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**The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on
Immigrant Latine ESL Adult Learners in Philadelphia
and Community Cultural Wealth**

By

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Abstract:

The COVID-19 pandemic has been an unprecedented worldwide phenomenon that has impacted virtually every aspect of life with certain populations experiencing the brunt more than others. Many immigrant Latine English as a second language (ESL) adult learners have had to grapple with a variety of historical and novel challenges regarding stress, health, immigration, employment, and education. This mixed-methods research study aimed to better understand the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on a group of immigrant Latine ESL adult learners in Philadelphia and the forms of capital they possess that help them obtain resources, navigate through challenging events, and mitigate damages. Thirty-six participants (18 to 50+ years; 63.89% female) participated in a survey that addressed stress level, learning of English, employment, health, and community cultural wealth. Quantitative analyses revealed that the pandemic had a negative impact on employment and the contraction of COVID-19 and that the sample possessed all forms of capital under investigation. Qualitative analyses revealed that the pandemic had a negative impact on family, finances/unemployment, health, learning of English, friends, immigration, isolation, and uncertainty about the future.

1. Introduction

Immigrant Latine¹ English as second language (ESL) adult learners historically have had to face compounding barriers in their journey of English language learning and upward social mobility in the U.S. (Artiga et al., 2021; Creamer, 2020; Eyring, 2014; Larrotta, 2019; Lazo et al., 2021; Warkentien et al., 2009). The pandemic has exacerbated these barriers and created new ones (Baxter, 2020; Browning et al., 2020; Creamer, 2020; Do & Frank, 2021; Krogstad et al., 2020; Lazo et al., 2021; Molock & Parchem). Despite the challenges, this population has been able to utilize their knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts to survive in the U.S. and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression in different aspects of life (Yosso, 2005). This research study aimed to understand the exacerbation of the historical challenges and creation of novel barriers by the

¹ “Latine” is used in this paper to describe people of Latin America instead of “Latino”, “Latino/a”, or “Latinx” because “Latino” grammatically only applies to males in Spanish and ignores other genders, “Latino/a” reinforces gender binaries, and “Latinx” does not follow Spanish language grammar. “Latine” follows the Spanish grammar as the “e” suffix is used in Spanish for gender-neutral words.

COVID-19 pandemic on immigrant Latine ESL adult learners in Philadelphia and to explore the community cultural wealth this population possesses.

A mixed-methods survey was utilized to explore the perceived impacts of the pandemic on stress level, the learning of English, and remote instruction as well as the contraction of the virus, access to health care, and employment. It also sought to investigate participants' views of the importance of English learning before and after the pandemic. Finally, the survey examined whether the sample possessed the six forms of capital that make up community cultural wealth: aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital.

The goal of this study is to understand the effects this population has been experiencing during the COVID-19 pandemic to help ESL program advocates, administrators, and practitioners develop better strategies to support these students, mitigate damages, and optimize teaching. This study aims to not only understand the vulnerabilities and challenges this group has been experiencing but also capture the forms of capital Communities of Color possess that help them survive in the U.S. in order to construct a fuller representation of this population's views and provoke further research and analysis of otherwise overlooked findings.

2. Literature Review

The following section describes the state of the art in the field of adult ESL education in the U.S., contains salient statistics for U.S. immigrant Latine ESL adult learners, and describes the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on occupational exposure, economic hardship, language barriers, immigration barriers, access to health care and health insurance, education, and mental health.

2.1 The State of ESL Education in the U.S.

There are numerous labels for English-language programs, practitioners, and students.

They include:

- English Learner (EL)
- Limited English Proficient (LEP)
- Modern Foreign Language (MFL)
- English-Language Learner (ELL)
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- English as a Foreign Language (EFL)
- English Language Acquisition (ELA)
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD)
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

The nature of ESL education is diverse. ESL students can range in age, country, language, immigratory status, educational experience, religion, occupation, culture, learning ability, and motivation (Baxter, 2020; Eyring, 2014). ESL students also come with diverse goals: obtain better employment opportunities, improve English-language skills to better themselves, build friendships, speak to their grandchildren, learn personal finance techniques, or obtain health information (Eyring, 2014). ESL programs serve students of all levels and can exist in different settings including colleges, universities, non-profit organizations, and government-funded programs (Eyring, 2014). In general, ESL programs concentrate on the basic skills of reading, writing, grammar, speaking, and listening. They may focus on a variety of meaningful real-life topics, such as housing, shopping, and recreation while integrating language skills, and they may also focus on pre-employment instruction that teaches “soft skills” such as social, communication, and self-management behaviors and “hard skills” like technical knowledge for a profession (Eyring, 2014).

ESL programs are listed as “English Language Acquisition” programs under the Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) in the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) within the U.S. Department of Education (Eyring, 2014). The majority of students enrolled in public adult education programs are ESL students or English literacy students (National Council of State Directors of Adult Education, 2009). The largest providers of adult ESL education in the U.S. that receive funding from the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 (P.L. 105-220) are local education agencies (public K-12 schools), community colleges, community-based organizations, correctional institutions, private colleges, libraries, and departments of human services (Eyring, 2014).

Despite these organizations receiving federal funding, funding for adult education is managed differently across states. For example, in Oregon it is under the community college system while in Tennessee it is under the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (Eyring, 2014). In Pennsylvania, adult basic and family literacy education programs, which include Adult Basic Education (ABE), distance learning, and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program (EILCE), are funded by the Division of Adult Education (Pennsylvania Department of Education, n.d.). Other ESL students may be enrolled in private, faith-based, workplace programs or other community-based organizations, but it is difficult to obtain accurate statistics because many are not monitored federally or by the state (Eyring, 2014).

Unfortunately, ESL education has had historical issues with meeting the needs of English language learners (ELLs). The average cost per adult learner per year in the U.S. is about \$626 (Tamassia et al., 2007). However, adult education in the U.S. receives less in funding than elementary, secondary, and college/university programs which creates challenges, such as more

students being placed in each class, classes becoming multilevel, and having a lack of substitute teachers, which impacts the motivation of students and causes class cancellations (Eyring, 2014).

2.2 Latine ESL Adult Learners' Statistics & Characteristics in the U.S. and in Philadelphia

The Hispanic/Latine population has been identified as one of the fastest growing minority groups in the U.S. The U.S. Census Bureau in 2020 recorded almost 60 million Hispanics/Latines living in the U.S. at that time. In Philadelphia in 2014-2018, approximately 15% of the population identified as Hispanic or Latine made up of Puerto Ricans (60%) and Dominicans (12%), who mostly reside in North Philadelphia, and Mexicans (8%) and Latines with ancestry in countries in Central America (7%), who mostly reside in South Philadelphia (Lazo et al., 2021). Many of these Latine immigrants are also ELLs in great need of services.

There is a large Hispanic limited English proficient (LEP) population in the U.S. that is in need of ESL education but who is not enrolled in ESL programs. The U.S. Census Bureau (2016) in 2015 recorded over 64 million people living in the U.S. whose language spoken at home was not English. Hispanics were the largest group: 64 percent of the 64 million (16.4 million) spoke Spanish at home. According to the results of the National Assessment of Adult Literacy survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Education in 2003, Hispanics, who represented approximately half of the foreign-born adults at that time, had lower English test scores compared to their foreign-born, Black, White, and Asian peers (Warkentien et al., 2009). Yet in 2015 the U.S. Census Bureau recorded nearly 26 million individuals in need of English literacy but only 660 thousand were enrolled in state-administered and federally funded ESL programs. The rest were and possibly are still on waiting lists unable to be served. Thus, Hispanic LEPs have become the majority minority in many places in the U.S. and the group with the greatest need for ESL

education. This need has increased and has become even more difficult to meet in the recent years due to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.

2.3 The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Immigrant Latine ESL Adult Learners in the U.S. and in Philadelphia

The novel coronavirus was first reported in Wuhan, China on December 31, 2019, spreading rapidly across the globe, and by March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic (Doctors without Borders, n.d.). Two years later and the pandemic has spread worldwide. As of April 30, 2022, the pandemic has caused more than 81 million cases and almost 1 million deaths in the U.S. (Centers for Disease Control, 2022). In Philadelphia, the total cases sum up to more than 314,000 with 5,102 deaths (The New York Times, 2022). In the U.S., race and ethnicity are risk markers for conditions that effect health, socioeconomic status, immigration status, access to health care, and exposure to the virus (Lazo et al., 2021). The pandemic's disproportionate effects on this population is another manifestation of these racial injustices against marginalized communities.

Latines have some of the highest case and mortality rates of COVID-19 across the nation. Hispanic/Latine persons in the U.S. have 1.5 times the risk for COVID-19 infection, 2.3 times the risk of hospitalization, and 1.8 times the risk of death compared to their White counterparts (Centers for Disease Control, 2022). In fact, near the beginning of the pandemic on September 2020, Hispanics represented 28.6% of cases and 21.3% of COVID-19 deaths nationally (Centers for Disease Control, 2020). This is a high rate as Hispanics only constituted about 18.5% of the US population at that time (Centers for Disease Control, 2020). Latines in Philadelphia through January 2021 had a 32% higher age-adjusted incidence rate compared to Non-Hispanic (NH) Whites, but a 29% lower testing rate, and neighborhoods with the highest concentration of Latines

have had a higher positivity ratio (Lazo et al., 2021). These high contraction and mortality rates are related to numerous historical factors including occupational exposure, economic hardship, language barriers, and immigration barriers all of which limit access to healthcare and health insurance and increase exposure.

Hispanics/Latines along with African Americans continue to be over-represented in the population in poverty relative to their representation in the overall population. In 2019, the share of Hispanics in poverty was 1.5 times more than their share in the general population (Creamer, 2020). In other words, Hispanics comprised 18.7% of the total U.S. population, but made up of 28.1% of the population in poverty. In Philadelphia, around 37% of Latines live in poverty, compared to 15% of Whites (Lazo et al., 2021). The pandemic has only exacerbated this disproportion. Research reports that at the onset of the pandemic Latine workers are among those most affected by the pandemic with nearly 50% being forced to take a pay cut or laid off (Krogstad et al., 2020).

Immigration law enforcement, language, and anti-immigrant sentiment have contributed to the lack of access to health insurance and appropriate access to care. The Migration Policy Institute (2019) estimates more than 8.5 million unauthorized immigrants from Latin America are living in the U.S. Philadelphia is home to a large percentage of this population. Estimates indicate about 15% of foreign-born Philadelphians were unauthorized immigrants in 2014 (Eichel & Ginsberg, 2017). During the onset of the pandemic, the Trump administration issued repressive and punitive policies and encouraged raids performed by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforce Agency (ICE) which manages detentions and removal of people who have been apprehended for immigration violation (Larrotta, 2019). Legal immigrants with a green card can still be deported from the U.S. if they are convicted of a felony or crime, fail to properly file tax returns, or

participate in public welfare programs, and for undocumented immigrants, life is even more difficult as they can be apprehended and deported at any time (Larrotta, 2019).

As a result, immigrant Latines often isolate themselves which makes their mobility and participation in community events and access to healthcare and education even more difficult. An analysis in 2019 shows that Latines were more than likely than their White counterparts to be medically uninsured in the U.S. (Artiga et al., 2021). In Philadelphia, 60% of immigrant Latines were uninsured in 2021 (Lazo et al., 2021). In fact, Latines in Philadelphia are 2.3 times more likely to not have a primary care provider and 62% more likely to forgo care due to costs compared to Non-Hispanic Whites (Lazo et al., 2021). Additionally, Latines living in Philadelphia face disparities in access to high quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate medical care (Lazo et al., 2021).

With limited access to relief funds or unemployment insurance, Latines have experienced greater pressure to work and risk occupational exposure than White workers. A study by Do & Frank (2021) revealed that workplace exposure plays a key role in contributing to the excess mortality burden, namely jobs in essential industries and telecommute unfriendly occupations, such as construction, warehousing, storage, and grocery stores. Their data does not support multigenerational households or pre-existing health conditions as driving factors. In Philadelphia, 32% of Latine workers are employed in essential occupations, as compared to 23% of white workers, and among Latine immigrants, undocumented immigrants are disproportionately employed in jobs with greater transmission risk, such as janitorial services and domestic labor (Lazo et al., 2021).

The pandemic has also created new challenges for this population. As a response to the pandemic, schools and programs moved to distance education. Distance education can be defined

as the delivery of instruction using some type of technology to students who are separated from the instructor (McCain, 2009). A study by Baxter (2020) reveals some of the challenges adult ESL students and practitioners in a sample program faced when transitioning from in-person to distance learning including communication barriers between students and instructors who did not know a common language, the limitations of in-person materials for distance learning, and access to and proficiency with technology (Baxter, 2020). These challenges have created even more stress and barriers for this population to pursue ESL education.

Finally, the pandemic has also negatively impacted the mental health of this population. These compounding challenges coupled with mandated isolation, stay-at-home orders, and travel restrictions which limits contact to their families has brought on many mental health issues, especially for college students and adult learners, including lack of motivation, anxiety, stress, worried about family's health, isolation, social distancing, education changes, and going out less (Browning et al., 2020; Molock & Parchem, 2021).

Thus, immigrant Latine ESL adult learners represent one of the fastest growing minority groups in the U.S. with the lowest English proficiency and greatest need for ESL education, with one of the highest COVID-19 case and mortality rates, and one of the most impoverished, likely to contract COVID-19, having hours reduced or laid off, uninsured, at-risk for immigration policies, and experiencing mental health issues group. Therefore, this study examined the perceived impacts of the pandemic on stress level, the learning of English, and remote instruction as well as contraction of the virus, access to health care, and employment. It also sought to investigate participants' views of the importance of English learning before and after the pandemic. I hypothesized that the pandemic negatively impacted all variables under investigation

and that the prioritization of learning English increased during the pandemic compared to before the pandemic.

3 Theoretical Orientation

This study aims to not only understand the vulnerabilities and challenges this group has historically experienced, but also capture the forms of capital Communities of Color possess that help them survive in the U.S. and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression in order to construct a fuller representation of this population's views. The following paragraphs describe Pierre Bourdieu's social and cultural reproduction theory and habitus and Yosso's community cultural wealth model.

3.1 Pierre Bourdieu's Cultural and Social Reproduction Theory

French Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1973; 1980) contributed to the sociology of education, theorizing the link between education and culture. He introduced influential concepts including social and cultural capital, social and cultural reproduction, and habitus to describe how middle and higher social classes preserve their social privilege across generations and how educational systems perpetuate the structure of power relationships by contributing to the reproduction of the structure of the distribution of cultural classes and thereby perpetuating inequality despite the belief of an equal society.

This transmission includes cultural capital defined as the familiarity of knowledge and practice of "high culture" within a society that are symbolic wealth and constitute "legitimate" culture; linguistic capital defined as the accumulation of a person's linguistic skills acquired within the family and academic apprenticeships that predetermines their position in society; and social

capital defined by social relationships including families who provide useful supports. In the U.S. these forms of capital valued by institutions are attained by White middle- and upper-class individuals.

Undergirding these systems and processes is the concept of habitus. Bourdieu (1980) defined habitus as a system of durable, transportable, unconscious dispositions and behaviors shared by people with similar backgrounds, such as social class, nationality, ethnicity, education, and profession, which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes. It is the way individuals perceive the social world and react to it and is generated and shaped by a deeply rooted history. For example, a person who possesses the cultural, social, and linguistic capital required by institutions and systems to engage in a particular setting, such as school or work, will find it easier to navigate through these settings and achieve success compared to a person who does not possess the same valued capital. These valued forms of capital create socially ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions – the habitus – that can help individuals thrive in the system. Thus, it is the habitus that regulates individuals and their external world, human agency, and social structure.

Bourdieu (1973) defined educational systems as the group of institutional mechanisms operated by the conservation of culture inherited from the past and bequeathed from generation to generation. According to his theory, the level of education schools measure is actually the accumulation of the effects of the early initiation training of art (dance, music, theater, galleries, historic sites, etc.) and linguistic capital. Despite the belief of living in an equal society, academic success is a measure of the amount of cultural capital bequeathed by the family. Thus, there is a correlation between academic success and the family's capital. A cycle of reproduction ensues where the position of the individual in the society is delegated by powerful institutions, and only

those in higher status with familiarity of the dominant culture endowed by the system of predisposition can attain this capital and education and continue this transmission of the inculcation of the culture. The educational system, therefore, fulfills a legitimation of the “social order” of power relationships between classes.

According to Bourdieu’s theory (1973; 1980), immigrant Latine ESL adult learners in the U.S. do not possess the cultural, social, or linguistic capital needed to appropriate success for school, and consequently, the job market. Immigrant Latine LEPs, who are statistically more impoverished than Whites and who do not possess the linguistic or cultural competence acquired through family upbringing and required by institutions to succeed, cannot achieve academic or economic success because they do not have the familiarity of the dominant culture, connections, or linguistic skills that are considered valuable – and necessary – by the dominant society in the U.S. to achieve success.

This study argues against this notion by following Tara J. Yosso’s (2005) community cultural wealth model to examine the forms of capital this population indeed possesses and uses to achieve success. I argue that the problem does not arise from within this population’s deficiency of cultural, social, and linguistic capital but from the pedagogic action of U.S. institutions and systems that require initial familiarity with the dominant culture to achieve success. The problem is U.S. institutions and systems rewarding the capital of the White middle- and upper class and, therefore, systematically devaluing those of the non-dominant classes which perpetuates the cycle of social inequality and inequity. I hypothesized that this sample does indeed possess useful forms of capital, and the impact of the pandemic on stress level, learning of English, employment, and health experienced by this sample are related to the social inequalities perpetuated by U.S. systems and institutions and not by a lack of capital.

3.2 Tara J. Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth

Tara J. Yosso (2005) proposed a different view of Bourdieu's (1973; 1980) concepts and processes. She utilized critical race theory (CRT) and Latin critical theory (LatCrit) to ground her theory and challenge Bourdieu's traditional interpretations of social and cultural reproduction theory which positions Communities of Color as possessing cultural deficiencies. She proposed an alternative model called community cultural wealth comprised of six forms of capital to identify, analyze, and challenge distorted notions of People of Color.

CRT is a critical perspective birthed by Derrick Bell in his book *Race, Racism in American Law* (1971). He argued that race is a social construct and racism is a force embedded in legal systems and policies in the U.S. He claimed that laws are not objective, and discrimination is central to the legal and political function of America. CRT focuses on the effects of this discrimination and calls them to be rectified, aiming at empowerment and liberation of Communities of Color. Accordingly, Yosso (2005) defined CRT in education as "a theoretical and analytical framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses" (Yosso, 2005, p.74).

Yosso (2005) noted that initially CRT focused on a Black/White binary and did not consider other People of Color with their own unique histories and experiences that have also been shaped by racism and subordination in the U.S. LatCrit extends CRT discussions to address the layers of racialized subordination other groups like Latines experience. She described LatCrit as the ways "racism, sexism and classism are experienced amidst the layers of subordination based on immigration status, sexuality, culture, language, phenotype, accent, and surname" (Yosso, 2005, p. 72). Her model argues against the racist idea of deficit thinking that holds minority students and families at fault for poor academic performance because of the belief that students

lack the normative knowledge and skills and parents do not value or support their child's education. According to this idea, schools need to fill up these passive students with the cultural knowledge deemed valuable by the dominant society. Looking through a CRT and LatCrit lens, these differences in cultures can instead be seen as nurturing and empowering.

Community cultural wealth, then, is a model that argues that there are forms of capital that marginalized groups have that traditional cultural capital theory does not recognize or value. These forms of capital are aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital, which are dynamic and inclusive. She defines them as, "an array of knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed and utilized by communities of color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms oppression" (Yosso, 2005, p.77).

1. **Aspirational capital** refers to the hopes and dreams for the future.
2. **Linguistic capital** refers to the intellectual and social skills multilingual individuals possess in addition to the experience of storytelling which foster skills related to "memorization, attention to detail, dramatic pauses, comedic timing, facial affect, vocal tone volume, rhythm and rhyme" and the ability to communicate via visual art, music, or poetry (Yosso, 2005, p. 79). Additionally, in the process of translating for others, individuals also gain multiple social tools, from vocabulary and cross-cultural awareness to "real world" literacy skills and math skills.
3. **Familial capital** refers to the kinship ties People of Color possess that teach about the importance of maintaining connection to community and its resources, and these ties provide lessons of caring, coping, and providing.

4. **Social capital** refers to the networks of people and community resources that provide instrumental and emotional support to navigate through educational, legal, employment, and healthcare institutions.
5. **Navigational capital** refers to the social and psychological skills to navigate through social institutions often filled with racism and a competitive set of norms and values.
6. **Resistant capital** refers to the knowledge and skills used to challenge inequality and transform oppressive structures.

In addition to the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on stress level, learning of English, employment, and health, this present study also investigated these forms of capital immigrant Latine ESL adult learners in Philadelphia possess. I hypothesized that this sample does indeed possess the forms of capital discussed.

4 Methodology

The following sections address the instruments used to collect data, the participants, and an overview of the analysis used to examine the results.

4.1 Instrument

A survey was adopted from Hartshorn & McMurry (2020), which investigated the effects of the pandemic on adult ESL students and teachers and found that the pandemic negatively impacted stress for both students and teachers and the learning of English for students across an array of contexts. Questions from their study were adapted and modified and new questions were added to the present survey to capture participants' views and perceptions about the effects of the COVID-

19 pandemic (see survey in Appendix). To measure community cultural wealth, questions were developed that followed Yosso's (2005) conceptualization of each form of capital.

Building on the preceding discussion, this survey sought to answer the following research questions by analyzing survey responses, demographic information, and open-ended data from the sample:

1. What are the perceived impacts of the pandemic on stress level, the learning of English, and remote instruction?
2. Has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the relative importance of English learning compared to before the pandemic?
3. What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on variables outside of English classes including contraction of the virus, access to health care, and employment?
4. Does the sample possess the forms of capital discussed?
5. What can student commentary tell us about the effects they face during the COVID-19 pandemic?
6. What insights can be discovered through the findings of this study and what implications can these findings produce?

Anonymized demographic information such as sex, age, nationality, marital status, number of children, length of time living in Philadelphia, length of time taking ESL classes, and English level was also collected. Questions were in likert-style and open-ended format. Due to the varying English proficiency levels participants possessed, the survey was administered in Spanish and questions and responses were then translated into English for analysis.

4.2 Context

The survey was sent to previous, current, and prospective immigrant Latine ESL adult learners who were living in Philadelphia at the time of the survey. Previous or current students either attended English classes at an English institute in Philadelphia or received private classes. All participants who attended English classes participated in the same 12-week intensive English program that consisted of 9 hours each week in grammar, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students learned English to obtain better employment opportunities, pursue college, improve English-language skills to better themselves, and/or prepare for the naturalization process to become an American citizen. Participants were recruited through convenience sampling by the researcher. The informed consent and survey link from Qualtrics were sent to potential participants through Whatsapp text message.

4.3 Participants

Of the 36 participants who completed the survey, 63.89% were females (23) and 36.11% (13) were males with an average age between the 30-39 range and a total range of 18 to 50+. Students' country of origin represented in this study were diverse; they included Dominican Republic (38.9%, 14), Puerto Rico (22.2%, 8), Mexico (8.33%, 3), Ecuador (8.3%, 3), Colombia (5.6%, 2), and one student (2.7% each) from each of the following countries: Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Brazil, and Venezuela. Table 1 represents student English language proficiency, ranging from beginner low to fluent, with most participants in the study possessing intermediate low proficiency (50.0%, 18). Most students were married (58.3%, 21) followed by single (30.7%, 11), divorced (8.3%, 3), and other (2.7%, 1). 72.2% (26) of students had children. Table 2 represents the student class attendance timeline. Most students (77.1%, 27) started

English-language courses before WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic (March 2020) and eventually stopped.

Table 1

Student Language Proficiency

Level	Percentage
Intermediate Low	50.0% (18)
Beginner Low	22.2% (8)
Beginner High	19.4% (7)
Intermediate High	2.0% (2)
Advanced	2.8% (1)
Total	100.0% (36)

Table 2

Student Class Attendance Timeline

Level	Percentage
Started before March 2020 and eventually stopped	77.1% (27)
I am currently looking for classes	11.4% (4)
Started after March 2020 and continue to take classes	8.6% (3)
Started before March 2020 and continue to take classes	2.86% (1)
Started after March 2020 and stopped	0.0% (0)
Total	100.0% (36)

4.4 Analyses

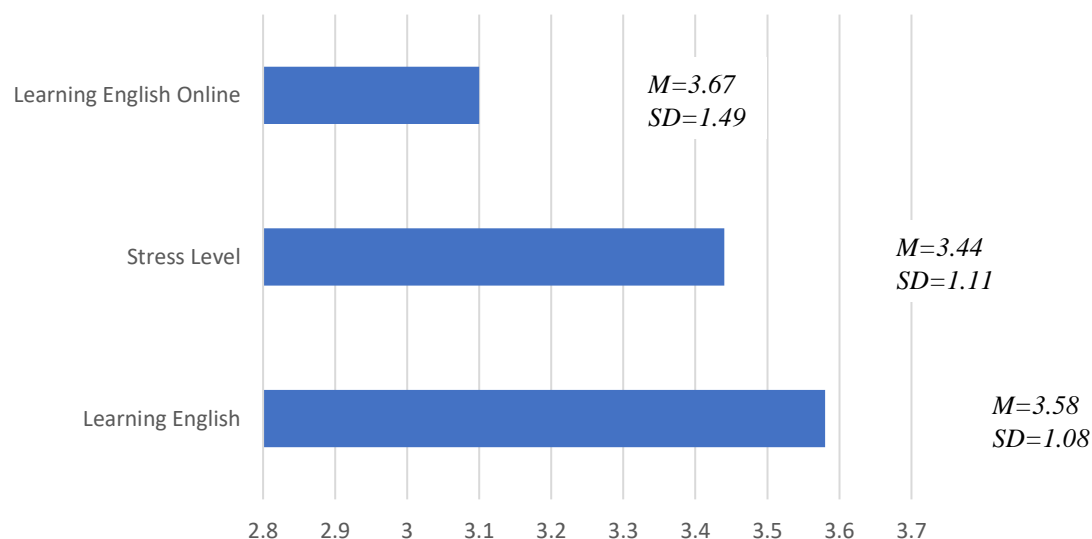
This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative methods were used for scaled items and included descriptive statistics. For the qualitative data, the researcher utilized thematic coding techniques. Specifically, I employed deductive coding to identify larger thematic and theoretical categories derived from the literature of the effects of COVID-19 on this population and inductive coding to identify codes that came from this unique sample.

5 Results

5.1 Quantitative Analysis

The first research question sought to understand the perceived effects of the pandemic on stress level, the learning of English, and remote instruction. Figure 1 represents these findings. It shows mean scores and standard deviations based on the Likert scale responses, where “extremely positive” was given a score of one and “extremely negative” a score of five. I utilized the Likert scale responses in this untraditional order because in this order the Qualtrics mobile view placed the positives (i.e., extremely positive) at the top and negatives (i.e., extremely negative) at the bottom, which I perceived as more intuitive than the standard Likert scale anchor placement which was the reverse order.

On average, students acknowledged the effect of the pandemic on stress ($M=3.44$, $SD=1.11$), the learning of English ($M=3.58$, $SD=1.08$), and online learning ($M=3.67$, $SD=1.49$) as neither positive or negative with 19.4% (7) of students indicating that they have not taken classes online. I discuss why these results may have been so in the discussion section.



Note: Extremely positive = 1, somewhat positive = 2, neither positive nor negative = 3, somewhat negative = 4, extremely negative = 5

Figure 1. *Pandemic impacts on student and teacher perceptions.*

The second question addressed the degree to which the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the importance or priority students placed on their learning of English compared to before the pandemic. Students indicated their views on a Likert scale with anchors formatted the same as the previous question where “extremely important” was given a score of one and “extremely unimportant” a score of five. On average, both before ($M=1.53$, $SD=.61$) and during ($M=1.47$, $SD=.70$) the pandemic, students viewed the importance of English learning as extremely important.

The third research question sought to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on variables outside of English classes including contraction of the virus, access to health care, and employment. Results indicated that 55.6% (20) of the participants reported contracting COVID-19 at some point during the pandemic and 44.4% (16) indicated they did not. Participants view of their access to health care was measured on Likert-scale responses, where “totally agree” was given a score of one and “totally disagree” a score of five. On average, participants agreed with the statement ($M=2.06$, $SD =1.17$) indicating they felt they did have access to adequate health care services. Answers for the employment question aimed to capture all possibilities of employment outcomes for both employed and self-employed students. Table 3 represents the answers participants indicated. Results show that most students have either had their hours reduced but not laid off/resigned (33.3%, 12) or have kept the same job and their hours have remained the same (30.6%, 11).

Table 3*Student Employment Results*

Status	Percentage
Employed - Yes, my hours have been reduced, but I have not been laid off/resigned.	33.3% (12)
No, I have kept the same job and my hours have remained the same.	30.6% (11)
Employed - Yes, I have left.	8.3% (3)
Self-employed – Yes, I have left my job.	8.3% (3)
I am not employed or self-employed.	8.3% (3)
Employed - Yes, I have been laid off.	5.6% (2)
Self-employed – Yes, my hours have been reduced, but I have not left my job.	5.6% (2)
Total	100% (36)

The fifth research question addressed the forms of capital this sample possessed. Table 4 represents mean scores and standard deviations based on the Likert-scale responses, where “totally agree” was given a score of one and “totally disagree” a score of five. On average, participants indicated they agreed they possessed all forms of capital with social (M=2.58, SD=1.23) and linguistic (M=2.53, SD=1.25) capital resulting in the highest forms.

Table 4*Forms of Capital Results*

Forms of Capital	Mean & Standard Deviation
Social capital	(M=2.58, SD=1.23)
Linguistic capital	(M=2.53, SD=1.25)
Familial capital	(M=2.28, SD=0.88)
Navigational capital	(M=2.17, SD=1.03)
Resistant capital	(M=1.78, SD=0.93)
Aspirational capital	(M=1.14, SD=0.42)

5.2 Qualitative data

An open-ended question asked participants to share what things have been the most difficult for them during the COVID-19 pandemic and why they have been difficult. The most salient themes that emerged were family (47.22%; 17), finances/unemployment (36.11%; 13) and

health (33.33%; 12). Table 5 illustrates the 8 units that were identified from the 36 participant responses. I discuss only the former 5 themes as the latter 3 were not saturated because they were one-word responses with no context.

Table 5

Theme Frequencies

Participant Themes	Percentage
Family	47.22% (17)
Finances/Unemployment	36.11% (13)
Health	33.33% (12)
Learning English	11.11% (4)
Friends	5.55% (2)
Immigration	5.55% (2)
Isolation	2.77% (1)
Uncertainty about the future	2.77% (1)
Total	100.0% (36)

5.2.1 Student Themes

Family. Most participants expressed that worry about family was the most difficult challenge during the pandemic. Participants often mentioned a number of other themes as it applied to their families. For example, participants worried about family living in other places or countries. One participant noted “The family, since I did not know how soon I would see them again...” and another revealed “Concern for my family because they are in Honduras and the health system there is very bad.” Participants also worried about their children not adapting to online learning. One participant observed “One of the things that was most difficult for me was that my 6-year-old girl could not go to school and study on the computer,” and another participant reported “...and [the COVID-19 pandemic] affected schooling because our oldest son found it more difficult to learn at home.”

Finances/Unemployment. The second-most salient theme revolved around finances and unemployment. Some students worried about work and exposure to the virus. One mentioned “Work, since there were several colleagues who became ill with COVID-19...” and another revealed “While others stayed at home, I had to go to work exposing myself to the virus. At work they told us that we could not stop although there were those who got infected but despite everything, because of my condition of working in the aviation area, we were not allowed to stay at home and [they told the workers] that if we did, we were on our own.” Other participants were worried about unemployment. One participant reported “We were also affected by the labor part. Since there was a curfew, my husband stopped working for a few weeks, and, well, the finances are reflected there” and another reported “The financial aspect, since in the months that I was out of work, I was forced to dip into savings to cover my needs.” Yet other students worried about the inflation of prices and increase in the cost of living. One student acknowledged “...Personally I am a single mother and expenses are higher and because of the pandemic, food, fuel and even medicines have gone up. Money does not last.”

Health. Some participants were worried about health for a variety of reasons including the contraction of the virus, pregnancy, medical care, insurance, eligibility for the vaccine, and access to care. One participant noted “The COVID-19 pandemic relatively affected our family because we have young children who cannot receive the vaccine.” Another reported “Children who do not want to use [masks], some adults are reckless, medical care has been strictly poor, you cannot go to a hospital because sometimes they don't even want to serve you, and no one can accompany you.”

English learning. A smaller number of participants expressed worries about English learning due to the interruption of classes, challenges of online learning, having to work more, and family

issues. One participant observed "...I had to stop English [classes] and some family problems" and another revealed "I don't speak English, I can't find [classes]."

Friends. A few students mentioned worrying about friends and social life. One student reported "Friends, since we could not share as we did before the pandemic due to the high incidence of infections and the restrictive orders that had to be followed according to the government."

6. Discussion

Quantitative results of this study showed that the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on employment and the contraction of COVID-19. Qualitative results showed that the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on family, finances/unemployment, health, learning of English, friends, immigration, isolation, and uncertainty about the future.

Quantitative results indicated that on average, participants acknowledged the effects of the pandemic on the learning of English as neither positive nor negative. The qualitative results may explain why some participants viewed the pandemic as negatively affecting their learning of English as some reported challenges coming from interruption of classes, transition to online learning, having to work more, and family issues. The mixed results may be due to the participants' class attendance timeline: 11.46% (4) of the participants were looking for classes at the time of the survey and according to their answers, they did not take classes prior to the pandemic starting, so the pandemic may not have impacted their learning of English since they were not taking classes prior. Additionally, 11.46% (4) of the participants continues to take classes, so they may not see the pandemic negatively affecting their learning of English.

Quantitative results also revealed that the importance students placed on their learning of English remained the same (extremely important) during the pandemic as prior to the pandemic. This may shine light on the fact that the stressors they have been facing has continued the urgency and prioritization of the learning of English to deal with the historical barriers exacerbated by the pandemic and creation of novel challenges.

Quantitative results indicated participants' views of online learning as neither positive nor negative. These mixed responses may be because some students saw barriers from distance learning while others saw benefits. Research has shown both positive and negative outcomes from distance education (Baxter 2020; Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020). Challenges include communication barriers between students and instructors who did not know a common language, limitations of in-person materials for distance learning, and access to and proficiency with technology (Baxter 2020). Benefits include more innovative instruction such as accommodating students with different schedules and priorities (Baxter 2020; Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020). Thus, the mixed responses could in part reflect the challenges from distance education for some students but also the opportunity to learn anytime and from anywhere for other students, providing opportunities for students to take classes that fit their schedule and lifestyle, which may allow them to have more access to classes and have feelings of ownership and organization of their education.

Quantitative results also found that on average students acknowledged the effects of the pandemic on stress as neither positive nor negative. This result may have been due to the wording of the question ("How has the pandemic affected your stress level?") and the anchors on the Likert-scale ranging from "Extremely positive" to "Extremely negative". Some students may have thought that answering negatively on the question meant that the impact of the pandemic on stress was a negative impact. Other students may have thought that answering positively on the same

question meant that the pandemic has increased their stress level as opposed to decreased (negative). The qualitative findings counter the quantitative findings. All participants reported worry about an aspect of their life in the open-ended responses (family, finances/unemployment, health, learning English, friends, immigration, isolation, uncertainty about the future), which may indeed create a form of stress.

This study found that more than half of the participants reported contracting COVID-19 at some point during the pandemic, which points to the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on immigrant Latines in the U.S. as discussed, including occupational exposure, economic hardship, language barriers, and immigration barriers (Lazo et al., 2021; Do & Frank, 2021; (Larrotta, 2019; Artiga et al., 2021). Quantitative results indicate that on average participants felt they did have access to adequate health care services. However, according to the qualitative data collected, some participants reported worry about health due to the contraction of the virus, pregnancy, medical care, insurance, edibility for the vaccine, and access to care.

Results show that most participants have either had their hours reduced but not laid off/resigned. Additionally, the open-ended responses reveal some participants worried about being laid off or hours reduced due to curfews instituted by the government. This resonates with research reported at the onset of the pandemic: Latine workers were among those most affected by the pandemic with nearly 50% being forced to take a pay cut or laid off (Krogstad et al., 2020).

Finally, quantitative analyses revealed that the participants do indeed possess all forms of capital under investigation. Qualitative analyses of open-ended responses support these findings. For example, two of the themes observed that created worry for participants were family and friends, specifically worry about family's health, family living in other places, and children adapting to online learning as well as worry about not being able to socialize and connect with

friends. This points to familial capital which is the forming of cultural wealth through the engagement of community well being and includes not just immediate family but extended family, including friends. These kinship ties provide lessons of the importance of maintaining healthy connection to community and resources and fosters caring, coping, and nurturing from one another. These findings also point to social capital which is obtained through the forming of a network of people that provide instrumental and emotional support which helps Communities of Color navigate through difficult events like the pandemic and find resources for health, jobs, and education.

Navigational capital can be seen in some responses as participants have had to maneuver through difficult institutional challenges and stressful events and conditions amidst the pandemic. Some participants mentioned their continuing in their jobs despite the risk of contracting COVID-19 because of their workplaces mandating their attendance with the threat of being dismissed. Other participants shared the necessity to use money from savings account. These behaviors point to the behavioral, social, and psychosocial skills and strategies that allows People of Color to mitigate damages and survive, recover, and even thrive through challenging times.

These findings counter Bourdieu's (1973) theory of social and cultural reproduction processes that positions this population at a disadvantage by not possessing the cultural, social, and linguistic capital needed to achieve academic and economic success. These findings also argue against deficit models of research that focus on what a family, student, or community is lacking to explain underachievement or failure, and the notion that disadvantaged social groups require access to resources outside their local and kin ties to generate better returns and thereby reinforcing the dominant culture and perpetuating the process of social inequality. This study finds that the capital wealth these groups have has indeed helped them to obtain resources, mitigate damages,

communicate, create and maintain connections, navigate systems and structures, resist oppression, and pursue their aspirations.

7.Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice

Due to the diversity in ESL education, implications and applications of these findings may vary widely depending on context. The following implications can be applied to research, policy, and practice for students and practitioners in circumstances similar to those experienced by the participants examined in this study during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. **Using Data.** Practitioners and program administrations should not make assumptions about the needs, experiences, and preferences of students. They should rely on data that provides useful information and insights associated with specific students. Additionally, institutions should disaggregate demographic data to enable Latines and their multiple identities to be recognized and represented. Responding to the contextual pluralities, differences, and needs of students fosters inclusivity and equitable educational experiences for all.
2. **Mental Health, Accommodations & Support.** Due to the high level of stressors experienced by students, programs could promote mental health through group exercises, meditation/mindfulness sessions, or accountability buddies. Instructors should be sensitive, understanding, compassionate, and patient towards students who may be struggling with the stressors, and they can also reduce the stress associated with academics by providing accommodations for assignments and exams and using more personalized approaches to learning. Programs and teaching staff can also support

- students' academic success with virtual town halls, regular email check-ins, virtual office hours, and peer mentoring.
3. **Native Leadership & Trainings.** Because these findings are unique to this population, leadership roles should be filled by Latine higher education professionals, and intercultural trainings should be offered to professionals that have limited knowledge of historically minoritized communities. This can have two effects. First, it can draw attention to these often-marginalized groups, and second, Latine leaders can establish organizational culture and create structural changes that lessen the barriers placed on students.
 4. **Asset-based Pedagogy in Practice.** Asset-based pedagogies should be employed to mitigate social inequalities by including and capitalizing on the capital wealth possessed by Students of Color. For example, instructors can lead activities that engage students in sharing their experiences and finding meaningful commonalities, such as finding a living-wage job and ways to afford food for their family.
 5. **Countering Anti-immigration Laws & Allocation of Resources.** These study results can be used to inform and motivate activists and community organizations to campaign against anti-immigration laws and policies. Additionally, understanding these negative effects may allow activists and organizations to allocate resources to the communities most in need.
 6. **Research.** Following CRT and LatCrit, research should begin with the perspective that Communities of Color are places with multiple strengths and should call into question White middle- and upper-class communities and values as the standard by which all others are judged. A shift should be made from the targets of the individual,

institutional, and structural social inequality to the forces that create the social inequality in order to understand why and how it is perpetuated and why schooling and institutions in the U.S. are crucial to the production and legitimation of this social reproduction idea. Accordingly, there should be a transition from damage-centered and deficit models of research to a strength-based and desire-based research framework to emphasize the particular strengths that exist within Communities of Color despite the adversities they face.

8.Limitations and future research

Although there are useful insights regarding the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrant Latine ESL adult learners in Philadelphia, there are a number of limitations that should be considered when examining these findings. First, this study employed convenience sampling to recruit participants and a small sample size, which impacts the generatability of the results. Second, the instruments used in this study were not all validated, which impacts the internal validity of this study. Finally, the researcher of this study initially aimed to answer additional research questions, including the variables under investigation that may have contributed to stress and if the forms of capital moderate the correlations that would be found. However, due to the small sample size and results that were not normally distributed which included some outliers, regression analyses could not be conducted. Similar studies in the future could benefit from including participants across a number of regions, using validated measurements, and conducting regressions and ANOVAs to analyze any correlations, moderations, and group comparisons.

9. Conclusion

This study sought to answer a number of questions associated with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrant Latine ESL adult learners in Philadelphia and community cultural wealth. Quantitative analyses revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on employment and the contraction of COVID-19. Qualitative analyses revealed that the most difficult challenges participants face during the pandemic were about family, finances/unemployment, health, learning English, friends, immigration, isolation, and uncertainty about the future. Additionally, this study found that the sample possessed all forms of capital under investigation: aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital.

These results not only reveal the negative impact the pandemic has had on immigrant Latine ESL adult learners in Philadelphia but also the capital wealth they possess to mitigate damages, communicate, create and maintain connections, navigate systems and structures, resist oppression and pursue their aspirations. Policy makers, ESL program administrations, practitioners, and advocates should consider the findings of this study to help identify the specific challenges this population has been facing and understand the capital it possesses so they can make informed decisions to support these students and their forms of capital, mitigate the negative effects, and optimize instruction.

This study and its framework can be used to inspire future research and thinking of Communities of Color to transition from deficit- and damage-centered research to strength- and desire-based research frameworks. Research should shift from focusing on the documentation of the pain and brokenness of Communities of Color, which reinforces the pathologizing of their history and experiences, to focusing more on understanding the complexity, self-determination,

hope, and sovereignty of People of Color. This shift depathologizes their past and experiences, allows for more holistic views – more than their conquered past and oppression – and creates a fuller representation of their experiences and perceptions. The production of research and knowledge should recognize and acknowledge the importance and implications of who asks the questions, who does the research, how the data is gathered, and who conducts the analyses. Following CRT, LatCrit, and community cultural wealth, research should aim to understand the systems, institutions, and processes that create and perpetuate social inequality in the U.S. as well as how Communities of Color use their cultural wealth for empowerment and liberation despite this inequality.

Appendix

Participant Survey Questions

- What is your sex?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Other
- What is your age?
 - 18-29
 - 30-39
 - 40-49
 - 50+
- What is your marital status?
 - Single
 - Married
 - Divorced
 - Widowed
 - Other
- Do you have children?
 - Yes
 - No
- How long have you lived in Philadelphia?
 - 1 year or less
 - 2-4 years
 - 5-9 years
 - 10+ years
- During the time you lived/have lived in Philadelphia are you/were you enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses at some point?
 - No
 - Yes
- What is your nationality?
 - Cuba
 - República Dominicana
 - Haití
 - Puerto Rico
 - México
 - Guatemala
 - Honduras
 - Nicaragua
 - El Salvador
 - Costa Rica
 - Panamá

- Belice
- Brasil
- Colombia
- Argentina
- Perú
- Venezuela
- Chile
- Ecuador
- Bolivia
- Paraguay
- Uruguay
- Guayana
- Surinam
- Guayana Francesa
- Islas Malvinas
- Otro
- When did you take ESL classes?
 - Started before March 2020 and eventually stopped
 - Started before March 2020 and continue to take classes
 - Started after March 2020 and stopped
 - Started after March 2020 and continue to take classes
 - I am currently looking
- How do you define your English-language proficiency level?
 - Beginner low: recognize a few words and phrases but cannot form sentences
 - Beginner high: recognize many words and can form sentences but with many errors
 - Intermediate low: can form sentences and describe things and situations but with some errors
 - Intermediate high: can form complex sentences and speak with relative fluency
 - Advanced: fluent
- On each of the following, please choose the description that best matches your feelings about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic while you were studying, continue to study, or are pursuing ESL education:
 - How has the pandemic affected your learning English
 - Extremely positive
 - Somewhat positive
 - Neither positive nor negative (didn't affect it)
 - Somewhat negative
 - Extremely negative
 - How has the pandemic affected your stress level
 - Extremely positive
 - Somewhat positive
 - Neither positive nor negative (didn't affect it)
 - Somewhat negative
 - Extremely negative
 - How has the pandemic affected your learning online (if you took or are taking classes online)

- Extremely positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neither positive nor negative (didn't affect it)
- Somewhat negative
- Extremely negative
- I did not/do not take classes online
- Your priority or importance for learning English
 - Before the pandemic
 - Extremely important
 - Very important
 - Moderately important
 - Slightly important
 - Not at all important
 - Now
 - Extremely important
 - Very important
 - Moderately important
 - Slightly important
 - Not at all important
- Please share what things have been the most difficult for you during the COVID-19 pandemic (worry about family, school, work, healthcare, finances, friends, immigration, etc.) and why it has been difficult.
 - Open-ended responses
- Please draw on your experiences and answer these questions as they pertain to you during your living in the U.S.
 - I have high aspirations and hope for the future.
 - Totally agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Totally disagree
 - In Spanish in my daily life, I engage in some sort of storytelling, oral histories, stories (cuentos), parables (dichos), visual art, music, or poetry from my culture
 - Totally agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Totally disagree
 - I have gained lessons of caring, coping, and providing from my [culture], family, sports, classmates, religious gatherings, and other community settings.
 - Totally agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree

- Totally disagree
 - In my experiences, I have had networks of people like family, friends, classmates, church congregations, etc. that have provided me with instrumental and emotional support to navigate obtaining English courses.
 - Totally agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Totally disagree
- Navigational Capital
 - I draw on social (family, friends, classmates, church congregations, etc.) and psychological (inner strength) critical navigational skills to maneuver through the U.S. society and schools.
 - Totally agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Totally disagree
- Resistant Capital
 - I use my knowledge and skills to oppose inequality, like racism, discrimination, sexism, machismo, and capitalism in the U.S.
 - Totally agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Totally disagree
- Perception of their access to health care
 - Since the beginning of the pandemic, have you tested positive for COVID-19 at least once?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Do you feel that you have had adequate access to health care services here in the U.S. such as personal health information, doctor's appointments, health follow ups, COVID-19 tests, etc.?
 - Totally agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Totally disagree
- Financial effect
 - Since the beginning of the pandemic at any time have your work hours been reduced or have you been laid off or chosen to leave your job (whether employed or self-employed)?
 - Employed - Yes, my hours have been reduced but I have not been laid off/resigned
 - Employed - Yes, I have been laid off
 - Employed – Yes, I have resigned
 - Self-employed - Yes, my hours have been reduced but I have not resigned
 - Self-employed – Yes, I have resigned

- No, I have kept the same job and my hours have stayed the same
- I neither employed or self-employed

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