

The Education and Self-Reported Health: A Legal Status Perspective*

Yiwan Ye

University of California, Davis

Roy Taggweg

University of California, Davis

Abstract

The implementation of President Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program in 2012 opened the doors for undocumented migrant youths to pursue higher education. With work permits in hand, the prospect of getting a Bachelor's Degree or higher emerged within the realm of possibility. However, for those with non-US Citizen legal status, the benefits provided by additional years of education remain unclear as few researchers have examined how the effects of educational attainment vary across legal status categories. In this study, we seek to test the assumption that there exists a positive, linear relationship between educational attainment and self-reported health, across different legal status categories – US Citizens, Legal Permanent Residents, Visa Holders, Refugees, and Undocumented Migrants. We hypothesize that some groups, such as Visa Holders and Legal Permanent Residents, receive a greater benefit across the outcome variables from additional years of schooling in comparison to undocumented migrants and refugees. To test this hypothesis, we analyze data from both the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and the American Community Survey (ACS). We utilize Combined-Survey Multiple Imputation (CSMI) to estimate the number of undocumented migrants within the sample.

*Paper prepared for presentation at the 2019 Population Association of America's annual meeting. Direct all correspondence to Yiwan Ye, Department of Sociology, UC Davis, One Shield Ave, Davis CA, 95616. Email: ywye@ucdavis.edu Second author is a Health Policy Research Scholar. *Health Policy Research Scholars* is a national leadership program supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to build equity by investing in scholars from populations traditionally underrepresented in graduate programs whose research, connections, and leadership will inform and influence policy toward a Culture of Health.

Is positive education effect on health salient across different legal status? Does specific legal status grant more advantages than the other type of immigration status? There are numerous empirical attempts on education effect on health across various demographic groups. Due to the political sensitivity and absence in legal status' data collection, the link between educational attainment and health outcomes in the legal status context is nonexistent. Using the Survey of Income and Program Participation data, we challenge this data limitation by comparing different imputation techniques in modeling respondents' legal status. We also examined how gender, race and ethnic background moderate the relationship between legal status and education effect. We will discuss the methodological implication and ethics of imputing missing legal status observations.

Hypothesis:

- Null hypothesis: education has positive effect on health, a. k. a. *education benefits*, across all legal status, citizenship status, and nativity.
 - a: Substitution hypothesis; b: Multiplication hypothesis
- H1a (Substitution hypothesis): the foreign born receives *larger* education benefits than the native born.
- H1b (Multiplication hypothesis): the foreign born receives *smaller* education benefits than the native born.
- H2a (Multiplication): the non-citizens receive *smaller* education benefits than the citizens.
- H2b (Substitution): the non-citizens receive *larger* education benefits than the citizens.
- ... substitution hypotheses are omitted for saving time
 - H2aI: Among immigrants, non-white migrants (e.g. Asians, Africans, Middle Easterners) receive *smaller* education benefits than white migrants (e.g. European whites, Australian whites, Afrikaans).
 - H2aII: Among immigrants, female migrants receive *smaller* education benefits than male migrants.
 - H2aIII: Among vulnerable legal status immigrants, Hispanics and Muslim migrants receive *smaller* education benefits than other migrants.

Method:

Main models:

- 1). Fixed effect regression model for education effect across legal status.
- 2). Mixed effect models for gender and ethnic background moderation effects.
- 3). Combined-Survey Multiple Imputation (CSMI) to estimate the number of undocumented migrants within the sample (missing cases).

Data: Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), a series of panel data.

Restriction: it should exclude all *non-immigrant* visa holders who have short term tourist, business, and student visas (B/F/J etc.), because they legally and hypothetically cannot have the “intention” to migrate. To be considered as immigrants, they need to hold immigrant visas (e.g. H1B visa holders, green card holders) or express *obvious* intention to *permanently* stay in the United States (e.g. refugee, DACA, other undocumented immigrants).