

Curriculum and National Identity: Evidence from the 1997 Curriculum Reform in Taiwan
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1. What is the main question(s) raised in the paper (the issue)? Is the national identity of junior high school's student related to the new educational perspective on the Taiwan's history introduced in the textbooks after September 1997?

2. Why should we care about it (the significance)?

According to past 150 years' empirical evidence, government's mass educational investment have been correlated to the threats of the military demand. The possible purpose of investing in education is to use the system as an instrument to cultivate the national identity of the their citizens. The author introduced a regression model to explain the mechanism behind the effect of education on national identity by using Taiwan's data. The research is related to the issue of the national identity of the Taiwan and China. More precisely, there are two differences introduced in the novel education system: A substantial increase in Taiwan-related content and the emphasis on the distinction between Taiwan and China in the new textbooks. These differences may influence the national identity of the youth. Therefore, the research needs to be taken seriously.

3. What is the author' s answer (the findings)? It contains three findings: First, Authors show that students whose age are around 20 years old are on average 18 percentage points more possible to present themselves as Taiwanese than as Chinese or both (Chinese and Taiwanese). Second, Memorizing textbook is possible channel to affect individual's national identity. For instance, authors found that the national identity of students in academic track is influenced significantly by their school curriculum. Moreover, authors also indicated that in older generations, the Hoklo people, who are major ethnicities living in Taiwan, are more likely to identify themselves as Taiwanese than other ethnicities, Mainlanders, Hakka, and Aborigines. Finally, the authors asserted that in the long run, people who follow the new textbook content maintain an analogous Taiwanese identity as those who study the old textbooks.

4. How did the author get there (the strategy)? Through analysis of Taiwan Social Change Survey (TSCS), authors adopted the regression discontinuity design to examine whether the new textbook contents would pose an effect on an individual's national identity. The TSCS holds abundant demographic information which aid in the analysis process. For example, the authors included the variables provided from the TSCS such as the respondent's gender, their parents' education level, and their parents' ethnicity etc. The authors then constructed different subgroups to find the likelihood mechanism of the curriculum effect. They focused, primarily, on the respondents' track, which composed of academic and vocational tracks, and the ethnic distribution of the respondents' hometown. To sum up, these strategies had led the authors to obtain the findings mentioned in previous section.