

DIW Applied Micro Seminar

Educational choices - competitiveness or locus of control?

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Abstract:

In Switzerland, pupils have to make important educational decisions before the end of compulsory schooling. They have to decide whether – given the required school grades – to continue their school career in an academically oriented baccalaureate school or in an apprenticeship. In the latter case they have to choose between more or less demanding occupations to learn and compete for vacant training positions. In this presentation I analyse educational intentions of a large sample of 8thgraders using a wide range of information, including measures of cognitive and non-cognitive skills. Although the educational decisions are risky and taken in a highly competitive environment, our experimental measures of competitiveness and risk have not much explanatory power once gender and other background information are controlled for. Conversely, locus of control is a strong statistically significant explanatory variable in all of our specifications.