

Economic and Social Impacts of Public Schools Management on the City of New Orleans and the State of Louisiana

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Abstract

Poverty, illiteracy, and crimes are key factors that commonly lead to poor performance in public schools in many inner cities. Without an adequate solution to eradicate these issues, a city could propel towards a path to destruction. Over the past decade, the city of New Orleans, which is known for its exotic party atmosphere, has been crippled by its failing school system, as well as increasing crime and poverty rates. New Orleans has eagerly strived to improve its social stature, but there are several issues that affect the performance of the public school system. Several research studies have shown that strong education is the key to both economic growth and crime rate reduction. Within the city of New Orleans, it is often realized that the management of the public school system has a major impact on the student's success rate. Statistics shown that within the recent years, tests scores have been continuously lower, crime has been higher than expected, and the teacher's salary has been unsatisfactory.

This prompts the question of whether there are significant associations between social economic factors and public school performance in inner city such as New Orleans. Hence, this current research will attempt to examine factors contributing to public school performance in New Orleans.

Keywords: New Orleans, public school performance, and social economic factors

1. Introduction

Over the past few years, the crime and poverty levels of New Orleans have fluctuated immensely. Many local officials, activists, socialists, psychologists, and parents have debated over education and its role regarding the city's shifting poverty and crime rate. Through the years, New Orleans has ranked in the bottom of each national list in poverty, education, and crime. Each issue has been an enormous factor that has adversely affected the perceptions of the city. While there have students that have successfully advanced within the New Orleans public school system, however many have been left behind. This is usually due to insufficient funds, ignorance of academics, and a negative outlook on life.

In the city of New Orleans, the superintendent is the executive officer of the school board, where their decisions a major factor on students and teachers' productivity. In addition, several students are often fall short of yearly advancement tests and standardized tests such as the ACT and SAT. The superintendent is to ensure that teachers are certified, as well as receiving adequate amount of funds for their services. In addition to a teacher's certification, the superintendent must also ensure that there are updated books and programs within schools. The superintendents as administrators have to ensure that each school is safe and has a nurturing environment. If not corrected, these are all issues that often affect a productive school system as well as its expected outcome for its students. Hence, this prompts the question of whether there are significant associations between social economic factors and public school performance in inner city such as New Orleans. Hence, this current research will seek to examine and evaluate several factors contributing to public school performance in New Orleans.

2. Literature Review

Unique and diverse in culture, New Orleans has consistently entertained many people around the world through events such as Mardi Gras, Jazz Fest, and even the Super Bowl. It is one of the cities known to promote carefree relaxation as well as an ultimate party. When all the parties are over, the city of New Orleans lives up to its name. While tourism and nation-wide events are heavily promoted, poverty, crime and education are placed on the back burner. Through the years, this influential city has struggled to improve its crime rate, high poverty, and unorganized educational system. In 2004, a staff member from the City Business and a local newspaper wrote an article discussing New Orleans's ranking as the third most stressful city in the United States. The rank reflected the high rates of poverty, violent crime, and unemployment that prevailed within the city. This ranking was out of three-hundred and thirty-three metropolitan cities. Tacoma, Washington and Miami, Florida were first and second on the list as most stressful cities. The factors determined in this ranking included those such as crime, poverty, suicide, divorce rates and alcohol

consumption.

In 2006, Lynne Jensen, a staff writer for the Times-Picayune, wrote an article about the state of Louisiana ranking 49th in nurturing children. In this article, Jensen discussed the decrease birth rate of infants in Louisiana, along with the decline of students in school and working for the state, propelling their rank to the bottom of the list. In the last few years, Louisiana has ranked in the bottom of the United States Census Bureau regarding poverty and crime. In 2003, Louisiana ranked #1 with 20.3 percent people living below the poverty level, while in 2004 Louisiana ranked #6 of states with violent crime. This is a statewide issue, even though New Orleans and Baton Rouge, the state capital, are the highest contributors in the statistical outcome.

With issues such as crime and poverty in the air, the issue of productive and sufficient education is often overshadowed. Education is the key factor in influencing success as it gives people a chance to believe in change and success in the future. Without education, many children are steered down a dangerous road, which leads to crime, poverty, and even death.

The public schools in New Orleans do not meet the expectations of many parents or students. Parents send their children to school to learn, but are distracted by fights and inadequate academic equipment, which renders them unable to learn. Do these issues exist in private schools or other parts of the United States? Instead of education filtering through children's brains at the local high schools, students struggle to focus on their academics in the midst of dangerous situations.

Brett Martel (2000) wrote an article depicting the shootings in the New Orleans area, most of which involved students who should have been in school. One incident involved a thirteen-year old boy who brought a gun to school because of a conflict with another young man within a rival neighborhood. The school that he attended looked exactly like its surrounding neighborhood - dark with barbed wired. It was located by housing projects, neglected houses, and broken glass. Where is the management? How can a child be expected to learn and not fight in an environment like this? How was he able to bring a gun to school? How can any child reach any level of achievement?

Hallinam (1994) had a study that examined how the monitoring of students' instruction generates a differential impact on student achievement transverse beyond school districts. The study listed two major mechanisms responsible for these effects: schools that vary in the monitoring placement and in the opportunities for instructional technique to students. The research elicited that monitoring placement could be affected by the degree of flexibility of track membership, school track structure, assignment criteria, and scheduling priorities. The study specifically focuses on student achievement and projected outlook.

Public schools must meet the expectations of the both the parents and the children as each child is entitled to a quality education. Smith and Meier (1995) wrote an article that was concentrated on the public choice and its needs for quality education. The research focused on school choice in addition to its popular education reform. It also noted the fact that the schools that did meet the needs of both the students and parents will draw more students and

grow, while schools who do not will get less funding and close. While public schools are more efficient for families in the area, private schools allow for a more quality education. The problem lies when parents cannot afford private school for their child. If not, they must rely on the public-school system to provide the best education for their child. While some children make it through the system, there are many that fall through the cracks (Capochino, 2006). Even with successful students in the New Orleans public school system, there are many that have been left behind due to insufficient funds, ignorance of academics, and a negative outlook on life that may lead to death or prison (Martel, 2000).

3. Data Analysis

Through the years, New Orleans has consistently ranked near last regarding education, crime, and poverty. In reviewing statistical data, there is a clear correlation between low education and high poverty as well as low education and high crime rates.

Table 1. Education and Louisiana

Louisiana	Student's Score
Orleans Parish (New Orleans)	below 50 th percentile on Leap Test
Jefferson Parish (surrounding cities)	below 50 th percentile on Leap Test
St. Bernard Parish	above the 75 th percentile
Tangipahoa Parish	above the 70 th percentile

There is also a correlation between high poverty and crime rates in New Orleans. This suggests that many people surrounded by poverty are eager to become liberated by any means necessary. By viewing the low education rates, it is almost obvious that low education productivity affects a student's ability to strive toward success academically. This would in turn provide options that steer them away from committing crime or becoming a victim of poverty.

Table 2. Murder rates were calculated based on the FBI Uniform Crime Reports and the estimates – 2015

State	Population (total inhabitants) (2015) [1]	Murders and Non-Negligent Manslaughter (total deaths) (2015) [2]	Murder and Non-Negligent Manslaughter Rate (per 100,000 inhabitants) 2015
Alabama	4,853,875	348	7.2
Alaska	737,709	59	8
Arizona	6,817,565	309	4.5
Arkansas	2,977,853	181	6.1

California	38,993,940	1,861	4.8
Colorado	5,448,819	176	3.2
Connecticut	3,584,730	117	3.3
Delaware	944,076	63	6.7
District of Columbia	670,377	162	24.2
Florida	20,244,914	1,041	5.1
Georgia	10,199,398	615	6
Hawaii	1,425,157	19	1.3
Idaho	1,652,828	32	1.9
Illinois	12,839,047	744	5.8
Indiana	6,612,768	373	5.6
Iowa	3,121,997	72	2.3
Kansas	2,906,721	128	4.4
Kentucky	4,424,611	209	4.7
Louisiana	4,668,960	481	10.3
Maine	1,329,453	23	1.7
Maryland	5,994,983	516	8.6
Massachusetts	6,784,240	128	1.9
Michigan	9,917,715	571	5.8
Minnesota	5,482,435	133	2.4
Mississippi	2,989,390	259	8.7
Missouri	6,076,204	502	8.3
Montana	1,032,073	36	3.5
Nebraska	1,893,765	62	3.3
Nevada	2,883,758	178	6.2
New Hampshire	1,330,111	14	1.1
New Jersey	8,935,421	363	4.1
New Mexico	2,080,328	117	5.6
New York	19,747,183	609	3.1
North Carolina	10,035,186	517	5.2
North Dakota	756,835	21	2.8
Ohio	11,605,090	500	4.3
Oklahoma	3,907,414	234	6
Oregon	4,024,634	99	2.5
Pennsylvania	12,791,904	658	5.1
Rhode Island	1,055,607	29	2.7
South Carolina	4,894,834	399	8.2
South Dakota	857,919	32	3.7

Tennessee	6,595,056	406	6.2
Texas	27,429,639	1,316	4.8
Utah	2,990,632	54	1.8
Vermont	626,088	10	1.6
Virginia	8,367,587	383	4.6
Washington	7,160,290	211	2.9
West Virginia	1,841,053	70	3.8
Wisconsin	5,767,891	240	4.2
Wyoming	586,107	16	2.7

While this information seemed more relevant to the research itself, more data could have been seen over the course of time, rather than total and per capita. One or the other would have sufficed, but both data points were rendered unnecessary when given nothing to compare it to. Had particular states been specifically targeted, especially seeing as data should have been related to the city of New Orleans over the state of Louisiana, the data would have been easier to disseminate.

Table 3. Persons below Poverty Level by State, 2014

Rank	State	Poverty Rate (by Household Income)	People in Poverty (by Household Income) (in thousands)	2014 Poverty Rates	Supplemental Poverty Measure (2010-2014 average)
-	<i>United States</i>	14.80%	45,950		16.0%
1	New Hampshire	9.20%	117	9.50%	15.50%
2	Maryland	10.40%	604	9.60%	10.10%
3	Wyoming	10.60%	54	9.30%	9.20%
4	Connecticut	10.80%	376	10.60%	12.5%
5	North Dakota	11.10%	79	11.00%	9.20%
6	New Jersey	11.10%	972	13.70%	13.9%
7	Minnesota	11.40%	607	12.10%	9.70%
8	Alaska	11.40%	81	12.10%	12.50%
9	Hawaii	11.50%	158	12.60%	17.30%
10	Massachusetts	11.70%	760	10.90%	13.80%
11	Virginia	11.80%	955	10.80%	13.30%
12	Utah	11.80%	341	9.80%	11.60%
13	Colorado	12.10%	632	12.40%	13.70%
14	Vermont	12.20%	72	9.70%	13.4%

15	Nebraska	12.30%	167	10.00%	9.8%
16	Iowa	12.30%	368	10.90%	8.60%
17	Delaware	13.00%	118	12.40%	13.90%
18	Wisconsin	13.20%	737	11.10%	10.80%
19	Washington	13.20%	913	11.90%	12.20%
20	Kansas	13.50%	381	13.90%	11.50%
21	Pennsylvania	13.60%	1,679	11.20%	12.60%
22	Maine	14.00%	181	11.60%	11.20%
23	South Dakota	14.10%	115	14.30%	10.60%
24	Illinois	14.30%	1,802	13.30%	15.20%
25	Rhode Island	14.80%	149	13.20%	13.60%
26	Idaho	14.80%	237	13.90%	11.80%
27	Montana	15.20%	151	13.50%	12.10%
28	Indiana	15.20%	968	16.40%	14.20%
29	Nevada	15.40%	430	13.10%	19.80%
30	Missouri	15.50%	908	15.60%	12.40%
31	Ohio	15.80%	1,778	13.50%	13.20%
32	New York	15.90%	2,760	15.90%	18.1%
33	Michigan	16.20%	1,567	27.60%	13.50%
34	Oregon	16.40%	637	7.11%	10.30%
35	California	16.40%	6,253	15.50%	23.80%
36	Oklahoma	16.60%	623	13.00%	13.40%
37	Florida	16.60%	3,231	14.60%	19.5%]
38	Texas	17.20%	4,519	17.40%	16.40%
39	North Carolina	17.20%	1,663	17.00%	14.20%
40	South Carolina	17.90%	838	13.80%	15.80%
41	Tennessee	18.20%	1,165	16.70%	15.50%
42	Arizona	18.20%	1,195	21.30%	18.80%
43	West Virginia	18.30%	328	16.00%	12.90%
44	Georgia	18.40%	1,298	18.50%	18.20%
45	District of Columbia	18.40%	114	18.00%	22.7%
46	Arkansas	18.70%	539	19.10%	16.50%
47	Kentucky	19.00%	812	17.10%	13.60%
48	Alabama	19.20%	905	16.80%	13.50%
49	Louisiana	19.90%	898	14.30%	18.5%
50	New Mexico	20.60%	347	19.60%	16.10%
51	Mississippi	21.90%	634	23.20%	16.1%

What helped this data is that the data was allowed and available to be compared to the national numbers. Having the total number of people in poverty listed in the country, while also having the data available by individual state truly helped show the proportion between state and nation. However, this data could have been tabulated as well, showing what percentage of the country's poverty is held by each state. The supplemental poverty measure was over a period of time, which could have been even further broken down to identify each year individually. Again, had the data been shown by major city over state, the data would have been more relevant, overall helpful, to the research.

Table 4. Public School Teachers' Average Salaries, 2012-2013

State	Starting Salary	Average Salary
Alabama	\$36,198	\$47,949
Alaska	\$44,166	\$65,468
Arizona	\$31,874	\$49,885
Arkansas	\$32,691	\$46,631
California	\$41,259	\$69,324
Colorado	\$32,126	\$49,844
Connecticut	\$42,924	\$69,397
Delaware	\$39,338	\$59,679
Florida	\$35,166	\$46,598
Georgia	\$33,664	\$52,880
Hawaii	\$41,027	\$54,300
Idaho	\$31,159	\$49,734
Illinois	\$37,166	\$59,113
Indiana	\$34,696	\$50,065
Iowa	\$33,226	\$50,946
Kansas	\$33,386	\$47,464
Kentucky	\$35,166	\$50,203
Louisiana	\$38,655	\$51,381
Maine	\$31,835	\$48,430
Maryland	\$43,235	\$64,248
Massachusetts	\$40,600	\$72,334
Michigan	\$35,901	\$61,560
Minnesota	\$34,505	\$56,268
Mississippi	\$31,184	\$41,814
Missouri	\$30,064	\$47,517
Montana	\$27,274	\$48,855
Nebraska	\$30,844	\$48,997
Nevada	\$35,358	\$55,957

New Hampshire	\$34,280	\$55,599
New Jersey	\$48,631	\$68,797
New Mexico	\$31,960	\$45,453
New York	\$43,839	\$75,279
North Carolina	\$30,778	\$45,737
North Dakota	\$32,019	\$47,344
Ohio	\$33,096	\$56,307
Oklahoma	\$31,606	\$44,373
Oregon	\$33,549	\$57,612
Pennsylvania	\$41,901	\$62,994
Rhode Island	\$39,196	\$63,474
South Carolina	\$32,306	\$48,375
South Dakota	\$29,851	\$39,018
Tennessee	\$34,098	\$47,563
Texas	\$38,091	\$48,819
Utah	\$33,081	\$49,393
Vermont	\$35,541	\$52,526
Virginia	\$37,848	\$48,670
Washington	\$36,335	\$52,234
West Virginia	\$32,533	\$45,453
Wisconsin	\$33,546	\$53,797
Wyoming	\$43,269	\$56,775

4. Results

Through extensive research, the findings show that there is a high correlation between high poverty and crime. Regarding major cities such as New Orleans, Los Angeles, New York City, Atlanta and Miami, many prominent correlations exist. In reviewing the statistics of the state of Louisiana, the findings show that here is a high correlation between poverty and crime. Louisiana ranked at number one regarding persons living below the poverty level” and sixth in violence and crime

Overall, the data submitted for this research was very inconsistent in more ways than one. Firstly, and arguably most importantly, hardly any of the data was taken around the same time, which makes it difficult to effectively compare and correlate the findings. Without proper means to correlate the findings and find patterns, actual findings are difficult to substantiate and conclude. The research should be reevaluated and submitted for further review.

5. Conclusion

There are many limitations within this research paper. ACT and SAT scores should have been reviewed over Leap Test scores. The results of the study may have been easily correlated to

academic improvement if actual test scores of the students were collected during this time period. Another limit on this research study is the actual period when the research data was collected from resources from previous years as they may not reflect Post-Katrina New Orleans. Hurricane Katrina caused many political leaders to realize the decline in the New Orleans public school system and the impact on its students. The post-Katrina school board was more eager to recreate decent environments for its students as well as an optimistic future. It is not only up to the school board to make a difference in the educational environment within the city. This study should have also narrowed its topic toward Black Americans in New Orleans. This would have further objectified the research as they make up seventy-five percent of the city, ninety percent of public schools, and the majority of the poverty and crime.

In conclusion, there are many factors that may have an impact on the public-school system of many other major cities. However, in this report, it seemed that hardly any of the data actually related to the research itself, as much of the report is written with a lens of emotion rather than objectivity. This subjective nature to the data given and report leave it difficult to disseminate and fully digest.

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