

Exploring immigrant gaps in education: empirical evidence

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Migratory background is known to influence students' school performance, both in reading and mathematics and science literacy. Using data from the OECD PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) 2018, we analyze the differences in scores between immigrant and native-born students in Italy, considering the variables that most influence the existing gaps. To better understand this achievement gap through econometric analyses as the Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition (Oaxaca, 1973; Blinder, 1973), our study analyzes the role played from other variables (i.e. gender, social and economic background, motivational variables, school context, school address) and how these differently influence the education gap of students with a migrant background, in the different subjects. The decomposition results suggest that the differences on PISA assessment from immigrant and non-immigrant student are all significant but larger in reading and science than in mathematics. On these matters, the study confirms the relevant weight of the language spoken at home by the student.