Counseling for Business & Industrial
Values Clarification

4.1 History

Values represent the base on which a person builds a satisfactory personal existence. Values are crystallized through social models and personal experiences. The concept of *value* is used in various fields with different significance. In **sociology** and **anthropology**, cultures pertaining to ages, geographical areas or generations are often described by means of the dominant values.

In the **philosophy of culture,** the study of values has been developed in axiology, an independent discipline focusing on man as a creative being. In connection with human activities, values are classified into: economic, political, artistic, moral. In **psychology** the accent falls on the variability of values within groups and on this basis the explanation of behavioural differences is attempted. Values are leading principles of life and people seek professions in accordance with their values, personality and interests.

Thus they will appreciate certain aspects of work and prefer some professions to others. Work satisfaction is associated with the agreement between personal and professional values. In **education**, values reflect cultural models in society. Classical culture promoted the idea of harmonious personality by integrating the values of goodness, beauty, truthfulness, holiness, honour. Modern culture insisted on a complex and efficient personality and fundamental values of lawfulness, liberty, equality, solidarity. Postmodern culture puts creative personality foremost, laying stress on personal innovation and autonomy.

In **career counseling**, values are analyzed in relation to other determinants of professional preference (interests, aptitudes, personality traits, etc.), whose clarification prepares and supports decision-making. The preference for certain occupations or professions is related to one's system of values. Once one's values have been clarified, there is less indecision regarding the future and more involvement in developing a professional identity.

Riffault (1993) presents the results of an investigation carried out in the 1980s in order to identify the major trends in family, work, religion, politics and the observable changes in the European system of values. As regards work, the

following were considered: material conditions, salary, atmosphere, favourable work schedule, but also elements of personal success, degree of initiative, and responsibility. In Romania, Chelcea (1994) presents a research performed in the 1993-1994 that aimed to identify the professional values of Romanian university students, during the transition to market economy.

The professional values inventory (Super) was used on an *indicative* sample (602 students of Bucharest universities). In the hierarchy of professional values the first positions were: a profession that should allow living one's desired lifestyle, in a pleasant work atmosphere, and with economic advantages. The study reveals that students relate to work by external motivation, and internal factors are less important. The results of the research may be explained by taking into account the social context after the change in political regime in 1989.

The Romanian Opinion Poll Institute – IRSOP carried out in 2005 a study on values, on a representative national sample for the adult population. On this occasion a personality profile of Romanians and Europeans was put together on the basis of the following characteristics: tolerance / empathy, self-consideration, cognitive abilities, assertiveness, morality, efficiency, modern / traditional. The study highlighted the extent to which certain values, social rights and principles are respected in Romania, and on the leading positions we encounter: *pluralism, minority rights, equality between men and women*.

In addition, the study analysis the persistence in Romanian mentality of certain non- values such as: corruption, anomy, authoritativeness, the conservative family model, ethnic and sexual stereotypes, xenophobia, alienation, intolerance.

4.2   Career Choices
Career choice theories consider a profession productive and stable when:

- it is freely chosen;
- it was selected from many possible alternatives;
- it is in accordance with the person's abilities, interests, and values;
- it benefits from the support of significant people in the client's life.

In the theory of vocational choice, Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, Helma hold that the significant factors in choosing a career are: the living environment, the education level, individual values, personality traits. The authors draw attention to the fact that each occupational activity type lies on values that may be accepted or not, may suit one or not.

Choosing a profession is influenced by the quality of choices made in relation to the values of various careers.

Super (1996) includes in his theory on the genesis of professional choices and preference two fundamental dimensions: lifetime development and articulation of social roles. Of the ideas relevant to our subject we mention:

> ➢ people differ with respect to aptitudes, needs, values, interests, personality traits, and self-image;
> ➢ in order to practice any profession, a combination of capacities and personality traits is needed, however one individual can practice several professions and implicitly various people with different characteristics can practice the same profession;
> ➢ using one's own resources and capacities to the maximum in accordance to personal values produces satisfaction in work.

Plant proposes an ethnologic perspective on professional values and their implications for counseling. A research performed in Denmark evinces three systems of values, corresponding to the following typologies (Christensen, 1987, 1988, apud Plant, 1998):

1. *The Career maker affirms*:
   a. *"work is my life, my way of expression"*,
   b. *"I study all the time, permanent study is me"*,
   c. *"I expect inspiration and personal development from my job"*,
   d. *"I am trying to combine leisure and work"*.
2. *The Wage earner says*:
   a. *"life is not just work, it is leisure as well"*,
   b. *"work does not take up my whole time"*,
   c. *"work and leisure are two different aspects"*.
3. *The Entrepreneur declares*:
   a. *"I am my own boss"*,
   b. *"I can organize my own time"*,
   c. *"I take courses once in a while"*,
   d. *"I work on several projects at the same time"*.

The analysis of the three perspectives evinces their concept of:
> ➢ *work* – personal development, job, or task;
> ➢ *spare time* – combined with work, completely separate, or in alternation;
> ➢ *lifelong learning* – seen as a process of personal growth or a simple tool.

Each perspective includes positive elements: passion for work in case of the careerist, balance in case of the wage earner, flexibility for the entrepreneur, but also different reactions to unemployment. The careerist will feel lost, the wage earner will lose his or her income and social relations, and the entrepreneur will start a firm or company

All these have an impact on counseling and target *aspects* such as:

- ➢ the counselor's activity influencing his or her system of values and the way they are reflected in daily practice or in employing the methods and instruments helping clients to be aware of their own values;
- ➢ the competitive environment of market economy where career-centred values and entrepreneurs are especially favoured, while pressure is put upon the wage-earners' values;
- ➢ the major changes in life may determine changes or adjustments in professional values; a counselor plays an important part in supporting a client to clarify certain contradictions in the system of personal and professional values;
- ➢ sets of complementary values where each has something to offer, and a counselor may help client find a balance between the three perspectives.

4.3   Counseling Values

Values are fundamental beliefs or motivations guiding human activities. In his work "*Counseling and Values*" (1970), Peterson (apud Gibson, Mitchell, 1981) analyses *values* by comparison to *needs, purposes, beliefs, attitudes, preferences*. Values are motivational forces, criteria on the basis of which aims are set. They are composed of: knowledge, approval, selection. Peterson affirms that values are **"hypothetical constructs"**, represent the **"desirable"**, in the sense of what "must be done" or what a person perceives to be the right thing to do under certain circumstances.

Numerous definitions are focused on the relationship between values and personality or highlight the link between values and society:

- ➢ "values, interests and attitudes are important dimensions of personality organically inter-correlated" (Chelcea, 1994);

- ➢ "as socialized individual preference, values include affective, cognitive and conative elements, revealing the action potential of human individuals, groups and communities" (McLauglin, 1965, apud Chelcea, 1994);

> the value system of an individual is a "a multifactor spiral or behavioural *influence modeling and dominating the decision-making capacity*" (Smith, Gibson, Mitchell, 1981);

> "values do not exist in isolation, but are structured in ordered, complex and contradictory, dynamic systems that reflect social conditions" (Chelcea, 1994);

> values are "states and ways of action, considered desirable and baring an essential role in orienting human actions, establishing objectives and aims, strategies, methods and action paths" (Zamfir, 1998).

Values are described by making reference to standards and behaviors (Mace, 1972, Gibson, Mitchell, 1981). Standards are attempts of human communities and groups to set rules that should ensure the keeping and expressing of values. Behaviors are ways of interaction, according to certain standards, and in order to conserve values.

A separate category is represented by professional values, defined as a "subsystem within the axiological system that refers to particular aspects of the professional activity, more or less desired" (Super, 1970, apud Chelcea, 1994). Raths, Harmin, Simon (1966, apud Gibson and Mitchell, 1981) have proposed the following criteria that values fulfill:

♦ choice – free, between alternatives, upon careful analysis of each option;
♦ cherishing, evaluation – carefully holding on to, finding satisfaction in choosing and the will of publicly declaring one's values;
♦ action – transposition into a behaviour model by exercising choice several times in life.

According to the capacity to determine behaviour, values may be operative, with a high probability of generating manifest behaviour, and intentional, with a low probability of being turned into manifest reactions (Chelcea, 1994).

4.4   Values in Literature
Guichard and Huteau (2001) make the distinction between general values that correspond to the aims of existence, and specific values, targeting particular fields. Values are more general, abstract, and fundamental compared to interests. Values are set later then interests, in adolescence, while *needs* are states of tension.

Interests may manifest themselves through value choice, to the extent to which preferences for particular situations or activities are means of reaching certain ends. The complex relationship between values and interests may be illustrated by this example: altruistic values may be satisfied in the medical profession, by taking care of sick people in a hospital (*the social type*, in Holland's theory) or as a bank manager (*the enterprising type*).

Harmin and Kirschenbaum (apud Gibson and Mitchell, 1981) proposed a "values pyramid", including the following levels:

- *level of information*: facts, information, abilities;
- *level of application:* facts, information, and the learning of how to apply them in various situations;
- *level of values:* using facts in one's own life and understanding what they mean to him/herself.

The *values* in the literature. Rokeach (1973) distinguishes a series of "fundamental" values (18), designating personal objectives (e.g. "leading a quiet life") or social objectives as (e.g. equality, liberty), and "instrumental" values (16), linked to the ensemble of behaviors' that have a positive moral connotation proving certain qualities (ambition, honesty, responsibility).

Perron (1981) wrote about five categories: *status* (the desire for admiration, an adequate position, substantial earnings), *accomplishment* (the desire to perform creative activities that allow self-expression), *climate* (the desire to have an organized and agreeable environment), *risk* (the desire for competition and unpredictable situations), *liberty* (the desire for independence).

Schwartz (1992), following Rokeach, advanced a list of 56 values that can be grouped in 10 categories and organized on the basis of a circular model. On one side we find the values that refer to surpassing one's self *(kindness, universality)*, which are in opposition with the values referring to self-assertion *(power, self-confidence)*. On another side are the values targeting change *(autonomy, stimulation, hedonism)*, in opposition with the values of continuity *(conformism, security, tradition)*.

Super (1991) created *The Inventory of Professional Values*, composed of 15 categories:

    1) *altruism* ("the possibility of contributing to the good of others");

2) ***aesthetic values*** ("manifest in activities allowing the realization of aesthetic objects and contribute to beautifying the world we live in");

3) ***intellectual stimulation*** ("it is associated with professions allowing for autonomous reflections and continuing learning");

4) ***professional success*** ("reflects the appreciation of a profession that gives the satisfaction of a job well done");

5) ***independence*** (in case of professions allowing a person to work "after a personal plan and at one's own pace");

6) ***prestige*** (in professions "attaching importance to those that perform them and gain respect of the others");

7) ***leading others*** (in professions "allowing the possibility of planning and organizing the work of others");

8) ***economic advantages*** ("reflect the orientation towards well-paid professions");

9) ***professional security*** (in case of professions where "an individual is sure to hold on to a job");

10) ***work atmosphere*** ("refers to satisfactory work conditions");

11) ***relationships*** *with superiors* ("work supervised by a fair boss with whom one gets along well");

12) ***relationships with colleagues*** ("activity offering the opportunity of good social relations with the colleagues");

13) ***lifestyle*** ("it is associated with professions where employees can "organize their life they way they like");

14) ***variety*** (in case of activities "with diverse operations");

15) ***creativity*** (associated with professions that involve "making new things or products").

Sagiv (1999, apud Guichard and Huteau, 2001) proposed *the correlation of interests*, according to Holland and the *values theory* of Schwartz. For example, *artistic and intellectual interests* are associated in a positive way with *universality*, which regroups values such as: caring for the environment, beauty, tolerance, justice, equality, peace, and in a negative way with *conformism.* In addition, the author establishes positive correlations between social interests, and kindness. Conventional interests are positively associated with security and conformism, while negatively with universality, autonomy, and stimulation.

4.5   Clarification Techniques

When a person adequately uses values clarification techniques, the probabilities of transposing conflicts or discrepancies into positive decision is increased and life becomes more satisfactory for the person and constructive from a social point of view.

Brown and Brooks (1991) establish a series of stages in the clarification of a client's values with the counselor's support:

    a) awareness about the importance of values in decision-making, motivation and satisfaction related to work;

    b) using formal and informal values clarification techniques;

    c) making one's values list;

    d) discussing discrepancies occurred in case of contradictory values;

    e) analysis of the implications of values on professional choices or changes in the client's life.

The list of values will be compared to the interests, aptitudes, abilities and roles in the client's life. Should any contradictions arise, they will be discussed with the counselor to identify adequate reconciliation measures. For instance, in case the client is looking for a job, the counselor will propose job alternatives that may be compatible to the client's values.

Kinnier and Krumboltz (1986, apud Brown and Brooks, 1991) formulated the following *steps* in the process of values clarification:

    1) identifying by the client of the values underlying each choice and appreciating the purpose of life ("my life will head in this direction if only …");

    2) identifying similar difficulties in the past and the way they were confronted ("I acted this way in the past because …");

    3) consulting with friends about the situation and the values involved ("if I were you, I would have …");

    4) analysis of options, arguing them ("I know what you think, but please consider …");

    5) allowing time for reflection ("I need to detach myself from this and reflect …");

    6) making a decision based on the estimation of personal values ("I have analyzed the situation from every angle. My values are… so I decide to …").

Values clarification techniques are used both in *individual and group counseling.* There are exercises, which done individually or together with the counselor can determine adequate behaviour on the part of the client. In individual counseling the following are of particular importance:

> ➢ establishing and maintaining the relation with the client;
> ➢ identifying and exploring the consequences of the options;
> ➢ making decisions by the client;
> ➢ recognizing the importance of being pro-active with the decisions.

Values clarification techniques have great potential in-group counseling. Numerous values clarifications techniques are used to inform clients and develop their communication and interpersonal relation abilities. The exercises used in groups of clients facilitate self-knowledge and support the clients' adequate behaviors. Of particular efficiency are the techniques allowing clients to compare, examine, and bring arguments in favors of their own values, interest, and behaviors, despite the rules imposed on them at any time by others.

Gibson and Mitchell (1981) find similarities between the values clarification process and the stages of counseling:

Values Clarification	Counseling
1. Familiarization: creating an atmosphere of trust, acceptance, and open communication.	1. Establishing the relationship: developing a relation of support that should facilitate communication by the clients of the reasons for seeking counseling.
2. Developing the self-image.	2. Identifying and exploring the clients' concerns.
3. Awareness of individual values.	3. Awareness and examination of possible options for the clients.
4. Assisting individuals to choose between alternatives and freely affirm their values, having weighed the consequences.	4. Decision-making by the clients, on having analyzed the alternatives of each option.
5. Supporting individuals in setting aims and actions according to their values.	5. Implementing the decision: the aims are set and the clients move on to action.

The counselor's role - The counselor understanding the client's values support the unraveling of behaviour, purposes, and what is significant in the client's life.

The counselor's responsibilities in case of values clarification techniques are (Gibson and Mitchell, 1981):

- understanding his/her own values and the way they differ from those of colleagues and clients;
- accepting the clients' right to have different values;
- giving up the moralizing tone or the tendency to get involved in actions that might discourage clients from examining and meditating on their own values;
- avoiding judging clients, and creating a climate of acceptance and openness that should facilitate the values clarification techniques; · awareness of the impact his or her implicit values may have on the client.