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THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL EDUCATION ON HUMAN CAPITAL



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Education is at the heart of modern discussions about human capital, since it is it that provides the population with competencies that are in demand on the labor market. An important source of accumulation and growth of human capital is the parental family: adult children of more educated parents may have more opportunities both for accumulation and for the subsequent capitalization of knowledge and skills. The purpose of the study is to assess the impact of parents' education on the human capital of their adult children. The assessment was made through a comparison of objective and subjective life results based on the absence/presence of higher education among the respondents' parents. Data collection was carried out by a mixed method (n = 1261). The share of respondents with higher education is 36%; 14% of respondents have both parents with higher education; 34% have at least one parent. The groups were compared using contingency tables with the control of the significance of differences according to Pearson's Chi-squared test. Indices of specific and total human capital are calculated on the basis of self-assessments. The index values were compared by the method of comparing the means with the control using the Fisher test (F). The results show that self-assessments of life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and social optimism differ significantly depending on the parents' presence/absence of higher education. The total human capital of people from more educated families is statistically higher and demonstrates elasticity. Investing in the development of their children, more educated parents focus on building up their universal competence, rather than specific professional knowledge. The author concludes that there is a positive relationship between the human capital of adults and their parents' education. Future research may focus on evaluating the impact of secondary professional education; identifying the factors of differences in returns to education between children from the same family; analysis of the features of human capital formation in families that differ in the nature of work.

Human capital, general skills, special skills, education, life outcomes, intergenerational mobility.

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Introduction

Since its inception in the 1960s, human capital theory has evolved into a fruitful, globally sought-after academic field, as evidenced by thousands of empirical studies. Today, human capital refers to “the knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics embedded in people that contribute to the creation of personal, social and economic well-being” (Polozhikhina, 2021). The multifaceted nature of this concept and its direct connection to personal characteristics cause difficulties in its interpretation and evaluation, so discussions on how to systematize the totality of qualitative and quantitative human characteristics, the use of which brings income and contributes to the economy, continue to this day.

Nevertheless, the basis of these discussions is the topic of education, because to this day the economic and sociological literature uses various modifications of the approach developed by the American economist J. Mincer more than half a century ago in assessing human capital. The essence of the approach consists in determining the return (in the form of a wage increment) on the number of years spent on education (Popov, 2020).

Thus, B.S. Potanin notes the positive impact of the level of education on wages and concludes that the education system is quite effective in providing the population with the competences demanded in the labor market (Potanin, 2019). At the same time, it is not only education as such that matters, but also the level of the university. S.Y. Roshchin and V.N. Rudakov conclude that full-time graduates of top Russian universities receive a stable salary premium compared to graduates of less prestigious universities when academic and socio-demographic factors are taken into account. Employees who graduated from universities in the first quartile of the Ministry of Education and Science’s rating

earn 23–30% more than those who studied at universities in the fourth quartile (Roshchin, Rudakov, 2016). At the same time, the article by A.I. Kolosova and co-authors shows that workers whose employment does not correspond to the received education have a markedly lower wage (about 13%), and the “penalty” is greater the higher the degree of mismatch between the job and the received education. A similar picture is observed in terms of job satisfaction: when the professional activity corresponds to the received education, job satisfaction self-assessments are 9–10% higher (Kolosova et al., 2020).

An important source of human capital accumulation and growth is the parental family¹. The influence of the parental family on the individual’s life trajectory is actively studied in sociological and economic science. We should note that there are a number of studies relating parental education to an individual’s social capital (Romashkina et al., 2020).

The parental family can act as a social elevator, a guarantee of maintaining social status. P. Gracia argues that highly educated and affluent parents spend higher quality leisure time with their children, which affects the growth of children’s cultural capital (while the effect of the father’s social status is higher than that of the mother’s social status) (Gracia, 2015). Other studies substantiate the importance of the parental family in the construction of the individual’s educational trajectory. According to A.G. Uvarov and G.A. Yastrebov, the educational success of Russian students depends on both the socio-economic status and the cultural capital of the family (Uvarov, Yastrebov, 2014). In particular, the socio-economic status of the family plays an important role in the decision to receive higher education: those from families with low social status more often choose secondary vocational education institutions (even if they

¹ Excerpt from the Human Capital Measurement Manual (Human Capital Measurement Task Force Note). Economic Commission for Europe. Paris. 2016. Available at: https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2016/mtg/CES_2-RUS_Human_Capital_Guide.pdf (accessed September 01, 2022).

have high academic achievements). When choosing between more and less prestigious universities, socio-demographic characteristics of the family become key predictors (Havenson, Chirkina, 2018).

Based on the analysis of foreign authors' works, A.G. Filipova and A.V. Vysotskaya characterize the practices of parents belonging to different social strata. Middle-class parents exercise conscious control over their children's upbringing in an effort to ensure their intellectual and social development: they choose schools and teachers, plan their extra activities and free time, influence their social circle. At the same time, the actions of working-class parents are more often spontaneous; they avoid "rationalizing and projecting the world of childhood", which they think should be freer and more unpredictable. In general, the educational practices of parents from different social strata begin to differentiate already at the level of preschool education (Filipova, Vysotskaya, 2018).

Thus, there is reason to believe that the parental family can meaningfully influence the formation of human capital; that adult children of more educated parents may have greater opportunities for both the accumulation and subsequent capitalization of knowledge and skills. The purpose of our study is to assess the impact of parental education on adult human capital. The assessment will be made through a comparison of the life outcomes of respondents whose parents have different levels of education. The article will focus on the effect of higher education.

Literature review

According to the traditional economic understanding of human capital, the logic of social and institutional development is denoted as a linear continuum of "education – work – productivity – income". That is, education leads to an increase in income because it provides an opportunity to increase labor productivity. However, there is empirical evidence that differential returns to education may be the result of prior inequality, and increases

in income may be due to social conditions affecting the individual at key moments in their biography (Popov, 2020).

The sociological approach productively complements the economists' classical vision. For example, according to screening theory, the material return on education is conditioned not only by the fact that an individual makes investments in their intellectual development in the course of education, but also by the fact that the education received acts as an indicator of people's distribution in certain areas of social space (the better the education, the better the place). Thus, the screening theory allows us to consider the institution of education not only in terms of its contribution to professional formation, but also as a system of signals about competitive position, that is, to talk about the reproduction of social inequality and social structure through the institution of education (Marginson, 2017).

Indeed, the parental family can influence the individual's social mobility. According to research, a significant proportion of Russians find employment with the help of family and friends. The practice of employment through social connections has many economic advantages – at the level of the individual, the company, and the economy as a whole: individuals' income grows, transaction costs go down due to job search, and the duration of unemployment decreases (Krekhovets, Shpilev, 2020). However, as E.S. Balabanova writes, family and family ties can be an advantage in employment, but not a panacea, because further advancement will depend on the building up business contacts (which is even more important than having formal qualifications). The most successful employees are those who came to the organization "through connections", but later proved themselves in the eyes of colleagues and management (Balabanova, 2015). Of great importance here are not only subject, professional competences, but also generic skills, such as communication, teamwork, self-management, self-control, because they allow an individual to establish interaction with other people and regulate their own behavior (Khuziakhmetov, Romashkina, 2022).

M. Grätz and co-authors, assessing the overall influence of family background on life outcomes, write that the socio-economic position of adult children from the same family is largely the same between social groups in developed countries. This means that adult children from the same family retain approximately the same social status as their parents (Grätz et al., 2019). D. Witteveen and P. Attewell take a similar view; in their analysis of longitudinal study of *Baccalaureate & Beyond* they concluded that significant income differences persist between U.S. college graduates from families from different social strata both 4 years and 10 years after graduation. Although further analysis suggests that these gaps can be partially explained by inequalities within occupational niches, income differences remain statistically significant after controlling for university level, major, and academic achievement (Witteveen and Attewell, 2017).

Parents play the role of “socializers of their children’s expectations”: they promote the assimilation of the value of success and the consolidation of appropriate behavior. In particular, children from highly educated families have the opportunity to learn from their parents’ behaviors oriented toward professional and personal fulfillment, such as taking additional courses, reading, and a responsible attitude toward work. The interiorization of the value of achievement shapes the expectations and intentions of growing children, which can meaningfully influence educational and professional achievement in adulthood (Vyalshina, 2020). In addition, favorable family socialization conditions positive stereotypical behaviors and reactions in work behavior: openness, involvement in work, respect for peers, and orientation toward mutual benefit (Gracia, 2015).

The level of parental education is important for the intergenerational mobility of human capital: the more educated parents are, the more they value education in all its forms, the more actively they are involved in their children’s education and, importantly, the higher their willingness to fund it (Yuzhakova, 2019). This agrees with the opinion of A.A. Vyalshina, who on the basis of the analysis

of an extensive empirical base came to the conclusion that educated parents get more results of their spending on children, because they have an idea about the approaches to education and development, have information about children’s needs and the ways to meet them in a certain period of life, and also know how to find missing information when necessary. In addition, expectations of a high return on children’s education make educated parents invest more in them (Vyalshina, 2020).

Nevertheless, as V.V. Antonenko notes, many research questions related to the assessment of the effect of the parental family on human capital remain underdeveloped in Russian science. For example, it is not known in which elements of children’s future human capital Russian fathers and mothers invest to a greater extent (health, education, social skills) and what the results of such investments are; how structured and elaborated are parents’ goals and plans; how much time they spend on organizing and conducting relevant child activities; who else of older relatives is involved in children’s development and how their responsibilities are distributed (Antonenko, 2014).

This article attempts to reduce the number of gaps in this research area by examining how parents’ educational attainment is related to the human capital of their adult children.

Sociologists and economists use not only objective measures of life outcomes (e.g., income and financial status), but also the subjective ones. In this context, the works of N.E. Tikhonova are worth mentioning in the first place. When studying the factors influencing subjective status in contemporary Russia, she operates with such indicators as job satisfaction, life satisfaction, social optimism, etc. (Tikhonova, 2018). It is important to note that subjective indicators of life achievements are based on people’s self-assessments of certain components of their lives.

Materials and methods

The applied descriptive sociological research was conducted in accordance with the positivist paradigm. Data were collected using

a mixed method, combining printed handout questionnaires and an online form (n = 1,261; 514 printed questionnaires, 747 electronic questionnaires).

The data were obtained as part of large-scale sociological research on human capital conducted in 2019–2022 by a team of sociologists at Tyumen State University in the Tyumen Oblast with the participation of the author of the article. In particular, the article (Romashkina et al., 2022) shows that people begin to associate the success of their efforts at work with a sufficient level of remuneration only after they reach the median level of income. Another article (Romashkina and Andrianov, 2022) points out the limits of applicability of the World Bank methodology for determining the human capital index of Russian regions and proposes a modified version of the calculation.

The theory of human capital is based on a positive correlation between certain individual characteristics and income, so our sample includes only the working population of the region over 18 years old (43% of men and 57% of women).

In our sample, the share of respondents with higher education (hereinafter – HE) is 36%. Both parents have HE in 14% of the respondents; one parent having HE makes up 34%; the father has HE in 21%; the mother has HE in 27%. The groups were compared using contingency tables controlling for the significance of differences using the Pearson Chi-square test. In the “Results” section, we will distinguish groups of respondents depending on the fact if at least one or both parents have HE.

When collecting data, we used respondents’ self-assessments of certain components of their professional activity and competence, which corresponds to a broad approach to the interpretation of human capital (Latov, Tikhonova, 2021). The level of self-assessments of human capital was measured by the Specific Human Capital and Total Human Capital indices, expressed on a scale from 0 (minimum value) to 1 (maximum value). General human capital is understood as people’s confidence in the importance and demand for their professional

competencies (knowledge and skills) in the labor market in general; specific human capital is understood as people’s confidence in the importance and demand for their professional competencies (knowledge and skills) for the organization in which they currently work. The values of indices of general and specific human capital are obtained as the arithmetic average of answers to the corresponding questions of the toolkit. More detailed information is presented in (Romashkina et al., 2020), where the results of theoretical operationalization and empirical verification of the Russian-language version of the interdisciplinary human capital measurement methodology are given. The index values were compared using the technique of comparing averages with controls by Fisher’s criterion (F).

Result

During the empirical data processing, we were able to identify some statistically significant patterns, which allow to judge the life outcomes of social groups representatives, whose parents had different levels of education, in other words, the influence of parents’ educational level on the human capital components of their adult children.

As noted above, its positive correlation with income is of fundamental importance in human capital studies, so it is advisable to begin the consideration of the results with this question. In our study, the respondent was asked to correlate their financial situation with the standard five-member scale from “not enough money for everyday expenses” (notionally “destitute”) to “can afford practically everything” (notionally “rich”). Pearson Chi-square test value of 13.9 at the significance level of $p = 0.016$ (which is lower than 0.05) allows to accept H1 hypothesis, i.e. it confirms the presence of weak, but statistically significant differences between the groups. Respondents in whose family at least one parent has higher education, in the total array gave higher self-assessments of their financial situation than in the group of respondents whose parental family did not have higher education (Fig. 1).

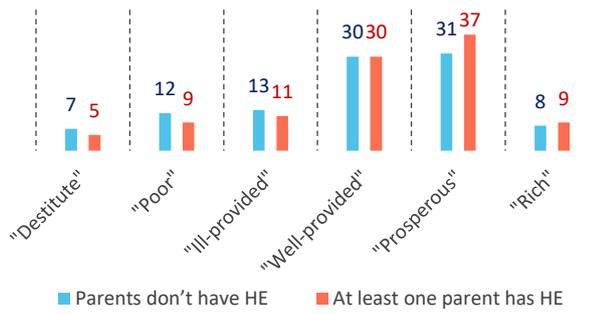


Figure 1. Self-assessments of financial standing depending on the fact if at least one parent has higher education, %

Source: the results of a sociological study conducted by a team of sociologists at Tyumen State University.

In addition, it is confirmed that people with both parents having higher education, more often than others have additional employment. The effect is statistically stable, as the Pearson Chi-square test is 7.9 at a significance level of 0.005. It can be assumed that the social capital

of the family increases the number of channels of income, thereby expanding the opportunities for economic activity (Fig. 2). It is noteworthy that a statistically significant relationship is found only if both parents have higher education. It is likely that a variety of implicit combinations of human and social capital of the mother and father are significant. Verification of this hypothesis requires additional research, and the present descriptive study does not pursue such a goal.

One of the indicators of human capital performance is subjective status. Thus, we found that the higher education of parents was associated with higher self-assessments of job satisfaction (Fig. 3), life satisfaction (Fig. 4) and social optimism (Fig. 5). Further, the influence of parental education level was statistically recorded in various combinations. For example, statistically significant differences were confir-

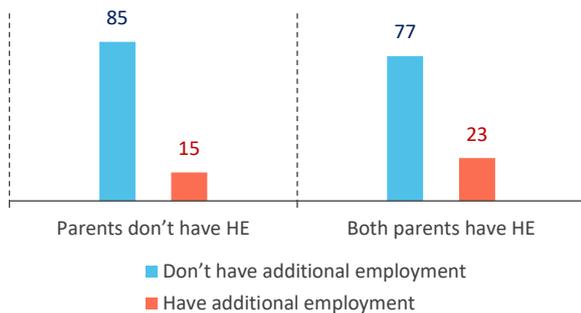


Figure 2. Availability/absence of additional employment depending on the fact if both parents have higher education, %

Source: the results of a sociological study conducted by a team of sociologists at Tyumen State University

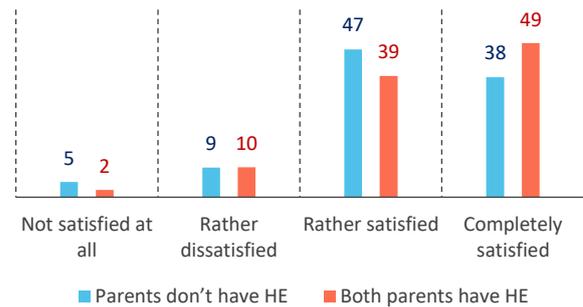


Figure 3. Job satisfaction depending on the fact if both parents have higher education, %

Source: the results of a sociological study conducted by a team of sociologists at Tyumen State University

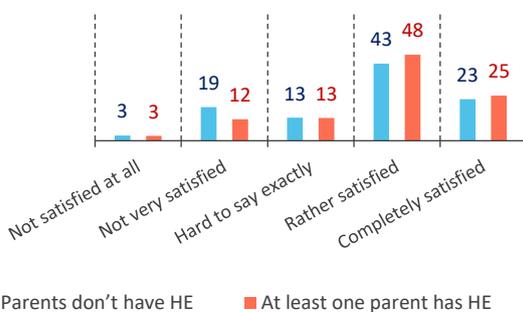


Figure 4. Life satisfaction depending on the fact if at least one parent has higher education, %

Source: the results of a sociological study conducted by a team of sociologists at Tyumen State University

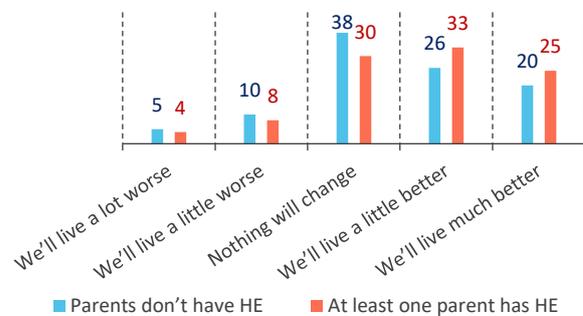


Figure 5. Social optimism depending on the fact if at least one parent has higher education, %

Source: the results of a sociological study conducted by a team of sociologists at Tyumen State University

med if both parents were highly educated, in other cases it was sufficient for at least one parent to have higher education.

Job satisfaction does increase as parental education level increases (Pearson Chi-square 11.3 at 0.010 significance level). Specific analysis is also needed to identify causal relationships, although it seems reasonable to assume that highly educated parents with extensive social contacts may contribute to their children's more desirable jobs.

As for life satisfaction, the Pearson Chi-square test of 14.9 also allows us to judge the presence of a significant relationship (significance level 0.005). It is likely that the increase in life satisfaction as the level of parental education increases can be correlated with both the formation of more developed cultural capital in the family and with the expansion of employment opportunities.

Self-assessments of social optimism are of separate interest, because here we observe the most marked differences against the background of a

stable statistical relationship (Pearson Chi-square test 15.0; significance level 0.005). In the group of respondents, where at least one parent has higher education, there are 12% more optimists. Perhaps educated parents act as a kind of support for their adult children, as they have the resources to help cope with the trials of life if necessary.

On the whole, the results obtained testify that an individual's own education increases the level of their general (knowledge and skills demanded in the labor market in general) and specific (knowledge and skills demanded in a specific organization) human capital, so their own education is the first by significance statistical factor which increases the human capital index (*Table*). At the same time, it is important to note that there is a direct linear influence of parental education on total human capital. Probably, it is general human capital (rather than specific human capital) that is a scarce resource in today's labor market, as it demonstrates the greatest elasticity with regard to parental education.

Table. Values of the indices of general and specific human capital by level of education (own, father's, mother's)

	Level of education	Specific human capital	General human capital
Your education	Secondary general and below	0.60	0.48
	Primary vocational (vocational school)	0.66	0.51
	Secondary specialized (vocational)	0.68	0.56
	Higher and postgraduate	0.67	0.64
	F (test for linearity)	8.268	62.14
	Significance	0.004	0.000
Father's education	Secondary general and below	0.63	0.52
	Primary vocational (vocational school)	0.67	0.58
	Secondary specialized (vocational)	0.68	0.61
	Higher and postgraduate	0.67	0.62
	F (test for linearity)	5.009	24.33
	Significance	0.025	0.000
Mother's education	Secondary general and below	0.64	0.53
	Primary vocational (vocational school)	0.66	0.54
	Secondary specialized (vocational)	0.67	0.61
	Higher and postgraduate	0.67	0.61
	F (test for linearity)	3.182	21.76
	Significance	0.075	0.000

Note: the maximum significant differences are highlighted (assessment of a statistically stable linear relationship); in absolute terms, the increase in the average values of the indices is small, but the maximum is statistically stable.

Source: the results of a sociological study conducted by a team of sociologists at Tyumen State University.

We emphasize once again that the general human capital in a broad interpretation includes many different competences necessary for a modern employee in the digital economy: these are not only professional, but also social-emotional competences (Romashkina et al., 2022; Khuziakhmetov, Romashkina, 2022). It is due to possessing these qualities which are often scarce that a worker has a more pronounced subjective confidence in their own demand in the labor market and readiness for active economic behavior.

Discussion

V. Amin and his co-authors write that today the effect of mother's education is equal to the effect of father's education: children receive approximately the same "boost" to their life chances from each additional year that their parents spend on education (Amin et al., 2015). This is consistent with our study: no fundamental differences were found between the effects of father's and mother's education on human capital and life outcomes for adult workers.

Y. Cui, H. Liu, and L. Zhao, investigating the effectiveness of compulsory schooling reform in China, concluded that children of more educated parents perform better in many areas: they have a pronounced desire for higher education, their results in the final exam are higher, they have an internal locus of control, and their health is better (Cui et al., 2019). It can be observed that the effect of family status on children's life outcomes is quite strong in developing countries, where differentiation in higher education opportunities persists.

Let us consider for comparison the findings of P. Lundborg and his co-authors, who were analyzing the mechanisms of intergenerational transmission of human capital based on a panel study of the Swedish Ministry of Defense, and concluded that the greatest effect of parental education on the human capital of their adult children is manifested in improved overall health as well as an increase in average values of cognitive (math, word processing) and non-cognitive (high-five indicators) skills. The observed differences are small (in the 5–10%

range) but statistically significant in most developed countries (Lundborg et al., 2018).

We can say that our results are consistent with both the case of developed and developing countries and, in a sense, intermediate between the two. In this context, it is interesting to consider the results of similar studies on Russian data. G. Borisov and C. Pissarides, using the base of the Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey of households of the Higher School of Economics, found that the channels of education (transition of education) and income (transition of earnings) from generation to generation in Russia are unequal. As the parents' education level generally increases, the children's education level increases, but this does not always lead to an increase in income, while the transfer of income between generations is quite rigidly fixed and is not always accompanied by an increase in the level of education. In other words, high-income parents do not necessarily invest more heavily in their children's education, but despite this, their children are highly likely to earn more than children from less affluent families (Borisov, Pissarides, 2016). Thus, the authors express the view that in Russia the family has an impact on the human capital and life outcomes of workers, but this impact is not always due to professional development through formal education; providing access to additional resources and networks of acquaintances plays an important role. In general, our results can confirm this assumption, as the study reveals patterns of connection between parental education and life outcomes of employees, allowing us to judge the importance of informal family and kinship relations for increasing the opportunities for capitalization of knowledge and skills. It is important to note that the above conclusion was obtained on the basis of the complementarity of economic and sociological approaches to the understanding of human capital.

Conclusion

The results of our study agree with the conclusions of other authors, whose works are devoted to the topic in question: parents'

education affects the intergenerational mobility of human capital. If at least one parent has higher education, their adult children are also likely to obtain it, and if both parents have higher education, this probability increases by another 10–15%. In addition, the parental family affects the accumulation and use of human capital in the long term, as its effect is seen among adult respondents.

Life outcomes are higher for those respondents whose parents have a higher level of education. In sociological interpretation, this means that the family participates in the reproduction of social inequality, acting as a social elevator.

Our study showed that combinations of parents' human capital mattered, since in some cases the positive effect on children's life outcomes was determined by the fact if either the mother or the father had higher education, while in other cases it required both parents to have higher education. In any case, the greatest positive effect was achieved when both parents were university graduates.

Self-evaluations of life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and social optimism, while not significantly but statistically significant, differed depending on the presence/absence of higher education among parents. Perhaps more educated parents do have more opportunities to facilitate and accelerate their children's professional and personal development.

In addition, the total human capital of those from more educated families is statistically higher and shows elasticity. This means that more educated parents do invest in the development of their children, not so much preparing them for specific professional

activities as building their universal competence. It seems that this conclusion contains elements of scientific novelty.

The obtained results can be practically significant for determining the problems of intergenerational mobility of human capital at the regional level, as they reveal the need to level the insufficient investment of parents without higher education in the development of general and special skills of children. "Socialization of expectations" and the formation of achievement motivation can be provided both within the parental family and through appropriate interventions.

The limitations of the study are due to the data. Human capital indicators were measured once, which does not allow us to talk about the consistency of the results obtained. If panel data were used, more accurate conclusions could be drawn.

Future research could focus on not only parental higher education, but also secondary vocational education. In addition, our future work could focus on identifying factors in differences in educational outcomes between children from the same family (siblings). For example, M. Grätz shows that families with stable socio-economic backgrounds can compensate for their children's adverse life events by giving siblings approximately the same level and quality of education and providing them with approximately the same life chances (Grätz, 2018). The study of human capital formation in families that differ in the nature of work is also of interest, because if parents have their own businesses, their children are more likely to become entrepreneurs (Bloemen-Bekx, 2019).

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