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Title: Non-cognitive skills, Parenting practices and Academic success

Abstract: Economists have been using psychometric tests, like IQ tests, to deal with the problem of cognitive ability bias but the effect of non-cognitive ability has been overlooked. In this paper a variable aimed at measuring a particular non-cognitive skill - attitude towards learning - is constructed using insights from Five-factor model of personality, and then used to assess the role of non-cognitive skills on children's educational achievement. This paper also looks at child-rearing practices as a transmission mechanism of socio-economic status. It studies the direct effect of parenting style on children's educational outcomes and also its indirect effect through the development of the children's own attitude towards learning. Using data from the British Household Panel Survey, the results of the estimation of a recursive system show that a negative attitude towards learning lowers significantly the propensity of getting high qualifications, and that having discipline at home helps children to develop a positive attitude towards learning. Another interesting result is that not only child-specific practices - such as monitoring of homework - but also generic child-rearing practices - like establishing rules at home - are important for the academic success of the children.

Keywords: Educational attainment; Youth; Non-cognitive skills; personality traits; parenting style

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