

Study identifies psychological factors that keep young adults employed

August 22 2011

Today's rapid economic change and labor market turbulence make early careers particularly unstable, but new research to be presented at the 106th Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association shows that young workers with certain characteristics may weather turbulent times better than their peers.

"The current 'Great Recession' in Europe and America has had particularly severe consequences for young workers," said University of Minnesota sociology professor Jeylan Mortimer. "They suffer high [unemployment rates](#) with lasting consequences for their careers."

The study identifies three psychological orientations and behaviors that influence employment success during the transition to adulthood: educational aspirations, career goal certainty, and job search activities.

"Although structural factors like industry, region, etc. are undoubtedly important, these three characteristics are found to be particularly significant career transition resources," said Mike Vuolo, an assistant professor of sociology at Purdue University.

Young adults who maintained high career aspirations and clarity of career goals from age 18 to 30 were more likely to be employed between 2007 and 2009 (when they were 33-36 years old) and also to have higher wages in 2009. Young workers who manifested greater indecision in their career goals were less successful in weathering the [economic turmoil](#) in the Great Recession. These trends persisted even when

educational attainments were controlled.

"The factors identified in this study are interrelated amongst themselves and also influence longer-term successes and vulnerabilities during difficult economic times," said Mortimer.

This study relies on data from the Youth Development Study, an ongoing longitudinal study, which began tracking a group of 9th graders from St. Paul, Minn. public schools in 1988. The original sample included 1,010 adolescents. The participants have been surveyed annually since, and now are approximately 37-38 years old. The analysis for the Mortimer/Vuolo study spans the years from when the participants were 18 to 36 years old.

More information: The paper, "Weathering the Great Recession: Psychological and Behavioral Trajectories in the Transition from School to Work," will be presented on Monday, Aug. 22, in Caesars Palace Las Vegas, at the American Sociological Association's 106th Annual Meeting.

Provided by American Sociological Association

Citation: Study identifies psychological factors that keep young adults employed (2011, August 22) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-08-psychological-factors-young-adults.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.