Discussion to
Decreasing Compulsory School Leaving Age in Hungary: Does it matter for regular students?
by Kiss Gergely Attila

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The paper

- Research question: the effect of peer composition on test performance
- SLA reform: exogenous variation in peer composition
- Diff in diffs identification strategy
- Findings are not clear

Major comments: overall impression

- I enjoyed the paper a lot
- There is a huge literature on the effects of increasing the SLA, but not much on decreasing it: there is a gap to fill
- Interesting research question: most of the literature on SLA reforms looks at out-of-school outcomes, while we know much less about how they affect human capital accumulation
- It is rare to find exogenous variation in peer composition: promising setup
- There are some questions to think about to improve the paper though

Major comments: framing

- Two possible framing
    - Looking at the effects of the reform on student's performance
        - Looking at whether the reform affected dropping out before completing primary school would already be an interesting outcome
    - Looking at the effects of (endogenous) peer composition on student's performance, using the reform as an IV
        - Question: what about class size? Can you differentiate between the effects of peer composition vs. class size?

Major comments: model specifications

- The diff-in-diffs models are not set up correctly
- Parallel trends are not shown
- The OLS/first stage/reduced form/2SLS models are not specified
    - OLS: y: math scores, x: OAR (OAR is endogenous)
    - First stage: y: OAR, x: reform
    - Reduced form: y: math test scores, x: reform
    - 2sls: y: math test scores, x: OAR instrumented by reform
- Current results have limited interpretation

Major comments: data

- Can you compare NABC test scores across years?
- Missing data on test scores: not random, does not necessarily mean that one is not in school. Also strongly correlated with social background/ability.

Minor comments

- Using a more explicit term instead of "overaged". For example: share of 14-year olds?
- Adding more graphs on descriptive stats
- Structure: tailoring the text to the framing
- Measuring the attitudes of students somehow (e.g. grades on diligence and/or behaviour?)
- Using alternative measures of class composition (maybe based on grade 6 test scores?)

Thanks for your attention!