

A STUDY ON THE CONDITION OF YOUNG ITALIAN NEETS AND THEIR TRUST IN THE FUTURE

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Abstract

Italy has one of the highest levels of NEETs in Europe (young adults Not in Education, Employment or Training). The impact of THE Global Crisis has worsened the employment opportunities of young generations, with the effect of decreasing wellbeing and self-confidence. Using data from the “Youth Project”, carried out by the Toniolo Institute for Advanced Studies (Catholic University), we investigated whether the NEETs experience a decline in the social relationships and a fall in their trust in the future in comparison to students and employed people of the same age. Provisional results show that NEETs are less confident and more likely to believe that most people do not care about what happens to the others.

1. Introduction

Recently NEETs - Not in Education, Employment or Training - have become one of the most interesting and alarming phenomenon among young people. NEETs are people aged between 15 and 29 that are not either studying, working or receiving any training. In Italy they represent the 21.2% of their age group (Istat, 2011). Without any study or work commitment, but also with no political, marital or parental obligations, NEETs have a great amount of spare time and, crucial for this life period, face difficulties in finding a job (Arnett, 2000). The already pronounced affective and economic dependency on families of Italian youngsters (Scabini, Marta & Lanz, 2006), along with the extension of the period young people live with their parents, represent new challenges for Italian families.

2. Aim

The present exploratory study aims at investigating:

- Whether young NEETs, students and workers differ in how much trust they place in their future;
- The impact on youngsters’ trust in the future of the relationship with their mother and father;

- The effect of being a NEET on the trust in social relationships.

3. Data and Methods

We use data from the “Youth Project” carried out by the *Toniolo Institute for Advanced Studies*, IPSOS and Catholic University. The sample consists of 9,087 individuals aged between 18 and 29¹ and equally distributed by gender (49.0% male); 38.7% are students, 34.7% workers. About 7% work and study at the same time while 19.6% of the sample are NEETs.

Participants filled out a questionnaire composed of:

- Demographic variables (age, sex, employment status, educational level and the education of the family of origin);
- The scale of the quality of their relationship with mother and father (Lanz, et al., 2007);
- The scale of the perception of the intention to control and intrusiveness by the mother and father (Scabini & Manzi 2010);

The empirical analysis implements ordered logistic models, in order to investigate whether the respondents agree or disagree to each of the items assessing the level of the trust in the future and of the confidence in the relationship with the other people.

The selected items used as dependent variables for the models are worded as follows:

- have experiences in the present is more important than planning for the future;
- I see my future full of risks and uncertainties;
- In life there are no choices that are forever;
- Most people can be trusted.

More in details, the aim of the empirical part of the paper is to investigate whether being a NEET affects the trust in the future and in the social relationships.

4. Results

Provisional results (Tab. 1) show that NEETs are less confident in the future than students and employed people. They are more likely to believe that most people do not care about what happens to the others and are more oriented to live present experiences than to plan the future.

¹ Although the condition of NEET generally involves people aged between 15 and 29, the youth project interviewed respondents aged between 18 and 29. The exclusion of the subsample of individuals between 15-18 does not undermine the findings of the survey, because large part of them still studies at the high school.

Tab .1 Results of an ordered logistic regression for four items on the trust in the future and in the social relationships for people aged between 18-29 in Italy (Youth Project)

	Most people can be trusted	I see my future full of risks and uncertainties	Have experiences in the present is more important than planning for the future	In life there are no choices that are forever
Gender				
Males	0	0	0	0
Females	-0.004	-0.185***	0.010	0.059
Family Indices-mother				
Quality of relationship	0.186***	-0.108**	0.129***	0.230***
Controlling mother	-0.020	0.142**	0.231***	0.173***
Family Indices-father				
Quality of relationship	0.338***	-0.211***	0.051	0.090**
Controlling father	0.032	0.182***	0.015	0.089
Age				
18-20	0	0	0	0
21-23	0.068	0.057	-0.128**	0.035
24-26	0.114*	0.070	-0.194***	0.107
27-30	0.233***	-0.012	-0.309***	0.247***
Employment status				
Employed	0	0	0	0
Neet	-0.284***	0.326***	0.105*	-0.093
Student	-0.216***	0.277***	-0.025	-0.183***
Employed + Student	-0.056	0.111	-0.058	-0.225***
Mother's Education				
Primary or lower secondary	0	0	0	0
Upper secondary	0.078	-0.015	-0.063	-0.014
Higher	0.136*	0.019	-0.156**	0.003
Father's Education				
Primary or lower secondary	0	0	0	0
Upper secondary	-0.056	-0.018	-0.003	-0.006
Higher	-0.108	-0.085	-0.083	-0.019
Respondent's Education				
Primary or lower secondary	0	0	0	0
Upper secondary	-0.126**	0.184***	0.018	-0.134***
Higher	0.049	0.194***	-0.129*	-0.221***
Observations	8447	8447	8447	8446

* $0.05 \leq pvalue < 0.10$; ** $0.05 \leq pvalue < 0.01$; *** $pvalue \leq 0.01$;

An interesting result is also the fact that the higher is the level of family emotional support, the more optimistic the attitude towards the future is.

On the contrary, the perception of intrusiveness by the mother and father negatively affects an optimistic perspective.

5. Conclusions

Results confirm that NEETs represent a vulnerable category because they a) are not committed to any activity, and b) expect a more negative and hopeless future for themselves. Thus, they are at risk of getting stuck in a situation which, without specific interventions, prevents them from being able to deal with the transition to adulthood. On the contrary the family proves to be an important protective factor regarding young people's trust in the future.

6. References

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