



Impact of Bilingual Education on Employment in the United States

Research Design



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Research Question

What is the impact on U.S. employment of increasing the number of bilingual primary and secondary educators for non-English speaking and immigrant children?

Theory

Integration of non-English speaking immigrants into U.S. society as primary and secondary public school educators in early and primary public education may reduce long-term social welfare program costs and enhance employability. Identifying immigrant groups at high risk for poverty and providing invention job training programs to enhance employability will likely reduce their use of social welfare programs. Lack of education attainment and job skills reduces employability and increases poverty, resulting in increased cost to social welfare programs. Poverty is socially undesirable due to the economic costs to society, yet government expenditure data shows increasing government expenditures on welfare related expenses due to an increasing lower-income class.¹ Supporting U.S. Census data, U.S. data shows trends of increasing income disparity with racial similarities among lower-income groups and decreased education attainment. According a Georgetown University study², critical skills cited as important for success have steadily increased in employer demand while education attainment has not kept up. A gap currently exists between the skills of the available workforce and the skills employers' need.³ The study shows, "at the current production rate in higher education, we (the U.S.) will fall 5 million short of the workers with postsecondary credentials we will need by 2020," which may only serve to widen the income gap and increase costs to society through poverty.⁴ Current trends in poverty must be reversed or stabilized to mitigate future economic costs. Therefore, strategic and targeted measures should be taken to increase U.S. population employability to meet the skill demands of employers. Key racial groups have been identified as at the highest risk for poverty, as well as being among the largest immigrant and Non-English speaking population. Additionally, as school enrollment among these groups and the need for language assistance has increased, school instructor representation of these groups and availability of language assistance had decreased. The lack of race representation and foreign language may affect the low education attainment of these groups

Racial trends in U.S. Census Bureau data show those groups with lower income and education attainment positively correlate with U.S. Department of Education data trends in increased public school enrollment and decreased instructor representation among these groups. Additionally, the racial groups increasing in school enrollment show strong similarities to immigration trends shown by Migration Policy Institute data. As a supporting example from the data, in the U.S., Hispanics are the largest immigrant population, are the largest minority population in poverty, attain the lowest level of education, and have the largest proportion of non-English speaking and immigrant children enrolled in public schools. Additionally, the data shows the rate of bilingual primary and secondary educators increasing at a decreasing rate to the increase in non-English speaking and immigrant children. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the largest education achievement gaps today are found between children from high-income and low-income families and are also evident between race,

¹ C. Chantrill, "U.S. Welfare Spending History from 1900," 2014.

² Carnevale, *Help wanted: Projections of job and education requirements through 2018*.

³ Carnevale, *Help wanted: Projections of job and education requirements through 2018*.

⁴ Carnevale, *Help wanted: Projections of job and education requirements through 2018*.

ethnicity, and home language.⁵ DHHS recommends early childhood development intervention as the most effective means of enhancing adult socioeconomic status (SES).⁶ Therefore, an increase in the number of bilingual primary and secondary educators to support non-English speaking and immigrant children would likely result in an increase in educational attainment among these groups, resulting in greater employability.

Hypothesis

Advancing immigrant training in early education career fields might be associated with a decrease in U.S. poverty levels among immigrants, along with an increase in immigrant and Non-English speaking educational performance and overall education attainment levels. While costs of poverty continue to rise, the level of education attainment continues to increase at a decreasing rate to employer skill needs, and costs to deliver education continue to rise exponentially due societies continually increasing demand for quality and quantity, and the technically limited nature of education as a public service. The task of policy makers is to formulate education policy so as to achieve maximum education output with minimum inputs to in turn increase employability and reduce costs of poverty. This might be most effectively accomplished in the context of culture.

With research showing that race and ethnicity affect academic achievement, this study seeks to identify the possible effect cultural contexting in education policy. Cultural contexting refers to the creation of policy, implementation of standards and administering of guidance in the context of each culture group involved in the process. Investment in vocational career training to place teachers in classrooms with similar culture and language backgrounds to the students would provide support to the students in the context of their culture. With identified demographic differences in education attainment, this study will identify the rate of demographic effect on the performance of high school populations in a state with positive education standards in place. In general, the intensity of correlation of demographic factors to performance will determine the probability that cultural contexting will increase efficiency in public education policy.

Populations tend to sort themselves into demographic groups based multiple factors of culture.⁷ Diverse populations enable this study to analyze the education outcome of schools comprised of different demographic groups. The disparate range of preferences for education input and output between these groups demand that education policy be determined at levels below that of the national government. The U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* emphasized by Justice Lewis Powell's opinion public education operations are neither 'explicitly or implicitly' protected in the Constitution, demonstrating that states have autonomy from the national governments over public education policy.⁸ The national government will not intervene in state education policy as long as states do not act discriminatory. According to Fisher, legal issues of two distinct factors have led to state's increasing role over local communities in education policy since the 1960's.⁹ The first issue is that "court's have recognized the responsibility of state governments to ensure not just equal, but

⁵ Lindsey Hutchison, Taryn Morrissey, Kimberly Burgess, "The Early Achievement and Development Gap."

⁶ Lindsey Hutchison, Taryn Morrissey, Kimberly Burgess, "The Early Achievement and Development Gap."

⁷ Margolis, "The Fiscal Problems of the Fragmented Metropolis," 32.

⁸ Hunt, "San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez," 782.

⁹ Fisher, "The changing state-local fiscal environment," 26.

'adequate' education for all children,” and the second issue is state emphasis on accountability that has arisen largely due to court decisions that have forced states to take increases fiscal responsibility for education production.¹⁰ Yet, with increased fiscal responsibility for education, state education policy continues to achieve diminishing returns in education output. Therefore, a national program aimed at increasing cultural support within schools would be most effective.

Most states have diverse populations and some form of education policy, yet none report an equal level of education output across all jurisdictions or that all jurisdictions are able to meet state standards. Based on research that suggests the correlation of demographic factors to academic achievement, I hypothesis that gains in education output achieved from positively effective state policy are significantly affected by demographic factors. If this is true, then the indication would be state policy implementation requirements and guidelines do not positively adjust for these demographic factors. An argument could then be made for the expected efficiency gains of cultural contexting in education policy. Due to the diversity of state populations, communities would best represent the cultural needs of their populations. Therefore, individuals in the community would best support the education of children in the community; non-English speaking immigrants would best support the education of non-English speaking and immigrant children in the community. Programs providing education career tracts for non-English speaking immigrants would enable these groups to take an increased role their communities and the economy.

Socio-psychiatrist Gary Weaver explains that, while culture is only a product of nurture, personality is a product of nature and nurture.¹¹ Sigmund Freud’s demonstrates that culture, like personality is like an iceberg, with the external conscious mind at the tip of the iceberg and the internal, unconscious mind submerged beneath the “water level of awareness.”¹² The internal personality traits that most humans develop in their formative years become the foundation of their for life. Beliefs, values, thought patterns, perceptions, and worldviews, that are initially instilled in the home environment and reinforced in the community outside the home, such as in church and school, enable kids to grow up more likely to perpetuate the culture of their community. The result of personalities perpetuating cultures is evident in the many communities around the U.S. made up of groups of people with similar racial and ethnic traits, in addition to education and income level. As personality is well known to impact and individuals’ learning style, and personalities are shown through the explanations of Freud and Weaver to develop from and perpetuate the culture of a community, it is reasonable to conclude that learning styles might be largely determined by culture. If the ability to consume education differs by culture, then the means of distributing education among communities may be more efficient if done so in the context of the primary community culture.

Data

Quantitative: U.S. trends in immigration rates and social costs, whole population poverty levels, welfare spending, education attainment and income levels, and critical traits increasingly required by the job market.

Dependent Variable: poverty level (outcome)

Main Independent Variable: training (treatment)

¹⁰ Fisher, “The changing state-local fiscal environment,” 26.

¹¹ Weaver, “Intercultural Relations,” 4, 9-10, 40.

¹² Weaver, “Intercultural Relations,” 9.

Controls/Contextual Variables: Other factors that decrease poverty levels, such as college completion

Dependent Variable: # of teachers

Main Independent Variable: training (treatment)

Controls/Contextual Variables: Other factors that decrease poverty levels, such as college completion

From the Department of Education, I would look at the following trends over time for U.S. elementary and secondary public schools:

- i. Percentage distribution of school teachers categorized as practicing in English as a Second Language (ESL)/bilingual education to determine the rate of support for non-English speaking children and foreign language instruction;¹³
- ii. Number of teachers by race/ethnicity to view trends in teacher diversity;¹⁴
- iii. Total enrollment in schools divided by the total teachers, librarians, and other nonsupervisory instructional staff to determine student/instructor ratio.¹⁵
- iv. Distribution of school enrollment race/ethnicity to view trends in student diversity.¹⁶
- v. Average reading scores by age and race/ethnicity to identify trends in performance.¹⁷
- vi. Average mathematics scores by age and race/ethnicity to identify trends in performance.¹⁸

From the Migration Policy Institute, I would look at the following U.S. immigration trends over time:

- vii. Ratio trends of immigrants to natives residing in the U.S.
- viii. Ratio of children under 18 in immigrant families to native families as a share of the total U.S. child population to help calculate level of cultural support needed in schools.
- ix. Top ten current largest U.S. immigrant groups to project level of cultural support needed in schools.¹⁹
- x. Regions of Birth, 1960-2012. Immigrant population in the United States by region of birth to determine trends and significance of Hispanic immigration in relation to immigration from other world regions²⁰
- xi. Limited English Proficient (LEP): Number, Share, and Growth of the Limited English Proficient (LEP) Population in United States 1990 to 2010²¹

Conclusion/Implications

Implications on interdependence U.S. approach to immigration policy, and educational investments:

A holistic review of U.S. national and sub-national governments expenditures reveals that, while the majority of the national government budget is spent on social services, the majority of

¹³ U.S. Department of Education, "Digest of Education Statistics: Teacher Trends," (i).

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Education, "Digest of Education Statistics: Teacher Trends," (ii).

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Education, "Digest of Education Statistics: Teacher Trends," (iii).

¹⁶ U.S. Department of Education, "Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Minorities," (i).

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Education, "Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Minorities," (ii).

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Education, "Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Minorities," (iii).

¹⁹ Migration Policy Institute, "U.S. Immigration Trends," (i).

²⁰ Migration Policy Institute, "U.S. Immigration Trends," (ii).

²¹ Migration Policy Institute, "U.S. Immigration Trends," (iii).

state and local government budgets are spent on public education, with each program affecting the other. Trends show that total government spending for social services and public education are consistently rising. One way to reverse these trends would be to target the highest risk for poverty groups, Non-English speaking immigrants, for economic investment. Cultural contexting in schools by matching students with teachers of similar race, ethnic and language may be the most immediately effective means of achieving this.

From the data, the ratio of Hispanic teachers to other race/ethnic groups might be representative of reduced Hispanic college graduation and lack of entry into professional fields, such as teaching. Trends in student/instructor ratio will indicate any shortage or surplus of teachers. Additionally, if the ratio of Hispanic teachers is found to be decreasing in comparison to the ratio of Hispanic students, Hispanic immigrants may be disadvantaged in education due to lack of cultural contexting.

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- ii. Top Ten Largest U.S. Immigrant Groups, 2012: Immigrants' Countries and Regions of Birth.
- iii. Immigrants' Countries and Regions of Birth: Regions of Birth, 1960-2012.
- iv. Limited English Proficient (LEP): Number, Share, and Growth of the Limited English Proficient (LEP) Population in United States 1990 to 2010
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- i. Table A-1. Years of School Completed by People 25 Years and Over, by Age and Sex: Selected Years 1940 to 2013
- ii. Table A-2. Percent of People 25 Years and Over Who Have Completed High School or College, by Race, Hispanic Origin and Sex: Selected Years 1940 to 2013
- iii. Table A-3. Mean Earnings of Workers 18 Years and Over, by Educational Attainment, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex: 1975 to 2012

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