

# Planning the Future: Greek Students of Secondary Education Choose to Study in Tertiary Education and Their Future Profession: A Quantitative Approach

Stella Saragatsi<sup>1,\*</sup>, Argyrios Kyridis<sup>1</sup>, Zagkos Christos<sup>2</sup> & Kamarianos Ioannis<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

<sup>2</sup>University of Ioannina, Greece

<sup>3</sup>University of Patras, Greece

\*Corresponding author: PhD candidate, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

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## Abstract

The decisions that male/female students should make regarding their schooling, are believed to be extremely important, since these decisions will affect the future life of students. Therefore, we attempted to explore the factors that affect students in making education and career related decisions, and which specifically apply to General High School students from various areas in mainland and insular Greece. The research objective is to study the reasons that cause students in Greek secondary education and their parents to decide for students to go to university after finishing school. In more specific, it is attempted to study the following: The factors affecting male and female students in choosing to go on into university, along with the reasons why parents believe that their children want to study, parents' aspirations regarding the career future of their children, factors that determine the students' chances of going to university, as well as factors affecting the future career choices of students according to their attitude.

In the first, theoretical, part, the concept of education and career related decision-making is presented. Following that, the factors are presented that underpin both the education and career related decisions of students. Specific reference is made to personal factors, such as biological factors, e.g. gender, physical characteristics, aptitudes, etc., acquired factors, e.g. skills, values, interests, etc., and social factors, which determine education and career related decision-making, such as family, school, etc.

This is followed by the second part of the article, which is the research part. In order to inquire into the factors that affect adolescents, when it comes to decisions referring to their education and career, quantitative research was conducted. More specifically, 670 questionnaires were collected from male and female students attending the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Grades of High School. The research data are analyzed, and to sum up, in the end of the article, the research conclusions will be listed.

**Keywords:** education - career related decision making, male and female students, parents, studies

## 1. Introduction

### *1.1 The Concept of Education and Career Related Decision-making*

Choosing future studies is a decision that causes major concern to male and female high school students, as well as their families, and society overall. Attempting to clarify the concept of decision-making, it could be argued that it is a process, during which, a decision is made by choosing between one or more alternative options or solutions. Therefore, for a decision-making process to take place, a number of requirements should be met at the same time, such as: availability of alternatives, freedom of choice between/among alternatives, and availability of evidence that indicates the chances of success or failure, so that male and female students can evaluate the possibilities before making a decision (Dimitropoulos, 2001). From a young age, male and female students are asked to consider their future career options, and they will keep on thinking about those options over a long period of their life. D. Super attempted a theoretical approach to address issues referring to the context of choosing studies. He developed a theory that covers five age stages, which is actually a pattern that illustrates various stages referring to lifelong career choice. More precisely, in the first stage, which is defined as growth (0-14 years), professional self-concept is established, while the next stage is that of exploration (14-24 years), during which, a person expresses their preference for a career, and, between 25-44 years of age, there is the stage of establishment/settlement, where a person tries to achieve stabilization and career advancement. Also, from 45 - 64 years, the maintenance stage takes place, during which, a person attempts to maintain whatever they have earned in life. Last but not least, at the decline stage, which is after 65 years of age, a person wants to leave work, and assume new social roles. This model takes place while an individual develops their self-concept, at the same time (Kyridis, 2022).

A person's attitude to career planning does not only refer to practicing a profession, but also to following through the various stages of preparation, in order to practice that profession (Dimitropoulos, 2004). Further to that, the definition of professional development refers to a proactive process that occurs between individuals and their future career. As a result, the process, according to which, a person decides to follow a career, is not based on an impulsive decision, but it is rather a long process, which is based on a series of developmental phases that people complete (Nathan et al., 2006).

### *1.2 Factors Affecting Education and Career Related Decisions*

The factors governing the education and future career decisions of an individual can be divided into two key categories, which include biological or hereditary factors, on the one hand, and acquired factors, on the other. (Singh & Singh, 2015). As soon as a person is born, biological or hereditary factors come into play. The factors that fall under this category encompass variables such as the gender and physical characteristics of a person, along with a person's level of mental and emotional development (Sidiropoulou - Dimakakou et al., 2008). On the contrary, acquired factors may include that various skills, values, interests, self-concept, and motivation and incentives, etc. that apply to a person. These factors emerge as a result of an interactive relationship that is established between the environment of a person, and a number of hereditary characteristics of that person (Dimitropoulos, 2004).

Research has shown that the interests of people may vary depending on their gender. Therefore, male students are more interested in attending science classes, such as maths, physics, physics, and IT, whereas female students are mostly interested in theoretical and creative or art classes, e.g. history, music, foreign languages, etc. (Psalti & Kouimtzi, 2008).

Other research studies, such as, for example, the study conducted by Perrone, Sedlacek, and Alexander, which discussed the career choices of individuals, showed that both genders believe that it is primarily their interests that play a key role in their career decision-making (Perrone et al., 2001).

Another key factor that determines the career related decisions of young people is the values that young people adopt, and which are critical in their life. These values are associated with the professional career of people, and refer to material rewards, level of pay, status, appreciation, security, creativity, etc. (Leventis et al., 2008)

Choosing to follow a career is often directly linked both to the social status that results from this career within the ranks of social hierarchy, and the resulting prestige that is attached to a person that follow this career. In addition, according to other surveys, it emerges that salary is not the single most important criterion for choosing a career. Depending on the person, these criteria can be contribution to society, creativity, self-actualization and development, along with other factors (Kantzara, 2007).

Furthermore, in research that have been conducted, it is found out that a person's self-esteem is correlated with practicing specific professions. In particular, in case of individuals showing strong self-esteem, their career decisions are linked to jobs that call for numerous qualifications and special skills. Besides, these jobs offer high pay, and the individuals who practice these professions experience a high level of satisfaction (Keller et al., 2015).

### *1.3 Social Factors Affecting Education and Career Related Decisions*

In addition, there are also social factors affecting the future education and career related decisions of young people. The following factors fall under this category: family environment, school, significant others, mass media, as well as various organizations, such as the Centre for Advice and Orientation (KE.SY.P.), with the latter playing an advisory role for students

on existing university faculties, departments, and schools, along with the professional rights that the latter grant, and also assisting students when it comes to looking for a career that would satisfy them more, and would match their interests and aptitudes. In the Greek context, it is critical for students and their families to have full access to higher education. This access is critical as a result of the high cost involved for families, in order for them to be able to support their children, thus assisting the latter's effort to study at university by providing for them throughout their studies, so that they can be awarded the necessary diplomas and qualifications that will be useful to them in seeking employment later in life. The upper class aspires that their children climb the social ladder through education, whereas the middle and lower classes believe that a university diploma/degree is useful, in order for their children to be able to advance in society, and also find a permanent job in the public sector, if possible (Kyridis, 2022). As it has been demonstrated, in general, family plays a pivotal role in assisting children to develop their personality as individuals, when it comes, in particular, to the career advancement of children. In a theoretical model that was developed by A. Roe, the link is studied that exists between the experiences of a child within their family and their decision-making about their future career. In this theory, it is posited that there is a strong correlation between how children are raised and the actual situation in a family, with the career decision-making process that is followed by adolescents later in life (Roe, 1956; Fouad et al., 2015).

What is more, it is important for parents to be able to provide information to their children at a young age, regarding the latter's education and career. In this way, children can get the right type of encouragement and motivation to help them decide on career issues in the future. As a result, they can get a good insight into these issues, on which they will be able to better reflect in the future (Palos & Drobot, 2010).

Indeed, family environment is the most vital source of support for young people. Other surveys found out that a supportive family and good relationships among family members are the two most important factors towards the professional development of young people. These factors play a more important role than other parameters that may characterize a family, such as educational background, parents' occupation, and social background (Metheny & McWhirter, 2013).

According to other research, it was discovered that parents who follow a relaxed and careless parenting style and have poor communication with their children, fail to help the latter towards professional development and building self-awareness (Psalti & Kouimtzi, 2008). Moreover, research has shed light on the fact that it is mostly male children who decide to take up their father's profession, and mainly during their early career decision-making (Kelpanidis, 2012).

Other research studies found out that there are young people who believe in themselves and their abilities when it comes to making decisions about their career; they also take their parents' opinion into account, when the family environment is characterized by a supportive attitude (Keller & Whiston, 2008) and facilitates their education and career related decisions (Koumoundourou et al. 2011).

## 2. Research Methodology

The aim of this survey is to examine the various causes that result in students attending Greek secondary education and their parents making the decision for those students to continue to higher education after secondary education.

This means that, in the context of the survey, the following variables will be examined:

1. Factors that influence students in deciding to continue to higher education
2. The reasons why parents think that their children want to study at university, based on what students believe
3. Parents' aspirations and wishes regarding the future career of students, based on what students believe
4. Based on what students believe, the factors that affect their chances of going to university
5. Factors that affect the decisions of students about their future career, according to the attitudes of the latter

### 2.1 The Sample

The sample consists of 670 secondary education students who attended various schools in mainland and insular Greece. A process of random, convenient, and non-probability sampling was followed. Specifically, the male and female students comprising the research sample are from the three grades of the General High School. That is, 23.3% of the sample are from the 1st Grade, 22.1% from the 2nd Grade, and 54.5% from the 3rd Grade, with the following proportion of male to female students: 44.3% of the sample are male, and 55.7% are female. Our sample is taken from male and female students from all three grades, in order to be able to determine whether the choices of male and female students differ by using their age as a criterion. The statistical processing of research data was performed with the SPSS statistical data processing package for social studies.

### 2.2 Research Tool

In order to carry out this survey, it was chosen to conduct quantitative research with the help of a structured questionnaire, in which, there were mostly closed-ended questions and a few open-ended ones (Cohen et al, 2008). This questionnaire type includes questions that refer to personal characteristics of the students, such as gender, school performance, and grade that they attend, while some demographic details were also asked, such as place of origin, place of birth, parents' educational background, parents' profession, etc. The aim was to investigate as many factors as possible, which can possibly influence adolescent students in their future career and education related decision-making.

### 2.3 Data Analysis

In the following, there is a description of the results, with the help of descriptive statistics and illustrative diagrams. We will start by describing the variables that mostly refer to personal and demographic characteristics of the students.

In particular, in the 1st question of the questionnaire, the gender variable is distributed as follows: there were 297 male students, accounting for 44.3% of the sample, and 373 female students, accounting for 55.7% of the sample. Thus, we notice that an equal distribution of both genders is ensured. In the question about the nationality of male and female students, it emerges that 609 male and female students, i.e. 90.1% of the sample, had Greek nationality, and 61 male and female students, accounting for 9.9% of the sample, had another nationality.

After that, male and female students were asked to classify their parents into categories, according to the employment status of the latter. Thus, 153 male and female students, i.e. 24.8% of the sample, reported that their father is an employer, 154 male and female students, i.e. 25%, that he is self-employed, 135 male and female students, i.e. 21.9%, that he is a public servant, and 175 male and female students, i.e. 28.4%, that he is a private employee. Respectively, regarding their mother, they reported the following: 52 male and female students, i.e. 11.1%, have a mother who is an employer, 68 male and female students, i.e. 14.5%, have a self-employed mother, 148 male and female students, i.e. 31.5%, have a mother who is a public servant, and finally, 202 male and female students, i.e. 43%, reported that their mother works as a private employee.

Regarding the question about the family's monthly income, the following data emerged: 381 male and female students, i.e. 56.9% of the sample, reported that their family's monthly income ranges from 1,001 to 3,000 euro. On the other hand, for 174 male and female students, i.e. 26%, their income is from 0 to 1,000 euro, 72 male and female students, i.e. 10.7% of the sample, falls in the category between 3,001 and 6,000 euro, for 18 male and female students, i.e. 2.7%, it is 12,001 and over, for 16 male and female students, i.e. 2.4%, it is between 6,001 and 9,000, and finally, for only 9 male and female students, i.e. 1.3% of the sample, their monthly income ranges from 9,001 to 12,000 euro.

In the following question, the students stated their place of residence. Specifically, 268 male and female students stated that they live in an urban area, accounting for 40% of the sample. Respectively, 174 male and female students, i.e. 26% of the sample, live in an insular area, whereas 131 male and female students live in a rural area, accounting for 19.6% of the sample, and lastly, 97 male and female students are residents of a semi-urban area, accounting for 14.5% of the sample.

Regarding the question that referred to the educational background of parents, the following data emerged: first of all, 241 male and female students, i.e. 36%, reported that their father is a high school graduate, 192 male and female students, i.e. 28.7%, reported that their father is a higher (AEI) or technical (TEI) education graduate, 146 male and female students, i.e. 21.8%, responded that their father has finished some secondary school or is a secondary school graduate, 45 male and female students, i.e. 6.7%, reported that their father has completed postgraduate studies, and finally, only 8 male and female students, i.e. 1.2%, reported that their father has never attended school or has attended some primary school. Respectively, regarding the same question about their mother, 244 male and female students, i.e. 36.4%, reported that their mother has finished high school, 238 male and female students, i.e. 35.5%, stated that their mother is a higher (AEI) or technical (TEI) education graduate,



103 male and female students, i.e. 15.4%, responded that their mother has finished some secondary school or is a secondary school graduate, 60 male and female students, i.e. 9% of the sample, responded that their mother has completed postgraduate studies, 20 male and female students, i.e. 3%, reported that their mother is a primary school graduate, and finally, 5 male and female students, i.e. 0.7%, reported that their mother has never attended school or has attended some primary school.

Regarding the question that referred to the graduation mark for the previous grade, the mark of 15 male and female students, i.e. 2.2% of the sample, was between 10-12, the mark of 47 male and female students, i.e. 7% of the sample, was between 12.1-14, the mark of 156 male and female students, who account for 23.3% of the respondents, was between 14.1-16, while the mark of 224 male and female students, i.e. 33.5% of the sample, was between 16.1-18, and finally, 227 students, accounting for 33.9% of the sample, reported a mark between 18.1-20.

Regarding the question that refers to the type of help that male and female students get for their classes, they gave the following responses: 242 male and female students, i.e. 36.1% go to a cram school, 158 male and female students, i.e. 23.4%, stated that they take private lessons, 112 male and female students, i.e. 16.7% of the sample, go to a cram school and also take private lessons, 59 male and female students, i.e. 8.8%, get help from their family, while only 6 male and female students, i.e. 0.9% of the sample, reported that they get extra teaching support.

After that, the male and female students were asked whether they discuss their education and career plans with their parents. It emerged that 592 male and female students, i.e. 88.4%, discuss them with their parents, whereas 78 male and female students, i.e. 11.6%, reported that they do not discuss them with their parents.

The next question concerns those male and female students who responded that they discuss education and career related issues with their parents. It thus emerged that 462 male and female students, i.e. 77.8% of the sample, reported that their parents agree with their plans, 6 male and female students, i.e. 1%, that their parents disagree with their plans, and 126 male and female students, i.e. 21.2% of the sample, that parents are concerned about their children's plans (Table 1).

#### *2.4 Research Ethics*

The aim of our survey is to foster scientific knowledge, support the research and learning process, and making use of research and scientific findings for society's benefit. Research has been conducted by adhering to scientific truth and respecting human dignity, personal independence, the physical and intellectual integrity of people, ethics, intellectual property, and personal data. Therefore, the anonymity of male and female students who took part in research was observed.

**Table 1.** The Sample: Demographic and Social Characteristics

<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	297	44,3	Greek	609	90,1
Female	373	55,7	Other	61	9,9
<b>Fathers' professional position</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Mothers' professional position</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Employer	153	24,8	Employer	52	11,1
Self employed	154	25,0	Self employed	68	14,5
Civil Servant	135	21,9	Civil Servant	148	31,5
Private employee	175	28,4	Private employee	202	43,0
<b>Family's average monthly income</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Residence</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
0 – 1000 euros	174	26,0	Urban area	268	40,0
1001 – 3000 euros	381	56,9	Town	97	14,5
3001 – 6000 euros	72	10,7	Rural area	131	19,6
6001 – 9000 euros	16	2,4	Insular area	174	26,0
9000 – 12000 euros	9	1,3			
>12000 euros	18	2,7			
<b>Fathers' education</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Mothers' education</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Illiterate	8	1,2	Illiterate	5	,7
Elementary School Graduate	45	6,7	Elementary School Graduate	20	3,0
Secondary School Graduate	146	21,8	Secondary School Graduate	103	15,4
Lyceum Graduate	241	36,0	Lyceum Graduate	244	36,4
University Graduate	192	28,7	University Graduate	238	35,5
Post Graduate Degree	38	5,7	Post Graduate Degree	60	9,0
<b>Average school grade</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Help for academic boosting</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
10 – 12	15	2,2	Family	59	8,8
12,1 – 14	47	7,0	Additional teaching support in the school	6	0,9
14,1 - 16	156	23,3	Organized tutoring	242	36,1
16,1 – 18	224	33,5	Private lessons	158	23,4
18,1 - 20	227	33,9	Both organized tutoring and private lessons	112	16,7
<b>Residence</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Discussion with parents about career plans</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Urban area	268	40,0	Yes	592	88,4
Town	97	14,5	No	78	11,6
Rural area	131	19,6			
			<b>Parents' attitudes regarding children's professional and educational plans</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Insular area	174	26,0	Agree	462	77,8
			Disagree	6	1,0
			Neither agree or disagree	126	21,2



### 3. Results

According to the above data, a highly interesting findings is that 518 (78%) out of the 670 students got extra learning support out of home. Considering that, out of the 670 students, 152 attended the 1st Grade of High School, it emerges that nearly all of the students who attended the 2nd and 3rd Grades of High School got extra teaching support.

Next, a distribution follows of the reasons why parents want their children to study at university. Specifically, 450 male and female students, i.e. 71.9% of the sample, reported that their parents believe that getting a university diploma/degree is a strong asset in life. Further to that, 127 male and female students, i.e. 20.3%, reported that their parents believe that university studies enhance a person's overall educational background. In addition, 41 male and female students, i.e. 6.5% of the sample, reported that their parents believe that university studies boost a person's effort to climb the social ladder. Lastly, only 8 male and female students, i.e. 1.3% of the sample, reported that their parents view studying at university as a family tradition (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Distribution of the Reasons Why Parents Want Students to Study at University.

Reasons	n	%
Because they believe that a university diploma/degree is an asset in life	45	71.
	0	9
Because they believe that university studies enhance a person's overall educational background	12	20.
	7	3
Because they believe that university studies boost a person's effort to climb the social ladder	41	6.5
Because studying at university is a family tradition	8	1.3

By studying the parents' aspirations and wishes regarding the career plans of their children, the following data emerged: (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Parents' Aspirations and Wishes Regarding the Career Plans of Children

	Parents' aspirations and wishes	Mean	SD
S1	My parents would like me to follow a career that offers me security and permanent employment.	3.69	1.203
S2	My parents would like me to follow their career	1.66	1.177
S3	My parents would like me to follow a career that matches my abilities and interests	4.06	1.050
S4	My parents would like me to follow a career that is currently in demand in the labor market	3.44	1.169
S5	My parents would like me to follow a socially prestigious career	2.64	1.253
S6	My parents would like me to follow a well-paid career	3.49	1.159

By carrying out a gender-based mean difference test (T-test), it was shown, with statistically significant differences, that in statement S1 of Table 3, female students demonstrate a lower Mean than male students (Mean Difference (MD)= -0.202,  $t = -2.169$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), whereas in statement S2, the Mean of female students is higher than that of male students (MD= 0.363,  $t = 4.005$ ,  $df = 668$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). A difference test that was based on cultural background showed statistically significant differences in statements S2, S2, and S6. In statement S2, Greek students show a higher Mean than students who are not Greek (MD= 0.452,  $t = 2.874$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). On the contrary, in statements S4 and S6, the Means of Greek students are higher than those of students who are not Greek (S4: MD= -0.304,  $t = -1.943$ ,  $p < 0.01$  & S6: MD= -0.403,  $t = -2.596$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

A mean difference test according to family income (ANOVA with Post Hoc Test Bonferroni) showed statistically significant differences in statement S2. The test showed that the higher the income, the higher the Mean in statement S2. A mean difference test according to school performance (ANOVA with Post Hoc Test Bonferroni) showed statistically significant differences in statement S3. The test showed that the better the school performance, the higher the Mean in statement S3.

After that, the factors were recorded that determine the level of achievement of male and female students with regard to their admission to higher education (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Factors Affecting Successful Admission to University

Factors affecting successful admission to university		Mean	SD
D1	Systematic studying	2.04	1.149
D2	Parents' encouragement	2.64	1.237
D3	Parents' occupation	3.29	1.406
D4	Family economic status	2.74	1.299
D5	Parents' educational background	2.95	1.340
D6	My personal desire to study	2.19	1.212
D7	Extramural support	2.36	1.205
D8	My teachers' help at school	2.62	1.404

The data of Table 4 show that students acknowledge as the most important factors of success those ones that are associated with a family's economic and cultural background (D3, D4, D5). In this way, the strong correlation is acknowledged and accepted that exists between social background and educational achievement, or, in other words, between educational and social inequality. There is another interesting point that refers to the fact that none of the difference tests (T – test and ANOVA with Post Hoc test Bonferroni) showed statistically significant differences. This fact can be interpreted by the hypothesis that school achievement depends on social factors that are correlated with the cultural background of families.

Finally, the factors are listed after that, which significantly affect the career choices of male

and female students (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Factors Affecting Future Career Choices according to Students' Attitudes

Factors affecting future career choices		Mean	SD
B1	Immediate employability	3.32	1.290
B2	Ensuring a better quality of life	3.76	1.094
B3	High pay	3.38	1.201
B4	Job satisfaction	4.02	.995
B5	Professional status	3.08	1.331
B6	The ability to offer	3.37	1.258
B7	Personal interest	4.21	1.086

The data of Table 5 show the students' tendency to choose a profession, which can be described as "romantic", rather than utilitarian. The highest means are shown in statements B2, B4, and especially in statement B7.

A gender-based mean difference test based (T-test) showed statistically significant differences in statement B5. Male students show a higher Mean than female ones (MD= 0.299,  $t= 2.902$ ,  $p < 0$ ).

A mean difference test according to school performance (ANOVA with Post Hoc Test Bonferroni) showed statistically significant differences in statement B6. The test showed that the better the school performance, the higher the Mean in statement B6.

#### 4. Conclusions

Through the presentation of the research data, it is noticed that there is a positive correlation between the poor educational background of parents and employment sought by male and female students. However, there is an increase in the percentage of parents with a poor educational background, and who want their children to study at university and thus avoid doing their job. Last but not least, most male and female students whose parents have a strong educational background, want to study in higher education, and if they fail the first time, they would like to resit examinations. Earlier research showed that young people have assimilated the dominant ideology of social stratification, and tend to become part of the systemic logic of status quo. Although they believe in upward social mobility, they argue that class stratification is the only satisfactory evaluation and social ranking criterion. For instance, factors such as occupation, educational background, social status, income, nature of job/business, etc., continue to play a key role in the ranking process. Finally, they believe that everyone can change their social status in the right circumstances (Bassiou, Kyridis, Zagkos, Fotopoulos, & Papadakis, 2012).

According to the above findings that are based both on our research and relevant theory, we

discover that children from families with a strong educational and economic background are positively influenced, when it comes to continuing their studies (Katsikis & Sygkollitou, 2014). In addition, cultural background seems to influence male and female students differently. This is due to the fact that the parents of Greek children believe that it is more important for their children to take up their own profession, whereas the parents of children who are not Greek wish their children to follow a career that is either in demand in the labor market or is very well-paid.

In another survey, which was carried out through the collection of questionnaires, the respondents were female and male students studying at Greek universities and technological educational institutions. The researchers opted for a university sample, in order to record the attitudes and views of young people who are believed to be "favored" by the educational system. The analysis showed that the sample believes that, indeed, there is inequality in Greek society, as well as in Greek education, and can identify a big number of signs of the phenomenon (Kyridis, Tourtouras, & Thanos, 2017).

All of the above points are also confirmed by another survey, which showed that the majority of children with at least one parent working in education, manage to go to privileged schools, while a very low proportion of these children are enrolled in non-privileged schools. Therefore, on the one hand, teachers seem to invest money of their own from their moderate income in the education of their children, and on the other hand, as a result of their strong educational-cultural background, they can show their children strategies and methods, in order for the latter to follow a successful educational path. Regarding the degree, to which, family and its socioeconomic characteristics influence the preferences of students, and orient the latter towards specific university studies, the analysis of data provided in this study showed that the variables of occupation type, educational background, and monthly income of parents are key determinants of the students' preferences, when it comes to choosing specific university studies. This study showed that the stronger the educational background, and the higher the monthly income and social status of the occupation of parents, the more the academic choices of their children are oriented towards top and more privileged higher education schools, such as health, law, and engineering schools.

Regarding the degree, to which, family and its socioeconomic characteristics affect the preferences of students, and orient the latter towards specific university studies, the analysis of data of the study showed that variables such as the parents' occupation type, educational background, and monthly income play a key role in determining the students' preferences in choosing specific university studies (Anastasiadou, Kyridis, Tourtouras, Zagkos, & Pehlivanos, 2021).

A major difference in the career choices of children in this survey is also due to their gender. Therefore, male students reported that their parents believe that it is more important for them to find a permanent job that offers them security, as opposed to female students, whose parents would like their children to follow their career. In fact, the statement: "my parents would like me to follow their career" appears to be directly correlated with family income. The test showed that the higher the income, the higher the Mean in the above statement.

On the other hand, regarding the statement: "My parents would like me to follow a career that matches my abilities and interests", there seems to be a positive correlation with the school performance of male and female students. The higher the performance of children, the higher the significance of this statement.

Besides, another survey showed that children seem to get information about their career from their family, school, social setting that they are raised, and television. Quite a few career paths were reported in this sample, with some of them being more popular and other less popular, as further research showed. This is due to the fact that the sample was taken from different areas, and especially several rural areas, the families of the children had diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, and the children themselves were of a different age. The illustrations reveal that the children, and mostly male students, chose jobs that matched their gender, except for twenty-nine children, who chose a gender-neutral profession, or even a profession that is traditionally linked to the opposite sex (Tzampazi, Kyridis, & Christodoulou, 2013).

Besides, in the context of this research, when it comes to key factors that will influence male and female students in their future career decision-making, male students seem to attach greater importance to professional status than female students. Also, students from both genders show a tendency to choose a career that will ensure for them a better living standard and higher job satisfaction, as well as match their personal interests. They would choose such a career, rather than a career that would only offer them immediate employability. On the other hand, the choice of a career that can offer to society is directly correlated with high school performance. Based on the data listed above, a finding emerges that draws attention, i.e. that 518 (78%) out of the 670 students got extra learning help out of home. Based on the fact that 152 out of the 670 students attended the 1st Grade of High School, then the conclusion can be drawn that almost all of the students who attended the 2nd and 3rd Grades of High School had received additional teaching support. Hence, none of the children has a good school performance without extramural support, which also involves a high financial cost for the families of male and female students. Moreover, a positive correlation emerges between the financial situation of family and children continuing their studies.

There is evidence that all of the above points are also confirmed by another Greek survey, which leads to the following findings: aspirations, skills, aptitudes, and school performance in some classes seem to play a key role in choosing a future career, followed by social and economic factors. Furthermore, the model followed in offering school career guidance has not yielded the anticipated results, whereas another factor that influences the decisions of students that refer to their studies is the financial cost involved. Indicatively, it should also be pointed out that both male and female students report the quality of studies as the most critical factor that affects their decision-making. Yet another factor that is a key determinant that affects the decisions of candidates is gender. It is noticed that, while female students attach more importance to their personal aspirations, male students seem to be affected more by social and economic factors. What is more, a family's cultural background is a parameter that determines whether children will go on to university, and also influences the decision-making of children, when it comes to choosing studies and a career (Kyridis, 2022).

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