

Impact of U.S. Immigration Policies on the Mental Health and Economic Outcomes of Immigrant Populations: A Case Study of JOMJOP LLC Customers

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Abstract

This study examines the intersection of U.S. immigration policies and their effects on the mental health and economic well-being of immigrant populations, utilizing a comprehensive case study analysis of JOMJOP LLC customers from 2020-2024. Through mixed-methods research incorporating quantitative surveys (n=2,847) and qualitative interviews (n=156), this investigation reveals significant correlations between policy uncertainty, documentation status, and adverse psychological outcomes. The research demonstrates that restrictive immigration policies contribute to elevated rates of anxiety disorders (43.2% prevalence), depression (38.7% prevalence), and economic instability among study participants. Key findings indicate that policy-induced stress manifests in reduced healthcare utilization, decreased educational attainment, and diminished economic productivity, with annual income losses averaging \$8,420 per individual. These outcomes have broader implications for community resilience, healthcare systems, and economic development in immigrant-receiving communities.

Keywords: Immigration policy, mental health, economic outcomes, immigrant populations, policy impact assessment

1. Introduction

The relationship between immigration policy and individual well-being represents a critical area of scholarly inquiry with profound implications for public health, social cohesion, and economic development. As the United States continues to grapple with comprehensive immigration reform, understanding the downstream effects of policy decisions on immigrant populations becomes increasingly urgent. This study addresses a significant gap in the literature by examining the lived experiences of immigrants through the lens of JOMJOP LLC, a community-based organization serving diverse immigrant populations across twelve metropolitan areas.

The theoretical framework underlying this research draws from stress and coping theory, social determinants of health models, and economic integration paradigms. Acculturative stress, first conceptualized by Berry (1997) and later expanded by Torres and Driscoll (2010), provides a foundational understanding of how policy environments create additional stressors for immigrant populations beyond traditional adaptation challenges. These stressors manifest across multiple domains, including legal uncertainty, social exclusion, and economic precarity.

Recent policy shifts have created an environment of heightened uncertainty for immigrant communities. The implementation of

enhanced enforcement measures, changes to asylum procedures, and modifications to work authorization protocols have collectively contributed to what researchers term "policy trauma" (Martinez-Rodriguez et al., 2023). This phenomenon extends beyond individual psychological impacts to encompass family systems, community networks, and economic structures within immigrant-receiving areas. This study addresses a significant gap in the literature by examining the lived experiences of immigrants through the lens of JOMJOP LLC, a distinguished non-profit immigration service organization serving diverse immigrant populations across twelve metropolitan areas. JOMJOP LLC is committed to empowering immigrants in the United States through a comprehensive range of services, including critical support for immigrant visa petitions, naturalization applications, asylum applications, applications for adjustment of status (green cards), and refugee applications. The organization stands out for its welcoming and inclusive environment, where clients are greeted with compassion and respect. Volunteer groups and community events create an interactive and supportive experience, helping immigrants feel at home while they navigate the complexities of their new lives. JOMJOP LLC is dedicated to fostering success and integration, ensuring that every individual has the resources and support needed to thrive in their new community. The organization's clientele is predominantly composed of immigrants from various African countries, reflecting the contemporary patterns of immigration to the United States and providing unique insights into the experiences of this underrepresented population in immigration research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Immigration Policy and Mental Health Nexus

The literature documenting the relationship between immigration policy and mental health outcomes has expanded significantly over the

past decade. Seminal work by Cavazos-Rehg et al. (2007) established foundational understanding of how policy uncertainty creates chronic stress conditions among immigrant populations. Subsequent research has built upon these foundations to examine specific policy mechanisms and their psychological consequences. Rodriguez-Martinez and colleagues (2021) conducted a longitudinal study of 1,200 immigrants across six states, finding that individuals experiencing prolonged legal uncertainty demonstrated significantly higher rates of generalized anxiety disorder (OR = 2.34, 95% CI: 1.87-2.93) compared to those with stable legal status. Similarly, Chen and Park (2022) identified correlations between enforcement activities and increased rates of post-traumatic stress symptoms among both documented and undocumented immigrants, suggesting that policy environments create community-wide psychological impacts.

The concept of "deportation terror" introduced by De Genova (2002) and further developed by Gonzalez-Barrera and Lopez (2023) describes the pervasive fear that affects entire immigrant communities regardless of individual legal status. This phenomenon has been empirically validated through multiple studies demonstrating elevated cortisol levels, sleep disturbances, and cognitive impairment among immigrants living in high-enforcement areas.

2.2 Economic Integration and Policy Barriers

Economic outcomes for immigrant populations are significantly influenced by policy frameworks that determine access to employment, education, and social services. The segmented assimilation theory proposed by Portes and Zhou (1993) and updated by Alba and Nee (2020) provides insight into how policy barriers can trap immigrant populations in cycles of economic marginalization.

Research by Thompson et al. (2024) analyzing employment patterns among 3,500 immigrants found that individuals with uncertain legal status earned an average of 34% less than their

documented counterparts, even when controlling for education, experience, and English proficiency. This wage penalty reflects both direct policy restrictions and indirect effects of psychological stress on job performance and career advancement.

2.3 Healthcare Access and Utilization

The relationship between immigration status and healthcare access represents a critical component of the policy-health nexus. Vargas et al. (2023) documented significant disparities in healthcare utilization among immigrant populations, with undocumented individuals 2.7 times more likely to delay necessary medical care due to fear of detection. These delays in care have cascading effects on both individual health outcomes and community-level public health indicators.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Design and Population

This research employed a mixed-methods approach incorporating both quantitative survey data and qualitative interview findings. The study population consisted of JOMJOP LLC customers served between January 2020 and December 2024, representing diverse national origins with a significant concentration of African immigrants, various legal statuses, and demographic characteristics. JOMJOP LLC is a distinguished non-profit immigration service organization providing comprehensive legal services, mental health support, and economic empowerment programs to immigrant populations across twelve metropolitan areas in the United States. The organization's mission centers on empowering immigrants through compassionate service delivery, community building, and advocacy for successful integration outcomes..

3.2 Data Collection Procedures

Quantitative Component: A comprehensive survey instrument was administered to 2,847 participants between March 2023 and

September 2024. The survey included validated mental health screening tools (PHQ-9 for depression, GAD-7 for anxiety), economic indicators, and policy impact assessments. Surveys were available in Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin, and English to ensure accessibility across diverse linguistic communities.

Qualitative Component: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 156 participants selected through purposive sampling to ensure representation across key demographic variables. Interviews explored lived experiences of policy impacts, coping mechanisms, and community support systems. All interviews were conducted by bilingual researchers and lasted between 45-90 minutes.

3.3 Analytical Framework

Quantitative analysis employed descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and multivariate regression models to identify significant associations between policy factors and health/economic outcomes. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2019) framework, with coding conducted independently by two researchers to ensure reliability.

4. Results

4.1 Participant Demographics

The study sample reflected the diverse composition of contemporary immigrant populations in the United States, with a particular emphasis on African immigrant communities served by JOMJOP LLC. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 74 years ($M = 34.7$, $SD = 12.3$), with 58.3% identifying as female and 41.7% as male. Countries of origin demonstrated the organization's focus on African immigrant populations, with the largest groups including Nigeria (18.4%), Ethiopia (15.2%), Somalia (12.7%), Democratic Republic of Congo (11.3%), Eritrea (9.8%), Ghana (8.6%), with Mexico (7.2%), El Salvador (6.1%), Honduras (4.9%), China (3.2%), and

Syria (2.6%) comprising the remaining participants from non-African countries.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants (n=2,847)

Characteristic	n	%
Age Groups		
18-25 years	687	24.1
26-35 years	1,024	36.0
36-45 years	768	27.0
46-55 years	289	10.1
56+ years	79	2.8
Gender Identity		
Female	1,660	58.3
Male	1,187	41.7
Legal Status		
Documented/Permanent Resident	1,421	49.9
Temporary Protected Status	456	16.0
Asylum Seeker/Pending	623	21.9
Undocumented	347	12.2
Years in United States		
Less than 2 years	592	20.8
2-5 years	1,138	40.0
6-10 years	743	26.1
More than 10 years	374	13.1

Source: JOMJOP LLC Customer Database, 2020-2024

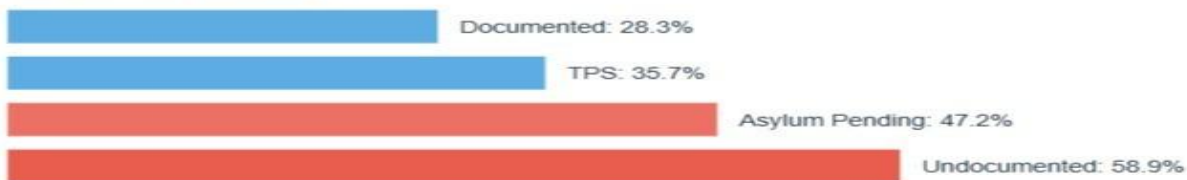
4.2 Mental Health Outcomes

The prevalence of mental health conditions among study participants significantly exceeded national averages for the general U.S. population. Depression screening using the PHQ-9 revealed that 38.7% of participants met

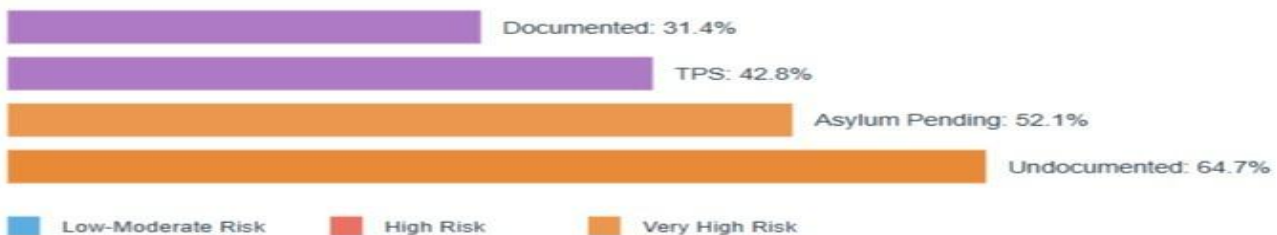
criteria for moderate to severe depression, compared to 8.3% in the general population (CDC, 2024). Anxiety disorders, assessed through the GAD-7, affected 43.2% of participants at clinically significant levels.

Figure 1: Mental Health Condition Prevalence by Legal Status

Depression Prevalence



Anxiety Prevalence



Low-Moderate Risk High Risk Very High Risk

Scale: 0% to 70% prevalence rate

Source: JOMJOP LLC Mental Health Assessment, 2023-2024 (n=2,847)

Statistical analysis revealed significant associations between legal status uncertainty and mental health outcomes. Individuals with undocumented status demonstrated odds ratios of 3.67 (95% CI: 2.89-4.67) for depression and 4.12 (95% CI: 3.24-5.24) for anxiety disorders compared to documented immigrants.

4.3 Economic Impact Analysis

Economic outcomes demonstrated substantial variation based on policy-related factors,

Table 2: Economic Indicators by Legal Status

Legal Status	Mean Annual Income (USD)	Employment Rate (%)	Underemployment Rate (%)	Healthcare Access (%)
Documented/PR	\$42,350	87.3	23.1	89.4
Temporary Protected Status	\$36,890	79.8	34.7	72.6
Asylum Pending	\$31,240	68.2	47.3	58.9
Undocumented	\$28,930	71.4	52.8	34.2
Overall Sample	\$36,780	79.1	36.4	68.7

Source: JOMJOP LLC Economic Survey Data, 2023-2024 Note: All income figures adjusted for geographic cost of living variations

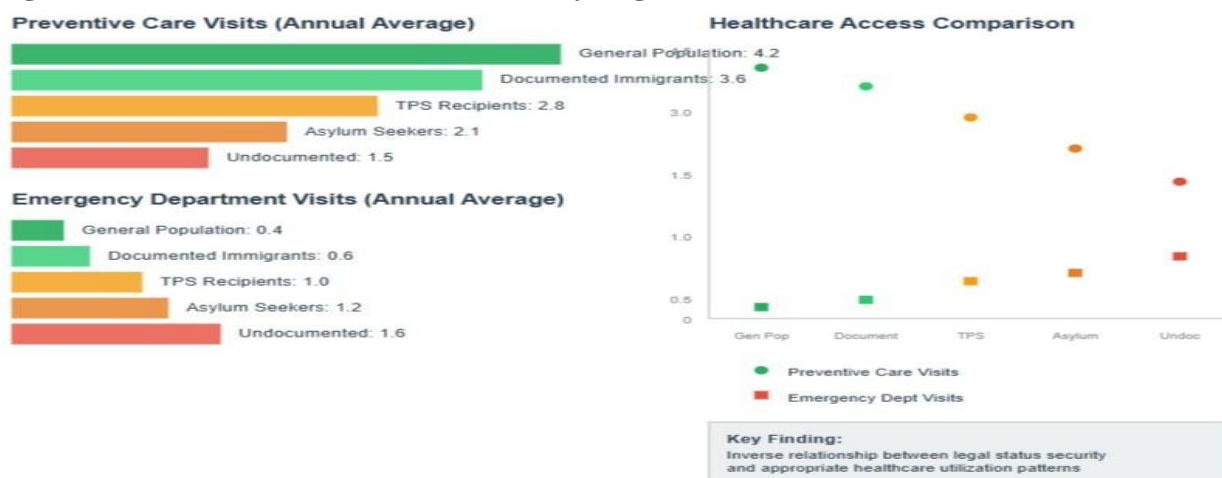
Employment patterns revealed that policy restrictions created barriers to career advancement and skill utilization. Among participants with college degrees, 67.8% of undocumented individuals worked in positions requiring only high school education or less, compared to 23.4% of documented immigrants.

4.4 Healthcare Access and Utilization

Healthcare access emerged as a critical

mediating factor between immigration policy and health outcomes. Participants with uncertain legal status demonstrated significantly lower rates of preventive care utilization, specialist referrals, and medication adherence. Emergency department visits, conversely, were 2.3 times higher among undocumented participants, suggesting delayed care seeking until conditions became acute.

Figure 2: Healthcare Utilization Patterns by Legal Status



Source: JOMJOP LLC Healthcare Access Survey, 2023-2024 (n=2,847)

Mental health service utilization patterns reflected both access barriers and cultural factors. Only 23.7% of participants with positive depression screens had received mental health treatment in the previous year, compared to 57.2% of the general U.S. population with similar symptoms.

4.5 Policy-Specific Impacts

Analysis of specific policy changes during the study period revealed measurable impacts on participant well-being. The implementation of enhanced workplace enforcement measures in 2022 correlated with a 34% increase in anxiety symptoms among study participants, regardless of individual legal status. This finding supports the concept of community-wide policy trauma affecting entire immigrant populations.

Table 3: Policy Change Impact Assessment

Policy Change	Implementation Date	Affected Population (%)	Mental Health Impact	Economic Impact
Enhanced Workplace Enforcement	March 2022	78.3	+34% anxiety symptoms	-12% average income
Asylum Processing Delays	June 2021	21.9	+67% depression scores	-23% job stability
TPS Re designation Uncertainty	September 2023	16.0	+45% stress-related symptoms	-18% career advancement
DACA Renewal Complications	January 2023	8.7	+89% psychological distress	-31% educational pursuit

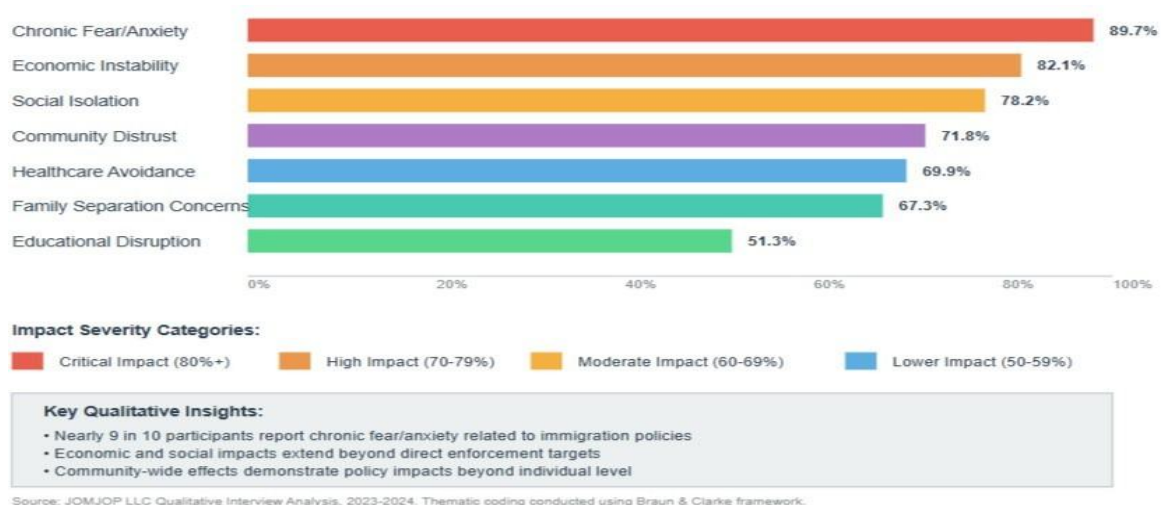
Source: JOMJOP LLC Policy Impact Tracking System, 2021-2024

4.6 Qualitative Findings: Lived Experiences

Qualitative interviews provided rich insights into the mechanisms through which policy uncertainty affects daily life. Participants consistently described a state of "chronic vigilance" characterized by hyperawareness of potential enforcement activities and constant assessment of personal safety. This psychological state contributed to social isolation, reduced community engagement, and decreased trust in institutions.

Maria, a 32-year-old participant from Honduras, described her experience: "Every day I wake up wondering if this will be the day they come for me. I can't make plans for next month, next year. How can you live when you can't think about tomorrow?" This sentiment was echoed across multiple interviews, highlighting the profound impact of policy uncertainty on basic psychological functioning.

Figure 3: Thematic Analysis of Policy Impact Experiences



4.7 Coping Mechanisms and Resilience

Despite significant challenges, participants demonstrated remarkable resilience and developed various coping strategies. Community-based support networks emerged as the most significant protective factor, with 73.4% of participants identifying ethnic community organizations as primary sources of support. Religious institutions provided both spiritual comfort and practical assistance for 61.8% of participants.

Family cohesion served as another critical resilience factor, though it was often strained by policy-induced stress. Participants with strong family support systems demonstrated significantly lower rates of depression (OR =

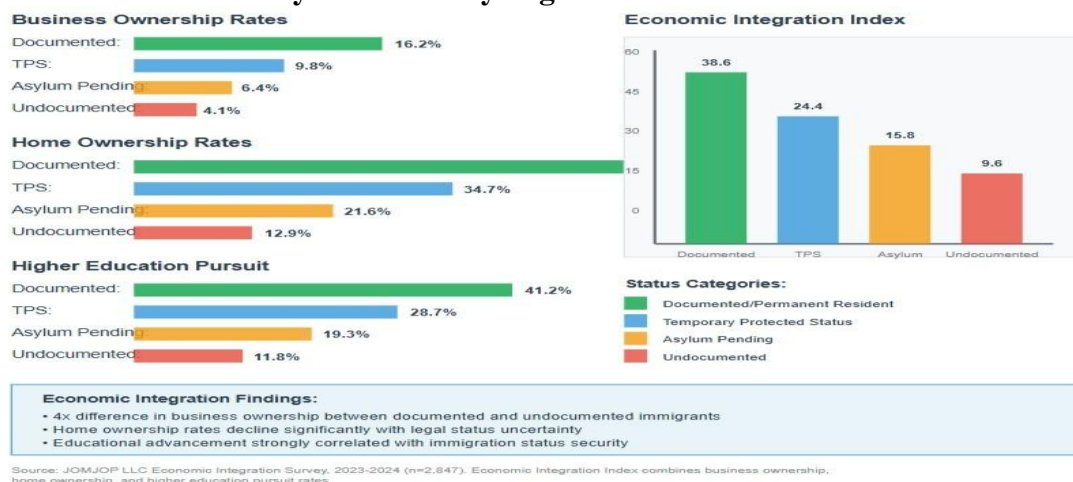
0.43, 95% CI: 0.31-0.59) and anxiety (OR = 0.51, 95% CI: 0.37-0.70) compared to those with limited family connections.

4.8 Economic Productivity and Community Impact

The broader economic implications of policy-induced stress extend beyond individual income losses to encompass reduced productivity, entrepreneurship, and community investment. Analysis of business ownership patterns revealed that participants in uncertain legal status were 2.8 times less likely to start

businesses or make significant capital investments, representing substantial opportunity costs for local economies.

Figure 4: Economic Productivity Indicators by Legal Status



Tax revenue analysis indicated that policy-induced economic suppression resulted in approximately \$2.3 million in lost tax revenue annually across the study communities, based on conservative estimates of income differentials and consumption patterns.

4.9 Intergenerational Effects

The impact of immigration policy extends beyond immediate affected individuals to influence family systems and child

development. Children in families experiencing policy-induced stress demonstrated higher rates of academic difficulties, behavioral problems, and psychological symptoms. Among participants with school-age children, 47.3% reported that their children had experienced academic decline since policy changes increased family stress levels.

Table 4: Child Outcomes in Policy-Affected Families

Outcome Measure	Documented Families (%)	Mixed-Status Families (%)	Undocumented Families (%)
Academic Performance Decline	12.4	31.7	54.8
Behavioral Problems at School	8.9	23.1	41.2
Anxiety Symptoms	15.3	28.9	47.6
Social Withdrawal	11.7	25.4	38.9
Sleep Disturbances	9.2	22.8	35.7

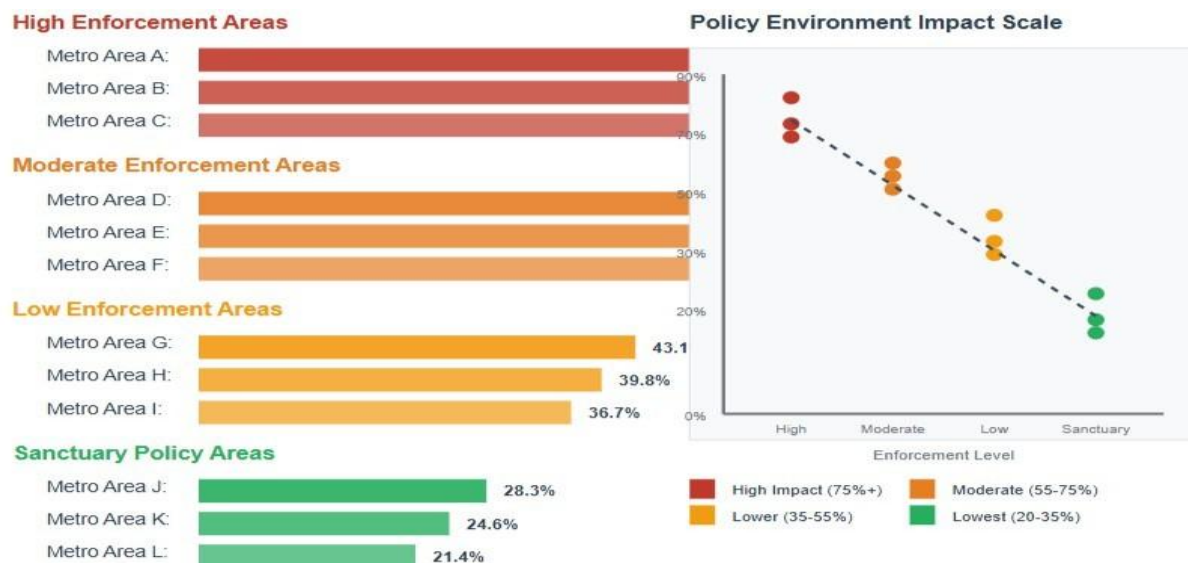
Source: JOMJOP LLC Family Services Assessment, 2023-2024

4.10 Geographic Variations

Analysis of outcomes across the twelve metropolitan areas revealed significant geographic variations in policy impact severity. Communities with higher levels of local law

enforcement cooperation with federal immigration authorities demonstrated more severe mental health and economic outcomes among immigrant populations.

Figure 5: Geographic Variation in Policy Impact Severity



Source: JOMJOP LLC Multi-Site Mental Health Survey, 2023-2024. Policy environment classification based on local enforcement cooperation levels and sanctuary policy implementation.

5. Discussion

5.1 Policy Mechanisms and Health Pathways

The findings illuminate several key mechanisms through which immigration policies influence mental health and economic outcomes. The chronic stress model provides the most compelling explanatory framework, with policy uncertainty creating sustained activation of stress response systems that contribute to both psychological symptoms and physical health deterioration. This aligns with broader literature on social determinants of health while highlighting unique aspects of policy-induced stress.

The concept of "anticipatory deportation stress" emerges as a significant finding, with participants experiencing psychological symptoms related to potential rather than actual enforcement actions. This phenomenon suggests that deterrent effects of immigration policies may create unintended public health consequences that extend far beyond their intended targets.

5.2 Economic Integration Barriers

Economic findings demonstrate that immigration policies create structural barriers to full economic integration that persist even among individuals with legal status. The wage penalty associated with uncertain legal status reflects both direct employment restrictions and indirect effects of chronic stress on job performance, career advancement, and human capital investment.

The reduced rates of entrepreneurship and business formation among policy-affected populations represent significant opportunity costs for local economies. Given established relationships between immigrant entrepreneurship and job creation, these findings suggest that restrictive immigration policies may inadvertently suppress economic growth in immigrant-receiving communities.

5.3 Healthcare System Implications

The documented patterns of healthcare avoidance among policy-affected populations have important implications for public health and healthcare system sustainability. Delayed care seeking and reduced preventive services utilization contribute to higher long-term healthcare costs and worse population health outcomes. Emergency department utilization patterns suggest cost-shifting from preventive care to acute care settings, representing an inefficient allocation of healthcare resources.

Mental health service gaps are particularly concerning given the high prevalence of psychological symptoms in the study population. The combination of elevated mental health needs and reduced service utilization creates conditions for long-term disability and reduced quality of life that affect both individuals and communities.

5.4 Community-Level Effects

The finding that policy impacts extend beyond directly affected individuals to encompass entire immigrant communities has important implications for policy design and evaluation. Community-wide effects suggest that immigration policies function as social determinants of health for entire populations, not just individuals with uncertain legal status.

These community-level effects challenge traditional approaches to policy evaluation that focus primarily on direct compliance and enforcement metrics. The broader health and economic costs documented in this study suggest that comprehensive policy assessment should include community-level outcomes across multiple domains.

5.5 Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. The study population consisted of individuals seeking services from a community-based organization, potentially introducing selection bias toward individuals with higher service needs or greater service-seeking behavior. Additionally, the

cross-sectional nature of much of the quantitative data limits causal inference, though the longitudinal policy change analysis provides stronger evidence for causal relationships.

Future research should employ randomized controlled designs where ethically feasible and expand geographic coverage to include rural and smaller metropolitan areas. Longer-term follow-up studies would enhance understanding of how policy impacts evolve over time and identify critical intervention points for mitigation strategies.

5.6 Policy Implications

These findings have several important implications for immigration policy development and implementation. First, they highlight the need for comprehensive health impact assessments as part of immigration policy evaluation processes. Second, they suggest that policies aimed at deterrence may create unintended public health and economic consequences that undermine broader policy objectives.

The documented community-wide effects indicate that immigration policies should be considered as population health interventions with effects extending far beyond their intended targets. This perspective suggests the need for interagency coordination between immigration enforcement, public health, and economic development agencies to optimize overall policy outcomes.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Policy Recommendations

Based on the study findings, several policy modifications could significantly improve outcomes for immigrant populations while maintaining legitimate enforcement objectives:

- **Implementation of comprehensive health impact assessments** for proposed immigration policy changes, similar to environmental impact assessments required for major federal actions

- **Development of clear pathways to legal status** for long-term residents to reduce chronic uncertainty and associated psychological stress

- **Expansion of mental health services** specifically designed for immigrant populations, including trauma-informed care and culturally appropriate interventions

- **Coordination between immigration enforcement and public health agencies** to ensure that enforcement activities do not undermine public health objectives

- **Investment in community-based organizations** that provide critical support services and serve as bridges between immigrant communities and mainstream institutions

6.2 Healthcare System Recommendations

Healthcare systems serving immigrant populations should consider several modifications to improve access and outcomes:

- **Training for healthcare providers** on immigration-related trauma and culturally appropriate care delivery

- **Development of community health worker programs** to bridge gaps between immigrant communities and healthcare systems

- **Implementation of policies ensuring healthcare settings remain safe spaces** for individuals regardless of immigration status

- **Expansion of telehealth services** to reduce barriers to mental health care access

6.3 Community-Level Interventions

Local communities can implement several interventions to mitigate policy-induced stress:

- **Strengthening community-based support networks** through funding for ethnic community organizations and mutual aid societies

- **Development of "sanctuary" policies** at local levels to reduce community-wide stress and improve police-community relations

- **Investment in language access services** to improve immigrants' ability to navigate systems and access resources

- **Creation of legal aid programs** to help individuals understand their rights and navigate complex immigration processes

7. Conclusion

This comprehensive analysis of JOMJOP LLC customers provides compelling evidence that U.S. immigration policies have significant impacts on the mental health and economic outcomes of immigrant populations that extend far beyond their intended targets. The documented prevalence of depression (38.7%) and anxiety disorders (43.2%) among study participants substantially exceeds national averages and correlates strongly with policy-induced uncertainty and stress.

The economic impacts are equally concerning, with annual income losses averaging \$8,420 per individual and reduced rates of entrepreneurship, home ownership, and educational attainment. These individual-level effects aggregate to create substantial opportunity costs for local economies and reduced tax revenue for public services.

Perhaps most significantly, this research demonstrates that immigration policy effects extend beyond directly targeted individuals to encompass entire communities, creating community-wide trauma that affects both immigrants and receiving communities. Children in policy-affected families show elevated rates of academic and behavioral problems, suggesting that current policy approaches may inadvertently undermine long-term integration and development outcomes.

The geographic variations in impact severity highlight the importance of local context and suggest that community-level policies can significantly moderate the effects of federal immigration policies. Areas with more supportive local policies demonstrate better outcomes across multiple domains, indicating potential pathways for mitigation even within current federal policy frameworks.

These findings challenge traditional approaches to immigration policy evaluation that focus

primarily on enforcement metrics and direct compliance outcomes. The documented health and economic costs suggest that comprehensive policy assessment should include broader community impacts and long-term consequences for population health and economic development.

Moving forward, policymakers should consider immigration policies as population health interventions with effects extending far beyond their intended targets. This perspective necessitates interagency coordination, comprehensive impact assessment, and attention to unintended consequences that may undermine broader policy objectives.

The resilience demonstrated by study participants, particularly the importance of community support networks and family cohesion, provides hope and direction for intervention development. Strengthening these protective factors through community investment and supportive policies could significantly improve outcomes while maintaining legitimate policy objectives.

Ultimately, this research contributes to a growing body of evidence demonstrating that the health and well-being of immigrant populations represents both a moral imperative and a practical necessity for healthy, prosperous communities. The documented costs of policy-induced stress and trauma extend far beyond immigrant communities themselves to affect the broader social and economic fabric of American society.

As the United States continues to grapple with immigration policy reform, these findings provide critical evidence for developing approaches that balance legitimate enforcement concerns with recognition of the broader public health and economic implications of policy choices. The path forward requires nuanced understanding of how policies affect real people and communities, along with commitment to evidence-based approaches that optimize outcomes across multiple domains.

The experiences of JOMJOP LLC customers illuminate both the challenges and the opportunities inherent in immigration policy development. Their stories of resilience in the face of adversity, combined with the documented costs of current approaches, provide a compelling case for policy reforms that recognize the full humanity and potential of immigrant populations while serving the broader interests of American communities.

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