

Participation in and outcomes of early work experiences

The case of work experience acquired before leaving school

Delma Byrne

Presentation prepared for Combat Poverty Agency Seminar
Tuesday 9th September 2008

Acknowledgements

- I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Combat Poverty Agency PhD Fellowship 2003-2006.
- I am also grateful for the support of Prof. David Raffe, Cathy Howieson, Professor Lindsay Patterson, Professor Adam Gamoran and Dr. Cristina Iannelli as well as participants of the following conferences that this work has been presented
 - Transitions in Youth Conference 2004, 2006
 - European Conference on Educational Research 2006

Outline of Presentation

- Introduction: Stating the Research Problem
- Research Questions
- Previous Studies
- Theoretical Framework
- Data and methodological Issues
- Findings:
 - Who partakes in early work experiences?
 - Early work experience and retention at upper senior cycle
 - Early work experiences and labour market outcomes
- Discussion

Research Problem...

- Increased differentiation at senior cycle has meant that students have the opportunity to engage in school organised work experiences before leaving school.
- However, the influence of differentiation at upper senior cycle and programmes offering a school organised work experience have attracted less attention.
- Research has focused on the work activities of young people through part time job holding (Stack et al 1998; Morgan 2000, Gilligan 2000; Leonard 2001; Stack 2001; McCoy and Smyth 2004) but not so much on school organised work experiences or the interaction of these early work experiences.
- More favourable economic climate suggests more opportunities for participation in part time jobs or 'double status positions'.

Research Questions...

- Who works? What type of early work experience?
- Do different types of early work experiences undertaken before leaving school have similar effects on the educational outcomes of school leavers?
- Does work experience connected to the curriculum confer greater benefits in the labour market than work that is not connected to school?

Literature on the determinants of Part time Job Holding

- A number of individual factors are key determinants of having a part time job while attending school:
 - *Individual level characteristics: Gender, Ability and Individual agency*
 - *Intergenerational transmission of social capital in the formation of human capital*
 - *Regional level variation in the uptake of early work experience*
- This research takes more seriously contextual factors: School effects and local area socio-economic deprivation

Determinants of having a school organised work experience

- Less is known in the Irish context surrounding school organised work experience
 - Less defined school-employer links than other countries such as Germany, Japan.
 - International research suggests that work experience as part of secondary education plays a large part in developing agency in decisions made after leaving school (Smith et al, 2004: Australia).
 - Less is known about what differentiates those who work in school organised work experiences from those who do not.

Overview of previous studies

- The general thrust of the literature is that working (and working intensively) in a part time job while still at school can have a negative effect on educational outcomes, but can smooth the transition from school to work for those who enter the labour market.
- There are 2 arguments that need to be considered in relation to school organised work experiences as part of vocational programmes
 - Vocational type programmes offering school organised work experience could increase inequalities in the education system. That is, students displaying more disadvantaged characteristics are more likely to pursue a vocational route than an academic route, which has influences on later outcomes.
 - By providing links directly with employers, school organised work experiences will improve occupational formation and improve pathways.

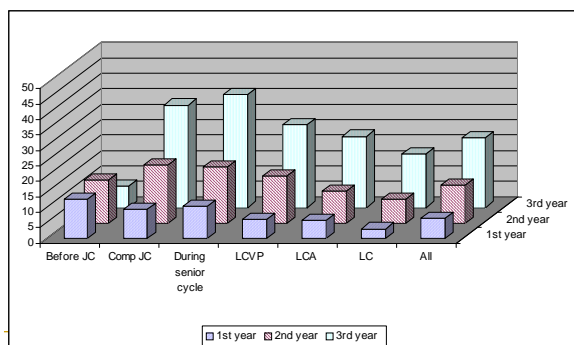
Theoretical Framework

- Developmental V Allocative Perspectives
- Human Capital V Institutional Linkages
- Market Models are critical of institutional linkages
 - Human Capital
- Network Theories encourage institutional linkages
 - Vocational education at upper second level can benefit students by offering skills that will be of value in the local labour market.
 - Institutional Ties/ Institutional Social Capital

Data & Methodology

- School Leaver Survey 2003
 - Representative sample of school leavers in academic year 2000/01
 - School leavers surveyed 18-20 months after leaving school.
 - Junior cycle leavers – no qualifications or a Junior Certificate
 - Senior cycle leavers – completed junior cycle and left school during senior cycle
- Deprivation Index derived from Hasse & Pratschke 2005 used as a proxy for the local area in which the school leaver lives.
- Methods used Regression and Survival Analyses
- Analyses presented in multilevel or variance components framework to take into account the clustering of the data and to produce robust standard errors.

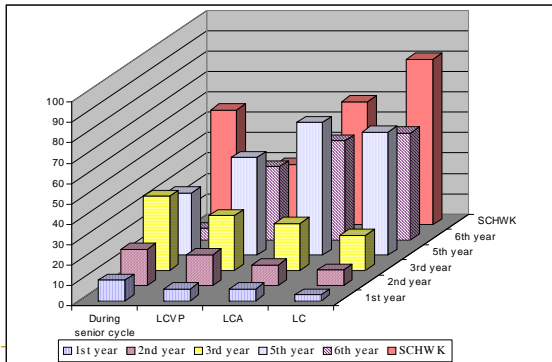
Figure 1: PTJ holding in junior cycle among all school leavers



Determinants of having a part time job in Junior Cycle

- Junior cycle leavers
 - Males
 - Households with full parental employment
 - Living in an area of low socio-economic deprivation more likely to have a part time job than if living in an area of high/moderate socio-economic deprivation
- Completed second level education
 - Males
 - Lower levels of parental education
 - Living in an area of high socio-economic deprivation.

Figure 2: Participation in early work experiences in senior cycle



Determinants of having a PTJ in senior cycle

- Senior cycle students from skilled manual social class backgrounds were more likely to hold a term time job(s) in senior cycle than those from higher professional backgrounds.
- Full parental employment more likely to have part time job than those exposed to unemployment
- Single parent household more likely to have a part time job
- Previous part time job holding in junior cycle
 - Importance of unobserved variables

Figure 3: Typology of Early Work Experiences

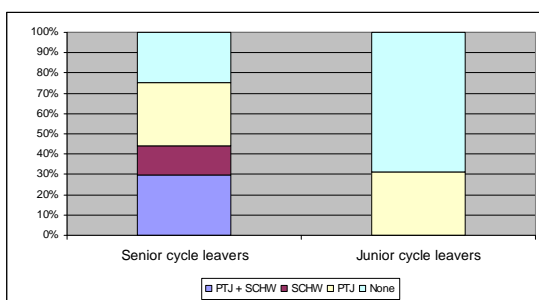
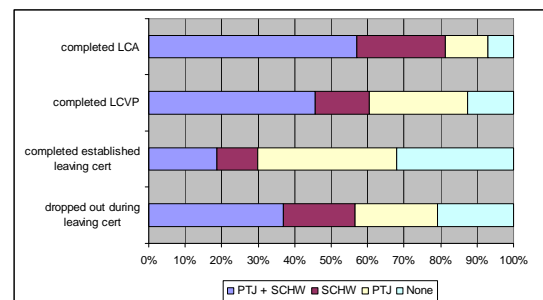


Figure 4: Distribution of Early work experiences across senior cycle leavers



Factors Associated with entering a programme with a school organised work experience

- Student intakes into each programme offering work experiences differ
- Factors associated overall participation in a programme offering school organised work experience
 - Parental Education
 - School Type Attended
 - Regional characteristics

Participation in school organised work experience within programmes

- Transition Year 81%
- Leaving Certificate Applied 72%
- Leaving Certificate Vocational 40%

Probability of having an early work experience before leaving school

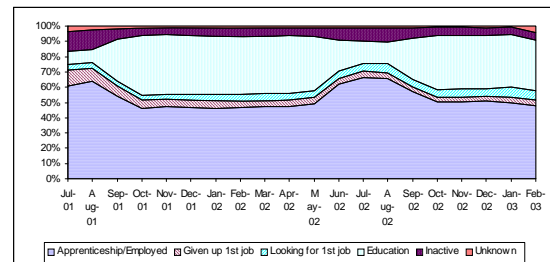
- Do school organised work experiences provide the most disadvantaged school leaver with experience of the world of work before leaving school.
- Previous part time work experience in junior cycle
- LCA and LCVP > to have experience of SCHWK than none
- LCA and LCVP < to have experience of both PTJ & SCHWK than none
- Full parental employment > all types of work experience relative to none suggests the importance of parental networks in accessing work placements.

Retention at Upper Senior Cycle

- Do different types of early work experiences undertaken before leaving school have similar effects on the educational outcomes of school leavers?

	-3.195	-1.762
Female		
Ref: Male	-650 (.146)	-629 (.147)
<i>Parental Social Class</i>		
Lower Professional	.514 (.307)	.553 (.309)
Non Manual	.533 (.302)	.551 (.305)
Skilled Manual	.651 (.315)	.691 (.319)
Semi-Unskilled Manual	.653 (.343)	.652 (.347)
Unclassified	-.158 (.408)	-.094 (.411)
Ref: Higher Professional	Ref.	Ref.
<i>Parental Education</i>		
Unknown	1.008 (.348)	1.108 (.351)
Primary or Less	1.089 (.279)	1.189 (.283)
Junior Certificate	.947 (.263)	1.043 (.267)
Leaving Certificate	.536 (.261)	.597 (.264)
Ref: Diploma or Higher Programme Being Pursued	Ref.	Ref.
LCVP	-.519 (.239)	-.658 (.245)
LCA	.761 (.167)	.496 (.183)
Ref: Established Leaving Certificate	Ref.	Ref.
<i>Type of school attended</i>		
Community/Comprehensive	.488 (.208)	-.425 (.166)
Vocational	.347 (.163)	.138 (.200)
Ref: Secondary	Ref.	Ref.
<i>Socio-economic deprivation score</i>		
High	.506 (.188)	.575 (.190)
Moderate	-.506 (.170)	-.530 (.171)
Ref: Low	Ref.	Ref.
<i>Early work experience</i>		
PTJ & SCHWK		.322 (.204)
SCHWK		.453 (.236)
PTJ		-.363 (.208)
Ref: None	Ref.	Ref.

Figure 5: Primary Economic Status by Month left school



	At Least One Month of Employment Vs None	At Least One Month of Unemployment Vs None	At Least One Month of Education Vs None
Early Work Experience			
Yes	+	-	-
Ref: No	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Gender			
Female	-	+	+
Ref: Male	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Stage left school			
Dropped out upon completion of JC	+	N.S.	-
Dropped out during Leaving Cert	+	N.S.	-
Completed established LC	+	-	+
Completed LCVP	+	-	N.S.
Completed LCA	+	N.S.	-
Ref: Dropped out before completing Junior Cert.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
School Type Attended			
Secondary	-	N.S.	+
Community/Comprehensive	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
Ref: Vocational	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Parental Education			
Junior Certificate	+	-	N.S.
Leaving Certificate	+	-	+
Diploma or Higher	N.S.	-	+
Unclassified	N.S.	N.S.	+
Ref: Primary or Less	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.

Survival Analyses: Survival in Employment upon leaving school

- Early work experiences have no reliable effect on survival time in employment after taking into account factors such as stage left school, gender, parental education and school type. That is, length of survival in employment after school is unaffected by early work experiences in any form.
- This was true for all school leavers and those who did not go on to any further education in the 20 months after leaving school.

Survival Analysis: Survival in Unemployment upon leaving school

- Early work experiences have no reliable effect on survival time in unemployment after taking into account factors such as stage left school, gender, parental education and school type. That is, length of survival in unemployment after school is unaffected by early work experiences in any form.
- This was true for all school leavers and those who did not go on to any further education in the 20 months after leaving school

In Summary...

- Work experience is an important factor to consider.
- There are evident selection effects which determine who gets work experience(s) before leaving school.
 - Individual
 - Socio-economic
 - School Effects
 - Regional Factors
- There are evident selection effects which determine who participates in programmes that offer school organised work experiences.
- Work histories seem to play a role in curricular tracks

- Drop out: While having had experience of a school organised work experience only was associated with drop out at senior cycle, the presence of the work experience variable reduced the effect of curricular track being pursued.
 - Issues relating to causality
- Because those with experience of part time job + school organised work experiences, and those with part time jobs only are more likely to avoid unemployment, suggests that school organised work experience needs to be supported with part time work for more favourable outcomes.
 - Issues relating to employers of part time job holders
- Despite the persistence of work related learning in the curriculum, institutional linkages seem to be overshadowed by market models. There is little evidence of school organised work experience helping those most disadvantaged in the labour market
- Data Considerations – measures of prior academic achievement