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Young People in Turkey who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) *

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Abstract

In recent years, **young people not in education, employment or training (**NEET) has become an important indicator in studies conducted on young people by both international organizations and various countries. NEET is considered an important and noteworthy indicator for demonstrating the social situation of young people in present-day populations. The number of studies in Turkey on this subject is currently very limited. The aim of this study was to identify and describe the gender, age, education, and status within the labor market of young people between the ages of 15-24 who are not in education, employment, or training. In accordance with the study aim, data from the Turkish Statistical Institute's (*Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu*, TÜİK) 2012 Household Labor Market Survey were used. In addition, studies from the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and Eurofound were used in order to make comparisons with data from other countries. Based on calculations performed by utilizing data from TÜİK's 2012 Household Labor Market Survey, it was determined that Turkey has a considerably high ratio of NEET among its young population. This study also proposes several suggestions for reducing the ratio of NEET in Turkey.

Keywords

NEET (Not in education, employment or training)
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Introduction

Young populations are considered important factors and assets for the social and economic development of countries. Consequently, the inability to effectively use this asset represents a significant loss for countries. In accordance with the "theory of demographic transition," each country passes through a stage in which it has a predominantly young population (Tansel, 2012; Yüceşahin, 2009). This period represents a window of opportunity for countries. In most developing countries, the opportunities and advantages presented by a young population ratio greater than 30% only lasts for several decades (International Labor Organization (ILO), 2012). Turkey is currently passing through a period in which such a window of opportunity is opening (Hoşgör and Tansel, 2010). However, an important portion of Turkey's young population is currently not taking part in education, employment, or training. For this reason, Turkey is faced with the risk of not being able to

* The opinions expressed in this study exclusively represent those of the author. These opinions are not are not binding for the Ministry of Development.

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effectively use the opportunities presented by its large young population. A study on young individuals in Turkish universities, for instance, has determined that 24.5% of these individuals wish to live and work abroad (Yazıcı, 2003). This high ratio indicates that the "window of opportunity" for Turkey is gradually transforming into a source of problems and risk.

A considerable portion of studies on young people are based on the conceptual framework known as the "school-to-work transition." This concept refers to the process in which, upon the completion of their educational life, young people transition to well-established and satisfying work that aligns with the education they received (Brooks, 2009; Müller and Gangl, 2003). Countries generally expect individuals who have completed their education to quickly and directly participate in the labour force; the measures and policies implemented by countries are, in fact, based on this expectation. In recent years, participation to education has started to become increasingly more difficult in many countries (Müller and Wolbers, 2003). Moreover, from the individual's perspective, education does not guarantee success in the labor market. Gangle (2003) describes that, although he considers education to be an important component for success in the labor market, factors such as work experience, previous places of employment, relationship networks, and regional mobility also have a significant effect on success in the labor market.

When children born during periods of high birth rates eventually reach working age, an increase will be observed in the supply of young labor. In the past, this increase in the young labor force was considered to be the main cause of the problems and deterioration experienced by the labor market (Freeman, 1979; Welch, 1979). Many researchers thus expected that the deterioration in the labor market could be resolved by reducing the ratio of young people within the working-age population (Freeman and Blanchflower, 2000). However, the expected improvement did not occur. Despite the decrease in the ratio of young people within the working-age population, the younger labour force has continued to experience higher levels of unemployment than the adult population (Korenman and Neumark, 2000). Moreover, despite having a better level of education than adults, younger people have continued to experience greater difficulties in the labor market. One of the most significant problems encountered by young people in the labor market is employers' preference for experienced workers rather than young workers (Bills, 1988; Rosenbaum, Karia, Settersten, and Maier, 1990). Another problem is the situation that Collins (1979) describes as "credential inflation:" as the supply of a particular type and quality of labor to the labor market increases, the market value of that type of labor inevitably decreases (Ploeg, 1994).

Young People that are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET)

These developments in the labor market for young people have led to a questioning and reexamination of public policies relating to youth. The main reason for the increasing importance attributed to young people over the past decade by public policies in Europe is the increasing threat of *social and economic exclusion* that these young people are facing (Conrad, 2005; Yates and Payne, 2006). Nudzor (2010) argues that this threat represents a risk for Europe's democratic lifestyle and society, and highlights the need to focus on the group known as "Young People that are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET)." NEET is a performance indicator, which, along with other classical indicators, such as the rates of unemployment and employment, provides information regarding the employment status of young people.

To measure the performance of countries with regards to the employment of young people, parameters such as the rates of unemployment and employment within the young population are often not sufficient by themselves. As these classical indicators only encompass individuals who are active within the labor market, they are generally insufficient for illustrating the scale of the problems faced by the young population. When the issue is considered only in terms of whether young people who seek employment can or cannot find work, a significant aspect and portion of the main problem can be overlooked. Focusing only on unemployment and employment rates can lead individuals to inadvertently ignore young people who are not in education, employment, or training. Vanttaja and Jarvinen (2006) have emphasized that young people who are in this NEET group are under the risk of

economic and social exclusion, and that they possibly face a future of marginalization. Consequently, grouping young people within the labor market as those who are employed and those who are unemployed represents an inadequate approach form the standpoint of youth policies, since such an approach can lead to policies that overlook the important problems faced by young people.

NEET is a concept that many researchers, national authorities, and international organizations use to describe young individuals who are disconnected from both education and the labour force. NEETs are consequently unable to take part in the labour force, and are under the risk of social exclusion (Eurofound, 2012; Furlong, 2007; OECD, 2010; Social Exclusion Unit, 2004). The European Union has accorded the subject of NEETs a centrally important place in its policies towards the employment of young people, with the subject being especially included into the Europe 2020 Agenda (European Commission, 2012). Although the concept of NEET is defined somewhat differently from one country to another, it nevertheless assumes an important place within the context of studies and policies pertaining to young people.

In most European countries, NEET is defined as individuals between the ages of 15 and 25 who are not receiving any education, not working at any job, and not participating to any training (Eurofound, 2012: 20). The concept first appeared in the United Kingdom (UK), as a consequence of the grouping of young people within the context of "career services." This grouping system in the UK attributes a "Status 1" to young people who are receiving education; "Status 2" to young people who are participating in a training program; and "Status 3" to those who are working. Istance et al. (1994) grouped and referred to individuals outside of these three groups – i.e. young people not in education, work, or training – as "status 0" (as cited by: Eurofound, 2012; Williamson, 2000). As the expression "Status 0" was not found to be politically appropriate, the concept was first renamed as "Status A," and later as "NEET" within the literature.

Depending on their policies and objectives, the concept of NEET is defined differently by different countries. In the UK, the concept is used for individuals between the ages of 16-18 who are not in education, employment, or training (Coles et al., 2002); while in New Zealand, the concept encompasses individuals between the ages of 15-19 (Hill, 2003). In Korea and Japan, the concept has been defined by taking into account social integration in addition to labor market participation (Eurofound, 2012; OECD, 2007, 2009). In this context, Japan defines NEET as individuals between the ages of 15-34 who are not part of the labour force, who are not attending any school, and who are not housewives (Miyamoto, 2005; OECD, 2009). Korea, on the other hand, defines NEET as individuals between the ages of 15-34 who have dropped out of school, who are not applying to any companies to find employment, who are unemployed, who are not married, and who do not have any caregiving or familial responsibilities (OECD, 2007).

In recent times, NEET has become an increasingly important labor market indicator for international organizations. NEET is an indicator that is especially considered and evaluated by policy-makers in Europe (Eurofound, 2012). For this reason, there has been an increasing need to standardize the definition of NEET.

The Europe 2020 strategy considers NEET as an indicator for monitoring the situation of the young population (Eurofound, 2012). The Indicators Group of the European Employment Committee has endeavored to provide a standard definition for NEET. In this context, the European Employment Committee has defined NEET as individuals between the ages of 15-24 who are not in education, employment, or training.

Most young people within the NEET age group are individuals who have completed general education. Decision-makers for educational policies assume that these individuals are no longer within the educational system, and that they are now part of the labor market. On the other hand, since NEETs are not participating in the labour force as well, they are also not considered by the decision-makers of labor policies. In this context, the concept of NEET is perceived as a youth problem that it is outside of the area of interest of policy- and decision-makers, and which is only considered

within the scope of youth policies. For young people, being a NEET is known to cause problems relating to "social inclusion" (Yentürk and Başlevent, 2012; Yurttagüler, 2012).

In recent years, NEET has been increasingly used as an important indicator by international organizations and various countries within the context of studies on young populations. NEET is considered as an important and noteworthy indicator for demonstrating the social situation of young people in present-day populations. To date, no studies on the subject of NEET have been conducted in Turkey. Moreover, there are currently no public policies in Turkey addressing the issue of NEET. For this reason, national statistics in Turkey contain no indicators regarding the subject of NEET. However, within the context of statistics shared by Turkey with international organizations such as the ILO and OECD, it is possible to find NEET-related calculations for Turkey that have been made by these organizations.

NEETs are young people who have completed their general education, but have not been able to participate into the labor market. For this reason, educational and employment/labor policies generally exclude or fail to consider NEETs. NEETs are consequently exposed to problems related to social exclusion. This study attempts to remedy the current lack of studies and research on the subject of NEETs in Turkey, and aims to attract the attention of public institutions to this subject and issue.

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to identify and describe the gender, age, education, and status within the labor market of young people between the ages of 15-24 who are not in education, employment, or training. In this context, answers were sought to the following questions:

1. What is the ratio of young people between the ages of 15-24 who are not in education, employment, or training?
2. What is the gender distribution of young people between the ages of 15-24 who are not in education, employment, or training?
3. What is the age distribution of young people between the ages of 15-24 who are not in education, employment, or training? Does this age distribution differ from the one observed among non-NEETs within the same age range?
4. Is there a significant difference with respect to the mean duration of education between NEETs within the 15-24 year-old age range and non-NEET individuals within the same age range?
5. What is the working experience and employment status of young people between the ages of 15-24 who are not in education, employment, or training?

Methods

This study was conducted using the relational study method, which is a relational screening model. The relational study method is an approach that attempts to identify the existence and the level of covariance between two or more variables (Karasar, 2009). This method was used in this study in order to investigate the age, gender, education, the choice of department/subject during vocational education and higher education, and the labour force participation variables of young people between the ages of 15-24 who are not in education, employment, or training.

Sample

The study was planned in accordance to data provided by TÜİK's 2012 Household Labor Market Survey. The geographical scope of this TÜİK survey included all of Turkey. Within the context of this survey, settlements with populations greater than 20,000 were defined as "cities," while, settlements with a population of 20,000 or less were defined as "rural areas." The sampling unit of the Household Labor Survey was the "address" (or household).

The study population consisted of young people between the ages of 15 and 24. The study sample was selected from young people between the ages of 15-24 who were surveyed by TÜİK within the scope of the 2012 Household Labor Market Survey. The 2012 Household Labor Market Survey was analyzed using the SPSS Program. Based on this analysis; it was determined that, within the scope of this survey, 78,006 individuals between the ages of 15-24 had been reached and surveyed. Of these individuals, 38,339 were male, while 39,667 were female.

Data Collection Tool

The aim of the Household Labor Survey conducted by TÜİK was to determine the structure of the labor market in Turkey; to identify the economic activities, the occupations (or business) and the work status of those who are employed; and to identify the job search period, the applied occupations (or job), and similar characteristics of those who are unemployed. The survey was performed using the face-to-face interview method, and the collected data were recorded onto a laptop computer. The sampling method was based on random, two-stage, and stratified cluster sampling.

During the study, data from TÜİK's 2012 Household Labor Survey was analyzed in order to identify which individuals who were NEETs, and to also determine the level of education of these individuals. Within the scope of the 2012 Household Labor Survey, question number 13 of the survey asked the individuals to describe the last educational institution from which they received a diploma. The question listed six possible answers. These included: "Individual is between 0-6 years of age;" "Has not graduated from any school;" "Primary school (5 years);" Primary education school (8 years)", "Middle or vocational school (8 years)," "High school," "Vocational or technical high school," "University, faculty or a higher educational institution." On the other hand, question number 14 of the survey asked the individuals whether they were literate. Individuals between 0-6 years of age were not asked this question, and individuals belonging to the "has not graduated from any school" category were, depending on the answer they gave to question 14, classified as either "literate" or "illiterate."

Based on the answers provided to the survey questions regarding their level of education, individuals were grouped as follows: Those who "have not graduated from any school" were grouped as either "literate" or "illiterate;" while individuals who have graduated from 5-year primary schools before compulsory primary education in Turkey became 8 years were grouped as "primary school graduates." On the other hand, individuals who graduated from middle schools (including equivalent vocational schools) before compulsory primary education in Turkey became 8 years were also grouped as "primary education graduates," since their level of education corresponds to that of present-day primary education graduates. Individuals who graduated from high schools or equivalent vocational high schools were categorized as "secondary school graduates." Graduates of two-year vocational universities, graduates of four-year universities and faculties, and individuals who completed graduate and doctorate studies were all categorized as "higher education graduates."

In the current study, individuals identified as NEETs and non-NEETs were grouped according to gender and age, and the mean level/duration of education was calculated for these groups. In this context, several "durations" were determined for levels of education described above. For the "illiterate" group, the duration of education was considered as "zero years." For the "literate" group, the duration of education was considered as one year; while for the "primary school graduates" group, the duration of education was considered as five years. Furthermore, the duration of education for the "primary education graduate," "secondary school graduate," and the "higher education graduate" groups were considered as 8 years, 11 years, and 15 years, respectively. Thus, for each group, the mean duration of education was calculated by first summing the duration of education of all individuals within the group (determined according to the number of years corresponding to their level of education, as described above), and then by dividing the total duration by the number of individuals within the group.

Analysis of Data

The aim of this study was to identify and describe the gender, age, education, and status within the labor market of young people between the ages of 15-24 who are not in education, employment, or training. In accordance with the study aim, data from the Turkish Statistical Institute's (*Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu*, TÜİK) 2012 Household and Labor Market Survey were used. Data were processed and analyzed using the SPSS 15.0 Statistical Package Program. Based on the characteristics of the study data and the hypotheses, analyses were performed using the chi-square and variance analyses.

Results

Results Regarding Gender Distribution among NEETs and Non-NEETs between the Ages of 15-24

The chi-square test results regarding the gender distribution of NEET and non-NEET individuals between the ages of 15-24 are shown in Table 1. According to Table 1, the ratio of NEETs was 26.8% within the population between the ages of 15-24. The ratio of NEETs within the male population between the ages of 15-24 was 15.5%, while the ratio of NEETs within the female population between the ages of 15-24 was 38.0%. In their respective female and male populations, the ratio of female NEETs was nearly two times greater than the ratio of male NEETs. Based on the data in Table 1, the calculation of gender ratios among NEET individuals indicated that 28.5% of all NEETs were male, while 71.5% of all NEETs were female. These results indicated that females have a higher likelihood of becoming NEETs. A significant difference was identified between the NEET and non-NEET groups with respect to gender distribution [$\chi^2 = 748216{,}5\ \ ss = 1\ \ P < 0{,}001$].

Table 1. Chi-Square Test Results regarding Gender Distribution within the NEET Group

		NEET	Non-NEET	Total
Man	Count	885.289	4.844.258	5.729.547
	Within Group	15,5%	84,5%	100,0%
Woman	Count	2.220.037	3.624.823	5.844.860
	Within Group	38,0%	62,0%	100,0%
Total	Count	3.105.326	8.469.081	11.574.407
	Within Group	26,8%	73,2%	100,0%

$\chi^2 = 748216{,}5\ \ ss = 1\ \ P = 0{,}000$

Results Regarding the Age Distribution of NEETs and Non-NEETs

The chi-square test results regarding the age distribution of NEET and non-NEET individuals between the ages of 15-24 are shown in Table 2. According to Table 2, increasing age (within the 15-24 age range) was associated with a higher likelihood of becoming NEET. NEETs who were 15 year-olds represented 12.4% of the same age population, while 24 year-old NEETs represented 37.1% of the same age population. A significant difference was identified between the NEET and non-NEET groups with respect to age distribution [$\chi^2 = 499645{,}1\ \ ss = 9\ \ P < 0{,}001$].

Table 2. Chi-Square Test Results Regarding Age Distribution within the NEET and Non-NEET Groups

		Age Groups										
		15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Total
NEET	Count	158.580	202.474	215.218	306.056	312.932	308.264	339.084	405.910	412.971	443.837	3.105.326
	Within Group	12,4	15,6	16,8	24,3	29,1	34,6	34,4	34,9	35,9	37,1	26,8
Non-NEET	Count	1.119.580	1.097.740	1.064.671	951.338	762.724	581.646	645.245	757.158	737.231	751.748	8.469.081
	Within Group	87,6	84,4	83,2	75,7	70,9	65,4	65,6	65,1	64,1	62,9	73,2
Total	Count	1.278.160	1.300.214	1.279.889	1.257.394	1.075.656	889.910	984.329	1.163.068	1.150.202	1.195.585	11.574.407
	Within Group	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

$\chi^2 = 499645{,}1\ ss = 9\ \ P = 0{,}000$

The age group-related ratio observed among NEETs also differed according to gender. An evaluation of gender distribution among NEETs and non-NEETs according to the age groups (as shown in Table 3 and 4) reveals a somewhat different picture. While the probability of becoming an NEET increases for males up to the age of 20, this probability begins to decrease once past the age of 20. Among females, on the other hand, the likelihood of becoming a NEET increases continually with age.

Table 3. Chi-Square Test Results Regarding the Ratio of Male NEETs with respect to Age Groups

		Age Groups										
		15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Total
NEET	Count	55.734	62.107	75.974	95.852	101.999	82.964	95.450	110.126	101.801	103.282	885.289
	Within Group	8,5	9,4	11,4	15,1	18,6	21,3	21,1	19,5	18,1	17,3	15,5
Non-NEET	Count	599.504	598.716	587.713	538.084	446.386	305.878	357.413	455.259	461.854	493.451	4.844.258
	Within Group	91,5	90,6	88,6	84,9	81,4	78,7	78,9	80,5	81,9	82,7	84,5
Total	Count	655.238	660.823	663.687	633.936	548.385	388.842	452.863	565.385	563.655	596.733	5.729.547
	Within Group	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

$\chi^2 = 87896{,}2 \;\; ss = 9 \;\; P = 0{,}000$

The chi-square test results regarding the age distribution of male NEETs and non-NEETs between the ages of 15-24 are shown in Table 3. Male NEETs who were 15 years old represented 8.5% of the same age male population, while male NEETs who were 20 years old represented 21.3% of the same age male population. However, with increasing age, this ratio gradually decreased to 17.3%. A significant difference was identified between male NEET and male non-NEET groups with respect to age distribution [$\chi^2 = 87896{,}2 \;\; \text{ss} = 9 \;\; \text{P} < 0{,}001$].

The chi-square test results regarding the age distribution of female NEETs and non-NEETs between the ages of 15-24 are shown in Table 4. Female NEETs who were 15 years old represented 16.5% of the same age female population, while female 24-year-old NEETs represented 21.3% of the same age female population. Among females, increasing age was associated with an increased likelihood of becoming an NEET. A significant difference was identified between female NEET and female non-NEET groups with respect to age distribution [$\chi^2 = 87896{,}2 \;\; \text{ss} = 9 \;\; \text{P} < 0{,}001$].

Table 4. Chi-Square Test Results regarding the Ratio of Female NEETs with respect to Age Groups.

		Age Groups										
		15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Toplam
NEET	Count	102.846	140.367	139.244	210.204	210.933	225.300	243.633	295.784	311.170	340.555	2.220.036
	Within Group	16,5	22,0	22,6	33,7	40,0	45,0	45,8	49,5	53,1	56,9	38,0
Non-NEET	Count	520.076	499.024	476.957	413.254	316.338	275.768	287.832	301.899	275.377	258.298	3.624.823
	Within Group	83,5	78,0	77,4	66,3	60,0	55,0	54,2	50,5	46,9	43,1	62,0
Total	Count	622.922	639.391	616.201	623.458	527.271	501.068	531.465	597.683	586.547	598.853	5.844.859
	Within Group	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

$\chi^2 = 464426{,}9 \;\; ss = 9 \;\; P = 0{,}000$

Results Regarding the Mean Duration/Level of Education of NEETs and Non-NEETs

The chi-square test results regarding the mean duration/level of education of NEET and non-NEET individuals are shown in Table 5. An evaluation of Table 5 shows that the mean duration of education among individuals between the ages of 15-24 was 8.5 years. The mean duration of education for the male and female populations between the ages of 15-24 was 8.8 and 8.2 years,

respectively. As shown in Table 6, a significant difference was identified between the two genders with respect to the mean duration of education [F(11573814-1) = 47.900.068, p < 0.01].

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics Regarding the Mean Duration of Education among NEETs and Non-NEETs With Respect to Gender

	Woman			Man			Total		
	Count	Average Duration of Education	Standart Deviation	Count	Average Duration of Education	Standart Deviation	Count	Average Duration of Education	Standart Deviation
NEET	2.220.025	6,8	4,4	885.203	7,9	4,0	3.105.228	7,1	4,3
Non-NEET	3.625.072	9,1	2,9	4.843.518	8,9	2.7	8.468.590	9,0	2,8
Total	5.845.097	8,2	3,7	5.728.721	8,8	3,0	11.573.818	8,5	3,4

Table 6. ANOVA Results Regarding the Mean Duration of Education among NEETs and Non-NEETs With Respect to Gender

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	ss	Mean Square	F	(p)
NEET	5.198.231	1	5.198.231,0	269.429,3	0,00
Gender	493.973,4	1	493.973,4	47.900.068	0,00
NEET x Gender	730.266,5	1	730.266,5	479.719	0,00
Error	125.413.753	11.573.814	10,8	45.586,4	0,00
Total	968.167.581	11.573.818		67.392,7	0,00

An evaluation of Table 5 shows that the mean duration of education among NEETs between the ages of 15-24 was 7.1 years, while the mean duration of education among non-NEETs of the same age range was 9.0 years. A significant difference was identified between the NEET and non-NEET groups with respect to the mean duration of education [F(11573814-1) = 269429, p < 0.01]. It was also determined that being a NEET had a significant effect on the mean duration of education of the two genders [F(11573814-1) = 479719, p < 0.01]. The mean duration of education of female NEETs and female non-NEETs was 6.8 and 9.1 years, respectively. In addition, the mean duration of education of male NEETs and male non-NEETs was 7.9 and 8.9 years, respectively.

Results Regarding the Work Experience and Employment Status of NEETs

The chi-square test results regarding NEETs' labour force exclusion according to their previous work experience are shown in Table 7. As can be seen in Table 7, the ratio of unemployment among NEETs was 18.9%, while the ratio of non-active NEETs excluded from the labour force was 81.1%. Meanwhile, the ratio of NEETs with previous work experience was 41.8%, while the ratio of NEETs without any previous work experience was 58.2%. It was noted that 64.7% of NEETs with previous work experience were excluded from the labour force (i.e. not active) in 2012. Nearly 840,000 NEETs were excluded from the labor market despite having previous work experience. It was determined that 21.9% of unemployed NEETs had no previous work experience. In terms of labour force participation, a significant difference was identified between the unemployment rates of NEETs with previous work experience and NEETs without previous work experience [$\chi^2 = 392077{,}4$ sd = 1 $P < 0{,}001$].

Table 7. Chi-Square Test Results Regarding the Distribution of Labour Force Exclusion among NEETs According to their Previous Work Experience

		Unemployed	Non-Active	Total
Experienced	Count	457.842	839.631	1.297.473
	Within Experience(%)	35,3%	64,7%	100,0%
	Within Labour Force (%)	78,1%	33,3%	41,8%
Inexperienced	Count	128.272	1.679.581	1.807.853
	Within Experience(%)	7,1%	92,9%	100,0%
	Within Labour Force (%)	21,9%	66,7%	58,2%
Total	Count	586.114	2.519.212	3.105.356
	Within Experience(%)	18,9%	81,1%	100,0%
	Within Labour Force (%)	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

$\chi^2 = 392077{,}4 \;\; ss = 1 \;\; P = 0{,}000$

Evaluating the results concerning female NEETs' work experience and employment status provides a better understanding of the overall employment-related situation of NEETs. This is because the abovementioned results and observations are mainly caused by the data for female NEETs. The chi-square test results regarding female NEETs' labour force exclusion according to their previous work experience are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Chi-Square Test Results Regarding the Distribution of Labour Force Exclusion among NEETs According to their Previous Work Experience

		Unemployed	Non-Active	Total
Experienced	Count	146.939	614.502	761.441
	Within Experience(%)	19,3	80,7	100,0%
	Within Labour Force (%)	68,8	30,6	34,3
Inexperienced	Count	66580	1.392.015	1.458.595
	Within Experience(%)	4,6	95,4	100,0%
	Within Labour Force (%)	31,2	69,4	65,7
Total	Count	213.519	2.006.517	2.220.036
	Within Experience(%)	9,6	90,4	100,0%
	Within Labour Force (%)	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

$\chi^2 = 124917{,}6 \;\; sd = 1 \;\; P = 0{,}000$

As can be seen in Table 8, the ratio of unemployment among female NEETs was 9.6%, while the ratio of non-active female NEETs excluded from the labour force was 90.4%. On the other hand, the ratio of female NEETs with previous work experience was 34.2%, while the ratio of female NEETs without any previous work experience was 65.7%. It was noted that 80.7% of female NEETs with previous work experience were excluded from the labour force (i.e. not active) in 2012. Nearly 615,000 NEETs were excluded from the labor market despite having previous work experience. It was determined that 31.2% of unemployed female NEETs had no previous work experience. In terms of labour force participation, a significant difference was identified between the unemployment (inactivity) rates of female NEETs and inactivity rates of female NEETs according to previous work experience [$\chi^2 = 124917{,}6 \;\; ss = 1 \;\; P < 0{,}001$].

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

Although NEET is a concept that originated in the UK, it has rapidly entered into the policy documents of many countries. Although different countries use different specific definitions for NEET, the basic definition of "young people not in education, employment, or training" has been generally accepted. The differences in the definitions of NEET generally center on the age range of the young individuals that are included into this group. While OECD and ILO consider the age range for NEET to be between 15-29, European Union documents use an age range of 15-24. In order to make a comparison with European Union countries possible, the age range of 15-24 was also used in the current study.

In its comprehensive study based on Eurostat's 2008 and 2011 data, Eurofound (2012) has demonstrated various important findings for European Union countries. According to Eurofound, the mean ratio of NEETs within the 15-24 year-old population has increased in the European Union between 2008 and 2011. In the said study, the ratio of NEETs within the 15-24 year-old population differed considerably from one country to another. While the Netherlands had the lowest NEET ratio of 3.8%, Bulgaria had the highest NEET ratio of 22.6%. The European Union average was 12.9%. In the current study, the ratio of NEETs within the 15-24 year-old population in Turkey was calculated as 26.8%. This ratio is 4.2 percentage points above the ratio for Bulgaria (which has the highest ratio in the European Union), and 13.9 percentage points above the average ratio for the European Union.

In studies conducted according to both the ILO's and OECD's definitions, Turkey comes across as the country with the highest reported NEET ratio (ILO, 2014; OECD, 2013). In a study conducted by the ILO (2014), an NEET ratio of 34.6% (according to 2011 data) was reported for Turkey, which was the highest ratio among evaluated countries. Turkey was followed by Macedonia, which had NEET ratio of 32.1% (according to 2012 data). An OECD study (2013) also identified Turkey as the member country with the highest NEET ratio. According to OECD's calculations, Turkey had an NEET ratio of 35%, with Turkey being followed by Israel, which had an NEET ratio of 27%. The OECD average was 15%, with the lowest country ratio of 7% being observed in the Netherlands.

NEET ratios tend to vary according to age groups. Among young individuals between the ages of 15 and 24, increasing age is associated with an increased likelihood of being an NEET. In the Eurofound study (2012), it was determined that the ratio of NEETs between the ages of 15-19 was lower than the ratio of NEETs between the ages of 20-24 in all European Union countries except Malta. The current study results indicate that this same trend is also applicable for Turkey. The study results also indicated that in the population between the ages of 15-24, increasing age was associated with an increased likelihood of being an NEET. However, this pattern is somewhat different when gender-related differences are taken into account. While a gradual increase in the NEET ratio was observed among females with increasing age, the NEET ratio for males increased up to the age of 20, but then started to decrease past the age of 20. Since Eurofound's study (2012) did not perform a calculation for single ages, it was not possible evaluate this trend any further. However, evaluating the situation in Turkey by forming two age groups with age ranges of 15-19 and 20-24 demonstrated that the 15-19 age group had a lower NEET ratio than the 20-24 group.

Studies conducted by international organizations have shown that in many countries, the ratio of female NEETs within a particular age group tends to be higher than the ratio of male NEETs within the same age group (Eurofound, 2012; OECD, 2013). According to Eurofound's study (2012), the ratio of female NEETs within the 15-24 year-old female population was higher than the ratio of male NEETs within the 15-24 year-old male population in 16 of the 27 European Union countries. The said study determined that the mean NEET ratio for females was 12.45% across the Europe Union, and that the ratio for females was 0.9 percentage points greater than the ratio for males. Similarly, the OECD study (2013) has shown that the ratio of female NEETs within the 15-29 year-old population (18.0%) was 5 percentage points greater than the ratio of male NEETs furthermore; the OECD study also determined

that 27 of the 34 OECD countries had higher NEET ratios among females than males. The ratios that the current study identified for Turkey were generally parallel with the ratios and patterns reported by the abovementioned studies. For Turkey, the ratio of female NEETs within the 15-24 year-old population (38.0%) was 22.5 percentage points greater than the ratio of male NEETs.

The level of education was identified as an important factor that affects the ratio of NEET within the 15-24 year-old population. In this context, a lower level of education was a factor that increased an individual's likelihood of becoming an NEET. The Eurofound study (2012) identified a similar pattern in the European Union. However, the Eurofound study also noted that in some countries, the ratio of NEETs among higher education graduates was also considerable. The study reported that in Cyprus, UK, Belgium, Ireland, and Luxembourg, individuals with higher education constituted more than 10% of the NEET group. The current study also demonstrated that a lower level of education was associated with a higher likelihood of becoming an NEET. It was determined that this likelihood was even higher for females.

One of the aspects that international organizations focus on when evaluating NEET-related data is level of labour force participation (Eurofound, 2012; OECD, 2013). In the OECD study (2013), calculations for the ratio of NEETs between the ages on 15-29 who were excluded from the labour force indicated that the average ratio for the OECD was 60%, while the ratio of unemployment was 40%. According to the same study, the ratio of exclusion from the labour force was calculated as 80% for NEETs in Turkey, while the ratio of unemployment was calculated as 20%. In the Eurofound study (2012), calculations for the ratio of NEETs between the ages on 15-24 who were excluded from the labour force indicated that the average ratio for the European Union was 48.8%, while the ratio of unemployment was 51.2%. In the present study, it was calculated that 81.1% of NEETs between the ages of 15-24 were excluded from the labour force, while the remaining 18.9% were unemployed.

For countries having a young population is considered as an important asset. Although having a young population presents a significant opportunity, converting this young population into an effective economic value first requires that they are appropriately integrated into the labor market. The integration of the young population into the labor market, in turn, requires that their education and skills are strengthened. These requirements place considerable responsibilities on those responsible for policy-making.

Turkey has various problems associated with its young population. Foremost of these problems can be listed as the lack of education, poverty and social exclusion. In their study on unemployment within the young population, Yentürk and Başlevent (2012) expressed that although unemployment cannot be considered as the critical threshold for the resolution of these problems, it is nevertheless a factor aggravates the scale of the problem. In a study conducted by Yentürk and Başlevent (2012), it was observed that the ratio of unemployment among youth was higher than the general unemployment ratio, and that the highest unemployment ratios were observed in the 20-24 year-old age group. Another finding of the current study was that although the level of education of the young labour force in Turkey was higher than that of the adult labour force, the highest level of unemployment within the 20-24 year-old age group was experienced by university graduates. The study also showed that compared to the EU countries, Turkey had a far more negative outlook in all three of the main indicators that are used to define and identify disadvantaged youth (the three indicators being unemployment, school dropout, and youth poverty).

Studies on social exclusion and poverty among young people have identified various problems that negatively affected these individuals' ability to benefit from their education, such as the limited number of extracurricular activities, overcrowded classrooms, and unsuitable environment at home for studying (Yurttagüler, 2012). In the study entitled "The Slum Youth," Gökçe (1976) described that 20% of young people between the ages of 14-20 had to abandon or interrupt their education due to migration, and that 50% of these migrations were due to poverty and subsistence problems. Semerci (2012) described that poverty and problems forced young people to become adults without properly experiencing their youth, and the first child of the family have to "grow-up" very rapidly to cope with the difficulties of life.

Low levels of labour force participation among young people are an increasingly growing problem that deeply affects many countries. The number of young individuals excluded from the labor market is gradually increasing. This development is taking place in parallel to the gradual increase in unemployment rates among young people. Traditional labor market indicators are not sufficient for demonstrating the scale and effects of these problems associated with the young labour force. For this reason, NEET-related numerical data have, in recent years, become indicators that are very closely followed by many countries. In Turkey, data regarding NEETs indicate that NEET-related problems have reached considerable proportions. Comparisons performed at an international level indicate that Turkey is one of the countries that has the most severe NEET-related problems. However, indicators and data regarding NEETs have still not been included into policy documents in Turkey.

An evaluation of the characteristics of NEETs in Turkey reveals an interesting picture. The available data indicates that NEETs in Turkey are predominantly female. In addition, increasing age within the young population is associated with an increased likelihood of becoming included into the NEET group. However, this pattern is somewhat different among males. The likelihood for males to become NEETs increases gradually up to a certain age, but then gradually decreases once this age is past. A higher level of education was identified as a factor that reduced an individual's likelihood of becoming an NEET. This relationship was especially valid and pronounced for females. For Turkey, the ratio of labour force exclusion (i.e. individuals who are not active) among NEETs was particularly high in comparison to other countries. On the other hand, it was also noted that a significant proportion of NEETs in Turkey lacked any previous work experience. Another aspect of the data that was considered noteworthy was the fact that the majority of NEETs with previous work experience were no longer participating into the labour force.

In light of the study data, it is clear that various measures need to be implemented in Turkey in order to reduce the ratio of NEETs within the young population. In this context, various measures could be used in order to reduce the ratio of school drop outs. In addition to this, alternative educational and training opportunities should be presented to those who dropout from school. In addition, investments for schools should be increased in accordance with the implementation of transition policies. To increase employment among young people, educational programs that allow individuals to acquire the skills and abilities demanded by the labor market should be implemented. Measures should also be implemented for removing the obstacles (e.g. care services) that prevent young women from participating in the labour force.

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