



UNIONE EUROPEA  
Fondo sociale europeo



**MINISTERO DEL LAVORO,  
DELLA SALUTE E DELLE POLITICHE SOCIALI**

Direzione Generale per le Politiche  
per l'Orientamento e la Formazione



Ministero dello Sviluppo Economico  
Dipartimento per le Politiche di Sviluppo e di Coesione



# LA DOMANDA DI ISTRUZIONE E FORMAZIONE DEGLI ALLIEVI IN DIRITTO-DOVERE ALL'ISTRUZIONE E FORMAZIONE

I risultati dell'indagine  
ISFOL

termine del corso di formazione – ha dichiarato che svolgerà il lavoro per il quale sta studiando ed il restante degli intervistati ha dichiarato che al termine del percorso intrapreso continuerà negli studi.

In conclusione, dai risultati della ricerca emerge la fotografia di un sistema formativo che da una parte assolve una funzione strettamente professionalizzante, finalizzata all'inserimento nel mercato del lavoro in tempi rapidi e con posizioni qualificate, dall'altra un'importante funzione di *rimotivazione* allo studio, soprattutto per quei ragazzi caratterizzati da precedenti esperienze di insuccessi scolastici. Per molti giovani, dunque, soprattutto per quanti, avendo vissuto un qualche insuccesso scolastico, sono a rischio di uscita da qualunque percorso formativo, la formazione professionale svolge una funzione latente di recupero e di anti-dispersione.

La ricerca sembra dunque dimostrare che un processo di apprendimento-insegnamento basato sulla pratica e sull'esperienza, grazie anche all'utilizzo di *stage* e laboratori, risulta essere vincente, perché risponde ad una utenza giovanile caratterizzata da una pluralità di bisogni e di interessi differenziati e a situazioni socio-culturali diversificate. A questo proposito vale la pena sottolineare l'importanza che un canale come quello della formazione professionale riveste anche per gli allievi di nazionalità straniera, una quota considerevole del campione, molto spesso figli di immigrati, le cui difficoltà alla scuola secondaria superiore sono spesso imputabili a problemi linguistici e di integrazione in una diversa cultura.

Un canale di Formazione Professionale Iniziale di qualità rappresenta, quindi, uno strumento prezioso per supportare una partecipazione più vasta alla formazione lungo tutto l'arco della vita, in un'ottica di inclusione sociale: per far sì, però, che ciò si realizzi pienamente è opportuno intervenire, correggendo le disfunzioni ancora presenti nel sistema, così da rendere tali percorsi veramente competitivi al pari degli altri canali formativi.

*Allegato A*  
Summary of the research

**“Training demand of young people  
with a right/duty to education  
and training**

*The research was conducted by ISFOL, Area Politiche ed Offerte per la Formazione Iniziale e Permanente (Area for Initial and Adult Vocational Training Policies and Activities), in conjunction with the IARD Institute under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour and Welfare, Directorate-General for Guidance and Training Policies (NOP OB. 3, System Actions, Strand C, Action 7 and NOP OB. 1, Technical Assistance and System Actions, Action II. 1.B.6).*

*The research staff included:*

- *for ISFOL: Anna D'Arcangelo, Valeria Scalmato, Enrica Marsilii*
- *for the IARD Institute: Carlo Buzzi, Gianluca Argentin, Marco Vinante*

*ISFOL and the IARD Institute were assisted by the Scientific Committee, consisting of:*

- *Carlo Barone - University of Mannheim*
- *Alessandro Cavalli - University of Pavia*
- *Silvia Cortellazzi - Università Cattolica (Catholic University)*
- *Giancarlo Gasperoni - University of Bologna*
- *Italo Piccoli - Università Cattolica (Catholic University)*

## 1. THE STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

The research on “*La domanda di formazione dei giovani in diritto-dovere all’istruzione e alla formazione*” (Training Demand of Young People with a Right/Duty to Education and Training), which *ISFOL* conducted in 2006 in conjunction with the *IARD* Institute, aims to shed light on the real training needs of young people, as well as on their wishes and expectations. The research takes as a starting point an assessment of the information students and their families have about the current educational system and, in particular, the pathway dedicated to vocational training.

Moving beyond the traditional methods of survey, based on the observations of “experts and practitioners” within the education and training systems, the research seeks to give voice to the other actors, young people themselves, by asking them about their opinions, experiences and hopes for the future.

In view of these aims, the research thus covers several dimensions, such as the effect of a family’s social class and cultural traits on young people’s choice of education and training pathways, the role of guidance during compulsory education, and the main sources of information, the aspirations and practical considerations that lead students and their families to choose an educational pathway.

The research focuses on two specific lines of investigation. The first involves examining the set of information that students completing the lower secondary school and their families have regarding Initial Vocational Training (IVT), with particular emphasis on their perceptions in terms of aims, contents, as well as training and career plans. Secondly, interviews with students completing the two- or three-year vocational training pathways are used to investigate the reasons for their choices, their opinions and enjoyment of the training experience, and their expectations and hopes for the future. The final aim is to be able to better fulfil the needs of students attending IVT.

In view of these objectives, two separate surveys have been conducted, using structured interviews presented in simple language similar to that used by young people and containing, whenever possible, common sections and questions for the two groups of respondents. The first survey was conducted on a representative sample<sup>64</sup> of around 2,000 students attending in 2006 the final year of lower secondary school (*terza media*) and their mothers. The structured interviews were held in classrooms and at the students’ homes during the months of March and April 2006, i.e. during the second term, after the completion of educational pro-

---

<sup>64</sup> The sample was stratified in proportion to the population by region, size of municipality, gender of student and educational qualification of the mother.

gress reports and presentation of the options for further study.  
For the second survey, which was carried out in the same time frame, a structured questionnaire was submitted to approximately 1,000 students in the second and third year of IVT courses at some 80 training agencies; the representative sample was selected according to geographical location and type of training pathway.

## 2.CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TWO SAMPLES

The composition of the samples used in the survey differs significantly in respect of the variables considered, as illustrated in the table below.

	Families of Lower Secondary School Students		Families of IVT Students	
<b>Social class</b>	Managerial	22.0	Managerial	6.9
	Lower professional	24.0	Lower professional	8.5
	Own account worker	20.0	Own account worker	23.6
	Manual worker or similar	34.0	Manual worker or similar	61.0
<b>Age</b>	Lower Secondary School Students		IVT Students	
	12 years	4.0	17 years	35.0
	13 years	6.4	18 years	37.0
	14 years	89.0	19 years	19.7
<b>Gender</b>	Males	51.0	Males	60.3
	Females	49.0	Females	39.7
<b>Nationality</b>	Foreign	2.5	Foreign	14.6
<b>Assessment at the completion of lower secondary school</b>	Expected assessment at the completion of lower secondary school		Assessment obtained at the completion of lower secondary school	
	Pass	14.3	Pass	62.5

**Table 1**  
*Characteristics of the Interviewees (per cent)*

As far as the social class and cultural traits<sup>65</sup> of the students' families are concerned, it emerges that the sample of students attending vocational training centres, unlike the sample of students attending the last year of lower secondary school, contains a large percentage of young people in the lower social class (manual workers or clerical staff). There is also a significant proportion of foreign students - that is young people with a foreign *nationality* - particularly in the North-East of Italy, where the productive fabric encourages early entry into work, even with low educational qualification.

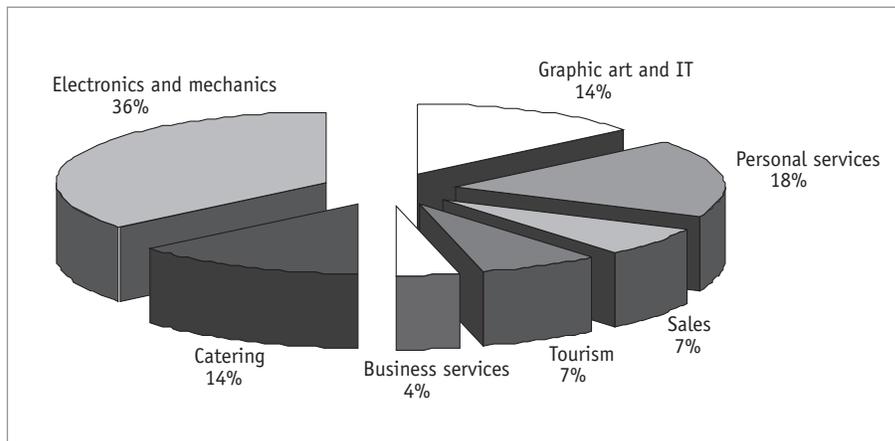
In respect to gender, the sample of vocational training students contains a majority of males, *aged* 17 to 18, who obtained a *pass* mark on their lower secondary

65 The "managerial" class includes families in which at least one of the parents is a higher-level manager or professional or an industrialist (with at least 15 employees); the category "lower professional" covers families in which both parents occupy lower managerial or administrative positions or are teachers, or in which one occupies one of these positions and the other is a manual worker; if one of the parents is an own-account worker (craft worker, shopkeeper, small business owner, farmer or member of a farming cooperative), the family is placed in the category "own account worker"; the "manual worker or similar" includes routine clerical workers, domestic workers and factory workers.

school exams. Moreover, a large proportion had failed to attend or repeated at least one academic year, except foreigner students, who performed better on their lower secondary school exams than their Italian peers.

Concerning the *types of courses attended* (Chart 1), more than a third of students (36%) in initial vocational training indicate a preference for electronics and mechanics, mainly in the northern Italian regions, followed by 18% that opt for personal services (beautician, hairdresser), while the same proportion (14%) choose graphic arts and catering, mainly in the South of Italy. The remaining courses included business services, tourism and sales, the last two mainly in the South of Italy. It is clear that, overall, courses designed to prepare students for work in industry and traditional branches of the services sector predominate. In terms of gender, 40% of female students choose personal services and just 4.3% electronics or mechanics, the latter sector proving particularly popular with foreign students. In fact, while foreign students account for the absolute majority of those in electronics or mechanics courses (50.6%), they represent a small minority (5.4%) of those choosing graphic art, Information Technology (IT) or business services.

**Chart 1**  
*Branches of  
Activity of Chosen  
Training Pathways  
(per cent)*



### 3. THE MAIN FINDINGS

The first part of the survey aims to discover what students in the last year of lower secondary school and their families think of the initial vocational training system, while the second part focuses on the opinions and judgements of students completing the two- or three-year initial vocational training pathway regarding their chosen course.

In line with the structure of the research, the considerations below begin with an investigation as to what young people know about the education and training systems and how they evaluate them. This is followed by an examination of some important transversal dimensions emerging from the survey, such as the practical and ideal reasons that underlie the choice of a course of study, the role of guidance and of the various sources of information, as well as the dreams and career aspirations of students.

#### 3.1 Knowledge of Education and Training Systems

The students in the last year of lower secondary school and their mothers included in the samples appear, overall, to have a poor and superficial knowledge of the initial vocational training system, often confusing it with technical and vocational education.

In fact, one-third of the students and a quarter of the mothers reported that they were not aware of the training objectives or of the possible outcomes or opportunities for vertical and horizontal transition to other courses (Table 2). Nonetheless, both the students and their mothers found some features of the system attractive, such as training for a specific job, the immediate usability of the educational qualification, and the inclusion of many hours of practical training.

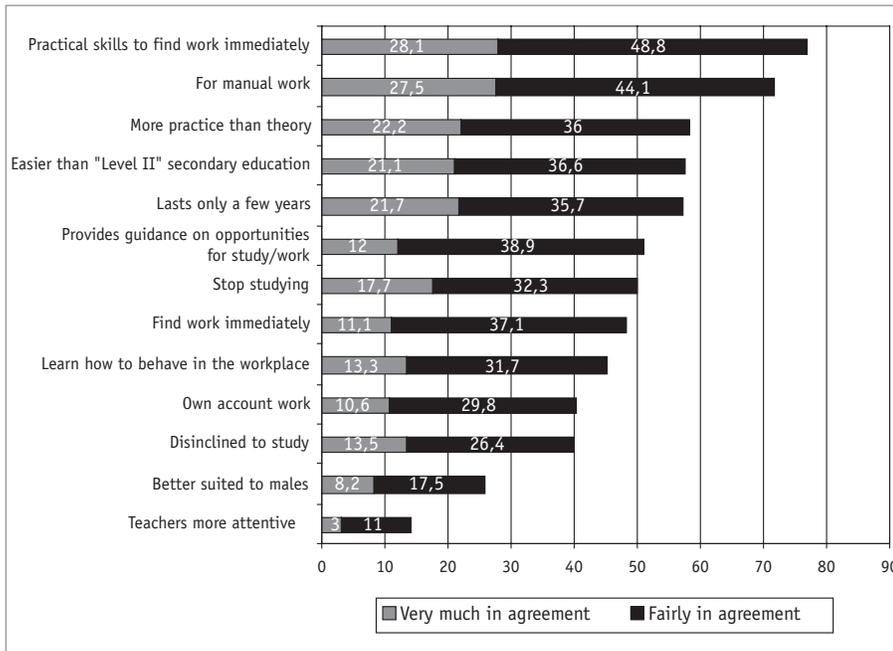
This lack of knowledge about the IVT system can be put down primarily to the lack of relevant information/guidance actions on the part of schools. The majority of the interviewees declared that “no one” at school had given any information about initial vocational training, with the exception of a few teachers, guidance counsellors and school friends, and always in an entirely informal manner. Only a very small proportion declared that they knew “almost all” of the Vocational Training (VT) centres located near their home, while a large majority (over 40%) knew at least “a few” VT centres in the area. However, it should be noted that about a quarter of the respondents who knew nothing about such centres were interested in receiving more information.

**Table 2**  
*Students' and Mothers' Information About Vocational Training (per cent)*

	Students	Mothers
Don't know	25.5	16.6
Don't know differences between vocational training and other schools	44.9	40.7
Know precise differences between vocational training and other schools	16.1	30.8
Know differences between vocational training and technical schools/institutes but not those w.r.t. vocational schools	7.2	8.5
There is no difference between vocational training and upper secondary education	6.4	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

By contrast, the interviewees who declared they knew all about the vocational training system (Chart 2), in reality often provided a very stereotyped description, calling it a fairly “easy” pathway (in terms of likelihood of passing the academic year), particularly compared to upper secondary education. They are aware that the IVT system has a number of training objectives: “providing practical skills that help find work” (77% at least “fairly agree” with this statement); helps to train for manual work (72% “fairly agree”); seems to be a training pathway that dedicates more time to practice than theory (52% of students at least “fairly agree”) and on the whole involves less effort because the pathways are shorter than those in the educational system. Fewer believe that vocational training is better suited to males (only 25% of students “fairly agree” with this) and to those disinclined to study. The figures therefore confirm that vocational training is recognised as *vocationally-oriented* education, an objective that many students and mothers consider positive (79% of mothers “fairly agree” that vocational training provides practical skills that are useful in finding work). Although training is often described as a means of entry into the labour market, part of the sample still attributes considerable value to the secondary school diploma or university degree as a credential for obtaining work.

However, a vocational training qualification considerably improves a young person’s chances compared with just a lower secondary school diploma. The mothers paint a very similar picture to their children, albeit with some differences: they place greater emphasis on the short duration of vocational training pathways and on the fact that the latter offers fewer opportunities for further study compared with upper secondary education.

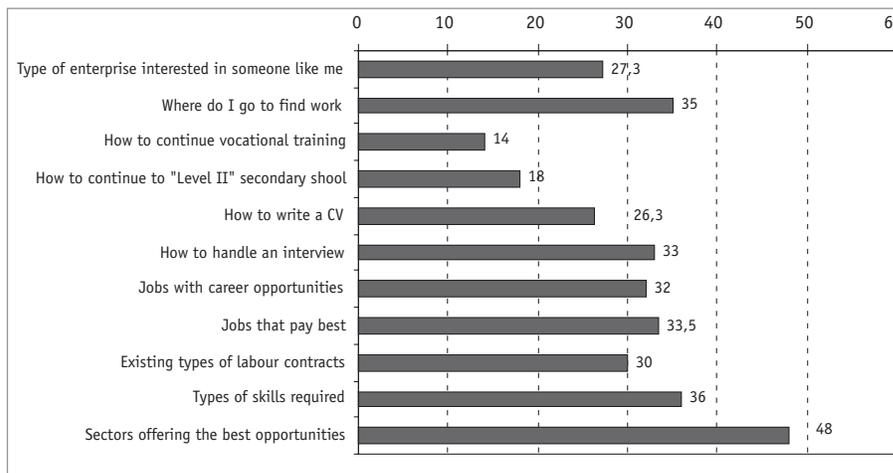


**Chart 2**  
*Students' Opinions of Vocational Training (per cent)*

Students in initial vocational training, who were asked about the opportunities offered by their chosen course and about the sort of information they need as they prepare to leave, also display a lack of knowledge of the vocational training system (Chart 3).

However, the most critical aspect would appear to be the lack of career guidance and job tutoring actions. Almost half the students, in fact, would like to have more information about the sectors offering the best opportunities for job insertion (48%), while one in three students wants to know more about the skills required for their chosen job, where to go in order to find work, and how to handle a job interview. Students appear to have better knowledge of the structure of the educational system and the opportunities it offers, even though there is still a considerable gap in what they know about the possibilities for vertical and horizontal transition between systems, and about the recognition of credits.

**Chart 3**  
Need for More  
Information (per  
cent)



### 3.2 Opinions of the Education Experience

"How much do you enjoy school?" is the question put to students in the last year of lower secondary school to evaluate their experience of school and to introduce the question of study options and career aspirations.

The students' answers<sup>66</sup> indicate that for the majority participation in school life is a pleasurable experience, although there exists a by no means negligible group experiencing difficulties. The great majority of the students interviewed (only 4% of the sample did not follow a smooth pathway and suffered interruptions in their studies) award a "pass" mark to their school experience in terms of enjoyment (the average is 6.6); 23% give less than 6 and 33% as much as 8 or more. However, school is enjoyed less by males, by students in the North-East of Italy and in small municipalities, by children of manual workers and own-account workers and by those who do less well. Relationships with teachers were described on the whole as good: teachers were appreciated above all for their teaching skills and next for their interpersonal skills. Moreover, teachers were appreciated more by students in the South of Italy, in small municipalities, belonging to the "lower professional" category, with good marks in the first term and by those reporting that they study hard.

These figures appear to confirm the notion that students who do well at school, who are more motivated to learn and who study hard enjoy school more.

<sup>66</sup> The students were asked to express their opinions on a scale ranging from 1 ("not at all") to 10 ("very much").

### 3.3 Students' Future Prospects

Several aspects of the questionnaire were taken into consideration in order to draw a complete picture of the training aspirations and career prospects of students attending lower secondary schools. These include the training aspirations that the mothers have for their children, the actual decisions made regarding the education or training pathway to follow after lower secondary education, the reasons behind that choice, the degree of knowledge about what training and education pathways provide, the usefulness of some sources of information about those pathways and how often the sources are used, the influence exerted on choices made by various family members, school personnel and other profiles, and finally the quality of *intra-family* relationships and activities.

Naturally, the *mothers have very high aspirations* regarding the continuation of study. More than 3 out of 4 would like their child to obtain a university degree and fewer than 1 in 10 have already abandoned the idea of their child obtaining an upper secondary school diploma. However, all mothers are aware that their wishes are unrealistic, particularly in view of the preferences expressed and decisions made by their children.

Among the various pathways in which students can continue their studies, the most attractive by far is the *liceo scientifico* (scientific *lycée*), which is the aspiration of almost a third of young people. By contrast, about 1 in 10 students choose the *liceo classico* (classical *lycée*) and around a quarter choose various forms of technical studies. Vocational education is the choice of about one-tenth of students, while, as expected, even fewer opt for language and artistic *lycées* or for initial vocational training (2%).

In the majority of cases, the *intrinsic motivations* behind the students' preferences emphasise the value of study, cultural interests, and the actual content of the subjects: the opportunity to improve one's culture (which more than 90% of the sample described as "fairly important"), interest in the subjects taught (90% were "fairly in agreement"), and the chance to attend university (75%). Other motivations stemmed from more *practical* objectives, connected with future entry into the labour market: the chance of finding work that reflects personal interests (virtually the whole sample) and is well paid, of finding a job already in mind, of combining periods of study and periods of work through traineeships and internships ("fairly important" for 57% of the sample), and of doing many hours of practical training.

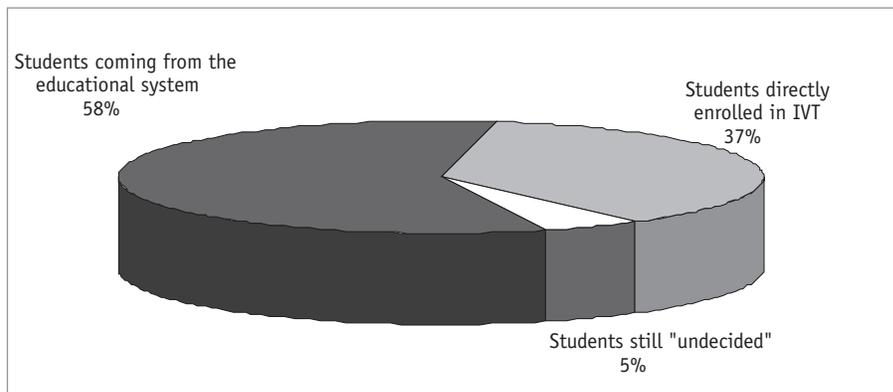
The most popular *source* of information on pathways after obtaining a lower secondary school diploma is targeted leaflets (63% of mothers and children). The majority of students also report they have taken part in meetings organised by lower secondary schools (61%) and upper secondary schools (56%) and have sought the advice of guidance services (41%). The press, television and radio broadcasts as well as meetings organised by VT centres represent a residual source of information, judged to be of little service. Those that do resort to websites make little use

of them, although they are described as useful. As regards the *profiles* who exert an influence on educational choices after lower secondary education, the students were generally unwilling to recognise the role of any profile in particular: even lower secondary school teachers and experts - the group that was acknowledged to play the most important role - exert “little” or “no influence” according to 58% of students. Next in line is the mother, to whom 67% of students attribute “little” or “no influence”, followed by the father (72%) and friends (76%).

### 3.4 Opinions of the Training Experience

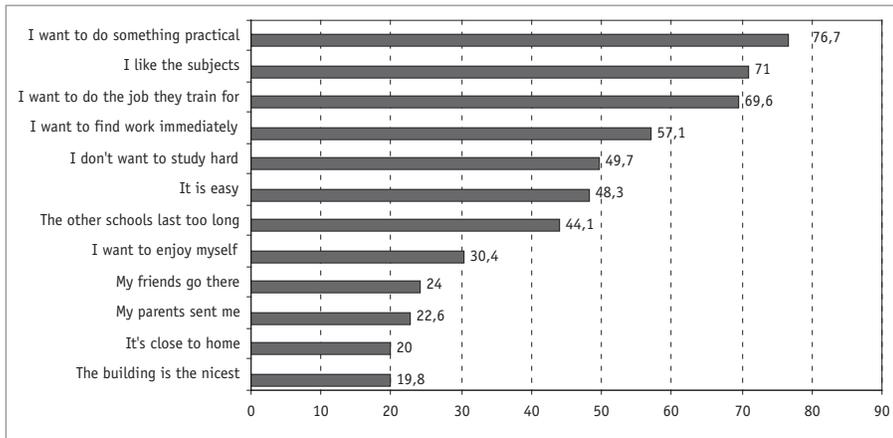
Before investigating the students’ degree of satisfaction with the time in their chosen training pathway, it is worth considering, albeit briefly, the profile of the sample of interviewees, in particular the reasons for the students’ choices, their opinions about their training pathways, their plans for education and career and the indications available about their needs. Users of vocational training represent a very select group compared to the overall population of young people: for the most part they are male, live in the North-East of Italy, come from a family of manual workers, and contain a large proportion of foreign nationals (see *the table 1*). It emerges that after lower secondary education 1 in 3 students (37%) opts immediately for an IVT course (Chart 4); on the other hand, most of the students (58%) come to IVT from the educational system, particularly technical and vocational schools, and 5.2% report to have “looked around” or made no choice at all.

**Chart 4**  
Students’ Route to  
Initial Vocational  
Training (per  
cent)



As to the reasons for choosing a training pathway, the majority of the sample declares, as the chart below illustrates, that above all they want “to learn practical things” (Chart 5). They are followed by those who “want to do the job that the training is for” and those who want to “find work immediately”.

By contrast, it also emerges that a very large proportion of young people end up in a IVT system because they assume it is shorter and easier than upper secondary education (“I didn’t want to study hard”, “it is easy”, “the other schools last too long”).



**Chart 5**  
Reasons for Choice  
(per cent)

These findings support the theory that the reasons for choosing the IVT system are basically twofold. The first reason is associated with a *career/vocation*-oriented decision and applies to all the students who choose vocational training because they want to train for the job they actually plan to do. Thus, on the one side there is an attraction for a study option with an applied bias, as the chosen course of students who are drawn to the professional role it trains for, and that favours rapid job insertion. This choice is naturally reflected in the type of pathway followed: for example, a large proportion of courses deal with personal services having a majority of female students, or with electronics and mechanics, graphic art and information technology. In this respect, vocational training is the best system for someone who wants to work on their own account, mainly in the crafts sector, or to take up a career in the services sector or in trade.

The second reason, on the other hand, is a *practical* choice. It applies to all students without a particular vocation for one profession or another, who are often prompted by poor school results and feel that vocational training is the easiest pathway for entering the world of work. In other words, they are basically looking for training that will not be too taxing or too long and will provide a compromise between attraction for the productive system and revulsion for the training system. For students in this category, vocational training basically stops *early dropping out from school* and offers a *second chance* to those whose school failures put them at risk of abandoning any type of training pathway.

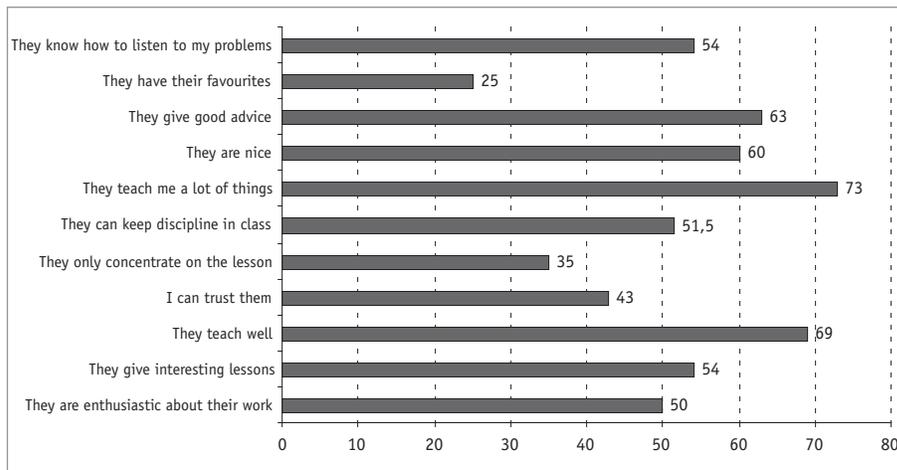
Moreover, the vocational training system appears to be a particularly popular training pathway with foreign students, who represent around 15% of the sample (compared to 2.5% of foreign students in the educational system). Since their earlier results are on average better than those of their Italian peers, it is likely that even if their lower secondary school results are satisfactory, they will prefer IVT courses because of the employment opportunities these courses offer. It may also be because they have

greater difficulty opting for more ambitious pathways within school and work.

A number of variables are taken into account in *evaluating the training pathway* on the basis of the students' responses: the students' relationship with teachers and peers, their satisfaction with the pathway chosen in terms of teaching, whether the skills they learn match their personal career prospects, whether the course logistics and organisation are appropriate and adequate, etc..

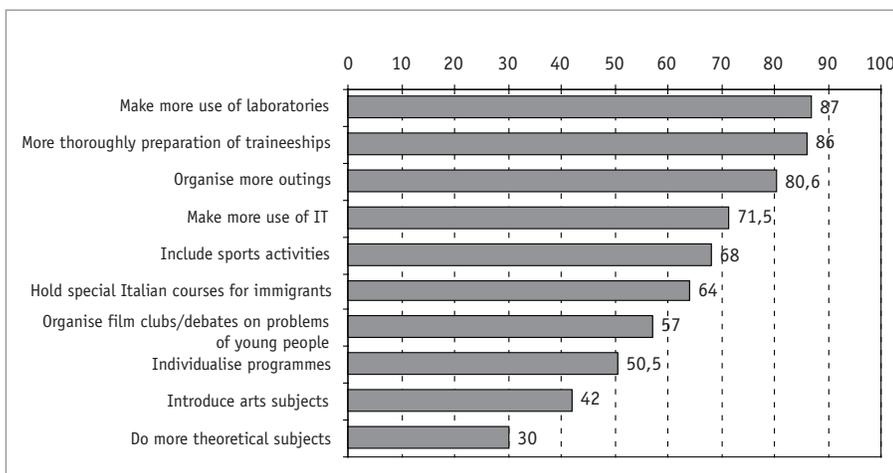
As far as the *teacher/student relationship* is concerned, the students generally hold a positive view of the teachers' role, particularly as regards their expertise. The majority of students (81.6%), in fact, believe that all, or at least most, of their teachers "*teach well*" and "*teach a lot of things*" (Chart 6). Opinions are cooler, however, regarding the active involvement of teachers in the didactic side and their ability to elicit interest on the part of the students: only half the sample believe that the teachers perform their work with enthusiasm and can give interesting lessons. Basically, therefore, it is not so much the teachers' sense of duty that is in question as their willingness to do "that little bit extra" to make the lesson not only useful, but fascinating and, more generally, to ensure that the teacher/student relationship is not just a formality but an intense experience. Perhaps the most crucial aspect is the teachers' difficulty in keeping discipline: nearly half the students (48.5%) believe that only a minority of teachers are able to guarantee this basic requirement of the teaching/learning process. Nonetheless, in 81.6% of cases the relationship with teachers is judged satisfactory, and this evaluation applies to tutors of training courses and traineeships.

**Chart 6**  
*Students' Evaluation of Student/Teacher Relationships ("all or almost all/many") (per cent)*



Overall, relationships with classmates are also very satisfactory, although not as warm as the relationships with other students at the VT centre. Briefly, the good atmosphere appears to favour the integration of female and foreign students, who represent minorities among the users of the VT centres.

As far as the *training experience* is concerned, the students greatly appreciate traineeships and laboratory activities: on several occasions, the students stress the importance of the fact that the courses are in applied subjects and are vocationally-oriented, and therefore the generally positive judgements concerning traineeship and laboratory practice are especially worthy of note. The stronger emphasis on the value of the vocationally-oriented approach of the courses and of the experience-based methods of teaching/learning clearly emerges from the specific question regarding “wishes”<sup>67</sup>, which was asked in order to obtain information about the needs, proposals and expectations of young people in areas they would like to see improved. Again, the students reassert the need for experimentation and “learning by doing”, for greater use of laboratories (86.8%), for better preparation of traineeships (86.0%), and for the organisation of more outings (80.6%) (Chart below).



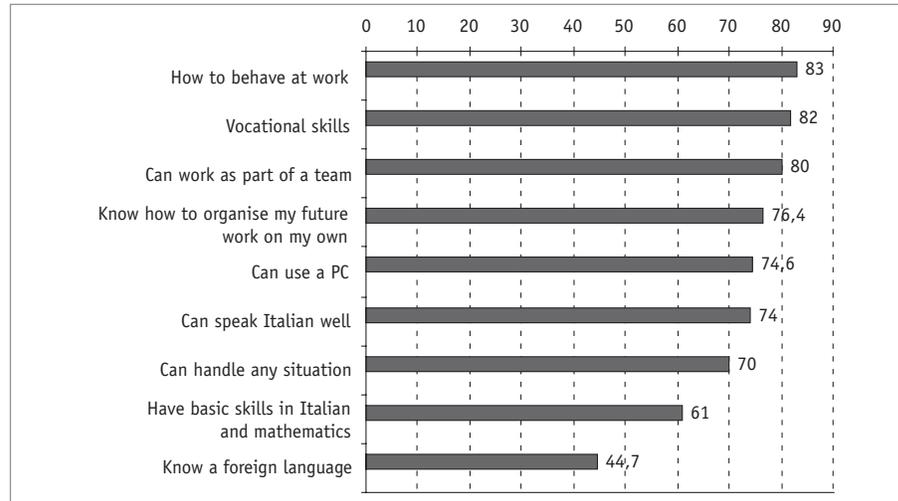
**Chart 7**  
Imagine you are the Head of the Vocational Training Centre. What do you think is important to improve? The curriculum (“very/fairly important”) (per cent)

Overall the students give a clearly positive opinion of *learning outcomes* in the VT centres. For 82% of them “the course I am attending has given me vocational skills” (Chart 8). In addition to the acquisition of skills, the training experience is judged equally effective in terms of its capacity to prepare for the social aspect of work by offering precious advice about how to behave after recruitment. Moreover, the large majority of students believe they have improved their organisational and relational skills (76%), reinforced their ability for team work (80%), gained more knowledge of PC use (75%) and learnt “how to handle any situation” (70%). Opinions are less positive about the acquisition of basic skills: Italian, mathematics and a foreign language. However, the foreign students believe to have reinforced these skills more than their Italian peers.

<sup>67</sup> “Imagine you are the Head of your VT centre. If you wanted to improve your training pathway for students in the future, how would you rate the following aspects?”.

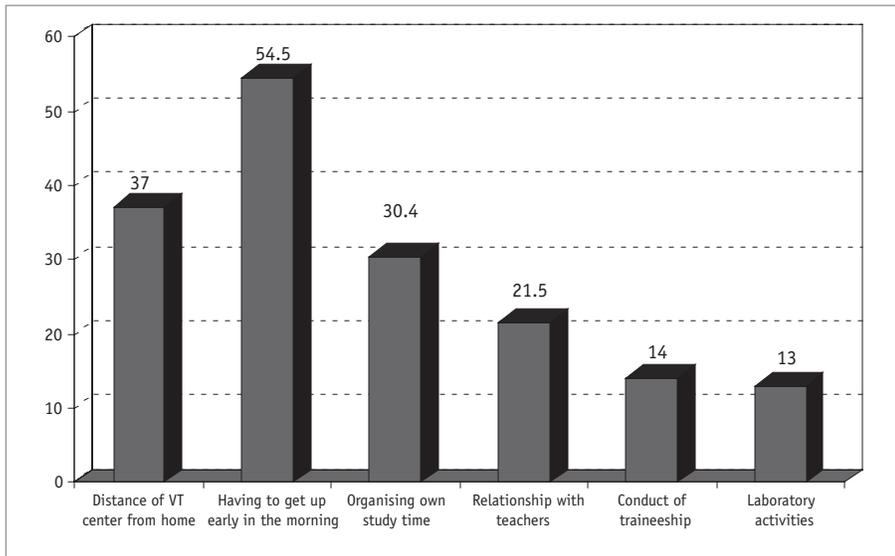
It is noteworthy that 2 out of 3 enrollees in a VT centre (65.7%) state that if they could go back they would still choose the initial vocational training system. More specifically, 56% would choose the same VT centre and 9.7% would choose another study course. Some 7.9% of the respondents would take a job, while just 13.5% would enrol in upper secondary school. There exists a large proportion of “don’t knows” (12.9%) who state they are uncertain what they would do.

**Chart 8**  
Perception of Learning Outcomes (“fairly/very much in agreement”) (per cent)



The greatest difficulties encountered during the training pathway concern the organisation of *learning times* (Chart 9): 30% of students at VT centres report difficulty organising their study time themselves, 37% state they are unhappy about the distance between home and the VT centre, with 54% complaining that they have to “*get up early in the morning*”. This is confirmation that VT centres are not evenly spread throughout the country and this can cause difficulty for those wishing to attend, but live in areas where no VT centre exists.

The other problem concerns the premises where the courses are held, which are inadequate according to 38.1% of the respondents, the equipment available (36.5% gave a negative assessment) and the teaching tools (45.6%). It is worthy to note that the opinion about the shortcomings of the premises and teaching tools of VT centres is shared by the students regardless of gender, nationality, age, or social status, which makes this observation appear all the more credible.



**Chart 9**  
Difficulties encountered during the Training Pathway (per cent)

On the whole, this confirms the picture of a training system that helps young people enter the labour market quickly and be in a qualified position without paying too high a price in terms of duration and effort of study.

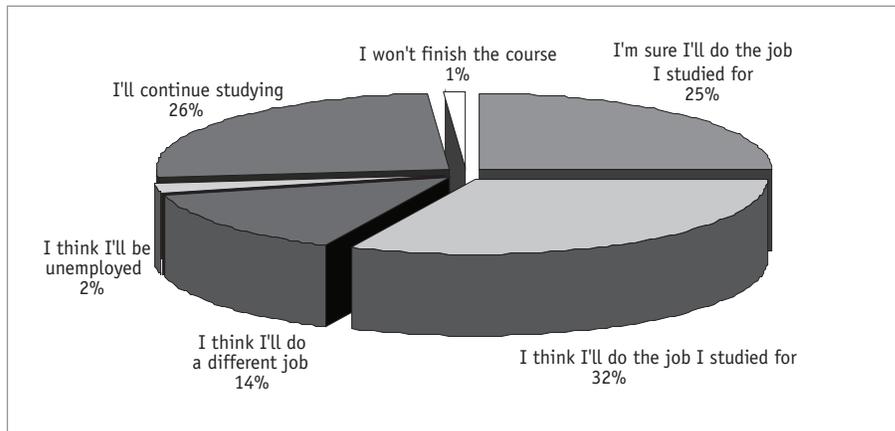
The real price is a lowering of their ambitions on the work front and a willingness to accept jobs with a not very high social and economic status. In fact, 74.1% of the respondents believe that VT centres prepare students for manual work. While it is true that such jobs are not among the most socially desirable occupations, at the same time this opinion does not necessarily have negative connotations, at least not for the students concerned. A course of study that trains them to perform manual work teaches them “to do real things” and provides practical skills. Finally, it is worth pointing out that in the minds of the students their educational and social destiny is by no means determined permanently. In 7 out of 10 cases, they stress the value of these courses in terms of guidance about future opportunities for study and work. The majority of the respondents deny that these courses limit their opportunities to continue studying. In addition, almost half of those interviewed believe that the VT centre could prove useful at some time if they wish to work on their own account.

### 3.5 Training and Career Plans After Vocational Training

The last part of the analysis focuses on the pathways to be undertaken after initial vocational training, the plans for study and work and the career aspirations of the young people concerned. A further objective of the research is to evaluate to what extent the goals that young people set for themselves are based on a clear understanding of the opportunities laid before them. On the whole, the students at VT

centres are fairly optimistic about their employment opportunities as a result of their chosen course. A quarter are absolutely sure that they will get a job that reflects the studies they have undertaken and a further 32% believe this is likely (Chart 10). Around 14% of the respondents, on the other hand, consider that they will end up in a job that has little to do with their studies and 2% believe they will become unemployed. Only 1% are concerned they will not complete the pathway undertaken in the VT centre.

**Chart 10**  
*Plans After the Training Course (per cent)*



About a quarter (26%) of the respondents state they wish to continue studying after they complete their course: 30% of these declare that they need further educational qualification for the job they want, while 23.1% believe that to find a job or guarantee a better career (28.4%), they need an upper secondary school diploma. Only 10.8% state they want to continue studying at school because they are very interested in the learning content. Other reasons account for a residual amount, such as parental pressure (2.6%) or not wanting to work right away (5.6%).

Consistently with these answers, the absolute majority (59%) of those who state they want to continue their training plan. Some 41%, on the other hand, intend to stay in the vocational training system, attending other regional courses (29.3%) or courses organised by private training organisations (11.7%). The interviewees who plan to find work after the training gained at the VT centre do not, for the most part, know where they will find a job (58.3%) (Chart 11). It is worth noting that 20.1% mention the enterprise where they spent their traineeship period, 8.3% the business of a friend or acquaintance, 7.1% the business of parents or relatives, and 6.1% declare they know where to find work but do not know the employer personally.

Among the reasons for deciding to enter the labour market, one of the most important is financial independence, followed by the certainty that their qualification will be sufficient to find work.