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Data Article

Dataset from a qualitative survey on Ph.D. entrepreneurship in Italy

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ABSTRACT

This article describes questionnaire data on Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) entrepreneurship in Italy. The data includes (i) information recently collected via a questionnaire survey on Ph. D. students; (ii) background information on Italian academic institutions attended by students. We present here some descriptive statistics of the variables included in the dataset. The database includes the responses of 906 students. Students provided information on their employment condition, on their family background and opinions on the Ph.D. course and the institution they attended. Information on regional characteristics and on university policies are also included.

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Specifications Table [please fill in right-hand column of the table below]

Subject area	<i>Economics</i>
More specific subject area	<i>Entrepreneurship, Education</i>
Type of data	<i>Cross-section dataset</i>
How data was acquired	<i>Qualitative survey, institutional websites, national databanks</i>
Data format	<i>Raw</i>
Experimental factors	–
Experimental features	–

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Data source location	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1meBr8dP fLulemcruz7wghsh1s0YVCZMy/view?usp=sharing
Data accessibility	Data available with this article and publicly available online here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1meBr8dP fLulemcruz7wghsh1s0YVCZMy/view?usp=sharing

Value of the data

- While there are some empirical studies on student entrepreneurship and abundant literature on academic entrepreneurship, Ph.D. entrepreneurship is a vastly unexplored phenomenon.
 - The database includes original data obtained from the responses to a questionnaire survey administered between 2014 and 2015 on Italian doctorate students. Qualitative data like this is rarely made publicly available.
 - The database included original information about students' perception about their home institution and about their Ph.D. programme.
 - The authors welcome future collaborations with other scholars and welcome the opportunity to contribute to the design of a similar survey in other countries.
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The data was collected protecting confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents. The dataset provides an original contribution to the understanding of the academic entrepreneurship phenomenon.

1. Data

With this survey, the authors intended to explore the entrepreneurial attitude of Ph.D. students, Ph.D. entrepreneurship is a relatively unexplored phenomenon in economics and management [2,3]. While there is abundant literature on academic entrepreneurship, it focuses almost exclusively on spin-offs start-ups by faculty and staff, largely ignoring the magnitude of the phenomenon of student entrepreneurship [1,5]. The first results of this line of research have already been published [4].

In order to investigate the factors driving Ph.D. students to start their own venture, the authors created an online questionnaire. The dataset described in this article was obtained from the responses to a questionnaire survey administered between 2014 and 2015 on Italian doctorate students who were supposed to receive the Ph.D. title between 2008 and 2014. Ph.D. students in Italy join 3-year programmes, but they are given the opportunity to extend their studies for one extra year.

The questionnaire was distributed directly by CINECA, an Italian consortium of universities, Research Institutions and the Ministry of Education and Research (MIUR), which holds the contact details of all Italian Ph.D. students and graduates. CINECA sent the questionnaire to around 23,500 individuals and received back 9062 completed questionnaires. We agreed with CINECA to make publicly available 10 per cent of responses to a subset of questionnaire questions. The full database is available upon request to the authors.

The questionnaire asked general questions about their study period, their level of satisfaction with the study programme, their occupational status and entrepreneurial activity. The questionnaire data were complemented by other data sources:

- to control for university level characteristics that might have affected the choice to become an entrepreneur, the survey data were merged with data provided by MIUR on university size, location and research performance;

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