

## STARTING POINTS OF VOCATIONAL CAREER CHOICE OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: EDUCATIONAL PATH AS A SELECTION ANALYSED THROUGH DECISION MAKING THEORY

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*Knowing and analysing the theoretical approaches of vocational career of students with special needs enables to understand and solve different problem situations, with what the named target group is faced with, both when choosing a speciality or when entering the work market. One must take into account the different socio-cultural and economic backgrounds and individual differences of students with special needs. Due to external and internal factors the possibilities of students with special needs to choose an educational path and to move further to the work market are considerably more complicated compared to youth with normative intellect. Choosing an educational path can be viewed as a factor for succeeding or not with career. Vocational education can be seen as one of the starting points of a career. The importance of career counselling cannot be underestimated when a young person chooses an educational path, no matter whether we understand this concept in its narrower sense as counselling when choosing education or in its broader sense as support in different questions concerning the young person's life. The most important part of career counselling is considered to be vocational counselling or counselling when choosing a speciality (Tegevuskava kutseharidussüsteemi arendamiseks Eestis, 2005, p. 10-12).*

*The aim of the article is to analyse the theoretical bases of vocational educational career. The article views theoretical approaches to educational path and to making an educational choice from the viewpoints of congruity, developmental and decision making theories, the models of decision making theory and the levels of decision making.*

*Considering the explored theoretical aspects it is possible to create a decision making model for career choice, which best fits the development of a certain country's political, economic and social system.*

*The current article considers students with mild mental disabilities as students with special needs.*

**Key words:** *student with special needs, career planning, decision making process, educational path as a selection, coping difficulties*

### Introduction

Since Estonia regained its independence in the beginning of 1990s, the country's educational policy has been systematically reformed. Creating educational possibilities for satisfying educational needs characterises the correspondence of educational political decisions to democratic and humanist principles (Puuetega inimestele ..., 1996, p. 55- 56).

During the last five years ideas about the role of vocational education have considerably changed in the Republic of Estonia. At the same time the importance of how to organise educational path choice and further continuation to the work market of students with special needs has also been taken into account (Tekste karjäärinõustamisest ..., 2006, p. 58-59).

The inclusion of students with special needs in vocational education and their continuation to the work market has been one of the priority themes in Estonian educational policy. However, there remain areas to be solved that would ensure a better coping for the named students.

One of the factors is the fact that the world around us becomes increasingly complicated. Both psychologists as well as personnel development specialists claim that work is nowadays one source of instability. Fast and constant changes, increasing info noise, multiple and quick choices – these are the keywords that characterise the present time.

Planning one's life consciously enables also students with special needs to acquire a balance between education, work and private life. The career counsellor can from one side help one's personal wishes to come true and from the other side support economic development by helping a person to find use for one's strongest sides according to the needs of the work market (Tekste karjäärinõustamisest ..., 2006, p. 69-71).

Changes in the laws of the Republic of Estonia are meant for the vocational education and continuation at the work market to become more flexible and available for the most varied target groups. Developing vocational education in country areas of the Estonia is important in the sense of regional policy, since it helps to develop enterprises, to create and maintain work places. Students with special needs are offered variable opportunities for studying. Creating flexible possibilities for studying, however, has at one moment become an obstacle. In the Republic of Estonia vocational education is facing critical years. Admission to vocational studies is influenced by changes at the work market: if an employee is paid a wage, young persons also come to learn this speciality. At the same time drop out is connected to what is happening at the work market: if the employer hires a boy or a girl without finishing the school, the latter often give up going to school – why to

give an effort, if one can also earn money without studying (Kutsehariduse kontseptuaalsed lähtekohad..., 2005, p. 24-26).

The novelty of the material covered in this article lies in the fact that the theoretical approaches and decision making models in career choice of students with special needs – which covers both speciality choice as well as choices connected to persons going to the work market – have not been analysed systematically.

Thus, it is important to analyse, how have the decision making models in career and educational path choices of an emerging career been theoretically worked out and elaborated.

Knowing and analysing different decision making models that consider the context of one's own country, enables to provide even in a changing economic situation certain satisfaction of educational need or retraining that would ensure a student with special needs possibilities to acquire a speciality corresponding to his/her interests, wishes and possibilities and to continue after graduating at the work market (Karlsson, 1987, p. 65-67).

The aim of the article is to analyse the theoretical approaches to vocational career of students with special needs.

The main objectives of the article are:

1. Decision making process in the decision making theory.
2. Theoretical approaches to the educational path.
3. Educational path as a selection.
4. Coping difficulties in the decision making process.

The theoretical approach to vocational career, analysed from the viewpoint of a certain country, form a bases for all members of the society to become learning persons, who through the acquired knowledge, skills, and values are able to cope in personal, work, and social life. Having this in mind, the Estonian vocational education system must also ensure young persons' social and vocational readiness for beginning the work life.

### **Theoretical background**

The decision making process is viewed within the decision making theory that distinguishes three decision making mechanisms or types. The first and oldest is a theoretical tradition that sees a decision as an aimed choice of a rationally thinking and behaving decider between several possibilities. Such decider has clear aims and weighs all pros and cons before making the best decision.

Another approach emphasises the routine character of decisions of organisations or masses, which are influenced by the impacts of mass psychology on decision making. Routine action patterns of organisations ensure the sustainability of decisions and their appliance.

The third theoretical tradition views decisions as a conflict and a result of a battle. Such decisions are formed as a result of compromises and may not be the first choice of the decision maker. According to this theory, decisions are influenced by the amount of accompanying deciders, their prestige, responsibility, values, experiences, as well as pressure groups' strength, public opinion, and mass communication.

The above-mentioned models may combine with each other or create more or less independent decision making theories.

### **Theoretical approaches to educational path**

The approach to educational path is seen as life-long learning and school or training type, which a person passes during his/her life. This is divided into two: compulsory and optional education. Different educational levels create an institutional context. Continuing on a next educational level is connected to the results acquired on a previous level. The majority of youth receives at least special secondary or a gymnasium education, but more and more young people are interested in continuing their studies at the university. Students with special needs – with mild mental disabilities – have only one possibility to continue education after basic school. That is continuing studies at vocational school (Harren, 1979, p. 124).

Vocational training is necessary for competing at the work market. Choosing a suitable speciality is an important question. When choosing a speciality student's interests are taken into account, however, these have to be in accordance with individual's skills. Students with special needs should choose a speciality, where their skills and talent would be maximally applied. Clarifying the vocational orientations of students with special needs and making a speciality choice is nowadays one of the most difficult tasks (Harren, 1979, p. 125).

Young persons' career choices can be described, explained, and understood through two theoretical perspectives – **internal and external**. In case of internal development career is described through choices that people make. In case of external development people moving from one workplace to another and their selection

to the named posts are viewed. The **internal** perspective is explored in the area of psychology and the **external** perspective in sociology. The difference between the two perspectives is larger than the difference just between the original approaches of two scientific principles. It is important to understand that people do not make decisions in a "vacuum". They are tied to the social and institutional context, which influences their career (Hodkinson & Sparker, 1997, p. 29-31).

Career choices are often viewed without clarifying the real nature of making a choice, which is the scientific 'backbone' of career counselling. Youth with special needs are in an unequal situation due to the limited speciality choice possibilities. In Soviet Estonia all people were secured with a work and having a career carried rather a negative connotation. Unemployment increased sharply when Estonia became independent and the state couldn't guarantee people any work, which on the state level brought along a conscious need for career counselling (Harren, 1979, p. 126).

**Three bigger possibilities to choose a career** are highlighted in the psychological literature. Individual career choice is viewed in the light of **congruity theory, developmental theory and decision making theory** (Harren, 1979, p. 127).

**Congruity theory** views the suitability of personality for the demands of different specialities. In case of a right decision there is coherence between person's interests/skills and the demands of the speciality (Harren, 1979: 128).

**Developmental theory** views the developmental process, according to which human development takes place rhythmically in stages that follow each other so that the nature of a previous step continues in a changed way in the next stage. A right decision presumes two aspects: first, a person must pass through a stage of finding out one's interests and second, a person must choose such an activity, which satisfies the developed interests (Harren, 1979, p. 129).

**Decision making theory** views decision making process. Ideal is considered to be a **realistic evaluation of possibilities and choosing the best from among the possible choices**.

*Decision making becomes problematic when it is not based on rational beliefs and evaluations. Decision making is or at least should be rational.*

Factors that determine the choice can surely be influenced by the person; however, they can't be totally under his/her control. Decision making is seen as an individual decision making process. A person, who makes a decision, should be free in one's choices. Decisions are weighed enough if a person has precise information and abilities to evaluate him-/herself realistically (Harren, 1979, p. 129-132).

The main problem of the above-mentioned theories is their insufficient attention to what is going on in the environment. When making a decision, the environment is viewed separately without any structural limitations. Rationality influences career choice in two directions.

1. People behave absolutely rationally having their interests in mind as long as the situation allows it.
2. The aim of the decision making process is to acquire a predetermined result as efficiently as possible. Such perspective is problematic, since youth whether do not behave rationally or the theory does not describe sufficiently, how people communicate with others and with the society. The rational decision making perspective ignores inequality in the society. As a result, possibilities of those people who are in worse situations and have special needs, diminish (Hodkinson & Sparker, 1997, p. 39-42).

### **Educational path as a selection**

Career choice is often mentioned, but little attention is turned to the **real decision making process**. Of sociological theories the career choice literature has often cited the **theory of classical status attainment** (Blau & Duncan, 1967, p. 231). The majority of sociological studies focus on the theme, how limiting are structural factors; however, they don't exclude person's decision making possibilities (Hodkinson & Sparker, 1997: 42-44).

Gambetta (1987) mentions two extremes of the sociological theory: **structuralist and first glance**. Between these two extremes there are different factors that guide a person toward certain career decisions. Gambetta's distribution is considered to be essential for career choice research.

**The structuralist viewpoint** does not take into account the possibility of individual choice, since our behaviour is influenced by external factors. Beliefs, preferences, and intentions have no importance, since they have been formed by the structure of the society and its fundamental system.

**First glance viewpoint** takes into account individual's choice on the contrary to the structuralist viewpoint. The first glance viewpoint says also that individual decisions have little importance. It is believed that human behaviour is caused by some arbitrary external factors that act outside the human consciousness. Cultural determination refers to beliefs and values that shape individual preferences and through that influence

their choices. Sociological theories that remain between the two extremes, try to bring these approaches closer by arguing that a person is able to choose between alternatives and make a choice, which has been shaped by the structure of the society (Gambetta, 1987, p. 9-16).

**The creators of status attainment theory** try to find and show how **social background is connected to career** (Blau & Duncan, 1967, p. 136).

Education can be seen from various aspects; however, the problem is that they do not reflect the reality, since they always exclude some important aspects of education. In extreme cases the individual is forgotten and in other cases the context. Psychological career studies can be accused of the latter, while in sociology there are more disputes over the two extremes. For understanding education and the decision connected to it, one must simultaneously try to **understand the mutual influence of structural and individual factors** (Rudd, 1997, p. 257-258).

It is not possible to explain educational choices one to one. They can be best described by **uniting the results of three processes – the structure of individual possibilities, the structure of choices and the structural power**. The structures of possibilities are especially important for people, but limit their possibilities for choosing. Despite this people make choices and decisions. It is important to understand how structural powers influence education. They shape individuals' preferences and intentions. The main approach is the following: we speak about structural powers, that limit free choice, and we know that the influence of these powers is in general predictable. Hereby we have in fact in mind, what is the contribution of the educational system in re-creating educational inequality (Gambetta, 1987, p. 168-179).

### **The traditional models of rational choice in decision making theory**

Career choice can be viewed as an individual intentional choice. Decision making can be seen as one central way of targeted human activity, but it has not yet been thoroughly studied (Solvic, 1990: 90).

The development of **decision making models** has two research directions. They can be distinguished according to the description of the decision situation: whether it takes into account decision makers risk or not. In a risk-based decision situation the decision maker doesn't know with full confidence all circumstances that have an impact on the results.

**A risk-evading decision making situation** is based on the premise that the decision maker is aware of all possible activity directions and their consequences, can detect all differences between alternatives, assemble them, and choose upon what is maximally useful (Kahneman & Tversky, 1986, p. 194; Solvic, 1990, p. 91-92).

**The risk-based decision making model** is called **expected values model**. This theory has been criticised a lot (Karlsson, 1987, p. 102-103).

In everyday life it is hard to evaluate the probability of the final results and their respective usefulness. Thus, in case of making a decision, likewise studying career choices, it is better to refer to situations that contain risk. Decision making models, that consider risk, have maximal benefit in its central position. The difference is in the fact that the decision maker cannot entirely foresee the final results. Such a model is called **expected utility (EU) model**. The problem with this model is a premise that the probability of final results is objectively known (Dawes, 1988, p. 187).

The **expected utility (EU) model** was improved considering the fact that the probabilities of final results are subjective. The model was called subjective expected utility (SEU) model (Karlsson, 1987: 103).

According to the **SEU model** the decision maker makes a choice that leads to maximal subjective benefit.

Of traditional decision making models the SEU is most advanced and presumes that the decision maker acts rationally and changes with one's decisions maximally the utility of the final result (Tversky & Kahneman, 1986: 26-27).

### **Critical study of the SEU model**

Although the **SEU model** is indisputably the most important base for the decision making theory, it has been criticised a lot. The model is too narrow and does not take into account the real decision making context. The model should be broadened considering the context. Contextuality considers the fact that real life decision making does never happen in a complete vacuum. In every situation psychological and social forces, that influence one's decision making, play a role (Tversky & Kahneman, 1986, p. 32- 35).

There are three major arguments against the traditional SEU model. Different scientists have confirmed that **human behaviour does not correspond to the SEU model, since people have evaluative prejudices, perceptual mistakes and coping difficulties**. The first two remain on a cognitive level, while the third is concerned with motivational factors.

**Evaluative prejudices** lead people often astray from the SEU model and cause mistakes in the decision making context. Mistakes appear in the decision making process due to **representativeness, availability, and anchoring** (Tversky & Kahneman, 1986, p. 39- 42).

- **Representativeness** estimates that there can be prejudices only to an extent, where a person's personality characteristics match the evaluators understanding of people, who work on these professions.
- **Availability** refers to situations, where people tend to evaluate the probability of events according to how easily can they remember similar cases from their own experiences.
- **Anchoring** refers to a situation, where the bases for evaluating have already been previously influenced (Tversky & Kahneman, 1986, p. 43-50).

**Perceptual mistakes** are concerned with situations, where a different description of a situation influences people's evaluations. This problem of rationality is known more under the name frame effect (Tversky & Kahneman, 1986, p. 51-52).

### **Coping difficulties in the decision making process**

Janis and Mann (1977) have studies coping difficulties. They argue that people have different coping strategies in different **tension situations**, which also sometimes characterise decision making situations. In decision making tension arises from the conflict between accepting and rejecting certain alternatives. In case decision making becomes the centre of attention, tension usually **becomes expressed in hesitation**, indecision, uncertainty, and emotional pressure. Only moderate tension leads to thorough info search and to making the right decision (Janis & Mann, 1977, p. 52-56).

**More problematic strategies** can actually spare time and prevent emotional pressure at the time of decision making; however, the result might not be the best decision. **These strategies** are apathy without conflict, changing a plan without conflict, protective avoidance and excess moderateness. **Avoiding decision** can happen by postponing a decision, by pushing the responsibility to make a decision to someone else or by strengthening the facts. **Choosing defence strategy is in case of making a decision connected to personality characteristics**. In case there is no need to make a decision for a certain deadline and its postponing doesn't lead to serious consequences, the decision maker is tempted to postpone the decision (Janis & Mann, 1977, p. 57-73).

Although Janis and Mann (1977) do not clarify the shortcomings of the SEU model in detail, their theory brings forth several ways in case of **which people cannot gather and connect necessary information for the expected result with their own value and actions**. This theory sees problem in motivation factors, not in cognitive shortcomings (Janis & Mann, 1977, p. 88-89).

According to Jungerman (1986), SEU rationality model supporters have three main arguments: meta-rational argument, resilience argument and structure argument (Jungerman, 1986, p. 627- 628).

**Meta-rational argument** says that when we consider the limitations of time and resources, it is in general rationally not very wise to use time and energy endlessly in order to analyse all possible alternatives and their consequences. In practical life it is not always realistic to wait for an optimal solution to every problem, thus in general people accept a satisfying solution (Jungerman, 1986, p. 629- 632).

**According to the resilience argument**, some decisions might seem irrational when we view them from a distance. Sometimes such irrational decisions can be rational, when we view them as parts of a durative process, where they are contradicted to each other and where context changes may emerge. The decision making context is not stabile and unchangeable and one must take into account the environmental feedback. People act according to real life situations, where the decision making context changes constantly (Jungerman, 1986, p. 633- 637).

**According to the structure argument**, people make decisions according to the situation, in which they currently are and they behave in a way that in their opinion fits to that particular situation best (Jungerman, 1986, p. 637-641).

The SEU model should be broadened in order to understand human behaviour better. One addition is the **regret theory**. Sudgen (1985) argued that the SEU model presumes that people have an absolute and consistent preference system, a 'general plan', which dictates how to behave in any situation. When a person is not acting according to the 'general plan', one can say that he/she is behaving irrationally (Sudgen, 1985, p. 77-81).

**Regret theory tries** to make seemingly irrational behaviour understandable. When making a decision people do not only think of utility and probability, but in addition try to contemplate, whether one might regret the decision later. The idea is based on the notion that in many cases people in fact regret their decisions, thinking that some other alternative would have been better (Sudgen, 1985, p. 82-86).

According to the SEU theory, people would not have regrets, if they analysed the utility and probabilities before making a decision. In real life it is not possible to foresee precisely the final outcomes. Thus the decider is not able to decide upon a better choice. The regret theory offers one way, how to understand, why many people behave inconsistently. This means that there isn't and cannot be an absolute and consistent preference system in the way people behave, which would help to find a solution to any decision making situation. All people are most of the time irrational. In situations where inconsistency is prevalent, can foreseeing regret influence decision making, and thus the **SEU model** has to take into account the **subjective nature of a decision making situation** (Sudgen, 1985, p. 87-99).

Jon Elster (1983) presents three levels of decision making process, which are behaviour, beliefs/wishes and informativeness. The absence of the third level in the SEU model has been criticised a lot. It is important to choose the best way for acting considering the respective beliefs and wishes. In order for the behaviour to be right, it has to be in accordance with the beliefs and wishes of the person. For wishes and beliefs one must find a sufficient amount of information that is connected to the facts that influence the decision. No optimal solutions can be found for all three levels. This in turn leads to unclearness concerning education choice (Elster, 1983, p. 111-113).

In general, we can argue that in the course of decision making process people have specific coping difficulties. Previous authors have shared several common viewpoints. They stress the fact that in general making every decision creates a certain tension in the person.

In case the psychological tension crosses a certain limit, blocks emerge in personal consciousness. This in turn causes postponing the decision making, in worse case even denying the problem. Making a decision that corresponds to one's wishes, interests, and talents is according to the rational decision making strategy possible in an optimal stress situation. Different authors suggest considering the following aspects when making a decision:

- meta-rational, resilience, and structure arguments (Jungerman, 1986, p. 627-641);
- a conflict between accepting or rejecting alternatives (Janis & Mann, 1977, p. 55-56);
- the subjective nature of a decision making situation (Sudgen, 1985, p. 87-99);
- three levels of decision making process (Elster, 1983, p. 111-113).
- In summary, we can say that coping difficulties in decision making process can be taken to minimum. People should find an optimal amount of information necessary for deciding according to their wishes and talents. Through considering the situation in making the best choice, this forms the base of decision making process.

### **Uncertainty in educational path choice**

The notion of uncertainty is an important addition to the SEU model. It is very important in the context of educational path choice. We begin with the third level – **informativeness**. It is very hard to say, what would be an optimal amount of information for choosing an educational path. The main reason in case of such uncertainty is the many-sidedness of the choice: even with an endless info search it is impossible for any person to foresee all the outcomes of education related decisions (Elster, 1983, p. 114-116).

The unclearness of beliefs and wishes refers to a situation where the acquired situation lacks the best belief. **Beliefs that are important when choosing educational path are** the existing possibilities, one's own real possibilities, educational path choice and the consequence of educational path choice. The consequences of educational path choice do not usually have optimal results. This would presume a complete prediction of the future developments of the work force market. In case of current beliefs and wishes many choices can have an equal value. **In many cases the structural limitations can restrain real possibilities so much that the only possible behaviour becomes the best choice, although it does not correspond to real wishes and beliefs.** This can happen more to students with special needs, whose skills are poorer (Elster, 1983, p. 118-122).

The problem is complicated and in general does not allow considering all alternatives and their consequences, since time and individuals' cognitive abilities are limited. Every decision maker solves problems gradually, according to one's possible choices. It concludes here, that decision makers try to find satisfactory solutions. Satisfactory solution is not optimal, but is good enough from the point of view of the decision maker at the current moment in time and in current situation. Satisfactory is more real than optimal, since in reality there are possible alternatives and endless consequences, but human cognitive abilities and time are clearly limited. Due to the limited rationality we are always connected to our environment (Elster, 1983, p. 123-125).

### Choosing an educational path

People do not always act rationally. On the first level – **behaviour** – a standard example of irrationality is lack of will. When choosing an educational path, this refers to situations, where external factors direct a person to act on the contrary to one's beliefs and wishes (Elster, 1989, p. 117-121).

The third level – **informativeness** – is somewhat more complicated. Irrationality here means whether not knowing the existing information or constant search for new information about what in the present situation would be most rational. The inability to decide may lead to an endless search for new information (Elster, 1989, p. 121-122).

In the context of educational path choice, ignorance is the most probable question for youth when choosing a speciality. Students choose a speciality, about which they lack thorough information. A typical example here is students, who during acquiring vocational education discover that what they have chosen doesn't correspond to their expectations. Studies by Savolainen and Turunen (1988) about drop-out in vocational schools showed that this problem was one reason for dropping out (Savolainen & Turunen, 1988, p. 254-257).

Theoretically the most interesting of the three levels is the second, which is connected to beliefs and wishes. Elster (1989) highlights the cognitive and motivational shortcomings of the decision making process (Elster, 1989, p. 127).

**The cognitive shortcomings of the decision making process** include changes of preferences due to framing and concluding mistakes. **Motivational shortcomings** are adaptable change of preferences and wishful thinking (Ruonavaara, 1985, p. 63-64).

Changing preferences refers to adapting wishes and possibilities in a way that when one doesn't get the wished, one doesn't want it any more. Possibility lies in whether one adapts oneself consciously with possibilities that are based on the choice or does it unconsciously. **Wishful thinking** refers to situations where beliefs are changed in a way that they would match with wishes. For example, one believes that a chosen speciality is exactly what one wanted. Wishful thinking is similar to changing adaptable preferences, but the **final result** is a belief, not a wish or will. A person, whose preferences have been adapted toward a possible renouncement, cannot be called free. Freedom in this case can be explained as an ability to accept the inevitable (Ruonavaara, 1989, p. 64 -65).

Change of preferences leads to inequality in educational path choice. With changing preferences it is also possible to explain the connection between educational path choices and beliefs. This explains the situation, where people with different social positions and abilities evaluate education's role and nature differently. Consequently, this refers to the fact that career choices of students with special needs are in fact limited and differ from those of regular students. Thus, we can talk about the inequality of educational possibilities, which are related to the social position and poorer educational abilities (Gottfredson & Berker, 1981, p. 112-115).

When analysing the viewpoints of these authors, we can conclude that people often behave irrationally in the decision making process. This expresses whether in the lack of will, insufficient information, groundless change of preferences, or wishful thinking. Students with special educational needs have a bigger threat to make choices based on the above mentioned irrational viewpoints. Thus, they need specific career counselling already in the basic school.

### Conclusions

Choosing an educational path can be viewed as a factor of career success or failure. Estonian vocational education system must ensure social and professional readiness for youth for beginning work life. One option is considered to be a functioning career counselling system. Vocational education can be seen as one starting point for career. Young persons' career choice can be described, explained and understood through two theoretical – internal and external perspectives. Educational choices are described as a joint result of three processes: structure of individual's possibilities, structure of possibilities to choose, and structural forces. Individual career choice is tackled from the viewpoints of congruity, developmental, and decision making theories. Career choice is often talked about, but little attention is paid to the real decision making process. Decision making theory views the decision making process. Ideal is considered to be realistic evaluation to possibilities and choosing the best among possible options.

The two research directions of decision making theory models are risk-based and risk-evading decision making situations. Decision making situation model that does not involve risk is called expected values model. The model was improved and named expected utility model, since the decision maker cannot fully predict the final results.

The expected utility model was improved on the bases of the fact that the probabilities of final results are subjective. The model was named subjective expected utility model.

There are three major arguments against the subjective expected utility model: human behaviour doesn't correspond to the SEU model, since people have evaluative prejudices, perceptual mistakes and coping difficulties. The decision making process has three levels: behaviour, beliefs/wishes, and information; and two shortcomings: cognitive and motivational.

Life planning is connected to relevant values and setting goals and with a concept of having a place in the world. A person should be able to express, how to organise one's life. In reality it is known that preferences change together with one's development. In order to understand career choice better, it is necessary to know the process of how the beliefs of different people are formed. It is necessary to understand the formulation of justifications of choices in case of different individuals. At the same time we cannot rule out the institutional and social context, where these choices were formed.

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