

COVID-19 Pandemic Employment Impacts on Asian Americans

Like many Californians, Asian American workers have been left jobless because of economic disruptions created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The problem is particularly acute for those disadvantaged with limited education, a segment that is disproportionately immigrants with limited English language ability.

Key Findings

Data from the American Community Survey provide insight on the labor-market disruptions during the early stage of the pandemic on persons between the ages of 25 to 64. The project examined the increase in unemployment with an adjustment for those furloughed or temporarily laid off. Overall, the increase for Asian Americans was similar to those for non-Hispanic White (NHW) and Other. Figure 1 disaggregates by educational attainment and shows that Asian Americans without any college schooling fared significantly worse than NHWs and Others.

There are also significant ethnic differences among Asian Americans (Figure 2), with Vietnamese Americans suffering the largest displacement due to their high concentration in the service industry—the majority in the nail salon industry, which was especially impacted by pandemic shut down.

The increase in job displacement was also particularly severe for Asian Americans with limited English language ability, with one sixth displaced (Figure 3).

Data from the Household Pulse Survey provides additional insights into the economic disruption throughout the pandemic experienced by people

Figure 1: Change in Unemployment-Displacement Rate of Asian, non-Hispanic White, and Other Ethnic Groups

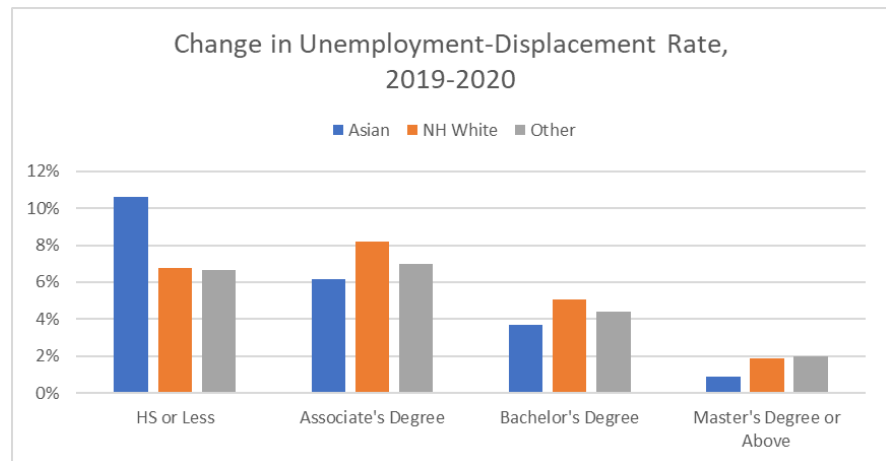
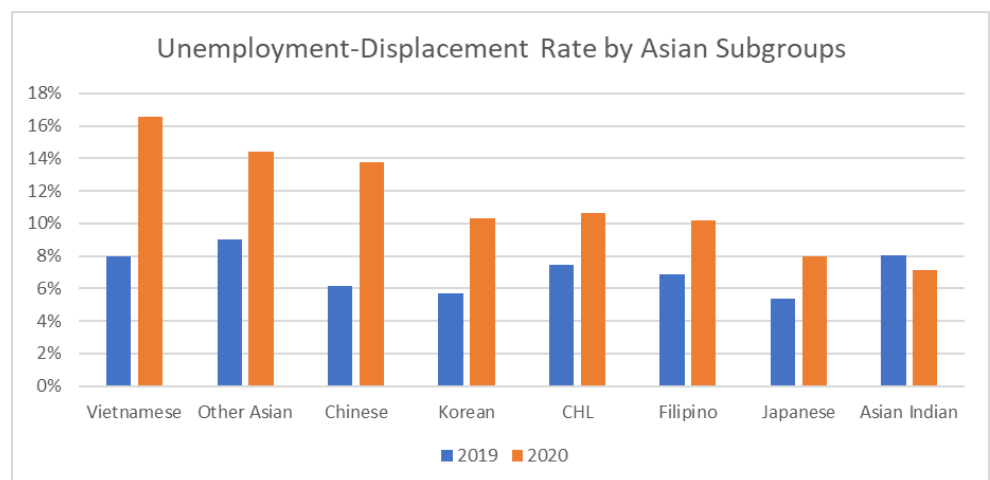


Figure 2: Unemployment-Displacement Rate by Asian Subgroups, 2019-2020



between the ages of 25 to 64. Compared with non-Hispanic Whites (NHWs), Asian Americans experienced a small but larger drop in paid employment. Figure 4 reports a decline in the proportion of the population with a paid job. The drop was particularly significant for less educated Asian Americans, and those with no college schooling had a decline far greater than NHWs and comparable to Others.

Recommendations

Based on our findings and those from previous studies, we recommend the following:

1. Eliminate information, language, cultural and trust **barriers to accessing unemployment assistance.**
2. **Develop re-employment and training programs to help displaced Asian Americans.**
3. Form university-government partnership to conduct **future research to disaggregate the Asian American population by ethnicity, language ability, and economic class.**

Figure 3: Unemployment-Displacement Rate by Ability to Speak English of Asian-Identifying Respondents

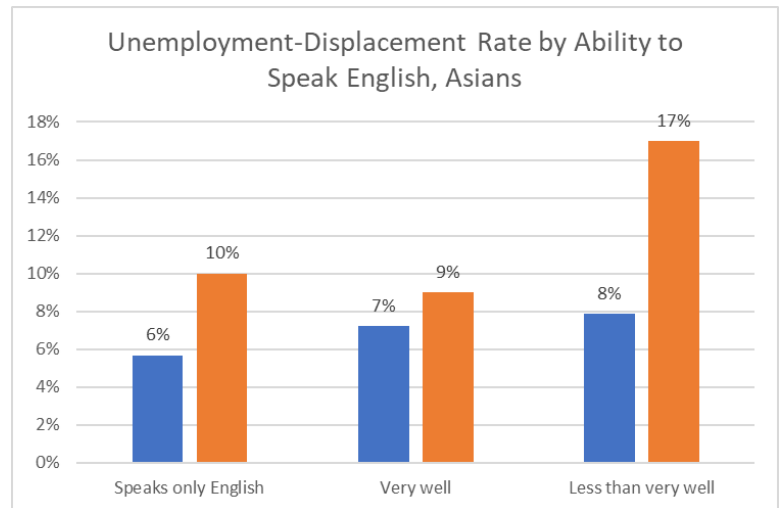
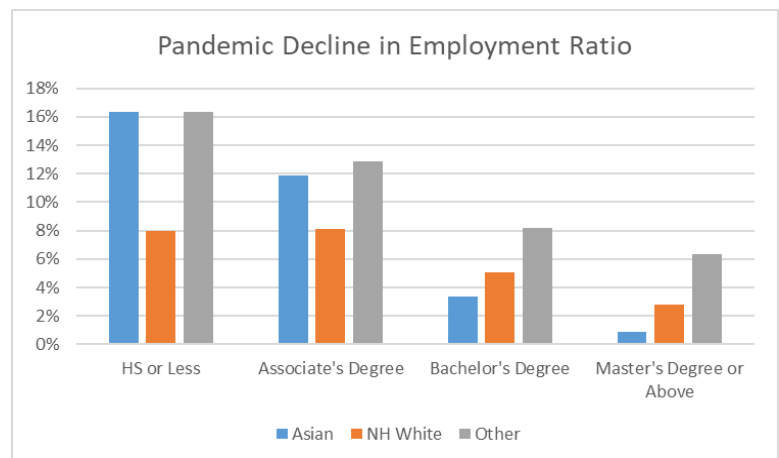


Figure 4: Pandemic Decline in Employment Ratio of Asian, non-Hispanic White, and Other Ethnic Groups



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