

# Determinants of Secondary School Choice in the Czech Republic\*

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## Abstract

The admission process into secondary schools in the Czech Republic involves high risk of ending up at an undesired school if failing to be admitted to one's preferred school. Hence, the application decision is an important element of the process since individuals have to assess their chances of being admitted. Empirical evidence based on pupils participating in the PISA project suggests that especially the education of parents and cognitive abilities matter to a large extent for a pupil's application decision. Non-cognitive skills are found to have an impact on a pupil's decision as well, even though the significance and magnitude differ across districts, and, most importantly, genders. Non-cognitive skills of females operate in accordance with intuitive expectations—higher risk associated with the outcome of the admission process in the district increases the importance of non-cognitive abilities with respect to decision-making. The opposite, counter-intuitive outcomes are obtained for males. Explanation and research suggestions are offered.

## Abstrakt

Prijímací proces na stredné školy sa vyznačuje vysokým rizikom, že žiak skončí na málo kvalitnej a neželanej škole v prípade, že neobstojí na prijímacom konaní na preferovanej škole. Rozhodnutie o tom, kam si žiak podá prihlášku je teda kľúčové a žiak pri ňom musí čo najlepšie odhadnúť svoje šance na tej ktorej škole. Empirické výsledky tejto práce, založené na údajoch z PISA výskumu, naznačujú, že vzdelanie rodičov a kognitívne schopnosti sú hlavnými faktormi ovplyvňujúcimi voľbu žiaka. Nekognitívne, osobnostné, schopnosti majú taktiež vplyv, aj keď menší oproti predchádzajúcim faktorom. Čo je dôležité, vplyv týchto osobnostných charakteristík je iný u dievčat ako u chlapcov. Kým nekognitívne schopnosti dievčat majú vplyv v súlade s intuitívnymi očakávaniami, t.j. s rastúcou rizikovosťou ich význam na rozhodnutie o voľbe školy rastie, u chlapcov tomu tak nie je. V článku sú rozobraté potenciálne príčiny a sú navrhnuté podnety pre ďalší výskum.

*Keywords:* non-cognitive skills, schooling choice, secondary education

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