



Socio-relational well-being and dropout in vocational schools: a study on school engagement and satisfaction

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Presentation for the SHE Academy 2020-Nov. 5, 2020



Early leaving...

-is *not* a sudden choice and results from a process which lasts years (Christenson, Sinclair, Lehr & Godber, 2001)

-is characterized by indicators such as **abandonment through low attendance, and experiences of school failure.** ***

-leads to a decreased state of well-being and to greater societal disparities (Freudenberg, 2007).

Early leavers from education and training in the EU

(2019, % of those aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and who were not in further education or training)

● Europe 2020 target
 ● Europe 2020 target achieved

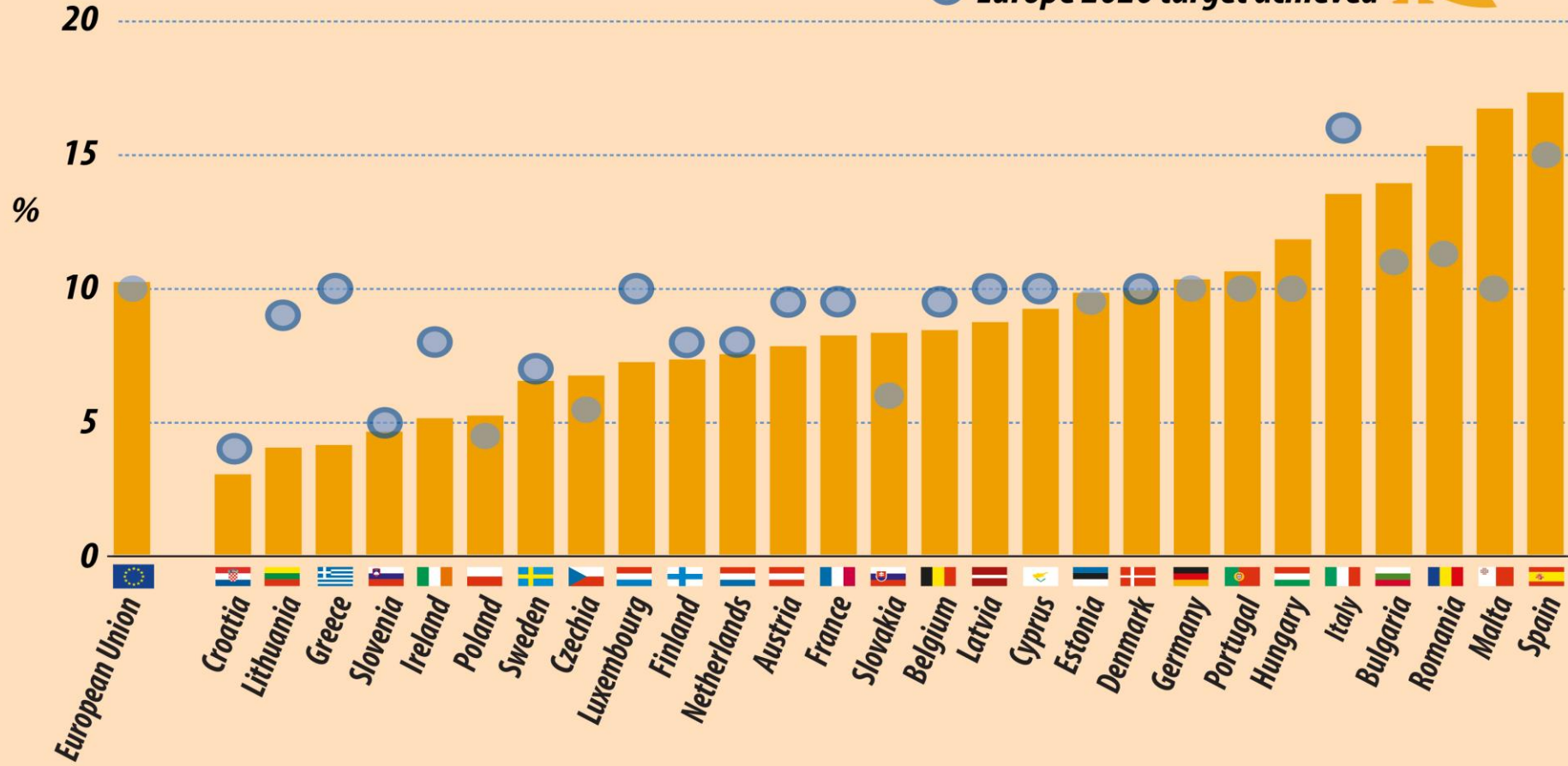
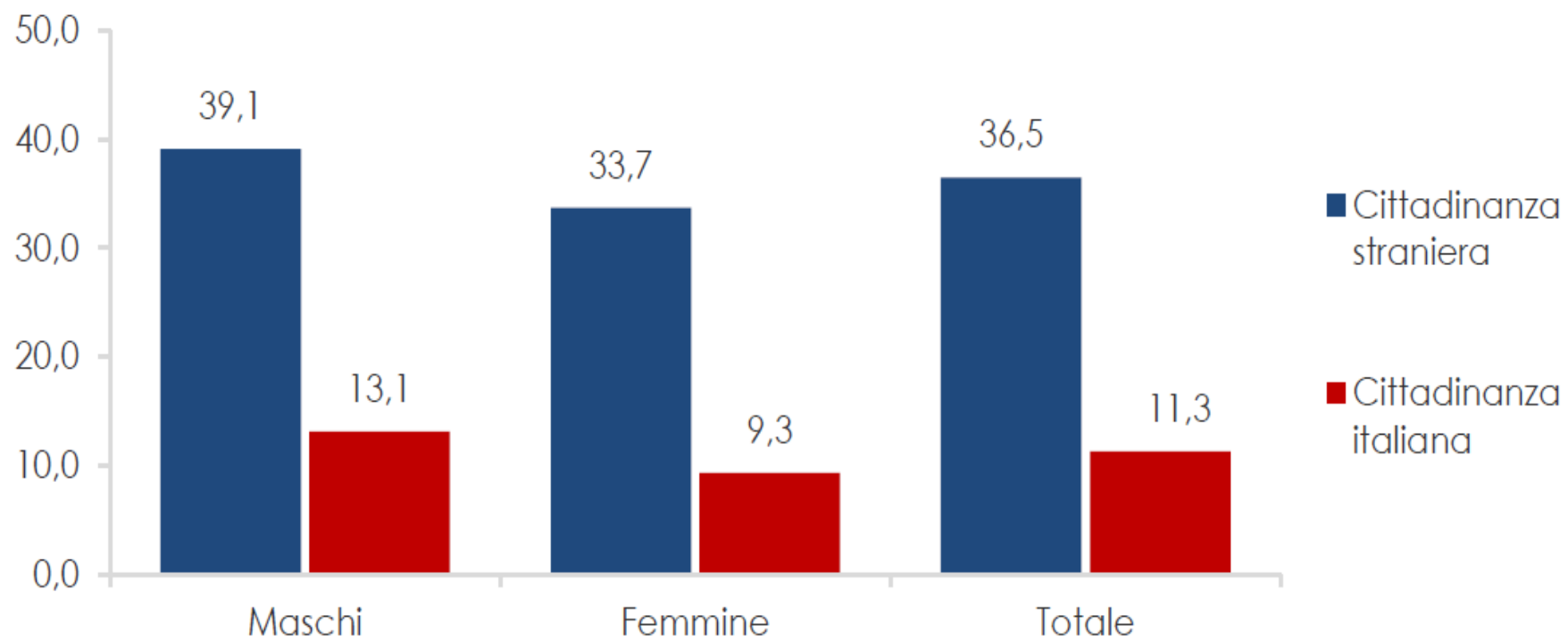


Fig. 4.9 Early leavers from education and training per sesso in Italia nel 2019



Fonte: EUROSTAT [edat_lfse_01]

Situation in Italy

Italy has one of the highest European 'early leaving' rates amongst youth aged 18-24 (ISTAT, 2017; Eurostat, 2020)

Who is at risk?

*Foreign born students

*Male

*Worst in the South of the country

Vocational schools: a last chance

Possible solutions?

Promoting socio-relational skills can help improve students' self-efficacy, relationships with peers and teachers.

*It can also improve their level of satisfaction and of school engagement.

*It makes the studying experience more conducive to learning and potentially reduces absenteeism and dropout rates

(Durlak & Weissberg, 2011)

Objectives

- 1) Explore the current situation of students attending vocational schools
- 2) Study their social-relational well-being and how it relates to their school situation and risk of leaving school earlier

Research questions

What is the relationship between:

***school engagement** and

-previous school performance,

-school intentions for the future and

-intentions to drop out

***school satisfaction** and

-previous school performance

-school intentions for the future

Methodology

Sample:

*235 adolescents F= 20% between the ages of 13 and 24
(M=15.5 ± 1.50)

*1st and 2nd years of 6 **vocational** schools in Piedmont (Italy)

Constructs studied

***School engagement** (Behavioral, Emotional & Cognitive engagement-Wang, Willett & Eccles (2011): 23 items on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e.: do your homework on time?/quickly recover from bad experiences?/I feel happy and safe in this school)

***School satisfaction** (Diener, et al.,1985; Nurmi et. al., 2003): 5 items on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e.: how interested are you in the topics presented to you?)

***Intention to drop out** (Hardre & Reeve, 2003): 3 items on a 6-point Likert scale (i.e.: sometimes I don't feel sure I want to continue studying)

Compared to...

Previous school performance (number of times they had repeated a school year: never, once, more than once)

and

Future school intentions should the student fail the current school year (stay at the same school, change to another one or choose to leave early)

Results (ANOVA)

Future intentions

Students who would **re-enroll at the same school** (in the event of failing the school year) **vs.** students who would **leave early**:

↑ **School engagement:**

- (Behavioral/Attentiveness) ($F(2) = 7,629; p = 0,001$)
- (Emotional Engagement/School Belonging) ($F(2) = 8.457; p = 0.000$)

↑ **School satisfaction** ($F(2) = 9.489; p = 0.000$)

Results (ANOVA)

Previous school performance

Students who had **failed a school year more than once vs.**
students who had never **failed a school year/failed once:**

↑ **School engagement:**

(Emotional engagement/School Belonging) ($F(2) = 3,820; p = 0.023$)

↑ **School satisfaction** ($F(2) = 2.993; p = 0.052$)

Results (correlational analyses)

Intention to Dropout was negatively associated with several dimensions of School Engagement:

School engagement:

- **Behavioral Engagement**

- **Attentiveness** ($r = -.35, p < .01$)

- **School Compliance** ($r = -.31, p < .01$)

***Cognitive Engagement**

- **Cognitive Strategy Use** ($r = -.26, p < .01$)

Conclusions

*The development of greater school engagement in students should become one of the priorities of the school system, to limit negative school experiences, which, as in the case of school year failure, can be predictors of school dispersion and of early leaving (Capperucci, 2016)

*It is fundamental to improve, through interventions and good practices, the social relational skills not only of students but of all the main key players within the Italian school system.

*“Arriving at one goal is the starting point
to another” (John Dewey)*

Thank you for your attention!