

Artifact Three

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The third artifact is my research proposal titled *The effect of Education on Crime Rates* for a research and design class and focused on the relationship between educational attainment and crime rates. It outlines a research design that examined how factors such as graduation rates, poverty levels and socioeconomic conditions influenced criminal behavior. I argue that increased access to education and high levels of educational achievement are associated with lower crime rates, and that education plays a key role in shaping long-term social and economic outcomes.

I see this paper as demonstrating my ability to put together and evaluate information and data used in policymaking. The focus of this paper is not just on education and how it relates (or predicts) crime but on how data can be used to support policy decisions. The research design includes identifying variables, collecting the relevant data and analyzing how these interact and result in outcomes. The paper tries to create a framework for evaluating real-world data and applying it to policy considerations, looking to show how data-driven analysis can be used in policy making process.

Through his research framework I analyzed how data can be used to inform policy decisions and evaluate the outcomes. The paper identifies key variables like education levels, poverty rates, and crime statistics and explains how they interact with the broader social and economic system. This was to show how it could be used by policymakers that can use data to understand trends and make informed decisions aimed at reducing crime through educational investment. By applying a structured evaluation of real-world data, using quantitative and qualitative information this information could be used for policy making.

While self-evaluating, I believe this paper demonstrates a strong understanding of how data is used within the policy making process. Its strengths include clear identification of variables and the attempt to build structured research that connects education to certain outcomes, in this case crime rates. To improve this I would work to expand the research by including more imperial data and refining the approach to make the analysis more precise. These improvements would strengthen the overall evaluation and better demonstrate the role of data in policymaking.

Education and Crime: Understanding the Effectiveness of Education on the Incidents of Crime

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Abstract

This research proposal works to draw and compare links with literacy and self-perceived literacy confidence that leads to dropping out of high school and becoming an incarcerated criminal. Studies have found direct links to crime prevention with primary and secondary education, as well as criminal reoccurrence. Studying if an individual believes they are at least equal to their peers matters as much as truly being equal to their peers in regard to dropping out of school or if efforts should be focused on taking those that want a second chance after they have failed and become incarcerated.

Education and Crime: Understanding the Effectiveness of Education on the Incidents of Crime

Introduction

Crime creates significant financial, social and human costs, for communities and governments. This issue is not just about investigating and arresting criminals but also working to prevent future crimes as much as possible. Public officials often debate whether the limited resources should be directed toward reactive criminal justice's responses like policing, prosecution, and incarceration, or toward preventative strategies designed to reduce criminal behavior before it occurs. Preventing crime costs substantially less than arresting prosecuting and sentencing criminals (Welsh, 2000). Recent research continues to show that individuals with higher levels of educational attainment are significantly less likely to be incarcerated, reinforcing education as a preventative policy investment (Davis, et al., 2013) The cost of incarceration is massive compared to the cost of crime prevention; however, it becomes difficult to know for sure if a crime is prevented. The best method to gauge is to compare statistics on areas that have developed crime prevention both before potential crime but also during criminal incarceration to prevent post incarceration criminal activity, also known as recidivism. Although there has been research on this Less research has focused on how self-perception and social identity influences these outcomes.. The most efficient and effective method is of preventing people from entering and/or reentering prison is completion of primary and secondary school as well as education and training while serving a criminal sentence. Education can provide individuals with skills, structure, opportunity, and a stronger sense of social belonging. (Lochner, 2004) Social identity theory is very clear during both time periods as well, as education and training that help define what a person sees themselves as, and their self-acceptance. Providing education and training

and using it to change how an inmate or potential criminal views themselves as is pivotal in converting their outlook on life.

Public protests and policy debates in recent years have renewed discussion over how governments should look and use public safety resources both efficiently and effectively. A prominent example was the “defund the police” movement, which argued that portions of police budgets should be redirected toward community-based services such as mental health programs, youth outreach, housing assistance, and education (Urban Institute, 2021). Supporters contended that many root causes of crime are social and economical in nature and preventive investments could reduce long-term criminal activity more effectively than enforcement alone. . Support of these community programs did help the community, however the cost proved to be too high. Austin TX, New York NY, Los Angeles, and others reduced the police budgets reallocating some or all the funds to community resources (McEvoy, 2020). These major cities later restored portions of police funding after issues with increased crime rates and lower response capability as declining public confidence in safety institutions. (Goodman, 2021) These developments suggest that while a community investment may provide meaningful benefits, successful crime reduction requires a balance rather than a single approach. Educational opportunity is still especially important to address long-term risk factors before criminal behavior becomes set.

Literature Review

Education stays one of the most available public policy tools to US citizens free of charge with the effect of improving long-term social outcomes. It is one of the only periods of time that a citizen must attend long term education. School systems are the benefit research that includes an easy breakdown of age groups, standardized testing, and localized geographical

locations. Knowledge of the money spent on each student, attendance, and testing records are easily available from the U.S census bureau and the US Educational Dept. Funding for schools primarily come from local and state budgets with the federal government augmenting lower economic areas, known as Title I schools. Each state also tracks many of these statistics, and states publish the anonymous data online. The data that is published is simple statistical research that does not draw conclusions, and in of itself can only really be used to track changes over time and find trends.

Criminal justice systems also track and publish data by both individual states and the federal government. National data has consistently shown that lower educational attainment is associated with higher unemployment, lower lifetime earnings, and greater contact with criminal justice system (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2021) Within these statistics is also the information of what resources go into what programs, and the outcome of these programs. Studies have been done on recidivism, what causes it and what works to prevent it. The overall issue is not just giving a person the tools and knowledge to stay out of prison, but the want that they are capable and deserve to live a life outside of crime.

Research has been done showing the more an individual makes the less inclination they have to commit crime (Anke Ramakers, 2016). Lochner and Moretti concluded that increased educational attainment significantly reduces crime, this is in part because education improves real economic opportunities. This was found while researching the characteristics of post release employment would reduce recidivism within the first 6 months of release. The study interviewed inmates before trial and 6 months after release. Seeking information on patterns of life before, during and after imprisonment with questions heavily focused on employment information. The research method was quantitative, taking non opinionated data and compiling it in ratios. This

allowed the information to be compared in a variety of ways compared to the topic. The research found that holding certain jobs reduced the chances of recidivism but also found that certain jobs increased the chances of recidivism. Skilled labor, managerial, and real-estate agents all showed reduced criminal reoccurrence. The study cited that the information was limited, including the time, including only up to six months post incarceration was tracked. Additionally, research was geographically found in a higher employment location, and not where employment can be a struggle to find.

Another study examined the question of how schools and teachers help prevent juvenile delinquency (Theimann, 2015). The thought process is that teachers do not just educate traditional understandings and concepts like reading, writing, and arithmetic but also lay the foundation for social and behavioral understanding. The classroom is an intense social environment that can help mold a person into a valuable and productive member of society. The study was conducted by taking annual surveys on students of 40 different schools over 4 years, resulting in 1,769 students aged 13-16 in grades 7-10. The research was quantitative in nature focusing on the relationship and trust they have with their teacher. Another quantitative survey broke down the opinion of crime by age group. These results were compared to student delinquency reports. The research found better teacher/student relationships led to better behavior about their opinion on crime and violence. Additionally, the worse the student/teacher relationship is the less attentive the student is however the study does not show that delinquency is a cause or the result of a bad teacher/student relationship. This study leans heavily on social identity theory, by having a low relationship factor with a teacher, typically results in negative social attitude and leads to delinquent behavior. With a positive teacher/student relationship the social learning theory presents itself as an opportunity for the student to replicate the positive

behavior. The study concludes that proactively working to have a positive relationship with the teacher can lower student misbehavior and absenteeism which in turn helps prevent starting delinquent behavior at an early age. The study does cite limitations particularly because the surveys spoke of teachers in general as well as understanding what are the causes of having a troubled relationship with a teacher.

Low reading levels, low attendance led to low graduation rates. The state of Maryland published in 2011 57.2% of prison populations were dropouts while 17.1% of the population graduated with a High School diploma (Maryland Correctional Enterprises, 2012). This research was conducted by a Maryland Dept of corrections task force working to find links between high school graduation and incarceration. The study compiles data from all Maryland schools, although it doesn't speak to the reason for dropping out, it does identify the results of high drop out rates and suggest programs to reduce the dropout rate specify to focus on third grade reading skills due to it's identification as a early warning factor. Additionally, Maryland sees the need for GED programs just as much and recommends adult programs in and out of prison to enable adults to get a high school diploma equivalent. This is simple quantitative data presented to decision makers. Although it does conclude that preventive and post incarceration education and training are key to reducing crime, the specific need for increased literacy rates among students and adults. Maryland has concluded that 12,255 inmates are without degrees, however only around 700 a year work to complete their GED belongs to a demographic that has 10% less recidivism. This in-turn saves the state of Maryland \$2.3 million a year.

Research Question

Understanding the relationship between education and crime is essential for effective policy and planning. Governments that run with limited financial resources must decide where educational investments will produce the greatest reduction in long term criminal activity. Cost-benefit studies have suggested that early educational intervention often generates long-term savings through reduced crime, lower welfare dependence, and increased tax revenue (Heckman, 1900–1902). Should policy framers prioritize early intervention through literacy development, school retention and graduation support for young citizens, or would it be more effective to place the greater emphasis on correctional education like GED completion and workforce training for incarcerated adults seeking reentry into society? The need to better understand the relationship between education and crime is paramount to answering where resources should be focused. Should the focus on crime prevention during early education or focus on those that have already crossed the threshold, are incarcerated where the focus would be on job training to prevent recidivism?

Identification and Operationalization of Variables

Literacy has been identified as a significant factor in crime prevention, with state-level findings suggesting strong connections between educational attainment and incarceration rates (Maryland Correctional Enterprises, 2012). Students should be measured in reading and comprehension, as well as their confidence in reading. Computer based testing, where a student will read a 1-3 grade proper sentence statements then continue to the next screen and answer a question without the ability to re-read the question will gauge comprehension. The number of these statement\questions answered correctly will be the first data metric. Incorrect answers will not be counted, only the number or correctly answered questions will be used.

Student confidence and self-perception are also important variables and should be built through structured interview conducted after academic assessment. . By understanding how they feel they assessed, their confidence and self-view can be better understood. A student's self-perception and relationship with authority figures, particularly teachers, may significantly influence motivation, behavior and academic engagement. Keeping it simple on a three-point scale (Barni, 2019).

The first question will help us understand how the student feels about their skill.

- 1) How difficult did you find each question to be? (1) Too easy, (2) Just right (3) Too difficult?

The next question will decide if they feel they are below, at or ahead of the other students.

- 2) How well do you feel you did compared to other students? (1) No well, (2) About the same (3) Not well?

The third question will help decide the authority figure's relationship.

- 3) How do you think your teacher will feel about your test result? (1) The teacher will be upset, (2) The teacher will not care (3) The teacher will approve

The final question will help find the authority figure's relationship.

- 4) Do you care what the teacher thinks about your test results? (1) I do not care, (3) I do care.

Lastly, statistics of the students for their attendance records should be taken and assigned to the test results as well as the interview results. (3) Less than 2% absentee record during the

school year (roughly 3 days) (2) More than 2% but less than 4% (roughly 3-6 days, (1) Greater than 4% (greater than 6 days).

Sampling Plan

Ideally the research can be conducted in a minimum of three location in the United States as ranked by Forbes (Morad, 2022), a school district in Mississippi, ranked 45th in education, Vermont ranked 5th, and South Dakota ranked 25th. These three schools stand for a range but not the extremes of rated public schools. Ideally 3rd, 6th, 9th and 12th grades will be surveyed. This span highlights arguably the first early indicators of low literacy rates, as well as the period of graduating to the next level of schooling, 6th being the completion of elementary school, 9th standing for the completion of middle school, and 12th representing the near completion of secondary school. Additionally, these same questions should be given to inmates prior to starting an educational program and after completion of an educational program. For this research, only students enrolling in a GED program should be used. Prisons within the same states, and within the same region where we are able should be used.

Data Collection

Information from the US Census Bureau to break down population statistics and demographics in the polled school locations should be used. Additionally, the budgets for both educational costs per child in each state as well as educational expenses budgeted per inmate enrolled into a training program should be used. These can be provided by the states themselves.

Analysis

Two groups will be compared in two separate groups, School age students and inmates.

Grade	Literacy Comprehension	Survey	Attendance	Score
Pre-EDU				
Post- EDU				
Grade	Literacy Comprehension	Survey	Attendance	Score
3 rd				
6 th				
9 th				

12

Comparing the survey score to the literacy comprehension survey will show the comprehension vs the perceived comprehension as well as the perceived acceptance. Attendance should be tracked and used simply because if a student does not attend class, they cannot be expected to be learning or building relationships.

Limitations

This study does not investigate outside factors that have been shown to affect education including regional differences. An example would be New Mexico and Arizona struggle with Spanish speaking students that by their nature may have extreme English literacy issues. This includes the prison populations and the language barriers some may face. Economic differences also have a great effect on the issues as the cost and focus of education programs during primary and secondary education, as well as prison programs vary from state to state.

Conclusion

Literacy rates strongly influence high school graduation outcomes and often serve as an early indicator of future academic success (Hernandez, 2011). By gauging literacy rates and their improvements (or lack of) over different grade levels, their confidence and feeling of their reading skill, and their perceived belief of how they compare to others. This Study looks to ID where educational efforts should have been concentrated to improve both literacy levels and ineffectual self-perception. It also examines whether similar strategies should be applied to adult education programs to strengthen rehabilitation efforts and offer meaningful second-chance opportunities. Evidence from correctional education programs has also found measurable reductions in recidivism, suggesting that educational access can remain effective at multiple stages of life (Davis, et al., 2013).

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Artificial intelligence (ChatGPT, OpenAI GPT-5.3) was used in a limited support role for, source discovery assistance, proofreading, and organizational feedback.