Decision making Process

In business, there is an eight-step model for strategic decision-making. The steps include;

defining the problem,

identifying the criteria, allocating weight to the criteria,

developing alternatives,

select alternative,

implementing the alternative, and

Evaluating decision effectiveness.

These steps can also be used to make big decisions in your life: buying a car, joining an organization, getting a part time job, buying a mobile or laptop, or choosing a college.

To offer insight, I will provide the decision-making process I used to choose my graduate program and university, Public Relations at Ball State University.

1-Define the problem: This step is simply defining the problem. What is the problem? How should it be solved? Is the problem time sensitive? Based on my education received in my undergraduate university, Illinois State University, I felt that there were gaps in my education: campaign analytics, technical writing, and business acumen. I felt that looking for jobs was more challenging than what I anticipated. I definitely had the desire to be in a position most similar to a creative director or account executive.

2-Identify decision criteria: This step is to think about variables or factors that will influence your decision. Variables can be important concepts to you regarding the problem defined in step one. While considering different programs and schools, I developed a list of criterion that had differently ranked priorities: reputable program, accredited programs, graduate assistantships, location, curriculum, and program length. These criterions helped me think about costs incurred, risks encountered, and desired outcomes.

3-Allocating weight to the criteria: To assign weight to each criteria–defined in step two–you simply rank the items on the list from most important to least important, with your most important item corresponding to the number of variables you have and the least important item being one. While I was making the decision, the most important criterion was definitely the possibility of obtaining a graduate assistantship. Thinking about this retrospectively, I will assign weight to each of the decision factors using one through six to indicated importance, six being highest/most important. Graduate assistantship (6), Accredited program (5), Reputable program (4), Curriculum (3), Location (2), and Program length (1). I felt that some of the priority weights shifted during different stages of decision-making. As deadlines to decide became closer and closer, I looked more closely at location and if I could feasibly imagine myself functioning.

4-Developing alternatives: This step requires that you list all possible outcomes in regards to the problem, so essentially different options. In regards to this step, I think alternatives would be considered other schools that I was accepted as a graduate student: Georgetown University, Loyola University, and Illinois State University.

5-Analyzing the alternatives: To analyze the alternatives, you must score each alternative on a scale of 1-10 based on each variable you have outlined. So applying the weighted criteria to the alternatives, I basically scored each criteria on a scale of one to ten in order to create a score for each school, the sum of the alternatives being the score. So for Ball State University, graduate assistantships scored a 10 and if I multiply this by 6 (the weight from step three), it would be equivalent to a 60. Applying this to all other variables, BSU received a total score of 163, Georgetown 150, Loyola 163, and Illinois State 92.

6-Select alternative: This is simply making the decision. There can possibly be other variables that influence your process of selecting an alternative. I applied for scholarships, grants, assistantships for all schools, however I was not successful at obtaining interviews or employment from all, so when Ball State University offered me an assistantship, my decision was made.

7-Implementing alternative: This step is enacting the decision. I think the most significant moment for implementing your decision is accepting your admission offer or signing a lease at an apartment.

8-Evaluating decision effectiveness: Evaluating the decision process is going to be a little different for everyone. Evaluation is dependent upon how you define it; therefore, evaluation can be measured against how much money you are taking out in student loans or your happiness. For me this is an ongoing process. I still think about location, academic curriculum, and other factors more as the semester progresses. Me being a city person, I think I should have considered other alternatives in more heavily populated areas. In addition, while I was reviewing academic catalogs from different schools, I feel like I should have paid closer attention to what the courses actually entailed. At Ball State, there are some courses required that I do not think are extremely, crucial to my career path. However, in retrospect, I feel like I should have paid closer attention to how I assigned weights to each of the criteria.