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Measuring Public School Competition from Private Schools: A Gravity-Based Index

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ABSTRACT

This research develops a gravity-based index of public school competition from private schools within local markets. Proponents of educational reform often call for policies to increase competition between schools. A major hurdle for researchers examining this issue is to determine a workable definition of "competition" by which they can measure the degree of competition within local markets. This study addresses this challenge by developing a school competition index for public schools in the Jackson metropolitan area of Mississippi, USA that considers the enrollments in public schools and the enrollments in their neighboring private schools, as well as the distances between them. The school competition index reveals the degree of competition for each public school based on its spatial location relative to peer private schools operating within its service area. This methodology can be useful for evaluating competition in other markets and redefining the traditional market structure.

KEYWORDS

Public School, Gravity-Based Index, Market, Competition, Education

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