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Time Perspective and Employment Status: NEET Categories as Negative Predictor of Future

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Abstract

Time perspective is crucial for young adults in relation to decision making regarding present and future. Literature links PT to age, to well-being and many other psychological issues, and recent study also to socioeconomic status. In this paper, we have studied the relationship between PT and employment status. Specifically, taking into account the complex employment dynamics of the Italian context and the ever-increasing number of NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), this research has studied the preferential temporal orientation of young NEET, comparing with students and workers of the same age and in the same socio-economic context. A questionnaire Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory in Short Form validated in Italian (S-TPI) was administered to 144 young adults aged 20-34. Multiple Linear Regression Model, stepwise method, shows that status NEET (negative predictor), age and level of education are predictors of future dimension; instead, maintenance income and family cultural capital are predictors of present dimensions.

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1. Introduction

The subjective organisation of time is acquired through a progressive psychological achievement. In the process of development, the individual is called to position himself in a temporality: if in childhood one experiences the present with short-range actions (Lewin, 1948), it is starting from adolescence, thanks also to mental development and the achievement of hypothetical-formal thought (Piaget & Inhelder, 1966), which becomes able to place itself in a time perspective that holds together past, present and future (Speltini & Molinari, 2015). With this mastery of time (Fraisie, 1957) the individual can situate within his dimensions his own biographical events and open his mind to the future, thanks to the ability to plan, to organise everyday life (Dreher & Oerter, 1987).

The construct of time perspective (TP) has traditionally been the subject of the study of developmental psychology (Frank 1939; Paolicchi, 1976; Ricci Bitti, Rossi, & Sarchielli, 1985; Vicario, 1973). The reading of psychological time in terms of time perspective is important because it allows us to understand the way in which the individual is placed in temporality, highlighting a continuous relationship with the context in which it is inserted.

The time dimensions constitute a spatial structure whose articulation depends on the social environment: the process of project and purpose formation is structured according to individual needs, but it is also dictated by the goals that the social structure proposes in the form of motivation (Nuttin, 1980). The dimension in which the context is more at stake is undoubtedly the future, which therefore assumes historically and culturally given forms and modalities. The experienced time has therefore its weight in delineating the temporal horizon, its density and its emotional tones in terms of pessimism or optimism (Trommsdorff, Lamm, & Schmidt, 1979).

Zimbardo and Boyd (1999) define the time perspective as a basic process in the functioning of the individual in relationship with society, a set of time frames that helps to assign order and meaning to the events and which it's used in the formation of expectations, goals and hypothetical scenarios. In this definition, the past dimensions may reflect a vision anchored to painful or unprocessed memories (*negative past*) or, on the contrary, positive attitudes (*positive past*); the dimensions of the present are linked to the experience of enjoyment (*hedonistic present*) or centred on the perception of personal control over events (*fatalistic present*); the dimension of the future, on the other hand, reflects an orientation towards targets and goals, and the use of planning strategies to achieve them.

The concept of time perspective has been studied in relation to many aspects of human activity and applied to a wide range of problems. More generally, the TP can determine different decisional styles according to the preferential centring expressed by the individual on a specific time dimension (Zambianchi, Ricci Bitti, & Gremigni, 2010). Research using the construct proposed by Zimbardo and Boyd shows that the orientations of the past are solid predictors of emotional outcomes (Stolarski, Matthews, Postek, Zimbardo, & Bitner, 2014; Zhang, Howell, & Stolarski, 2013), while the guidelines present and future tend to influence behaviour (Chittaro & Vianello, 2013; Keough, Zimbardo, & Boyd, 1999). In fact, TP can be a strong predictor of health and well-being (Cunningham, Zhang, & Howell, 2015; Hall, Fong, & Sansone, 2015; Zhang & Howell, 2011). More specifically, a focus on the future is associated with a reduced likelihood of engaging in HIV risky behaviour (Rothspan & Read, 1996), smoking and alcohol

and substance abuse (Bickel & Arnett, 1998; Keough, Zimbardo, & Boyd, 1999; Petry, Wills, Sandy, & Yaeger, 2001).

The subjects with this orientation would tend, in fact, to put more effective protective behaviours concerning health (Keough, Zimbardo, & Boyd, 1999), thanks to a greater ability to assess the long-term consequences of the actions undertaken, or as focused on personal fulfilment aspirations that risky behaviours could impede (Zambianchi, Ricci Bitti, & Gremigni, 2010). On the contrary, centring on the present seems to be a risk factor for safe sexuality (Rothspan & Read, 1996), road risk (Zimbardo, Keough, & Boyd, 1997), the use and abuse of cigarettes, alcohol and drugs (Keough, Zimbardo, & Boyd, 1999).

Time Perspective also predicts important developmental outcomes: several studies focus on the relationship between identity and time perspective, showing how time perspective dimension prevent critical outcomes in adolescence (Laghi, Baiocco, Liga, Guarino, & Baumgartner, 2013) and are related to cognitive and affective dimensions (Speltini & Molinari, 2015).

Regarding a possible link between time perspective and socio-economic status (SES), the literature does not report univocal results. Studies show that TP is a powerful mediator between SES and health (Fuchs, 1982; Guthrie, Butler, & Ward, 2009; Singh-Manoux, & Marmot, 2005), and more specifically as a higher SES is most likely associated with a future-oriented TP, compared to a lower status (Corral-Verdugo, Fraijo-Sing, & Pinheiro, 2006, D'Alessio, Guarino, De Pascalis, & Zimbardo, 2003; Epel, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 1999; Fuchs, 1982; Lamm, Schmidt, & Trommsdorff, 1976), but the latter focus in particular on small samples (a specific group, the homeless). More recent studies have tried to fill the gap in the literature, finding how SES is strongly associated with the time perspective, bringing to attention how a future-oriented TP, and less on the fatalistic present, seems to be typical of subjects with high level of education and more present in the sample of workers (Guthrie, Butler, & Ward, 2009). There are no studies in this sense in the Italian context.

But, considering the complex dynamics of youth employment in the Italian context, the study of the relationship between socio-economic status and TP is becoming increasingly important. In these dynamics, future and present are inevitably joined: projects on the future, in being greatly influenced by the context are in fact closely linked to the present that young people find themselves living. Young adults are more affected by contextual factors because in this phase of life the future orientation is central to the extent that decisions can lead to important results for career, personal life and social commitment (Nurmi, 2005; Steinberg et al., 2009).

The post-modern passage from a future like controllable time, linked to the choices of the present (first modernity) to a widespread despondency of its predictability (second modernity) (Leccardi, 2009) has caused in young adults a weakening of both the capacity of cognitive planning of the future and of the "affective gaze" directed to it. Fear, insecurity, anxiety seem to replace the experiences of trust, security and hope (Ricci Bitti & Zambianchi, 2011).

The psychological difficulties already inherent in the school-work transition are now fused with the dynamics of youth employment: the criticality of the labor market impacts on young people, forcing them to reduce their aspirations and to limit the temporal scope of their projects (Aleni Sestito et al., 2015). In fact, in recent years, the end of safe employment, the proliferation of professions and the plurality of contractual conditions have led to the progressive reduction of the possibility of predicting and planning the working future, with a greater risk of marginalisation.

Being young today presents more risk aspects than in previous generations (Scabini & Rossi, 2006): specifically, the Italian context is conceived as a prototype of southern European countries where opportunities for young adults to develop coherent and satisfactory life plans are influenced by current socio-economic suffering (Leccardi, 2006). In fact, most of the young Italians, after the period of education, experience periods of great instability and uncertainty (Berton, Richiardi, & Sacchi, 2009; Boeri & Galasso, 2007; Iezzi & Mastrobuoni, 2010), often associated with it a strong distrust of institutions (Pharr & Putnam, 2000).

In this scenario, where youth employment has become a social problem, the term NEET - Not in Education, Employment or Training - has been coined as a useful defining category to monitor the status of young people in the labor market and in the social context where they are immersed.

The acronym, born in the late '80s in the United Kingdom from the need to define young people aged 16 to 18 years not in employment, institution and training and since then extended to the range between 15 and 34 years, is now adopted in almost all EU Member States and in some non-European contexts, albeit with some specificities (Agnoli, 2015; Quintini & Martin, 2006; Walther & Pohl, 2005). This has allowed, also through the creation of a specific indicator, on one hand to monitor the size of the phenomenon, but on the other to clarify its characteristics, given its heterogeneity, in view of specific interventions. The 7 subtypes of NEET – re-entrants, short-term unemployed, long-term unemployed, unavailable due to illness or disability, unavailable due to family responsibilities, discouraged workers, other inactive – can be placed

along a continuum that goes from a minor level to a higher level of vulnerability (Eurofound, 2016).

The highest rates of young NEET adults have been recorded in Italy where about a third of individuals aged 20 to 34 are neither employed nor included in education or training processes (30.7%) (Eurostat, 2018). Specific to the Italian context is the strong gap between the northern and southern regions: the workforce of the South is considerably lower than the North, accentuating the differences in the presence of the NEET phenomenon (North, 17.7%, Central, 21.3%, South and Islands, 38.8%).

In our previous research on this phenomenon we have seen how occupational status weighs on the vision of the future that appears to be uncertain. The mutations of the social and economic context in fact bring significant effects on how to live time: NEET appear inactive in the present, they live in fact an “empty time”, and they show a difficulty in thinking about the future. The working precariousness accompanies the existential one and pervades every aspect of everyday life (Parola & Donsi, 2018).

2. Aims

Within the theoretical framework proposed by Zimbardo & Boyd (1999), the aim is to study the relationship between time perspective and occupational status. In particular, we want to understand whether NEET young adults have a different time orientation, both with regards to the present experience and with the aspirations for the future, in comparison with those who, in the same socio-economic context, study or work.

3. Material and methods

3.1 Participants

144 young adults aged 20 to 34 participated in the study, divided into students employed and NEET, from the Campania region. The choice of the reference territory has fallen on Campania as it is currently the Italian region most associated with the phenomenon (38.8%) (Istat, 2018). The socio-demographic characteristics of the sample are reported in detail in Table 1.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample (n=144)

	%
Gender	
Male	36.8
Female	63.2
Age	
20-24	34.7
25-34	65.3
Employment status	
Students	54.2
Employed	20.1
NEET	25.7
Educational levels	
Lower secondary	1.4
Not completed Upper secondary	1.4
Upper secondary	32.6
Not completed academic/general tertiary	4.2
Bachelor or equivalent	14.6
Master or equivalent	3.4
Doctoral or equivalent	11.8
Educational level of father	
Not completed primary	.7
Primary	5.6
Lower secondary	25.7
Upper secondary	41.7
Bachelor or master	23.6
Doctoral or equivalent	2.8
Educational level of mother	
Not completed primary	.7
Primary	4.2
Lower secondary	22.2
Upper secondary	54.9
Bachelor or master	15.3
Doctoral or equivalent	2.8
Marital status	
Unmarried	90.3
Unmarried partner or Married	9.7
Children	
Yes	4.2
No	95.8
Accommodation	
Living alone	2.8
Living in parental home	85.4
Living with the partner	9
No partner, living with other people	2.8
Maintenance income	
Labour income	38.2
Parental income	58.3
Partner income	3.5

3.2 Procedure

Participants were submitted to a protocol requesting detailed socio-demographic information and the Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory questionnaire (Z-TPI, Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999),

in the Short Form validated in Italian (S-TPI, D'Alessio, Guarino, De Pascalis, & Zimbardo, 2003).

The purpose of the informed consent form is to provide confidentiality and anonymity for the participants involved in the study. The study was carried out in accordance with the World Health Organization ethics guidelines and was approved by the ethical committee of Psychological Research of University of Naples Federico II.

The demographic information included age, gender, marital status, presence of children, educational level, educational level of the parents, employment status, maintenance income, accommodation.

The S-TPI questionnaire includes 22 items on three factors: Present Hedonistic, Present Fatalistic and Future. The Present Fatalistic subscale includes 5 items (e.g.: "It doesn't make sense to worry about the future since there is nothing to do about it anyway."); the Hedonistic Present subscale includes 8 items (e.g.: "I believe that getting together with one's friends to party is one of life's important pleasures."); the Future subscale includes 9 items (e.g.: "When I want to achieve something, I set goals and consider specific means for reaching those goals"). For each item, the respondents indicated how characteristic a particular statement was of them on a five-point Likert Scale (very untrue, somewhat untrue, neutral, somewhat true, and very true, coded 1–5 such that higher values indicated a stronger endorsement). The subscale score was the mean of the relevant items.

The use of the Short Form, which keeps out the dimension of the past, is (a) linked to a greater interest in the dimensions of the present and the future, as the literature demonstrates, have more predictive of positive / negative behavioural outcomes, (b) in line with the authors dealing with the relationship between socio-economic status and time perspective (Guthrie, Butler, & Ward, 2009), (c) supported by the theoretical and psychometric motivations that guided the creation of this version for young people and adults in the Italian context (D'Alessio, Guarino, De Pascalis, & Zimbardo, 2003). The subscales of the questionnaire have good psychometric characteristics (Cronbach's α range from .74 to .82 and test-retest reliability from .70 to .80).

3.3 Data analysis

Preliminary analyses were carried out. First, means and standard deviations were performed. Skewness and kurtosis values for all study variables were computed to tests the assumption of multivariate normality. Pearson's correlations between all variables of this study were calculated.

In order to examine the the association of Occupational Status, Age, Gender, Educational level, Educational level of parents, marital status, presence of children, maintenance income, accommodation (independent variables) and Present Hedonistic, Present Fatalistic, Future (dependent variables) Multiple Linear Regression, stepwise method, were computed.

The choice of the analysis technique was guided by the knowledge of the phenomenon and the number of predictors necessary for its explanation. In the study of the NEET category, in fact, considered as an extremism of possible problems related to development, it becomes necessary to study the phenomenon through various factors and understand how occupational status affects the net or with the interaction of other characteristics.

The stepwise modelling allows to evaluate the relationship between a set of predictors and a variable response, with an automatic procedure for inserting the variables one by one. Non-continuous variables were treated as dummy variables within the model. Analyses were performed using IBM SPSS software.

4. Results

Means, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis values were reported in Table 2. As a first analysis step, the average scores on the total number of participants were calculated for the three dimensions considered – Present Hedonistic (TP.PE), Fatalistic Present (TP.PF), Future (TP.F) – and later the relationship between socio-demographic variables and time dimensions was observed in order to highlight possible differences (D'Alessio, Guarino, De Pascalis, & Zimbardo, 2003). The measures time perspective had levels in the literature range of skew and kurtosis (-1, 1) (Muthén & Kaplan, 1985) indicating that the distribution does not have weighty distortions. The average obtained scores on the three dimensions give an account of the centring of the subjects comparing them to the dimensions of the time perspective. The tendency of our participants is towards preferential centring on the future (Tab. 2).

Table 2. Mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis values for all study variables ($n=144$)

	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
TP.PE	2.69	.49	.30	-.46
TP.PF	2.73	.72	.61	.28
TP. F	3.02	.95	-.50	-.89

Table 3. Mean scores on the time perspective subscales by socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

	TP.PE		TP.PF		TP.F	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Gender						
Male	2.76	.58	2.78	.67	2.81	.85
Female	2.64	.43	2.70	.75	3.14	.99
Age						
20-24	2.73	.49	2.96	.70	3.17	.79
25-34	2.66	.50	2.60	.70	2.94	1.02
Employment status						
Students	2.68	.42	2.76	.69	3.37	.61
Employed	2.88	.54	2.69	.65	3.58	.49
NEET	2.52	.55	2.70	.84	1.82	.79
Educational levels						
Lower secondary	2.50	.30	3.00	.57	3.50	.24
Not completed	2.86	.61	3.30	2.40	1.67	.01
Upper secondary						
Upper secondary	2.64	.55	2.91	.70	2.95	.95
Not completed	2.57	.37	3.13	.90	2.17	1.01
academic/general tertiary						
Bachelor or equivalent	2.78	.54	2.86	.68	3.35	.48
Master or equivalent	2.67	.47	2.56	.62	2.99	1.05
Doctoral or equivalent	2.75	.46	2.34	.61	3.26	.90
Educational level of father						
Not completed	2.29	-	3.40	-	3.33	-
primary						
Primary	2.68	.37	3.25	.81	2.94	.96
Lower secondary	2.63	.55	2.63	.68	3.05	.95
Upper secondary	2.80	.47	2.88	.77	3.17	.84
Bachelor or master	2.54	.48	2.44	.55	2.69	1.13
Doctoral or equivalent	2.71	.42	2.55	.34	3.28	.56
Educational level of mother						
Not completed	2.29	-	3.40	-	3.33	-
primary						
Primary	2.74	.62	3.23	.85	3.39	.37
Lower secondary	2.67	.52	2.59	.68	3.14	.98
Upper secondary	2.64	.49	2.78	.67	2.84	.98
Bachelor or master	2.88	.42	2.69	.88	3.25	.89
Doctoral or equivalent	2.54	.39	2.10	.42	3.50	.59
Marital status						
Unmarried	2.70	.50	2.72	.69	3.03	.94
Unmarried partner or Married	2.55	.42	2.83	.95	2.85	1.07
Children						
Yes	2.50	.47	2.90	.98	2.69	1.26
No	2.69	.50	2.72	.71	3.03	.94
Accommodation						
Living alone	3.25	.32	2.45	.53	3.17	.88
Living in parental home	2.68	.49	2.74	.69	3.00	.96

Living with the partner	2.53	.48	2.83	1.00	2.95	.99
No partner, living with other people	2.79	.69	2.45	.72	3.47	.55
Maintenance income						
Labour income	2.82	.53	2.74	.72	3.27	.78
Parental income	2.60	.45	2.69	.66	2.91	1.00
Partner income	2.60	.47	3.32	1.37	2.04	1.05

The variables considered, on the other hand, allow us to shed light on how personal or social variables can be decisive in the time perspective of individuals: as we can see in detail in Tab. 3, it is TP.F that has higher scores for most considered variables (v. gender, age, educational level of parents, children, marital status), while a different time orientation emerges according to the educational level, the employment status, the accommodation and the maintenance income. Compared with the qualification, the abandonment of a course of study seems to weigh on the preferential centring: the subjects who have dropped out of high school or university have in fact a centring on the present fatalistic type, rather than on the future.

As far as accommodation is concerned, the subjects who live alone express more a hedonistic preference on the present than others, while not underestimating their orientation towards the future, while those who live with their parents or with other people who are not romantically linked, sharing perhaps a transitional experience, they are more definitely oriented towards the future. Regarding the source of maintenance, when the partner represents the main source, a fatalistic vision of the present emerges. In the details of occupational status, the average scores show that employed and students have a preferential focus on the future, while NEETs in this dimension have a considerably lower score than the other two categories. This data reasonably refers to their cognitive and affective difficulty in planning for the future. Instead, they get the highest score in the fatalistic present dimension.

Prevailing in the comparisons with almost all the variables, the orientation towards the future therefore appears to be lacking when deficiencies in the economic-work and/or personal fulfilment sphere are at stake.

Table 4. Pearson's correlations between variables of regression model

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Age^a	-												
2. Gender^b	.018	-											
3. Educational levels^c	.532**	.134	-										
4. Educational level of father^d	-.045	-.064	.075	-									
5. Educational level of mother^e	-.085	.013	.086	.649**	-								
6. Marital status^f	.239**	.153	.060	-.016	-.038	-							
7. Children^g	-.152	-.087	.104	.127	.220**	-.635**	-						
8. Accommodation^h	-.003	.101	.016	-.165*	-.089	.472**	-.247**	-					
9. Maintenance incomeⁱ	-.059	.120	-.250**	.053	.009	.230**	-.260**	.122	-				
10. Employment status^l	.375**	-.053	.079	.000	-.067	.166*	-.152	.033	.217**	-			
11. TP.PE	-.064	-.120	.059	-.022	.070	-.088	.077	-.105	-.186*	-.103	-		
12. TP.PF	-.239**	-.051	-.287**	-.186*	-.111	.046	-.050	.004	.078	-.040	.290**	-	
13. TP.F	-.116	.165*	.104	-.078	-.002	-.058	.073	.034	-.266**	-.622**	.219**	-.137	-

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$. ^aAge: 1=20-24, 2=25-34. ^bGender: 1=Male, 2=Female. ^cEducational levels: 1=Lower secondary, 2=Not completed Upper secondary, 3=Upper secondary, 4=Not completed academic/general tertiary, 5=Bachelor or equivalent, 6=Master or equivalent, 7=Doctoral or equivalent. ^dEducational level of father: 1=Not completed primary, 2=Lower secondary, 3=Lower secondary, 4=Upper secondary, 5=Bachelor or master, 6= Doctoral or equivalent. ^eEducational level of mother: 1=Not completed primary, 2=Lower secondary, 3=Lower secondary, 4=Upper secondary, 5=Bachelor or master, 6= Doctoral or equivalent. ^fMarital status: 1=Unmarried, 2=Unmarried partner or Married. ^gChildren: 1=Yes, 2=No. ^hAccommodation: 1=Living alone, 2=Living in parental home, 3=Living with the partner, 4=No partner, living with other people. ⁱMaintenance income: 1=Labour income, 2=Parental income, 3=Partner income. ^lEmployment status: 1=Students, 2= Employed, 3=NEET.

A first correlation analysis allowed to evaluate the relationships between the predictors used in the subsequent regression analysis. From Tab. 4 we note that the most strictly socio-demographic variables correlate with each other, indicating a certain linearity of development (see age and educational level, $r = .532$, $p \leq .01$, age and marital status, $r = .239$, $p \leq .01$).

The TP.PE correlates negatively with the maintenance income ($r = -.186$, $p \leq .05$), indicating that the more income is produced by one's work, the more the present goes towards the size of the enjoyment; the TP.PF correlates negatively with age ($r = -.239$, $p \leq .01$), decreasing with age, and with their own educational level ($r = -.287$, $p \leq .01$) or that of the father ($r = -.186$, $p \leq .05$), decreasing with the increase of the schooling. Moreover, the two dimensions of the present (TP.PE and TP.PF) positively correlate with each other ($r = .290$, $p \leq .01$) and this datum accounts for an evidence, already visible from the average scores shown in Tab 3: the major differences compared to the orientations are found between present and future, while between fatalism and hedonism the scores are closer together, perhaps because the subjects, generally express a preference for orientation on the present, then orient themselves towards fatalism or hedonism in relation to specific situations, thus not showing an exclusive centring on one or the other dimension.

The TP.F correlates negatively with the maintenance income ($r = -.266$; $p \leq .01$), decreasing precisely in cases of dependence on others for their own maintenance and with the occupational status ($r = -.622$, $p \leq .01$), being smaller in the case of NEET subjects; instead, it correlates positively with the TP.PE ($r = .219$, $p \leq .01$), expressing the evidence that centring on the future can be accompanied by a vision of the present, more hedonistic than fatalistic, and with gender ($r = .165$, $p \leq .05$), where women have a greater focus on the future.

Table 5. Regression model (stepwise method)

Dimension	Model	Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	R_c^2	F for ΔR^2
TP.PE	Step 1	Maintenance income – Labour income	.228	.083	.225	2.750**	.225	7.561**
	Step 2	Maintenance income – Labour income	.211	.082	.208	2.574*	.292	6.572*
	Step 3	Educational level of father – Upper secondary	.187	.081	.187	2.313**	.355	6.709*
		Maintenance income – Labour income	.212	.080	.209	2.636*		
		Educational level of father – Upper secondary	.212	.080	.212	2.653*		
	Step 4	Educational level of mother – Bachelor or master	.277	.109	.203	2.544*	.388	6.176*
		Maintenance income – Labour income	.230	.080	.227	2.877*		
		Educational level of father – Upper secondary	.243	.080	.243	3.019*		
		Educational level of mother – Bachelor or master	.281	.108	.205	2.606*		
	Step 5	Marital status – Unmarried	.271	.133	.163	2.031**	.418	5.838*
		Maintenance income – Labour income	.208	.080	.205	2.596*		
		Educational level of father – Upper secondary	.166	.088	.166	1.876**		
		Educational level of mother – Bachelor or master	.373	.116	.272	3.207*		
		Marital status – Unmarried	.298	.133	.179	2.248**		
			Educational level of father – Bachelor or master	.223	.112	.193	1.990**	
TP.PF	Step 1	Age – 20-24	.360	.123	.239	2.936**	.239	8.621**
	Step 2	Age – 20-24	.395	.121	.263	3.264*	.315	7.764*
	Step 3	Educational level of father – Lower secondary	.644	.251	.206	2.563*	.376	7.667*
		Age – 20-24	.440	.120	.293	3.674*		
		Educational level of father – Lower secondary	.685	.247	.219	2.774*		
			Maintenance income – Partner income	.810	.310	.207	2.613*	
TP.F	Step 1	Employment status - NEET	-1.606	.122	-.741	-13.146*	.546	172.817*
	Step 2	Employment status - NEET	-1.676	.124	-.773	-13.503*	.559	91.700*
	Step 3	Educational levels – Master or equivalent	.268	.116	.132	2.307**	.569	63.922*
		Employment status - NEET	-.1657	.123	-.764	-13.458*		
		Educational levels – Master or equivalent	.244	.116	.120	2.106**		
			Gender – Male	-.220	.107	-.113	-2.050**	

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$

The regression model shows the predictors for each examined dimension (Tab. 5). For the dimension of the Hedonistic Present, the strongest predictor is the source of maintenance, in a regression model with 5 factors (in order: Maintenance income_Labour income, Educational level of the father_Upper secondary, Educational level of the mother_Bachelor or master, Marital status_Unmarried, Educational level of father_Bachelor or master) ($R^2c = .418$, $F_{(5, 138)} = 5.838$, $p < .001$). The vision of enjoyment therefore depends, on one hand, on experiences of economic and relational independence and, on the other, on a high family cultural capital.

In the Fatalistic Present the strongest predictor is the Age, in a 3-factor model (in the order, Age_20-24, Educational level of the father_Lower secondary, Maintenance income_Partner income) ($R^2c = .376$, $F_{(3, 140)} = 7.667$, $p < .001$). In this case, being younger and dependent on others, along with a lower cultural capital, influences the perception of control over the events.

The NEET status is, instead, the strongest predictor of a negative vision of the future, in a 3-factor regression model (in order, Occupational Status_NEET, Educational level_Master or equivalent, Gender_Male) which explains the widest proportion of variance ($R^2c = .57$, $F_{(3, 140)} = 63.922$, $p < .001$). The NEET condition, and therefore the occupational status, turns out to be decisive for the vision of a negative future, and a longer scholastic preparation tends to accentuate the sense of failure of the future aspirations, especially in males.

5. Discussion and conclusions

Our results show that occupational status affects the time perspective of young adults. While peers and busy students are predominantly future-oriented, the NEET condition predicts a negative view of the future. From this vision emerges a real difficulty in “thinking about the future”, in terms of lack of orientation towards objectives and difficulties in the use of planning strategies. Along with occupational status, this difficulty appears for those who have a higher level of education and therefore a consequent greater investment in their work potential, which makes one perceive a condition of inactivity even more disappointingly. Workers, on the other hand, in a moment of transition, have the task of adapting to the contexts in which they are inserted and of comparing their expectations with real and actual opportunities, but have a defined status and therefore a different experience, expressing a hedonistic preference towards the present, without however rejecting the design dimension of the future. This result is in line with the literature that links the time perspective and the socioeconomic status, showing how a future-oriented, and less fatal-to-present, perspective is typical of subjects with a high level of education and of workers (Guthrie, Butler, & Ward, 2009).

The question of gender differences, that is, of women more oriented towards the future than men, which are instead negative predictors of the future dimension, could be linked to the characteristics of the male and female biographical features that inevitably affect future perspective (Leccardi, 1996), an interesting result especially in relation to possible protective factors but which requires further research.

Differently, young adults still included in the training or education processes, students of degree courses or later specialisations and masters, are still temporarily protected from learning contexts, because they are not yet called to realise life projects in practice. Specifically, those who are working, therefore in the midst of the exploration inherent in the orientation to the future.

A more in-depth reflection can be made by taking into account the specific items concerning the dimension of the future, “I like to think about the future”, “I believe that my future is beautiful and well planned”: to affirm, in fact, that the NEET youth group is the strongest negative predictor for the future dimension, means to say, as we also note from the average scores presented, that compared to these items the NEETs are positioned at the lowest values, strongly indicating the uncertainties that belong to their everyday life, therefore their mined design capacity. The young NEETs are, in fact, oriented towards the present, more to the fatalistic one, thus focusing on the control component on the events.

Further considerations must be made on the two dimensions of the present. The first evidence is that the most influencing in these dimensions are the economic conditions of dependence/independence, age and family cultural capital. Gaining and having its own independence – not only the workers but also students, workers, scholarship holders, trainees or paid interns – affects the vision of the present, which goes towards hedonism, and the same thing seems to happen for those who have a marital status of unmarried/unmarried; a present time perspective of a fatalistic type is highlighted, instead, when one is not yet in a position to be able to maintain their own upkeep and therefore dependent. Alongside this, the educational level affects the vision of the present: in the case of a high level of parental schooling, the present is more oriented towards hedonism while, on the contrary, a low level of paternal schooling affects the vision of a fatalistic present. This data is in line with the studies that link the level of low family education and the focus on the present fatalistic (Guthrie, Butler, & Ward, 2009). Age is also affected by this centring: the 20-24 group is, in fact, a predictor of how to relate to the present fatalistic. This is confirmed by the literature that studies the development of the time perspective and its change over the ages of life: as the individual grows, the idea of being at the mercy of destiny decreases, instead increasing control over events (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999),

thanks to a greater internal control (Peterson & Stunkard, 1992). Studies that suggest a negative relationship between age and hedonistic present are different and very recent (Carstensen, 2006; Carstensen et al., 2011; Laureiro-Martinez, Trujillo, & Unda, 2017).

A key to understanding our results may be that, where a short-sightedness about the future is present (Steinberg et al., 2009), this appears strongly linked to contextual factors and youth unemployment that impact incisively on the time perspective of young adults. Among the time dimensions, the one that is most affected by the contextual factors is precisely that of the future: the economic situation is in fact one of the main causes of the transition from future-promises to future-menace (Benasayag & Schmit, 2003), characterised by a situation that is blocked, unstable and dangerous both individually and collectively.

These results have fuelled ongoing studies on the impact of the future perspective on the health of young NEET adults, in terms of internalising and externalising problems, in line with the literature that links time perspective to risk/health protection factors. A focus on the present and strongly negative scores on the future dimension could in fact lead to serious risks in terms of well-being, which also seem to be linked to our results on the perceived malaise of young adults NEET (Parola & Donsi, 2018). In the present time and in the absence of future orientation, in fact, there could be levels of both internal (Paul & Moser, 2009) and external malaise (Sommantico, Donizzetti, De Rosa, Parrello, & Osorio Guzman, 2015).

This study could offer a brief but useful reflection in the development of programs and strategies of interventions for young NEET. If uncertainty threatens trust and planning for the future, young people must be provided early with the tools necessary to improve their skills (Savickas, 2005, 2012) and to develop essential social and emotional skills in decision making (Di Fabio & Kenny, 2016). In this direction should be planned interventions to creating positives in the present, and developing a vibrant image of a hopeful future.

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