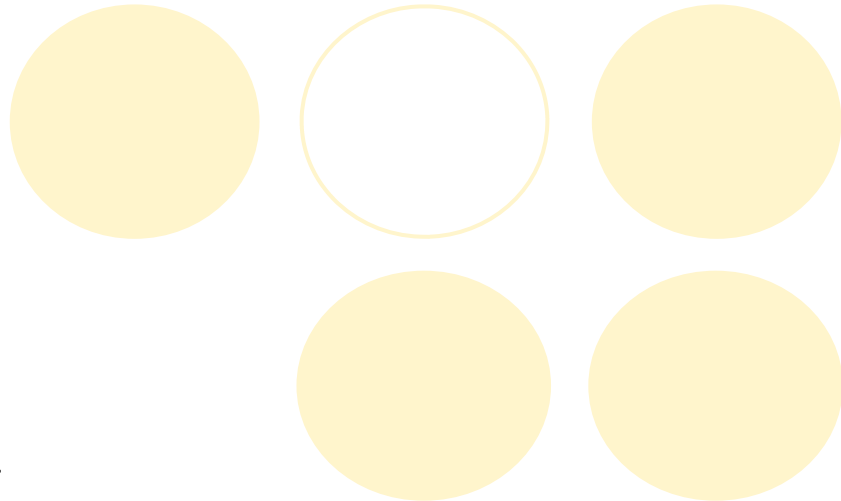


Michigan Program in
Survey Methodology
student, Brian Hunscher,
co-presenting at the
2014 Annual MAPOR
Conference.

Renaissance Chicago Downtown
Hotel

Friday, November 21, 2014, 8:00
AM - Saturday, November 22, 2014
6:00 PM



Factors influencing the accuracy of student reports of family background: Evidence from the Qatar

Jill Wittrock, Brian Hunscher, Linda Kimmel and Kien Trung Le

Saturday , November 22 2:45pm

Scholars in the field of education have long assumed family background, home inputs and resources, and student characteristics are a few of many factors that are important in predicting student achievement and student educational aspirations. Of these, family background is singled out as especially salient and can, at times, reduce or even erase the impact of poor resources, underfunded institutions, or less than qualified teachers.

Family background is often conceptualized as a basket of socioeconomic and household attributes such as parental education and occupation, availability of a computer in the home, number of books in the house, whether the child has a space to study, and whether the child lives with one or both sets of parents. The protocol for many educational studies is to include the family background questions with the standard battery of questions about assessment within the student surveys, rather than asking parents the questions. However, oftentimes student misreport this information, especially parental education, with potential consequences for measurement error.

While some limited existing research has looked at the impact of misreporting of family background on student achievement, the majority of the findings are based on data collected from studies in North America and the European Union. This paper unpacks the determinants of misreporting of family background characteristics using new survey data from the Qatar Education Study, the first comprehensive school-level study of its kind in the country where all stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, teachers, and administrators) were surveyed. Identical demographic and family background questions were included on both the student and parent surveys, thus allowing us to determine the underlying factors leading to a higher probability of misreporting. These findings will have important implications for the design of education research in not only Qatar but also the broader region.

