

Career Aspirations and the Process of Career Decisions

First Results of the DAB – Panel Study

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Introduction

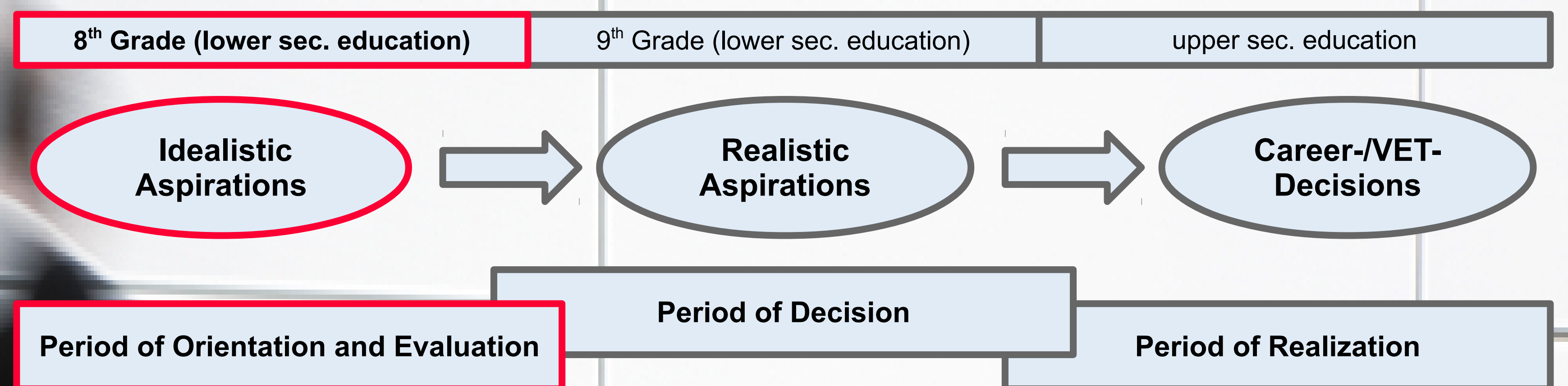
- Educational aspirations lead to educational decisions which are the result of the consideration of alternatives.
- Little research on the process of career aspirations.
- Focus on the theoretical perspective of *rational action* and *primary and secondary effects of social (and ethnic) origin*.
- Focus on the first transition from compulsory education to upper sec. education.
- Educational aspirations are influenced by...
 - ...the socially distinctive estimation about educational costs and benefits
 - ...the importance and probability of status maintenance
 - ...the probability of successfully realizing a degree
 - ...different prerequisites for school performance
- Subjective perceptions depend on social origin.

Project Design and Research Questions

Research Questions

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

Design of the DAB-Panel Study



Determinants of Occupational and Educational Aspirations

Independent Variables

Individual Parameters
education of the parents (pupil's nationality)
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, spec. middle school) (0) vs. vocational education (1) vs. Other & undecided (2)

Educational Aspirations II: vocational education (0) vs. vocational baccalaureate (1) vs. upp. sec. school (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)

	Model 1.1 Costs (C)	Model 1.2 Costs (C)	Model 2.1 Prob. of Success (p)	Model 2.2 Prob. of Success (p)	Model 3 Imp. of Status Maintenance (SV)	Model 4 Prob. of Status Maintenance (c)
<i>Upper Sec. Education (Ref.: VET)</i>						
Vocational Baccalaureate	0.398***	0.398***	-1.198***	-1.198***	-	-0.851***
Upper Sec. School	0.761***	0.761***	-1.677***	-1.677***	-	-1.151***
<i>Education Parents (Ref.: ISCED 4-6)</i>						
ISCED 3c	0.006	-0.034	-0.267***	-0.240***	-0.146	-0.433***
ISCED 3b	0.110*	0.082	-0.081+	-0.070	-0.055	-0.129*
ISCED 3a	0.138	0.129	0.063	0.052	-0.328**	0.077
<i>Household Income (Ref.: high)</i>						
low		0.107+				
medium		0.051				
GPA German				0.138***		
GPA Math				0.087**		
Constant	2.827***	2.790***	4.395***	3.339***	2.565***	4.396***
Observations	6'501	6'501	6'501	6'501	2'167	6'501
Number of Clusters	2'167	2'167	2'167	2'167	-	2'167
adj. R ²	0.064	0.065	0.259	0.264	0.002	0.138

t-values in brackets; households as clusters; controlled for missing values in ISCED and household income, not declared.
+ p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

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 parent's 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 oder ISCED3b.
- 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*.

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

	Modell 5	Modell 6 (additiv)	Modell 7 (multiplikativ)
<i>Vocational Baccalaureate vs. VET</i>			
<i>Education Parents (Ref.: ISCED 4-6)</i>			
ISCED 3c	0.485**	0.649	0.609*
ISCED 3b	0.550**	0.705	0.714*
ISCED 3a	0.688	0.597	0.617*
Imp. Status Maintenance (SV)		0.922*	
GPA German		1.235	1.239
GPA Math		1.221*	1.313*
Constant	0.657***	0.336	0.137***
<i>Upper Sec. School vs. VET</i>			
<i>Education Parents (Ref.: ISCED 4-6)</i>			
ISCED 3c	0.294***	0.483*	0.448**
ISCED 3b	0.350***	0.487***	0.549**
ISCED 3a	0.889	0.657	0.693
Imp. Status Maintenance (SV)		0.934	
GPA German		2.344***	2.546***
GPA Math		1.468**	1.536***
Constant	1.052	0.013***	0.005***
<i>Theoretical Parameters</i>			
Subjective Costs (C)		1.099*	
Subjective Prob. of Success (p)		2.211***	
Imp. Status Maintenance (c)		1.374***	
Educational Motivation (U + cSV)			1.207***
Investment Risk (Cip)			0.422***
Observations (Households)	6501 (2'167)	6501 (2'167)	6501 (2'167)
Wald- χ^2	182.70***	687.68***	519.89***

Exponentiated coefficients: + p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001
Controlled for missing values in ISCED, not declared.

Data and Sample

The major interest of the longitudinal project is to investigate the individuals' forming of educational aspirations and career decisions. Of particular interest is the choice of a vocational training by young people in Switzerland. Therefore, the focus of the DAB – Panel Study is on the formation of vocational choice as a development process from idealistic to realistic career aspirations.

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

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

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