

Children who are the youngest in the class at the start of primary education do worse later in the job market

Maturity differences early in the school career also translate in differences in getting a student job, which in turn affects the transition from school to work

BRUSSELS, EUROPE, January 24, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In the scientific literature, great attention has recently been paid to 'relative age effects'. Children born at the end of the year are up to 12 months younger than their peers, which leads to differences in well-being and education. An international research team lead by professors Stijn Baert (Ghent University) and Luca Fumarco (Masaryk University) has now investigated whether this extends to the labour market.



We take the logical next step in the literature on 'relative age effects': we study whether differences in maturity at the start of the school career translate into differences in finding a job later."

Professor Stijn Baert

Within school classes, some young people (abstracting from those who have to sit over) are up to 12 months younger than others. This typically concerns children born at the end of the year. At a young age, this can make a big

difference in maturity. Earlier international scientific research has already shown that the relatively younger pupils score less well in terms of, among other things, school results, sports performance and social contact. This can have self-reinforcing consequences, as those who score well at a young age also have a step ahead later on.

The research paper can be found here: <https://docs.iza.org/dp14977.pdf>

The study uses data in which a representative sample of 6,000 Flemish (Belgian) people, born in 1978 and 1980, were followed until the age of 26 or 29. In this way, very rich data were available on both the school and the first labour market outcomes of these people.

These data were analysed by an international research team using state-of-the-art econometric techniques to estimate the causal relationship between age differences at the start of secondary education and first labour market outcomes.

What does it show? Being 12 months younger than classmates at the start of primary school translates into a large drop in the probability of being employed one year after leaving school. Within the sample, 8.8% were not working at that time. Being 12 months younger increases that chance by 3.5 percentage points.

Also the chance of a first quality job a year after leaving school is lower for those who are younger in class at the start of primary education. For instance, being 12 months younger leads to 5.1 percentage points less chance of a permanent contract.

Part of this effect can be explained by the fact that maturity differences in the classroom also translate into differences in getting a student job, which in turn translates into a faster transition from school to work, as shown by further analyses of the researchers.

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In previous research, we have already shown that the youngest children in the class are on average less happy and also in less good health, being, for example, more overweight. In this new research, we are taking the step that is the logical one for me as

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