EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Income inequality has long been a crucial topic when addressing the inequities faced by Persons with Disabilities (PwD). Race, gender, and education level are factors known to cause income inequalities within Persons without Disabilities (PwoD) in United States institutions.

However, prior research has not focused on how gender, race, and education level affect PwDs and their income. Having a disability alone creates barriers in society. Yet, the intersection of marginalized identities with disability status can increase these barriers between identity groups.

This study used demographic information from the Micro Censuses data, and American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates from 2012-2019 to *understand how gender, race, and education level affect PwDs and their income.*

The count of individuals divided by different categories for each year and the corresponding income for relevant individuals were the two sets of data considered.

The data collected addresses a given identity in the following aspects: state of residence, gender, race, education level, and disability status. We did not consider individuals of adolescence and those that did not achieve a high school diploma (that is, those with the highest educational level below 12th grade) and placed them into a single collective. Our education level categories are high school graduates, GED/alternative degree, college Associate degree, Bachelor, Master, and Doctorate holders.

We measured *how identity factors influence an income using an OLS estimator from a Statsmodels module.* We used the base case of an Asian female PWD from Alabama with an associate degree's income. The overall result achieved our original goal with a relatively correlated R-square of 0.705. Using this OLS estimator, we made predictions for the years we studied (2020-2035).

Income and State

From our trends in income and state, there are few shifts within the United States concerning the income gap between PWD and PWoD over time.

In 2012, the median income percent difference ranges between 56.96% to 80.91%. In 2019, the aggregate median income percent difference between PWDs and PWoDs was between 57.63% to 88.56%. *Within seven years, the income gap has only increased between PWDs and PWoDs in the United States.* Our findings show that historic political support has no significant effect on the income gap in the United States. Using historically politically aligned states, like California with the Democratic Party and Arkansas with the Republican Party, we compared 2012 in 2019 income gaps. Arkansas had a 65.27% median income gap while California had a 68.12% median income gap in 2012. In 2019, California had an income gap of 67.41% and Alabama, 69.23%.
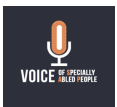
Though the United States average median income gap has slightly decreased since 2012, many individual states have increased the income gap by 2019.

Income and Education

There is an 84.7% median income gap between PWDs who hold bachelor's degrees and PWoDs with bachelor's degrees in 2019. Additionally, there is a 102.7% median income gap between PWDs and PWoDs with doctorate degrees.

By 2035, we predicted a 94.8% gap between PWDs or PWoDs with bachelors and doctorate degrees. Overall, *the income gap remains between PWDs and PWoDs even with the same education level. The data shows that the higher the education level, the higher the income gap is between PWDs and PWoDs.*

Income and Race

In 2019, black PWDs made $8348 while white PWDs made a median of $11,978. *White PWDs had the highest income of all the ethnic groups while black PWDs had the lowest income of all ethnic groups.*

In 2035, we predict that the income gap between persons with disabilities who are white and black will expand. Our model predicts a black PWD will make $13,308 and a white PWD will make $16,488 in 2035. Altogether the impact of race is clearly shown through our data as two of the most marginalized groups in the country, *Black Americans and Indigenous Americans, have the greatest income gap over time.*

Income and Gender

Disparities between income within sex show that gender is a factor within PWD inequalities. In 2019, we found that *a male PWD would make $12,172 while a female PWD made $8005. This is a large gap considering that there are more female PWDs than male PWDs in the United States.*

We have predicted that in 2035 these statistics will only show an expanded income gap between male and female PWDs. In 2035, a male PWD will be making $18,658 while a female PWD would be making a median of $12,162.

The Intersection of Gender, Race, Disability Status

Within gender, some nuances occur between PWDs from both a marginalized race and a marginalized gender. Within a cohort of black females, black males, and white female PWDs median incomes become skewed. In 2019, white female PWDs would be making the most money at $9,410. Following would be black male PWDs with a median of $8,906 with black female PWD making the least at $7,218. The 2019 statistics reflect historic segregation in our country and the lasting effects of institutionalized racism.

Furthermore, our 2035 predictions highlight the severe impact of gender inequities in all groups. In 2035, the individual who makes the most money within our cohort changes from a white female PWD ($9,410) to a black male PWD ($13,213). Yet, black female PWDs remain at the lowest income at a $10,665 median income. The predictions highlight the effect of gender inequities in our country. Though there are *more female PWDs than male PWDs, male PWDs are predicted to make more money over time.*
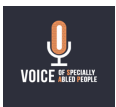
It is important to notice the intersection between groups when comparing black female PWD and white female PWD. While females who have a disability are at a disadvantage compared to their male counterparts, the intersection of another identity, such as being from a marginalized group, will impact the severity of the gap.

Income inequality within PWDs can be seen by analyzing race, gender, and education level within income inequality. Employers, government officials, and individuals can all partake in pushing changes. Negative stigmas surrounding the hiring of PWDs, lack of accommodations, and societal stigma create a barrier for PWDs in jobs earning a higher income.

Employers can promote inclusion by having workshops, sharing sessions, and other activities to ensure an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere. We recommend government policies concerning increased tax incentives to provide additional welfare for PWDs and target PWDs from historically marginalized backgrounds.
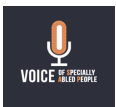
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Sophie Manoukian is a senior at the University of California doubling majoring in Public Health and Data Science. She is passionate about social justice as she is the co-chair of the UCB School of Public Health Sexual Violence Prevention commission where she leads violence prevention education efforts. She is also currently serving as the President of Voice of Specially Abled People (VOSAP) Club at UC Berkeley.

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WHY THIS MATTERS TO VOSAP

VOSAP's mission of Data-Driven Advocacy has been strengthened by collaboration with the Data Sciences Department of UC Berkeley. This study expands efforts to conduct impactful research in the disability sector by focusing on how gender, race, and education level affect People with Disabilities (PwDs) and their income. While many studies explore the impact of similar factors on the lives of People without Disabilities, very little information is available on the income inequalities in the lives of PwDs.

The study provides meaningful insight into the disparities of income faced by PwDs in the United States while extensively focusing on how these inequalities are further amplified due to specific identities. The research can help employers and policymakers make more inclusive policies and target PwDs from historically marginalized backgrounds.

ABOUT VOICE OF SPECIALLY ABLED PEOPLE INC

Voice of Specially Abled People (VOSAP) is a global advocacy organization built on the principles of Empowerment of Specially Abled People. In Special Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC, VOSAP is working to create an Inclusive and Accessible world by accelerating the implementation of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and goals of the UN CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) treaty. In addition to enabling individuals with assistive devices, surgical interventions, scholarships etc. VOSAP has created innovative digital transformation tools to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities.