

Abstract

This thesis examines whether growing up surrounded by books has an impact on cognitive skills later in life. Data from SHARE - Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe are used. The variable 'books when ten' is used to determine its effect on variable 'numeracy'. We used also other variables regarding the respondent's age, gender, mental health or family situation. The results of this study show that those who were surrounded by a higher number of books as children perform better at a specific task designed to test cognitive ability when presented with it at an age of over 50 years. The results were obtained using logit model. The finding that access to books can slow down cognitive decline later in life can be used to argue for greater focus on reading and availability of books in schools as well as greater access to books through public libraries, or act as a hint for parents aiming to give their children the greatest possible introduction to life.

Keywords	books, education, cognitive skills, SHARE
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