



Quantitative Survey Report: Youth Barometer 3

September 2021

PREPARED FOR YOUTH BOARD OF CYPRUS
BY IMR/UNIVERSITY OF NICOSIA™



Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Research Specifications: | 3 |
| Purpose and Objectives of the Research: | 3 |
| <i>Survey Results</i> | 4 |
| Lifestyle | 4 |
| Covid-19 Pandemic | 5 |
| Education and Employment | 8 |
| Society, Institutions and Active Participation | 9 |
| Expectations for the Future | 10 |
| Main findings | 11 |

Research Specifications:

This quantitative survey was conducted by IMR / University of Nicosia™, on behalf of the Youth Board of Cyprus, and it is the third part of the Youth-Barometer survey series.

The data collection process took place in July and August of 2021, in nationwide coverage, both in urban and rural areas.

The research involved 1000 young people aged 14-35.

The sample was selected using the random stratified sampling technique. Data collection was performed by telephone, online and in-person interviews using a structured questionnaire.

Purpose and Objectives of the Research:

The primary purpose of the Youth Barometer survey series is to implement monitoring indicators so that there is a barometer of the views and perceptions of young people aged 14-35 in Cyprus.

Another objective for the research was the investigation into the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic on the lives of young people in Cyprus.

At the same time, issues related to general life satisfaction, and in particular issues related to the quality of life, happiness, education, and employability were explored.

An integral part of the Youth Barometer surveys is the recording of views and perceptions on issues related to public participation, institutions, and politics, but also the recording of expectations for the future.

Survey Results

Lifestyle

Life Satisfaction

The overall level of satisfaction shows a slight increase, compared to the previous study (70% were very or quite satisfied compared to 64% of the participants) which was carried out while strict restrictive measures were in place (local and universal lockdown). However, the percentage remains significantly lower compared to the first study (85%), which was conducted before the outbreak of the pandemic.

Women's satisfaction levels were slightly higher (71%) compared to men's (67%). No significant contrasts were reported between the different age groups.

Compared to the previous year, 28% of the participants state that their quality of life has improved, 24% state that it has worsened, while about half (48%) say that it has remained the same.

Main Concerns

The participant's main concerns focus on aspects related to their employment status, such as finding a job (48%), good vocational prospects (19%), low income (16%), unemployment (12%), and keeping their job.

Findings indicate that 32% of the participants are seriously concerned about social inequality in society, such as the existence of social stereotypes and prejudices.

Taking into account the above concerns, combined with economic issues (14%), the general lack of good prospects (9%), and the high cost of living (8%). It is evident that the general difficulty young people face is meeting the economic demands of modern Cypriot society.

Social media usage habits

The social media applications that Cypriot youth prefer are Instagram and Facebook, with Instagram being the main preference for 8 out of 10 young people.

In third place, with a significant difference from the first two, is Tik Tok (29%), while with a slight difference is LinkedIn (27%), Twitter (26%), and Snapchat (25%).

Covid-19 Pandemic

Emotional State

About a year and a half after the outbreak of the pandemic, the emotional state of Cypriot youth is overrun with negative feelings.

Anxiety/stress is a feeling that prevails in 46% of young people. Combined with 28% who say they feel insecure/precarious and 10% who say they are concerned; a severe state of uncertainty seems to prevail among young people.

The restrictive measures and social isolation due to the pandemic affected the psychological state of young people. Specifically, 34% state that they feel monotony/boredom/apathy, and 17% state that they feel lonely.

Negative emotions are observed in lower percentages, as 15% state that they feel distress/despair, 14% are afraid, 11% describe the feeling they experience as depression, and 9% state that they feel anger/rage.

In terms of their mental health, in particular, 57% of young people say they have been badly affected. There is a significant difference between genders, as women have increased rates (61%), compared to men (53%). In terms of age, among juveniles (14-17 years old) there is the highest percentage of people who report that their lives have been badly affected (71%).

The need for psychological support was felt by 38% of young people. Of these, the majority (64%) turned to acquaintances and friends for psychological support, while 43% of young people sought support from family, specifically their parents. Only 2 out of 10 young people, who felt the need for psychological support, were referred to mental health professionals, while the findings show that 1 in 10 of them did not ask for any help.

Effects on everyday life

The effects of the pandemic on everyday life seem to be obvious, as 80% of young people say that as a result of the pandemic their daily life has been affected (to a great extent or somewhat). As these results are similar to the previous study (86%), there are indications that the pandemic continues to affect their lives.

A significant difference between the genders was reported. More specifically, 87% of women state that their daily life has been affected more or less, while the corresponding percentage for men is 74%.

The aspect of young people's lives that seems to have been most affected by the pandemic is related to entertainment and fun (Average 7.48 / 10), followed by their psychological state/mood (Average 6.73 / 10) and their education (Average 5.98 / 10).

A significant increase was found in the health aspect (Average 5.47 / 10), compared to the previous measurement (Average 3.72 / 10).

Challenges due to the consequences of the pandemic

Among the biggest challenges faced regarding the effects of the pandemic are issues related to measures put in place in order to reduce the spread of the disease, such as restrictions on transportation (33%), the demonstration of Safe Pass (25%), the mandatory mask use (23%) and the general feeling of restricting human rights (12%).

Another important aspect, which emerges through the difficulties arising as a consequence of the pandemic, is related to the feeling of uncertainty that prevails, especially regarding the financial and occupational establishment. Specifically, a percentage of 11% state that due to the pandemic, their work has been suspended or stopped, 10% feel uncertain about the future, and 8% seem to be facing financial problems.

Concerns about the consequences of the pandemic

The main concerns of young people due to the effects of the pandemic focus on three main areas.

The first area concerns work and financial uncertainty, with 24% referring to the possibility of a new economic crisis as their biggest concern. When it comes to the labor sector, 13% are concerned about career prospects and 8% are concerned about a possible increase in youth unemployment.

The second area is related to both the short-term and long-term psychosocial consequences of the pandemic, due to social constraints and

social alienation. Analytically, 23% expressed concern about the introduction of a new way of life with restrictive measures, 17% reported the issue of restrictions on transportation and travel while 12% expressed the possibility of the pandemic being prolonged. In particular, regarding the effects of the pandemic on their psychological state, 11% said they were concerned about restrictions on entertainment and recreation, 10% said they were concerned about the general feeling of uncertainty caused by the pandemic, 7% stated that they were concerned about the impact on social life and 6% were concerned about the psychological impact.

The third area includes the effects of the pandemic on health-related issues. In particular, 9% of young people express health concerns, 6% seem to be afraid of the contagion or even the death of a loved one from the virus, while 4% seem to be concerned about the effects of vaccines.

Vaccination

Significantly lower than the percentage of the total population that has received both doses of the vaccine (61.9%) is the corresponding percentage of young people aged 14-35, who stated that they received both doses of the vaccine (54%).

The highest vaccination rate was reported among people aged 30-35, which amounts to 70% for the two doses of the vaccine, while for the age groups 18-24 and 25-29 approximately half of them completed the vaccination process (49 % and 52% respectively). Indicatively, it is worth mentioning that the vaccination coverage (for both doses of the vaccine) in the adult population of Cyprus amounts to 75.2%.¹

Among the under-aged participants (14-17), 20% of them have been vaccinated with one or two doses, while 24% state that they intend to proceed with the vaccination. Young people between the ages 14-17 have the highest rate of refusal to receive the vaccine (35%).

The findings show that a significant part of young Cypriots (19%) who have not yet decided whether to proceed with the vaccine need special attention.

¹ Source Website of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
<https://vaccinetracker.ecdc.europa.eu/public/extensions/COVID-19/vaccine-tracker.html#national-ref-tab> (Date of access : 15/09/2021).

Education and Employment

Education, Employment and the Pandemic

Difficulty (to a great extent or somewhat) in adapting education/work to the new conditions brought about by the coronavirus pandemic, seems to have been encountered by 63% of young people. Difficulties, in adapting to the use of new technologies are reported by 33% of young people.

Attending work and classes with a physical presence is preferred by the vast majority (82%) of young people. The highest level of preference for physical presence occurs among young people between ages 14-17 (96%), while the lowest was reported among people aged 30-35 years (76%).

Occupational Status

The employment situation of the majority of young workers remains the same (52%). A higher percentage in job stability is found in the age group 30-35 (58%), compared to the younger workers (18-24 in 42% and 25-30 in 49%).

There is a slight increase in the overall degree of satisfaction regarding their current job, as 73% state, they are very or quite satisfied, compared to 63% recorded in the previous measurement. Similarly, a slight increase appeared in the percentage of young people who state that their current job is related to their academic background (49% vs. 41% in the 2nd Youth-Barometer survey).

General Views and Perceptions concerning Work and Education

Established in almost all young people (97%), is the perception that people should continue to be educated throughout their lives, with 9 out of 10 young people reporting that they would take advantage of opportunities given to them for furthering their education.

In terms of their situation, 85% say they are grateful for the job/education they have today, and 80% feel professionally / academically successful.

Society, Institutions and Active Participation

Participation in Social Activities

The percentages recorded regarding participation in social activities are low. The main reasons why this phenomenon seems to be happening are the lack of motivation (it did not occur - 37%), the lack of time (32%) as well as the inability to identify with these activities (I do not feel that they express me - 22 %).

However, the most popular activities they mentioned were related to volunteering (37%), sports/sports teams (30%), and professional associations (19%). The main motivations for the participation of young people arise from the need to contribute to their society (48%), the identification with the activity (I feel that it expresses me - 27%) as well as the feeling of belonging in a team (to be a member of a group - 19%).

Institutions

Trust level in institutions remains below average, as it was recorded in previous studies. Specifically, the lowest level of trust was recorded about the political parties, scoring an average of 2.75 out of 10. They are followed, in ascending order, by the media (3.19 / 10), the Government (3.51 / 10), and Parliament (3.56 / 10). The level of trust in the Courts (4.91 / 10) and the Local Government (4.74 / 10) is comparatively higher and closer to the average.

Interest in Politics

The majority of the participants (67%) have little or no interest in politics. This percentage does not show a statistically significant difference from the previous studies (65% in the 2nd Neo-Barometer and 68% in the 1st Neo-Barometer).

Despite that, 61% of young people with voting rights, voted at the Parliamentary Elections that took place in May. The main reasons that led them to the polls were based on the sense of duty as active citizens (55%), recognizing the importance of their vote (40%) as well as the perception that through their vote they can determine and better their future (24%).

On the other hand, the reasons that prevented 39% from exercising their right to vote was the lack of interest in politics (33%), the lack of trust in

politicians and politics (25%) as well as the general discrediting through the perception that their vote has no impact (18%).

The way to motivate young people to participate in the electoral process by voting is mainly related to the interest they expect from the state to show young people (15%) and to convince them that their vote can have an impact, for change to occur (28%). In addition, an important motivation for exercising the right to vote is the ability to identify with people who claim political positions, as they want the opportunity to choose candidates close to their age (young candidate - 16%), but also people who express similar views, ideas, and perceptions to their own (11%).

Expectations for the Future

Young people seem to be more optimistic about the future compared to the previous survey, as 80% say they are very or quite optimistic. The corresponding percentage recorded in the previous study was 61%.

The same does not seem to apply regarding the future of the next generations, with 59% saying they are little or not at all optimistic. This percentage, however, shows a slight decrease of 8%, compared to the corresponding statements recorded during the previous measurement (67%).

Professional recognition is the goal that prevails for the next five years in 61% of young people. The successful completion of their studies is expected by 31%, while 22% seek financial independence. A percentage of 18% aims to start a family, while 14% report the general fulfillment of their dreams.

Concerning state support, the main concerns focus on employment, education, and financial support. Specifically, the most important programs/services expected from the state, concern the development and strengthening of employment plans (34%), youth entrepreneurship support plans (26%), lifelong learning plans (22%), market interconnection programs (21%), and technology education programs.

Main findings

Current Situation

The current situation among Cypriot youth seems to have slightly improved, compared to the previous study, which was conducted during strict restrictive measures, due to Covid-19.

Nevertheless, the shadow of the pandemic seems to be hovering over aspects of their lives, reinforcing the general feeling of uncertainty that prevails, especially around their financial and professional establishment.

At the same time, the pandemic has left deep wounds on the psychosynthesis of the young people of Cyprus, which are reflected through a set of negative emotions they are experiencing.

Work and Education during the pandemic

The findings related to the effects of the pandemic on work and education were interesting especially those regarding the overwhelming preference that young people have for the pre-pandemic way of working and studying.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that a higher degree of difficulty occurred in adapting to the new working/education conditions resulting from the pandemic rather than in the use of new technologies.

Society, Institutions and Active Participation

Trust level in the institutions is low, which may be related to the low level of interest in politics.

These findings demonstrate the urgent need of the state to increase the interest of the youth of Cyprus and promote the candidates and politicians, who will encourage participation and trust in young people regarding decision-making processes.

The worldwide transition into the era of Big Data and digital transformation, have driven **IMR/University of Nicosia***, one of the largest market research organizations in Cyprus, to invest in an all new Market Business Intelligence unit. The Business Intelligence unit, through its collaboration with multiple teams of experts both in Cyprus and abroad, offers new and innovative solutions based on real time data collection, advance analytics and tailored-made visualizations endorsing strategic business decisions.

Providing insights to your business™



Insights Market Research (IMR) Ltd:

Member of



Certified with



CONTEMPORARY ENTERPRISES

SIR 2014

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

T: +357 22 265150

F: +357 22 256530

E: pastou.m@unic.ac.cy

Mrs. Marina Pastou
Qualitative Research Manager

For more information about IMR/University of Nicosia* please visit our website:

www.imr.com.cy