



Is more time in school worth it?

Effects of two-shift schooling on test performance from a longitudinal study in Colombia

To improve access to the education system, some countries have introduced partial school days. Those are supposed to reduce costs by allowing two shifts of students to benefit from the same infrastructure and the same teachers, but they reduce the total time children spend in school and can affect various learning outcomes.

So... What are the effects of two-shift schooling on standardized test performance?

Are they the same for all children?
If not, what do these differences tell us about the role of schools as vehicles for social equity?

Data and Method

- Panel data from student's performance in official test scores (Saber 9 2017, and Saber 11 2019).
- Data from the 'synthetic index of education quality' (ISCE).
- Fixed effects model, where results are driven by the students who changed from partial to full-day schooling in the observed period.

Results



Full day schooling has larger effects for rural and public schools, compared to urban and private ones. It also makes a bigger difference in schools with lower average socioeconomic status, and for individual students from less advantaged backgrounds.



The relationship between a school's quality and its ability to transform instruction time into good grades is not linear. Additional time in school makes the most difference at both ends of the quality spectrum and dips for medium quality schools.



Lengthening the school day has a considerably larger impact on mathematics test scores, compared to language scores. This difference holds across all subgroups of students.

Conclusions

Schools make the most difference where other resources are less available. For underfunded public schools, underserved rural areas, or underprivileged children, schools are an essential part of the development of kids who are otherwise dealt a rough hand. **Therefore, offering every child a full day in school is an important step towards turning the education system into a tool for closing some social gaps in Colombia.**

