

NBER WORKING PAPER SERIES

ESTIMATES OF THE ECONOMIC
RETURN TO SCHOOLING FROM
A NEW SAMPLE OF TWINS

Orley Ashenfelter
Alan Krueger

Working Paper No. 4143

NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH
1050 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
August 1992

This research was supported by the Industrial Relations Section, Princeton University and the National Science Foundation (SES-9012149). We are indebted to Graham Burge, Greg Fisher, Kevin Hallock, and Michael Quinn for excellent assistance with data collecting and processing. We are also indebted to Andy Miller, of the Twins Days Festivals, Twinsburg, Ohio for help in arranging our interview survey of twins. This paper is part of NBER's research program in Labor Studies. Any opinions expressed are those of the authors and not those of the National Bureau of Economic Research.

NBER Working Paper #4143
August 1992

ESTIMATES OF THE ECONOMIC RETURN
TO SCHOOLING FROM A NEW
SAMPLE OF TWINS

ABSTRACT

This paper uses a new survey to contrast the wages of genetically identical twins with different schooling levels. Multiple measurements of schooling levels were also collected to assess the effect of reporting error on the estimated economic returns to schooling. The data indicate that omitted ability variables do not bias the estimated return to schooling upward, but that measurement error does bias it downward. Adjustment for measurement error indicates that an additional year of schooling increases wages by 16%, a higher estimate of the economic returns to schooling than has been previously found.

Orley Ashenfelter
Industrial Relations Section
Firestone Library
Princeton University
Princeton, NJ 08544
and NBER

Alan Krueger
Industrial Relations Section
Firestone Library
Princeton University
Princeton, NJ 08544
and NBER

This paper uses a new survey of identical twins to study the economic returns to schooling. We estimate the returns to schooling by contrasting the wage rates of identical twins with different schooling levels. Our goal is to ensure that the correlation we observe between schooling and wage rates is not due to a correlation between schooling and a worker's ability or other characteristics. We do this by taking advantage of the fact that monozygotic (from the same egg) twins are genetically identical and have similar family backgrounds. In our survey we also took some unusual steps to measure a worker's schooling level accurately. We obtained independent estimates of each sibling's schooling level by asking each twin to report on both their own and their twin's schooling. These new data provide a simple and powerful method for assessing the role of measurement error in estimates of the economic returns to schooling.

The results of our study indicate that the economic returns to schooling may have been badly underestimated in the past. We estimate that each year of school completed increases a worker's wage rate by 16%. This estimate is nearly double previous estimates and it is also double the estimate we would have obtained from these data had we been unable to adjust for omitted ability variables and measurement error. Surprisingly, we find no evidence that unobserved ability is positively related to the schooling level completed; instead,

we find some weak evidence that unobserved ability may be negatively related to schooling level. We also find significant evidence of measurement error in schooling levels. Our results indicate that measurement error may lead to considerable underestimation of the returns to schooling in studies based on siblings.

We begin the paper with a discussion of the data we have collected. We compare our sample with more conventional data and with other surveys of twins and we report on the extent of the measurement error we have found. We next report the detailed results of our study of the earnings of twins using conventional econometric methods to adjust for measurement error. In a final section of the paper we provide estimates and tests of the restrictions from a simple model of the earnings process that incorporates errors in the measurement of schooling.

I. Data Collection and Appraisal

Our goal was to obtain a sample of data on twins in which we could obtain independent measures of each sibling's schooling level. We realized at the outset that this would be a simple task if both twins could be interviewed simultaneously. Both twins could then be asked questions about themselves and

their sibling. A natural place to interview twins for this purpose is one of the many "twins festivals" held throughout the U.S. In fact, we chose to attend the 16th Annual Twins Days Festival in Twinsburg, Ohio in August of 1991. The Twinsburg Festival is the largest gathering of twins in the world and, in 1991, attracted over 3,000 sets of twins, triplets, and quadruplets, many of whom were children. We managed to interview over 495 separate individuals over the age of 18 during the three days of the festival.

A. Data Collection

Our data collection instrument was patterned after the questionnaire used by the Bureau of the Census for the Current Population Survey (CPS). (A copy of the questionnaire we used is contained in Appendix A.) Many of the questions on the survey are identical to those administered in the CPS, but some were written by us and are relevant only for a study of twins. Monozygotic (commonly called identical) twins result from the split of a fertilized egg and are considered genetically identical. Dizygotic (commonly called fraternal) twins result from the fertilization of separate eggs and lead only to siblings that are genetically similar, as are brothers and sisters. One goal of our survey instrument was to determine whether the twins we interviewed were identical or fraternal. Much of our analysis below is restricted to a sample of identical

twins.¹

Our interviewing technique employed a team of five interviewers. The Twinsburg Festival maintains a research pavilion, which consists of a tent near the main entrance to the festival where researchers are located. To carry out our survey we placed an advertisement in the festival program inviting all adult twins to come to our booth to be interviewed. As an incentive we offered to make a contribution to the Twins Festival Scholarship Fund for every pair of adult twins who completed an interview. Our interviewers also roved throughout the festival grounds and approached every adult twin pair they encountered with a request for an interview. We were pleasantly surprised to find that virtually every pair of twins that we approached agreed to participate in our interviews. (Only four pairs of twins refused to be interviewed.) At the outset we were concerned that our questions about earnings, when asked in a face to face interview, might lead to some nonresponse. As it turned out our concerns were misplaced, and virtually every twin provided the requested data (leading to a response rate for this question that is far higher than in the CPS).

¹ We determined whether twins were identical by their answers to the question "Is your twin brother/sister an identical twin? That is, are you monozygotic twins?" In a study of questionnaire responses by pairs who claimed to be monozygotic twins Jablon, et. al. (1967) found that fewer than 3% were incorrect as measured by serological tests.

We asked each twin about their wage rate on their most recent job, but we have included twins in our sample only if they held a job within the previous two years. In every case we separated the twins for the purposes of our interview so that no twin heard their sibling's response to the questionnaire.

Although we report on a detailed comparison of our survey with data from the CPS below, we have some casual impressions about our sample of twins that should be kept in mind. Much of the purpose of a twins festival is to celebrate the similarity of the twins who are present. For the participants these festivals provide an environment where twins are not so unusual as they ordinarily seem. The participants therefore tend to dress alike and to celebrate their similarity. As a result we suspect that twins in our sample may bear stronger similarities than would be the case in a random sample of twins. For example, our sample contains a far greater representation of identical twins relative to fraternal twins than would exist in a random sample. These similarities will cause no problem for estimating the returns to schooling, but they may make a comparison of our study with other studies of twins more difficult.

On the other hand, the twins in our study do vary in dimensions that the twins in other studies do not. For example, the Behrman, Hrubec, Taubman,

and Wales (1980) study is based on a sample of male veterans of World War II. Our study has a representation considerably broader than this, and includes women as well as men.

B. Representativeness of the Sample

Table 1 provides sample means and standard deviations for the variables we study below and for a few additional variables designed to measure the extent to which the twins shared a common environment. The table also contains similar data from the Current Population Survey for comparison purposes. Two things are clear from this table. First, although similar to the CPS sample, our sample of twins is better educated and more highly paid than the CPS sample. Likewise, our sample of twins is younger and contains more women and whites than the CPS sample. Second, it is clear that the identical twins in our sample tend to have similar education levels, and that identical twins bear a closer similarity than fraternal twins. For example, 49% of identical twins (but 43% of fraternal twins) report attaining exactly the same level of education, while 74% of identical twins (but 38% of fraternal twins) report having studied together during high school.

Table 2 reports the correlations among the (logarithmic) wages, (self-reported and sibling-reported) education levels, and father's and mother's

education levels for our sample of twins. In all our analyses we have randomly selected one twin as the first in each pair. We write s_1^1 for the self-reported education level of the first twin, s_1^2 for the sibling-reported education level of the first twin, s_2^2 for the self-reported education level of the second twin, and s_2^1 for the sibling-reported education level of the second twin. (That is, s_n^m $m, n = 1, 2$, refers to the education level of the m th twin as reported by the n th twin.) All six of the possible correlations are reported in the table. It is apparent that the independent measures of education levels are highly correlated. There are, of course, two measures of the father's and mother's education levels and we have reported the correlations across both of these also. It is apparent from the table that the wage rates and education levels of identical twins are highly correlated, and that they are more highly correlated than the wage rates and education levels of fraternal twins.

It is possible to compare some of the correlations in Table 2 with other reports of sibling correlations. For identical twins Behrman, et. al. (1980) report intrapair correlations of .76 for years of schooling and .55 for (the logarithm of) earnings. These may be contrasted with our estimates of intrapair correlations for identical twins of .66 for self-reported schooling and .56 for (the logarithm of) wages rates. For fraternal twins Behrman, et. al. (1980) report

intrapair correlations of .55 for schooling (compared to our estimate of .54) and .30 for earnings (compared to our estimate of .36). Although they are not identical, the correlation coefficients from the Behrman, et. al. data differ only a little from those in our survey.

C. The Extent of Measurement Error

The correlations in Table 2 provide a comprehensive set of estimates of the measurement error in these data. In the classical model of measurement error we may write $S_n^m = S_n + v_n^m$ where S_n is the true schooling level and v_n^m ($m=1,2$) are measurement errors that are uncorrelated with S_n ($n=1,2$) and each other.² In this model the correlation between the two measures of schooling, S_n^1 and S_n^2 is just $\text{var}(S_n) / [\text{var}(S_n^1) \cdot \text{var}(S_n^2)]^{1/2}$. This correlation is the fraction of the variance in the reported measures of schooling that is due to true variations in schooling. This ratio is sometimes called the "reliability ratio" of the schooling measure.

The two estimates of the reliability ratio for the twins schooling levels in Table 2 are .92 and .88. These estimates indicate that between 8% and 12%

² The assumption that the measurement errors are uncorrelated with each other may be relaxed by allowing a family fixed effect in the measurement error, and we do so in Section 3.

of the measured variance in schooling levels is error. Previous estimates of the reliability ratio in schooling levels (derived by re-surveying) by Siegel and Hodge (1968) and Bielby, Hauser, and Featherman (1977) have ranged between .80 and .93, and are very similar to our estimates from the survey of twins.

Since both twins were asked about the schooling levels of their parents, it is also possible to estimate the measurement error in parental schooling levels. These estimates of the reliability ratio in the schooling levels of the twins' parents are lower than the estimates of the reliability ratios for the twins themselves. The reliability ratios are around .86 for the father's schooling and .84 for the mother's schooling.

Although we do not pursue this issue in detail here, the classical model of measurement error implies many restrictions on the correlations in Table 2. For example, assuming that measurement errors are uncorrelated across outcome measures, the two correlations between the (log) wage of a twin and the two measures of the father's schooling level should be identical, as is the case. Inspection of Table 2 indicates few, if any, significant differences between the correlations displayed in the table and those that would be predicted by the classical model of measurement error.

II. Conceptual Framework and Basic Empirical Results

A. Conceptual Framework

We denote by y_{1i} and y_{2i} the logarithms of the wage rates of the first and second twins in the i th pair. We let X_i represent the set of variables that vary by family, but not across twins. In our study the variables in X_i include age, race, and any measures of family background. We let Z_{1i} and Z_{2i} represent the sets of variables that may vary across the twins. In our study these variables include the education levels, union status, job tenure, and marital status of each twin.

A general setup (see, for example, Chamberlain (1982)) specifies wage rates as consisting of an unobservable component that varies by family μ_i , observable components that vary by family X_i , observable components that vary across individuals Z_{1i} and Z_{2i} , and unobservable individual components (ϵ_{1i} and ϵ_{2i}). This implies

$$(1) \quad y_{1i} = \alpha X_i + \beta Z_{1i} + \mu_i + \epsilon_{1i},$$

and

$$(2) \quad y_{2i} = \alpha X_i + \beta Z_{2i} + \mu_i + \epsilon_{2i},$$

where we assume that the equations are identical for the two twins.

A general representation for the correlation between the family effect and the

observables is

$$(3) \mu_i = \gamma Z_{1i} + \gamma Z_{2i} + \delta X_i + \omega_i,$$

where we have assumed that the correlations between the family effect and the schooling level of each twin are the same, and where ω_i is uncorrelated with Z_{1i} , Z_{2i} , and X_i . The coefficient γ measures the "selection effect" relating family earnings and schooling levels while the coefficient β measures the rate of return to schooling. The data on twins make it possible to measure the selection effect and therefore to identify the rate of return to schooling. The reduced form for this model is obtained by substituting (3) into (2) and (1) and collecting terms:

$$(4) y_{1i} = [\alpha + \delta]X_i + [\beta + \gamma]Z_{1i} + \gamma Z_{2i} + \epsilon'_{1i}$$

$$(5) y_{2i} = [\alpha + \delta]X_i + \gamma Z_{1i} + [\beta + \gamma]Z_{2i} + \epsilon'_{2i},$$

where $\epsilon'_{1i} = \omega_i + \epsilon_{1i}$ and $\epsilon'_{2i} = \omega_i + \epsilon_{2i}$. Although equations (4) and (5) may be fitted by ordinary least squares, generalized least squares is the optimal estimator for these equations because of the cross-equation restrictions on the coefficients.

In this framework Z_{2i} may influence y_{1i} and Z_{1i} may influence y_{2i} in the reduced form. That is, both sibling's education levels (or any other variable that varies across twins) may enter into both sibling's wage equations because

of the correlation between the family effect and schooling levels. These correlations are entirely a result of selection effects. If, for example, families that would otherwise have high wage rates are more likely to educate their children, then γ should be positive. Finally, it is clear that the coefficients β of the variables that differ across twins are identified. They may be estimated because the selection effects γ may be estimated. On the other hand, the coefficients α of the variables that vary only across families are not identified.

The difference between (1) and (2) (or (4) and (5) is

$$(6) \quad y_{1i} - y_{2i} = \beta(Z_{1i} - Z_{2i}) + \epsilon_{1i} - \epsilon_{2i}.$$

In (6) the individual effect μ_i has been removed. The least squares estimator for this equation is called the "fixed effects" estimator. In equations (4) and (5) the selection effect is estimated explicitly and then subtracted to obtain the structural estimate of the return to schooling. In (6) the selection effect is eliminated by differencing. We report estimates of all these equations below in order to provide direct evidence on the size of the selection effect.

B. The Effect of Measurement Error

Classical measurement error in schooling will lead to bias in the estimators of the effect of schooling on wage rates. In a bivariate regression, the least squares regression coefficient in the presence of measurement error in

schooling is attenuated by an amount equal to the reliability ratio; that is, $\text{plim } \hat{\beta}_{\text{ols}} = \beta_{\text{ols}}[1 - \text{var}(v)/(\text{var}(S) + \text{var}(v))]$, where β_{ols} is the population regression coefficient if schooling were perfectly measured. Our estimates of the reliability ratio in the level of schooling are about .90, indicating that the ordinary least squares regression estimator would be biased downward by about 10% relative to its value in the absence of measurement error.

In the presence of selection effects, however, the ordinary least squares estimator will be biased even in the absence of measurement error (because of the omitted sibling's schooling variable). The "fixed effects" estimator eliminates this selection (or "omitted variable") bias but it does so at the expense of introducing far greater measurement error bias. In the presence of classical measurement error (see Griliches (1979)) the plim of the fixed effects estimator, $\hat{\beta}_{\text{fe}}$, is $\beta_{\text{fe}}\{1 - [\text{var}(v)/(\text{var}(S) + \text{var}(v))(1-\rho)]\}$, where ρ is the correlation between the measured schooling levels of the twins and β_{fe} is the population fixed effects estimator that would be obtained in the absence of measurement error. For the fixed effects estimator the attenuation caused by measurement error is increased because of the correlation between the schooling level of the twins. For example, with a reliability ratio of .9 and a correlation between the twins' self-reported schooling of .66, the fixed effects estimator would be biased

downward by $.1/(1-.66)=.294$, or about 30% relative to its value in the absence of measurement error.

One simple procedure for reducing the effect of measurement error on either estimator is to average the multiple reports on schooling and to use this average as the independent variable in equation (6). Assuming classical measurement error and using $[(S_1^1 - S_2^2)/2 + (S_1^2 - S_2^1)/2]$ as the independent variable in equation (6) leads to a modified fixed effects estimator with the following property:

$$\text{plim } \hat{\beta}_{\text{avg}} = \beta \{1 - [\text{var}(v)/((\text{var}(S) + \text{var}(v))(1-\rho) + 2\text{var}(S))]\}.$$

Measurement error causes a smaller asymptotic bias here than in the standard fixed effects estimator because the averaging decreases the measurement error as a fraction of the total variance in the independent variable. We report the results of estimates based on averages of the schooling data below to further appraise the importance of measurement error in estimation of the returns to schooling.

Finally, a straightforward consistent estimator for equations (4) and (5) or (6) may be obtained by the method of instrumental variables using the independent measures of the schooling variables as instruments. We also report these estimates below.

C. The Basic Empirical Results

Table 3 contains simple estimates of the effect of schooling on earnings that control only for demographic variables (that may be considered strictly exogenous). In columns 1 and 2 we report the results of stacking equations (1) and (2) and fitting them by least squares and generalized least squares (the seemingly unrelated regression method due to Zellner (1962)). The results in columns 1 and 2 are comparable to most of the estimates that have appeared in the literature that ignore the potential correlation between schooling level and family background. For example, a regression fitted to data from the 1990 CPS with an identical specification as that in column 1 of Table 3 gives an estimate of the effect of schooling on the wage of 8.3% per year completed (compared to 8.7% in the data for twins). Estimates of the effect of age and gender on wage rates are also similar in the CPS, but estimates of the effect of race on wage rates are very different (9% versus -40%).

The results in column 3 of Table 3 correspond to stacking equations (4) and (5) and fitting them by generalized least squares. These are the results that include the sibling's education level in each twin's wage equation. The coefficient of this variable is a measure of the selection effect, γ , in equation (3). As the table indicates, this effect is small and negative, indicating that the

selection effect in these data is negative. In this sample the better educated families are not those who would otherwise be the most highly compensated in the labor market. This result also implies that a regression estimator of the returns to schooling that does not adjust for the selection effect will be downward biased.

A regression of the intrapair difference in wage rates on the intrapair difference in schooling levels (which is the fixed effects estimate) is reported in column 5 of Table 3. This result confirms that the ordinary least squares regression result is smaller, not larger, than the intrapair regression estimate. This result is dramatically different from the result reported by Behrman, et. al. (1980). Behrman, et. al. report an OLS estimate of the return to schooling similar to what we report in column 1, but their intrapair regressions (comparable to those in our column 5) indicate schooling returns that are only around 40% as large.³

Figure 1 contains the scatter diagram of the intrapair (logarithmic) wage difference against the intrapair schooling difference. This diagram displays

³ We are comparing the regression coefficient in line (Y-1) in Table 6.1, which is for identical and fraternal twins, with the regression coefficient in line (Y-4) in Table 6.2, which is for identical twins only, of Behrman, et. al. (1980). The result in line (Y-4) in Table 6.2 Behrman, et. al. (1980) is a typographical error and should read .03, not .003.

much of what the basic data contain. First, it is clear that many twins report identical education levels, so that many intrapair education differences are zero. Second, there is still a large amount of variability in the reported wage differences of identical twins with the same education levels. The standard deviation of the difference in the log wages is .56 for identical twins with identically reported education levels. This may be compared with a standard deviation in the difference in log wages in the overall sample of .58. Finally, and despite the variability in wage rates, there is a clear tendency for better educated twins to report higher wage rates.

Columns 4 and 6 in Table 3 report the instrumental variables estimates that are intended to correct for measurement error in the education data. Here we use each sibling's report of his (or her) sibling's education level as an instrumental variable for his (or her) sibling's education level. These instrumental variables estimates are much larger than the least squares estimates and they are consistent with our finding above that a considerable fraction of the variability in reported differences in twins' education levels is due to measurement error. If we accept the sibling reports as valid instruments, it seems likely that conventional methods are producing serious underestimates of the economic returns to schooling. (The Appendix Table contains estimates

similar to those in Table 3 for the group of fraternal and identical twins. These results have the same implications as those in Table 3.)

Table 4 contains some further tests of the effect of measurement error on estimates of the returns to schooling. In this table we report the results of re-estimating the least squares and generalized least squares results of Table 3 using simple averages of the multiple indicators of education levels as independent variables. As expected, all of the estimates in Table 4 are larger than the corresponding estimates in Table 3. These results provide further evidence that measurement error is producing a downward bias in conventional estimates of the returns to schooling.

Table 5 contains an analysis that parallels the analysis in Table 4 except that variables measuring union status, marital status, years of tenure on the current job, and the education of the worker's parents have been added to the regressions. The estimated returns to schooling here are even larger than in Table 4. In addition, worker job tenure has a strong positive and precisely determined effect on wage rates. Marital status and union status have positive effects on wages, but neither effect is measured precisely.

Many of the results in Tables 3, 4 and 5 are similar to those that have been reported elsewhere in the study of the determination of wage rates. Wage

rates are concave in age, males earn more than females, and parental education seems to have very little independent effect on wage rates. One anomaly in Tables 3, 4 and 5 is the estimated effect of race on wage rates, which indicates that white workers earn less than nonwhite workers. It seems possible that this result is due to selection in the relatively small sample of nonwhites who attended the twins festival and turned up in our sample. We have, therefore, computed the results in Tables 4 and 5 deleting the sample of nonwhite workers. The results of these regressions for white workers do not differ in any material way from those already reported. (The effect of schooling on wage rates is slightly higher for white twin pairs than for the group as a whole, but this difference is not statistically significant.)

III. A Simple Model of Wage Rates, Schooling, and Measurement Error

A simplified version of equation (6), which represents the intrapair difference in wage rates, is:

$$(7) \Delta y_i = \beta \Delta s_i + \Delta e_i$$

where β represents the return to schooling, Δy_i represents the intrapair difference in log wages, Δs_i represents the true intrapair difference in schooling, and Δe_i is an error that is independent of schooling levels. Letting $\Delta s'_i$ and

$\Delta s''_i$ represent the measured self-reported schooling difference ($s_1^1 - s_2^2$) and the sibling-reported schooling difference ($s_1^2 - s_2^1$) we may also write

$$(8) \Delta s'_i = \Delta s_i + \Delta v'_i$$

$$(9) \Delta s''_i = \Delta s_i + \Delta v''_i,$$

where $\Delta v'_i$ and $\Delta v''_i$ are measurement errors in schooling that we assume are uncorrelated with the true schooling levels and with each other. Notice that any fixed tendency for some families to mis-report their schooling levels has been eliminated by differencing. This setup leads to a very simple method of moments estimation scheme.

The theoretical covariance matrix of the three variables Δy , $\Delta s'$, and $\Delta s''$ is contained in Table 6. This may be contrasted with the empirical covariance matrix for our data on identical twins in Table 7. The simple model in equations (7)-(9) has several implications for this covariance matrix. First, and most important, there is the restriction that the covariance between the wage difference and the education difference should be the same for each measure of the education difference. Remarkably, Table 7 indicates that this equality holds almost precisely in the data. Second, if self-reported measures of education are more accurate than sibling reported measures of education, then the variance of self-reported education differences (3.69) should be less than the variance of

sibling reported education differences (3.90). The empirical covariance matrix is also consistent with this hypothesis.

Table 8 contains the method of moments estimates of the basic parameters set out in Table 6. Since equations (7)-(9) are overidentified there are two estimates of the rate of return to schooling in the unrestricted model. This implies that there are also two estimates of the variance in the difference in wage rates that is explained by schooling differences. The first estimate of the return to schooling is simply the ordinary instrumental variables estimate (reported earlier in Table 4) of .167. The second estimate, which corresponds to the instrumental variables estimate we would obtain if we used the own reports of schooling as instruments for the sibling reports, is nearly identical at .157. The optimally restricted estimate of the return to schooling is in between these two estimates at .161.⁴

The estimates of the variance in the true intrapair difference in schooling and the two measurement error variances are independent of the

⁴ We select the restricted estimate $\theta \cdot \hat{\beta}_1 + (1 - \theta) \cdot \hat{\beta}_2$, where θ is selected to minimize the variance of the restricted estimate. The optimal θ is $[\text{var}(\hat{\beta}_2) - \text{cov}(\hat{\beta}_1, \hat{\beta}_2)] / [\text{var}(\hat{\beta}_1) + \text{var}(\hat{\beta}_2) - \text{cov}(\hat{\beta}_1, \hat{\beta}_2)]$. This procedure is equivalent to the optimal minimum distance estimator, as in Chamberlain (1982). We compute the asymptotic standard error of the restricted estimate assuming that θ is known.

estimates of the return to schooling. The estimates of these variances imply that measurement error makes up a sizeable fraction (about 42%) of the variance in the difference in the self-reported measures of schooling, and an even larger fraction (about 45%) of the variance in the sibling-reported measures of schooling. Measurement error is a serious problem in the estimation of intra-pair schooling differences because of the high correlation between the schooling levels of twins, as Griliches (1980) indicated some time ago.

IV. Conclusion

We went into the field to collect a new sample of data on twins in order to specifically resolve some important questions about the returns to schooling that have remained unresolved for over a decade. In 1980 Behrman, et. al. reported dramatic and widely publicized results from a study of identical twins that indicated that the economic returns to schooling were only about 3% per year completed, or about 40% of the size of the conventional estimates. Our results are very different. First, we find no evidence that conventional estimates of the returns to schooling are biased downward by imperfect controls for other

family-related factors that may affect earnings.⁵ Second, we find that measurement errors in self-reported schooling differences result in a substantial downward bias in conventional estimates of the returns to schooling.

If our procedures for adjusting the estimated returns to schooling for measurement error are accepted, then our best estimate is that increased schooling increases average wage rates by about 16% per year completed. This is a far larger estimate than any we have seen in the prior literature. Even if our procedures of adjustment for measurement error are not accepted, within-pair estimates of the returns to schooling in our data are never less than 9% per year completed. Only additional data collection is likely to lead to better estimates of the returns to schooling.

⁵ In fact, Griliches (1977) characterizes most of the available literature as providing little evidence of downward bias in estimated schooling effects due to omitted variables. The absence of selection effects is also noted by Ashenfelter and Zimmerman (in process) in their study of brothers and father-son pairs and by Angrist and Krueger (1991 and 1992) in their studies of the effect of the draft lottery and compulsory schooling on the returns to schooling. Additional evidence that the returns to schooling may have been badly underestimated has also been found by Butcher and Case (1992).

References

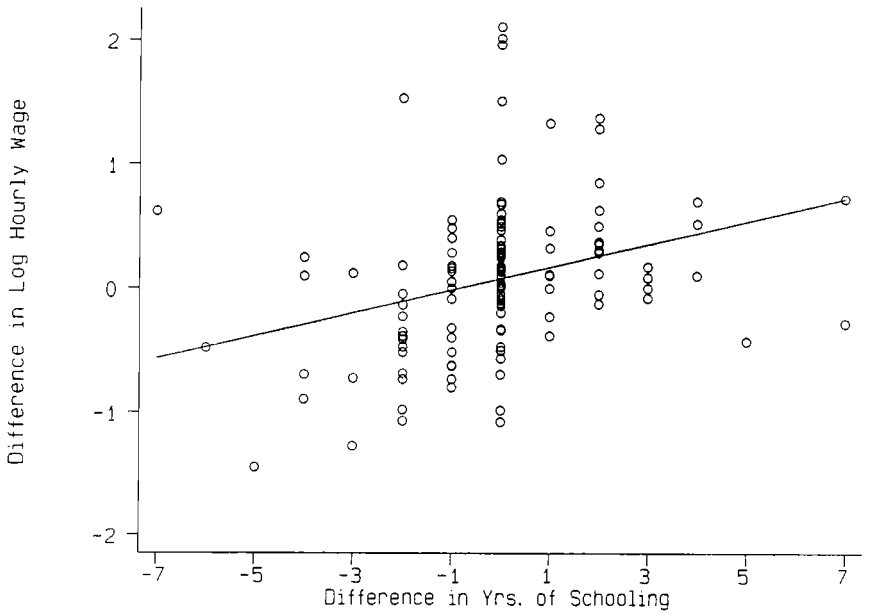
- Agrist, Joshua, and Alan Krueger, "Does Compulsory Schooling Affect Schooling and Earnings?" Quarterly Journal of Economics, November 1991, 106, pp. 979-1014.
- Angrist, Joshua, and Alan Krueger, "Estimating the Payoff to Schooling Using the Vietnam-era Draft Lottery," unpublished paper, 1992.
- Ashenfelter, Orley, and David Zimmerman, "Estimating the Return to Education with Sibling Data," in process, 1992.
- Behrman, Jere, Zdenek Hrubec, Paul Taubman, and Terence Wales, Socioeconomic Success: A Study of the Effects of Genetic Endowments, Family Environment, and Schooling (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co., 1980).
- Bielby, William, Robert Hauser, and David Featherman, "Response Errors of Non-Black Males in Models of the Stratification Process," in D.J. Aigner and A.S. Goldberger, eds., Latent Variables in Socio-economic Models (Amsterdam: North Holland, 1977), pp. 227-251.
- Butcher, Kristin and Anne Case, "The Effect of Sibling Sex Composition on Women's Educational Attainment," Princeton University, June 1992.
- Chamberlain, Gary, "Multivariate Regression Models for Panel Data," Journal of Econometrics 18:5, 1982, pp. 5-46.
- Goldberger, Arthur, Econometric Theory (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964). Griliches, Zvi, "Sibling Models and Data in Economics: Beginnings of a Survey," Journal of Political Economy 87 (Supplement), 1979, pp. S37-S64.
- Griliches, Zvi, "Estimating the Returns to Schooling - Some Econometric Problems," Econometrica 45, January 1977, pp. 1-22.
- Jablon, Seymour, James Neel, Henry Gershowitz, and Glenn Atkinson, "The NAS--NRC Panel: Methods of Construction of the Panel, Zygosity

Diagnosis, and Proposed Use," American Journal of Human Genetics 19, March 1967, pp. 133-161.

Siegel, Paul and Robert Hodge, "A Causal Approach to the Study of Measurement Error," in Hubert Blalock and Ann Blalock, eds., Methodology in Social Research (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1968), pp. 28-59.

Zellner, Arnold, "An Efficient Method of Estimating Seemingly Unrelated Regressions and Tests for Aggregation Bias," Journal of the American Statistical Association 57, 1962, pp. 348-68.

Figure 1: Intrapair Returns to Schooling, Identical Twins



stata™

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics; Means (Standard Deviations in parentheses)

Variable	Identical Twins ^a	Fraternal Twins ^a	Population ^b
Self-reported education	14.11 (2.16)	13.72 (2.01)	13.14 (2.73)
Sibling-reported education	14.02 (2.14)	13.41 (2.07)	--
Hourly wage	\$13.31 (11.19)	\$12.07 (5.40)	\$11.10 (7.41)
Age	36.56 (10.36)	35.59 (8.29)	38.91 (12.53)
White	0.94 (0.24)	0.93 (0.25)	0.87 (0.34)
Female	0.54 (0.50)	0.48 (0.50)	0.45 (0.50)
Self-employed	0.15 (0.36)	0.10 (0.30)	0.12 (0.32)
Covered by union	0.24 (0.43)	0.30 (0.46)	--
Married	0.45 (0.50)	0.54 (0.50)	0.62 (0.48)
Age of mother at birth	28.27 (6.37)	29.38 (7.05)	--
Twins report same education	0.49 (0.50)	0.43 (0.50)	--
Twins studied together	0.74 (0.44)	0.38 (0.49)	--
Helped sibling find job	0.43 (0.50)	0.24 (0.43)	--
Sibling helped find job	0.35 (0.48)	0.22 (0.41)	--
Sample size	298	92	164,085

a. Source: Twinsburg Twins Survey, August, 1991.

b. Source: 1990, Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Groups File.

Table 2: Correlation Matrices

Identical Twins

	Y_1	Y_2	S_1^1	S_1^2	S_2^2	S_2^1	Father's Educ (1)	Father's Educ (2)	Mother's Educ (1)	Mother's Educ (2)
Y_1	1.000									
Y_2	0.563	1.000								
S_1^1	0.382	0.168	1.000							
S_1^2	0.375	0.140	0.920	1.000						
S_2^2	0.267	0.272	0.658	0.697	1.000					
S_2^1	0.248	0.247	0.700	0.643	0.877	1.000				
Father's Educ (1)	0.155	0.088	0.345	0.266	0.361	0.416	1.000			
Father's Educ (2)	0.159	0.091	0.357	0.278	0.320	0.389	0.857	1.000		
Mother's Educ (1)	0.102	0.088	0.348	0.343	0.392	0.410	0.614	0.644	1.000	
Mother's Educ (2)	0.126	0.087	0.316	0.321	0.322	0.337	0.503	0.579	0.837	1.000

Fraternal Twins

	Y_1	Y_2	S_1^1	S_1^2	S_2^2	S_2^1	Father's Educ (1)	Father's Educ (2)	Mother's Educ (1)	Mother's Educ (2)
Y_1	1.000									
Y_2	0.364	1.000								
S_1^1	0.142	0.233	1.000							
S_1^2	0.128	0.256	0.869	1.000						
S_2^2	0.140	0.367	0.543	0.535	1.000					
S_2^1	0.136	0.387	0.621	0.565	0.951	1.000				
Father's Educ (1)	0.109	0.028	0.332	0.408	0.353	0.407	1.000			
Father's Educ (2)	0.025	-0.107	0.259	0.392	0.230	0.253	0.803	1.000		
Mother's Educ (1)	0.147	-0.117	0.025	0.127	0.244	0.244	0.547	0.458	1.000	
Mother's Educ (2)	-0.065	-0.178	0.180	0.216	0.109	0.180	0.587	0.600	0.742	1.000

Note: Y_1 and Y_2 represent sibling 1 and sibling 2's log hourly wage rate.

Table 3: OLS, GLS, IV, and Fixed Effects Estimates of Log Wage Equations for Identical Twins^a

Variable	OLS (1)	GLS (2)	GLS (3)	IV ^b (4)	First Difference (5)	First Diff. by IV (6)
Own Education (+100)	8.387 (1.443)	8.744 (1.495)	8.844 (1.515)	11.624 (2.950)	9.157 (2.371)	16.697 (4.311)
Sibling's Education (+100)	--	--	-.665 (1.518)	-3.735 (2.946)	--	--
Age	.088 (.019)	.090 (.023)	.090 (.023)	.088 (.019)	--	--
Age-Squared (+100)	-.087 (.023)	-.089 (.028)	-.090 (.029)	-.087 (.024)	--	--
Male	.204 (.063)	.204 (.077)	.206 (.077)	.206 (.064)	--	--
White	-.410 (.127)	-.417 (.143)	-.424 (.144)	-.428 (.128)	--	--
Sample Size	298	298	298	298	149	149
R ²	.260	.219	.219	--	.092	--

Notes:

- a. Each equation also includes an intercept term.
- b. Own education and sibling's education are instrumented for using each sibling's report of the other sibling's education as instruments.

Table 4: Estimates Using Average of Schooling Reports
Log Wage Equations for Identical Twins*

Variable	OLS (1)	GLS (2)	GLS (3)	First Difference (4)
Avg. Own Education (+100) ^b	8.664 (1.494)	9.414 (1.575)	9.796 (1.619)	11.727 (2.596)
Avg. Sibling's Education (+100) ^b	--	--	-1.651 (1.621)	
Age	.089 (.019)	.091 (.023)	.091 (.023)	--
Age-Squared (+100)	-.088 (.023)	-.091 (.029)	-.091 (.029)	--
Male	.203 (.063)	.202 (.077)	.208 (.077)	--
White	-.406 (.127)	-.382 (.144)	-.385 (.144)	--
Sample Size	298	298	298	149
R ²	.272	.223	.225	.122

Notes:

- a. Each equation also includes an intercept term.
- b. Avg. own education is equal to $(S_1^2 + S_1^2)/2$ and avg. of sibling's education is equal to $(S_2^2 + S_2^1)/2$.

Table 5: GLS, IV, and Fixed Effects Estimates of Augmented Log Wage Equations for Identical Twins^a

Variable	GLS (1)	GLS (2)	IV ^b (3)	First Difference (4)	First Diff. By IV (5)
Own Education (+100)	10.463 (1.585)	10.485 (1.588)	14.700 (3.421)	9.088 (2.198)	17.866 (4.126)
Sibling's Education (+100)	--	-.775 (1.621)	-6.193 (3.470)	--	--
Age	.082 (.023)	.082 (.023)	.082 (.019)	--	--
Age-Squared (+100)	-.094 (.029)	-.094 (.029)	-.092 (.024)	--	--
Male	.147 (.080)	.149 (.081)	.139 (.066)	--	--
White	-.472 (.143)	-.482 (.144)	-.506 (.130)	--	--
Covered by Union	.115 (.072)	.118 (.072)	.153 (.081)	.063 (.090)	.095 (.095)
Married	.089 (.065)	.086 (.065)	.051 (.073)	.142 (.081)	.140 (.086)
Yrs. of Tenure	.025 (.005)	.024 (.005)	.020 (.005)	.028 (.006)	.028 (.006)
Father's Educ.	.001 (.014)	.001 (.014)	.006 (.013)	--	--
Mother's Educ.	.013 (.017)	.015 (.018)	.019 (.017)	--	--
Sample Size	284	284	284	147	147
R ²	.320	.320	--	.257	--

Notes:

- a. Each equation also includes an intercept term.
- b. Own education and sibling's education are instrumented for using sibling's report of the other sibling's education as instruments.

Table 6
Moment Matrix

	Δy	$\Delta s'_i$	$\Delta s''_i$
Δy	$\beta^2 \sigma_{\Delta s}^2 + \sigma_{\Delta \epsilon}^2$	$\beta \sigma_{\Delta s}^2$	$\beta \sigma_{\Delta s}^2$
$\Delta s'_i$		$\sigma_{\Delta s}^2 + \sigma_{\Delta u'}^2$	$\sigma_{\Delta s}^2$
$\Delta s''_i$			$\sigma_{\Delta s}^2 + \sigma_{\Delta u''}^2$

Table 7
Empirical Covariance Matrix

	Δy	$\Delta s'$	$\Delta s''$
Δy	.336	.338	.360
$\Delta s'$		3.691	2.158
$\Delta s''$			3.902

Table 8
Method of Moments Estimates

<u>Parameter</u>	Unrestricted Estimates		Restricted Estimates
	<u>(1)</u>	<u>(2)</u>	<u>(3)</u>
β	0.167 (0.043)	0.157 (0.041)	0.161 (0.036)
$\sigma^2_{\Delta s}$	2.158	2.158	2.158
$\sigma^2_{\Delta \epsilon}$	0.276	0.283	0.280
$\sigma^2_{\Delta v'}$	1.533	1.533	1.533
$\sigma^2_{\Delta v''}$	1.744	1.744	1.744

Note: Asymptotic standard errors for β are in parentheses.

Appendix Table

OLS, GLS, IV, and Fixed Effects Estimates of Log Wage Equations for All Twins*

Variable	OLS (1)	GLS (2)	GLS (3)	IV ^b (4)	First Difference (5)	First Difference by IV (6)
Own Education (+100)	7.813 (1.165)	7.761 (1.215)	7.713 (1.241)	10.219 (2.313)	7.182 (1.948)	13.092 (3.407)
Sibling's Education (+100)	--	--	.244 (1.239)	-2.414 (2.311)	--	--
Age	.088 (.015)	.089 (.018)	.089 (.018)	.088 (.015)	--	--
Age-Squared (+100)	-.090 (.018)	-.092 (.022)	-.091 (.022)	-.090 (.018)	--	--
Male	.192 (.050)	.184 (.058)	.184 (.058)	.191 (.050)	--	--
White	-.371 (.104)	-.378 (.119)	-.376 (.120)	-.379 (.105)	--	--
Sample Size	408	408	408	408	204	204
R ²	.248	.199	.199	--	.063	--

Notes:

- a. Each equation also includes an intercept term.
- b. Own education and sibling's education are instrumented for using sibling's report of the other sibling's education as instruments.

Appendix A

Twinsburg Twins Survey (TTS) - August 1991

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our survey. We will be asking you some background questions and a set of questions from the Current Population Survey. The Current Population Survey is a survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau every month. It is used to calculate the unemployment rate and to produce several other economic indicators. Our survey should take less than 10 minutes. We will keep your responses completely confidential. You do not need to respond to a question if you do not want to.

1. What is your name? _____
2. Where do you currently live? _____ (Town, State)
3. Do you have a twin brother or sister? Brother _____ Sister _____
4. What is his/her name? _____
5. Is your twin brother/sister attending the Festival?
If yes, would you please ask him/her to stop by our booth.
6. As children, were you and your twin "as alike as two peas in a pod", or did you have "only ordinary family resemblance"?
Peas in a pod _____ Ordinary family resemblance _____
7. In childhood, did your parents, brothers and sisters, or teachers have trouble in telling you apart?
Yes _____ No _____
8. Is your twin brother/sister an identical twin? That is, are you monozygotic twins? (Only ask of same sex twins.)
Identical _____ Fraternal _____ Don't Know _____
9. How do you know you are or are not monozygotic twins?
Blood test _____ Tissue Typing _____ Placenta _____ Never Tested _____
10. Do you have any first cousins who are twins? Yes _____ No _____
11. What is the highest level of school your father completed? _____
12. What is the highest level of school your mother completed? _____

13. What occupation did your father spend most of his career in?

14. Approximately how old was your mother when you were born? _____

17. What is your date of birth? _____ (m\d\y)

19A. What is your marital status? (Circle one.)

Married Widowed Divorced Separated Never Married

20. Sex: Male _____ Female _____

21A. Are you a veteran of the armed services? Yes _____ No _____

Vietnam Era Korean War World War II World War I Other

23A. What is the highest grade of school you attended? _____

23B. Did you complete that grade? Yes _____ No _____

What is the name of the school that granted you your highest degree?
Where is that school located?

24. What is your race? (Circle one.)

White Black Hispanic American Indian Asian Other

19. What were you doing most of last week?

Working WK
With a job but not at work ... J
Looking for work LK
Keeping house H
Going to school S
Unable to work U
Retired R
Other (specify) OT

20. Did you do any work at all LAST WEEK, not counting work around the house?

Yes _____ No _____

20A. If No, when was the last time you worked for pay? _____ (year).

Description of Job or Business (last week's job or last job if not working)

23B. What kind of business or industry did you work for last week? (For example: TV and radio mfg., retail store.)

23C. What kind of work were you doing? (For example: electrical engineer, stock clerk, typist, farmer.)

23D. What were your most important activities or duties at this job? (For example: types, keeps account books, files, sells cars.)

23E. Which of the following describes your employer? (Circle one.)

Private Co. Government Self Employed

23F. For how long have you worked for this employer? _____

25F. Counting all locations where your employer operates, what is the total number of persons who work for your employer?

<25 _____ 25-99 _____ 100-499 _____ 500-999 _____ 1000+ _____

25A. How many hours per week do you usually work at this job? _____

25B. Are you paid by the hour on this job? Yes _____ No _____

(If paid hourly ask:)

25C. How much do you earn per hour? \$ _____.

25D. How much do you usually earn per week at this job BEFORE deductions? Include any overtime pay, commissions or tips usually received.

\$ _____ per week.

25E. On this job, are you a member of a labor union or of an employee association similar to a union?

Yes _____ No _____ (If No, ask 25F.)

25F. On this job, are you covered by a union or employee association contract?

Yes _____ No _____

26. Do you have a disability that limits the amount or kind of work that you can do?

Yes _____ No _____

27. Did your twin brother/sister ever help you to find a job?

Yes _____ No _____

27. Did you ever help your twin brother/sister to find a job?

Yes _____ No _____

28H. What is the highest grade of school your twin attended? _____

28I. Did your twin complete that grade? Yes _____ No _____

31. Did you and your twin study together when you were in high school?

Yes _____ No _____

32. Have you done some volunteer work in the past month? By volunteer work I mean not just belonging to a service organization, but actually working in some way to help others for no monetary pay.

Yes _____ No _____

32A. If yes: I'd like your best estimate of the total number of hours you spent in the past month as a volunteer.

_____ hours

Interviewer's Initials _____