

# Chapter 1

## Gender Equality and Relevant European Policies Regarding Vocational Education and Labour Market: A Case Study From Greece

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter aims firstly at examining the impact of gender stereotypes on choosing vocational education or profession. Secondly, the relevant policies of European Union and Greece, in particular, are presented and commented upon. For this purpose, relevant data have been collected from four related surveys conducted in the years 2008, 2010, 2014, and 2017, mainly in the high schools of Attica (Greece).*

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*The results from these four surveys only partially confirm the original hypothesis, namely that the gender stereotypes influence the decision-making process of choosing a field of vocational study or profession, but also indicate that there are significant correlations between specific occupations per gender identity and stereotypical perceptions. Finally, the harmonious coexistence of the sexes requires the development of self-knowledge and critical thinking. This can be achieved only by raising the awareness of teachers, who are called to improve the critical self-knowledge and social knowledge of individuals through the implementation of policies regarding school and local society.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Gender stereotypes and attitudes that shape them, combined with other factors, undoubtedly influence the decision-making process of choosing a field of study and a profession. This decision is influenced not so much by the biological aspect of gender (Sex), but mainly from its social perspective. Many external factors are contributing to the preservation of the phenomenon of gender stereotypes in modern societies. The theoretical approaches so far, established during the last six decades, correlate the concept of gender not only with the vocational choice/development, but also with the vocational assessment. Despite the actions/policies that have been agreed and implemented, generally in European Union (EU) and particularly in Greece, to address stereotypes is primarily an individual matter of attitude. In this respect, education plays a crucial role, both in changing these attitudes and in connecting vocational skills with the labour market.

The relationship between education (general or vocational), training and the labour market is widely discussed by many in the literature available internationally. Education, both as an institution and as a process, is utilized for analyzing the social relations of production and labour market, as it is considered to be the area of shaping the professional choices of young people, to a large extent. The international literature emphasizes the role of education, reproducing and cultivating gender stereotypes, because a key feature of the labour market continues to be the strong tendency for vertical and horizontal gender discrimination, with women participating to the non-privileged group. However, despite the institutional and legal changes that have taken place at national, European and international level, women, as well as various ethnic minorities, suffer discrimination in the workplace and their human rights are affected to the greatest extent, with the result that these groups are often led to exclusion. The violation of fundamental social rights is forbidden by many

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