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# CAREER CHOICE AND EFFECTIVE CAREER MANAGEMENT: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS BASIS ON THE WAY TO CAREER

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### **Abstract**

This paper identifies the importance of effective career management and need for organizational support for employees' career management. Effective career management refers to the policies and practices deliberately designed by the organizations in order to enhance the career effectiveness of their employees. We examined empirically the relationship between opinions of employees about strategy that is most important in career and their opinions about effective career management. In research data were gathered and analyzed fro 102 employees. Some of the opinions of the employees emphasize that a career strategy is a process of realization of the idea for one's own career progress. Their opinions point out that effective career management refers to continuous personal and professional upgrade. By understanding what we want in our careers and how this will affect our nonwork activities, we can be in a better position to plan our future.

Key words: career management, career strategy, entrepreneurial goals, process, employees JEL Classification: M13, M12, O15

## INTRODUCTION

The basis of a quality organization consists of employees who are satisfied with their work, ready to learn and thrive and thus continuously bring progress and profit for themselves and the organization. The foundation of a quality organization is the corporate mission, a reasonable vision of the organization, clearly set goals and a high level of creativity and innovation of employees, aimed at fulfilling the mission, vision and goals. The career and lifemanagement process begin with the development of a personal definition of success (Mackowiak, 1985). Through the integration of the roles of the individual and the organization in the career-management process, employees can optimize their contribution to an organization. Employees can successfully manage their careers by applying the techniques of self-assessment, goal setting, and career planning. But organizations need to work constantly at improving the abilities and advancement potential of their members. The organization's role in career management begins with a sound performance-appraisal system. A good and realistic career plan helps people to see the opportunities in relation to their abilities and includes concrete steps and short-term results to be achieved, which when achieved create a sense of accomplishment that directly affects the motivation and satisfaction of work.

## **DETERMINATION OF THE TERM "CAREER MANAGEMENT"**

Career management is combination of structured planning and the active management choice of one's own professional career (Ball, 1997). Career management definition according to Arnold are the attempts that is made to influence the career development of one of more people and the formal activities of providing training, mentoring and careers advice (Arnold, 1997). Career management is important to an organization which helps it to secure the skills and knowledge for its future and needs (Adamson, 1998).

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For the authors Greenhaus, Callanan, and Godshalk the career management model guides individuals through the different phases of their career from figuring out what their first job should be right to navigating the road to retirement (Greenhaus, 2018).

Arnold states that work organizations are compelled (and sometimes choose) to change form, strategy, and size in ways which affect the kinds of work roles and careers available and it can be argued that managing careers is difficult yet necessary for both individuals and organizations in these circumstances (Arnold, 2002).

## **EFFECTIVE CAREER MANAGEMENT AS A CONTINUOUS AND ACTIVE PROCESS**

The organization helps employees in career planning, although career management is primarily an individual responsibility (Dessler, 2007). Employee assistance is provided by reviewing careers, setting career goals, planning activities, and providing career feedback. Quality and effective career management involves three types of information: information on the strategy, goals and plans for work and development, information on the abilities, goals and development potentials of the employees and information on organizational needs and vacancies It is very important for employees to have information that refers to the organization itself, its plans and work needs for timely planning of their careers. It is also important for the organization to have relevant information on employment, their potential and career development goals in order to align with the organizational and individual goals and interests. A common and important feature within models of career management is the career goal (Greco, 2020). Given the unpredictable labor market, effective career management is the responsibility of both individual workers and organizations.

According to Baron and Greenberg a typical career management programme, as part of the larger human resources system, involves efforts to help employees to assess their own career strengths and weaknesses; set priorities and specific career goals; provide information on various career paths and alternatives within the organization and offer employees yearly reviews of their progress towards these goals by managers who have received training in conducting such assessments. The authors Hiirshi and Koen in their paper - Contemporary career orientations and career self-management: A review and integration presents a career counseling intervention framework to help clients self-direct their careers and attain worknonwork balance (Hirchi, 2021). According to them researchers can use this framework to gain a better understanding of career self-management from a whole-life perspective.

The organization should develop and simultaneously realize the development career of the individual by engaging in accordance with the current competence of the individual, by projecting the future job or managerial role of the individual in accordance with the capabilities through training the employee in accordance with current and planned requirements. working, by evaluating performance, by rewarding and promoting employees based on their performance, by reassigning, checking for other suitable jobs and roles.

## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A CAREER CHOICE**

When we talk about career choice we cannot say that we have fully elaborated this issue, if we consider it outside the concept of entrepreneurship. The decision to be the owner of an enterprise, or to develop innovative potentials within a larger organization (intrapreneurship) undoubtedly requires setting goals and creating an appropriate career plan. It is important to know that career is usually understood as a set of behaviours demonstrated by the individual in the direction of self-improvement. In contrast, entrepreneurship is more understood as an individual behaviour that has as its ultimate goal the promotion of innovation and the manifestation of creative actions. (Ozsungur, 2021)

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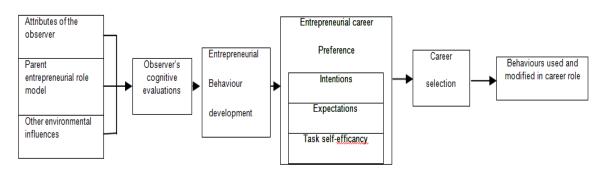
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To understand the connection, let's first start from the essence of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is usually understood as the transformation of innovative and creative ideas into action, as well as turning risks into opportunities. Creative ideas emerge as e result of cognitive coding and information transformation process. In the process of innovation, the integration of new knowledge with existing knowledge takes place. In this sense, entrepreneurship is reduced to the creation and implementation of ideas. Of course, for this to happen, the entrepreneur should have the appropriate knowledge, skills and talent. An individual can develop the idea of an entrepreneur; invest in it to the extent that he can manage his knowledge, skills and talent. An entrepreneur is also expected to possess characteristics of a researcher, organizer, etc. For all these characteristics to be acquired, to be sustainable and to result in a successful entrepreneur, career management is needed. When these two concepts are connected, we arrive at the term career entrepreneurship. (Ozsungur, 2021)

Questions we should ask ourselves are: Why do people choose entrepreneurship as a career choice? or What factors influence the development of entrepreneurial behavior? An answer to these questions can be obtained from the Social Learning Theory which can help to understand and identify the basic determinants of entrepreneurial activity. According to this theory, people perceive and evaluate behavior in their environment. As a result of the environment they develop their attitudes and beliefs, but also set their intentions and goals. (Scheiner, 2009) When we talk about the environment, it should be emphasized that it is the family environment that is the most influential and most of the process of socialization of the person takes place within its framework or by its example. (Jayawarna et al., 2015)

Figure 1 – Process of entrepreneurial career choice from a social learning perspective



**Source**: Scheiner, W.Ch., 1<sup>st</sup> Edition (2009) *Fundamental Determinants of Entrepreneurial Behaviour*, Gabler, GWV Fachverlage GmbH, Wiesbaden, p. 19

This theory offers four categories of factors (Scheiner, 2009) that can have a significant impact on a career choice decision:

- 1. Specific abilities of the person such as genetics, innate gifts, talents, abilities these abilities can largely limit the person's preferences.
- 2. Environmental conditions and events this category is mostly outside the sphere of influence of the individual, but they have a significant impact on the decision-making process. This part includes family experience and resources, because each family teaches and directs its children to different things and depending on the availability of different resources.
- 3. Experience gained through learning which can be understood as an individual's behavior aimed at generating recognition/rewards (Instrumental Learning Experiences), or behaviour created by observing and learning from real or imagined models (Associative Learning Experience)

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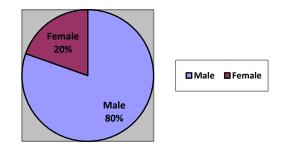
4. **Tasks approach skills** – a category that develops in cases where the individual is faced with unfamiliar problems.

Regarding the choice of an entrepreneurial career as a career choice, there are several empirical studies that show that there is a connection between the decision made by the individual and his family background. An individual is more inclined to choose entrepreneurship as a career path if there is observational learning from a valid model that offers a success story of self-employment. The observed pattern is a powerful determinant and thus the individual may be encouraged or discouraged to make a decision to follow it. Research goes even deeper, distinguishing between the influence of the role of the father and that of the mother on children's determination. Namely, the profession of the father has an influence on the professional determination of the son and daughter, while the role of the mother has a limited influence mostly only on the daughter. On the other hand, research has shown that women are more influenced by the family when deciding to start a business, unlike men who are more independent in this matter. (Scheiner, 2009)

#### **RESULTS AND METHODS**

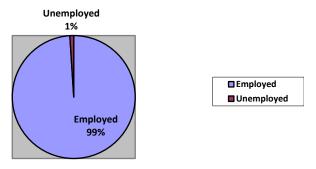
In order to determine the conditions for effective career management in Macedonia, a research was conducted in which a survey technique was used. The survey covered a total of 102 respondents throughout the Republic of Macedonia. It is a simple random sample, which allows to obtain estimates for the characteristics of the entire population to which the sample belongs. As for the demographic characteristics of the sample, the research included respondents from different age groups, different genders - male/female, with different socioeconomic status - employed/unemployed and of course with different work experience in order to get an objective picture of the situation.

Figure 2 – Gender of the respondents



Source: Own research

Figure 3 - Socioeconomic status of the respondents

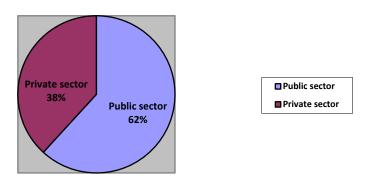


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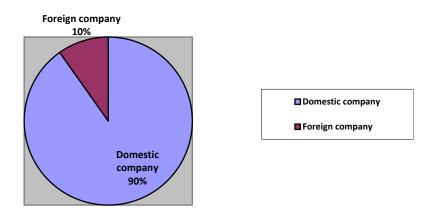
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Figure 4 – The employment sector



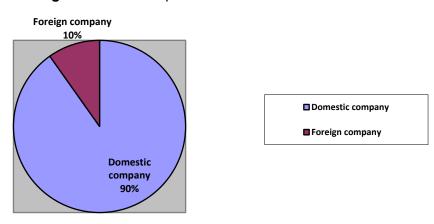
Source: Own research

Figure 5 – Type of company



Source: Own research

Figure 6 – Work experience



Source: Own research

The survey consisted of statements for which respondents could express their attitude in the form of clear approval (agree), partial agreement (partially agree) in the case that their worldview is close to the statement, but not identical to it, it was left to them possibility of

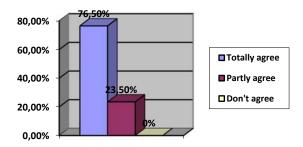
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complete disapproval (disagree). The statements covered several essential aspects on which effective career management depends, such as motivations, prerequisites that need to be met in order to achieve effective career management, factors that influence this process, knowledge and skills that should be available for successful managing this process etc.

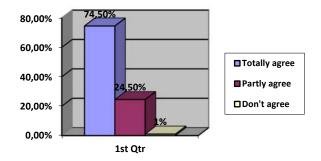
From thuc research, knowledge should be obtained about the situation regarding this issue in Macedonia, how career management is an act of a conscious process and in which parts interventions are needed to improve the situation. The answers to the claims that if the individual wants to have an effective career management, first of all, as a prerequisite, he should have knowledge about himself, his affinities, advantages and disadvantages on the one hand, and knowledge about the environment as a factor that can influence the realization of the planned on the other hand, can be traced in Figure 7 and Figure 8.

Figure 7 – Effective career management requires excellent self-knowledge



Source: Own research

**Figure 8** – Effective career management requires having an accurate assessment of one's environment



Source: Own research

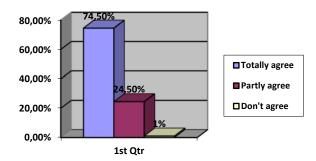
It can be seen that the respondents have a clear idea of the importance of self-knowledge and how influential the external environment can be for effective career management. Both statements have almost equal significance in the perception of the respondents.

As for the conviction that goals should correspond to a person's inner potentials, in terms of values, abilities, interests and preferred lifestyle in order to be realistic, an overwhelming majority of respondents answered positively. (**Figure** 9)

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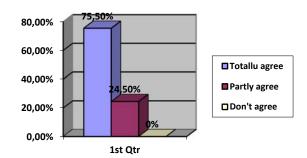
**Figure 9** - Effective career management requires developing realistic and conceptual goals that are compatible with one's own values, interests, abilities and preferred lifestyle.



Source: Own research

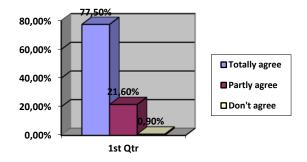
In the section dedicated to the development of a career plan and creating a strategy, the respondents were faced with claims through which it was necessary to determine how much the respondents are aware of the need for a strategic approach to this issue. (Figure 10) The answers provide a clear insight into how important it is for the respondents to have feedback and how important is also to have the skills to develop a strategy. (**Figure** 11, 12)

**Figure 10** - Effective career management requires developing and implementing appropriate career strategies.



Source: Own research

Figure 11 - Effective career management requires a continuous feedback process

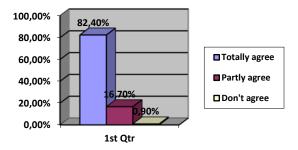


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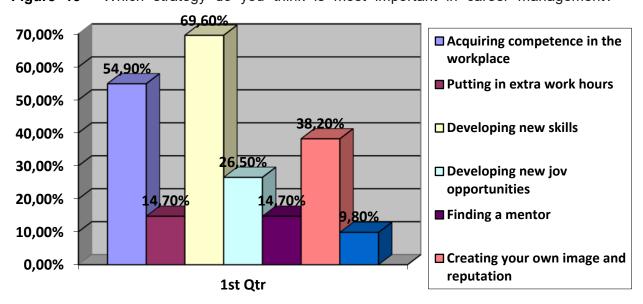
**Figure 12 –** Having the skills to develop and implement career strategies is key to effective career management



Source: Own research

Also, from the respondents' answers to the question – What do you think constitutes a career strategy? it can be concluded that they have a clear idea of what a career strategy is. The answers mostly move within the framework of the understanding that it is primarily a process, guided by defined goals and taken action. Continuous improvement of own skills through perseverance and dedication in order to achieve the vision. According to the respondents' perception, this is a process in which it is crucial to know one's own advantages and disadvantages. In doing so, respondents were offered to choose which of the listed strategies is crucial and most important according to their understanding in order to achieve effective career management.(Figure 13)

Figure 13 - Which strategy do you think is most important in career management?



Source: Own research

From the answers (Figure 13), it can be seen that the respondents mostly consider the importance of *Developing new skills* and *Acquiring competence in the workplace* as strategies for accessing effective career management. From this it can be concluded that the respondents believe that relying on themselves and investing in their own development of skills is the surest path to career development. It immediately follows the *image and reputation* 

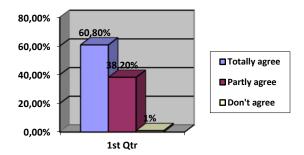
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that the person will create in the environment. The lowest rated, i.e. strategy with the least importance for effective career management according to the respondents, is the involvement in the decision-making process in the organization and the development of its policies.

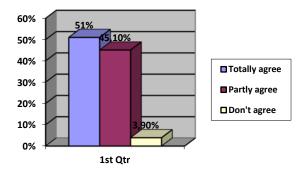
As for the effectiveness of the strategy and the influences that may call it into question, the respondents were offered two influencing factors as options: the organization itself (the norms and values that it nurtures) and the nature of the ultimate goal for which the strategy is intended. From the responses of the respondents that can be seen in Figure 14 and Figure 15, it can be concluded that the respondents agreed that the nature of the goal we strive for is significant and has an impact on the effectiveness of the strategy, but also the values and norms that are nurtured in organization have a high degree of influence on the success of the strategy.

**Figure 14** - The effectiveness of the specific strategy depends on the norms and values of the organization.



Source: Own research

**Figure 15** - The effectiveness of a particular strategy depends on the nature of the career goal



Source: Own research

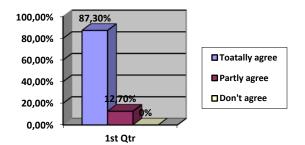
The last question of the survey was aimed at determining the thinking and perception of the respondents about whether there is a universal way, a prescribed model that can equally successfully respond in all cases to defined goal.

Figure 16 - There is no "one best" strategy that is equally effective in all situations

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Source: Own research

From the given answers, it can be concluded that the respondents clearly understand the essence of the strategic approach in solving problems. An overwhelming majority (87.3%) pointed to the fact that each strategy is specific to itself, built in accordance with the nature of the goal.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Considering the importance of effective career management, the paper elaborates this issue in the Macedonian context. By determining the attitude of the respondents on several key issues related to effective career management, gaps in thinking and the possible lack of adequate knowledge in the area of career management should be revealed.

The results of the conducted research show that Macedonian citizens see career development as a continuous process that requires vision and long-term commitment. The conclusions are based on a sample composed of employees in both the public and private sectors (public 61.8%, private 38.2%), with experience mostly in domestic companies (90.2%), but also in foreign companies (9.8%), representation of both gender (male 19.6%, female 80.4%) and of course, the sample was predominantly composed of people in employment (99%) who face the challenge of developing their own career path.

What brought to the fore the result of the research was that the respondents have a clear idea of the need for an objective attitude towards oneself and one's environment. Over 70% of the respondents emphasized the importance of cultivating an honest attitude towards one's own needs and abilities, as well as their matching with the defined desires and goals. Because it is not enough to just want something strongly, but you also need the appropriate skills to achieve it. Very often, the possibilities for achieving the goals are limited by the conditions in the environment, so successful management of external factors is necessary, and for this purpose, their realistic assessment is needed. A third point that stands out with exceptional importance is that the defined goals must be realistic (78.4%) in order to be achievable. They should match the opportunities of the environment and also be compatible with the values, interests, abilities and lifestyle of the individual.

Over 75% of respondents have a clear idea that career management is a long-term, thoughtful and painstaking process that requires a strategic approach and a continuous supply of feedback that should provide us with insights as to whether we are on the right track and how far our actions are deviating from the defined goals. This kind of strategic approach necessitates the need for appropriate skills for strategy development as well as their implementation. 82.4% of respondents emphasized this fact. In the part of their free understanding of what, according to them, the strategy represents, most of the answers define

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it as a continuous planned and organized process that requires persistence and commitment, aimed at a single goal/vision, the realization of which requires appropriate skills and constant upgrading of own knowledge.

Given the many opportunities that can provide career development in the form of different strategies, respondents emphasized the importance of having a strategy for developing new skills. 69.6% of respondents believe that the key to progress in one's career is to invest in the development of new knowledge and skills through continuous education. The second most important strategy, supported by 54.9%, is the acquisition of workplace competence, which is again related to the level of personal skills, abilities and investment in personal development. Options such as building one's own image and reputation (38.2%), developing new job opportunities (26.5%), finding a mentor and investing in additional working hours (14.7%) follow, and the lowest rated is the strategy for inclusion in the development of the organization's policies (9.8%).

We have already said that a career can be understood as a set of behaviors demonstrated by an individual for self-improvement, while entrepreneurship refers more to individual behavior aimed at promoting innovative and creative actions. (Ozsungur, 2021) However, individuals who see themselves in an entrepreneurial career should set their goals accordingly to reflect these entrepreneurial aspirations. Operational goals in the entrepreneurial career will reflect expectations for personal success, but also the achievements of the firm. In this case, personal career goals and business goals intersect. (Greenhaus et al., 2010)

Not every strategy is necessarily relevant to an entrepreneurial career. There are strategies that are almost unnecessary for an entrepreneur. However, a strategy that is considered relevant and necessary for every entrepreneur is definitely the strategy that includes the development of skills and knowledge (Greenhaus et al., 2010), because we said that for an idea to be transformed and implemented, appropriate knowledge, skills and talent are needed. Among other things, an entrepreneur is expected to possess characteristics of a researcher, organizer, etc. According to the respondents, exactly this strategy for developing new skills is of crucial importance and is ranked as a real priority regardless of the type of career in question.

Most respondents agree that the norms and values that are nurtured in the organization (60.8%) and the nature of the defined goal (51%) have an impact on effective career development. However, what is significant is the awareness that there is no unified model that guarantees results, but each career path requires its own commitment and a specific strategy specifically developed for the defined goal. 87.3% of respondents agreed that there is no "one best" strategy that is equally effective in all cases.

If we compare the answers, we will see that the so-called internal factors (abilities, skills, knowledge, self-assessment 76.5%) are far more pronounced than external factors (organizational culture as a factor 60.8%). Respondents gave greater importance to what personal skills, knowledge and abilities (as a condition for achieving career goals) represent, in contrast to the atmosphere in the organization as part of the opportunities/limitations that come from the environment. Part of the emphasized knowledge and skills refer to skills for strategy development and strategy management, supported by 82.4% of the respondents, quite expected if we consider that the need for strategic career development is strongly supported by 75.5% of respondents.

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