

The Phenomenon of “Not in Education, Employment, or Training” (NEET) in Chilean Youth: An Updated Descriptive Analysis

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Abstract

This article examines “not employed, in education, or training” youth people (NEET) in Chile, highlighting the socioeconomic situation and structural inequalities they face. Utilizing expanded data from the CASEN 2022 survey, the study investigates the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of 709,864 youth NEETs, representing 17% of the population aged 15 to 29. The majority, 69%, are women, and 85% reside in urban areas, emphasizing gender and urban disparities. The study employs statistical analysis to explore the prevalence of NEETs, revealing a higher rate among women and a strong association between NEET status and lower income levels. Additionally, the research underscores the importance of integrated education and employment policies to mitigate this phenomenon. The descriptive nature of this study, based on survey data, precludes causal inferences but provides a solid basis for understanding the challenges and guiding future policy formulation to reduce problematic transitions from education to employment in young people in Chile.

Keywords

Youth NEET, Chile, Latin America, Youth Education and Employment, and Youth Social Exclusion

1. Introduction

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) identify NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youths—those not in education, employment, or train-

ing—as a critical group reflecting deep challenges both on an individual and collective level, significantly impacting society and the global economy (ILO, 2020; OECD, 2023). According to the ILO report “Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020”, the NEET status affects approximately 267 million youth people aged between 15 and 24 years, suggesting a loss of productive and human potential, the existence of systematic inequalities, and structural deficiencies that limit equitable access to opportunities for all youth people. This situation has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis, which has led to the risk of a “lockdown generation”, with youth individuals disproportionately facing the effects of the pandemic throughout their working lives (ILO, 2020).

The OECD identifies the seamless transition from education to employment as a critical challenge requiring immediate attention. It advocates for integrated educational policies that not only focus on reducing the NEET rates but also enhance the alignment of educational programmes with labour market demands. This approach ensures that educational systems not only equip youth individuals with relevant skills but also support broader economic and social recovery efforts. Effective coordination between educational institutions and industry stakeholders is crucial to implement these policies successfully (OECD, 2023).

The ILO highlights the urgency of implementing comprehensive youth employment policies that mitigate the impact of the crisis and prevent adverse long-term consequences in educational, training, and professional spheres. This includes a large-scale policy response, effective implementation of employment or skills guarantees, and broader policies that promote economic and social recovery (International Labour Office, 2012).

In Chile, the sustained prevalence of NEETs significantly undermines national economic productivity and perpetuates poverty and inequality. This group’s exclusion from educational and employment systems leads to social marginalization and can increase crime and other risky behaviours. Addressing these issues requires a coordinated policy response that integrates educational improvement and labour inclusion (OECD, ECLAC, & CAF, 2014: p. 95).

The Sociodemographic Characterization Survey (CASEN) 2017, carried out by the Ministry of Social Development and Family of Chile, revealed that youth NEETs reach 528,574 people between 15 and 29 years old. It corresponds to 13% of the population in this age group. According to this survey, 31% of NEETs are men, 69% are women, and 85% live in urban areas and in vulnerable situations: 35% are in the first quintile and only 6% in the fifth quintile. Furthermore, according to multidimensional measures, 17% of these youth people are classified as poor by income, and 30% are considered poor (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, 2017).

Addressing the NEET issue, both in Chile and globally, requires collaborative efforts between governments, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations to develop effective strategies that tackle the causes and consequences of this phenomenon. There is a need for integrated policies in Chile that not only

improve access to quality education and foster job creation but also support the transition of youth people from the educational system to the labour market.

The update of the characterization of NEET youths in Chile, as per the 2022 CASEN Survey, is an essential effort to understand the current socioeconomic dynamics and the challenges faced by Chilean youth in a post-pandemic context. It is crucial for the design and implementation of public policies aimed at reactivating and enhancing the educational and labour or employment trajectories of this population group.

2. Conceptual Framework of the NEET

The phenomenon of “NEET” youth, i.e., youth people who do not study, do not work and are not in training, has captured the attention of researchers, policy-makers, and society at large over the last few decades, emerging as a crucial challenge for the economic and social development of countries. This interest stems from the pressing need to understand the deep-rooted causes that lead youth people to this situation and to seek effective strategies for their reintegration into education or employment (OECD, 2023).

The term NEET initially gained popularity in the United Kingdom in the late 1990s and early 2000s, being officially adopted by the British government. A milestone in the study of this phenomenon was the report “Bridging the Gap: New Opportunities for 16 - 18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training”, published in 1999 by the UK Department of Education and Employment. This document represented one of the first systematic efforts to address the problem of NEET youths, marking the beginning of specific interest in this population and setting a precedent in the analysis and political action regarding youth social exclusion (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999).

The “Bridging the Gap” report is a comprehensive study on NEET youths in Europe. It has greatly influenced subsequent research and policy development in addressing this issue. According to the ILO report on global employment trends for youth in 2020, around 20% of young people between 15 and 24 years of age are NEETs globally (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999). Approximately 260 million young people globally need work experience to earn income or to enhance their education or skills (ILO, 2020). In Latin America, the phenomenon of young people who neither study nor work has been analysed and discussed in various studies and reports that seek to understand the extent of the problem, its causes and consequences, and possible solutions (Székely & Karver, 2015)

Longitudinal studies, including the United Nations Development Program report of March 2015, have examined the educational and employment trajectories of youth people classified as NEET in Chile. These studies have revealed that, while 67% of NEETs aged 15 to 30 have completed at least secondary education, suggesting that educational level alone does not explain this situation, a significant 83.5% of those identified as NEETs in 2011 have remained in this condition, indicating that it often represents a prolonged state of socioeconomic inactivity rather

than a transitional phase. This persistent pattern of exclusion is reflected throughout Latin America (Cabezas, 2015), where De Hoyos, Rogers and Székely report that one in five youth people are NEETs, affecting more than 20 million people. Székely analysis of 18 countries highlights that 17.4% of youth people aged 18 to 24 are NEETs, with a higher incidence among women, an imbalance that increases with age (Székely & Karver, 2015; De Hoyos et al., 2016).

The convergence of these studies illuminates the complexity of the NEET phenomenon in Latin America, highlighting the need for comprehensive and targeted approaches that take into account gender nuances, educational background, and socioeconomic strata (Trucco & Ullmann, 2015)

The CASEN 2011 survey indicated that NEETs constituted 15.6% of the Chilean population aged between 15 and 30 years. More recent reports from the National Employment Survey (ENE) by the National Institute of Statistics (INE) highlighted that, for the period from June to August 2022, 13.5% of the youth population between 15 and 24 years were NEETs. A gender breakdown reveals that youth men have a slightly lower rate (12.7%) compared to women (14.3%), presenting a gender gap of 15,544 individuals. It is crucial to note that at the height of the pandemic, specifically in the May to July 2020 quarter, the INE estimates indicated that the national rate of youth NEETs surged to 21.2% (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, 2011; INE, 2022).

The estimates and figures presented offer an insight into the reality of NEETs youths in Chile. The various measurements differ depending on the methodology, purpose, and approach used. To gain a more updated and comprehensive view of the situation up to 2022, it is imperative to refer to the National Socio-Economic Characterization Survey (CASEN), which provides an integral and detailed measurement of the NEET phenomenon through its methodology focused on well-being and the socio-economic dynamics of the Chilean population.

This study aims to refine and enhance the understanding of this critical population group, enabling the formulation of more accurate and effective public policies to address the needs of Chilean youth in the post-pandemic context.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study Population

This observational descriptive study is based on the last Chilean National Socio-economic Characterization Survey (CASEN-2022), a survey with a complex sample design conducted by the Ministry of Social Development and Family (MDSF) in partnership with the National Institute of Statistics (INE) (Secretaría de Evaluación Social, 2023a, 2023b).

The CASEN-2022 survey, conducted across 335 Chilean municipalities, captures critical data on poverty, education, health, housing, work, and income, aiming to assess socioeconomic disparities nationally and regionally. Utilising the 2017 Census for a new housing sampling frame and applying the Raking calibration method, this representative household survey employed a probabilistic, strat-

ified, and two-stage design. Trained interviewers conducted voluntary, face-to-face interviews using smartphone technology, with each session averaging 65 minutes for a four-member household. The survey achieved a household response rate of 68.7%, interviewing 72,056 households and 202,231 individuals. Personal data was not collected, ensuring respondent privacy. The CASEN-2022 data is publicly accessible, providing valuable resources for policy analysis and research (Secretaría de Evaluación Social, 2023a, 2023b).

3.2. Data Selection and Sample

Using the expanded data, the study examined 709,864 youth individuals aged between 15 and 29 residing in Chile, who were not enrolled in any formal educational institution, had not worked in the week prior to the survey, did not perform occasional paid tasks, and were not absent from work for justified reasons. Those about to start or resume their studies were excluded from the final analysis to ensure an accurate definition of the study group. Individuals attending pre-university courses or preparing for university admission exams (PAES/PDT) were excluded from the non-study category, as they are considered to be in an active phase of educational transition. Similarly, excluded from the non-work group were those who had engaged in some activity in the past week and students who, although not having worked that week, have a source of income. These exclusions are key to focusing the research on young people who are completely disconnected from the educational and labour systems and potentially face different barriers to participating in the labour market or becoming a risk group of social marginalization.

3.3. Measures or Variables

This study examines the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of NEET youth in Chile, utilizing data from the CASEN 2022 survey. The following **Table 1** outlines the key variables analyzed in the study, along with their definitions:

3.4. Statistical Analyses

Statistical analyses were performed using STATA version 14.0 (Stata Corp, TX, USA). Descriptive statistics were performed to provide a profile of the general characteristics of the sample. The statistical significance was tested using Wald's chi-square statistic for categorical variables and t-test for continuous variable and a level of significance of 5% in the test was accepted.

Contingency tables to delineate the distribution of NEET status across demographic, household familiar and socio-economics factors. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to check if the means of groups (15 - 19, 20 - 24 and 25 - 29) are significantly different from each other. To ensure the results were representative at a national level, expansion factors provided by the CASEN-2022, were applied.

With 7,614 observations, the expanded population amounts to 709,864 young individuals, ensuring representativeness at both national and regional levels. This

Table 1. Variable definitions of the NEETs Youth study, Chile 2022.

Research variables	Definition
NEET Status	Status of youths not in education, employment, or training
Age	The age of individuals ranges from 15 to 29 years.
Sex	Sex of individuals, categorized as women or men.
Residential Area	Classification of the residential environment, differentiating between urban and rural areas.
Educational Level	The highest level of education attained by the youths, including primary, secondary, technical, professional, and postgraduate education.
Household Income	Deciles of household income, corrected for autonomous income, measured in deciles from 1 to 10.
Multidimensional Poverty 5D	Condition of poverty is measured through five dimensions: education, health, work and social security, housing, and environment and networks.
Native Ethnicity	Identification of whether the youths belong to any indigenous ethnicity in Chile.
Economic Dependency	Classification of youths based on their economic dependency on other household members.
Health System Access	The type of health insurance the youths are affiliated with includes public, private, military systems, or no insurance.
Household Head Role	The role of youths as heads of household, including gender and age differences.
Region of Residence	Regional distribution of NEET youths, categorized by geographic zones such as central, southern, and northern Chile.
NEET Rate	Prevalence rate of NEET youths per 1,000 individuals in different categories such as age, gender, educational level, household income, and region of residence.

Source: own elaboration based on CASEN 2022 survey.

allows for precise and reliable estimations of NEET rates across different regions of Chile, facilitating formulating policies and programmes based on robust data. (Social Observatory Division, 2023). It is essential to highlight that the reference population for all rate denominators is the expanded NEET population. Additionally, the total population of young individuals between 15 and 29 comprises 41,876 observations, expanded to 4,172,425 to provide a broad and detailed comparative framework in the analysis.

Implementing expansion factors in the CASEN 2022 survey aims to ensure representative and accurate estimates but has limitations. The accuracy of these factors depends on reliable auxiliary data like population projections, which can be erroneous or outdated. Additionally, the method assumes uniform response rates and demographic consistency, which may not reflect actual variability across regions or subgroups, leading to biased results, especially for underrepresented groups. Therefore, it is essential to continuously update methodologies and inputs to address biases and enhance the reliability of research findings (Social Observatory Division, 2023).

4. Results

This report analyzes the prevalence rate of the NEET population in Chile in 2022.

The results are structured in three domains: demographic, socioeconomic characterization, and household family factors of NEET youth. Details include age, gender, nationality, residential environment, and region. The data also highlights regional disparities within the context of Chile's demographic structure, informing potential influences on NEET status in different locations.

4.1. Demographics NEETs Characterization

A demographic analysis of the NEET population offers a detailed overview of the NEET population in Chile as of 2022, segmented by age, gender, nationality, urban versus rural living conditions, and regional distribution.

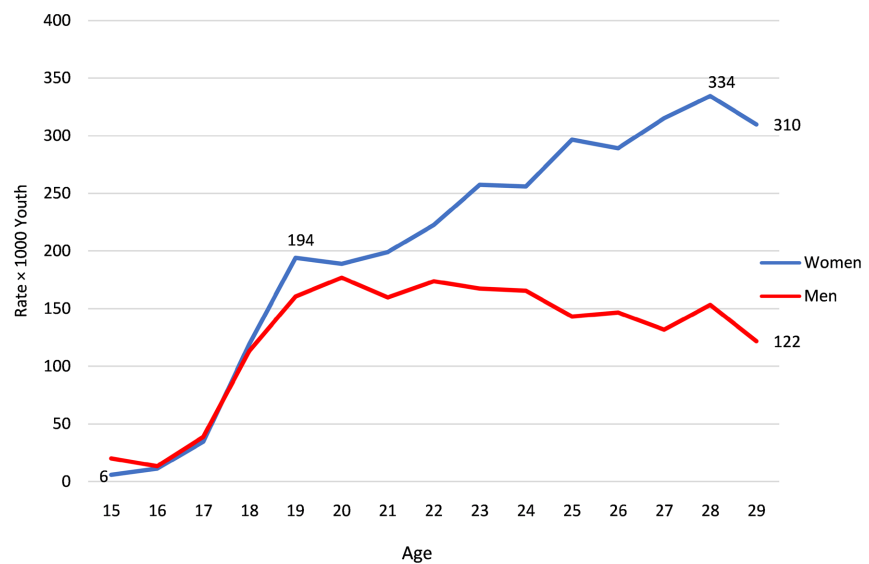


Figure 1. Prevalence Youth NEETs by sex rate per 1,000 Youth, Chile 2022. Source: own elaboration based on CASEN 2022 survey.

Figure 1 vividly showcases the pronounced disparities in NEET rates between young women and men across various age groups in Chile for the year 2022. The data reveals a dynamic pattern: starting at age 15, the NEET rate for women is significantly lower at 6 per 1,000. However, this rate increases sharply by age 18, where it reaches 194 per 1,000, overtaking the rate for men, which stands at 113 per 1,000. The escalation continues for women, with NEET rates peaking at 334 per 1,000 by age 28. This peak is followed by a slight decline to 310 per 1,000 at age 29.

For young men, the trend in NEET rates begins with an increase but remains comparatively stable and begins a gradual decline from the age of 25. This illustrates a distinct pattern of engagement with education and employment for men, contrasting sharply with the trends observed for women.

This significant divergence in NEET rates by sex is substantiated by a one-sample proportion test, which yields a Pearson χ^2 of -19.3907, $p = 0.0001$. This test confirms a significant difference between the observed proportion of women

NEETs and the expected 50%, highlighting a pronounced gender disparity within the NEET population. Women are significantly more likely to be NEET than men, underscoring the urgent need for gender-sensitive policies and interventions to address the economic and educational integration challenges faced by young women in Chile. This finding emphasizes the critical role of tailored strategies that cater specifically to the unique hurdles that young women encounter as they transition into adulthood.

Table 2, highlight a distinct gender disparity, with women constituting 62% of the NEET population compared to 38% of men. This trend is consistent across the age groups, with the highest discrepancy observed at age 29, where 72% are women. Most NEET individuals are Chilean, comprising 89% of the total, underscoring that the NEET issue is predominantly domestic rather than driven by non-nationals, who make up just 11%.

Table 2. Distribution of demographic characteristics of NEET youth in Chile 2022.

Age	Sex		Nationality		Location Type		Regions (*)		
	Women	Men	Chilean	Others	Urbano	Rural	North	Center	South
15	22%	78%	46%	54%	93%	7%	20%	71%	9%
16	48%	52%	57%	43%	88%	12%	19%	55%	26%
17	45%	55%	86%	14%	87%	13%	19%	62%	19%
18	49%	51%	91%	9%	84%	16%	17%	59%	24%
19	54%	46%	88%	12%	87%	13%	17%	56%	27%
20	50%	50%	91%	9%	89%	11%	12%	67%	22%
21	54%	46%	92%	8%	87%	13%	15%	57%	28%
22	54%	46%	88%	12%	87%	13%	18%	53%	28%
23	61%	39%	89%	11%	89%	11%	16%	58%	26%
24	61%	39%	94%	6%	87%	13%	14%	61%	26%
25	64%	36%	89%	11%	88%	12%	15%	59%	26%
26	68%	32%	89%	11%	88%	12%	16%	54%	29%
27	69%	31%	87%	13%	88%	12%	16%	59%	25%
28	69%	31%	88%	12%	89%	11%	16%	60%	24%
29	72%	28%	88%	12%	87%	13%	15%	61%	24%
Total	62%	38%	89%	11%	88%	12%	16%	59%	26%

(*) North: Arica Parinacota, Tarapacá, Antofagasta, Atacama, Coquimbo; (*) Center: Valparaiso, Metropolitana, O'Higgins, Maule; (*) South: Ñuble, Biobío, Araucanía, Los Lagos, Los Ríos, Aysén, Magallanes. Source: own elaboration based on CASEN 2022 survey.

Urban areas show a significantly higher concentration of NEETs, with 88% residing in cities as opposed to 12% in rural settings, indicating a possible link between urbanisation and higher NEET rates. Regionally, the Central Zone, which includes major urban centres such as the Metropolitan region of Santiago, har-

bours the majority with 59% of the country's NEETs, reflecting its more significant population density. Conversely, the South and North zones account for 26% and 16%, respectively, suggesting different economic or social dynamics that may influence these distributions. The predominance of NEETs in urban and central regions highlights potential issues related to urban resource allocation and the effectiveness of social and educational policies in these densely populated areas.

4.2. Socioeconomic NEETs Characterization

This section examines the socioeconomic aspects of NEET youth, including 5D-multidimensional and income poverty, education level, and native ethnicity background. The analysis highlights the significance of policymakers, educators, and researchers in understanding the impact of these variables on disengagement from education, employment, access to education, and participation in the labour market, thereby aiding intervention and policy formulation.

4.2.1. Household 5D-Multidimensional Poverty

For data analysis, we will use the definition of 5D-multidimensional poverty according to the National Socioeconomic Characterization Survey (CASEN) 2022, which evaluates this condition through five key dimensions: education, health, work and social security, housing, and environment and networks. These dimensions allow a comprehensive evaluation of poverty, considering various aspects that affect people's well-being and quality of life. CASEN 2022 uses regional expansion factors to ensure that results are nationally and regionally representative, providing accurate and reliable estimates (PNUD, 2023). According to MSDF, a household is considered in 5D-multidimensional poverty if it presents 22.5% or more of deprivations, equivalent to a traditional dimension.

This approach assesses deprivation through specific indicators, providing a deeper understanding of poverty. It is especially relevant for Chile's NEETs, young people who are neither studying nor working or training, in identify the various barriers they face, from a lack of employment to inadequate housing and health care of household and family background. Recognizing these interconnected aspects is critical to developing policies that comprehensively address the roots of poverty and exclusion (Secretaría de Evaluación Social, 2023a, 2023b; Cabezas, 2015).

The graph illustrates the NEET rates among youth living in 5D-multidimensional poverty in Chile, a key indicator of youth disengagement from education and employment (Figure 2). These rates are disaggregated by sex and age groups (15 - 19, 20 - 24, 25 - 29 years), providing a comprehensive view of the issue. The results indicate that young women consistently exhibit higher NEET rates than men in the age groups 20 - 24 and 25 - 29. Specifically, in the 15 - 19 age group, the NEET rate is 19 per 1000 for women and 26 per 1000 for men. However, in the 20 - 24 age group, the NEET rate significantly increases to 77 per 1000 for women and 58 per 1000 for men. This trend persists in the 25 - 29 age group, with

rates of 79 per 1000 for women and 36 per 1000 for men. These data suggest a greater vulnerability among young, poor women, particularly in the older age groups.

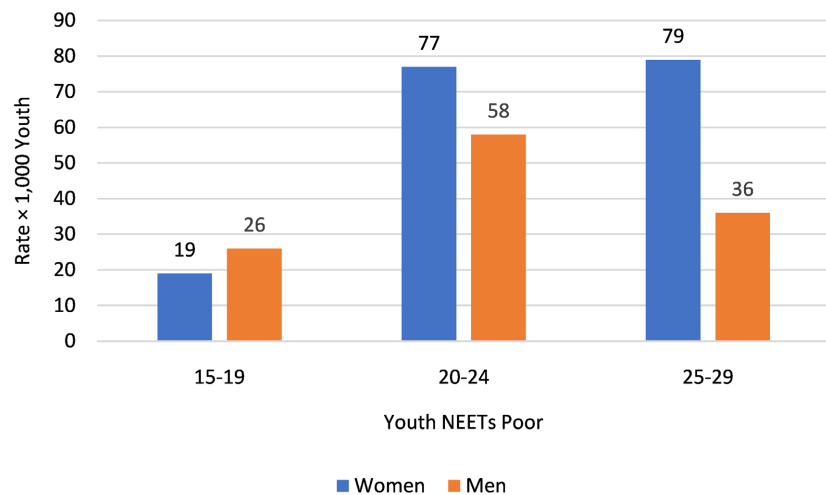


Figure 2. Prevalence Rate of NEET Youth per 1,000 by household 5D-Multidimensional Poverty, 2022. Source: own elaboration based on CASEN 2022 survey.

This significant divergence in NEET rates is substantiated by an ANOVA test, which yields a model R-squared of 0.8618, indicating that 86.18% of the variability in NEET rates is explained by sex and age group factors ($F = 29.93$, $p = 0.0000$). The ANOVA results show that both sex ($F = 25.87$, $p = 0.0000$) and age ($F = 48.54$, $p = 0.0000$), as well as their interaction ($F = 13.35$, $p = 0.0001$), are highly significant. This test confirms a significant difference between the NEET rates of women and men, highlighting a pronounced gender disparity affecting women and that increase with age. Women are significantly more likely to be NEET than men, underscoring the urgent need for gender-sensitive policies and interventions. Policymakers, researchers, and organizations involved in youth education and employment in Chile are crucial in addressing the economic and educational integration challenges young women face. This finding emphasizes the critical role of tailored strategies that cater specifically to the unique hurdles that young women encounter as they transition into adulthood.

4.2.2. Household Income Poverty

Figure 3 vividly illustrates the distribution of NEET rates per 1,000 for young women and men by age groups (15 - 19, 20 - 24 and 25 - 29) and the autonomous per-capita or household income deciles. The data, which is of paramount importance, reveals substantial disparities based on age, gender, and socioeconomic status.

For youth NEET women aged 25 - 29, the first income decile shows the highest prevalence rate of 831, indicating a significant impact of disadvantaged economic conditions on their ability to participate in employment, education or training. This rate progressively decreases, reaching 44 per 1,000 in the tenth income decile.

For the age group 20 to 24 years in women, the highest NEET rate also appears in the first decile, with 415 per 1,000 and experiences a fluctuating decrease between deciles, again reaching a slight peak in the tenth decile, with 76 per 1,000. The youngest age group (15 - 19) shows lower NEET rates overall but follows a similar trend, starting at 84 per 1,000 in the first decile and declining sharply to 7 per 1,000 in the tenth decile.

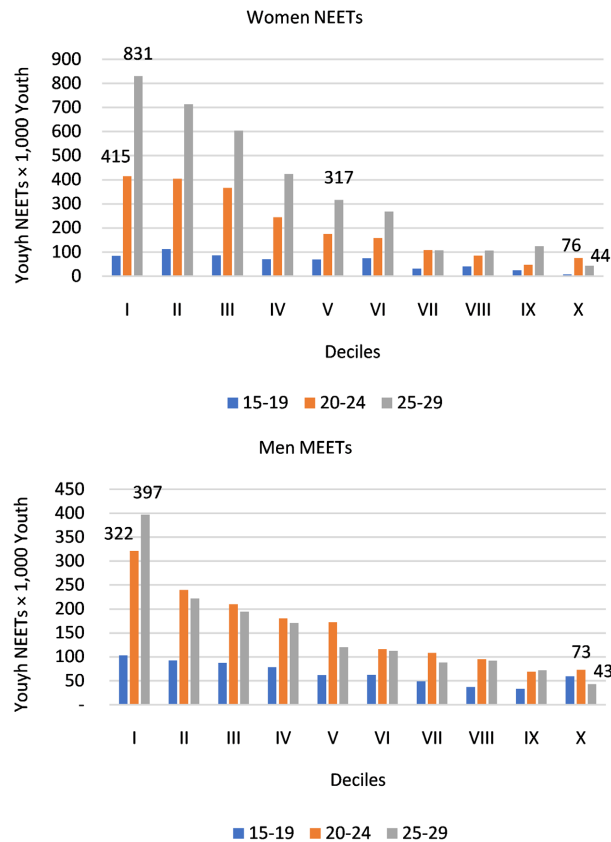


Figure 3. Distribution of NEET rate by Sex and Age Group and Household Income Deciles in Chile. Source: own elaboration based on CASEN 2022 survey.

NEET rates among men are highest in the lowest income deciles and decrease as income increases, suggesting a solid rise between poverty and NEET prevalence. In the first decile, the rate is 397 per 1,000 young people aged 25 - 29 and 322 per 1,000 young people aged 20 - 24. These rates decrease progressively until they reach 43 and 73 per 1,000, respectively, in the tenth decile. This pattern highlights the need for targeted interventions and support programs for young men in the lowest deciles to improve their education, employment and training opportunities.

4.2.3. Education Level of NEET Youth in Chile

Before analyzing the differences in NEET rates according to the highest educational level achieved, it is essential to present the context of the distribution of the

total population of young people (15 - 29 years old) in Chile by these educational levels. The distribution reveals that 37% of young people have completed Scientific-Humanistic Secondary Education, the largest group. This is followed by 32% who have reached the Professional level with careers of 4 or more years. 13% of young people have completed secondary technical professional education, and 13% have reached a higher level of technical education (careers of less than three years). Only 3% of young people have remained at the Basic Education level. In comparison, those who only have Special Education (Differential) or never attended do not reach 1%, just as those with postgraduate studies do not reach 1% either (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social y Familia, 2023; CASEN 2022).

The educational structure, as outlined in the previous paragraph, serves as a fundamental framework for comprehending the fluctuations in NEET rates across the various educational levels attained by Chilean youth. This understanding is crucial for our analysis.

The educational panorama of NEET young people in Chile presents notable disparities in educational achievements according to gender. **Table 3** shows the distribution of NEET rates per 1,000 individuals according to the highest educational level achieved. For young women who have never studied, 577 of every 1,000 are NEETs. At the same time, for men, 924 out of every 1,000 are NEETs, indicating a significant gender gap at the earliest stage of educational exclusion. These NEET rates were calculated for women and men aged 15 to 29 years per 1,000 individuals in the general population of the same age range, highlighting the substantial gender disparity and the need for targeted interventions to address the early educational disengagement of young people in Chile.

Table 3. Prevalence rate per 1,000 of being NEET by education level in Chile 2022.

Educational Level Achieved	Women	Men	Total
Never Studied	577	924	784
Preschool	451	632	536
Special Education	457	383	414
Primary/Elementary Education	447	216	306
Secondary Education	261	157	206
Technical Secondary Education	271	153	209
Technical Level (3-year program)	229	105	173
Professional (4-year program)	112	73	93
Postgraduate	61	0	34
Total	213	129	170

Source: own elaboration based on CASEN 2022 survey.

Early childhood education, including preschool education, reveals a gender discrepancy in NEET rates, with 451 for women and 632 for men per 1,000. This disparity, which starts from the very beginning of educational pursuits, under-

scores the need for interventions at the onset of education to prevent subsequent NEET tendencies. This data also highlights the immense potential of early interventions in shaping educational outcomes and reducing gender disparities.

In secondary education, women outnumber men in NEETs, marking a crucial point for higher education or the workforce. Gender imbalance also occurs in technical education, with higher female participation rates in both secondary and tertiary levels. For professional education, women again have higher rates than men. Furthermore, postgraduate education exclusively has female representation among NEETs, with no male counterparts.

Interestingly, the analysis shows that the probability of being NEET increases slightly with a higher educational level, although this relationship is weak. The ANOVA model is statistically significant (p -value = 0.0000), indicating a significant relationship between education and NEET status. The coefficient for educational level is small (0.0051) but significant (p -value = 0.000), suggesting a slight positive relationship between higher educational levels and NEET status. However, the literature shows us that the NEET condition is multicausal.

4.2.4. Native Ethnicity and Young NEETs in Chile

Figure 4 shows the rates of young NEETs who recognize themselves as having Native Ethnicity in three age groups per 1,000 young NEETs of the same age groups by sex.

NEET rates among women of native ethnicity are reportedly higher than those of men, with 141 women NEETs per 1,000 young native NEETs in both age groups, compared to 125 and 112 in the natives. Male NEETs, respectively. This suggests that young indigenous indigenous women face greater barriers to accessing education, employment, or training compared to their male peers in these age ranges.

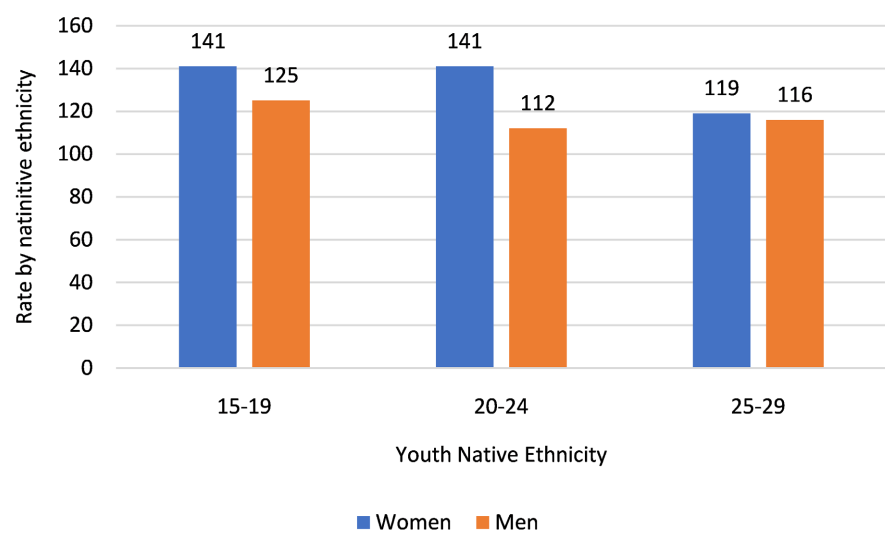


Figure 4. Prevalence NEETs youth ($\times 1,000$) rate by native ethnicity. Chile 2022. Source: own elaboration based on CASEN 2022 survey.

In the 25 - 29 age group, a promising trend emerges as the disparity in NEET rates between women and men diminishes, with 119 per 1,000 native women being NEETs, compared to 116 native men. This positive shift may suggest that older young women are finding more avenues to surmount the barriers they face at younger ages, although the rates remain alarmingly high for both sexes.

It is important to note that although the graph shows apparent differences in the rates of NEETs between males and females in different age groups, the Chi-square test model did not find a significant association difference (p -value = 0.234). This suggests that the observed differences may not be statistically significant and could result from random variability. Therefore, any conclusions regarding gender differences should be interpreted cautiously, and additional analyses with larger samples are recommended to confirm these findings.

4.3. Family Background NEETs Characterization

Analyzing the family environment of NEET youth in Chile includes factors like parental education, economic dependence, health system access, housing conditions, and head of household role. Understanding these barriers and designing policies to address their needs is crucial for their stability, support and opportunities within their family context.

4.3.1. Parent's Educational Level

Table 4 presents the NEET rates among young people in Chile in 2022, according to their parent's educational level. It must be noted that the data available on the parents' education in the CASEN Survey 2022 is limited; only 11% of NEET's mothers and 9% of NEET's fathers have information. Then we recommend caution interpreting these results.

Table 4. Prevalence of NEETs Youth ($\times 1,000$) according parent's educational level (Chile, 2022).

Education Level	Mother	Father
Never Studied	282	281
Primary/Elementary Education	257	250
Secondary Education	167	170
Technical Secondary Education	126	136
Technical Level (3-year program)	101	79
Professional (4-year program)	110	111
Postgraduate	89	30
Total	175	172

Source: Own elaboration based on the CASEN 2022 survey microdata. Note: Data on parental education was available for only 11% of NEETs (mothers) and 9% (fathers). Interpret results with caution.

There is a strong association (p-value: 0.0001) between the highest educational level achieved by the parent's and the highest educational level attained by a NEET youth. In other words, parents' educational level is closely linked to the educational level of their NEET children. Then it must be cautious when interpreting these results. The data reveals that young people whose parents never studied have the highest NEET rates. As parents' education level increases, NEET rates significantly decrease, indicating that higher protective effect of parental education against youth becoming NEET. This result suggests that there is some intergenerational transmission of parental socioeconomic status to the next generation. This emphasizes the importance of education in addressing the NEET phenomenon, particularly among individuals with less educated parents. Enhanced access and quality of education at all levels are essential.

4.3.2. Economic Dependency of Youth NEETs

Figure 5 highlights the economic dependence of NEETs in Chile, distinguishing between those reliant on others and those who are not. This differentiation is vital for comprehending the socioeconomic factors and dynamics affecting young people at different stages of their early adult lives.

Overall, 84% of NEETs are economically dependent, highlighting issues like limited employment opportunities, barriers to education, health problems and socio-cultural factors such as; postponement of independence from the maternal home, from marriage or participation in the labour market, as an expression of a delayed transition to adulthood.

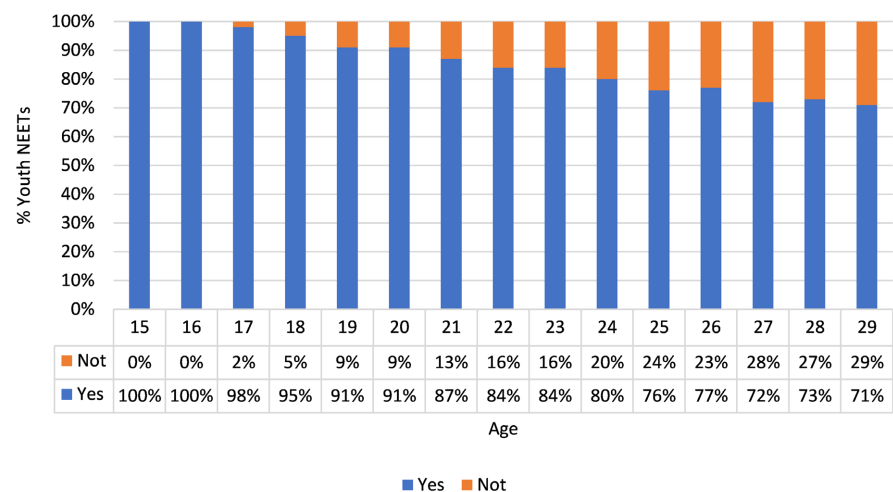


Figure 5. Prevalence NEETs rate by Economic Dependency. Chile 2022. Note: Not: not-economically dependent; Yes: economically dependent, source: own elaboration based on CASEN 2022 survey.

These findings emphasize the need to address the structural challenges that perpetuate this dependence. As it is expected, the economic dependency rates of youth NEETs decrease as they age. At age 15, the dependency rate in youth NEETs

is 100%, likely due to many still being in school or under parental care. However, as young people age, the rate of economic dependency slightly decreases, reaching 95% at 18 and a staggering 71% at 29. This pattern suggests that aging within this age group is linked to increased difficulty in achieving economic independence, reflecting broader structural challenges.

4.3.3. Access to the Health System

The accessibility of healthcare for NEET youth significantly impacts their health status, well-being and societal integration. Examining the accessibility to health services through healthcare insurance as a proxy, reveals disparities that may exacerbate their challenges, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to improve health outcomes and facilitate their productive social engagement (Karaođlan et al., 2023). The data provided refers to the NEET health insurance system.

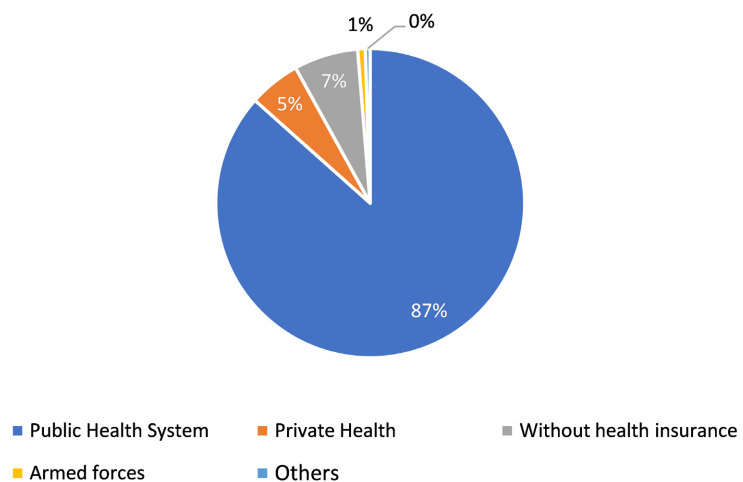


Figure 6. Distribution of healthcare insurance system among NEET youth, Chile 2022. Source: own elaboration based on CASEN 2022 survey.

Figure 6, provides a detailed analysis of the healthcare insurance of young NEETs. Most NEETs, 87%, are enrolled in the public health insurance system, reflecting a predominant dependence on social security and government public health services. However, only 5% are enrolled in the private health insurance system, and 7% still need health insurance, which can represent a significant barrier to accessing appropriate medical treatments. Additionally, a small percentage (1%) are affiliated with the military health system, and less than 1% belong to other categories.

4.3.4. Youth NEETs in the Heads of Household Role

Table 5 shows the NEET rate categorized by age and gender of household heads. Women have varying rates across age ranges, peaking at 390 per thousand at age 21, and an average rate of 282 per thousand for the considered age group. Men, on the other hand, generally have lower rates, with a notable peak of 111 per thou-

sand at age 20. The average rate for men is 65 per thousand. This gender disparity highlights higher proportions of young women facing NEET status compared to men at most ages, suggesting inequalities in employment, education, and social responsibilities.

Table 5. Prevalence rate ($\times 1,000$) of youth NEETs heads of the household. Chile 2022.

Age	Women	Men
18	100	25
19	356	44
20	236	111
21	390	37
22	321	110
23	271	44
24	287	54
25	227	40
26	296	59
27	253	69
28	273	90
29	314	61
Total	282	65

Source: own elaboration based on CASEN 2022 survey.

5. Discussion

The NEET phenomenon is a global socioeconomic challenge manifesting in Chile, as revealed by the analysis of the CASEN 2022 survey. This research highlights the severity and distinctive characteristics of the problem within Chile's specific geographical, demographic and economic context, establishing parallels with patterns of broader international issues identified in studies and reports from influential organizations such as the ILO and the OECD (OECD, 2023; ILO, 2020).

For a better understanding, the findings of this study raise the need to address three key areas surrounding the dynamics and patterns of young NEETs' status: demographic factors, socioeconomic factors, and family background factors.

The updated descriptive analysis offered by this research on the CASEN 2022 survey data aligns with the conceptual framework discussed in the OECD and ILO reports, emphasizing the global loss of human and productive potential among young people. In particular, the ILO's concern about the emergence of a "lock-down generation" due to the COVID-19 pandemic resonates strongly with rising NEET rates in Chile, as highlighted in this study. This global context helps to understand the increase in NEET rates in post-pandemic context and the lingering effects of young people's integration into society and the economy (Eurofound, 2021; OECD, 2023; ILO, 2020).

A key finding from demographic factors revealed by the CASEN 2022 survey is the pronounced gender disparity within the NEET group in Chile, where most NEETs are women. This reflects the global observations of Székely & Karver (2015) and the Social Exclusion Unit (1999), which have observed similar gender imbalances in other regions, particularly Latin America. These findings underscore the critical need for gender-sensitive policies, a recommendation also championed by the OECD. Such policies are crucial to redress systematic inequalities and enhance the alignment of education systems with labour market demands (Székely & Karver, 2015).

The study also highlights the significant impact of living in urban and rural areas on the NEET population. Urban areas present challenges in allocating resources and implementing social and educational policies, with a high concentration of NEETs that could be linked to educational training programs and improving skills for the labour market to mitigate socioeconomic inequalities. In contrast, rural areas face more severe problems of marginalization due to a lack of adequate infrastructure, limited access to education and employment opportunities, and a lower capacity for social innovation. The regional distribution also reveals differentiated economic and social dynamics, underscoring the need for specific solutions for each context (Erdoğan et al., 2021).

The socioeconomic analysis of NEETs in Chile reveals deeply rooted structural inequalities, with a higher incidence of NEET status among people from lower income deciles, higher levels of vulnerability according to 5D-multidimensional poverty indicators, and specific regional concentrations. This pattern aligns with the UK Department of Education and Employment's seminal report, "Bridging the Gap," which initially highlighted the role of socioeconomic background in influencing NEET status. The persistence of such disparities calls for integrated policy approaches that combine education, employment and social welfare interventions to mitigate these challenges (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999).

There is an unequal distribution of NEETs due to their socioeconomic level, gender and, of course, their educational level; these variables are key factors that determine this distribution. Studies in Europe address job insecurity and limited education as risk factors for young people, particularly women, in less developed regions. This is consistent with our findings (Avagianou et al., 2022).

Sociologically, high dependency rates among NEETs by age could be attributed to long educational trajectories and a delay in entering the workforce, influenced by cultural norms and economic structures. Economically, the lack of adequate job opportunities and accessible higher education compounds the problem, creating a cycle of dependency and limited prospects. Culturally, gender roles and expectations may also play an important role, particularly in the gender disparities observed within the NEET population (Székely & Karver, 2015).

Research on NEETs in Chile, using the 5D-multidimensional poverty indicators according to the CASEN 2022 Survey, reveals that young people from low-income families face higher rates of NEET, with significant barriers in employ-

ment, housing and healthcare (Olivares-Tirado & Zanga, 2024). This aligns with findings presented in *Progress of the World's Women*, which emphasize the structural barriers to women's participation in employment and the need for gender-responsive economic policies (UN Women, 2015). Likewise, Mascherini (2019) highlights the need for comprehensive approaches in European policies to address the structural disparities that affect NEETs, underlining the importance of policies that consider family background and various dimensions of poverty to improve social and economic inclusion.

The main limitation of this study is its reliance on survey data, which may not capture the full complexity of the NEET phenomenon, such as informal employment or undeclared economic activities. Additionally, the data may be subject to information bias. However, the advantages lie in the comprehensive coverage and detailed insights provided by the CASEN 2022 survey, which offers a solid basis for an updated understanding the NEET problem in Chile and drawing comparisons with international contexts (División Observatorio Social, 2023).

The NEET problem in Chile requires a multifaceted political approach, encompassing educational, economic, and social reforms. This aligns with the ILO and OECD's calls for comprehensive youth employment and education policies that meet current and futures labours market demands. To address this issue, policy recommendations include developing flexible and inclusive educational pathways, implementing job creation programs, encouraging companies to hire young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and establishing support systems for NEETs and their families, such as mental health services and professional advice.

The situational analysis of NEETs in Chile, provided by the CASEN 2022 survey, contributes to the global discourse on the issue. It offers regionally distinctive yet universally relevant insights and highlights the need for resilient policy frameworks. Characterizing and addressing the NEET phenomenon in Chile serves as a model for national and international policymaking, with the potential for meaningful change. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to track outcomes and policy effectiveness. Comparative studies between Chile and other Latin American countries would provide valuable insights, and exploring the effectiveness of vocational education and training (VET) policies and the impact of new technologies and digital skills on NEET integration into the labour market could lead to new policy developments.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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