



Student Sentiment on Immigration at the University of Nevada, Reno

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Introduction

This study explores the relationship between particular demographics of students at the University of Nevada, Reno, and their opinions regarding immigration in the United States.

Data was collected by the means of an anonymous online survey, with questions concerning various aspects of immigration, as well as specific demographic questions.

Students were given the option of being entered into a gift card drawing for participating.

Methods

Surveys were distributed in multiple ways. Specifically:

- We spoke to various classrooms regarding the project, encouraging students to participate. The survey link was either posted in online classrooms or given as a QR code.
- The PI tabled at student hubs around campus, such as the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center and Joe Crowley Student Union. Tablets were used to provide students access to the survey.



Figure 1: Tabling setup used to distribute survey at student hubs

Measures

- To quantify qualitative survey responses, an Immigration Sentiment Index (I_s) was calculated. This value ranges between 0 and 1, with 0 representing hyper-conservative anti-immigration views and 1 hyper-liberal pro-immigration views. The response of each particular survey question was assigned a value, and the average of these yielded an individual's I_s value.
- Individuals with an I_s of .70 or greater were classified as being in strong favor of immigration and were very likely to strongly oppose a border wall with Mexico, support the abolishment of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency, support open borders, and describe immigration in a purely positive light, among other measures.
- Statistical tests performed were based on the proportion of individuals within a demographic with an I_s of .7 or greater, with $\alpha = .05$.

Results

- $n = 71$
- Average $I_s = 0.632$
- Median $I_s = 0.633$
- $SD = 0.106$
- Approximately Normal Distribution

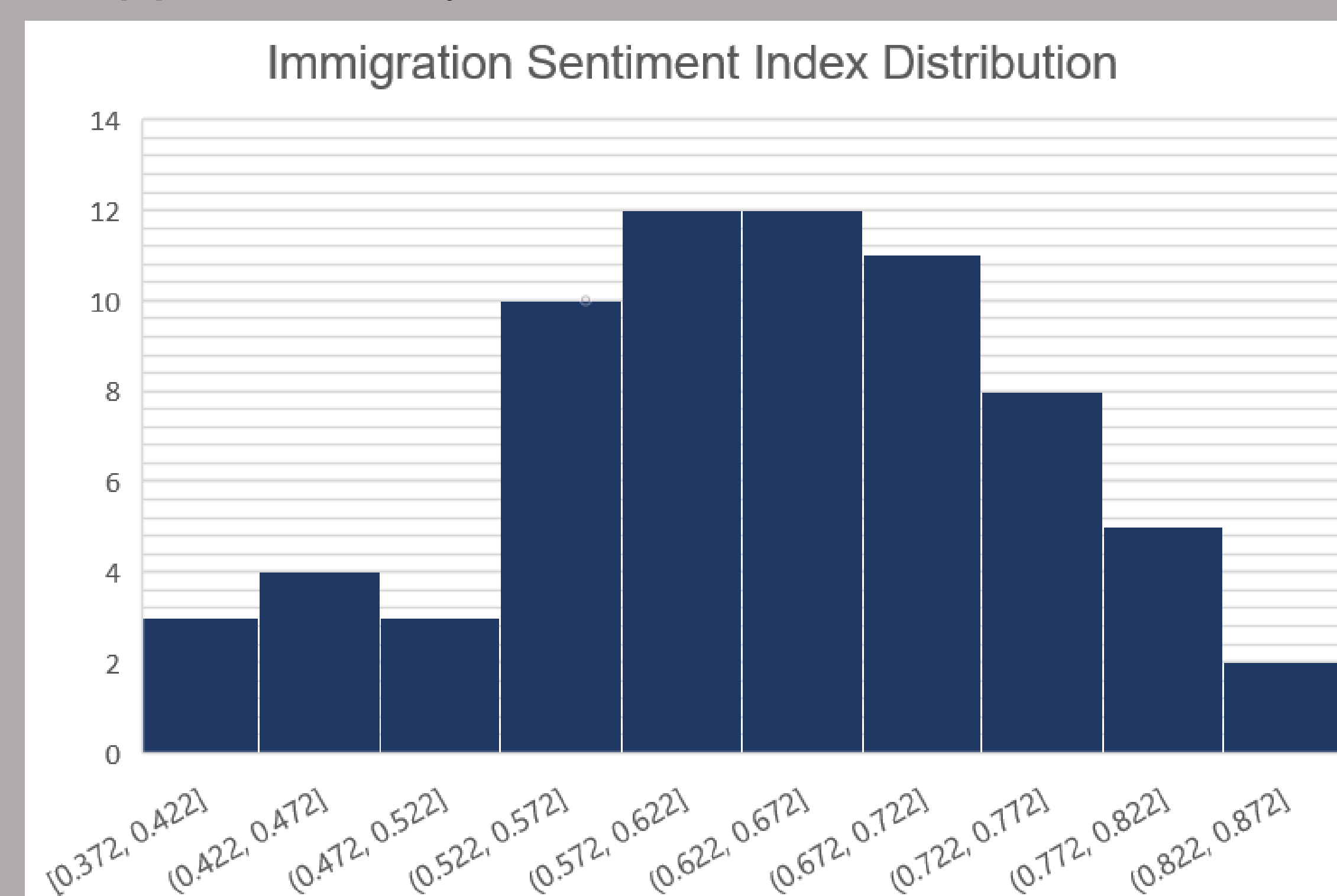


Figure 2: Distribution of I_s values of all participants

Conclusions

- On average, students at the University of Nevada possessed favorable views on immigration. While the average student was not apathetic on the subject, their views did not represent previously described strong favor either.
- Students who had some relation to immigrants were not more likely to strongly favor immigration than those who did not ($p = 0.694$).
- Hispanic students were not more likely to strongly favor immigration than non-Hispanic students ($p = 0.635$).
- Minority students were not more likely to strongly favor immigration compared to non minority students ($p = 0.676$).
- Students who identified as straight were not less likely to strongly favor immigration compared to students who identified as LGBTQ+ ($p = 0.888$).
- Employed students were not more likely to strongly favor immigration than students who were not employed ($p = 0.632$).
- Upperclassmen were more likely to strongly favor immigration than lowerclassmen ($p = 0.013$). This may suggest the college environment elicits increasingly positive views on immigration over time.
- STEM majors were less likely to strongly favor immigration than non STEM majors ($p = 0.021$).
- With a relatively small and potentially unrepresentative sample, results of this study cannot be completely generalized to all University of Nevada students. Further research is required for a full generalization of results.