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Workshop 2B - Education and labour market

Does it matter where they train? Transition into higher education after VET and the role of labour market segments.

Authors

*Miriam Grønning, Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training SFIVET
Ines Trede, Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training SFIVET*

Abstract

Due to a higher demand for tertiary education and increasing complexity of working tasks, continued skill development and educational achievement has become important for the career development of young people with vocational education and training (VET), i.e. the majority of Swiss school leavers. We therefore investigate whether different types of training structures during apprenticeship-based VET influence individuals' likelihood to enter tertiary education.

We assume that training and working conditions within labour market segments in Switzerland are similar, as the Swiss labour market structure and VET occupations largely coincide. We therefore posit that theories of labour market segmentation (e.g. Sengenberger, 1987; Kalleberg & Sorensen, 1979) can be used to understand the influence of types of training structure on further educational achievement. These theories state that structural differences between segments (e.g. product markets, average firm size or qualification level of the staff) result in varying working (and training) conditions, opportunities for further training career opportunities, wages and satisfaction with work (Baron & Bielby, 1980; Tolbert, Horan & Beck, 1980). The primary segment, is generally equipped with higher financial and staff resources and better career opportunities compared to the secondary segment. We therefore hypothesise that young people who were trained in the primary segment are more likely to pursue a tertiary level education than those who were trained in the secondary segment.

Our analyses are based on a full national sample of health care apprentices who were surveyed in the last year of their apprenticeship (2010), one year (2012) and five years after completion (2016). The data thus enables us to observe enrolment in tertiary education up to five years after completion of the apprenticeship. Since selection into the primary and secondary segment is likely to be non-random, we use propensity score matching techniques to reduce a possible selection bias. Results show that young people from the primary segment (hospitals) were more likely to enter tertiary education compared to apprentices from the secondary segment (nursing homes). These findings imply that the types of initial training matters for workers' careers by affecting further educational achievement.

References

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