


From: Journal of Economics, Race, and Policy lanie.mabanan@springernature.com 
Subject: Journal of Economics, Race, and Policy: Decision on your manuscript
Date: December 13, 2024 at 12:27 PM
To: hhadah@tulane.edu

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Ref: Submission ID 33481294-df2a-4cce-80ee-c20f2b9975ac

Decision: major revision

Dear Dr Hadah,

Your manuscript, "The Impact of Hispanic Last Names on Educational and Labor Market Outcomes", has now been assessed.

Hussain,

Two of the 3 reviewers recommended rejecting the paper. They do have good reasons but I disagree that the work can't be saved. One wrote to me privately about the writing and organization saying "Overall, the paper is somewhat disorganized and difficult to follow mostly because there is a lot of repetition throughout and the same ideas and concepts are repeated at various points throughout the paper. For example, results are presented twice, and the empirical approach is discussed in three separate sections that repeat much of the same. Right now, the main contribution seems to be that they have a cleaner identification strategy, but I believe there is more they can do to motivate why this paper is an important contribution above and beyond the empirical approach". However, the other reviewer is not convinced even about your identification and wrote privately "...recommendation is to reject it. The primary reason is that, despite the author clearly stating the necessary identification assumption, the manuscript demonstrates that this assumption does not hold. Therefore, I am not convinced that the estimates the author claims as evidence of discrimination are valid". Your work is cut out for you but not impossible. Once you turn in a revision, I'll send it back to the reviewer who suggested revision and a new unbiased fourth reviewer for comment. I think all of these points have credibility but some will take longer than others to address. I'd suggest that you return the revision by April 14, 2025.

We invite you to revise your paper, carefully addressing the comments from the reviewers and the editor. Please ensure the results are accurately reported, any overstated conclusions are rewritten and the limitations of the work fully explained. When your revision is ready, please submit the updated manuscript and a point-by-point response. This will help us move to a swift decision.

We recommend submitting all revisions within 120 days of the corresponding author receiving a revision request email.

If you need more time, please contact us and include your submission ID.

Kind regards,

Gary Hoover
Editor
Journal of Economics, Race, and Policy

INSTRUCTIONS

TO SUBMIT YOUR REVISION

The original submitting author, Hussain Hadah, must upload a point-by-point response to reviewer comments as a PDF file. This must include a description of any additional experiments that were carried out and a detailed rebuttal of any criticisms or requested revisions that you disagreed with.

Any files (including the manuscript) that have changed based on reviewer comments will also need to be uploaded again. Do not include tracked changes in your manuscript file. If you need to upload a marked-up version of the revised manuscript with the changes highlighted, you can upload it on the related file section.

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WHEN DO YOU NEED TO SUBMIT YOUR REVISION BY?

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Reviewer Comments:

Reviewer 1

Please see attached.

Attachments:

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Reviewer 2

Review: The Impact of Hispanic Last Names on Educational and Labor Market Outcomes

Summary

This paper estimates the effect of having a likely Spanish last name on education and labor market outcomes. It compares the outcomes of children with a White Hispanic father and White non Hispanic mother to those with a White Hispanic mother and White non Hispanic mother. Given that customarily children have their father's last name, children whose father was born in a Spanish speaking country are more likely to have a Spanish last name. Overall, the paper finds small differences in years of education and employment with somewhat larger differences in educational attainment. There is some heterogeneity by gender.

I enjoyed reading this paper and I hope that my comments are useful.

Main comments

The paper needs to be more clearly motivated in the introduction. There are a lot of reasons why studying discrimination by race and ethnicity is important and the paper would benefit from clearly articulating this, including discussing the implications of this discrimination. You mention economic mobility and I think there is more you can say about this. I also think clearly stating the contributions of the paper earlier on would be important.

I would also like to see a clearer theory and review of the literature on the topic. For example, why should we expect that discrimination will affect educational attainment? Hispanics are one of the fastest growing groups entering college, but the extent to which they complete an associate or BA degree may reflect discrimination that happens when students are in school that ultimately translates into differences in attainment. Why might we expect differences in employment and years of education?

Why might we expect differences by gender?

Occupational segregation can also reflect discrimination in the labor market with important implications for economic mobility and other outcomes, and it would be important to mention this in the literature review.

In general, the review of the literature needs to provide more details about the different studies and how your paper contributes to that literature above and beyond using a cleaner comparison.

There are places throughout the paper where additional references are needed. For example, when you state in the introduction on page 3 that discrimination can lead to lower wages, reduced opportunities, and hinder assimilation this statement needs references.

Can you explain why you discuss assimilation and in what ways this is connected to your theory given that you are focusing on U.S. born children? If this matters because you are focusing on U.S. born Hispanic children with one foreign-born parent, then you need to clearly state this.

You also need to state clearly and early in the paper that your study focuses on children with a foreign-born parent. Children with U.S. born Hispanic parents may be different than those with foreign-born parents and you could more explicitly discuss this in the paper.

Also given the differences in the characteristics of immigrants from different Spanish-speaking countries living in the U.S. (differences in socioeconomic status, education, etc.), you probably want to mention that your study is not capturing this. Further, to the extent that men and women migrate from different countries and have different pre- and post-migration characteristics then this might affect your results.

One possible way to address this is to conduct sensitivity analyses limited to Children whose parents were likely born in Mexico or who respond themselves that they are Mexican. Given that immigrants from Mexico are the largest immigrant group from a Spanish speaking country in the U.S., this may offer an even cleaner comparison. There could still be differences in the characteristics of Mexican mothers and fathers, but you could potentially

check this in the data.

There are several sections that are repeated in the paper and I would suggest you streamline the text. For example, you review results twice, but this isn't necessary.

Similarly, I think you can more systematically organize the section describing your empirical strategy and clearly explaining your identification strategy, the concerns that it helps you overcome, your assumptions, and how you are testing whether these assumptions likely hold. Currently this is explained in multiple sections throughout the paper.

Can you provide an example that illustrates how you link individuals in the CPS to the synthetic parents?

I would like more details about the sample and the decisions you make. For example, you identify your sample as U.S. born children who identify as White in the CPS but some of these may also identify as Hispanic no? Do you restrict your sample to respondents who identify as White Hispanic or not? How many individuals in your sample identify as White non-Hispanic even if they have a parent born in a Spanish speaking country and how many do not? If someone has a Hispanic parent but do not identify as Hispanic those may be different than people with a Hispanic parent who identify as Hispanic.

If there are people who identify as White non Hispanic in your sample even though they have a parent born in a Spanish speaking country, can you do a sensitivity analysis removing them?

For example, on page 18 you say "I also find a significant earnings gap between those that identify as Hispanic." Can you explain this statement? Is this related to the point I made above?

You report results for men and women and, I am sorry if I missed it, but I would like to see this motivated in the paper as there are many reasons for doing the analyses separately. See my earlier point on the lit review/theory.

It would also be important to discuss effect sizes. Some of the findings seem to be small and you should discuss whether they are economically meaningful. Further, there should be more discussion about what your findings mean to understand discrimination for Hispanics and how it plays out, including by gender and in what ways they fall short in answering this question.

How are you measuring the different outcomes? I don't believe you discuss in the paper. This may be obvious, but I think it is still important to mention for clarity.

When you control for education in models that examine earnings, the effect becomes statistically insignificant, what happens if you include industry or occupation fixed effects? Can you do that? Then you'd be comparing people within the same industry or occupation.

The conclusion repeats much of what was said in the body of the paper, and I would like to see more discussion about the implications of your findings to understand disparities in education and labor outcomes between people with different ethnic background, and to what extent you can conclude these differences can be attributed to discrimination. It would also be important to compare your results with other literature on this topic.

Minor comments

On page 14, this sentence seems to be incomplete: "Consequently, comparing WH and HW children to each other to analyze discrimination against Hispanics in the labor market."

Throughout the paper you refer to people with a parent born in a Spanish speaking country as "children who have a Spanish-sounding last name" I would encourage you to soften this language and say "who likely have" a Spanish sounding last name. First, you do not know if a person actually does have the last name of their father. Second, while it is true that Spanish sounding last names are very common in Spanish-speaking Latin American countries and among Latinos in the U.S., this may not be true across the board and many people born in Spanish speaking countries, who are Spanish speakers and Hispanic, may not have a traditionally sounding Spanish last name.

Reviewer 3

Review of 08-JERP: "The Impact of Hispanic Last Names on Educational and Labor Market Outcomes"

The manuscript explores the impact of having a Hispanic-sounding surname on educational and labor market outcomes. It focuses on children from inter-ethnic marriages with one White (W) and one Hispanic (H) parent, distinguishing between those with Hispanic (HW) and White (WH) surnames. Findings indicate that individuals with Hispanic last names face significant disadvantages: they achieve 0.2 fewer years of education, are 1 percentage point more likely to be unemployed, and earn 5 percentage points less than those with White last names.

Major comment:

As the author states on page 4, the key identifying assumption is that people born to HW parents are similar to their WH peers. Only when this assumption is fulfilled can the author attribute the estimated coefficients to evidence of discrimination. However, Table 4 clearly shows that the differences between HW and WH synthetic parents' characteristics, such as the father's/mother's education and total family income, are all significantly different. More specifically, HW families exhibit lower levels of education and income compared to their WH counterparts. Based on this, it is not clear whether the estimated coefficients are indeed evidence of discrimination or they merely reflect the fact that HW children grew up in an environment with less resources/educated parents.

The manuscript heavily adopts the methodology of Rubinstein and Brenner (2014), which examines the impacts of having a Sephardic-sounding surname on wages by comparing the Israeli-Jewish men born to Sephardic fathers and Ashkenazi mothers (SA) with those born to Ashkenazi fathers and Sephardic mothers (AS). They too find that the AS and SA families have statistically different educational and labor market outcomes. However, in their case, despite the fact that Sephardic Israelis face tougher labor market conditions, SA parents exhibit better education and labor market outcomes than AS parents. Therefore, any evidence indicating that SA offspring have worse labor market outcomes provides convincing (and potentially a lower bound) evidence of discrimination.

