

Titre

**Investigating the effect of students' psychological fragilities on control beliefs**

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Résumé

*Perceived control has been shown to play a major role in human capital investment, particularly in education-related decisions, making this concept relevant among students. But little is known about the determinants of these control perceptions. At the same time university students face more and more mental health problems. This paper studies how control beliefs on future success are impacted by psychological fragilities, using data from a cross-section survey on French higher education students. Students control beliefs is measured through the importance they attribute to several factors involved in success. A distinction is made between internal factors (on which individual has control on) and external ones (beyond individual's control). Considering potential endogeneity in the relationship between control beliefs and psychological fragilities, I implement an instrumental variable strategy. Sunlight exposition has been shown to be associated with mental health disorders. I exploit this association and use the sunlight in the seven days before the student took the survey as instrumental variable. The strategy implemented uncover a positive effect of psychological fragilities on internal factors attributed importance and a negative effect on external factors one. This result is in line with psychological literature results that depressed individuals blame themselves more, as if they had control over everything. I also explore whether the impact of psychological fragilities on control beliefs is a relevant channel to explain the impact of psychological fragilities on students' efforts.*