SELF-AGEISM AMONG WOMEN IN GREECE: THE ROLE OF BURNOUT IN CAREER DECISION-MAKING SELF-EFFICACY

Maria Panagopoulou *, Dimitris Panaretos **, Alexandros G. Sahinidis ***

* *Corresponding author*, Department of Business Administration, University of West Attica, Athens, Greece
Contact details: Department of Business Administration, University of West Attica, 250 Thivon & P. Ralli Str., Egaleo, 12141 Athens, Greece
** Department of Statistics and Insurance Science, University of Western Macedonia, Grevena, Greece
*** Department of Business Administration, University of West Attica, Athens, Greece

Abstract

The present research attempts to identify the role of age in women's working lives. It studies the factors and aspects of women's working lives that are affected by age and whether the burnout they experience affects their self-efficacy in the way they make professional decisions. A cross-sectional online survey was conducted in Greece. To obtain the data a structured, online, self-administered questionnaire was used. The questionnaire consists of 25 questions referring to the variable of burnout (Maslach Burnout Inventory — MBI), 25 questions concerning self-efficacy in career decision-making (career decision self-efficacy scale short form — CDSES-SF), and 25 questions concerning demographic data. The collected data was processed using the R language. The findings show that age and gender are very important factors influencing career development (Aliyev & Tunc, 2015). Age, therefore, plays a key role in women's working lives (Loretto et al., 2000). The study adds value to existing research on ageism by focusing on the consequences for women's professional lives in Greece. The findings can help in the formulation and development of targeted interventions to empower women and train them to improve their self-efficacy in terms of professional decision-making.

Keywords: Self-Ageism, Burnout, Self-Efficacy, Decision-Making, Quantitative Research, Organizations

1. INTRODUCTION

Ageism is defined as discrimination against individuals based on their chronological age (Ayalon & Tesch-Römer, 2017, 2018). Almost 50 years ago, Butler (1969) coined the concept of ageism, having then offered the following definition: "Prejudice by one age group towards other age groups" (p. 243). Age-related prejudices and stereotypes can be either positive or negative and are directed at people of different age groups. Age racism occurs at both institutional and individual levels (Ayalon & Cohn-Schwartz, 2022). Another important component regarding age racism relates to the fact that it can be directed both towards the self and others (Ayalon & Tesch-Römer, 2017). It is worth highlighting that age is a complex concept that includes cognitive, behavioral and emotional manifestations and parameters (Iversen et al., 2009). It is also observed that the age factor reinforces social inequalities, which are more identified in women and even in older women (van den Heuvel, 2012). Moreover, regarding ageism, age stereotypes are internalized that contribute to ageism both in terms of self-ageism and other-oriented ageism (Ayalon & Tesch-Römer, 2017). On the one hand, young people internalize the negative social views of older people, which pushes them to shape their views and thus their attitudes towards old age (Kotter-Grühn & Hess, 2012; Levy, 2003; Rothermund & Brandstädter, 2003). On the other hand, older people also have negative views of old age and tend to view older people negatively (Dobbs et al., 2008). These negative views on ageing are particularly pronounced among women (Ayalon, 2015). This can have adverse effects on both their personal and professional lives. Bodner et al. (2017) examined the relationship between attitudes towards ageing and subjective age, finding that a decrease in positive attitudes towards ageing is associated with an accelerated increase in subjective age relative to chronological age. From the above, it can be concluded that women's social and working lives are affected (Dennis & Thomas, 2007). Employers perceive older workers as costly (Conen et al., 2012). It is not surprising that older workers find it difficult to find a job or are the first to be dismissed (Radović-Marković, 2013). Naturally, the above does not leave the female population unaffected and possibly related to women's emotional exhaustion as well as their difficulty making career decisions. The present study attempts to identify the role of age in women's working lives. The study examines the factors in women's working lives affected by age and whether the burnout they experience affects their self-efficacy in the way they make professional decisions. In line with previous research, it is necessary to have studies capable of measuring and understanding the complexity of the concept of age. To date, studies have focused on the manifestations and etiology of ageing, neglecting the consequences and proposals for intervention (de São José & Amado, 2017). The present research aims to add value to existing research on ageism by focusing on the consequences on women's professional lives in Greece, which can help in the formulation and development of targeted interventions to empower women and, train them to improve their self-efficacy in decision-making. The questions that need to be answered are:

RQ1: How does the age of each woman and the characteristics of both her personal life and her professional life affect her professional decisions?

RQ2: Does age play a significant role in job burnout and is this related to their self-efficacy in making career decisions?

In the present research, a cross-sectional online survey was conducted in Greece. A descriptive design based on a quantitative approach was chosen to investigate the role of self-ageism among working women in Greece. The research population includes all working women in Greece. The participants were recruited using a passive recruitment strategy, through invitations via Facebook pages and groups. The inclusion criteria were being a woman, over 18 years old and agreeing to participate. A convenience sample consisted of those who wanted to participate voluntarily in the study, by completing the online questionnaire.

Data collection was made online using a structured self-administered questionnaire through Google Forms which was available to participants from January 2023 to April 2023; the online questionnaire was posted on Facebook pages and groups. In order to obtain the participants', consent an information and consent form, describing the purpose of the study and data treatment, was attached to the online questionnaire. The completion of the questionnaire was taken as proof of consent for those who participated in the study.

In order to collect the data a structured, online, self-administered questionnaire was used. The selected questionnaire was used as one of the most appropriate to answer our research questions and it is considered an established, valid and reliable instrument by previous studies (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981). As the questionnaire was used for the first time in working women in Greece it was translated, pilot-tested and culturally adapted from the source language (English) to the target language (Greek) to meet the study sample's needs.

The questionnaire consisted of 3 parts: 25 questions referring to the variable of burnout (Maslach Burnout Inventory — MBI) (Maslach & Jackson, 1986), measured on a Linkert scale, 25 questions concerning self-efficacy in career decision-making (career decision self-efficacy scale short form — CDSES-SF) (Benz et al., 1992), which is also measured on a Linkert scale, and 25 questions concerning demographic data.

The findings show that age and gender are very important factors influencing career development (Aliyev & Tunc, 2015). Age, therefore, plays a key role in women's working lives (Loretto et al., 2000).

The structure of this paper is as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature. Section 3 presents data analysis. Section 4 contains the results obtained from the analysis. Section 5 presents a discussion of the results. Section 6 provides the conclusion which includes the limitations of the research as well as suggestions for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Ageism affects women's well-being (Ayalon & Tesch-Römer, 2018; Cohn-Schwartz et al., 2022). For example, women's internalized negative stereotypes regarding

age can produce self-fulfilling prophecies that contribute to feelings of vulnerability and dependency (Chrisler et al., 2016). However, it is important to note that women make up the majority of the 65–74 years old age group. In this group, there are 82 men for every 100 women (Chrisler et al., 2016). Therefore, it seems that an untapped pool of human capital has been created, which negatively affects economic growth and productivity (Phillipson, 2019). Recent studies have shown that many individuals exclude themselves from education opportunities and paid work due to internalized ageism (van der Horst, 2019).

Demographic, economic and social trends are experienced differently by men and women. This is not independent of the age domain as men and women perceive themselves and their ageing differently within the social and work context (Itzin & Phillipson, 1995). Duncan and Loretto (2004), in their survey of the financial sector in the United Kingdom, found that women experience more age discrimination than men. Granleese and Sayer (2006) concluded that women working in higher education experience more discrimination on both age and gender grounds than men. The same is true in organizations where women are expected to have a smart appearance. This creates another form of discrimination against women relating to their physical appearance (Warhurst & Nickson, 2009; Warhurst et al., 2009), which, as can be seen, is not disconnected from the age factor.

Gendered ageism can occur at many stages of women's careers and includes comments on all aspects of women 's existence and roles. This racism is not only reported by men towards women but also by women themselves towards other women (Jyrkinen, 2014). In modern times, which are characterized by successive changes, the concept of career has changed. The kaleidoscope model dominates (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005) and career development is becoming a lifelong process (Hall, 2002). Women's careers face more obstacles and interruptions. For this reason, women's careers differ from men's (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; Burke, 2007). Childbearing, their role as caregivers, and the daily emotional state that alternates between work and home have a different impact on women. According to research, ageism and the gender factor intersect in many ways. This is a challenge for working women (Jyrkinen, 2014).

It is equally important to mention that age has been linked to vocational interests (Lun, 2010). In the development of an individual's vocational interests, perceptions of self-efficacy influence his/her vocational interests (Lent et al., 1994). According to the above, self-efficacy is influenced by age in making decisions related to vocational interests. Self-efficacy includes the beliefs that the individual has about their ability to achieve desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Those who have high self-efficacy feel that they can complete difficult tasks and have some control over things. On the other hand, those who have low self-efficacy give up easily and avoid difficult tasks as they doubt whether they will succeed (Bolling & Graf, 2022).

Making professional decisions is one of the most important issues for adults. In occupational psychology, studies have focused on understanding the factors associated with career decision-making.

These factors include personality, job search effectiveness (Saks & Ashforth, 1999), and family expectations (Duffy & Dik, 2009). Work context psychology theory argues that individuals make career decisions under the influence of constraining factors (Hartung & Blustein, 2002; McWhirter et al., 2005; Creed et al., 2004). Age is directly related to the individual's perceptions of their limiting factors regarding the work context (Cheung et al., 2016). Also, the constant experience of age discrimination in the workplace could create a state of chronic emotional exhaustion that translates into harmful outcomes for individuals and the work environment (Mazzetti et al., 2022).

In the academic literature, age discrimination in the workplace is referred to as a stressor, leading to adverse consequences (Hershcovis, 2011). Posthuma and Campion (2009) highlighted 5 stereotypes about older workers: they are perceived to have poor performance, less open to learning processes, more resistant to change, less inclined to invest in organizational activities and more expensive than their younger colleagues. On the other hand, there is strong evidence from academic research that younger employees also experience age-based stereotyping in the workplace (Bertolino et al., 2013). Moreover, younger employees are perceived as unreliable and inexperienced compared to older colleagues (Bal et al., 2011). Overall, research concludes that empirical evidence suggests that both age groups (i.e., younger and older workers) are prone to stereotype threat (von Hippel et al., 2013). However, age-related stereotypes are associated with detrimental outcomes only among older workers (von Hippel et al., 2019). Stereotypes about the link between youth and inexperience may fade as young workers gain experience and skills over time. In contrast, stereotypes associated with older workers become stronger over time (Garstka et al., 2004). Consequently, older workers are likely to exhibit lower levels of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, higher turnover intention, and reduced levels of job commitment. Furthermore, older workers who experience age discrimination may be prone to emotional exhaustion and thus feel emotionally drained (Greenberg, 2006).

Based on the above we formed the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a positive relationship between burnout and self-efficacy in professional decision-making.

H2: There is a relationship between age and level of education, marital status and whether or not women have children.

H3: There is a relationship between age and type of work status (unemployment, discharge, end of contract, resignation), type of job position (employee, self-employed, supervisor, director), type of work contract (part-time or full-time), income in euros as well as online learning.

H4: There is a relationship between age and type of firm, number of employees of each firm and the type of contract (long-term, fixed-term, no contract).

3. DATA ANALYSIS

Normally distributed continuous variables were presented as mean (standard deviation — SD) and

categorical variables as frequencies (percentage). Comparisons of continuous variables between groups were performed using the analysis of variance (ANOVA) test of the independent samples (for normal distribution) and the Kruskal-Wallis test (for skewed distribution). A Pearson's chi-squared test was conducted to determine whether significant differences existed concerning women's sociodemographic categorical characteristics between age groups. To check each factor's internal consistency and reliability concerning food attitude, motivations, and satisfaction, a Cronbach's alpha value higher than 0.7 was considered an acceptable value (Kline, 2016).

A robust multi-stage method (MM) was performed to investigate the associations between self-efficacy score and burnout factors, taking into consideration age, education, continuing training, and income. The ordinary least squares (OLS) regression is a method that is very sensitive to outliers and for this very reason, this method was not used. On the other hand, robust regression is a technique that can reduce the impact of outliers (Yohai, 1987). Results are presented in the form of a standardized coefficient (b) and a corresponding 95% (lower-higher) confidence interval (CI). Collinearity between the independent variables was evaluated using the variance inflation factor — VIF (values > 4) — suggested collinearity between independent variables and one of them was excluded from the model). The assumption of homoscedasticity was tested by plotting the scatter plot of standardised residuals over the predicted score values. R-squared (R^2) was calculated to find how well each fitted model predicts the dependent variables (the higher the R^2, the better the model fits the data), and is indicative of the percentage of the variance in the dependent variable that the independent variables explain collectively. Statistical significance was defined for p-values below 0.05 and was based on two-sided tests. The CDSES-SF (Benz et al., 1992) contains 25 items. The participants indicated how confident they felt about each statement on a 5-point Likert-type scale, from no confidence at all (1) to complete confidence (5). Higher scores represent greater levels of career decision self-efficacy. An overall, socioeconomic status (SES) score is created by summing the item ratings (Cronbach's alpha = 0.95; Scale mean = 91, SD = 18).

Factor analysis, using the principal component method, was applied in order to identify burnout patterns based on a questionnaire. Factor analysis is based on the correlation matrix of the variables involved, and correlations usually need a large sample size before they stabilize. Specifically, it's a table showing the linear correlations between all pairs of burnout questions. Thus, the correlation matrix of the questions used here showed that there were several correlation coefficients with $r > 0.6$. Overall, the values in this matrix were high, which indicates that only a few factors will be required to account for the variation. Moreover, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test (a measure of sampling adequacy for each variable in the model and for the complete model) was 0.92 (close to 1), also implying high interrelationships between the burnout questions, thus, the appropriateness of factor analysis in assessing burn out patterns. The orthogonal rotation (rotation with varimax option) was used to derive optimal non-correlated factors (burnout patterns). The information was rotated to increase the representation of each question to a factor. Parallel analysis was used in order to determine the number of factors retained. Parallel analysis is an alternative technique that compares the scree plots of factors of the observed data, with that of a random data matrix of the same size as the original. In our analysis, a three-factor solution was selected (three burnout patterns-dimensions). Based on the principle that higher absolute values indicate that the burnout questions contribute most to the construction of the factor, the patterns were named according to the loadings of the questions that correlated most with the factor (loadings > 0.6). All reported p-values were based on two-sided tests. R software (version 4.2.2) was used for all calculations.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

A total of 325 questionnaires were filled out, of which 309 were valid. The distribution of the sample concerning their sociodemographic profile appears in Table 1. The total study sample was 309 women aged from 18 to 68 years old of which 93 (30%) were aged up to 30 years old, 101 (33%) were aged between 31 to 40 years old, and 115 (37%) were aged above 40 years old. Over half of the women who participated in the study had a Bachelor's degree or even a Master degree (69.58%), were single (55.34%) without having children (59.87%), had an active employment status (84.79%), were employees (73.20%) at a Greek company (61.85%) with 5–100 employees (27.83%), were working full-time (89.35%), had a long-term (73.88%) contract, had an income between 901 to EUR1200 (26.46%) and participated in an e-learning education (63.23%) and continuing training program (65.29%).

Moreover, statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) between the three age groups (up to 30 years old vs. 31–40 years old vs. above 40 years old) were found concerning education, marital status, having kids, employment status, position, kind of contract, income and e-learning assuming a different socio-demographic profile by age group (see Table 1).

Factor analysis extracted 3 factors (burnout dimensions) that explained 66% of the total variation. The scores of the 3 burnout dimensions are presented in Table 2 (in bold are the coefficients with absolute values > 0.6). The following 3 factors were derived, which were characterized by the predominant subscale's burnout:

- Factor 1 — *Personal accomplishment*;
- Factor 2 — *Emotional exhaustion*;
- Factor 3 — *Depersonalization*.

The association between self-efficacy score and burnout factors estimated by robust regression, is presented in Table 3. *Personal accomplishment* [(b-coefficient (95% CI): -6.05 (-8.32 to -3.79)] and *depersonalization* [b-coefficient (95% CI): -1.88 (-3.53 to -0.23)] were (inversely) associated with the self-efficacy score. Secondary school education was negatively associated with better self-efficacy scores compared to PhD holders [b-coefficient (95% CI): -14.54 (-24.52 to -4.57)], after adjusting for various confounders. Women with low income had a better self-efficacy score compared to women with high income [b-coefficient (95% CI): 12.26 (4.84 to 19.68)]. The same result was observed among women who received EUR1201 to EUR1600 [b-coefficient (95% CI):

6.54 (-0.07 to 13.16)] as well as among those who did not answer this question [b-coefficient (95% CI): 6.82 (-0.87 to 14.50)]. In addition, age [b-coefficient (95% CI): 0.17 (-0.03 to 0.38)] and continuing training [b-coefficient (95% CI): -4.43 (-8.43 to -0.44)] were found to have a statistically significant effect on changes in the self-efficacy score.

Table 1. The distribution of the sociodemographic profile overall and by age group

Variable	Category	Overall (n, %)	Age up to 30 years old (n, %)	Age 31–40 years old (n, %)	Age above 40 years old (n, %)	p-value
Education	Secondary school	45 (14.56%)	13 (13.98%)	10 (9.90%)	22 (19.13%)	< 0.01
	Diploma	39 (12.62%)	48 (51.61%)	28 (27.72%)	34 (29.56%)	
	Bachelor's degree	110 (35.60%)	5 (5.38%)	15 (14.85%)	19 (16.52%)	
	Master's degree	105 (33.98%)	25 (26.88%)	44 (43.56%)	36 (31.30%)	
	PhD	10 (3.24%)	2 (2.15%)	4 (3.96%)	4 (3.47%)	
Marital status	Married	106 (34.30%)	7 (7.53%)	41 (40.59%)	58 (50.43%)	< 0.001
	Single	171 (55.34%)	86 (92.47%)	55 (54.45%)	30 (26.09%)	
	Divorced/widowed	32 (10.36%)	0 (0%)	5 (4.95%)	27 (23.48%)	
Having kids	Yes	124 (40.13%)	4 (4.30%)	36 (35.64%)	84 (73.04%)	< 0.001
	No	185 (59.87%)	89 (95.70%)	65 (64.36%)	31 (26.95%)	
Employment status	Active	262 (84.79%)	69 (74.19%)	98 (97.03%)	95 (82.61%)	< 0.001
	Unemployment	18 (5.82%)	17 (18.28%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.87%)	
	Discharge/end of contract	19 (6.15%)	3 (3.22%)	1 (0.1%)	15 (13.04%)	
	Resignation	10 (3.24%)	4 (4.30%)	2 (1.98%)	4 (3.48%)	
Position	Employee	213 (73.20%)	70 (92.10%)	80 (79.21%)	63 (55.26%)	< 0.001
	Self-employed	37 (12.71%)	4 (5.26%)	12 (11.88%)	21 (18.42%)	
	Supervisor	28 (9.62%)	1 (1.31%)	7 (6.93%)	20 (17.54%)	
	Director	13 (4.47%)	1 (1.31%)	2 (1.98%)	10 (8.77%)	
Business	Greek	180 (61.85%)	50 (57.42%)	58 (63.16%)	72 (63.16%)	0.49
	Multinational	111 (38.14%)	26 (34.21%)	43 (42.57%)	42 (36.84%)	
Number of employees	< 10	59 (20.27%)	19 (25%)	14 (13.86%)	26 (22.81%)	0.34
	11–50	53 (18.21%)	15 (19.74%)	16 (15.84%)	22 (19.30%)	
	51–100	81 (27.83%)	15 (19.74%)	36 (35.64%)	30 (26.31%)	
	101-1000	39 (13.40%)	10 (13.16%)	17 (16.83%)	12 (10.53%)	
	> 1000	48 (16.49%)	15 (19.74%)	15 (14.85%)	18 (15.79%)	
	Don't know	11 (3.78%)	2 (2.63%)	3 (2.97%)	6 (5.26%)	
Kind of contract	Half-day	31 (10.65%)	15 (19.74%)	7 (6.93%)	9 (7.89%)	0.011
	Full time	260 (89.35%)	61 (80.26%)	94 (93.07%)	105 (92.10%)	
Type of contract	Long-term	215 (73.88%)	58 (76.3%)	77 (76.24%)	80 (70.17%)	0.49
	Fixed-term	39 (13.40%)	12 (15.79%)	11 (10.89%)	16 (14.03%)	
	No contract	37 (12.71%)	6 (7.89%)	13 (12.87%)	18 (15.79%)	
Income in euros	< 600	39 (13.40%)	22 (28.95%)	5 (4.95%)	12 (10.53%)	< 0.001
	601–900	52 (17.87%)	20 (26.31%)	14 (13.86%)	18 (15.79%)	
	901–1200	77 (26.46%)	18 (23.68%)	38 (37.62%)	21 (20.17%)	
	1201–1600	51 (17.52%)	9 (11.84%)	19 (18.81%)	23 (20.17%)	
	> 1600	44 (15.12%)	3 (3.95%)	19 (18.81%)	22 (19.30%)	
	No answer	28 (9.62%)	4 (5.26%)	6 (5.94%)	18 (15.79%)	
E-learning	Yes	184 (63.23%)	55 (72.37%)	66 (65.35%)	63 (55.26)	0.048
	No	107 (36.77%)	21 (27.63%)	35 (34.65%)	51 (44.74%)	
Continuing training	Yes	190 (65.29%)	57 (75%)	54 (63.37%)	69 (60.53%)	0.107
	No	101 (34.71%)	19 (25%)	37 (36.63%)	45 (39.47%)	
Self-efficiency scale-short form mean (SD)	SES score	91 (18)	90 (17)	93 (18)	91 (19)	0.68

Note: n = 309 participants.

Table 2. Factor loadings regarding the burnout questionnaire (Part 1)

Statements	Factor		
	1	2	3
Q1: I feel emotionally exhausted because of my work.		0.64	
Q2: I feel worn out at the end of a working day.		0.82	
Q3: I feel tired as soon as I get up in the morning and see a new working day stretched out in front of me.		0.74	
Q4: I get the feeling that I treat some clients/colleagues impersonally as if they were objects.			0.77
Q5: Working with people the whole day is stressful for me.			0.70
Q6: I feel burned out because of my work.		0.81	
Q7: I have become more callous to people since I started doing this job.			0.57
Q8: I'm afraid that my work makes me emotionally harder.			0.56
Q9: I feel frustrated by my work.		0.68	
Q10: I get the feeling that I work too hard.		0.72	
Q11: I'm not really interested in what is going on with many of my customers.			0.71
Q12: Being in direct contact with people at work is too stressful.			0.74
Q13: I feel as if I'm at my wits' end.		0.77	
Q14: I have the feeling that my customers blame me for some of their problems.			0.60
Q15: I feel full of energy.	0.78		
Q16: The work I do is useful and full of meaning.	0.84		
Q17: I feel full of vitality and strength when I work.	0.86		
Q18: I am excited about my work.	0.88		
Q19: My work inspires me.	0.88		

**Table 2.** Factor loadings regarding the burnout questionnaire (Part 2)

Statements	Factor		
	1	2	3
Q20: When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	0.76		
Q21: I feel proud of the work I do.	0.87		
Q22: When I work, I am able to continue my work for a long time.	0.82		
Q23: My work is a challenge for me.	0.85		
Q24: In my work, I have great mental endurance.	0.83		
Q25: I always show persistence in my work even if things are not going well.	0.74		

Note: Loadings are similar to the correlation coefficient, with higher absolute values indicative of a higher correlation between the variable (burnout) and the respective factor.

Table 3. Results from MM-regression models that evaluated the association between self-efficacy and burnout factors

Independent variables	b-coefficient (95% CI)	p-value	VIF
Factor 1	-6.05 (-8.32, -3.79)	**< 0.001**	1.39
Factor 2	-0.35 (-2.38, 1.67)	0.73	1.27
Factor 3	-1.88 (-3.53, -0.23)	**0.02**	1.16
Education			1.97
Secondary school vs. PhD	-14.54 (-24.52, -4.57)	**0.004**	
Bachelor's degree vs. PhD	-3.77 (-10.84, 3.30)	0.29	
Diploma vs. PhD	-5.82 (-13.99, 2.34)	0.16	
Master's degree vs. PhD	-1.58 (-8.74, 5.58)	0.66	
Age	0.17 (-0.03, 0.38)	**0.09**	1.55
Continuing training	-4.43 (-8.43, -0.44)	**0.03**	1.23
Income			2.05
< 600 vs. > 1600	12.26 (4.84, 19.68)	**0.001**	
601–900 vs. > 1600	2.95 (-4.32, 10.23)	0.42	
901–1200 vs > 1600	2.69 (-3.46, 8.86)	0.39	
1201–1600 vs. > 1600	6.54 (-0.07, 13.16)	**0.05**	
No answer vs. > 1600	6.82 (-0.87, 14.50)	**0.08**	

Note: n = 309 participants.

Figure 1. Parallel analysis scree plot for determining the number of factors in exploratory factor analysis
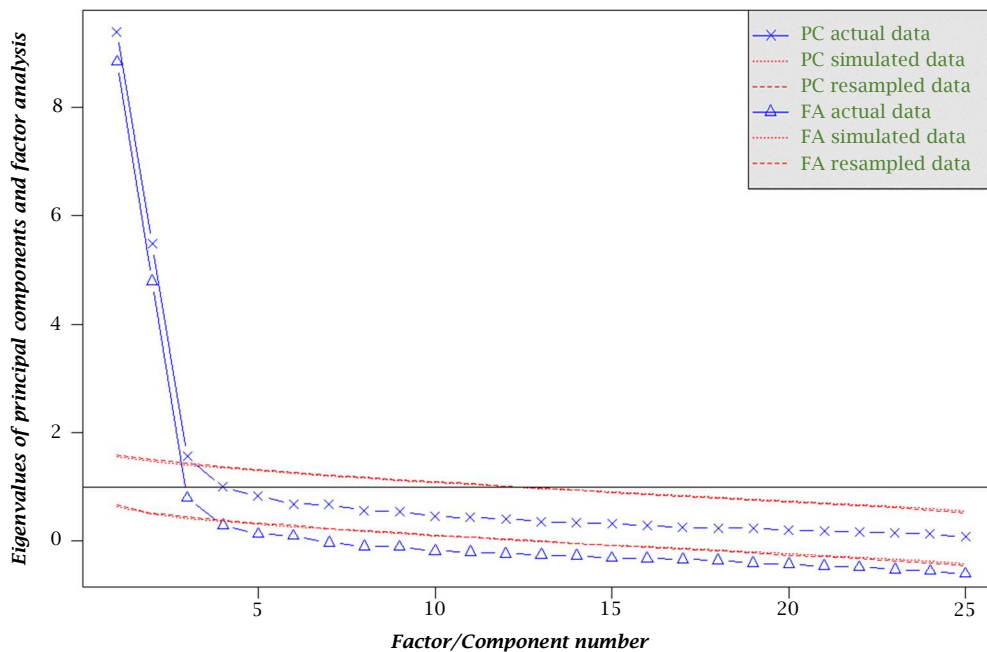
5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

After analysis (see Table 1) it was shown that the level of education has a statistically significant relationship with the age groups selected. Also, marital status (married, unmarried, divorced, widowed) has a statistically significant relationship with the age groups selected. The same is true for whether or not women have children. Furthermore, there is a statistically significant relationship between the age groups and the work status (unemployment, discharge, end of contract, resignation) as well as with the type of position (employee, self-employed, supervisor, director). Finally, there is a statistically significant relationship between the age groups and the type of work contract (part-time or full-time), income in euros as well as online learning. However, there seems to be no statistically significant relationship between the age groups selected and the type of firm (Greek or multinational), the number of employees of each firm and the type of contract (long-term, fixed-term, no contract). The findings are

very important and add value to research on ageism by providing more information on specific factors related to women's age and their working lives. Indeed, research that has been done suggests that age and gender are very important factors influencing career development. Women may experience discrimination at a younger age than men but older women are not as attractive to organizations and are also perceived as less competent (Loretto et al., 2000). Age, therefore, plays a key role in women's working lives. Those women who have lived with the model of a male caregiver and women whose dominant role has been that of a caregiver are particularly vulnerable to age discrimination. Women whose dominant role was that of wife and caregiver usually engaged in traditionally female occupations even if they were very low-paid (Handy & Davy, 2007). As mentioned above, the type of job also plays an important role. Women who have chosen to work as clerks especially as secretarial support appear to be more vulnerable to age discrimination (Handy & Davy, 2007). A British study argues that employers consider a 25-year-old woman as an ideal employee. While correspondingly women from the age of 30 onwards report ageism. Also, women aged 40 years old and over if dismissed may face serious problems finding a job in a position similar to their previous one or with a contract similar to the one they had (Hollywood et al., 2007). Moreover, with the help of factor analysis as shown in Table 3, the subscales that make up the variable of burnout (*personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization*) have a statistically significant relationship with self-efficacy in professional decision-making. Indeed, as has been reported in previous research, high levels of self-efficacy are predictors of successfully coping with challenges and difficulties (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). However, when burnout increases then levels of self-efficacy decrease. This is because self-efficacy is associated with a variety of concepts, including job performance, motivation, and job satisfaction (Bandura, 1993). When burnout is predominant, the levels of the above decrease, therefore, the self-efficacy variable shows a decline (Aliyev & Tunc, 2015). Correspondingly, in this study, it seems that burnout affects the variable of self-efficacy in professional decision-making. In fact, some researchers argue that burnout is more prevalent in women (Bandura, 1993), due to the many roles they take on. Especially in modern times, and after the pandemic, women took on more workloads that were accomplished within the home and alongside household chores and child-rearing. These factors combined with gender stereotypes pushed women to burnout (Aldossari & Chaudhry, 2021) which influenced their career decisions.

6. CONCLUSION

In the modern era where changes are continuous and successive in every context (labor, social, political, legislative, health, employment), women's daily life is becoming more and more demanding. Women are taking on multiple roles which they are trying to fulfil successfully. This is made more difficult by the existence of age-related stereotypes in the workplace. This leads to a weakening of the factor of production associated with human capital since it creates a pool of untapped human potential. Furthermore, discrimination and stereotypes deprive women of higher jobs, which also affects the performance of enterprises. Moreover, it is not new that the diversity of human resources contributes to innovation and creates a competitive advantage for the company concerned. These factors lead women to embrace gender stereotypes, which can lead to an increase in dysfunctional thoughts, reduced self-esteem and self-efficacy, high anxiety as well as procrastination, indecisiveness, and reduced assertiveness. After all, as the results of the research showed, age and gender are very important factors influencing career development, with age playing a key role in women's working lives. For the above reasons and to empower women, a psycho-educational program can be created that will aim at training women to develop or strengthen their skills such as communication skills, stress management in social situations, career planning, self-efficacy, self-efficacy in making professional decisions, adaptability, assertive behavior, self-care, prioritization, etc., necessary for today's soft skills. Finally, it is worth noting that the above training is necessary for women of all ages and diverse age groups as it is understood from the research data that age is a factor that affects the working life of all women (younger and older). Further research could be conducted in a larger sample of women and in specific job sectors in order to produce more generalizable findings. Also, further research in other countries would be useful to understand how each culture affects the variables.

REFERENCES

Aldossari, M., & Chaudhry, S. (2021). Women and burnout in the context of a pandemic. *Gender, Work & Organization, 28*(2), 826–834. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12567

Aliyev, R., & Tunc, E. (2015). Self-efficacy in counseling: The role of organizational psychological capital, job satisfaction, and burnout. *Procedia — Social and Behavioral Sciences, 190*, 97–105. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.922

Ayalon, L. (2015). Perceptions of old age and aging in the continuing care retirement community. *International Psychogeriatrics, 27*(4), 611–620. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1041610214002415

Ayalon, L., & Cohn-Schwartz, E. (2022). Ageism from a cross-cultural perspective: Results from a national survey of Israelis over the age of 50. *International Psychogeriatrics, 34*(9), 779–787. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1041610221001241

Ayalon, L., & Tesch-Römer, C. (2017). Taking a closer look at ageism: Self-and other-directed ageist attitudes and discrimination. *European Journal of Ageing, 14*, 1–4. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10433-016-0409-9

Ayalon, L., & Tesch-Römer, C. (2018). *Contemporary perspectives on ageism.* Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73820-8

Bal, A. C., Reiss, A. E. B., Rudolph, C. W., & Baltes, B. B. (2011). Examining positive and negative perceptions of older workers: A meta-analysis. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, *66B*(6), 687–698. https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbr056

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, *84*(2), 191–215. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191

Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist*, *28*(2), 117–148. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep2802_3

Benz, C. R., Bradley, L., Alderman, M. K., & Flowers, M. A. (1992). Personal teaching efficacy: Developmental relationships in education. *The Journal of Educational Research, 85*(5), 274–285. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.1992.9941127

Bertolino, M., Truxillo, D. M., & Fraccaroli, F. (2013). Age effects on perceived personality and job performance. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *28*(7–8), 867–885. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-07-2013-0222

Bodner, E., Ayalon, L., Avidor, S., & Palgi, Y. (2017). Accelerated increase and relative decrease in subjective age and changes in attitudes toward own aging over a 4-year period: Results from the Health and Retirement Study. *European Journal of Ageing*, *14*, 17–27. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10433-016-0383-2

Bolling, C. N., & Graf, A. S. (2022). Related factors to aging-career interest: Ageism and self-efficacy in the context of a life-span development course. *Educational Gerontology*, *48*(10), 472–483. https://doi.org/10.1080/03601277.2022.2046454

Burke, R. J. (2007). Career development of managerial women: Attracting and managing talent. In D. Bilimoria & S. K. Piderit (Eds.), *Handbook on women in business and management* (pp. 109–131). Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781847204134.00013

Butler, R. N. (1969). Age-ism: Another form of bigotry. *The Gerontologist*, *9*(4, Part 1), 243–246. https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/9.4_Part_1.243

Cheung, F., Wu, A. M., & Yeung, D. Y. (2016). Factors associated with work volition among aging workers in Hong Kong. *Journal of Career Development*, *43*(2), 160–176. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845315585576

Chrisler, J. C., Barney, A., & Palatino, B. (2016). Ageism can be hazardous to women's health: Ageism, sexism, and stereotypes of older women in the healthcare system. *Journal of Social Issues*, *72*(1), 86–104. https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12157

Cohn-Schwartz, E., Finlay, J. M., & Kobayashi, L. C. (2022). Perceptions of societal ageism and declines in subjective memory during the COVID-19 pandemic: Longitudinal evidence from US adults aged ≥ 55 years. *Journal of Social Issues*, *78*(4), 924–938. https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12544

Conen, W. S., Henkens, K., & Schippers, J. (2012). Employers' attitudes and actions towards the extension of working lives in Europe. *International Journal of Manpower, 33*(6), 648–665. https://doi.org/10.1108/01437721211261804

Creed, P. A., Patton, W., & Bartrum, D. (2004). Internal and external barriers, cognitive style, and the career development variables of focus and indecision. *Journal of Career Development*, *30*(4), 277–294. https://doi.org/10.1177/089484530403000404

de São José, J. M. S., & Amado, C. A. F. (2017). On studying ageism in long-term care: A systematic review of the literature. *International Psychogeriatrics*, *29*(3), 373–387. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1041610216001915

Dennis, H., & Thomas, K. (2007). Ageism in the workplace. *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging*, *31*(1), 84–89. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26555516

Dobbs, D., Eckert, J. K., Rubinstein, B., Keimig, L., Clark, L., Frankowski, A. C., & Zimmerman, S. (2008). An ethnographic study of stigma and ageism in residential care or assisted living. *The Gerontologist*, *48*(4), 517–526. https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/48.4.517

Duffy, R. D., & Dik, B. J. (2009). Beyond the self: External influences in the career development process. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *58*(1), 29–43. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2009.tb00171.x

Duncan, C., & Loretto, W. (2004). Never the right age? Gender and age-based discrimination in employment. *Gender, Work & Organization*, *11*(1), 95–115. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2004.00222.x

Garstka, T. A., Schmitt, M. T., Branscombe, N. R., & Hummert, M. L. (2004). How young and older adults differ in their responses to perceived age discrimination. *Psychology and Aging*, *19*(2), 326–335. https://doi.org/10.1037/0882-7974.19.2.326

Granleese, J., & Sayer, G. (2006). Gendered ageism and "lookism": A triple jeopardy for female academics. *Women in Management Review*, *21*(6), 500–517. https://doi.org/10.1108/09649420610683480

Greenberg, J. (2006). Losing sleep over organizational justice: Attenuating insomniac reactions to underpayment inequity with supervisory training in interactional justice. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 91*(1), 58–69. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.1.58

Hall, D. T. (2002). *Careers in and out of organizations*. SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452231174

Handy, J., & Davy, D. (2007). Gendered ageism: Older women's experiences of employment agency practices. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, *45*(1), 85–99. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1177/1038411107073606

Hartung, P. J., & Blustein, D. L. (2002). Reason, intuition, and social justice: Elaborating on Parsons's career decision-making model. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *80*(1), 41–47. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2002.tb00164.x

Hershcovis, M. S. (2011). "Incivility, social undermining, bullying… oh my!": A call to reconcile constructs within workplace aggression research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *32*(3), 499–519. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.689

Hollywood, E., Brown, R., Danson, M., & McQuaid, R. (2007). Demographic and labour market change: The dynamics of older workers in the Scottish labour market. *Scottish Geographical Journal, 123*(4), 242–256. https://doi.org/10.1080/14702540802189677

Itzin, C., & Phillipson, C. (1995). Gendered ageism: A double jeopardy for women in organizations. In C. Itzin & C. Phillipson (Eds.), *Gender, culture and organizational change* (pp. 84–95). Routledge.

Iversen, T. N., Larsen, L., & Solem, P. E. (2009). A conceptual analysis of ageism. *Nordic Psychology*, *61*(3), 4–22. https://doi.org/10.1027/1901-2276.61.3.4

Iwanicki, E. F., & Schwab, R. L. (1981). A cross validation study of the Maslach Burnout Inventory. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 41*(4), 1167–1174. https://doi.org/10.1177/001316448104100425

Jyrkinen, M. (2014). Women managers, careers and gendered ageism. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, *30*(2), 175–185. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2013.07.002

Kline, R. B. (2016). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling* (4th ed.). The Guilford Press.

Kotter-Grühn, D., & Hess, T. M. (2012). The impact of age stereotypes on self-perceptions of aging across the adult lifespan. *Journals of Gerontology: Series B, 67*(5), 563–571. https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbr153

Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *45*(1), 79–122. https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1994.1027

Levy, B. R. (2003). Mind matters: Cognitive and physical effects of aging self-stereotypes. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, *58*(4), 203–211. https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/58.4.P203

Loretto, W., Duncan, C., & White, P. J. (2000). Ageism and employment: Controversies, ambiguities and younger people's perceptions. *Ageing and Society, 20*(3), 279–302. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X00007741

Lun, M. W. A. (2010). Student knowledge and attitudes toward older people and their impact on pursuing aging careers. *Educational Gerontology*, *37*(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1080/03601270903534770

Mainiero, L. A., & Sullivan, S. E. (2005). Kaleidoscope careers: An alternate explanation for the "opt-out" revolution. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, *19*(1), 106–123. https://doi.org/10.5465/ame.2005.15841962

Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1986). *Maslach Burnout Inventory manual* (2nd ed.). Consulting Psychologists Press.

Mazzetti, G., Vignoli, M., Guglielmi, D., Van der Heijden, B. I. J. M., & Evers, A. T. (2022). You're not old as long as you're learning: Ageism, burnout, and development among Italian teachers. *Journal of Career Development*, *49*(2), 427–442. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845320942838

McWhirter, E. H., Blustein, D. L., & Perry, J. C. (2005). Annunciation: Implementing an emancipatory communitarian approach to vocational psychology. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *33*(2), 215–224. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000004273097

Phillipson, C. (2019). "Fuller" or "extended" working lives? Critical perspectives on changing transitions from work to retirement. *Ageing and Society*, *39*(3), 629–650. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X18000016

Posthuma, R. A., & Campion, M. A. (2009). Age stereotypes in the workplace: Common stereotypes, moderators, and future research directions. *Journal of Management*, *35*(1), 158–188. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206308318617

Radović-Marković, M. (2013). An aging workforce: Employment opportunities and obstacles. *Cadmus: Promoting Leadership in Thought that Leads too Action, 1*(6), 142–155. https://cadmusjournal.org/node/312

Rothermund, K., & Brandtstädter, J. (2003). Age stereotypes and self-views in later life: Evaluating rival assumptions. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *27*(6), 549–554. https://doi.org/10.1080/01650250344000208

Saks, A. M., & Ashforth, B. E. (1999). Effects of individual differences and job search behaviors on the employment status of recent university graduates. *Journal of Vocational behavior*, *54*(2), 335–349. https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1998.1665

Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2007). Dimensions of teacher self-efficacy and relations with strain factors, perceived collective teacher efficacy, and teacher burnout. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99*(3), 611–625. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.99.3.611

van den Heuvel, W. J. A. (2012). Discrimination against older people. *Reviews in Clinical Gerontology*, *22*(4), 293–300. https://doi.org/10.1017/S095925981200010X

van der Horst, M. (2019). Internalised ageism and self-exclusion: Does feeling old and health pessimism make individuals want to retire early? *Social Inclusion*, *7*(3), 27–43. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v7i3.1865

von Hippel, C., Kalokerinos, E. K., & Henry, J. D. (2013). Stereotype threat among older employees: Relationship with job attitudes and turnover intentions. *Psychology and Aging*, *28*(1), 17–27. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029825

von Hippel, C., Kalokerinos, E. K., Haanterä, K., & Zacher, H. (2019). Age-based stereotype threat and work outcomes: Stress appraisals and rumination as mediators. *Psychology and Aging*, *34*(1), 68–84. https://doi.org/10.1037/pag0000308

Warhurst, C., & Nickson, D. (2009). "Who's got the look?" Emotional, aesthetic and sexualized labour in interactive services. *Gender, Work & Organization*, *16*(3), 385–404. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2009.00450.x

Warhurst, C., van den Broek, D., Hall, R., & Nickson, D. (2009). Lookism: The new frontier of employment discrimination? *Journal of Industrial Relations*, *51*(1), 131–136. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022185608096808

Yohai, V. J. (1987). High breakdown-point and high efficiency robust estimates for regression. *The Annals of Statistics, 15*(2), 642–656. https://doi.org/10.1214/aos/1176350366

APPENDIX

Variables affecting the working life of women in Greece:

- *Demographics:*
  Age:
- *Educational level:*
  Primary
  Secondary education
  Bachelor's degree
  Vocational education and training
  Academic degree from a private university
  Postgraduate studies
  Doctoral studies
- *Educational level of the mother:*
  Primary school
  High school
  Higher education
- *Father's educational level:*
  Primary school
  High school
  Higher education
- *Mother's job* (if she is retired, choose professional employment before she retires):
  Public employee
  Private employee
  Freelancer
  Farmer
  Household
  Unemployed
- *Father's job* (if he is retired, choose professional employment before he retires):
  Public employee
  Private employee
  Freelancer
  Farmer
  Household
  Unemployed
- *Marital status:*
  Married
  Single
  Divorced/widowed
  In a relationship
- *Do you have kids?*
  Yes
  No
- *Number of children:*
- *Place of residence:*
- *Place where you grew up:*
- *Recent employment status:*
  I work
  Unemployed — dismissal/termination of contract
  Unemployed — resignation
  I have never worked

- *Briefly write below the reason for resignation* (if you are currently unemployed, please fill in the information in this section based on your previous employment):
  Job position
  Employee
  Supervisor
  Director
  Self-employed
- Is the company/organization you worked is Greek or multinational?
  Greek
  Multinational
- *What is the approximate number of employees of the company you work for?*
  Up to 10 employees
  Up to 50 employees
  Up to 250 employees
  Up to 1000 employees
  I do not know
- *Years of work experience in this job:*
- *Years of work experience from previous jobs* (if this job is/was your first job, put 0):
- *Work sector:*
- *Type of work contract:*
  Full time
  Part-time
- *Type of contract:*
  Long-term
  Fixed-term
  No contract
- *Net monthly income in euros:*
  Up to 600 euros
  600 to 900 euros
  900 to 1200 euros
  1200 to 1600 euros
  Above 1600 euros
  I do not answer
- *Participation in lifelong learning education:*
  Yes
  No
- *Participation in continuing education:*
  Yes
  No

Work burnout questionnaire:

Please read carefully each of the following sentences and then note how often you felt what was described in relation to your work. If you have never felt this way, mark 0 (zero). But if you have felt the emotion described, please note how often you feel it by circling the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how often you have that emotion.

Q1: I feel emotionally exhausted because of my work.
Q2: I feel worn out at the end of a working day.
Q3: I feel tired as soon as I get up in the morning and see a new working day stretched out in front of me.
Q4: I get the feeling that I treat some clients/colleagues impersonally as if they were objects.
Q5: Working with people the whole day is stressful for me.

Q6: I feel burned out because of my work.
Q7: I have become more callous to people since I started doing this job.
Q8: I'm afraid that my work makes me emotionally harder.
Q9: I feel frustrated by my work.
Q10: I get the feeling that I work too hard.
Q11: I'm not really interested in what is going on with many of my customers.
Q12: Being in direct contact with people at work is too stressful.
Q13: I feel as if I'm at my wits' end.
Q14: I have the feeling that my customers blame me for some of their problems.
Q15: I feel full of energy.
Q16: The work I do is useful and full of meaning.
Q17: I feel full of vitality and strength when I work.
Q18: I am excited about my work.
Q19: My work inspires me.
Q20: When I get up in the morning I feel like going to work.
Q21: I feel proud of the work I do.
Q22: When I work I am able to continue my work for a long time.
Q23: My work is a challenge for me.
Q24: In my work, I have great mental endurance.
Q25: I always show persistence in my work even if things are not going well.

Work decision making self-efficacy scale:

After reading the following statements carefully, note how confident you are that you could complete each of them, according to the example. Specifically, 1 = Not at all confidence, 2 = Little confidence, 3 = Medium confidence, 4 = Much confidence, 5 = Complete confidence.

Example: How confident are you that you could: a) Articulate the skills you have developed in your previous jobs?

If your answer was "Medium confidence", you would circle the number 3.

Q1: Find information that interests you on the internet.
Q2: Choose a major from a list of possible majors that interest you.
Q3: Plan a schedule of goals for the next 5 years.
Q4: Determine the actions you would take if you faced problems in your studies.
Q5: Assess accurately your abilities.
Q6: Pursue a profession from a list of possible professions that interest you.
Q7: Determine the actions you must take to successfully complete your studies in the major you have chosen.
Q8: Persist in both your studies and your professional goals even when you get frustrated.
Q9: Determine what would be the ideal profession for you.
Q10: Find out what the work trends in a profession in the decade we are going through.
Q11: Choose a profession that fits your lifestyle.
Q12: Write a good resume.
Q13: Change your field of study if you are not satisfied with your first choice.
Q14: Deciding what is most valuable in a profession.
Q15: Find information on the average annual income of workers in a profession.
Q16: To make a professional decision without worrying about whether it is right or wrong.
Q17: Change the profession if you are not satisfied with what you have chosen.
Q18: Determine if you are willing to make sacrifices to achieve your career goals.
Q19: Talk to someone who already works in the field you are interested in.
Q20: Choose a major of study or a profession that meets your interests.
Q21: Find employees, companies, and organizations that are related to your professional potential.
Q22: Determine the lifestyle you would like to lead in the future.
Q23: Gather information about your higher education studies.
Q24: To successfully take part in an interview for a profession.
Q25: Identify a second study direction or an alternative solution if you cannot follow your first choice.