Career Aspirations and the Process of Career Decisions
First Results of the DAB – Panel Study
Franziska Jäpel, David Glauser, and Rolf Becker

Introduction

• Educational aspirations lead to educational decisions which are the result of the consideration of alternatives.
• Little research on the process of career aspirations.
• Focus on the theoretical perspective of rational action and primary and secondary effects of social (and ethnic) origin.
• Focus on the first transition from compulsory education to upper sec. education.

Project Design and Research Questions

Research Questions
(1) Which idealistic educational aspirations have 8th grade pupils depending on their social and ethnic origin?
(2) Do the perceptions of costs and benefits differ between pupils depending on individual parameters?
(3) How can the assumptions of rational choice explain varying idealistic educational aspirations of pupils at the first transition?

Design of the DAB-Panel Study

Period of Decision
Period of Realization

Determinants of Occupational and Educational Aspirations

Independent Variables

Individual Parameters
education of the parents (pupil’s nationally)
household income
current type of school
school performance
gender

Status Maintenance
importance of status maintenance
probability of status maintenance

Probability of Success
Perceived Costs

Idealistic Occupational And Educational Aspirations

Dependent Variables

Educational Aspirations I:
upper sec. school (grammar school, special middle school) (1) vs. vocational education (2)

Educational Aspirations II:
lower sec. school (0) vs. vocational education (1) vs. undecided (2)

Subjective perception about educational costs and status maintenance: subjective costs (C), probability of successfully realizing a degree (p), importance of status maintenance (SV), probability of status maintenance (c)

Sample and Results

Tab. 1: Determinants of Subjective Costs, Success Probability, and Status Maintenance (OLS-regressions with households as clusters)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coeff (1)</th>
<th>Coeff (2)</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>Sign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household Income</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
<td>0.002***</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
<td>2.45**</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
<td>0.002***</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
<td>2.45**</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Performance</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
<td>0.002***</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
<td>2.45**</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Background</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
<td>0.002***</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
<td>2.45**</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tab. 2: Theoretically Expected Determinants of Educational Aspiration (conditional logistic regression)

Data and Sample

• Nearly 4’000 pupils
• Data is collected by an online survey
• Data from the first wave in winter 2011/2012

Results

• There are differences in idealistic educational aspiration between genders and depending on social and ethnic background (data not shown).
• Pupils from families lower education expect higher costs in upper sec. school. The expected financial burden is also higher for pupils from families with low household income.
• The estimation of the probability of success is influenced by school performance and the parents’ educational background. The importance of status maintenance is increasing with a higher educational background.
• The probability of status maintenance is decreasing for upper sec. school if the parental education background is ISCED3c or ISCED2b.
• The effect of social background on idealistic aspirations is mainly explained by subjective estimate of costs, probability of successfully realizing a degree, and status maintenance as a perceived return from education.
• Idealistic aspirations concerning the transition from lower to upper secondary education can be explained by the assumptions of rational choice and the secondary effect of social origin.

Outlook

• Wave II in August/September 2012 and Wave III in May/June 2013
• Similar analysis for the secondary effect of ethnic origin
• Choice-Experiments to investigate the exact impact of VET characteristics on occupational decisions

References


Bundesamt für Berufsbildung und Technologie BBT