

Dropping out from a Training Course after the High School in Italy

Il Rischio di Interruzione dei Corsi di Formazione Professionale in Italia

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Riassunto: In questo lavoro viene analizzato il rischio di interruzione dei corsi di formazione professionale a partire dai dati raccolti nell'ambito delle indagini sui percorsi di studio e di lavoro dei diplomati svolte dall'ISTAT. Sulla base dei dati raccolti nella indagine più recente, viene proposto un modello logistico per individuare possibili determinanti socio-demografiche del processo di abbandono.

Keywords: Dropping out, training courses, logistic model.

1. Introduction, data and methods

After completing the high school, different professional paths can be undertaken. One may continue to study or look for a job, or both. Moreover, some decide to specialize with training courses. These may vary from language courses to informatics or to job learning ones, and can be public (i.e., regional) or private (ISFOL 2006). The aim of our study is to describe the participation in and the drop out from vocational training courses. We use data from the samples "Survey on school-to-work transitions of secondary school graduates" carried out by the National Italian Statistics Institute (ISTAT) from 1998 to 2004. The purpose of these surveys is to evaluate the benefits of having an educational qualification in the labour market. We apply to the last survey (2004) data a binomial logistic regression analysing the probability to conclude or to drop out from a training course (e.g. Lam 1984). We built up a regression model based on stepwise selection strategy. The model is estimated by applying the 'logistic' procedure of the SAS package. Variables related to both individual characteristics of graduates and the features of the attended courses were included in the model as descriptors.

2. Results and discussion

Graduates' participation to regional training courses was high both in 1998 and 2001 (about 12%), while it diminished to 8% in 2004. Notably, the drop out process seems to follow a decreasing pattern ranging from 11.3% in 1998 to 8.9% in 2004. Always in time women participate more and stop attending less often a training course.

The results of the logistic model performed on people graduated in 2001¹ suggest that the most important effects on dropping out risk are due to course features, especially to the variable discriminating whether the course is public, self-paid private or paid by the employer (Table 1). The risk of dropping out is highest for students attending public courses, followed by those attending courses held by private institutions or paid by the employer. Notably, no significant differences were observed in the drop out from first (i.e. lower secondary school licence needed) vs second level training courses (i.e. upper secondary school licence needed). The attachment to study at both the secondary and the tertiary level plays an important role too: a vocational education increases both the probability to participate to and to drop out from a training course. Moreover, university students show a lower attachment to vocational training courses as well. By gender, the analysis confirms that women have a higher probability to conclude their course.

Table 1: *Stepwise logistic regression: summary statistics*².

	Base profile	Estimate	S.E.	Wald χ^2	P
Intercept		-1.56	0.19	65.8	< 0.01
Sex	F	-0.33	0.16	4.3	0.04
School type	G	-0.54	0.21	6.6	0.01
University	N	-0.44	0.17	6.3	0.01
Course type	P	-0.47	0.20	5.4	0.02
Course type	E	-1.51	0.47	10.4	< 0.01
Course type	S	-0.13	0.20	0.4	0.51

F=female, G=generalist, N=not enrolled, P=private training course, E=training course paid by the employer, S=Second level regional training course.

Females with a generalist secondary education – but not enrolled in university – who attend courses held by private institutions or paid by the employer showed the lowest probability to leave the training course. Males with a vocational education and enrolled in tertiary education who attend a regional training course, show the highest probability to drop out. Considering the lack of quantitative data and researches on training course participation and outputs, policies designed to improve quality and efficacy of vocational training education should take into account the results of such analyses (e.g. Ottaviani 2005).

References

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¹ A total of 20,408 graduates (on a population of 455,000 graduated) was selected from a sample of 1,802 schools. A grant from Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs supports ISTAT to improve the last survey on graduates through questions on training course participation.

² The stepwise process removed: geographical area, father's education, upper secondary school mark, training course length and subject. The significance level for entering variables was set to 0,07.