Introduction

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The Canadian government’s treatment of indigenous people is a shameful piece of the country’s short history. The government’s attempt at assimilation through the use of residential schools traumatized many generations of indigenous children, and its effects can still be seen today, over 25 years since the closure of the last school. Recent discoveries of over 1000 unmarked graves at these schools paint a picture of the horror that traumatized many generations of indigenous people is a shameful piece of the Canadian government’s treatment of indigenous people. The study of the indigenous schooling system at these schools could explore the implications of this. With these data, there are many directions that one could take in further research. For example, one could examine how a shifting of funding to the government affected how students were connected to their culture. I believe that a shifting of funding to the government, and the subsequent decrease of involvement from the band, would have created a major shift in how students were connected to their culture. One could also create a variable for the school type, whether it was a boarding, day, or industrial school, and use that data to analyze some of the previous questions.

Methodology

In order to regress the data for further analysis, I had to design a program in Stata that would merge together the tables from the same year, if applicable, and then append these to the tables from previous years and in the years that followed. In the end, after I had cleaned out blank and unnecessary entries, I had one large data set with over 14,000 entries that allowed me to observe trends in data over time.

I then had to decide what variables would be of interest. One step I took was creating a variable called att_ratio which showcased the ratio of attending students to students on the registry by dividing the former variable by the latter. I considered this to be one of the variables of interest. In addition, I considered the variable depicting the annual salary of teachers, which I labeled sal_annum. Lastly, I created two variables describing the type of funding the schools received. The first, fnd_pd_num, would be marked as 1 if the school was funded through the government, 0 if the school was funded by the church, and 0.5 if it was a mix of the two. The second of these variables, fnd_pd_chr, would be listed as 1 if the school was funded partially or in full by a church, a Christian society, or a missionary group, and 0 otherwise. I regressed all of these variables against each other, as well as the year variable to observe trends over time.

Results

Over time, various trends arose in the data. The most notable of these being a shift in the type of funding. The schools in later years are more often funded by the government and less often by the band or the church. In addition, the attendance ratio of students increases over time, as well as teacher salary.

Effect of Type of Funding

Funding from the government rather than a church or school was observed to increase teacher salary and the attendance ratio over time. Church funding was observed to decrease both. This, when coupled with the data depicting funding shift, could explain the increase in teacher salary and attendance over time.

Effect of Teacher Salary

An increase in teacher salary has the highest effect on the attendance ratio than any other variable, demonstrated by a beta coefficient of 0.4132153. The figure below shows the trend. Future research could explore the implications of this.

Conclusion and Future Research

Upon regressing the various variables against each other, I am left with a clear picture of how they are related to one another, and what that meant for the situation on the ground regarding these schools. Consistent with previous research is the trend of funding shifting away from the band and church, and more towards the government. What I can add to this is evidence that the shifting of funding to the government increased teacher salaries and increased the rate to which students attended. I believe this conclusion is logical as the government would have had the resources to increase funding where they thought was necessary, and to enforce attendance to a higher degree.

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