

CAREER DECISION – A PROCEDURAL APPROACH

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Abstract: In the career choosing process there are many factors and mechanisms that can interact and influence the career decision.

The career decision has three main components that lead to performances and stability in the professional life.

Keywords: career, decision, counseling, career plan, strategy.

Conceptual boundaries

"Career counseling is the process of maximum compatibility between resources, requirements, aspirations and personal interests of an individual and the real offer provided by education, training and socio-professional integration." Career counseling is a service that addresses the individual in a holistic, continuous and flexible manner throughout all cycles of his life and in all significant aspects of his roles in school, at work, in social life or community, family and free time. This service is reflected in information, advice and guidance offered to all applicants by accredited professional advisors (Jigău, 2007, 20).

In career counseling approach lies an important career decision. This is "the process of selecting a career alternative from the set of options available at a given time" (Băban, 2001, 220). We make decisions every day of our lives, some more important than others, but not all of them involve rational psychological mechanisms. Sometimes reaching the decision automatically follows under our lifestyle, values and experience that we show at a time, and sometimes - high-stakes decisions - such as the ones related to career choice - "they involve interests, energies and perspectives essential for the general good of the person" (Chiru, 2007, 498).

As such, the personality resources activated in the decision making process, must be known, the person's value system, his level of availability for full exploitation of current circumstances and, equally, we must consider the components of career decision that we will approach below.

Elements of career decision making

The context of career decision is given by all factors that influence the content and decision making process. Among the relevant factors in this process we mention the most important:

- knowledge about themselves (interests, values, skills and personality characteristics) are the result of the self-discovery approach and the more accurate, clear and well-structured they are, the more career decisions are stable in time and closer to the optimal decision;
- parental factors - parents are the strongest influence on children by emphasizing personal values and guiding children to accept these values; sharing experiences from the workplace, boosting employment activities and behaviors; providing a feedback

about career alternatives etc.;

- school factors - school related performance requirements, teaching methods, teacher attitudes (authoritary or democratic) to students;
- group of friends - are a significant source of influence on young people's career plans. Friends are selected based on similarity of attitudes and behaviors, and as the friendship develops, the similarity increases;
- work experiences - through direct confrontation with various work tasks, young people's are testing their own values about the work they perform and redefine their own value system. Many times young people reported that work experience has harnessed vision work.

The content of the decision refers to the actual problem that requires a decision.

Possible career issues as:

- school choice and profile study (eg theoretical high school, art school, medical school etc.)
- choosing a profession (IT, accountant, lawyer, driver, psychologist, teacher etc.)
- choosing a particular course of education (eg school teaching - Faculty of Pedagogy - Master in Education);
- choosing the appropriate professional skills training (volunteering, apprenticeship etc.)

The decision making process itself includes a number of steps that have a greater or lesser importance in the economy of career decision, based on the content and context of the decision.

Defining the decision and indicating alternatives include: awareness of the need to make a career decision; defining and identifying the content of the existing alternatives to make the decision. Note that the decision alternatives available and accessible at any given time are determined by the context of the decision.

Exploration and evaluation of available alternatives. At this stage, based on predetermined criteria, alternatives are evaluated to identify the best option. Among the most important criteria we find: compliance with the expectations of the person (desired lifestyle, the expected activity, educational level concerned, etc.); costs and benefits of choosing the option. Criteria underlying the assessment of alternatives are unique and correspond to each person and the importance given to them is dependent on the priorities set to them.

Career plan. Based on the selected alternative, at this stage is established an action plan to implement the decision. The plan may relate to: how the knowledge and skills necessary for practicing the chosen field will be acquired; how the educational offers or trades will be explored; how to self-promote etc.. Career plan can be considered a real map that will guide the individual towards achieving a successful proposed destination.

The content of the career plan aims at: *purpose* - it can be defined in terms of outcomes, processes or desirable events. It provides the direction to take and allows analysis results. *The objectives* are subsumed to the main goal and define specifically what the person wants to achieve. Effective objectives imply the involvement of the person - they are made by the concerned person and are related to its purposes; they are action oriented, indicating a

particular direction, ie the sequence of actions to be taken to achieve the goal and they are formulated specific, measurable, realistic, temporal. The *strategies* are the practical way on which the decision maker has stopped to accomplish his objectives.

The enforcement of the decision is the stage where the plan set is applied exactly. It implies consistency and flexibility to adapt to unexpected situations, being considered effective those plans that take into account unexpected events and allow a reassessment and rehabilitation plan.

Reassessment of the decision provides review and improvement for the decision making. This allows on the one hand, the identification of "strong" points of the decision and on the other hand, correcting certain difficulties which occurred in different stages of decision making (Lemeni and Miclea, 2004).

Conclusions

Sometimes we make choices under the influence of impuls, sometimes, as career choice, is extremely important to know the steps described above, in order to streamline the process of career decision and finally obtain an optimal solution for each of us.

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