Volume 15, Number 2 ISSN 2150-5063

Allied Academies International Conference

Las Vegas, Nevada
October 10-13, 2012

Academy of Economics and Economic Education

PROCEEDINGS

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ACCESSIBILITY OR ACCOUNTABILITY? THE RHETORIC AND REALITY OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

David R. Aske, University of Northern Colorado
Laura S. Connolly, University of Northern Colorado
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ABSTRACT

Can school choice and school accountability truly leave no child behind? Politically and socially popular beliefs in the power of the free market have led to a movement towards accountability and quality assurance that relies on the powers of competition. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) promotes the idea that competition between schools will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the education system. At the same time, the rhetoric of NCLB maintains the progressive message of the "Common School" era. Specifically, the forms of school choice and school accountability are at odds with the concept of universal provision of education outlined in the verbiage and title of NCLB. This article employs a model of an education production function to explore the dichotomy existing between the rhetorical intent and practical implications of the NCLB. The analysis centers on the classic efficiency/equity trade-off to show that NCLB is leading to an educational environment attempting to reach two conflicting and incompatible goals. Federal, state, and local policymakers must confront this incompatibility in order to design a policy that reflects the values most preferred by society.

The cultural faith in the power of free market competition has led to a movement towards accountability and quality assurance in the provisioning of education. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) promotes the idea that competition between schools will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the education system. At the same time, the rhetoric of NCLB maintains the progressive message of the "Common School" era. The competitive aspects of school choice and school accountability are at odds with the concept of universal provisioning of education outlined in the verbiage and title of NCLB.

This article employs economic theory to explore the dichotomy existing between the rhetorical intent and practical implications of the NCLB. The analysis centers on the classic efficiency/equity trade-off and shows that NCLB creates an educational environment deadlocked in a battle with itself over how to reach two conflicting and incompatible goals.

AMERICAN CULTURAL VALUES OF EDUCATION

The idea that all children in the United States have the right to a publicly supported education regardless of race, social class or religious beliefs is an American value. Not only access to a public education, but the expectations of a common educational experience, is part of the American culture. This common school idea is based on the view that education should be an equitable, assimilative, and inclusive institution designed to prepare students to be future productive citizens (Meyer, 2006).

The development of the common school ideal has its roots in the nineteenth century rural, one room school house (Pulliam and Van Patten, 1999). These schools were funded by local property taxes, free to all (white) children, and governed by the local communities with little state regulation. Schools and the education students received were seen as products representing the community. Today public schools are still financed through local property taxes (although states, and to a lesser extent the federal government, do provide funding), are still open to all (all) students and governed by local school boards. And, not unlike the nineteenth century school, today's public school is seen as a representation of the community. Arguably, the public school is more locally entrenched and community based than any other economic, social, or political institution.

While historians date the end of the common school era in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century, the common school ideal remains. The rhetoric of twentieth century education policy, through Supreme Court decisions and federal legislation, reiterates the importance of attempting to achieve social equity through public education. The history of American education is rife with changes; changes in the role of the Federal government, in curriculum, in funding, in assessment, just to name a few. However, the common theme, at least in the rhetoric, is that public education in America provides all children with a "level playing field".

ECONOMIC NATURE OF EDUCATION

Economists have long discussed the dichotomous nature of the public and private sectors and therefore the realms in which each should engage. Further, there has been much discussion regarding where the line separating the two realms should be drawn. It is the spirit of those discussions that leads the following debate regarding the nature of public education as a good.

In pure economic terms, private goods are those that the private or for-profit sector of the economy willingly produces since that production offers opportunity to earn profit. These goods exhibit two defining traits within their nature: rivalry and excludability. Rivalry arises when the consumption of the good by one patron decreases the remaining supply of that good for other patrons. Excludability arises when a patron is prevented from receiving benefits from the good if they have not paid for the privilege. Within the context of these defining traits, education is a private good: it is rival (one additional student within the classroom will decrease the amount of personal attention received by other students in that same classroom) and excludable (if you have not paid the school's tuition, you may not attend). In the context of this simple definition, the provision of education should lie in the realm of the private sector. However, it is often argued that education generates positive externalities, thereby justifying public involvement in correcting the market failure. Much of the historical intent of the "common school" and subsequent judicial and legislative actions regarding the importance of education to the proper functioning of society reflect the externalities resulting from education.

In addition to the externality issue that leads to public sector intervention, there also arise issues related to the "proper" distribution of educational opportunities. As discussed in the previous section, education, to Americans, has not been a commodity that is available only to those with the means and the will to pursue it. Public education is funded primarily through the taxation of real property; and property ownership is highly correlated with higher levels of wealth. Providing educational opportunities to children of non-property owner families basically involves a redistribution of income.

In his seminal work, *Equality and Efficiency: The Big Tradeoff*, economist Arthur Okun describes inefficiencies associated with redistributive activities in terms of a "leaky bucket", wherein he states that when transferring income from wealthy individuals to poorer individuals, a portion of the income is lost in the process. The reasons for the leaky bucket as identified by Okun, include administrative costs associated with the redistribution and behavioral changes induced by the redistribution. These behavioral changes impact work effort; savings and investment decisions; and attitudes and motivations toward acquiring human capital (Okun, 1975). The value that society places on a more equitable distribution is illustrated by their willingness to forgo some level of efficiency to achieve it.

DISCUSSION

Much of the controversy within the current education debates have to do with the level of the contents of Okun's bucket and more specifically, how to measure the flow rates that affect the bucket's level. That is, how much is gained by investing in less-advantaged children compared to the loss resulting from redistribution? Explicit costs associated with education are easy to track but the implicit external benefits that accrue to society are much harder to assess. Blank (2002, p. 464) states, "when all children are in mandatory public schooling it is hard to measure the effects relative to a world with no public schooling, to determine the long-term returns on public school dollars."

The No Child Left Behind Act attempts to achieve both equity and efficiency but we have shown it cannot do both. The desire of the policymakers who developed NCLB to capture both American ideals is admirable but it is important for stakeholders (e.g., policymakers, education officials, and parents) to confront this dilemma honestly, so that an appropriate balance can be struck. This balance can only be found by conscientiously acknowledging the trade-off and by understanding both the short-run and long-run consequences that result.

UNDERWATER MORTGAGES: WHY HOMEOWNERS MAY CONTINUE TO PAY THE DEBT

Thomas W. Secrest, Coastal Carolina University

ABSTRACT

This paper introduces some realistic interpretations that may help to explain why timely payments continue to be made by a subset of the estimated 12-14 million people that have underwater mortgages. Initial secondary data and evidence is provided by the National Housing Survey conducted monthly and compiled quarterly by Fannie Mae. The focus is on the attitudes and beliefs of underwater mortgage holders and how they may value the real property rights that are a central part of homeownership. It is suggested that this subset of homeowners value these intangible rights to such an extent that they are willing to continue making payments. Further, these rights are valued because many basic conscious and unconscious needs are met through having access to, and ownership of, consistent reliable shelter.

INTRODUCTION

The paper argues that, when other considerations are taken into account, underwater homeowners may have other-than-financial reasons to continue making payments. It begins with a discussion of the underwater mortgages in the U.S. followed by a summary of the National Housing Survey for the first quarter 2012 with specific attention to attitudes and beliefs of underwater homeowners. Then the theoretical underpinnings for motivation and need satisfaction first described by A.H. Maslow (1943) are outlined. It is suggested that need satisfaction consciously or unconsciously motivates people to secure shelter in the form of a home and the real property rights that are part of homeownership. Finally, it is argued that the owner of real property rights may place such a premium on the value of the rights that they are justified in making on-time and in-full payments on an underwater mortgage.

UNDERWATER MORTGAGES IN THE U.S.

According to Bernanke (2012), "It is estimated that indeed, about 12 million homeowners – more than 1 out of 5 with a mortgage – are underwater, meaning they owe more on their mortgages than their homes are worth." Approximately 31.4 percent of homeowners in the U.S. are currently underwater in their mortgage and the typical amount that the debt exceeds the property value is $75,644 (Zillow, 2012). The cumulative value of underwater debt is estimated to be $1.2 trillion more than the homes are worth (Humphries, 2012). The cause of this nationwide negative equity phenomenon is well documented to be (1) underestimation of borrower credit risk when underwriting questionable exotic loans, (2) lending standards that allowed individuals to borrow excessively against equity in their homes, and (3) a collapse in real estate prices during the recent financial crisis.

A myriad of assistance programs have been implemented by both the public and private sector to assist homeowners cope with the loss in property value. These programs have primarily focused on homeowners whose mortgage payments are delinquent or who may be facing foreclosure (e.g. Johnson, 2011). Very few methods of assistance are available to underwater homeowners whose mortgage is current. One solution for these homeowners is to purposefully stop making further payments. Known as a "strategic default," it is performed by persons who have the financial resources to continue making payments, but choose to stop. However, 59 percent of all homeowners surveyed would not choose this strategic default option if they were underwater on their mortgage by 40 percent (Reifflin, 2012). Indeed, a housing research company survey recently found that 90 percent of underwater homeowners continue to make payments on their mortgage debt (Zillow, 2012).

RECENT SURVEY EVIDENCE FROM U.S. HOMEOWNERS

The most recent Quarterly National Housing Survey sponsored by FannieMae is the first quarter 2012, which indicated that 30 percent of respondents rent, 5 percent are boarders, and 65 percent own their primary residence. Of those that own, 41 percent own outright and 59 percent have a mortgage on the property. Twenty-five percent of mortgaged property was reported to be underwater, while 59 percent were above water. The remaining 16 percent believed the debt and the properties' value were even.

Exhibit 1 contains the attitudinal questions from the National Housing Survey, along with the percentage of respondents that believe owning rather than renting their primary residence is the way to achieve the stated goal or objective. Of note is that these objectives are not financial or economic in nature.

Exhibit 1: Achieving Goals by Owning versus Renting: National Housing Survey Results
Percentage that selected owning as opposed to renting as the way to achieve stated objective

Objective	General Population	Those with mortgages	Above water	Under water
Have control over what you do with your living space	93	98	98	97
Have a sense of privacy and security	90	96	96	94
Have a good place for your family or to raise children	88	90	90	91
Live in a place where you and your family feel safe	83	89	90	90
Feel engaged in your community	80	88	88	89
Live in a nicer home	82	86	88	82
Live in your preferred school district	69	77	78	75
Live in a convenient location	62	66	66	67
Have flexibility in future decisions	61	60	59	60
Have less stress	50	48	48	48
More likely to buy rather than rent at some point in the future	58	59	50	79

Interestingly, homeowners with underwater mortgages are substantially more likely to purchase another home sometime in the future versus those with above water mortgages. Regardless of mortgage status, control of the property, happiness and safety of the family, school district and location, and having flexibility in the future are all perceived to be better obtained by owning a primary residence rather than renting, but at a cost of increased stress.

MOTIVATION TO OBTAIN OWNERSHIP OF A SECURE SHELTER

A well-known theory of human motivation was proposed A.H. Maslow in 1943. The theory assumes that human needs lead to motivation which results in behavior to satisfy the unfulfilled need. He proposes that human needs are arranged in a purposeful order ranging from basic physiological needs to highest-level self-actualization needs. Once a need arises, it may eventually become so intense that it demands satisfaction (motivated behavior to satisfy the need) so that the person is free to address additional higher-level needs. Exhibit 2 outlines Maslow's need hierarchy.

Exhibit 2: A. H. Maslow's Need Hierarchy

NEED LEVEL	EXAMPLE / MOTIVATOR
Physiological	Breathing (Air), Food, Water, Sex, Sleep, Homeostasis (Warmth), Shelter, Excretion
Safety and Security	OF: Resources, Property, Employment, Family, Health, Physical well-being
Social / Belonging	Friendship, Group involvement, Family, Intimacy
Esteem	Self-esteem, Recognition, Attention, Status, Confidence, Achievement, Self-respect, Respect by others
Self-actualization	Morality, Justice, Creativity, Spontaneity, Problem solving, Lack of Prejudice, Wisdom, Acceptance of Facts

Virtually all humans need protection from the elements that shelter provides (physiological need). Shelter can serve to protect our physical well-being, health, family, and other property, satisfying to various degrees safety and security needs. Both renters and owners can keep themselves safe, warm, and healthy. However, a person that rents shelter only has the ability to house and secure other property, their family, and perhaps some resources. An owner of shelter accomplishes this and more. An owner provides future shelter and security for their family, and a home may be viewed as a financial resource providing some financial security. In sum and in comparison to transient renters, ownership can meet not only basic safety and security needs, but also provide the stability and confidence to suspect these needs will be satisfied in the future.

The third level of needs is social in nature as humans are social animals and have a need to feel part of a group and have friends and family. A difference in the satisfaction of social needs between owners and renters may exist because ownership means permanence. An owner can be confident that these needs will continue to be satisfied for as long as they desire. While renters share many of the same rights and may intend to remain indefinitely, it is ultimately the owner of the leased property that decides how long they may stay and continue to satisfy related social needs. Renters' ability to maintain future social need satisfaction is uncertain.

As lower-level needs are satisfied or become less intense, esteem needs will emerge take precedence. Purchasing one's primary residence and qualifying for a mortgage can lead to a sense of achievement and accomplishment as well as self-respect. The highest level of Maslow's needs hierarchy are self-actualization needs and includes morality, problem solving, justice, and acceptance of facts. With regard to underwater homeowners, continuing to make mortgage payments satisfies a moral need while abiding to a contract (the mortgage note) may be interpreted as keeping with justice. Non-delinquent underwater homeowners that continue payments may be consistent with acceptance of facts and, should they search for solutions to their dilemma, it may qualify as problem solving.

REAL PROPERTY RIGHTS ROLE IN THE PROBLEM

In the U.S., ownership of real property includes both ownership of the land and physical structures on the land, and certain intangible rights afforded by law. Tangible assets of land and structures have value but the value of intangible rights is less apparent. For the purpose of this paper, ownership of these rights is an attempt to secure permanence of need satisfaction. The intangible rights most often associated with real property are (Galaty, Allaway, & Kyle, 2003):

Possession: the property is owned by whomever holds title.
Control: within the laws, the owner controls the use of the property.
Enjoyment: the owner can enjoy the use of the property in any legal manner.
Exclusion: others can be excluded from using or entering the property,
Disposition: the title holder can sell, rent or transfer ownership or use of the property at will.

For an owner of real property rights, the right of enjoyment allows one to profit from the use of the property and the right of control not only means that the owner can change the property, but also may encumber (borrow against) the property. An owner that decides to allow others to occupy the property through a lease for compensation is making use of the right of disposition, enjoyment, and control.

When a renter occupies a property, the compensation paid to the owner is to temporarily secure some of the real property rights. Typically, this includes the right to occupy, to enjoy, and at least some level of control and exclusion. A renter cannot encumber the property, they may not possess the property through a title, and they may not dispose of the property, so they hold a less complete set of rights. Therefore, unlike an owner of real property rights, a renter cannot attain any level of permanence of need satisfaction.

In order for a person to be confident of current and future need satisfaction in relation to shelter and what shelter can provide, it is necessary to secure the real property rights attached to the shelter. Legal ownership of the property is the most permanent method to attain this objective. Underwater homeowners that continue to make payments on time and in-full are assumed to be doing so to protect their legal rights of ownership because ownership increases confidence of current and future need satisfaction.

SUMMARY

This paper argues that there are conscious or unconscious needs that motivate the 90 percent of underwater homeowners to continue making payments on their mortgage. The intervening path to sustained need satisfaction is to acquire property rights that are a part of homeownership. Once these rights are obtained, they are so valuable that the payments on the debt are continued.

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THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYMENT AND EXTRACURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT ON UNDERGRADUATES' PERFORMANCE IN A BUSINESS STATISTICS COURSE

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ABSTRACT

Using data covering every semester and summer from Fall 2007 through Spring 2011 collected at a comprehensive regional public university in an applied business statistics course we examine the impact of academic course load, employment and other time commitments on students' eventual grades in the course. We find that employment has a weak but positive effect on performance in the course, while working more hours lowers one's grade. Involvement in extracurricular activities has no significant effect on grades. We also demonstrate that controlling for students' overall academic ability (we use GPA) is vital to establishing reliable links between these factors and a grade in a particular course. When students take the course also has some effect (e.g., summers are better than either spring or fall semesters, and afternoons are better than mornings).

Our results should be of interest to a wide audience: current and future college students, parents, faculty, and academic advisors. One potential way to extend and improve our approach and results would be to consider how certain components of a student's grade, such as the quiz average or attendance, are affected by working or being involved in many activities. For example, it would be interesting to examine how important class attendance is to performing well in the course, and if those with many other time commitments are able to keep up with regular assignments (quizzes).

WIKIPEDIA: FRIEND OR FOE

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Cindy Strickler, University of Louisiana at Monroe
Banappagari, Prashanth, University of Louisiana at Monroe

ABSTRACT

What do faculty and students really think of Wikipedia? Can Wikipedia be a helpful resource in introductory college courses?

In a survey of students and faculty at the University of Louisiana at Monroe, faculty reported using Wikipedia more often than students. In fact, 16% of students reported that they had "never" used Wikipedia in the last twelve months; whereas, zero percent of faculty reported never having used Wikipedia.

Faculty also seemed more open to using Wikipedia as a resource in introductory classes than students. Twenty-five percent of faculty found Wikipedia content comparable to an introductory textbook "to a considerable degree" and thirty-five percent found it to be "occasionally" comparable. Forty percent of faculty found Wikipedia to be comparable "seldom" or "never." These results could be interpreted as 60% of faculty being "open" to the use of Wikipedia.

Students seemed much more skeptical of the use of Wikipedia as a replacement for a textbook in an introductory class. Forty-three percent reported that they would "never" view Wikipedia as a viable replacement to the textbook and twenty-seven reported "seldom".

With the rising cost of textbooks, the greater availability of free-source online material and survey results indicating that faculty are amenable to the use of Wikipedia as a resource, the authors of this paper will present files that systematically organize Wikipedia links to match topic by topic subjects covered in a typical Introduction to Macroeconomics course and an Introduction to Management course.

Keywords: Wikipedia, textbooks, rising costs, open access

INTRODUCTION

From 1986 to 2004, the cost of college textbooks increased at a rate of about 6% per year, which was more than twice the rate of inflation. (Nicholls, 2005) From 2007 – 2010,, the costs continued to climb at a rate of 22%, quadruple the rate of inflation. (Allen, 2011) These rising costs often leads students, already burdened with high tuition costs and student debt, to make a tough decision of whether to spend hundreds of dollars to purchase a book they may not need and may not be able to resell or to avoid buying the textbook and risk a poor grade in the class. According to Molly Redden (2011), a recent survey found that 7 in 10 students have avoided buying a textbook because of its cost. The survey, released by the U.S. Public Interest Research

Group, a nonprofit consumer- advocacy organization, found that the total cost of student textbooks equates to about 72 percent of tuition at community colleges and 26 percent of tuition at state universities. As summed up by Rich Williams, a member of the group, the survey results indicate an "urgent need for affordable solutions." (Redden, 2011).

In recent years, some viable solutions have begun to be offered to students to help ease the pain of these high costs. The solutions include the option offered by bookstores to allow students to rent the hard copy of the book for a certain number of months or to have access to the book online for a specified time period. Students may also purchase used books or earlier editions of the books if the instructor allows it. Many times, these previous editions of a book are very close in content to the newest edition, but are available at highly discounted prices. Another more recent option is that publishers have begun offering electronic textbook or e-books as alternatives to the traditional textbook at approximately 50% of the price of the traditional books. These are the duplication of the hard copy textbook in digital format accessible online. With the increasing popularity of e-readers such as the Amazon Kindle and Barnes and Noble's Nook, the offerings of e-books are expected to increase dramatically. (Natsuko, 2010) And, most recently, publishers like Flat World Knowledge, now publish their textbooks online free of charge to online users or in hard copy form for about a fifth of the cost of traditional books. (Natsuko, 2010)

To summarize, this matter of the rising costs of textbooks is forcing universities and book publishers to create alternative, lower-cost solutions for students to have access to material being taught in their college classes. One lower cost solution for students in introductory classes could be the use of Wikipedia as a resource for information. This paper will examine the option of using Wikipedia as a resource for these classes and perhaps as a replacement or substitute for the textbook and the perceptions of students and faculty of its use for these purposes

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Wikipedia is an online collaborative encyclopedia, which is created outside the traditional authorship, editorial, and copyright constraints. An open content repository of encyclopedia knowledge, its content is written by volunteers in a collective and collaborative effort. Any Internet visitor may add, delete, and publish content on any Wikipedia page, but are asked to adhere to Wikipedia's policies of contributing verifiable information and to write from a neutral point of view. While the initial goal of Wikipedia was to serve as a historical record of programming ideas, wikis today are used mostly to convey web-based encyclopedic knowledge, news, or textbooks. Its simplicity and ease of use encourage users to contribute new information or to edit and correct the contributions of others. This ease of use is expected to serve as a self-regulating tool, designed to ensure or at least promote accurate, verifiable, and unbiased information from its 85,000 users. (Matei, Dobrescu, 2011)

Several research studies have focused on the reliability of the information found in Wikipedia. Some have expressed concern about the accuracy of its information and the writing styles (Lim, 2009, Wallace & Fleet, 2005), while others provide evidence that its information is reliable and of good quality. (Chesney, 2006). Giles (2005) compared the number of Wikipedia errors to those in the online version of *Encyclopedia Brittanica,* and found more in Wikipedia.

But, Chesney (2006) found that 87% of the Wikipedia articles had no errors and that on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being the highest, Wikipedia articles rated an average of 2.9. Rand (2010) reports that Wikipedia has broader coverage of many topics than printed encyclopedias, but is lacking in content related to law and medicine.

But, the question of how trustworthy Wikipedia is remains a valid one, and several studies suggest ways in which Wikipedia's usefulness in academics can be assessed and improved. Nielsen (2007) analyzed the number of Wikipedia outbound links to scientific journals and to non-scientific magazines. A large number of links to *Nature*, *Science*, and the *New England Journal of Medicine* and some astronomy journals were found, and the most common non-scientific resource citation was the *New York Times*. A bias toward recent and popular items has been noted in some examinations of Wikipedia contents. Other researchers used a systematic method of analyzing Wikipedia for completeness of information using the characteristics of recency, importance, country population, and economic power. Among other things, they found that the recency of information drives content coverage and concluded that Wikipedia content reflects the "social profile of its online users." (Rand, 2010)

Regardless of the concerns, Wikipedia's usage continues to grow, and it remains one of the most popular websites today. With 400 million unique visitors each month (Wikipedia, 2012), in July 2011, it ranked #5 in Google's' ranking of the most visited sites. (Smith, 2011) As of March 2012, Wikipedia had more than 16,450,000 registered users and more than 85,000 active contributors working on more than 21,000,000 articles in more than 280 languages.

In the review of the literature, several studies were found that addressed the use of Wikipedia in the higher education learning environment. Obviously, Wikipedia's abundance of information, its many links to outside sources, and its free price make it very popular with students. These factors are contributing to the increasing number of Wikipedia citations in student papers. (Rand, 2010) From her research, Rand (2010) concludes that Wikipedia offers several teaching opportunities in the areas of responsible editing and verifiability in writing research papers and in adding content to Wikipedia. In her study exploring college students' use of Wikipedia, and their perceptions and motivations concerning the website, Sook Lim (2009) found that all of the survey respondents had visited the Wikipedia site and about 33% used it for academic purposes. It was also used to quickly check facts and find background information. However, her survey found that the students had a cautious attitude about the website, indicating that they perceive the quality of the information to be moderately accurate. She concluded that educators should allow the use of Wikipedia, but should provide guidelines for its use. (Lim, 2009) A similar recommendation from Cathy Davidson suggested that history professors "make studying what it does and does not do part of the research-and-methods portion of our courses." (Nix, 2010) Lastly, Jeff Maehre (2009) argued that college instructors, especially in introductory classes, should allow students to use Wikipedia entries in their research projects because it gives them the opportunity to learn by engaging in a process and thinking individually rather than just following rules.

With the high and rising cost of textbooks, and with several studies recommending the use of Wikipedia in the academic environment, a need emerged for research on whether Wikipedia could be a viable alternative to textbooks in introductory course and the perceptions of students and instructors in the use of Wikipedia as a resource in these classes. While some research was found on the use of Wikipedia in the academic environment, none was found that addressed using Wikipedia as an alternative to a textbook. This paper will attempt to fill that gap and, in the larger context, to add transparency to the question of the reliability of the sources available within Wikipedia.

THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was twofold. First, the college students' usage rate, their perceptions regarding the viability of sources available on Wikipedia, and the encouragement they received in using Wikipedia as resource in introductory college courses is explored. Also, the study seeks to understand the faculty's opinion of the practice of using Wikipedia as a resource in introductory classes.

A survey of undergraduate students and faculty at the University of Louisiana at Monroe was used to collect data regarding the usage of Wikipedia. A total of 171 students and 21 faculty members participated in the study. The survey questions for students included the following:

- SQ1. How many times have you used Wikipedia in the last 12 months?
- SQ2. For an introductory class, would you recommend Wikipedia being used as a source of information?
- SQ3. Do you feel Wikipedia could be a viable replacement or substitute for a textbook in an introductory course?

The survey questions for faculty included the following:

- FQ1. How many times have you used Wikipedia in the last 12 months?
- FQ2. For an introductory class, would you recommend Wikipedia being used as a source of information?
- FQ3. Do you feel that the content on Wikipedia is comparable to content in an introductory course textbook?
- FQ4. In the last 12 months have you taught introductory courses?

RESULTS

Interestingly, the results of the survey indicated that faculty reported using Wikipedia more often that students. In fact, 16% of students reported that they had "never" used Wikipedia in the last twelve months, as shown in Figure 1, and 0% percent of faculty reported "never" having used Wikipedia, as shown in Figure 2. On the other end of the scale, 48% of faculty reported using Wikipedia 21 or more times, whereas 29% of students reported using the website 21 or more times.

Figure 1

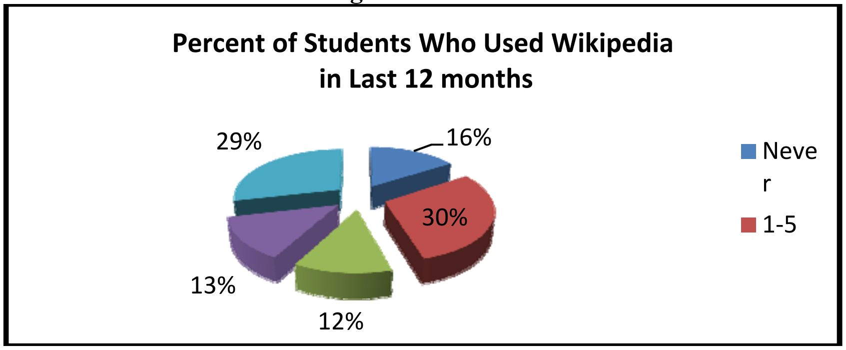
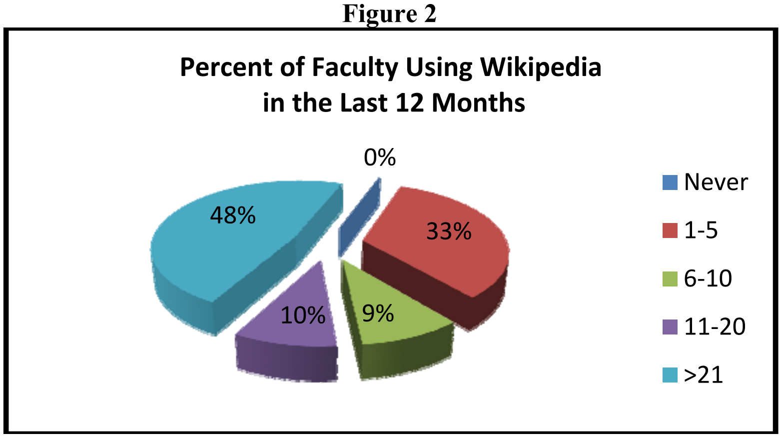


Figure 2



Students and faculty were next asked if they would recommend Wikipedia as a source of information in an introductory class. As shown in Figure 3, 52% of students would recommend Wikipedia as a resource for an introductory class "occasionally" or more frequently whereas 57% of faculty, shown in Figure 4, recommends it as a resource "occasionally" or more frequently.

Figure 3

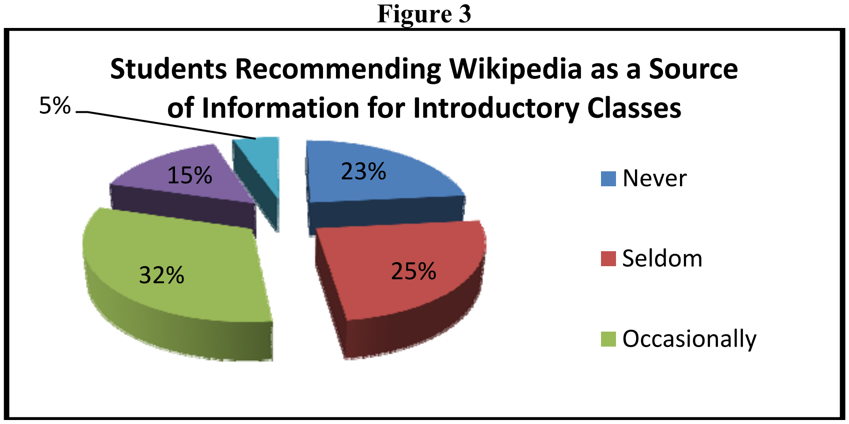
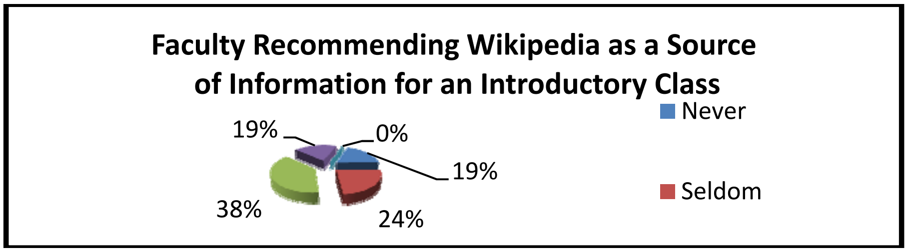


FIGURE 4



Lastly, students and faculty were asked how readily Wikipedia could serve as a replacement for an introductory course textbook or how comparable in content the two are. As shown in Figure 5, 30% of students reported that they would view Wikipedia as viable replacement of the textbook occasionally or more frequently. Figure 6 shows that, in comparison, 62% of faculty found Wikipedia to be comparable to an introductory textbook occasionally or more frequently.

Figure 5

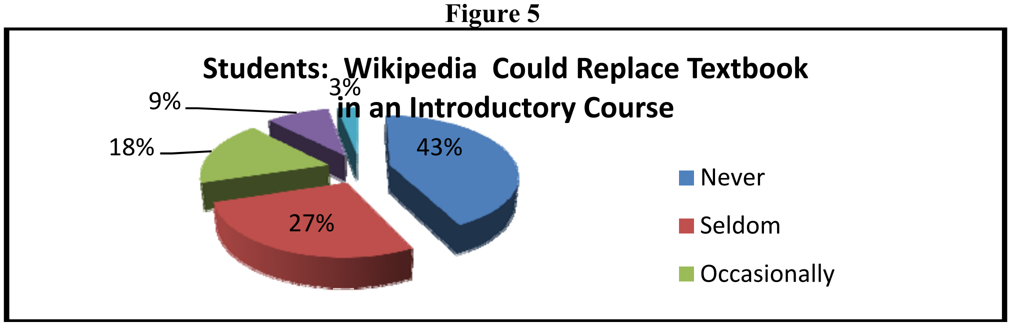
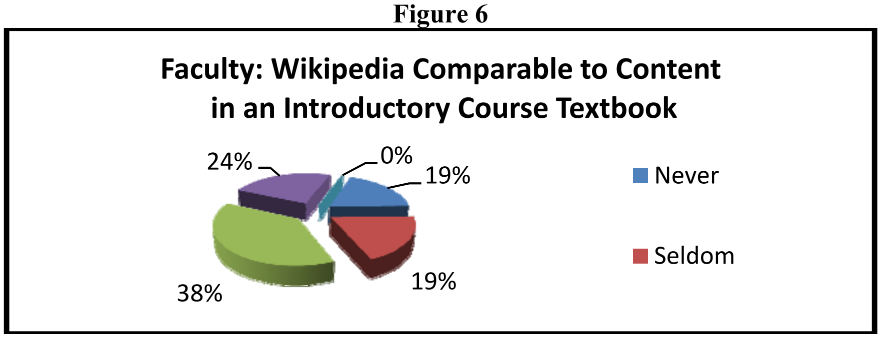


Figure 6



Faculty seemed much more open to using Wikipedia as a replacement for textbook due to the content being comparable in introductory classes than students. These results could be interpreted as 62% of faculty being "open" to the use of Wikipedia.

To facilitate the implementation of Wikipedia as a resource or supplement in an introductory course, a file systematically matching topics and Wikipedia links for and Introduction to Macroeconomics course in included in the Appendix of this paper. It conclusively indicates that the information in the textbook is comparable to the information in Wikipedia.

CONCLUSION

Given the continually rising cost of college textbooks, a search for solutions and alternatives is needed. In a survey of students and faculty at the University of Louisiana at Monroe, overall, faculty appeared to be more in favor of using Wikipedia than students. In the question regarding usage of Wikipedia, faculty reported using it more often than students. In fact, 16% of students reported that they had "never" used Wikipedia in the last twelve months; whereas, zero percent of faculty reported never having used Wikipedia.

Faculty also seemed more open to using Wikipedia as a resource in introductory classes than students. The results indicate that the majority of the faculty survey participants were "open" to the use of Wikipedia, while students seemed much more skeptical of the use of Wikipedia as a replacement for a textbook in an introductory class.

With Wikipedia growing in usage and being ranked as one of the most popular websites, perhaps it could become a replacement for the textbook in some courses. With the Introduction to Macroeconomics course surveyed for this research, the information in the textbook and on Wikipedia was quite similar. Some of the issues concerning the quality of the information in Wikipedia addressed in this paper would need to be addressed and the material used in an introductory course would need to be carefully verified if Wikipedia were to be used, but the possibility of using Wikipedia as a replacement for the textbook for some courses could be a viable solution to the high cost of textbooks.

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TICKET PRICING PER TEAM: THE CASE OF MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL (MLB)

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Soonhwan Lee, Indiana University Purdue University, Indianapolis
Phillip Miller, Minnesota State University, Mankato

ABSTRACT

In this paper, we explore the determinants of demand for attendance at Major League Baseball (MLB) games for 23 individual MLB teams during the period 1970 to 2003. Our central focus is to explore team-specific elasticities of demand for attendance. We use Error Correction Models (ECM) to identify these elasticities. The empirical findings show that factors of demand differ between teams with respect to the factors that determine attendance and to the estimated weights. We find that demand for attendance is mostly inelastic with levels varying between teams.

CUSTOMER SERVICE, ETHICS, AND ECONOMICS

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ABSTRACT

Customer service is important for entrepreneurs because aa good product or service can sell a product once but it is good customer service that brings in real long-term economic returns. In different cultures customer service may take different forms because a friendly business person may be welcomed in one culture while avoided in another. We also discuss cross cultural ethical differences and the impact that they have on organizations. We examine ethics, customer service, and economic returns among employees and entrepreneurs in Mexico, the USA, and Canada. We find that educational programs can influence levels of customer service, ethics, and economic returns.

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THE OIL ECONOMY OF SAUDI ARABIA

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ABSTRACT

Saudi Arabia is one of the richest countries in natural resources. Oil revenues allowed the Saudi economy to expand and grow to become a modern complex economy. The kingdom plays a key role in the world's economy, facilitating world trade in major commodities. It is ranked one of the world's largest 20 economies, and it has been growing robustly in the past decade.

INTRODUCTION

The Saudi government has been increasing its spending rapidly in the past couple of years, while still creating record budget surpluses in recent years fueled by staggering increases in oil prices. This has raised so many questions about the kingdom's effectiveness in managing this massive oil wealth and whether or not the long-term investment outlook looks promising to attract foreign direct investments to Saudi Arabia.

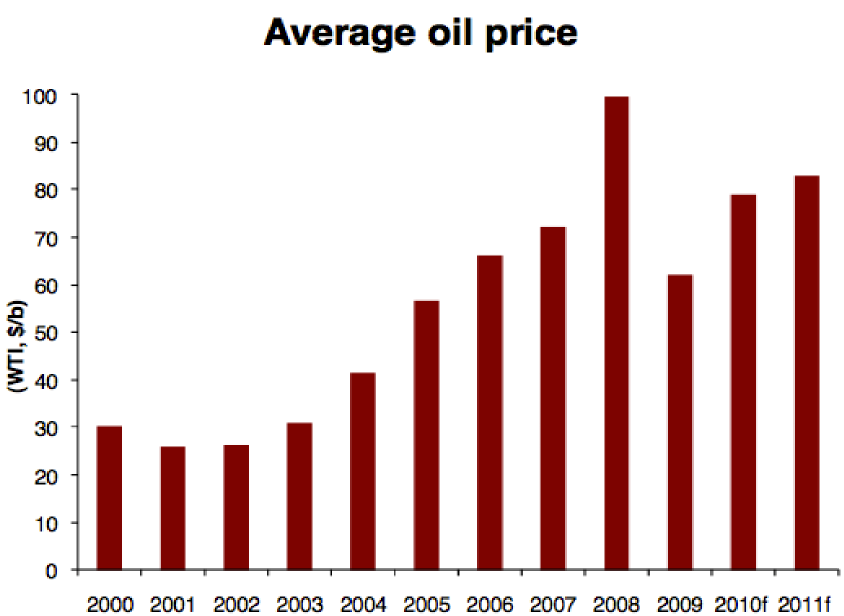
THE ECONOMY OF SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia's petroleum sector accounts for about 90% of its exports. (CIA World Factbook, 2011) Sitting on 20% of the world's proven oil reserves, Saudi Arabia is considered one of the largest exporters of petroleum in the world. (Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 2011) The petroleum sector accounts for roughly 80% of budget revenues, 45% of GDP, and 90% of export earnings. (CIA World Factbook, 2011) The energy rich kingdom is playing a major role not only among OPEC countries, but also in the world's economy in general. Saudi Arabia's economy is greatly dependant on oil prices. When oil production started, the country's economy expanded rapidly in the 1970s, averaging a double-digit growth in GDP for more than a decade. However, with the decline of oil prices in the 1980s, GDP growth almost flattened. (Country Studies Program) Since 1999 oil prices rose steadily on average, turning around the Saudi economy to be considered as one of the 20 largest economies in the world. (G-20.org, 2011)

Country Economic Profile

Official Name	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Population	26,131,703 (July 2011 est.)
GDP	$622 billion
GDP Real Growth Rate	3.70%
GDP per Capita	$24,200
GDP Composition	agriculture: 2.6% industry: 61.8% services: 35.6%
Unemployment	10.80%
revenues	$197.3 billion
expenditures	$167.1 billion
Budget Defecet or Surplus	6.8%+ of GDP
Inflation Rate	5.40%
Central Bank Discount Rate	2.5% (31 December 2008)
Major Industries	oil, petroleum refining, basic petrochemicals,cement, fertilizer, plastics, metals
Agricultural Products	wheat, barley, tomatoes, melons, dates, citrus, chickens, eggs, milk
Oil Production	10.52 million bbl/day
Oil Consumption	2.643 million bbl/day 25.1% of Production
Oil Proven Reserves	262.6 billion bbl (1 January 2011 est.)
Exports	$237.9 billion 90% petroleum and petroleum products
Imports	$88.35 billion machinery & equipment, food, motor vehicles, textiles
Reserves of FX and Gold	$445.1 billion
Exchange Rate SAR/US Dollar	3.75

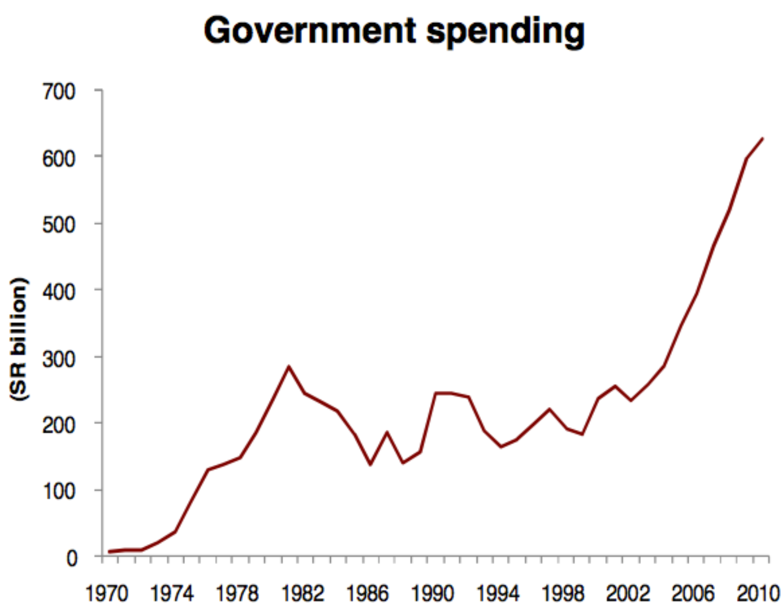
The numbers are estimates as of 2010, unless mentioned otherwise Source: (CIA World Factbook, 2011)



(Gamble, 2010)

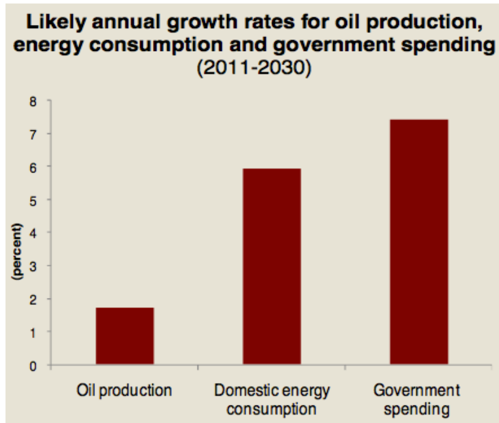
In the 1930s oil was discovered in Saudi Arabia. Yet, it wasn't until late 1960s that the oil industry started to boom. Since the 1970s, Saudi Arabia launched massive government spending programs, investing in infrastructure, defense, healthcare, education…etc. (Country Studies Program) Consequently, massive amount of wealth was accumulated, and the country became one of the dominant economic and political powers of the Middle East.

After signing a Trade Investment Framework Agreement with the U.S. in July 2003 and many years of negotiating, Saudi Arabia became a member of the World Trade Organization in 2005. (Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 2011) Since then, the government increased spending, according to the World Factbook "the government plans to spend $373 billion between 2010 and 2014 on social development and infrastructure projects to advance Saudi Arabia's economic development", including building six economic cities around the country to promote the expansion of the economy to raise the standard of living. (CIA World Factbook, 2011) The Saudi government spending plan for 2010–2014 aspires to increase real GDP by 15% over the five years and calls for substantial government investment in human resource development in order to decrease Saudi unemployment from 9.6% to 5.5% according to the Department of State. (Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 2011)



(Bourland, 2011)

In recent years, the kingdom has opened economically to integrate its economy with those of the world. Saudi Arabia has taken many steps to ease doing business in the country to encourage the inflow of foreign direct investments. Saudi Arabia's effort was visible in the *2011 Doing Business* ranking report by the World Bank. The kingdom was ranked number 13 in ease of doing business. (The World Bank, 2011) Moreover, Saudi Arabia continues to invest in the petrochemical sector, which is the country's core competency, resulting in major growth in The Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC). SABIC, a state-owned company, has grown to become one of the world's leading petrochemical companies. According to Arab News, "in 2008, SABIC was ranked the number 1 chemicals company in Asia and number 4 in the world by Fortune Global 500." (Roger, 2009) With all of these programs in place, Saudi Arabia transformed itself in a relatively short period of time from a desert kingdom to a world-class economy, facilitating over a quarter of the world's oil. (Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 2011)



(Bourland, 2011)

While Saudi Arabia may be enjoying oil revenues for some years to come, it is clear that it will be crucial for Saudi Arabia to find alternative sources of revenue for the long-run wealth and prosperity of the country.

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