

SOC 506: Final Research Report

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Introduction

Researchers are often interested how opinion on canonically controversial social issues like sexual education in public schools is associated with different demographic characteristics. In this analysis, I take this question and explore how opinions and acceptance about sex education vary across the income distribution. Particularly central to this analysis is an understanding of how high income individuals favor or do not favor different policies regarding better health education.

First, I present a description of the data and a discussion of the analytic strategy. Then I step through the methods, present some visual and descriptive results. In this analysis I estimate a logistic regression and a multinomial regression. The first logistic regression looks at how income and associated covariates predict support or opposition to sex education in school. I estimate a variety of formulations and I step through analysis and model critique.

Finally, I offer some conclusions and insights about the relationship between race, income, and attitudes about sex education. This document is accompanied by a detailed repository that is also on github <https://github.com/theloniousgoerz>, which provides all of the supplemental code and documentation needed to generate this report and the analysis.

Background and data

Effective sex education in public schools has been shown to be important from a health, social and community wellbeing (Fentahun et al. 2012; Bearman, Moody, and Stovel 2004). Bearman, Moody, and Stovel (2004) finds that in closed social networks at schools, taking a comprehensive sexual education approach is important for reducing disease, rather than focusing on high risk actors. In addition to this, many health classes attempt to provide this but there is often major pushback from religious groups and other organizations that seeks to restrict public sex education in schools.

With this motivation, I focus this analysis on looking at the covariates and potential predictors of support or lackthereof related to sex education. In this analysis, I use the General Social Survey (GSS), the longest running nationally representative opinion poll, to understand how different economic, racial, and place based attributes correlated with supporting sex education. While the GSS cannot be compared over time like a normal panel survey can, it can represent aggregate opinions and provides rich data to do so.

I employ the GSSR package to look at the 2018 sample of respondents, and use the question “sexeduc” to test this hypothesis. In the table below, I summarize the variables that I pull from. I exclude income and respondent income and provide those in the appendix as they have many categories.

Analysis

In this section I conduct the analysis using logistic regression. After presenting full and restricted models of the data, I summarize the results and I present some implications. After that, I present a description of the model validation and testing for prediction after.

Model validation

Discussion and conclusion

Characteristic	N = 789
Race	
black	143 (18%)
other	109 (14%)
white	537 (68%)
sex	
female	432 (55%)
male	357 (45%)
View on Sex Education	
favor	740 (94%)
oppose	49 (6.2%)
Hispanic	
Hispanic	140 (18%)
Not Hispanic	649 (82%)
region	
E N Central	132 (17%)
E S Central	47 (6.0%)
Mid Atlantic	88 (11%)
Mountain	65 (8.2%)
New England	39 (4.9%)
Pacific	101 (13%)
S Atlantic	176 (22%)
W N Central	52 (6.6%)
W S Central	89 (11%)
Degree	
Bachelor	168 (21%)
Graduate	83 (11%)
HS	392 (50%)
JR college	74 (9.4%)
Less than HS	72 (9.1%)
Age	44 (33, 56)

¹ Statistics presented: n (%); Median (IQR)

Code appendix

Bearman, Peter S, James Moody, and Katherine Stovel. 2004. "Chains of Affection: The Structure of Adolescent Romantic and Sexual Networks." *American Journal of Sociology* 110 (1). The University of Chicago Press: 44–91.

Fentahun, Netsanet, Tsion Assefa, Fessahaye Alemseged, and Fentie Ambaw. 2012. "Parents' Perception, Students' and Teachers' Attitude Towards School Sex Education." *Ethiopian Journal of Health Sciences* 22 (2).