability is limited as it solely relies on a sample size in a Southeastern state. Secondly, while the study explores the intersectionality of race, gender, and disability, its findings may not apply to

broader populations without further validation across diverse geographic and demographic contexts. Lastly, considering the dynamic nature of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact, a follow-up study conducted five years post-pandemic could provide valuable insights into the long-term effects on economic mobility and the efficacy of interventions implemented in response.

Conclusion

As previously highlighted by the authors, employment status not only acts as a pathway to upward economic mobility and the preservation of generational wealth but also plays a vital role in fostering positive identity development and overall well-being (Strauser et al., 2012). In conclusion, the findings of this study, alongside similar research (Bonaccio et al., 2020; Shakespeare et al., 2021; Wong et al., 2022), should serve as a rallying call for action among government, institutional, and community stakeholders. Given the pervasive influence of oppressive systems and additional barriers, there exists an immediate and imperative need to confront the persistent cycle of economic stagnation affecting people with disabilities nationwide, especially considering the adverse repercussions of COVID-19. This issue encapsulates economic injustice and human rights concerns, as those at the intersection of these factors are deprived of the necessary resources for long-term occupational success and denied the opportunity to lead fulfilling lives of economic quality.

Source of Funding

Winston-Salem State University Center for the Study of Economic Development.

Conflict of Interest

None

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