

Choice of Study and Profession by Greek Secondary Education Students: A Study of the Factors Influencing Their Choices

Stella Saragatsi (Corresponding author)

Secondary Education Teacher, PhD candidate, School of Early Childhood Education

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Greece

E-mail: stellasar1@yahoo.gr

Tel: 30-233-106-5778

Argyrios Kyridis

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

Zagkos Christos

University of Ioannina, Greece

Kamarianos Ioannis

University of Patras, Greece

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Abstract

Nowadays, students are required to make some decisions at quite a young age, first of all, regarding their education, followed by a series of career decisions that will be critical for them later in life. Therefore, we attempted to investigate the social and personal factors that affect students in making their education and career related decisions, with a focus on students attending the country's high schools.

In the first part, which is the theoretical part, the concepts of professional development, maturity, and career choice are presented. After that, the factors are presented that determine both the education and career related decisions of students. In specific, various personal factors are analyzed; for example, biological factors, such as gender, physical characteristics, aptitudes, etc. In addition, acquired factors, such as skills, values, interests, and so on, are presented.

The second part of the article follows, which is the research part. In order to investigate the factors that affect adolescents in their education and career related decisions, qualitative research was conducted. More specifically, 35 interviews were taken from students attending the 3rd Grade of High School, which were analyzed through qualitative content analysis. Compared to earlier research, where there was direct and strong involvement of parents in the decisions made by young people, nowadays, there is evidence of young people's effort to differentiate from their parents' beliefs, and become independent from the family environment. As a final word, in the end of the article, the conclusions of our research will be listed.

Keywords: education - career decisions, students, parents, gender, aptitudes, studies

1. The Concept of Professional Development and Maturity

In order to be able to understand the reasons why students choose to adopt a specific career attitude, we need to study their professional development, and in fact, the process, through which, their personality develops.

Students are required to think about their future career from a young age, which will continue to be an issue of concern for them over a long period of their life. A theoretical approach to the context that refers to choosing a field of studies was attempted by D. Super. This theoretical model spans over five age stages, while it also serves as a model for lifelong career choice. In detail, during the first stage, i.e. growth (0-14 years), professional self-concept is shaped, followed by the stage of exploration (14-24 years), during which, a person orients themselves to a career/occupation, while, between 25-44 years old, the stage of establishment emerges, where a person seeks stabilization and career development. On the other hand, from 45 - 64 years, there is the maintenance stage, where a person seeks to maintain whatever they have achieved in life. Finally, during the decline stage, i.e. after 65 years of age, a person wishes to leave work/retire, and play new social roles. This particular model develops simultaneously with a person's self-concept (Kyridis, 2022).

Career attitude does not only refer to practicing a specific profession, but also to all stages of preparing to practice it (Dimitropoulos, 2004). On the other hand, professional development is defined as a proactive process that takes place between individuals and their future career. Therefore, the process, through which, a person chooses to practice a certain profession, is not the result of an impulsive decision, but rather a long-term process, which is based on all of the developmental stages that a person goes through (Nathan et al., 2006). A large number of social scientists refer to the term of career personality type, which actually refers to the professional conduct of a person, and which is part of a person's overall behavior, with

special reference to a person's professional life (Dimitropoulos, 2004). Adolescence is a period in life that holds special importance regarding professional development. In this developmental stage, key cognitive, emotional, and social changes take place in the life of adolescents. During this stage, adolescents demonstrate strong emotional reactions, while they gradually start showing signs of improvement in organizing, planning, and developing abstract thought, as well as in their decision-making ability (Yurgelun-Todd, 2007). However, when it comes to the professional development of an individual, the institution of family, in general, seems to play a major role, also setting the standards for professional development (Moysiadou, 2012).

Furthermore, professional maturity actually refers to the professional development of individuals, and is based on an individual's ability to make a specific career decision, obtain relevant information, make consistent career decisions, and also demonstrate consistent personal characteristics (Erman et al., 2015). Whether an individual manages to make an optimum career decision, or not, depends on their maturity at the time of making a career decision, and properly collecting and using information, in order to be able to make use of appropriate means to achieve their goals (Vrettakou, 1990). Professional maturity is determined by physical, emotional, cognitive, and social factors. These factors prepare people to be able to deal with any future obstacles in their career choice, while it is found out that the family environment of people plays the most important role in their career choice (Keller & Whiston, 2008).

2. Factors Affecting Education and Career Decisions

The factors that may determine the education and future career decisions of a person can be divided into two major categories: biological or hereditary, and acquired (Singh & Singh, 2015).

Biological or hereditary factors affect a person from birth. These factors include the gender, talents, physical characteristics, and also mental-emotional development of a person (Sidiropoulou - Dimakakou et al., 2008). On the other hand, acquired factors are defined as skills, values, interests, self-concept, etc. These factors result from an interaction between the environment and specific hereditary characteristics (Dimitropoulos, 2004). Let's start with gender, since it is believed to be a factor of key importance that affects a person's education and career decisions. However, even in modern Western societies, where there is gender equality, career, as well as family, roles are affected by traditional views of the two genders (Moshavi et al. 2008). Although there has been significant improvement in offering equal job opportunities to both genders, there is still social inequality that is actually also reproduced by a number of social institutions (Connell, 1996). Naturally, the education choices and career decisions of young people are also affected by other characteristics of those people, such as skills and aptitudes. Another factor that seems to have a strong impact on following a specific career is the external characteristics of individuals, such as height and build (Psalti & Kouimtzi, 2008). An additional biological factor refers to the mental and emotional development of young people, since mental and emotional development plays a critical role in optimum decision-making by the latter. Therefore, the cognitive ability helps a person to

develop sound understanding and thinking, in order to be able to deal with any obstacles that may arise in the person's environment, since a mentally mature person can evaluate situations and make optimum decisions (Feldman, 2011). On the other hand, the emotional development of a person is believed to play an extremely helpful role in decision-making. Emotional maturity enables a person to make the right decisions with a cool head, avoiding any wrong decisions, at the same time. As opposed to that, experiencing an emotionally charged situation, along with stress or uncertainty, prevents a person from making a decision easily, or causes them to keep postponing decision-making (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Piaget, who studied human intelligence, argues that intelligence is based on heredity, as well as on other influences that may be experienced by a person, and which come from the environment where a person grows up. According to Piaget, the development of intelligence in a person is based on two functions, i.e. assimilation and accommodation, where a person perceives from the environment various experiences that are gradually assimilated and become knowledge. On the contrary, accommodation refers to a process, in which, a person actually learns to adapt to the conditions that exist in their close environment, as the person gradually and slowly finds balance in life (Piaget, 1972). Thus, a child's intelligence develops as they experience various forms of balance (Elliot et al. 2008, Raptis & Galanoudaki – Rapti, 2013). Therefore, according to Piaget's theory, there are four development stages of a child. More precisely, the first stage refers to sensorimotor intelligence, which takes place in the first two years of a person's life, and a child begins to learn the world surrounding them, with the help of their senses. After that, from the age of two to six years, a child goes through the stage of preoperational thinking, where some cognitive abilities develop, without, however, losing the power of senses and proceeding with pure logical thinking. At this point, a child is neither capable of making generalizations, nor of categorizing objects, while they are also self-centered. The third stage is that of specific thoughts, which takes place approximately from the age of six, to eleven to twelve years. In this age range of development, a child is capable of performing a number of mental operations, but they are not capable of developing deductive thinking. On the other hand, the fourth stage of development takes place during adolescence, i.e. after approximately eleven to twelve years of age. At this stage, a child is capable of deductive thinking, as well as of criticizing, making thoughts - assumptions, and developing theories (Piaget, 1972; Cole & Cole, 2001). Another theory is that of Vygotsky, which discusses the cognitive development of a person, which is determined by the environment where that person grows up as a child. This theory posits that the support that a child can get from their close environment, for example, their parents, friends, and teachers, can help them advance to a higher cognitive level than the one where they originally were on their own. The difference between the cognitive level where a child was on their own, and the developmental level that they will achieve with the help of their environment, is called "zone of proximal development", and a child is capable of dealing successfully with situations, where, had they not had the support of their close environment, they would not have been able to cope with (Vygotsky, 1997, Feldman, 2009).

Coleman believes that as soon as individuals develop their emotional skills to a significant extent, they are capable of dealing better with situations, and making better decisions (Brown et al. 2003).

3. Social Factors Affecting Education and Career Decisions

In Greek society, the successful access of students to higher/tertiary education is of uttermost importance, both for children and their families. This is due to the fact that it costs families a lot to support their children, in the latter's effort to get into university and also during their studies, so that they can get all those degrees and qualifications that will be useful to them in the future, in order to be able to find a job. Upper-class families want their children to be able to climb the ranks of social hierarchy through education, whereas middle- and lower-class families believe that a degree/diploma is a useful tool for the social development of their children, as well as a means to find permanent employment, preferably in the public sector (Kyridis, 2022).

Family has been proved to play a key role overall in the personality development of an individual, and more specifically, in the latter's professional development. In her theory, A. Roe analyzes the correlation between the experiences that a child has in the context of their family and choosing a career later in life. More precisely, she argues that the way that children are raised, along with the climate that exists in a family, are inextricably linked to the career choices adolescents later in life (Roe, 1956; Fouad et al., 2015). Moreover, a key role in the professional development of children is played by information on the education and career prospects that parents should give to their children from a very young age, so that children can receive stimuli that may help them in the future, in order to establish views and attitudes towards issues that will affect their career choices in the near future (Palos & Drobot, 2010). As a matter of fact, family context is the most important source of support for young people in their education and career decisions (Koumoundourou et al., 2011). Research has shown that the cause of students experiencing a high level of stress and feeling that they were not ready to make decisions on career related matters was their strict childhood upbringing (Cheung et al., 2014). In other research, it was found out that a supportive family environment and good relations among family members both play a more critical role in the professional development of young people than other characteristics that a family may have, such as its educational background, occupation of parents, and their social background (Metheny & McWhirter, 2013). What is more, the following conclusions are derived from research conducted by Edwards & Quinter; in specific, students attach importance to the opinion of friends or other relatives who practice occupations that students themselves are interested in, believing that they can draw useful information, which can help them in making their final decisions (Edwards & Quinter, 2011).

4. Research Objective

This research aims to study and investigate the factors affecting the education and career decisions of high school students in Greece. Ultimately, it aims to highlight the factors playing a key role in the life of students and their future career decision-making.

In greater detail, this research attempts to investigate whether gender, aptitudes, parents, the educational background and occupation of parents, the economic crisis, mass media, the Centres for Advice and Orientation (KESYP), and the role of significant others, in general, are factors that are taken into consideration by students, when it comes to their career

decision-making.

5. Method

In this paper, qualitative research has been conducted, based on semi-structured interviews. In order to investigate the topic in question, we chose to conduct qualitative research, because we believed it was the most suitable, according to Strauss and Corbin (1998), since it can better interpret phenomena, such as human emotions, and thoughts, in general. That is, phenomena that are hard to approach and analyze purely from a quantitative point of view, and draw reliable research conclusions. Therefore, in this research study, we have chosen three data collection methods, i.e. questionnaires, interviews that will be analyzed through qualitative content analysis, and custom texts with qualitative speech analysis.

After taking the interviews and transcribing them, an analysis was performed through the method of qualitative content analysis, with the "theme" serving as a reporting unit. The analysis resulted in three main axes, which compose a number of thematic categories and subcategories (see Tables 2 and 3, below). The thematic categories and subcategories that emerged after the analysis, were grouped according to the responses of the students who were interviewed.

Sample

35 interviews were taken from students attending the 3rd Grade of High School, i.e. 10 from male students (28.5% of the sample), and 25 from female students (71.5% of the sample). Most of the respondents lived in urban areas, accounting for 71.5% of the students, whereas 28,5% lived in rural areas. The data collection tool that we used for the survey was a spontaneous and semi-structured interview framework, where, during its design, the main axes resulted from carrying out a relevant literature review. The interview was chosen, along with the said method of analysis, in order to perform an in-depth analysis of how students think. Gender is perhaps believed to be one of the most important factors affecting the education and career choices of young people (Mau & Bikos, 2000). However, research has shown that, in many cases, the choices of male and female students did not result from their own decisions; they are rather affected by the social setting, which is a key determinant of the expectations of each gender, causing young people to make specific career choice (Moshavi et al. 2008). In modern Western societies, although gender equality has been introduced, its application to the job market and future family roles that young people are going to take is strongly affected by traditional stereotypical views that refer to gender. During this analysis, by studying our sample, we will attempt to find out whether this unequal treatment applies to career choice.

Data collection process

Once the questionnaire design was completed, 35 interviews were taken from students. These interviews were taken over the period between 20/09/2019 and 20/10/2019. The length of the interviews differs, depending on whether a student wants to give a more, or less, in-depth response. The average length of a interview is 35 minutes, with the longest standing at 50 minutes, and the shortest at 13 minutes. The responses were audio recorded, after the

students were first informed and gave their consent to take part in research, as we assured them that no personal data will be published. Thus, students agreed to have the research data statistically analyzed and anonymously processed. The decision to conduct the interviews was made after getting the consent of the research subjects, and usually in the school premises. In fact, using the school premises made things easier for both the researcher and the students who took part in research.

One of the main limitations of the research process is that qualitative research is based on the personal views and beliefs of people. Thus, it was deemed necessary to take a sufficient number of interviews, in order to have a more comprehensive understanding and draw safer conclusions.

6. Research Results

In the following, the axes and thematic categories and subcategories of the analysis will be presented. Through data processing and interview analysis, three specific thematic categories emerged, from which, it was possible to determine subcategories that allowed the grouping of information that was collected from the responses of students. The thematic axes remain the same, whereas the thematic categories and subcategories depend on the data collected.

In specific, the following axes were established through research:

1. school performance - family background
2. career choice (studies)
3. advice-information on education matters

Following that, a table (Table 1) is presented, where the thematic axes, categories, and subcategories are illustrated, as well as a number of indicative, representative student interview excerpts.

Table 1. Axes – Thematic Categories – Student interview excerpts

Axes	Thematic Categories	Subcategories	Interview Excerpts
A1 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE-FAMILY BACKGROUND	A1.1 STUDENTS' GRADE POINT AVERAGE	A1.1.1 Previous year's grade point average	<i>The responses ranged as follows: 10 -12 (0 students) 12.1 – 14 (4 students) 14.1 – 16 (12 students) 16.1 – 18 (10 students) 18.1 – 20 (9 students) (Interv. 1-35).</i>
		A1.1.2 Specialization	<i>The following responses were received: Humanities: 20 students Science: 3 students Economics and Information Technology: 10 students Health Studies: 2 students (Interv. 1-35).</i>
			<i>"My mother is a nursery school</i>

		<p>A1.1.3 Educational background of parents</p>	<p><i>teacher. She attended university in Athens and loved teaching and children, whereas my father only finished primary school and became a farmer". (Interv. 2)</i></p> <p><i>"Both of my parents studied accounting at a Technological Educational Institution (TEI), and they run an accounting firm together" (Interv. 4)</i></p> <p><i>"My father finished high school, and he is a truck driver; my mother finished high school, but she doesn't work" (Interv. 5)</i></p> <p><i>"Both of my parents finished secondary school at the village, and are farmers" (Interv. 15)</i></p>
	<p>A1.2 RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS</p>	<p>A.1.2.1 Parents' desire to study</p>	<p><i>"My parents want me to continue family tradition and take up their law firm" (Interv. 2)</i></p> <p><i>"My parents want me to study and get away from farming" (Interv. 3).</i></p> <p><i>"My parents can only afford to send me to an Institute of Vocational Training (IEK), because of the family's dire financial situation" (Interv. 15)</i></p>
		<p>A 1.2.2 Parents discussing education and career matters with children</p>	<p><i>"I don't have a good relationship with my parents; we never discuss" (Interv. 6)</i></p> <p><i>"I discuss a bit with my mother; I am not very close with my father" (Interv. 7)</i></p> <p><i>"I discuss a lot with parents, and they respect my choices" (Interv. 16)</i></p> <p><i>"There is communication with my parents, they advise me, but they also respect my wishes" (Interv. 18)</i></p> <p><i>"I often talk with my parents, but my opinion counts the most" (Interv. 32)</i></p>
		<p>A1.2.3 Evaluation of relationships with family</p>	<p><i>"We have a very good relationship and communication; they respect my dreams and choices" (Interv. 33)</i></p> <p><i>"I discuss with my parents; they never push me, and I choose what I will do" (Interv. 28)</i></p> <p><i>"Our relationship is bad" (Interv. 11)</i></p> <p><i>"My relationship with my</i></p>

Axes	Thematic Categories	Subcategories	Interview Excerpts
			<p>parents is non-existent" (Interv. 6)</p> <p>"I ask for my parents' advice; they have experience, they respect me, and they have got my best interest at heart; our communication is excellent" (Interv. 35)</p>
A2 CAREER CHOICE (STUDIES)	A2.1 GENERAL CONTEXT	A2.1.1 School Choice	<p>"I want to study Law; it's my lifetime dream" (Interv. 2)</p> <p>"I want to study Economics, in order to work in the accounting firm of my parents" (Interv. 5)</p> <p>"I am mostly interested in a career in the army, the police, and the fire brigade" (Interv. 10).</p>
		A2.1.2 Financial situation of family and studies	<p>"There are no financial issues in my family, which could limit my choices" (Interv. 5).</p> <p>"I can't choose places that are far; my parents have no money... I will only limit myself to schools based in Thessaloniki" (Interv. 20)</p>
		A2.1.3 Career choice	<p>"I wasn't influenced by anyone; I can make up my own mind for my future" (Interv. 27)</p> <p>"It was my parents that mostly influenced my choice" (Interv. 5)</p>
		A2.1.4 Career and immediate professional settlement	<p>"I choose the police, purely for the salary" (Interv. 10)</p> <p>"I want a profession that contributes to society" (Interv. 28)</p>
		A2.1.5 Influence of parents' occupation	<p>"I wasn't influenced by anyone" (Interv. 27)</p> <p>"My sisters are nursery school teachers; it's a family tradition in our home" (Interv. 19)</p>
		A2.1.6 Career and social contribution	<p>"I would only follow a well-paid and high-status career; this is what I am only interested in" (Interv. 2.)</p> <p>"I have a high level of awareness of social issues; I would follow a career that deals with people, even if the pay was not high" (Interv. 9)</p>
A3	A.3.1	A.3.1.1	<i>"I get information from the</i>

ADVICE-INFORMATION ON EDUCATION MATTERS	INFORMATION	Sources of information	<i>Internet; I have no other source of information" (Interv. 10)</i> <i>"I get career advice and information from my older siblings" (Interv. 19)</i>
		A.3.1.2 Centres for Advice and Orientation (KESYP) and educational guidance classes	<i>"We want to attend classes that can explain our professional rights" (Interv. 16)</i> <i>"The Centres for Advice and Orientation (KESYP) should be more proactively run by experts; we know nothing about certain schools, and we hesitate to choose them" (Interv. 23)</i>

7. Discussion of Results

Undoubtedly, career choice is an extremely important decision in the life of young people. A review of relevant research over the period between 1980 and 2002 (Whiston & Keller, 2004) highlights that the functional characteristics of a family, such as, for example, a supportive family environment, influence more the career decisions and expectations of adolescents than structural characteristics, e.g. the socioeconomic and cultural background of a family. International literature indicates that discussion is the most usual way for parents to show their support to their children (Palos & Drobot, 2010). It should also be highlighted that there are differences between the parents' gender and the support that they provide to their children. Through research, a causal relationship has been reported between raising career awareness and offering support to children, and gender. More precisely, parents are more supportive to children of the same gender as them. Likewise, in Greece, relevant research indicates that the influence of family on the education and career decisions of adolescents is mostly based on the structural characteristics of family, such as family size and the educational background of parents (Dimaki, Kaminioti, Kostaki, Psarakis, & Tsourti, 2005; Maziridou, 2008; Sidiropoulou, 1991). Generally speaking, as it is highlighted in research, there is strong influence of Greek parents on the school career, job guidance, and choice of a future career of young people (Deligianni-Kouimtzi, Maziridou, & Kioseoglou, 2003; Stogiannidou, Farmakis, & Kazi, 1999).

Furthermore, another Greek research study 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. Besides, school career guidance is not as effective as expected, and the choices of students regarding their studies are affected by the economic cost of studying. Another noteworthy point is that both male and female students report that the quality of studies is the most important factor for choosing what to study. Moreover, gender evidently plays a critical role in the choices of candidates. Female students are focused more on their personal aspirations, while male students on social and economic factors. Other than that, the cultural background of family also affects the entry of children into higher/tertiary education, as well as the choices of children regarding the type of studies and career to follow (Kyridis, 2022).

Following an analysis of the interviews taken in the context of this survey, the following

points have emerged: 85.7% of the students responded that they want to continue their studies into higher education, primarily to ensure a better future, some of them in order to continue a family business, followed by the desire to get away from a career in farming, whereas only 14.3% of the students reported that they want to continue studying at an Institute of Vocational Training (IEK) because of some special aptitude that they have, and also for economic reasons. A point to note is that none of the 35 students of the sample wants to stop studying after graduating from high school. We can see that all parents, regardless of their educational background, want their children to continue their studies into higher education, in order for children to either continue and take up their parents' profession or get away from manual labor. Some indicative views of the students are presented below:

"Of course, my parents want me to continue my studies, not only because I am a good student, but also for my future professional settlement". (Interv. 3).

"My parents want me to continue family tradition and take up their law firm" (Interv. 17)

"My parents want me to study and get away from farming" (Interv. 23).

In addition, we can identify a specific preference of students towards a career that offers immediate settlement (65.71% of the sample), such as in the police, the army, and the fire brigade, even if they do not particularly like it. On the other hand, only 34.28%, i.e. 12 students, believe that they should follow a career that they like, and which can promote their aptitudes, talents, etc.

Five students (14.3%) of the sample reported that they will continue their studies at an Institute of Vocational Training (IEK). By comparing their performance with their choice of studies, we can see that there is a positive correlation between poor school performance and studying at an Institute of Vocational Training (IEK). On the contrary, eight students (22.8%) of the sample reported that they want to study teaching, having very good school grades, ranging from 16 to 20 out of 20. Ten students (28.6%) of the sample reported that they want to go to an army or police academy, having good school grades. Seven students (20%) of the sample with excellent grades chose social sciences (law - psychology, etc.), and finally, five students (14.3%) of the sample mostly chose economics or information technology schools, etc., having moderate school grades.

A noteworthy point that emerges through the interviews is the following, in specific: 42.8% of the students (i.e. 15 students) do not discuss school or career matters with their parents, either not at all, or very little, and mostly with their mother. By studying these responses, we can see that the educational background of most parents who belong to this category is primary, secondary, and high school graduates, whereas only one parent has graduated from a Higher Education Institution (AEI), and we can see that they have very little discussion with their children. By comparing the responses of the children with their school performance, we find out that 10 students (28.5%) of the sample have either poor or moderate performance. On the other hand, only 5 students (14.3%) of the sample report very good or excellent school grades, although they do not often hold discussions with their parents. Yet, 6 students (17.1%) report that they do not discuss at all with their parents, showing poor school grades.

Indicatively, we will list the responses of the students below:

"I don't discuss with my parents; I avoid it, because they never value my opinion, and they believe that I won't make it" (Interv. 6)

"I don't discuss at all with my parents; we don't have the right relationship" (Interv. 15)

"I don't discuss with my parents; they ignore me" (Interv. 27)

"My relationship with my parents is very bad; we never discuss" (Interv. 29)

"Only with my mother, I sometimes talk" (Interv. 30)

On the other hand, 20 students, i.e. 57.2% of the sample, responded that they discuss a lot with their parents, on career and school matters. They reported, in general, that their parents respect their opinion, trust them, and give them useful advice for the future. The educational background of the parents is mostly high school and university graduates. Besides, the school performance of the children is considered to be very good and excellent. Therefore, we notice a positive correlation between the educational background of parents, the school performance of children, and good communication. Indicatively, the responses provided by the students themselves will be listed below:

"I discuss a lot with parents, and they respect my choices" (Interv. 2)

"I often talk with my parents, but it my opinion that counts the most" (Interv. 4)

"There is communication with my parents, they advise me, but they also respect my wishes" (Interv. 18)

Compared to earlier research, where there was a direct and strong involvement of parents in the decisions made by young people, nowadays, we witness that young people show a tendency to differentiate from the views of their parents, and get away from the family environment. Indicatively, we note that only three students (8.5%) of the sample reported excellent relationships, fifteen students (42.8%) reported very good relationships, eight students reported good/average, and nine students (25.7%) reported bad. In specific, 17 students, i.e. 48.5% of the sample, reported that they chose their career themselves, without any guidance. On the contrary, 10 students (28.5% of the sample) reported that there was significant contribution from friends, and finally, 22.85%, i.e. 8 students, received advice from their family, in order to choose their future career. In conclusion, we can point out that, in a previous question, i.e. whether they discuss the future with their parents, 42.8% of the students reported that there is communication with their parents. However, only 22.85% of the students of the sample reported that they got advice from their family in making their decision. Therefore, the final decision is rather personal. Specifically, 48.5% of the sample (17 students) reported that they were not influenced by anyone, whereas 10 students, i.e. 28.5%, argued that they have been influenced by friends and older siblings. Last but not least, only 22.85%, i.e. 8 students, reported that they want to continue their family business, and they have been considerably influenced by their parents' profession. They characteristically reported the following professions: accountants, lawyers, doctors, and teachers. By

comparing the responses of the children, we can see that they have generally reported a relatively poor educational background of their parents. In particular, only 37.14% of the sample, i.e. 13 parents, have graduated from a Higher Educational Institution (AEI) or Technological Educational Institution (TEI). This finding also confirms the low influence of their parents' profession on children

Moreover, thirteen students (37.2%) of the sample reported that they experience major financial issues. This will prevent them from choosing faraway places, and a number of children reported that they will study and work at the same time, while some others choose to attend an Institute of Vocational Training (IEK), in order not to financially burden their parents. Hence, we notice that there is a correlation between their financial situation and choosing or continuing their studies.

Another point that emerges from the analysis of the interviews is the following: regarding the question whether they would choose a career that contributes to society, even if the pay was not high, the students expressed the following views: 23 students, i.e. 65.71% of the sample reported "definitely not", whereas only 12 students, i.e. 34.28%, reported that the career that they want to follow exclusively deals with people. They actually stressed the fact that they have had a special interest in and awareness of social issues from a young age, and they would like to be involved in such a career. As opposed to that, in the following question, the students were asked whether they chose or are about to choose a career, based on criteria such as financial rewards, status, and their own aptitudes, or personal satisfaction. The responses that were collected lead to the following findings: all of the 35 students (100% of the sample) would like to get a job that can offer everything; however, 23 students (65.71%) argued that a permanent job served as a criterion for their choice, whereas 12 students (34.28%) set their personal satisfaction as a priority. The above findings are also confirmed by the previous questions that were asked to them. Regarding the question that refers to their sources of information on career matters (taught courses, employment rights, etc.), a percentage of students as high as 71.4% (25 students) reported that they are only informed from the Internet, while 28.5% (10 students) have mostly discussed with and been informed from their parents. In a previous question, 20 students (57.2%) reported that they have good communication with their parents, and discuss school matters, in general. From the responses to this question, we notice that only 10 students, i.e. 28.5%, can get specific information from their parents. Lastly, regarding the question whether the students need more information on career matters, such as through information events, visits to Centres for Advice and Orientation (KESYP), School Career Guidance (SEP) classes, etc., all of the 35 students (100% of the sample) reported that a School Career Guidance class or information events on career matters are necessary.

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