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The relationship between perceived overqualification and counterproductive work behaviors:
The mediating role of burnout and job boredom

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Acknowledgments

As Louis L'Amour once said: "*A good beginning makes a good end*", and as people often say, "*every end comes in hand with a new beginning.*" After a long journey, in a time when the whole planet had to deal with an unprecedented event, that of the COVID-19 pandemic, and after months of hard work towards the realization of this present thesis, I feel the need to thank everyone who stood by my side all the way along for their support, guidance, encouragement and love.

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Abstract

Overqualification denotes a state in which employees possess more skills, abilities and knowledge in relation to the job position they hold. It can be viewed either subjectively or objectively and is often associated with counterproductive work behaviors, work boredom, burnout as well as with low levels of job satisfaction and retention. Hence, the notion of overqualification has been widely researched worldwide. More specifically, in this present thesis, we first examined the direct relationship between perceived overqualification and counterproductive work behaviors. Then, we introduced job boredom and burnout as mediators between perceived overqualification and counterproductive work behaviors.

The pure aim of the thesis was to contribute to the existing literature by examining these concepts in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry by testing if indeed job boredom and burnout mediate the aforementioned direct relationship. In our research, 282 employees from a company operating in the BPO industry responded to our questionnaire, in which anonymity was guaranteed. Conclusions support our initial hypotheses and denote that perceived overqualification is positively related to job boredom, burnout and counterproductive work behaviors. Ultimately, at the end of the thesis, practical and theoretical implications are introduced to top executives and senior leadership teams along with recommendations for future research and limitations of the present study.

Key-Words: Perceived Overqualification, Job Boredom, Burnout, Counterproductive Work Behaviors

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

The notion of overqualification refers to the degree to which employees are equipped with a surplus of skills, abilities, and knowledge compared to the job position they possess (Erdogan et al., 2011; Hultin et al., 2016; Maynard et al., 2006; Yang et al., 2015). Employees working in jobs that are inferior to their qualifications has become a sign of modern days due to high unemployment rates (Hultin et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2015) along with the severe global economic crisis that took place within the last decade (Luksyte, Spitzmueller & Maynard, 2011). Therefore, overqualification became more evident than ever (Reingold, 2009).

Nevertheless, all researchers agree that overqualification refers to excessive levels of knowledge, education, skills, abilities, and experiences that employees possess compared to the job position they hold (Feldman, 1996; Feldman, Leana & Bolino, 2002; Vaisey, 2006). What is more, the European Center for the Development of Vocational Training (2018) maintained that approximately two-fifths of employees in the European Union conceive themselves as overqualified. Based on the above, we can argue that perceived overqualification has turned into a significant concern for employees all over the globe.

Likewise, Congregado et al. (2016) argued that nowadays, the labor market sometimes fails to absorb the increasing supply of knowledgeable individuals, and that is why lots of individuals are forced to compromise for jobs that do not require a plethora of qualifications or skills in an attempt to avoid unemployment and its consequences. That being said, one of these options could be to accept a job position in a BPO's contact center department. That is the reason why the present research is conducted on this industry to examine whether or not individuals employed in the BPO industry feel overqualified.

Further, it is a fact that a large majority of overqualification scientific research has been conducted in Western countries (Sadava, O'connor & McCreary, 2000) and in Western Europe (Verhaest & Omeij, 2006). Surprisingly, according to Görg and Strobl (2003), overqualification is most commonly found in developing countries (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Shen & Kuhn, 2013); nonetheless, it is a fact that only a few studies have taken place in countries outside the West. Therefore, even though Greece is a developed and not a developing country, conducting a research on the Greek reality seems an appropriate research decision.

In depth, overqualification is thought to be a concern of critical importance in Greece if we consider that 11,52% of the unemployed population holds a college degree (OECD, [2022](#)). As a result, this factual reality may lead unemployed individuals to accept jobs that do not fit their profiles or jobs that will under-utilize their knowledge, skills, or abilities, thus making it possible for individuals to develop perceptions of being overqualified. According to Erdogan et al. (2011), those subjective perceptions may have negative consequences both for individuals and organizations, and that is why perceived overqualification has become an emerging scientific topic in the human resource management literature (Chu, 2020; van Dijk, Shantz & Alfes, 2020).

1.1 Aims & Objectives

The central goal of the present master thesis is to present, analyze, and underline the vital role that employees' perceived overqualification plays in the BPO industry companies that operate in Greece. Thus, it is essential to examine the relationship between perceived overqualification and counterproductive work behaviors. Hence, we also examine the mediating role of burnout and job boredom in the aforementioned direct relationship.

1.2 Thesis Structure

This present thesis consists of nine chapters. More specifically, introduction is the first chapter in which the aims, objectives, and the practical pertinence of the research are presented. The second chapter contains the literature review. In more detail, in this chapter, the cohesive scientific literature is given for the following concepts: Overqualification, Job Boredom, Burnout, and Counterproductive Work Behaviors. In the next chapter, the thesis' hypotheses are both described and presented. Research Methodology is the fourth chapter, while results and the data analysis process are discussed in the fifth and sixth chapters. The last three chapters refer to discussion & conclusions, theoretical and practical implications, and limitations.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2. Overqualification

It was not until 1992 that the notion of overqualification received a significant deal of public attention. It all started when the City of New London disqualified and refused to recruit a police officer applicant based on a highly sky-scraping score on an intelligence test. Following this case, even the United States District Court of Connecticut decided that the above-mentioned rationale was correct since the fundamental recruiting aim would be to employ a police officer whose turnover likelihood would be diminished and whose tenure would be perpetually yielded (Demonte & Arnold, 2000).

In an attempt to define the concept of overqualification, it should be highly stressed that it constitutes a highly multi-dimensional variable that both affect and is affected by organizational procedures (Erdogan, Bauer & Karaeminogullari, 2017). Yet, researchers faced great difficulties in plotting a coherent and robust definition. However, attaching some highly valued definitions found throughout overqualification literature would be incremental towards realizing the notion of overqualification. According to Feldman (1996), overqualification is the flip side of underemployment. Thus, underemployment denotes an insignificant employment quality situation when specific job requirement standards are concerned.

Drawing attention to Feldman's (1996) conceptualization, underemployment can be formulated into five attributes:

- Over-education prevalence, meaning that the individual possesses more education than required for carrying out a specific job
- Over-skills acquisition, denoting that the individual is equipped with a surplus of skills and experience that are imperative for handling job tasks
- Forced employment, a situation in which individuals work out of necessity and not out of ambition or aspiration for personal or professional achievement
- Conscious involvement in a part-time job
- Acceptance of a low reimbursement/wage for a job

Generally speaking, overqualification is commonly cited as a unique situation of incompetent employment (Fine & Nevo, 2008) when employees are over-educated, over-experienced, and over-skilled for handling a job that does not require such extensive knowledge, previous associated experience, or immense set of abilities (Johnson and Johnson, 1996; O'Brien, 1986; Thompson et al., 2013; Vagias, 2010).

2.1. Objective and Subjective Underemployment

Another strain in the conceptuality of overqualification is the complexity that researchers faced when trying to operationalize or measure overqualification. In their attempt to operationalize overqualification, Khan and Morrow (1991) divided overqualification into two facets; the subjective underemployment and the subjective one.

Objective underemployment was defined as the disparity between years of college attendance and years of college attendance needed for a specific job. Moreover, subjective underemployment was represented by two nonpartisan measures; the first being "perceived overqualification" and the second one being "no growth". In more detail, perceived overqualification indicates the discrepancy between education and skill underuse while no growth was operationalized as the capability to expand actual knowledge by mastering novel tasks and concepts in the current job (Johnson & Johnson, 1996).

2.2 Objective and Subjective Overqualification

Contemporary overqualification literature (Erdogan et al., 2011; Lobene, Meade & Pond, 2015; Luksyte, Spitzmueller & Maynard, 2011; Maltarich, Reilly & Nyberg, 2011) divides overqualification into two pillars; the objective and the subjective (or perceived) one. Objective overqualification refers to a plethora of distinct qualifications that employees have in their possession (Knowledge, Skills, Abilities) regarding their job requirements (Erdogan et al., 2011; Feldman & Maynard, 2011). On the other hand, according to Yang et al. (2015), perceived overqualification is defined as the degree to which employees believe that they possess an excessive set of qualifications, such as over-education, over-experience, and outstanding abilities, in regards to the job they hold.

Focusing our attention on the concept of perceived overqualification, it should be underlined that it consists of the personal perception of the employee since Luksyte and

Spitzmueller (2011) argue that there is a significant likelihood that employees might perceive themselves as overqualified while they are not in regards to the specific job they hold. This is merely because employees who believe they possess more qualifications than needed for the job to develop a pessimistic mindset accompanied by negative feelings, which, in return, affect their behaviors and attitudes since their aspirations and expectations were neither met nor accomplished (Liu & Wang, 2012; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). In addition, this could thus be explained by the fact that employees perceive themselves as overqualified even in cases in which they do not see any growth or promotion opportunities, which denotes a mismatch between actual job and expected job opportunities (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Liu et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2002).

According to Maynard et al. (2015), employees may not initially conceive themselves as overqualified. This fact is relative in cases in which employees are not familiar with their work duties at an early stage. More specifically, once they are employed and get acquainted with their daily work tasks and responsibilities, employees might realize that their job is not a great fit for providing growth opportunities or challenging them directly, and as a result, this fact leads them towards realizing that their qualifications by far exceed their job requirements. Apart from that, perceived overqualification is often influenced by personality traits (Buunk et al., 2003). In this way of thinking, individuals encompassed with arrogance and high levels of confidence may develop higher expectations due to their narcissistic nature and, as a result, feel entitled to more significant opportunities and outcomes (Brown, 1996; Judge, Scott & Ilies, 2006; Rubb, 2003).

As a common difference ground, we could argue that subjective (perceived) overqualification refers to perceived employee feelings while objective overqualification is more merely conceived as the comparison among knowledge – acquired through continuous education- and skills with job demands and requirements as viewed from an individual scope of analysis (Fine, 2007; Johnson & Johnson, 2000). In a meta-analysis, Johnson and Johnson (2000) also claimed that the discrepancy between expectations and reality (organizational work experience) further enlarges, strengthens, and amplifies perceived overqualification sensitivity and feelings. However, it should also be mentioned that perceived overqualification is generally an emotional state appearing when an employee has a wholly different perception of the job demands (Lobene, Meade & Pond, 2015).

2.3 Overqualification Prolific Reasons

Attention should be placed on the reasons why an individual chooses to accept a job that is inferior to their skills, experience, and educational background and that eventually hold them overqualified. According to Thompson et al. (2013), this could partially be due to factors such as fear of staying unemployed for a long time since individuals may think that staying out of the market will trigger mixed feelings to those who will go through their curriculum vitae in the near future. Thus, health insurance benefits could be another possible reason since human capital may not afford to pay for health bills. Erdogan et al. (2011) concedes with the above-mentioned reasons and also introduce the factor of "economic reality" as another different potential reason. More specifically, when an economic crisis prevails, people may accept an inferior job since this option provides them with some safety and ease of mind. In other words, in an environment in which layoffs and downsizings are present, individuals compromise with an inferior job position due to fear and insecurity. In this way of thinking, Johnson and Johnson (2000) underline that all of the above forces individuals to go the extra mile and take the difficult decision to accept an entry-level job.

According to Erdogan, Bauer and Karaeminogullari (2017), there are eight (8) specific reasons that might force employees to accept inferior jobs. That being said, it would be fruitful to analyze the following eight factors:

- **Education:** Educational level, as well as its accompanying value and quality, is one of the first reasons that vitally contribute to the existence of overqualification. In plain detail, it is a solid fact that especially in Europe and Asia, individuals start their professional journey only when their educational voyage ends. That being said, this social trend may force people to a state of continuous education since they might not be able to a job position that really fits their talents, standards, and aspirations.
- **Experience:** Experience is also a significant factor impregnating overqualification. More specifically, lack of experience may trigger sentiments of fear, and as a result, individuals are willing to invest more in their educational competencies. This fact leads individuals to become over-educated and, therefore, overqualified.

- **Workforce Immigrants:** People who voluntarily immigrate abroad in search of a better professional future may accept inferior job positions in regards to their skills and knowledge capabilities. That could be partially justified if someone takes into consideration the fact that immigrants may lack the needed social capital or any other remarkable capabilities that are required for job placements within the specific country. As an overlapping result, workforce immigrants tend to be overqualified.
- **Gender:** Gender plays a vital role in influencing individuals in making a specific choice since it is a variable that might cultivate a culture of an employment coverage need. More specifically, when taking into consideration old-time stereotypes, it could be argued that were cases in the past in which husbands did want to be the "man of the house" so that being said, they wanted their wives to hold inferior jobs in relation to the job prestige their job positions held. In addition to that, women had to balance their personal-professional-maternity lives, so in some cases, women accepted to accept less demanding jobs so as to be able to acquire the needed balance.
- **Job Search:** Job search could denote a very tiring and emotional state of mind for many individuals since fear of staying out of the market for a long time with its underlying consequences may force unemployed individuals to accept a less challenging job that underutilizes their skills. This case could be more easily conceived when it comes to individuals who enter the market for the first time in their lives.
- **Age:** Age could be another antecedent that contributes to the proliferation of overqualification as researches have shown a significant correlation between the two. More specifically, there are specific indications that show that young employees are more over-educated when it comes to older employees since they want to be better prepared due to the fact that they lack the expected work experience.
- **Previous Employment Experience:** Previous work experience could be another potential factor that both influences and strengthens the prevalence of overqualification. This could be further explained if we would take into consideration cases in which individuals have experienced downsizing,

layoffs, or firings. This devastating past work experience may lead them to lower their aspirations and, therefore, accept inferior jobs.

- **Personality Traits:** Personality traits constitute a significant factor towards overqualification behaviors. In more detail, when it comes to narcissism which is accompanied by excessive levels of confidence, individuals may overestimate themselves and illusionally think that they deserve a specific job for which, in reality they do not. Narcissistic behaviors could also lead people to believe that their current job position does not align with their skills and aspirations, which in turn, may create subjective overqualification feelings.

To sum it up, one could safely argue that overqualification is multi-dimensional variable that is influenced by a tremendous amount of inter-connected factors.

2.3.1 Hiring an overqualified applicant – Pros and Cons

Throughout overqualification literature, there was an established and commonly accepted opinion that overqualified applicants are charged with adverse work outcomes. However, recent scientific literature contradicts this opinion and, on top of that, suggests that overqualification has an accompanying bright facet as well. In the following paragraphs, we analyze whether or not hiring an overqualified applicant is a wise choice to make.

2.3.2 Cons of hiring overqualified applicants

Job dissatisfaction and employees intention to leave the organization are two issues that represent some of the most severe consequences of overqualification since overqualified individuals may feel underestimated, and as a result, these feelings gradually apply to their job performances (Erdogan et al., 2017). More specifically, relative deprivation theory could also explain this above-mentioned fact. According to this theory, when individuals feel that they are entitled to a specific job position in which they do not end up being employed, they gradually begin feeling deprived, and as a result, some of them quit their jobs (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009). Furthermore, when thoroughly investigating overqualification literature, we can safely contend that overqualified individuals are often stigmatized since their hiring and onboarding experience is linked to high levels of risk (Wald, 2005).

In more detail, hiring managers and executives think that hiring an overqualified applicant will trigger a big spend of money, quality, and time since these individuals will eventually quit their jobs once they find a better opportunity that will better suit their profiles and prestige (Gkorezis et al., 2019; Rose, 2005). For these reasons, Porter (2009) underlines that overqualified applicants are often inclined to conceal essential skills or simplify their curriculum vitae not to be perceived as overqualified.

Overall, overqualified employees are often associated with decreased levels of job performance and lower levels of work engagement and increased levels of turnover intentions, work boredom, and counterproductive work behaviors (Fine & Nevo, 2008; Liu et al., 2014; Lobene & Meade, 2010; Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013). Nonetheless, it is withstanding to mention that overqualified employees may also engage in activities that influence mobbing as a result of low self-esteem feelings (Erdogan, Bauer & Karaeminogullari, 2017).

2.3.3 Pros of hiring overqualified applicants

On the other hand, other researchers claim that hiring an overqualified applicant is a positive and strategic move. According to Russell et al. (2016), an overqualified applicant constitutes an under-utilized human resource who has the potential to increase the company's productivity significantly. In the same train of thought, Erdogan et al. (2011) maintain that an overqualified individual may increase innovation levels and also provide the organization with diverse ideas on how processes can change and improve. That being said, it is argued that this individual may become the competitive advantage of the organization. Moreover, hiring an overqualified applicant could signal a strategic move when an organization wants to expand its activities since overqualified individuals could add their knowledge and expertise to the social capital of the organization. As a result, the organization will be significantly benefited since, apart from the acquired knowledge, time and resources will also be saved.

Thus, Thompson et al. (2013) underline that overqualified individuals are a great source of knowledge since they can provide mentorship and guidance to their co-workers, and consequently, productivity may be leveraged. Furthermore, Gallo (2011) mentioned that these individuals might also challenge their co-workers, a fact that will motivate and inspire them to reach the best version of themselves, both personally and professionally. In the same year, Erdogan et al. (2011) introduced the idea of short-term benefits. More specifically, they

declared that overqualified applicants are top-performers by nature. This fact signifies that even if there is a high turnover risk, it is always worth hiring these individuals since they will always perform exceptionally, and this performance will cover the long-time turnover effects due to the fact that hiring less qualified employees in the first place would not be sufficient. Last but not least, Zhang et al. (2016) noted overqualified individuals might not engage with negative work behavior outcomes, but on the contrary, their proactive behaviors will help the organization to grow significantly.

2.4 Theoretical Approaches of Overqualification

It is of critical importance to investigate different theories based on which researchers have established different approaches and conclusions. In the following paragraphs, some of the most crucial social psychology theories are presented.

2.4.1 Equity Theory

It is without a doubt that when individuals invest multiple resources into education and skills refinement, there is always the possibility of either becoming overqualified or gradually experiencing greater aspirations. As a result, individuals may start being preoccupied with a state of inequity feelings. More specifically, Adams (1965) first developed and expanded equity theory as a means of conceiving the social exchange process in which employees' reactions to the above-mentioned state of inequity are based. Thus, equity theory consists of the following three main steps:

- Firstly, employees, as human beings, start to assess their ongoing relationships with their co-workers by taking into consideration the ratio of the outcomes they acquire to the inputs they have provided in the internal context of this relationship.
- Secondly, if the acquired outcome to provided input ratio is neither evaluated nor perceived as equal, then an inequity comes to life.
- Thirdly, once inequity feelings are established, then sentiments of anger or annoyance of under-honor or under-reward may surface. Respectively, on the other hand, feelings of guilt for being over-honored or over-rewarded might also arise (Miles, Hatfield & Huseman, 1994).

Based on specific personality traits (Huseman, Hatfield & Miles, 1987), individuals may react differently in situations in which inequity exists. More specifically, according to Feldman et al. (2002), individuals compare the current job position they hold with one of their co-workers, and that fact might happen either on a conscious or unconscious basis. In addition, Liu and Wang (2012) claim that there are also specific cases in which the above-mentioned comparisons may trigger individuals to start thinking about equity. In more detail, comparisons can consciously take place in cases in which overqualified individuals are placed in the same pool of opportunities for promotion (Thompson, 2009).

2.4.2 Relative Deprivation Theory

Relative deprivation theory was first introduced to explain the discrepancy soldiers were feeling in terms of job dissatisfaction with their job conditions when objectively measured (Stouffer et al., 1949). Crosby (1976) mentioned that this specific theory serves as a means to decode better the difference between individuals' subjective feelings and their objective contextual circumstances. It was not until six years later when Crosby (1982) expanded this theory and attested that individuals might long for more than they possess and consequently experience feelings of deprivation since they might feel entitled to something but not have it.

According to Hobfoll (1989), the overlapping result of any deprivation feelings could be enmity, frustration, acrimony, and moral shock. Thus, Mummendey et al. (1999) also outlined that there are two primary deprivation types; the first being egoistical deprivation and the second being fraternal deprivation. Additionally, the first primary type of deprivation, the egoistical one, takes place at the moment which individuals compare themselves with others, while the second type, the fraternal one, is introduced when people compare their own social group with that of others.

Drawing consistency of relative deprivation theory, overqualification is experienced when employees who might subjectively perceive themselves as overqualified hold the belief that they should have held a higher status job position that would be in accordance with their level of accomplishments. Consequently, when this wishful thinking is not achieved, individuals become deprived (Feldman et al., 2002). Thus, Hu et al. (2015) contend that at the time in which deprivation feelings start to arise, individuals realize that their desires and aspirations are forever refuted, a situation which worsens when the gap between actual and

preferable job conditions expands. That being said, it is clearly established that all of the above-mentioned feelings are born due to individuals' subjective evaluations (McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011). To sum it up, relative deprivation theory suggests that when employees want an article and feel that they totally deserve to have it but do not (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009), they develop feelings of frustration which are expected to trigger negative reactions (Crosby, 1984).

2.4.3 Person-Job Fit Theory

Caplan (1987) underlined that the Person-Environment (P-E) fit theory clarifies how individuals can adjust to their work environments. Thus, part of this theory is built on the basis of accomplishment between an individual's traits and their job duties. As a result, it is of critical importance to theoretically investigate the person-job (P-J) fit theory which consists of two primary dimensions; the first one being the fit between demands and abilities and the other being the fit between needs and supplies (Cable & Edward, 2004; Edwards, 1991).

More specifically, in regards to demands-abilities fit, a comparison between the individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities with the ones that the job requires is established while the needs-supplies fit examines which needs or desires of the individual are being met on their job (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). All in all, when the comparison between demands and abilities turns in favor of abilities, then individuals feel under-utilized, and as a result, they experience overqualification feelings (Bills, 1992; Edwards et al., 2006). That being said, the person-job fit theory can also determine overqualification feelings since when the individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities are not a perfect match with the needed job duties and tasks, then counterproductive work behaviors could be enforced (Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013).

2.5 Job Boredom

Job boredom constitutes a widely researched notion in the 21st century, following the rising research interest in the 20th century. According to James (1890), work boredom results from the employee's perception of the time spent executing a specific job when this time does not yield productive outcomes. Thus, Davies (1926) claimed that boredom constitutes a situation of mental fatigue that employees feel due to a complete lack of interest when they need to execute repetitive tasks. In addition, Mils (1959) underlined that work boredom is a personal and emotional situation that individuals experience and that could be defined as the acquired experience that the employees receive when there is an absolute lack of goal

accomplishments, while Greeson (1953) described it as a situation that surfaces when employees are in need of job enrichment initiatives since their current roles are not exciting enough.

In the same train of thought, job boredom was captured as a generally inclined emotional and physical fatigue state which comes to life when employees tend to reject the idea of personally committing to their organization (Pines & Kafry, 1978) while Farmer and Sundberg (1986) suggested that boredom arises when people are neither challenged nor motivated. Five years later, Sundberg et al. (1991) noted that their initial claim is confirmed and that thus, this situation denotes a direct relationship between the individual's perceptions and work duties. Nevertheless, the most commonly used definition sets boredom as a dissatisfaction state solely attributed to an environment where employees are not encouraged to go the extra mile (Mikulas & Vodanovich, 1993).

Similarly, as mentioned above, job boredom is an emotional state reaction triggered when individuals deal with tasks of repetition and routine on a daily basis. For that reason, O'Hanlon (1981) mentioned that boredom constitutes a unique psycho-physiological condition that comes to life due to employees' reactions to excessive exposure to tedious processes that lack challenging motives. In addition, it was also suggested that the state of boredom depends on the individual's personality traits since each employee may experience or conceive boredom differently (Kass, Vodanovich & Callender, 2001; Mikulas & Vodanovich, 1993b). However, without a doubt, when boredom feelings emerge, individuals' chances of turnover intentions augment. (Mael & Jex, 2015; Spector et al., 2006)

Notably, Van Tilburg and Igou (2011) mentioned that individuals who experience job boredom might think that their ongoing situation is encompassed with an unchallenging job meaning and that formats a new motives-free environment. An equally significant aspect of the opinion mentioned above is also supported by Barbalet (1999) who confirmed that job meaning lack triggers the emerging states of work boredom. This fact is wholly explained if we consider that boredom is an evergreen situation in which individuals neither feel appreciated nor challenged to execute their work tasks and go above and beyond (Pekrun et al., 2010). As a result, job boredom from an emotional viewpoint inscribes job meaning's lack of initiative triggering negative organizational outcomes.

All in all, Rothin and Werder (2007) claimed that job boredom is enforced by three main factors which signal that individuals have unclearly established work duties. More specifically, tediousness is the first factor, while lack of challenges and interest are the other two, respectively. As a result, work boredom could cause long-term physical illnesses, such as exhaustion, depression, stress, and counterproductive work behaviors, such as increased absenteeism or lack of organizational commitment (Fox, Spector & Miles, 2001). To sum up, it is normal for individuals to feel bored at any point, but this fact does not necessarily correlate with work boredom-related feelings since if boredom is not present at all times, then long-term adverse outcomes cannot be triggered.

2.6 Burnout

The concept of burnout is considered to be complex since multiple factors account for it. Burnout literature has proved that burnout is formed by employees' experiences (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001) as it is conceived as a prolonging response to chronic interpersonal and emotional stress workplace factors that affect both the physical and psychological health of employees (Maslach, 2003). In detail, Freudenberger (1974) was one of the first researchers to investigate the notion of burnout when noticing the augmenting psychological pressure employees were experiencing across different industries. In this way of thinking, it was first hypothesized that the more an employee is committed to their work, the greater performance pressure will be experienced.

According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), burnout is often used to describe individuals' emotional exhaustion. More specifically, burnout is considered a negative and rather persistent work mindset state in which individuals feel exhausted. Thus, burnout is often partnered with feelings of discomfort while also with decreasing motivation senses and increasing negative work behaviors. Similarly, Maslach and Jackson (1986) defined burnout as employees' psychological and physical reactions to excessive stress levels along with disappointment from their work environments. Furthermore, Cropanzano et al. (2003) affirmed the aforementioned definition and on top of that, added chronic fatigue.

The work of Maslach and Jackson (1981) was a significant milestone towards burnout literature. More specifically, the three-component conceptualization of the burnout concoct

was created, which today is known as the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach, 1998; Maslach & Jackson, 1986). In reality, the Maslach Burnout Inventory construct is composed of three main dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment (Brenninkmeijer & VanYperen, 2003). Thus, it is of critical importance to stress that the significance of this construct is owed to the fact that it situates individuals' stress experiences within a collective state of affairs (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). However, we should mention that the MBI construct is widely used for burnout measurement even though it was initially developed with exclusive application to professions in which employees work alongside with other people (Demerouti et al., 2003).

Following the MBI construct, emotional exhaustion is thought the most important element among the other two components since it clearly represents the fundamental stress dimension of burnout (Maru, 2002). More clearly, emotional exhaustion is experienced when individuals feel that are mentally drained as well as depleted of all of their emotional and physical resources (Maslach, 1998). In other words, emotional exhaustion takes place at the time when employees feel overwhelmed and lack the needed energy to face tomorrow (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1997). Lastly, it should also be underlined that work conflicts and work overload are the primary sources that lead to emotional exhaustion (Maslach, 1998).

In the second place, depersonalization occurs after individuals' emotional exhaustion – which might be perceived as the first phase - and often comes as a direct response to job stressors (Maru, 2002). In more detail, the notion of depersonalization signifies the individuals' organizational detachment and denotes the inter-personal facet of burnout (Maslach, 1998). Thus, depersonalization calls out to cynical behaviors which reflect the distance attitudes that employees cultivate towards their organization, a situation which can also be described as defense coping (Brandes et al., 2008; Brandes & Das, 2006; Lee & Ashforth, 1996). All in all, it could be maintained that depersonalization leads individuals to be equipped with a detached or a dehumanized attitude (Maslach, 1982).

As the last step, it is also of equal importance to analyze the final dimension of the MBI construct, that of personal accomplishment. According to Brenninkmeijer and VanYperen, (2003), personal accomplishment denotes individuals' demotivated sense of competency in

comparison to their past performances. In other words, it explains the incompetency feelings and lack of motivation for achievement that employees develop (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). Moreover, Maslach & Leiter (1997) argue that employees start developing professional inefficacy symptoms due to reduced self-efficacy feelings, meaning they feel they are neither capable of being successful nor capable of making a difference. Lastly, it should be underlined that the dimension of personal accomplishment delineates the self-evaluation component of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2008).

2.7 Counterproductive Work Behaviors

Over the last decades, solid theoretical research has been performed on counterproductive work behaviors (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Liu et al., 2015; Luksyte, Spitzmueller & Maynard, 2011). To begin with, according to Spector and Fox (2006), counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) constitute voluntary acts that intend to harm or even to harm the organization and all stakeholders involved. Similarly, Spector, Bauer and Fox (2010) argued that counterproductive work behaviors transgress social rules along with norms with the intent to harm other individuals (CWB-I) or the organization (CWB-O). Likewise, Marcus and Schuler (2004) provided a general interpretation of counterproductive work behaviors by highlighting that all kinds of counterproductive work behaviors have in common one specific behavior: the voluntary and potentially harmful acts that aim to refute and discredit the bespoke interests of the organization.

Based on the above, we could argue that counterproductive work behaviors could either be interpersonal or against the organization (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Berry, Ones & Sackett, 2007). More specifically, interpersonal counterproductive work behaviors (CWB-I) could outburst by involving cursing, making jokes that are offensive or embarrassing co-workers in public (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Thus, these behaviors might also simply involve refusal to volunteer or to be a team player thus, also denial to provide any kind of help (Thau, Aquino & Poortvliet, 2007; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). In the latter case, that of CWB-O, individuals may choose to provide damage to the organization by working slowly, taking longer breaks, putting little effort, or stealing (Zhao, Peng & Sheard, 2013).

All in all, Thau, Aquino and Poortvliet (2007) argued that it does not matter if these behaviors target either the interpersonal or the organizational dimension because they constitute non-accepted work behaviors that, in the end, cause damage to organizational processes. Similarly, Dalal (2005) mentioned that both dimensions could not be distinguished. Instead, researchers should place their spotlight focus rather on the sources that influence individuals to engage in counterproductive work behaviors and not on the dimensions (Bies & Tripp, 2005)

Chapter 3 – Hypotheses Development

The notion of overqualification refers to the degree to which employees are equipped with a surplus of skills, abilities, and knowledge compared to the job position they possess (Erdogan et al., 2011; Maynard, Joseph & Maynard, 2006). Over the years, overqualification has piqued the interest of researchers worldwide (Buchel & Mertens, 2004; Erdogan et al., 2020; Maynard, Joseph & Maynard, 2006; Maynard & Feldman, 2011; Peiro, Agut & Grau, 2010), as employees perceiving themselves as overqualified has turned into a widespread phenomenon on a global scale (McKee-Ryan & Harvey 2011). In their attempt to measure overqualification, researchers came up with two aspects: the objective and the subjective one (Arvan et al., 2019).

According to Liu and Wang (2012), perceived overqualification is thought to be a more direct index of job attitudes and behaviors. For that reason, the large majority of studies around overqualification adopt the subjective (or perceived) aspect of it. According to Erdogan et al. (2011), subjective overqualification is best suited for psychological research purposes due to the fact that measures for its opposite aspect, that of the objective overqualification, tend to solely center their attention to a specific area of skills, abilities, and qualifications that are compulsory by the job. Therefore, in this present study, a perceptual measure of overqualification was applied in order to explore the process by which employees identify themselves as overqualified.

In addition, counterproductive work behaviors signal employees' conscious and deliberate actions that aim to threaten organization and/or its employees (Berry, 2012) and therefore, harmful effects are generated (Fox, Spector & Miles, 2001). To put in a more specific way, Dalal (2005) argued that counterproductive work behaviors denote employees' deliberate behaviors that impair the conforming interests of organizations. Hence, in the existing scientific literature, it is maintained that counterproductive work behaviors may appear in different forms, such as exhibiting a bad behavior (Griffin & Lopez, 2005), criminal behaviors (Hogan & Hogan, 1989), anti-social behaviors (Giacalone & Greenberg, 1997), behaviors that enforce antagonism (Lehman & Simpson, 1992), aggressiveness (Douglas & Martinko, 2001), vengeance (Bies, Tripp & Kramer, 1997; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997) along with behaviors that influence violence or mobbing (Knorz & Zapf, 1996). Significantly, counterproductive work

behaviors have a detrimental aim towards organizations and employees which consequently, could affect organizational productive and employee effectiveness (Fox, Spector & Miles, 2001). All in all, according to Fine (2012) counterproductive work behaviors could serve as a mechanism that could uncover and also, disclose organizational malfunctions.

Based on the above, we could support that perceived overqualification and counterproductive work behaviors are significantly related. Thus, relative deprivation theory could provide a solid explanation for the above-mentioned relation. In detail, relative deprivation theory suggests that when individuals compare their qualifications and benefits with those of others, they might feel deprived or frustrated due to the fact that they feel they deserve more than others. According to Zhu and Zhang (2021) this comparison triggers negative emotions, such as disappointment, sorrow and annoyance. As a result, these feelings may lead to counterproductive work behaviors. Furthermore, Fox and Spencer (2001) added another dimension that explains the phenomenon. More specifically, they argue that employees who conceive themselves as overqualified exhibit such behaviors because they identify that their resources in terms of knowledge, skills, abilities and energy are wasted. Likewise, Berkowitz (1989) underlined that when employees sense an annihilation of their resources, they detect that they are hampered from their goals and aspirations and as a result, they might react to this situation by engaging in counterproductive work behaviors.

Taken together, a vast majority of scientific studies have proven that perceived overqualification triggers negative feelings and detrimental reactions on individuals (Lobene & Meade, 2010; Liu et al., 2015; Lobene, Meade & Pond, 2015). Thus, counterproductive work behaviors could be such a reaction (Luksyte et al., 2011; Fine & Edward, 2017). Based on the foregoing theories and findings, the first hypothesis stipulated as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Perceived overqualification will be positively related to counterproductive work behaviors.

Further, Person-Job (P-J) fit theory could provide great insights on how and why perceived overqualification is experienced (Liu et al., 2015). In more detail, according to Kristof-Brown and Guay (2011), P-J fit determines the match or compatibility between the individual and the job. Thus, perceived overqualification is experienced when employees judge that there is an incompatibility between their qualifications and job demands (Kristof-Brown,

Barrick & Stevens, 2005). As a result, negative feelings may come up, such as work boredom (Edwards & Van Harrison, 1993).

Further, according to Fischer (1993), job boredom constitutes an unpleasant feeling designated by low stimulation and high dissatisfaction levels resulting from an unexciting work environment (Stein et al., 1995). Provided that job boredom triggers employees' emotional reactions to such depressing work environments, Liu and Wang (2012) maintained that boredom could be conceived by employees when they detect an underutilization of their abilities (Caplan & Jones, 1975; Erdogan et al., 2011) or at times that a mismatch between their skills and their job requirements is observed (Reijseger et al., 2013). Spector and Fox (2006) maintained that workplace stressors can trigger negative emotions to employees that can foster engagement in counterproductive work behaviors. Hence, following this argument, Watt and Hargis (2010) found a positive connection between perceived overqualification and job boredom. In addition to that, a great scientific body has also found that job boredom was related to deviating behaviors (Gkorezis & Vatou, 2018) and also to counterproductive work behaviors (Bruursema et al., 2011). Thus, a positive relation between boredom and counterproductive work behaviors, such as sabotage and abuse was also established across multiple studies (Drory, 1982; van Hooff & van Hooff, 2014). Based on the foregoing discussion, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 2a: Perceived overqualification will be positively related to job boredom.

Hypothesis 2b: Job boredom will be positively associated with counterproductive work behaviors.

Hypothesis 3: Job boredom will mediate the relationship between perceived overqualification and counterproductive Work Behaviors.

Furthermore, burnout could be described as employees' extended emotional responses to job stressors (Maslach, 2003). In detail, burnout consists of three dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization (Cynicism) and Professional Inefficacy (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). According to Gorman (2007) burnout is a widespread phenomenon affecting individuals all around the world and penetrates different occupation fields (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006), such as call center agents (Wegge et al., 2006).

One of the most prestigious conceptual frameworks to study burnout effects is the Conservation of Resources model (Bakker, Demerouti & Verbeke, 2004; Halbesleben, 2010; Hobfoll & Schumm, 2009). In more detail, this model aims to explain the reasons why individuals experience burnout by integrating a perspective of resources. More specifically, resources have been defined as “those objects, conditions, energies or individual characteristics that are valued in their own right, or that are valued because they act as conduits to the achievement or protection of valued resources” (Hobfoll, 2001, p. 339). As a result, a potential loss or threat of individuals’ resources could be the reason that individuals experience burnout (Halbesleben, 2006; Hobfoll, 2001).

Further, according to Hobfoll and Schumm (2009), the conservation of resources model relies on two dependent principles. In detail, firstly, potential loss of resources adds more to strain than does gain of resources and secondly, individuals feel that they need to proliferate their existing resources in order to gather new resources or to block their loss. As a result, when individuals face potential threat or resource loss, they tend to react in a way that minimizes the strain, a fact that could potentially trigger detrimental results in case individuals fail to do so (Bakker, Demerouti & Verbeke, 2004; Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007). Hence, according to Liang and Hsieh (2007), engagement in counterproductive work behaviors could be an underlying result.

Even though overwhelming job demands and work overload can trigger employees’ experience of burnout (Bakker, Demerouti & Verbeke, 2004; Maslach & Leiter, 2008), burnout could also result from inadequate workload or even underload as a consequence of repetitive and monotonous job tasks (Maslach et al., 2001). If we also integrate the conservation of resources model in the discussion, we could maintain that an insufficient workload will trigger employees’ feelings of potential resources loss and as a result, burnout will be experienced (Hobfoll & Schumm, 2009). Hence, work underload could be measured either qualitatively (e.g. job boredom, unchallenging tasks) or quantitatively (limited activity). According to Maslach (1998), the above-mentioned measurement types could lead to burnout or even to boredom strain (Parasuraman & Purohit, 2000).

In addition, we could argue that individuals who perceive themselves as overqualified may be more vulnerable to three dimensions of burnout due to the fact that their workload may

seem inadequate. More specifically, the notion of individuals who think they are overqualified may apply to both qualitative and quantitative underload concepts since in the first case, employees handle tasks that are inferior to their skills while in the second case, this skills surplus allows them to complete them really fast and as a result, they may feel bored. Although there are scarce researches examining the relationship between perceived overqualification and burnout, we hypothesize this relationship in light of the conservations of model resources model (Halbesleben, 2006).

More specifically, the model claims that individuals seek to retain, protect and build their resources due to the fact that loss or threat of resources are devastating for them (Hobfoll, 2001). Consequently, it is hypothesized that employees who perceive themselves as overqualified may also perceive that their resources are being depleted and waster and as a result, they might feel emotionally exhausted since they are not given the chance to apply for their skills, abilities and qualifications on the job (Burriss, 1983). From this viewpoint, employees may engage to counterproductive work behaviors (Spector & Fox, 2005).

Hence, it also expected that these employees that may also feel that their skills are neither enriched nor utilized and consequently, in their attempt to protect their depleting resources, they might distance themselves from their organization which denotes high levels of cynicism behaviors (Bolino & Feldman, 2000; Neveu, 2007). Lastly, in case employees feel that they their skills cannot be applied, they might also perceive that are inefficient (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). As a result, it is hypothesized that perceived overqualified individuals will experience a stressful situation that might result in a behavioral strain (e.g., CWB) as the outcome of the three burnout dimensions (Luksyte, Spitzmueller & Maynard, 2011). Based on the foregoing discussion, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 4a: Perceived overqualification will be positively correlated with job Burnout.

Hypothesis 4b: Burnout will be positively correlated with counterproductive work behaviors.

Hypothesis 5: Burnout will mediate the relationship between perceived overqualification and counterproductive work behaviors.

Chapter 4 – Methodology

4.1 – Research Type

According to Patten and Galvan (2019), the spectrum of empirical research solely focuses on making outlined and thorough observations by participating and therefore, engaging in a strict procedure mitigating from a compact commitment of a systematic cognition and experiment towards examining variables. Hence, the significant importance of this research type aligns with the fact of the “indisputable” truth since any conclusions drawn are accompanied by concrete, valid and confirmable evidence. In addition, Berliner (2002) arguably underlines that empirical research has in its fundamental core the study value of a certain phenomenon at its natural space which signals the valuable contribution of well-reasoned outcomes.

In the same train of thought, it would be beneficial to target our spotlight focus on the value that quantitative research has to offer to the execution of empirical research. According to Goertz and Mahoney (2012), the notion of quantitative research, by its genuine definition, nature, and meaning, refers to statistical universalities that are merely encompassed with deriving results and denouements of a representative sample of all parties involved. On top of that, it appears that sampling is inextricably linked to the process of quantitative research since it is a crucial step towards ensuring the quality of the conclusions drawn. All in all, in this present study, for all the above-mentioned reasons, the research type that was conducted was quantitative, empirical, and sampling via electronic questionnaires.

4.2 Research & Data Collection Method

The research took place between Dec 27 to Jan 24, 2021. More specifically, taking into consideration the severe outburst of COVID-19 cases in Greece, all questionnaires were shared in an electronic form by taking advantage of Google, and thereby, “Google forms” were utilized. It is withstanding to mention, that it was decided to opt for a questionnaire, as this option is considered a great fit since questionnaires administer researchers with the ability to execute a certain type of research and at the same time, collect a significantly generous bulk of data in a confined lapse of time (Galesic et.al, 2009).

In regards to the distribution of the electronic questionnaires, it is worth underlining that they were all shared within a major BPO multinational company. Thus, when it comes to the language of the questionnaire, all questions were in their original English version since English is the official language of the companies and as a result, the need for translation was frivolous.

All participants were highly encouraged to provide honest answers as it was crystal clear and guaranteed that their responses would remain anonymous and no further info would be internally shared with those companies. That being said, anonymity gives a solid motive for unbiased answers due to the fact that anonymous surveys boost higher disclosure of delicate information (Murdoch et. al 2014). Lastly, as far as the research population is concerned, in total numbers, the questionnaire was forwarded to a total of 341 employees.

A total of 341 questionnaires were sent to BPO-industry employees, and 282 were received, generating an 83% response rate. It is essential to mention that all questionnaires were adequately submitted and that none of them had any missing questions. In addition, there were only 6 cases in which age or organizational tenure numbers were not integers, so in this case, those numbers were either rounded to the nearest integer or not using the following rule: If the number had at its not integer part any number from 0 to 4, then we kept the integer part, and in case the number had at its not integer part any number greater than 4, then the number was rounded to the next integer. As the last step, all data were encoded and imported to the statistical software suite developed by IBM called SPSS Statistics, while all graphs and tables were created with the help of Google Sheets.

4.3 Sample Analysis

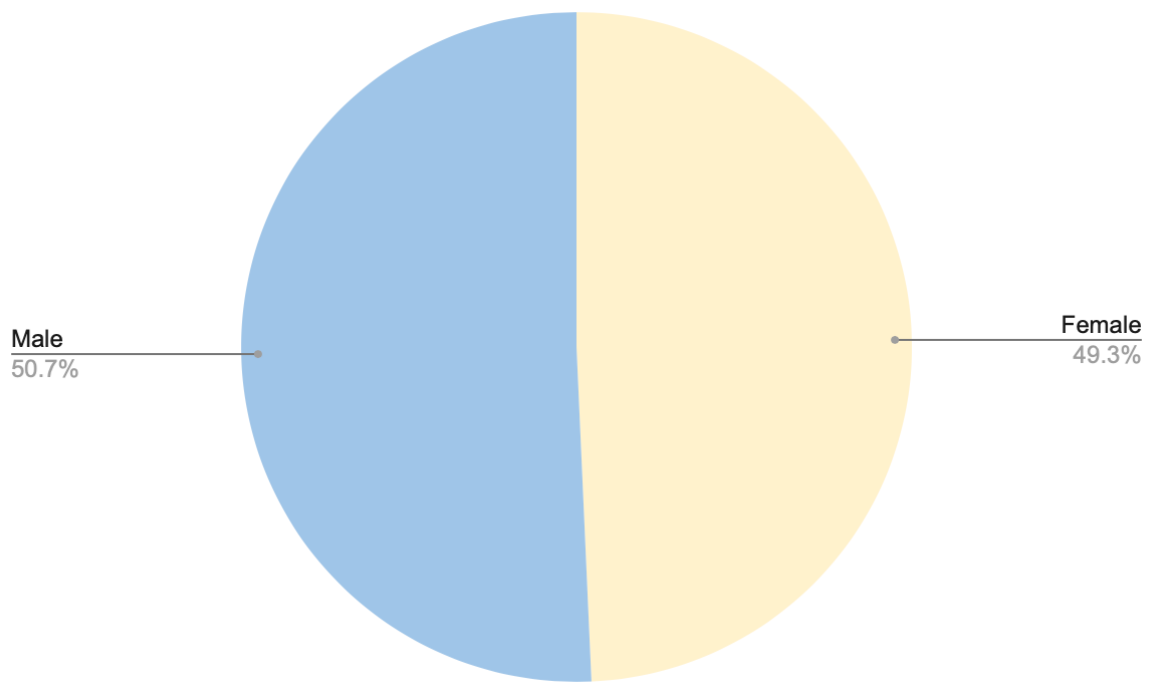
The control group of our research consists of 282 employees. Regarding our first demographic variable, "Gender" (Graph & Table 1), we calculated that 49.3% of the participants were women and the remaining 50.7% were men. As a result, we could argue that the data represent gender perceptions. Regarding "Age" (Graph & Table 2), the large majority was between 18-29, at 52.8%, while the age group 30-39 represented 26.6% of the sample. In addition, age groups 40-49 and 50 or greater represented 17% and 3.5%, respectively.

In regards to "Employment Status" (Graph & Table 3), around 50% of participants work full time with definite contract agreements, while 45% is evenly split between full-time (fixed term) and part-time employees, and lastly, 4.5% of participants work under part-time fixed contracts. As far as "Organizational Tenure" (Graph & Table 4) is concerned, the vast majority of approximately 72% works at the company up to 5 years, while 22% are employed for more than five but less than ten years and only 6% of the participants are part of the company for more than ten but less than 15 years. Lastly, 1 out of 4 participants is a high school graduate, 1 out of 3 holds a master's degree, 2 out of 5 participants are bachelor degrees' holders, and only 2 participants held PhDs (Graph & Table 5).

Graphs & Tables

Table 1 - Gender Breakdown

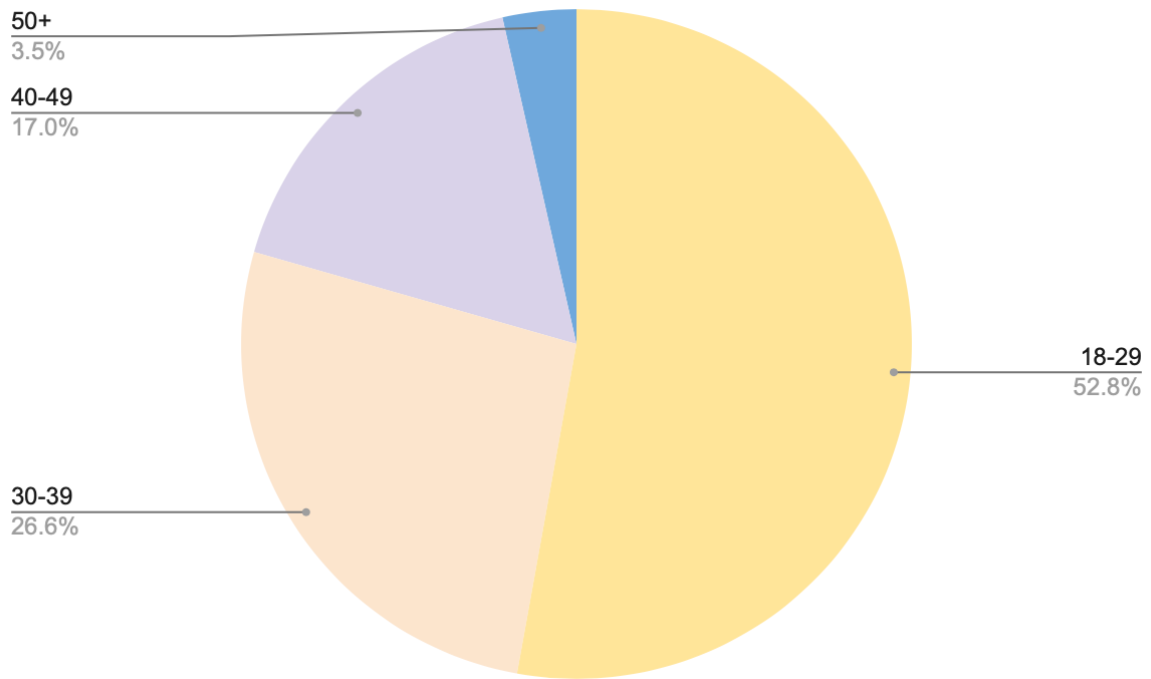
Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	139	49.3%	49.3%	49.3%
Male	143	50.7%	50.7%	100.0%
Total	282	100.0%	100.0%	



Graph 1. 1 – Gender Breakdown

Table 2 - Age Breakdown

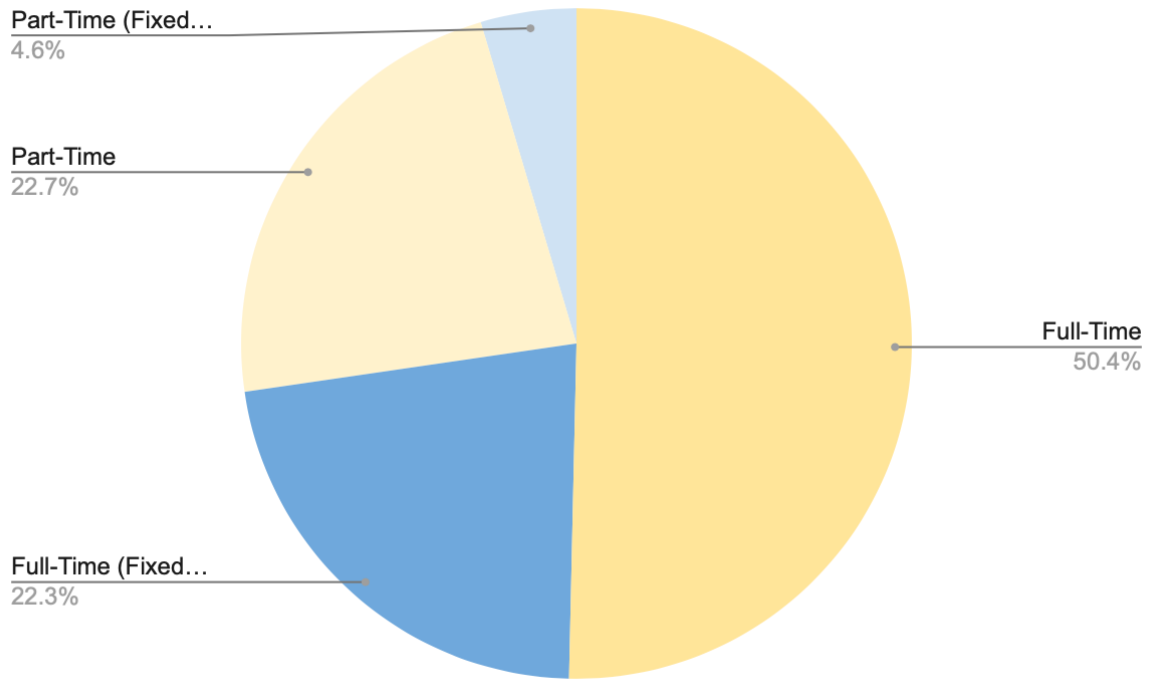
Age	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-29	149	52.8%	52.8%	52.8%
30-39	75	26.6%	26.6%	79.4%
40-49	48	17.0%	17.0%	96.5%
50+	10	3.5%	3.5%	100.0%
Total	282	100.0%	100.0%	



Graph 1. 2 – Age Breakdown

Table 3 - Employment Status

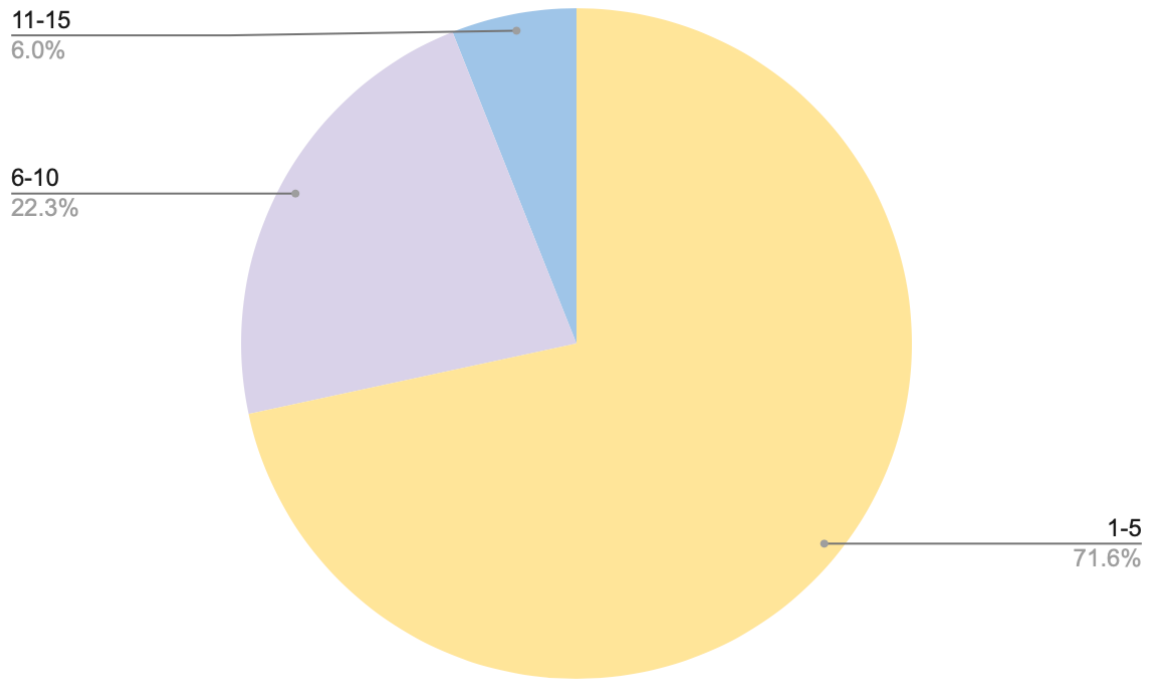
Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Full-Time	142	50.4%	50.4%	50.4%
Full-Time (Fixed Term)	63	22.3%	22.3%	72.7%
Part-Time	64	22.7%	22.7%	95.4%
Part-Time (Fixed Term)	13	4.6%	4.6%	100.0%
Total	282	100.0%	100.0%	



Graph 1. 3 - Employment Status

Table 4 - Organizational Tenure

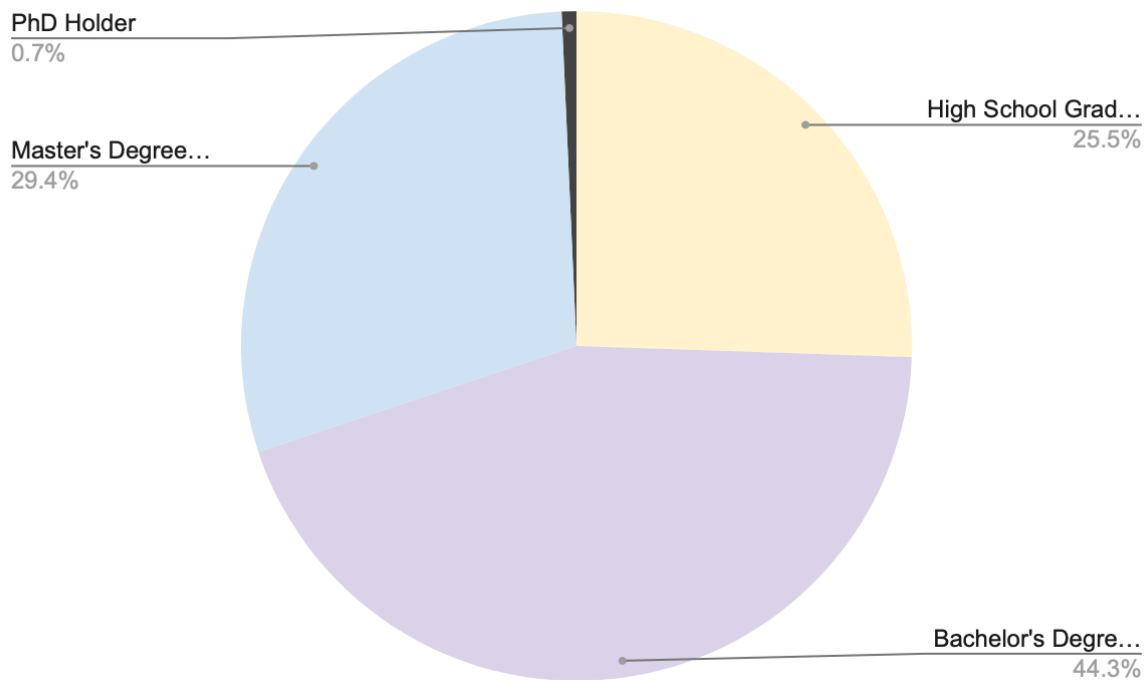
Organizational Tenure	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-5	202	71.6%	71.6%	71.6%
6-10	63	22.3%	22.3%	94.0%
11-15	17	6.0%	6.0%	100.0%
15+	0	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	282	100.0%	100.0%	



Graph 1. 4 - Organizational Tenure

Table 5 - Educational Background

Education	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
High School Graduate	72	25.5%	25.5%	25.5%
Bachelor's Degree Holder	125	44.3%	44.3%	69.9%
Master's Degree Holder	83	29.4%	29.4%	99.3%
Ph.D. Holder	2	0.7%	0.7%	100.0%
Total	282	100.0%	100.0%	



Graph 1. 5 - Educational Background

4.4 Measures

A seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree was implemented as well as utilized for the measurement of most research items while some other items were on a five-point Likert scale basis and on a scale ranging from 1= “Never” to 7= “Every day”. By the same token, “Explanatory Factor Analysis” (“EFA”) was successfully postured (“maximum likelihood extraction method”; “promax rotation”; cutoff value = 0.30”).

4.4.1 “Perceived Overqualification”

“Perceived Overqualification” was assessed by using nine items in total, as formulated by Maynard, Joseph and Maynard (2006) on a seven-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Somewhat Disagree, 4=Neither Agree nor Disagree, 5=Somewhat Agree, 6=Agree, 7=Strongly Agree). Sample items include “My job requires less education than I have” and “Someone with less education than myself could perform well on my job”. Cronbach’s alpha was 0.869

4.4.2 “Job Boredom”

“Job Boredom” was measured by taking into consideration six items, in a seven-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Somewhat Disagree, 4=Neither Agree nor Disagree, 5=Somewhat Agree, 6=Agree, 7=Strongly Agree) as developed in the research of Reijseger et al., (2013). Sample items include “I feel bored at my job ”, and “At work, time goes by very slowly” Cronbach’s alpha was 0.872

4.4.3 “Burnout”

“Burnout” was measured by taking into consideration sixteen items, in a seven-point Likert scale (1=“Never” to 7=“Every Day”) as developed in the research of Maslach, Jackson and Leiter (1997) in order to measure the three dimensions that burnout is consisted of: Exhaustion, Cynicism and Professional Inefficacy. Sample items include “I efficiently solve any problems that may arise in my work ”, “I doubt the significance of my work” and “When I finish work I feel so tired I can’t do anything else”. Cronbach’s alpha for Emotional Exhaustion was 0.871 while cronbach’s alphas were 0,794 and 0,711 for Cynicism and Professional Inefficacy respectively.

4.4.4 “Counterproductive Work Behaviors”

“Counterproductive Work Behaviors” were measured by taking into consideration twelve items (Bennett & Robinson, 2000) based on a five-point Likert scale (1=“Never”, 2=“Rarely”, 3=“Sometimes”, 4=“Often” and 5=“Always”). Sample items include “I behaved in an unpleasant manner toward my supervisor / a co-worker ”, “I spend time on tasks unrelated to work ” and “I take unnecessary breaks”. Cronbach’s alpha was 0.933.

4.4.5 Control Variables

Apart from the above mentioned variables, some other variables were controlled in an individual level. In more detail, those variables include “Gender” (Coding: 1=“Male” and 2=“Female”), “Age” (Respondents were asked to submit their age with an integer number), “Employment Status” (Coding: 1=“Full-Time”, 2=“Full-Time (Fixed Term), 3=“Part-Time” and 4=“Part-Time (Fixed Term), “Tenure” (Respondents were asked to fill in their working presence) and “Education” (Coding: 1=“High School Graduate”, 2=“Bachelor’s Degree Holder”, 3=“Master’s Degree Holder” and 4=“PhD Holder”).

Chapter 5 - Data Analysis

Factor analysis allows researchers to review in a comprehensive way the hypothesized relationships between variables. This a process of significant importance since it allows us to understand how concepts relate to each other. Hence, factor analysis is distinguished between the exploratory and confirmatory one.

According to Child (1990) exploratory factor analysis constitutes a method that allows us researchers to explore the basic structure of a specific set of variables without introducing a predetermined structure on the outcome and consequently, EFA helps us to identify the basic factor structure. On the other hand, confirmatory factor analysis constitutes a statistical process that researchers utilize in order to verify the factor structure of a specific set of variables. Hence, it gives us researchers the ability to test their hypotheses since CFA analyzes the causal relations among variables. Consequently, CFA is a great tool that helps researchers bridge the gap they observe between observation and theory (Mueller & Hancock, 2001).

5.1 - Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

As mentioned earlier, SPSS Statistics is a statistical software suite that is widely used to conduct exploratory factor analysis. Exploratory factor analysis acts a mean that initially allows researchers to explore and analyze a set of variables that are grouped into factors. All variable sets come from the corresponding questions found in a questionnaire. Hence, exploratory factor analysis provides important insights regarding which variables are not related to each other so that they can be taken out of the analysis. Thus, it also gives directions to researchers regarding which causal relationships are developed between the set of variables. Lastly, it also constitutes a significant step towards identifying collinearity issues among variables.

Further, when conducting exploratory factor analysis, the first step a researcher follows is to navigate to settings so as to be provided with estimates on how many factors can be found. In case of a sample that corresponds to normal distribution, it is expected that the original correlation matrix would be reliably produced. In this study, we chose to not predefine the number of factors that should be created. In detail, the number of factors were found based on the eigenvalues that were greater than 1. Hence, an appropriate method to cohesively analyze

an immense number of data and variables is to apply the “Varimax” method and for that reason, the Varimax method was applied.

Significantly, two indicators were used to judge our data’s quality. More specifically, the first indicator was the Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) that assesses the sample’s sufficiency. According to this indicator, the desired values should score above 0.8 in order to attest there is an adequate homogeneity. Furthermore, the latter indicator was the Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity that evaluates whether the correlations among variables would give us the green light to continue with factor analysis. In regards to this indicator, the desired values of p should be less than 0.05. All in all, in this thesis, the KMO indicator was 0,899 and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity indicator was 0,000 (Table 6). Consequently, these indicative results prove the adequacy of our data and therefore, allow us to continue with the factor analysis process.

Table 6 – KMO and Bartlett’s Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		,899
Bartlett's Test of	Approx. Chi-Square	6401,817
Sphericity	df	770
	Sig	,000

Further, in regards to the final exploratory factor analysis, two questions were excluded from “perceived overqualification”, along with one question from “job boredom” as they were identified in more than one factor. Similarly, for the same reason, three questions were excluded from “counterproductive work behaviors”, two questions from “emotional exhaustion” and one question from “cynicism”. Lastly, it should be also mentioned that the two facets of perceived overqualification were identified under one factor.

According to the pattern matrix table (table 7), it is evident that all the questions (apart from those excluded as explained above) were identified into six (6) factors. Moreover, according to Fabrigar et al. (1999), we should also pay serious attention to the table of communalities (table 8). In more detail, table 8 shows the variance percentage for each specific variable as interpreted from the final number of factors. Hence, ideally, all variables should be greater than 0,5 since variables less than 0,3 should be excluded while variables ranging from 0,3 – 0,5 are most likely to be excluded.

The reason a variable that shows a communality score below 0,3 is excluded is due to the fact that it does not correlate with any factor. Moreover, when each specific variable is concerned, we should underline that its factor loading represents its relation to the factor. From an empirical point of view, a factor loading that is greater than 0,5 signifies that the variable contributes remarkably to the factor. As we can see in table 7, each variable's factor loading exceed the 0,5 threshold which is a satisfactory outcome.

Further, it should be also noted that reliability denotes the consistency that answers exhibit on their scale while validity is used to verify whether or not the scale adheres to its original development goal. At this stage, we should mention that in this study, we focused on a specific validity type, that of internal consistency, which evaluates if questions that measure the same features show correlation within the feature and with one another. Thus, Cronbach A is thought to be the most commonly used element verifying internal consistency and its value should be greater 0,7 in order to be considered sufficient.

Table 7 - Pattern Matrix

	Factors					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
POVQ1	,891	,154	,156	,116	,007	,211
POVQ2	,783	,152	,058	,132	,011	,231
POVQ3	,692	,048	-,023	,066	,057	,237
POVQ4	,587	,192	,054	-,036	,111	,181
POVQ5	,709	,212	,112	,248	,021	-,056
POVQ6	,614	,154	,126	,332	,022	-,111
POVQ9	,827	,089	,133	,283	,013	-,088
WorkBoredom1	,191	,124	,042	,671	-,076	,243
WorkBoredom2	,193	,136	,002	,598	,043	,187
WorkBoredom3	,163	,042	,043	,723	,018	,053
WorkBoredom5	,202	,152	,028	,778	,007	,058
WorkBoredom6	,164	,128	,101	,804	-,045	,172
CWB1	,084	,708	-,032	,052	,143	-,022
CWB2	,011	,726	,115	,078	,032	,003
CWB4	,156	,650	,141	,223	,063	,033
CWB5	,187	,825	,276	-,047	-,182	,132
CWB6	,092	,709	,208	-,024	-,035	,121
CWB8	,182	,589	,117	,221	,126	-,068
CWB9	,135	,701	-,072	,111	-,068	-,105
CWB11	-,066	,672	,069	-,072	-,107	-,029
CWB12	,173	,704	,111	,098	-,024	,119
Cynicism1	,201	,129	,032	,067	0,31	,710
Cynicism2	,202	,091	,121	,022	,062	,619
Cynicism3	,171	,111	-,012	,142	-,152	,689
ProfInefficacy1	-,028	,209	,056	-,015	,809	,032
ProfInefficacy2	-,113	0,43	,079	,046	,862	,128
EmotExhaustion1	,234	,152	,714	,161	,148	,073
EmotExhaustion2	,245	,092	,735	,202	,265	-,021
EmotExhaustion3	-,018	,191	,796	-,114	,101	,146
EmotExhaustion4	,273	-0,65	,717	,130	,058	,112
EmotExhaustion5	,020	,082	,792	,102	,197	,039
EmotExhaustion7	,155	,231	,619	,151	,002	,104
EmotExhaustion8	,067	-,040	,686	,064	-,071	,117
EmotExhaustion9	,071	,123	,704	-,038	,142	,123

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Table 8 - Communalities

Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction
PerceivedOVQ1	,711	,782
PerceivedOVQ2	,499	,559
PerceivedOVQ3	,501	,557
PerceivedOVQ4	,578	,601
PerceivedOVQ5	,612	,648
PerceivedOVQ6	,691	,801
PerceivedOVQ9	,524	,553
WorkBoredom1	,595	,561
WorkBoredom2	,573	,520
WorkBoredom3	,667	,701
WorkBoredom5	,617	,551
WorkBoredom6	,772	,791
CWB1	,693	,667
CWB2	,742	,728
CWB4	,778	,791
CWB5	,611	,553
CWB6	,732	,749
CWB8	,773	,783
CWB9	,717	,769
CWB11	,709	,780
CWB12	,632	,682
Cynicism1	,598	,576
Cynicism2	,672	,751
Cynicism3	,653	,729
EmotExhaustion1	,704	,769
EmotExhaustion2	,678	,745
EmotExhaustion3	,730	,758
EmotExhaustion4	,622	,654
EmotExhaustion5	,580	,621
EmotExhaustion7	,652	,691
EmotExhaustion8	,690	,662
EmotExhaustion9	,739	,731
ProfInefficacy1	,501	,552
ProfInefficacy2	,528	,534

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood

5.2 - Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

According to Smelser and Baltes (2001), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) constitutes an effective tool for all behavioral as well as social sciences since it generates a measured model that is based on the structural equation modeling. Hence, CFA is produced on the variance-covariance and means matrix and its significant values lays to the fact that it can disclose bias, either on a uniform or on a non-uniform level. Thus, Hair (2011) maintained that CFA is greatly used with variables measured with more than one dimension. In the present thesis, CFA was developed through structural equation modeling (SEM) with the use of SMART-PLS 3.

In table 9, the Construct Reliability and Validity values are presented. Hence, we should also add that all indicators of Composite Reliability should be over 0,7 in order to be considered as adequate. In addition, for the evaluation the Convergent Validity, we use the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) indicator which should be greater than 0,5 in order to confirm that all factors were adequately measured in regards to their variances (Hair, 2011). According to table 9, all AVE and Composite Reliability scores were above the threshold of 0,5 and 0,7, respectively. Lastly, in regards to discriminant validity, we checked the “Heterotrait-Monotrait” (HTMT). According to Henseler et al. (2014), in order for discriminant validity to be achieved, all HTMT values should be less than 0.85. In this study, all HTMT values were below 0.85, therefore, discriminant validity was achieved.

Table 9 - Construct Reliability & Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Burnout		1.000		
Counterproductive Work Behaviors	0.929	0.942	0.944	0.740
Overqualification	0.869	0.876	0.901	0.668
Job Boredom	0.872	0.877	0.911	0.662
Emotional Exhaustion	0.871	0.873	0.892	0.611
Cynicism	0.794	0.828	0.849	0.532
Professional Inefficacy	0.711	0.727	0.806	0.528

After checking the reliability and validity rules, the proposed model was constructed in Smart-PLS 3 and it is shown in Figure 1.

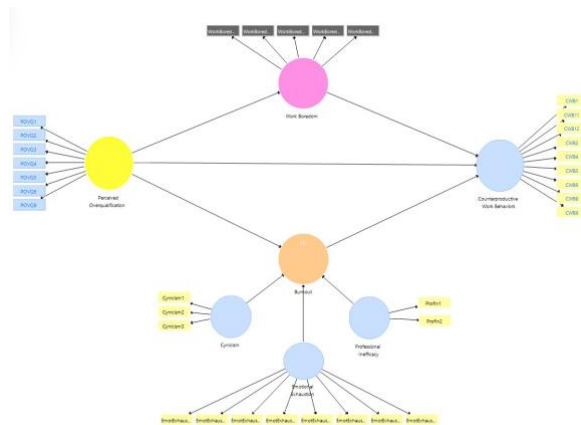


Figure 1. 1 - Proposed Model

According to Figure 1, three path end up to counterproductive work behaviors. More specifically, the first path examines the direct relationship between perceived overqualification and counterproductive work behaviors. The second path, examines the mediation role of work boredom while the third examines mediating role of burnout between perceived overqualification and counterproductive work behaviors. Furthermore, it should be also noted that three dimensions of burnout (emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and professional inefficacy) are reflective variables in regards to the questions they address while also being formative variables to burnout. Thus, according to Gaskin and Happell (2014), the amount of variables presented requires the “Two-Step” approach in order to have a better understanding of the depicted relationships. Below, Figure 2 illustrates the Two-Step Approach.

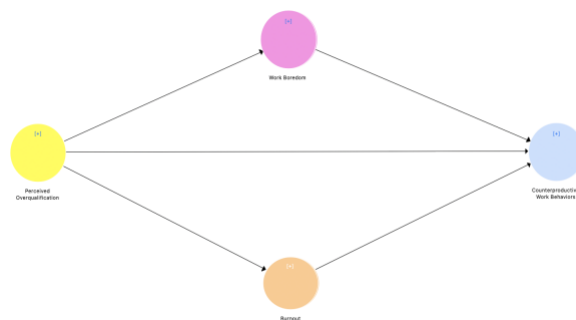


Figure 1. 2 - “Two-Step” Approach

Chapter 6 – Results

The bootstrapping procedure was applied (2000 randomly drawn samples) in Figure 1.2 in order to determine which hypotheses can be accepted and which rejected. Table 10 and Figure 3 show the path coefficient along with their significance levels. In more detail, according to table 10, the relationship between perceived overqualification and counterproductive work behaviors (as stated in hypothesis 1) is positive and statistically significant since the value of t-statistics is 7,891 ($>1,96$) and the value of p-value 0,000 ($<0,05$). Therefore, hypothesis 1 is supported. In addition, hypothesis 2a mentioned that perceived overqualification and work boredom will be positively associated. As we can see from the table, hypothesis 2a is also supported since the relationship is positive as well as statistically significant since t-statistics = 7,042 ($>1,96$) and p-values = 0,000 ($<0,005$).

Further, in hypothesis 2b, it was hypothesized that the relationship between work boredom and counterproductive work behaviors would be positive. Indeed, the relationship is positive and statistically significant since t-statistics = 3,699 and p-values = 0,000 thus leading us to accept it. Thus, hypothesis 3 suggested that work boredom will mediate the relationship between perceived overqualification and burnout. This hypothesis is supported since there is a positive relationship between the three variables, which is also statistically significant because t-statistics is 2,986 ($>1,96$) and p-values = 0,042 ($<0,05$).

Hence, hypothesis 4a mentioned that perceived overqualification will be positively associated with burnout. Drawing attention to table 10, we can see that hypothesis 4a is accepted since there is a positive relationship between the variables while t-statistics = 4,998 ($>1,96$) and p-values = 0,000. Likewise, hypothesis 4b suggested that the relationship between burnout and counterproductive work behaviors will be positive, which is supported since t-statistics = 7,042 ($>1,96$) and p-values = 0,000.

Lastly, hypothesis 5 suggesting that burnout will be a mediator between perceived overqualification and counterproductive work behaviors is also supported since a positive relationship among the variables appears as t-statistics = 2,849 ($>1,96$) and p-values = 0,036 ($<0,05$).

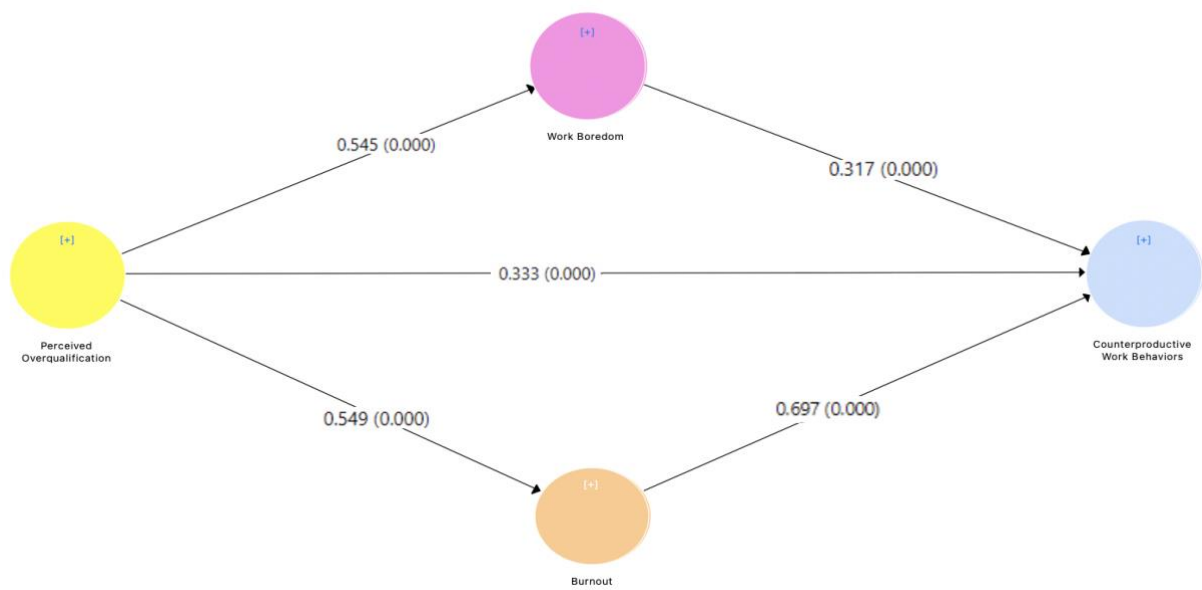


Figure 1. 3 - “Two-Step” Approach Framework

Table 10 - Summary of Path Coefficients and Significance levels

Direct Hypotheses & Corresponding Paths	Path - Coefficient	T - Statistics	P - Values	Hypothesis Support
Perceived Overqualification → Counterproductive Work Behaviors	0.333	7.891	0.000	H1 Supported
Perceived Overqualification → Work Boredom	0.545	7.042	0.000	H2a Supported
Work Boredom → Counterproductive Work Behaviors	0.317	3.699	0.000	H2b Supported
Perceived Overqualification → Burnout	0.549	4.998	0.000	H4a Supported
Burnout → Counterproductive Work Behaviors	0.697	7.042	0.000	H4b Supported
Mediation Hypotheses & Corresponding Paths	Path - Coefficient	T - Statistics	P - Values	Hypothesis Support
Perceived Overqualification → Work Boredom → Counterproductive Work Behaviors	0.131	2.986	0.042	H3 Supported
Perceived Overqualification → Burnout → Counterproductive Work Behaviors	0.101	2.849	0.036	H5 Supported

Chapter 7 – Discussion & Conclusions

First of all, our first hypothesis, suggested that perceived overqualification will be positively related to counterproductive work behaviors. This hypothesis was supported according to our results. In particular, this fact shows that when employees perceive themselves as overqualified, they tend to develop negative feelings towards their work situation and as a result, they become more prone to detrimental behaviors. This fact could also be explained under the relative deprivation theory framework which suggests that once individuals feel deprived, they are more susceptible to engage in negative job behaviors (Yu et al., 2018). As a result, our finding confirms similar researches in the past (Liu et al., 2015; Lobene, Meade & Pond, 2015).

Further, the two following hypotheses claimed that perceived overqualification will be related to boredom and that boredom will also be associated with counterproductive work behaviors. In the first case, it was initially hypothesized that both variables will be positively related which was also found in the research. According to Watt and Hargis (2010), perceived overqualification is positively related to job boredom which was also found in a previous study of Drory (1982). Drory (1982) mentioned that when individuals possess more skills, qualification and abilities than needed for handling specific job tasks, then they are more prone to think that they are overqualified and therefore, they become susceptible to job boredom. Hence, according to Caplan and Jones (1975), individuals with high levels of perceived overqualification feelings sense that their skills are under-utilized and that consequently, develops boredom feelings.

To continue with, it was also found that job boredom was positively related to counterproductive work behaviors, which was first hypothesized based on the fact that tasks that are either repetitive or monotonous might affect employees' feelings. According to Kass et al. (2001), employees encompassed with high levels of job boredom were found to also have high levels of absenteeism proneness, while Spector et al. (2006) claimed that these employees were also associated with level of withdrawal. Consequently, these studies provided a first insight and support for a link between job boredom and counterproductive work behaviors. It was also suggested in the third hypothesis that job boredom will be a mediator between

perceived overqualification and counterproductive work behaviors which was also supported. This signifies the detrimental role that job boredom plays in the above-mentioned relationship and as a result, executives should create initiatives that will challenge employees' daily tasks.

Further, the next two hypotheses suggested a positive link between perceived overqualification and burnout along with burnout and counterproductive work behaviors. To be more specific, a positive relationship was found between perceived overqualification and burnout, which signifies that burnout does not always stem from heavy work overload but it can also come as the result of skills under-utilization or work underload. By integrating the conservation of resources model (Hobfoll, 2001) in our initial way of thinking, we suggested that when individuals feel that their resources, for which they have invested a great amount of energy, are threatened or remain unutilized, they experience the first symptoms of burnout, a fact that was also supported by Halbesleben (2006).

In addition, it was also suggested that the relationship between burnout and counterproductive work behaviors would also be positive. Based on the above-mentioned model, we hypothesized that when employees sense a loss or threat of their resources, they develop burnout symptoms. More specifically, once burnout symptoms appear, individuals might start to feel emotionally exhausted, develop cynical attitudes or even sense that they are not capable enough. This fact is supported by Neveu (2007) who maintained that work underload may trigger employees to feel that their skills are being depleted while sensing their professional inefficacy. As a result, individuals are more susceptible to engage to counterproductive work behaviors.

Thus, according to Luksyte, Spitzmueller and Maynard (2011) employees will attempt to distance themselves from this stressful situation and as a result, behavioral strains, such as counterproductive work behaviors, appear. Moreover, based on the above reasoning, the fifth hypothesis suggested that burnout will mediate the relationship between perceived overqualification and counterproductive work behaviors which was also supported. All in all, we conclude that perceived overqualification is a negative situation which triggers negative employees and organizational outcomes.

Chapter 8 – Practical & Theoretical implications

In this chapter, we will provide practical suggestions and theory boosting to top executives that stems from our research's results. To begin with, based on our research, we examined the relationship between perceived overqualification and counterproductive work behaviors in the light of mediators such as burnout and work boredom. It was initially suggested that employees might perceive themselves as overqualified in cases in which their qualifications, skills and abilities are not being utilized or challenged (Vaisey, 2006). Therefore, a first suggestion for leadership teams would be to assign more responsibilities to individuals while giving them the chance to work on an autonomy model (Wu et al.,2014). By doing this, employees will feel valued and appreciated (Spreitzer, 1995) and therefore, their productivity might also increase (Johannsen & Zak, 2020). In addition, it should be also stressed that autonomy serves a means that diminishes employees' feeling of being overqualified (Lunenburg, 2011).

Further, empowerment constitutes another variable that top executives of BPO companies should also take into consideration. This is due to the fact that empowerment is defined as individuals' perceptions of controlling how their work can be executed and therefore, as a consequence, employees feel engaged and responsible for work outcomes which diminishes feelings of overqualification. (Hardy & Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1998; Hechanova-Alampay & Beehr, 2001; Ritti, 1970). In addition to this, a great scientific body has affirmed that empowerment is related with positive work results (Ahearne, Mathieu, & Rapp, 2005; Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003). More significantly, Erdogan and Bauer (2009) suggested that empowerment will also serve as a way that can alleviate perceptions of deprivation and that might signal that employees will not be susceptible to engage in counterproductive work behaviors.

Moreover, BPO leadership teams would need to be aligned and aware of all negative outcomes associated with overqualification and also, paying great attention when hiring overqualified individuals should also be one of their top priorities because by doing so, companies could minimize costs that are associated with overqualified applicants. Hence, top executives should cultivate a culture and a work environment in which managers truly respect and value their subordinates. This is considered a crucial and vital step since counterproductive

work behaviors can be decreased because when team leaders show a great level of appreciation and trust, individuals with cynical attitudes regarding their job tasks start feeling that their work does matter. Such actions will appeal to overqualified individuals who in turn, will sense that their top management team tries to accomplish their goals and aspirations. All in all, these actions will most likely ameliorate employees' well-being and as a result, counterproductive work behaviors will be reduced.

From a theoretical point of view, the Person-Organization fit framework could be very useful since it explains why individuals who perceive themselves as overqualified are inclined to counterproductive work behaviors. More specifically, if there is a mismatch in the above mentioned fit, stressful feelings are exhibited to individuals who in turn, engage in negative behaviors with detrimental effects. Besides, perceived overqualification denotes a stressor that forces employees to engage in counterproductive work behaviors due to the fact that they might feel impoverished to take advantage of opportunities that will stimulate their career and growth (Spector & Fox, 2005).

It is also of equal importance to underline the impact of demographic variables on counterproductive work behaviors. In detail, Frank (1978) mentioned that women are more likely to perceive themselves as overqualified in comparison to men. Thus, Feldman (1996) attested that overqualification is commonly found among minority groups. Lastly, Maynard and Joseph (2008) claimed that age, organizational tenure and employment status are demographic variables associated with perceived overqualification.

Chapter 9 – Limitations

It is a fact that empirical studies face severe limitations. First of all, this present master thesis solely focuses on the effect that perceived overqualification has to employee and organizational outcomes. More specifically, even though our sample of 282 questionnaires seems to be satisfactory, individuals were asked to express their subjective opinion and that means that our conclusions cannot be objectively presented. Besides, we cannot also determine if individuals consciously accepted a job that they conceived inferior to their qualifications or if they reached this conclusion while being employed.

Furthermore, the research took place within one company of the BPO industry and that signifies that the sample cannot apply to every BPO company within Greece. According to Erdogan, Bauer and Karaeminogullari (2017), culture is a vital variable that affects employees' overqualification feelings and that means, that our results do not have a universal application and therefore, cannot be generalized. Consequently, under the same conditions, people may perceive themselves as overqualified while in other parts of the world, due to cultural elements, people may turn this opinion down.

In addition, data collection lasted for a limited amount of time and that cross-sectional character constitutes a significant drawback due to the fact that no causal conclusions regarding examined variables could be drawn since there is no comparison with any previous historical data (Boxall, Guthrie & Paauwe, 2016). Hence, it is very likely that in case we conduct the same research in a different time, the chances of receiving different results are great (Levin, 2006).

Finally, in this study we examined the mediating role of job burnout and job boredom between perceived overqualification and counterproductive work behaviors. That being said, as a future research recommendation, it would be intriguing to identify additional mediators or moderatos so as to better comprehend the causal paths. For example, psychological empowerment and job autonomy could also be used in the future by examining more organizational outcomes, such as job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

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