

SELECTING FOREIGN STUDENTS--ARE GPA AND RATINGS INTERCHANGEABLE AS CRITERION VARIABLES?

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SUMMARY

This study investigates the relationship between certain background variables often used to select foreign students for study in the U. S. and two criterion variables--GPA and ratings of on-the-job success upon returning to their home country. It represents an effort to determine whether GPA is a reasonable substitute for ratings of on-the-job as a criterion variable. The relationship between six background variables and the two criterion variables was studied in a group of Honduran educators who studied in Florida during 1969-1970. The study indicated that some variables which were good predictors of GPA were poor predictors of ratings of on-the-job success, and that most variables were more highly correlated with GPA than with ratings.

PROBLEM

In 1969 there were more than 120,000 foreign students studying at United States universities (Walton, 1971). It appears that there is a trend toward an ever-increasing number of foreign students in the U. S., especially from the underdeveloped countries (Education and World Affairs, 1966).

Given the large number of foreign students in the U. S. and the trend toward even larger numbers, it is surprising to find a great paucity of data-based policy in the area of foreign student admissions. "Strange as it may seem, the plain fact is that most of our institutions of higher learning do not have a clear rationale for the admission and training of graduate foreign students." (Harari, 1970, p. 61). Education and World Affairs (1966) reports that less than 25 per cent of the foreign students admitted to American universities receive counseling or are subjected to any testing.

One of the reasons for the lack of uniform admissions policies may be the absence of a clear definition of the university's role in preparing foreign students for life in their home countries. The majority of the research done on foreign students in the U. S. has concentrated on the students' attitudes toward the U. S. culture (Lysgaard, 1955; Coelho, 1958; Pool, 1965; Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1963) and not the effectiveness of their preparation.

Percent Enrolled in School / United States - 1972

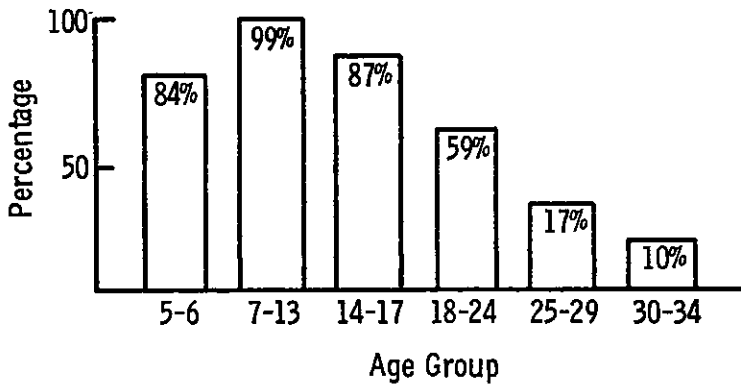


FIGURE 2. Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1973.

Theoretically, secondary teachers hold a bachelor's degree plus two years of training in a Teacher Training Institute. Primary teachers are secondary school graduates with two years of teacher training. In fact, 18% of the primary teachers, 21% of middle teachers and 25% of the secondary teachers are reported by Dutt (1973) to be untrained.

Since Independence, the number of universities has risen rapidly in India. From 1946 to 1960, a total of 29 universities were established; and during the 1960's alone, 39 more were established. As of 1969, there were 93, well distributed over the nation. Affiliated with the universities are approximately 3,000 colleges, 16% of which have fewer than 100 students and 60% less than 500. These small colleges are of concern because of the inadequacy of training of their faculties (Haggerty, 1969).

The rapid rise in number of colleges was accompanied by a rapid rise in enrollment. Lack of educational planning has produced too many graduates in some areas with an inadequate number of graduates in other areas. It was reported that at the end of 1971 about 75,000 engineers had been registered as jobless and that nearly 20,000 more had gone abroad either to work or to study (Hartley, 1972). At the same time, there is a great need in the medical profession, especially for workers who will go into the villages.

To achieve a convergence of trained manpower and labor demand, Dr. Sunitee Dutt and Dr. L. S. Chandrakant called for cooperation between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor to conduct manpower surveys, to establish appropriate programs and to guide youth into vocational choice in areas of need. A change in the curriculum at the secondary level to provide for vocational training will require change in attitudes of parents and youth, most of whom see a college education as desirable for status reasons.

To summarize, current problems in Indian education, as reported by Indian educators are, particularly

- (1) The tremendous number of students and the rapid growth in numbers which is expected in 15 years to more than double the current enrollment and reach the 170 million mark (Chandrakant, 1973).
- (2) Lack of facilities. Even in Delhi some classes meet in tents for lack of buildings.
- (3) Shortage of books and supplies.
- (4) Curriculum left from days of British rule, a curriculum which never was and surely never will be relevant to a non-Western society.
- (5) A low level of training for teachers and a great shortage of teachers for the villages, where 80% of the people live.
- (6) Need for assessment of manpower needs and adjustment of training programs to provide reasonable numbers of graduates to meet the needs.
- (7) Need for vocational counselors to provide youth with vocational information and assistance in making wise vocational choices.
- (8) Perhaps the greatest problem of all - financial resources. The current expenditure is next only to national defense and expanding at the rate of over 10% each year. Considering India's limited resources, it is apparent that the kind of extrapolation quoted by R. Louis Bright (1973) for educational expenditures in the United States would find India, too, with overwhelming financial costs - greater than 100% of the GNP.

One observer's summary was that India has too many people, too many cows, too many gods and too many problems - with too few apparent solutions.

The desire for social and economic change is evident in this developing country in the unrest among students, parents, educators and political leaders. Change does not come rapidly to a country steeped in religious and social traditions dating back 5,000 years. These same influences have been sustaining factors in India's survival as a society through the thousands of years of invasions, occupations, and the world of change outside. India's contemporary leaders recognize that education is necessary for the accomplishment of the goals they now hope to achieve.

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