

The Model of Cohesions between Career and Competence

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In the concept of traditional career the success is measured by objective criteria (status, the position taken, obtained income, etc.). The contemporary success of career is defined by more subjective criteria – satisfaction with the activity performed, implementation of inner potential, implementation of life goals, etc. the realisation of the latter career is related to the quality of person's competence, its development, re-qualification. Only when possessing the competence of proper level, a person, according to Bridges (1994, will be able 'to change the course' in his / her life by considering market needs as well as the goals of personal self-realization.

Environmental changes adjusted the system of organization's and employees' values, and especially the viewpoint to career. Contemporary career is treated as sequence of individual's roles based on the work, experience, increased responsibility (Baruch, 2006), regular interaction with other people, production of new knowledge and work forms as well as generation of ideas (Arthur, Rousseau, 2001), independence from a particular organization (Greenhouse, 2000). Such changes in understanding career, as Brown, Scase (1997) state, require universal technical, social and personal competences, but not specific skills. The latter do not lose their importance, but are treated only as one part of individual's competence. As activity environments get more complex, the successful activity cannot be explained only by collection of possessed specific skills. Complex unique situations provoke premeditated and conscious behaviour. In this case, the person's competence is considered because, according to Jucevicius (1998), unstable not-established model of contemporary career in an organization requires individual's autonomy; however it is meaningful only when it is based on competence. Autonomy at work, according to Norman (1983), is understood as the case when the greatest satisfaction of person's life is found in performing certain activity, for which a person has to use all his / her creative abilities, to show emotions, solidarity. Grin (1991) states that becoming autonomous at work is the process when the personality integrates because it sees all activities as elements of personal planning and reviews all its experiences as giving the basis for the implementation of personal expectations and goals. In respect of contemporary career individual's autonomy is one of the conditions of career success because self-knowledge, independence, sense of responsibility and development ensures not only harmony of person's and environment's interaction but also the possibility of career development. Thus, in striving for career competence is the main requirement.

A person striving for career at an organization faces the complex assignments possessing elements of tactics and strategy, to perform which he / she has to show abilities to handle increasing information flow, to think appropriately, to fast and qualitatively solve complex problems. This needs the competence of a certain level: the more complex activity (for example, requiring analytical thinking), the higher competence level is.

Considering the importance of competence level in respect of career, competence is defined as ability to apply for practical situations principles and techniques of certain activity (Nickols, 2000), a wide list of high-level skills and behaviours, which determines the ability to successfully act in complex unforeseen situations (Westera, 2001) as well as the set of personal traits, behaviour and features, which is necessary for successful performance of the work (Abraham, 2001).

Thus, the changing concept of career allows offering appropriate perspectives for career estimation referring to competence levels. At each career stage employee's competence is evaluated: readiness to perform an assignment / activity as well as competence level. The career based on the identification of competence levels shows that it is not enough to possess only certain competence, it is important to determine a competence level as well as to identify what competences lack.

In a career process a constant growth of employee's competence initiates emergence of a new activity or creation of the new work, which requires from an acting person to apply the possessed competence for the conditions of the new activity or to be able to critically evaluate own experience and to learn if an activity situation changes. Thus, these levels emphasize not only results but also in striving for a higher level possibilities of development of new activities – competence – emerge. The level of employee's competence depends not only on the functions being performed, activity results achieved, improvement of the work process, abilities constantly being developed, sharing of new knowledge, experience with organization's employees, but also on obligations for the organization, the level or responsibility manifestation, the degree of the responsibility taken by an employee. In this case the identification of the levels of career and competence is purposeful and necessary.

In order to theoretically substantiate the change of competence levels as well as to distinguish the criteria characteristic for each level, every competence level is equated to career stages. All career stages, according to Greenhouse, Callanan, Godshalk (2000), show that an employee advances by constantly moving through all

stages, which present appropriate assignments and challenges. The competence levels distinguished by Bowden, Marton, (1998, 2003), Jucevičienė, Lepaitė (2000) correlate with the four career stages distinguished by Dalton, Thompson (1986), in which the relation between the age of an individual and the position taken is emphasized, it is shown how employees move from one stage to another within an organization (four stages). Such movement conditions activity changes, the change of functions as well as competence growth. The growth of a competence level is ensured by career possibilities.

The designed model of interface of competence levels and career stages (see Figure 2.) reflects how competence enables acting in different contexts of the activity as well as constantly changing activity conditions and it influences individual's career. Competence levels correlate with four career stages, in which the relation between the age of an individual and the position taken is pointed out, it is shown how employees move from one career stage to another within an organization. As employee's competence grows, the possibilities for career increase.

Thus as conditions change and new activities emerge, which require from an acting person to adjust the possessed competence under conditions of a new activity or to be able to critically evaluate own experience and to learn if the activity situation changes; the competence level also changes. Each career stage needs assessment of employee's competences: readiness to perform the work and a competence level. The greater it is, the better career planning skills and greater possibilities for career are.

Keywords: *career, contemporary and traditional career, competence, competence levels.*

Introduction

The traditional viewpoint stressing only management of organization's career does not meet the needs of changing society, an organization, an individual and labour market. The concept of traditional career measures and identifies success by objective criteria (status, the position, work experience, etc.). The representatives of the concept of modern career define success in more subjective criteria – sense of meaningful life, implementation of inner potential, satisfaction with the activity being performed, etc. Under the market conditions every person has to take care of his / her career, competence quality as well as to create perspective activity that is adequate to his / her abilities and self-realisation, by this he / she assures his / her material wellbeing. Thus, even the best objective criteria of success assessment not always reveal whether in fact individual's career is successful because everyone defines what success in his / her career is.

In the concept of traditional career the career possibilities are related to employees' qualification and its improvement. The concept of corporate career is related to the quality of person's competence, its development, re-qualification and for this the employee is responsible. Only when possessing the competence of appropriate level a person, according to Bridges (1994), will be able 'to change the course' during his / her life by considering the market needs and goals of personal self-realization.

Considering the career within an organization, as Lips-Wiersma, Hall (2007) state, the process of career has to function as integrated corporate system of an individual and organization when an organization gets involved into the planning of individual's career as well as the aims and objectives of both parties are coordinated.

Most scientists analysed career management in different aspects: Gunz (1988), Arthur (1994), Fletcher (1996), Arnold (1997), Watts (1998), Patton, McMahon (1999), Hansen (2001), Hall (2002), Hartung (2002), Meijers (2002), Dackert (2003), Fried (2003), Kucinskiene (2003a, 2003b), Valackiene (2003, 2005), Baruch (2004), Greller (2005), Kirchmeyer (2005), Paulsen, Callan (2005), Garniene (2006), Ciutiene (2006), Kuijpers, Schyns, Scheerens (2006), Paston, McMahon (2006), Barnett, Bradley (2007), Hennequin (2007), Larsson et al. (2007), Schnake (2008), De Vos, Dewettinck, Buyens (2008), Petkeviciute (2003, 2007), Danilevicius (2008), Zuperkiene, Zilinskas (2008) and other authors.

Most foreign scientists (Boyatzis, 1982, 2002, 2007; Otter, 1992; Magnin, 1993; Spencer and Spencer, 1993; Barnett, 1994; Kirschner, 1997; Drucker, 2000; McBerr, 2000; McCredie, Shacleton, 2000; Poole, Warner, 2000; Alsop, 2001; Trotter, Ellison, 2001; Westera, 2001; Prevot, Guallino, 2003; Salaj, 2005; Vernhout, 2005; et al.) and Lithuanian scientists (Chreptavičienė, 1997, 1998, 2002; 2007, 2009; Lauzackas, 1999, 2005; Juceviciene, Lepaite, 2000; Zydziunaite, 2002, 2003; Juceviciene, 2007; Petkeviciute, Kaminskyte, 2003; Ciutiene, Sarkiunaite, 2004; etc.) scientists analysed competence in different aspects (the concept, types, their characteristics, levels) and substantiated its importance for activity effectiveness.

Despite the diversity of researches, yet no scientist has analysed career through the prism of levels of employees' competence. The disclosure of the relation of career and employee's competence makes premises for coordinating interests of an organization and employee: such impact is successful because people, inspired by the needs, enthusiastically strive for the aims that were identified with their participation. On the other hand, the possibility measured by obligations responsibility delegation emerges; this is the means for the encouragement of employees' energy and their motivation. According to Frost, Kumar (2000), employees work more productively, innovatory and are more concentrated if they have the power of decision-making and responsibility for the decisions made. Delegation of powers helps to develop employees' intellectual potential, creativity in solving problems; it helps to acquire knowledge, experience and develop comprehensively (Haksever, Render, 2000; and others). An employee knowing his / her career possibilities and striving for it will attempt to develop already possessed competence because, according to Hunt (1970, 1974; by Arends, 1998), the greatest development takes place when environment conditions give stimuli for person's cognitive and emotional development. The understanding of competence importance and meaningfulness is necessary for confidence in one's powers and autonomy. In the context of work person's autonomy can be influenced by the highest-level abilities and competence. The higher competence level, the higher autonomy level can be achieved.

The article solves the scientific problem, which allows systemising the knowledge and experience of the researches on phenomena of career and competence by foreign and Lithuanian scientists and strives to answer three problematic questions: 1) *in what characteristics does contemporary career distinguish?*; 2) *how much does career depend on competence level?*; 3) *which career model would represent contemporary career best?*

The research aim – is to substantiate the theoretical-hypothetical model of competence and career.

The research method: analysis of scientific literature.

The concept of career

In the process of the changes of society and organizations the concept of career also changes. Some scientists point out that it has disappeared, others – that it has become unlimited (Artur, 1994). Some scientists (Fletcher, 1996; Ciutiene, 2006; Danilevicius, 2008, etc.) treat career as vertical rise of a person towards higher position, others (Schuler, 1995; Hall, 1996; Meijers, 2002; etc.) – as horizontal, i.e. the strategy of person's constant development and his/her professional flexibility and mobility assured by it.

In scientific literature it is possible to detect several different models, however two main models of career are most frequently found: 1) the model of organizational (bureaucratic, traditional) career, to which hierarchical character of career; dominating role of an organization in managing individual's career and assessing its success; low initiative and mobility of a person; consistent and easily prognosticated future of career; stability and social security are characteristic. One of the main features of this model – is the priority of organization's interests against employee's interests. Formation and planning of career involves only the most perspective and most gifted employees of an organization. Bureaucratic career does not distinguish in flexibility depended on an organization. However, bureaucratic career has positive features as well: an organization takes responsibility for employees' development, perspectives for career development are clear, related to a particular organization or field. This ensures proper security sense and guaranteed workplace for an employee. The main requirement of the model of bureaucratic career – is employee's ability to accommodate to changes. 2) The model of personal career is perceived as the process which the person himself / herself plans, organizes, manages and controls by taking responsibility for this.

According to Watts (1998), within a traditional organization employees' career most frequently developed vertically: only within an organization and framework of the profession. The hierarchical form of an organization has already become outdated. The forms of organizations dominating in modern society (projects or matrixes, network or virtual organization) give different possibilities of career. Nowadays career less and less depends on performed functions. According to Artur (1994), we have unlimited career because the pressure against population to be more mobile and flexible grows. As the result, people experience more risk related to their career. Thus, as Meijers (2002)

states, one has to develop by becoming competitive 'career actors' in order to adequately use their possibilities. Modern employees have to become 'reflective practitioners' in order to remain competitive. They have to develop their competence in order to constantly understand what they do in respect of the organization they work for and their personal life, as Drucker (1993) states. A modern employee, according to Kessles (2001), has to continuously analyse all possibilities of employment in both internal (organization's) and external (beyond it) market, at the same time feeling the obligation for the organization where he / she works.

Due to the development of economic and technological environment, competition in the labour market, economic, demographic upturns and downturns, changing work possibilities, changing needs of employees and an organization, the relationship between an employer and employee does not distinguish in such lasting as previously. Thus, both individual's orientation to own future within an organization and organization's investments into individual's career are not considered to be essential and reasonable. As Kuijpers, Schyns, Scheerens (2006), Baruch (2004) state, nowadays an organization is not interested to assure long-term, logic and consistent development of career. As career is treated as multi-directional, based on changes, new challenges and possibilities, individuals themselves have to take care of long-term goals of the development of their career; and organizations should create proper conditions, under which individuals can improve their human capital and their value of the market by acquiring certain knowledge, abilities and skills.

As Hall (2002) states, in the viewpoint of contemporary career, career can be successful without rise upwards; its success measure is not only the status and salary, but also the implementation of personal potential, accomplishment of life goals. Flexibly applied horizontal career allows adjusting the needs of employees and an organization and creating conditions for employees to develop in the desired direction. When knowing possibilities of horizontal career, employees more clearly imagine their perspectives within an organization; and after having used them they feel greater satisfaction with the work being performed (Masiulis, Krupavicius, 2007). It is possible to distinguish several typical ways of horizontal career. One of them is when one moves to fulfil other position, which involves the activity interesting for an employee and for which the employee possess sufficient competence. The second way – when an employee moves to work at another unit by changing work object or region, employee's functions usually do not change. The third way – an employee is given a possibility to perform one position for some time and for the functions of the other position – the rest of the time. The possibilities given by horizontal career can be used in implementing plans of vertical career: for example, in developing the reserve of leading employees, candidates for managers can work by changing the positions of the same hierarchical level for certain time and so get better acquainted with the work of different units of the organization as well as acquire knowledge and abilities necessary for their future. The essential feature of

contemporary career – is to combine the interests of an employee and organization. Organization's interests most frequently are oriented to economic objectives while the interests of employees – can be various. According to Hall (2002), in the modern context career is treated as individually perceived sequence of attitudes and behaviours related to present experience during an entire period of personality life; it is not only vertical but also horizontal movement, active position of a personality and subjectivity of the viewpoint to career success, strategy of continuous development and professional flexibility influenced by it, a smaller role of an organization. Contemporary career is the sequence of individual's roles based on his / her work, experience, increased responsibility (Baruch, 2006); constant interaction with other people, creation of new knowledge, work forms and generation of ideas (Arthur, Rousseau, 2001); independence from a particular organization (Greenhouse, 2000). Such changes in career understanding, as Brown, Scase (1997) state, require more universal technical, social and personal skills than specific, work skills, which do not lose their importance, but they only are treated as one of the components of individual's competence. According to Jucevicius (1998), the unstable model of contemporary career not yet established within an organization requires individual's autonomy; but it has force only when it is competence-based. In respect of contemporary career individual's autonomy is one of the conditions of career success because self-knowledge, independence, sense of responsibility and development ensure not only the harmony of person's and environment's interaction but also the possibility of career development. Thus, competence is the main requirement in pursuing career. Kuijpers, Schyns, Scheerens (2006) assumed that the relation between carer and competence existed; so they distinguished the internal career, which is based on a subjective opinion and was based on the person's understanding about his / her career implementation, and the external career, which is assessed objectively by considering the opinion, salary, status of other people as well as other criteria. The formulated concept of career encourages individuals to take responsibility for their career; thus, as Haase, Fransis-Smythe (2007) state, competence is one of counter-points able to help in pursuing higher career. In an organization a person pursuing for his / her career faces the complex assignments possessing elements of tactics and strategy, to perform which the abilities to handle increasing flow of information and new knowledge, to properly think, to fast and qualitatively solve problems are necessary.

In summary it is possible to state that the concept of contemporary career should be treated as life-long process of person's professional self-expression, constant choices emerging from their work, learning, self-expression and free-time decision-making; the process involves person's professional life, workplaces, duties and achievements. Flattening structure of organizations opens a lot of possibilities for horizontal career, which has a lot of importance to keep professional employees within an organization as well as for employees' motivation.

In order to substantiate the model of career within an organization, it is necessary to reveal similarities and differences of traditional and contemporary career. Several authors performed such comparisons: Stanisauskiene (2000), Patton (2001), Kucinskiene (2003), Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, Lenz (2004), and others. The change of traditional and contemporary career is analysed in the context of an individual, the requirements set by the organization for a workplace and organization's environment in order to identify certain necessary abilities separately in each above-mentioned contexts. However, the authors did not get deeper in the aspect how the characteristics of contemporary and traditional careers interacted in the context of an individual, organization and environment. This comparison is based on the opinion of Boyatzis (2008) that the most effective construction is interrelated with different models of behaviour. The most effective actions occur when person's abilities or talents synchronize with work requirements and organization's environment. Referring to this attitude, career can be related to the characteristics of the competence, which contains the context of environment, an organization and individual. In summarising and supplementing the differences of traditional and contemporary career, the career structure becomes evident in the context of an individual; organization and environment (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 presents the peculiarities of contemporary and traditional careers in the context of an individual, organization and environment as interacting and making influence upon each other as well as important in order to clarify the role of competence in the change. In assessing career at individual's level, his / her values, life philosophy, competences, chosen career strategy and life style are considered. Comparing career in an individual's level it becomes evident that in a contemporary career the loyalty of employees decreases, employees themselves take responsibility for the development of their career and competence while in traditional career the loyalty for the organization, minimal responsibility for the results and development of skills are emphasized. Individual's talents are described as values, vision, personal philosophy, knowledge, competences, life and career strategies, interests and style. The requirements of workplace are based on the level of assignments, distribution of functions and roles. Assessing this aspect, it becomes evident that employees in a modern organization are assessed according to their competence, greater obligations given to them as well as their responsibility level while in a traditional organization the responsibility for employee's career, results is taken by the organization. If organization's environment is assessed according to its culture and economic, political, and social environments, it becomes evident that in a modern organization employees work in uneven and competitive environment striving for personal development and recognition. Within a traditional organization the hierarchy of management levels as well as adjustment of employees to an organization are clear.

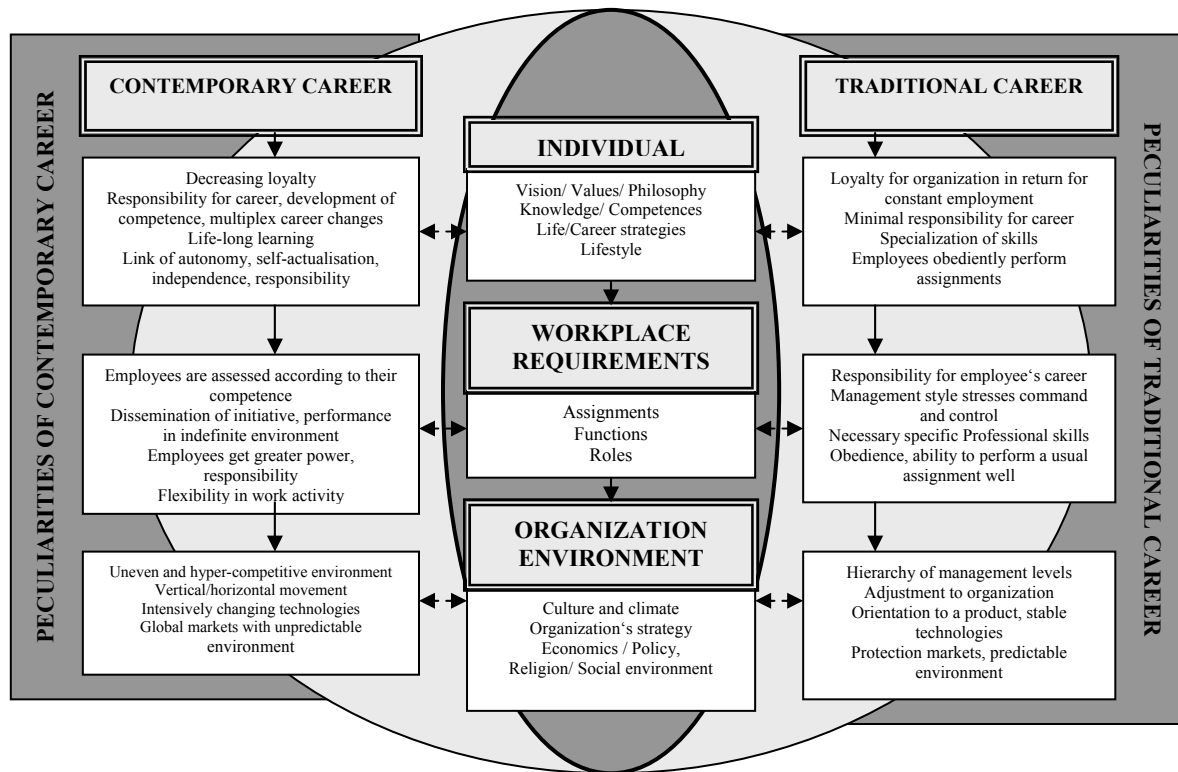


Figure 1. Career structure in the context of an individual, organization and environment

Rapidly changing environment changes not only an organization but also an individual. These changes often are contradictory, increasing the differentiation between the values of an organization and employees. Having assessed that environment changes rearranged the system and viewpoint of values of both an organization and its employees, it is possible to state that career assumes new features related not only to individual's knowledge, abilities, competence, but also to the requirements and environment set by the organization. Altogether with a constantly changing environment the viewpoint of employees to their work, competence development and organization's viewpoint to career is changing. Thus, the review of traditional and contemporary careers as well as disclosure of peculiarities is significant for substantiating the importance of competence and influence upon career.

The influence of competence upon career success

As the change of the labour market needs gets faster as well as the complexity of activity environments is increasing, employees' competence has become one of the most important advantages in the process of the creation of organization's value as well as one of the important factors influencing employee's career. The concepts 'profession' and 'qualification' lose their importance as, according to Juceviciene, Lepaite, (2000), 'they are described by definite skills and enable a person to perform limited assignments in clearly structuralised activity as well as in which clearly identified work functions prevail'. Nowadays person's suitability for the work is determined by his / her abilities to implement the acquired

qualification in the activity and referring to the values, person's features and viewpoints to pursue activity results. Thus, the activity competence, enabling a person to function as an independent professional who is able to continuously improve practice and correspondingly react to the changing environment, is becoming significant (WHO, 2002). Mastered high-level abilities and competence, which is a transferable instrument, determine person's autonomy. It is especially important in pursuing career. According to Grint (1991), becoming autonomous in the work is the process into which the personality, perceiving all elements of personal activity planning and reviewing all his / her experiences as giving the basis for the implementation of personal expectations and goals, integrates. Chreptaviciene (2009), having analysed opinions of most scientists (Decker, 1984; Barnien, 1997; Lauzackas, 1999; Westera, 2001; Alsop, 2001; Lepaite, 2001; Sonntag, 1992; Martinkus, Neverauskas, Sakalas, 2002; etc.) on the structure of activity competence and its characteristics, states that activity competence is the structural formation involving: *professional* (or instrumental); *cognitive activity competence* because the abilities, though different, reflecting this competence exist in all roles; *person's behaviour competence* (group / team work, work organization, motivating others, etc.) and *communication competence*, the structure of which contains ICT competence as the means to share information. In the structure of competence the ability to manage and apply the collection of cognitive skills takes the central place because when assessing them the activity results are considered (Westera, 2001).

Scientists (Spenser and Spenser, 1993; Eraut, 1994; Westera, 2001; and others), state that competence is a hierarchical structural formation. The competence of a different level is necessary for the performance of the activity of a different hierarchical level; for example, the more complicated activity requiring analytical thinking, the higher competence level is. Eraut (1994) points out that competence has to involve positive and negative dimensions that allow assessing the quality of the work being performed; thus, the author suggests to divide competence into levels and referring to them to assess person's competence. Dreifus and Dreifus (1986) expanded the latter idea; they introduced the concepts of *expert* and *beginner* into the system of competence assessment and stated that such disjuncture allows to draw a border between competence and incompetence. Thus, competence levels should be considered. Spenser and Spenser (1993) offered the concepts of *threshold* and *exclusive* competence. *Threshold* competence is the competence that is necessary for activity / work conditioning minimal positive results. *Exclusive competence* – is the activity / work performed by a person of expert level when the best results are achieved. In this case maximum results are considered.

Competence (in holistic viewpoint) is specific in the case of every activity. According to Reich (1993), Bowden and Marton (1997), the complexity of activity can be divided into three types: 1) 'routine' production activities, which involve not only product production processes, but also routine management activity. Practical behaviour / contextualised competences conditioned by skilful learning / experience is necessary for its performance. 2) Interpersonal activity (for example, trade, service of customers), for performance of which skilful learning / contextualised knowledge+practical behaviour conditioned by experience are necessary. 3) analytical activity (for example, juridical, engineering, management) for performance of which skilful learning and balance of cognitive constructivism are necessary.

Such distribution helps distinguish the main features of these types of activity, to reveal complexity of activities and to identify what competence level is necessary for successful performance of a proper type of activity. Dreyfus, Dreyfus (1986) state that a person could have mastered five competence levels: 1) *a beginner*: strict observance of plans, rules; low perception of situations, non-independent decisions; 2) *an advanced beginner*: features of situations accepted after prior experience, guidelines for actions, limited perception of a situation; 3) *competitive*: understandable and considered planning, standardized usual actions; 4) *experienced*: holistic situations; deviations from the usual structure are understood; easier solved problems; the maximum is pursued in every situation; 5) *expert*: independent from rules and guidelines; intuitional perception of a situation; analytical decisions are made when facing problems; possession of the vision. Bowden and Monton (1998, 2003) distinguish four levels of competence mastering: *behaviour, surplus, integrated and holistic*. According to the author, the competence of skilfully learnt behaviour (the first level) is necessary to perform operational work; it

precisely satisfies work requirements and consists of clearly distinguished components. In this case necessary competences are considered. The second level of activity needs surplus competence, which is based not only on skilfully learnt behaviour but also on certain knowing: in this case also competences are considered. For more complex activity the competence based on knowledge and experience, the integrated application of which creates completely different quality of activity requiring the competence of integrated and holistic levels, is necessary. Integrated competence when the integration of behaviour and knowing is based on the activity conditioning essential change, is necessary for changing internal and external conditions of the work (the third level of activity); holistic competence is necessary to create new work and to transfer one's qualification into a new situation of activity (the fourth level of activity) (Juceviciene, Lepaite, 2000). Thus the more complex activity, the more important competence level is for its successful performance. According to Vernhout (2005), the competence necessary to perform an assignment can be assessed in six levels (inexperienced, beginner, advanced, competitive, professional, and expert), and person's possessed general competence – in five levels (beginner, advanced, competitive, professional, and expert). In order to assess a level of competence, the assessment system of 0 – 100 points is used. Workplace competence defines the most necessary competences for a particular workplace or position, as well as it requires assessing a level of desired competences. Employee's competence outlines by what competences a person who is going to work in a particular position has to distinguish.

Identification of the relation of competence and activity levels becomes important due to more and more changing character of any professional activity. When considering the importance of competence level in the context of career, competence is defined as the ability to apply for practical situations the main principles and techniques of certain content field (Nickols, 2000), broad list of high-level skills and behaviours that conditions the ability to successfully act in complex, unexpected situations (Westera, 2001) as well as the set of personal traits, behaviour and features necessary for successful performance of an assignment (Abraham, 2001). Barnett (1994) relates competence to the behaviour not foreseen in advance at indefinite situations. The author refers to operational viewpoint and indicates that competence involves skills, results of demonstrated activity and their evaluation as well as the ability to transfer skills into other contexts. Thus, competence is the essential characteristic of an individual, which is directly related to effective performance of high-level activity.

In summary it could be stated that the competence of different level is necessary in different stages of activity; and this in its turn allows drawing the premise that employee's career depends on the possessed level of competence. The concept of competence as well as its identification in respect of particular activity still is the object of scientific discussions not only in Lithuania but also round the world. Thus, the problem of activity quality criteria, by means of which competence is measured, is defined. However, the definition of activity levels allows

stating that competence is implemented in the activity, in which it is possible to distinguish levels. Considering them, it is possible to distinguish clearer requirements set for competence and to make premises to create the system of career based on competence levels

In order to theoretically substantiate the change of competence levels and to distinguish the criteria characteristic for every level, every competence level is equalled to career stages. All stages of career, according to Greenhous, Callanan, Godshalk (2000), show that an employee advances consistently and passes all stages, which present appropriate assignments and challenges. The

competence levels distinguished by Bowden, Marton, (1998, 2003), Juceviciene, Lepaite (2000) correlate with the four stages of career distinguished by Dalton, Thompson (1986), which point out the relationship between individual's age and the position taken, it is showed how employees move through four career stages within an organization. The movement from one stage to another determines activity changes, the change of functions and personal growth as well as growth of competence. Coherences of competence levels and career stages are presented in Figure 2.

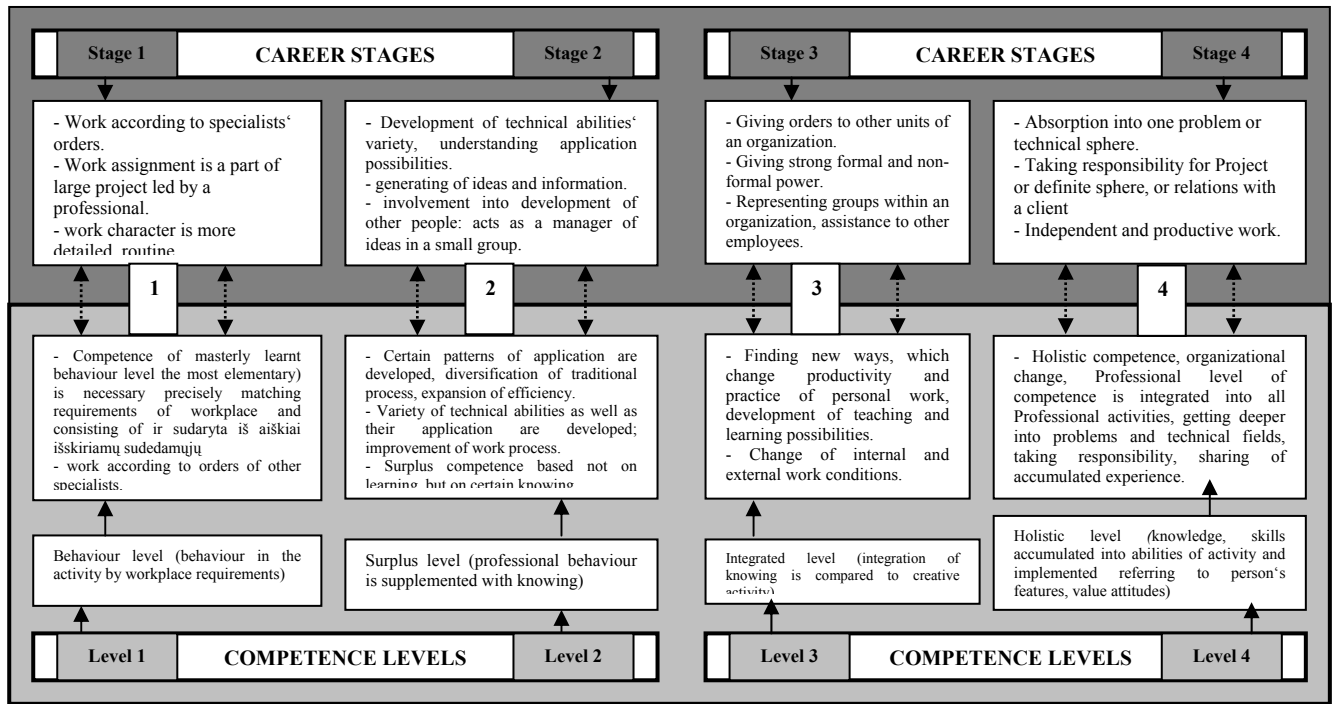


Figure 2. The model of interface of competence levels and career stages

The presented model discloses that namely competence enables acting in different contexts of activity and constantly changing conditions of activity as well as influences individual's career. The first level of behaviour competence, which needs the most elementary competence for operational performance, correlated with the first stage of career, in which the character of work is detailed, routine and according to requirements (1). The second competence level necessary for work improvement is based on not only skilfully learnt behaviour but also on certain knowing, is related to the second stage of career, to pursue which application of abilities, perception of new possibilities, involvement of other members of the organization into their development are necessary (2). As employee's competence grows, the possibilities of career change also increase. The third integrated competence level distinguishes in the change of internal and external conditions of work, emergence and use of new ways in the work process, development of the possibilities for training and learning (3) and correlates with the third stage of career, in which representation of other groups in an organization manifests, the importance of responsibility,

obligations emerges. Creation of a new work and qualification transfer into a new activity situation, participation of an employee as professional in organization's activities, getting deeper into problems and fields, taking responsibility, sharing of accumulated experience with other members of an organization, independent and productive work are characteristic for the fourth competence level – holistic competence (4) and the fourth career stage.

The third (changing of work internal and external conditions) and the fourth (creation of new work and qualification transfer into a new activity situation) levels become the aim of the higher level, and the first and the second levels can be reached only during practical activity (by learning to work according to the instruction). The complexity of the fourth level is pointed out by: 1) person's viewpoint to himself / herself as professional, 2) the ability to perform the role of a professional and 3) professional's identity and integration of his / her activity congruence; this it is named holistic competence (Lepaite, 2003).

Thus, in a career process constant growth and change of employee's competence initiates emergence of new activity, new abilities and skills or creation of a new work, which from an acting person require to accommodate the possessed qualification to conditions of new activity or to be able to critically assess own experience and to learn when the activity situation has changed. Thus, these levels emphasise not only results; but by pursuing higher and higher level the possibilities for development of new activity – competence – emerge. The level of employee's competence depends not only on the performed functions, achieved activity results, improvement of work process, constantly developed abilities and competences, sharing of new knowledge, experience with organization's employees, but also on obligations for the organization, the level of responsibility expression, the degree of the responsibility taken by the employee. In this case the career based on the identification of competence levels is expedient and necessary.

The model of career and competence cohesion

The changing concept of career allows offering proper perspectives for career assessment by referring to competence and its levels. In planning, developing or forming career there are a lot of factors that can be divided into internal (person's goals and expectations, education, attitudes) and external (economical context, the influence of society and family) (Adamson, Doherty, 1998). Thus, it is important that an individual would understand the complexity of these factors, would be able to assess their characteristics and importance in developing career. In pursuing career the abilities to evaluate a new situation, within it to choose proper activity methods and to constantly integrate intellectual and professional knowledge, to transfer knowledge and skills into new situations by learning to act at different levels of activity have to be constantly developed because only individual's knowledge, abilities are not measured without the possibility to demonstrate them or to apply in practice. The expression of competence is the effectiveness of activity.

Shein (2006), having presented the model of career based on eight career anchors, which so far has not lost its relevance both in the theory and the practice, considers combination abilities, needs, motives and values that are revealed at early career stages and reflect human experience as career basis. According to the author, actions of an individual and organization can be coordinated because only an organization can purposefully and effectively evaluate that the competence level of employees would be assured and corporate plans would be implemented.

Dalton, Thompson (1986), having disclosed how within an organization employees move from one career stage to another, speaks about certain skills and abilities necessary for the movement; however, they do not name this as competences. The movement from one stage to another one challenges the changes of activity. In order to adjust to them, abilities are necessary.

The literature presents a lot of viewpoints and opinions what influences career, what factors, what abilities or competences are important. However, when planning

career and evaluating the changing character of activity, it is not enough to possess only certain specific competence, the competence level and its identification are important. In each stage of career employee's competence is being evaluated: readiness to perform the work and the level of abilities. Referring to the premise (the higher competence level, the greater possibilities for career) the theoretical hypothetical model of career has been formed (see Figure 3), which is based on levels of employee's competence. The competence levels presented on the horizontal axis correlate with the stages of career discussed earlier on the vertical axis. In order to prove what level of the competence is necessary at each stage of career, what abilities and skills identify the higher stage of competence, the competences distinguished by Shein (2006) (technical-functional, emotional, analytical, creativity, managerial, public) and by Stanisauskiene (2000) (personal, social, professional and learning), which are necessary when pursuing for career were chosen. We think that all and final competences are necessary at the highest career stages; however, in the range of these chosen competences and certain abilities the relations of competence levels and career stages are measured. These competences and the abilities ensuring them empower an individual to solve the objectives emerging in his / her career as well as meet the requirements of modern work world. However, the expression of not all competences and their level at separate career stages is homogeneous; only certain abilities defining competences are analysed in order to prove the relations of career and competence.

The first and the second competence levels can be reached only during practical activity by learning to work according to the instruction. Following strict rules, learning only to find and know oneself, to define own roles, to find the means how to implement them according to the competence level, an employee is at the first career stage. The possession of the abilities to reflect own activity in order to improve it, to find the way out when facing problems, the ability to identify a problem and to distinguish the factors influencing it transfers an employee to the second career stage.

The third and the fourth levels are the levels of higher competence, in which the abilities to accommodate own knowledge at a particular situation, to generate ideas and to implement them, to get involved into activity improvement (the third level) are distinguished; an employee refers to the possessed competence and experience, he / she is able to overcome resistances and problems by implementing decisions, gets involved into organization's activity, obligates and takes complete responsibility for his / her activity results.

As conditions change due to the emergence of new activities, which require from an acting person to accommodate the possessed competence under conditions of a new activity or to be able to critically evaluate own experience and to learn that when an activity situation changes, the competence level also changes. Thus, it is expedient that possibilities for employee's career depend on the increase of his / her competence level. The higher the competence level, the better skills to plan own career and the greater possibilities for career are.

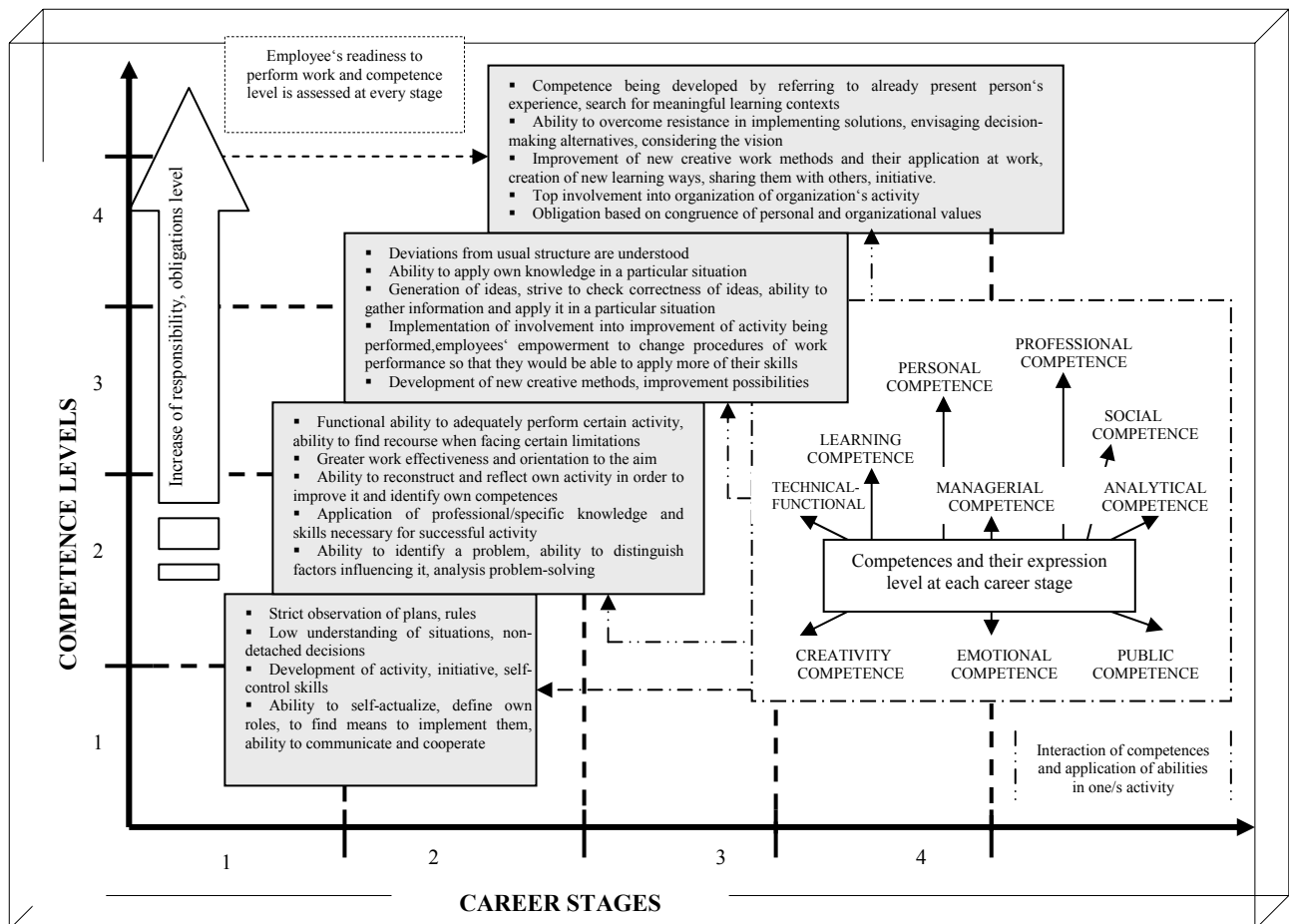


Figure 3. Theoretical-hypothetical model of career

Conclusions

1. In the process of the change of society and organizations the characteristics of person's activity have essentially changed; the latter have determined the change in the concept of career as well. The bureaucratic concept of career that stresses organization's position is actively changed by the modern concept of career, to which multidisciplinary and active personal position are characteristic. Contemporary career should be treated as life-long process of person's professional self-expression, constant choices emerging from work, learning, self-expression and free-time decisions, which involve person's professional life, workplaces, duties and achievements. The source of person's activity for career is his / her needs and values, the difference of which determines the individuality of every career.

2. The main factor conditioning possibilities of person's career is the quality of competence. In the traditional concept of career the possibilities are related to employees' qualification and its enhancement, for which an organization is responsible. The concept of contemporary career is related to the quality of person's competence, its constant development, re-qualification and an employee responsible for this.

3. In the context of career, the competence is defined as ability to apply the main principles and techniques of

certain content area for practical situations, the broad list of high-level skills and behaviours that determines the ability to successfully act at complex unexpected situations. The competence of a different level is necessary to perform the activity of different hierarchical level, which enables acting in different contexts of activity and influencing individual's career. Competence is implemented through an activity; the competence of different level is necessary to perform the activity of different hierarchical level when orienting to which clearer requirements set for competence emerge; and this makes premises to create the system of career based on competence levels within an organization.

4. The career process within an organization has to function as integrated corporate system of an individual and organization when the organization gets involved into the planning of individual's career as well as the goals and objectives of both parties are coordinated.

5. As the outcome of the analysis of scientific literature, the theoretical hypothetical model of career is substantiated; it is based on the levels of employee's competence. The model is designed by referring to the relations of employees' competence and career stages within an organization. At each career stage the evaluation of employee's competence is necessary: his / her readiness to perform the work and the levels of his / her abilities.

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Karjeros ir kompetencijos ryšių modelis

Santrauka

Socialinių transformacijų laikotarpiu, kai kinta ir žmogiškųjų išteklių valdymo kontekstas, ir, pasak Hargreaves (1999), „žmogaus savasties bei tapatumo jausmas“, iš esmės kinta ir karjeros bei jos galimybių suvokimas. Šiuolaikinė karjera – tai ne tik vertikalus, bet ir horizontalus judėjimas organizacijoje, kurį sąlygoja aktyvi asmenybės pozicija ir požiūris į karjeros sėkmę supratimas, nuolatinio tobulėjimo strategija ir jos garantuojamas profesinis lankstumas bei mobilumas, mažesnis organizacijos vaidmuo, stabilumo ir socialinio saugumo reliatyvumas. Lanksčiai naudojamą horizontaliosios karjeros galimybes leidžia suderinti organizacijos ir darbuotojų poreikius bei interesus ir sudaryti sąlygas darbuotojams tobulėti norima linkme. Nereikšmingos tampa sąvokos „profesija“, ir „kvalifikacija“, kuri, pasak Jucevičienės, Lepaitės, (2000) „yra nusakoma apibrėžtais igūdžiais ir įgalina atlikti ribotas užduotis aiškiai struktūruotoje veikloje, kurioje vyrauja aiškiai nustatytos darbo funkcijos“. Šiuo metu žmogaus tinkamumą darbui lemia jo gebėjimai įgytą kvalifikaciją realizuoti profesinėje veikloje ir, remiantis vertybėmis, asmens savybėmis ir požiūriais, siekti veiklos rezultatų. Tai reiškia tampa veiklos kompetencija. Tik turėdamas atitinkamo lygmens kompetenciją, žmogus, pasak Bridges (1994), gebės gyvenimo tėkmėje „keisti kursą“, atsižvelgdamas į rinkos poreikius bei asmeninės savirealizacijos tikslus.

Karjeros valdymą įvairiais aspektais analizavo daugelis mokslininkų: Gunz (1988), Arthur (1994), Fletcher (1996); Arnold (1997), Watts (1998), Patton, McMahon (1999), Hansen (2001), Hartung (2002), Meijers (2002), Dackert (2003), Fried (2003), Baruch (2004), Greller (2005), Kirchmeyer (2005), Paulsen, Callan (2005), Paston, McMahon (2006), Barnett, Bradley (2007), Hennequin (2007), Larsson ir kt. (2007), Schnake (2008), De Vos, Dewettinck, Buyens (2008), Kučinskienė (2003a, 2003b), Valackienė (2003, 2005), Garnienė (2006), Čiutienė (2006), Petkevičiūtė (2003, 2007), Danilevičius (2008), Župerkienė, Žilinskas (2008) ir kiti autoriai. Nepaisant tyrimų įvairovės, iki šiol nei vienas mokslininkas į karjerą organizacijoje nepažvelgė per darbuotojų kompetencijos lygmenų prizmę. Akcentuojant vien tik kompetenciją, anot Barnett (1994), patvirtinama, jog darbuotojo veiksmai atitinka konkrečius standartus. Kompetencija, pasak Westera (2001), yra hierarchinis struktūrinis darinys. Skirtingam veiklos hierarchiniam lygiui atlikti reikalinga skirtingo lygio kompetencija. Kuo sudėtingesnė veikla, pavyzdžiui, reikalaujanti analitinio mąstymo, tuo reikalingas aukštesnis kompetencijos lygmuo. Atskleidus karjeros ir darbuotojo kompetencijos lygių ryšius sudaromos prielaidos suderinti organizacijos ir darbuotojo interesus: žinodamas darbuotojų kompetencijos lygmenis, vadovas galėtų spręsti, kurie darbuotojai gali padėti formuojant tikslus, priimant sprendimus taip pat kokio lygio sprendimus pagal kompetencijos lygį darbuotojams gali patikėti. Įtraukdamas darbuotojus į tikslų formulavimo bei sprendimo priėmimo procesą, vadovas apeliuoja į darbuotojų aukščiausio lygio (valdžios, kompetencijos, pasisekimo, asmenybės plėtojimo, saviraiškos) poreikius. Toks poveikis yra sėkmingas, nes žmonės, ikvėpti tokių poreikių, entuziastingai siekia tikslų, kurie buvo nustatyti jiems patiems dalyvaujant. Kita vertus, galima pamatuoti deleguoti įgaliojimus ir atsakomybę. Tai yra darbuotojų energijos skatinimo bei jų motyvacijos priemonė. Pasak Frost, Kumar (2000), darbuotojai dirba produktyviau, novatoriškiau ir yra labiau susitelkę, jei gali priimti sprendimus ir yra atsakingi už juos. Įgaliojimų delegavimas padeda ugdyti darbuotojų intelektualinį potencialą, kūrybiškumą sprendžiant problemas, padeda įgyti žinių, patirties ir visapusiškai tobulėti (Haksever, Render, 2000 ir kt.). Darbuotojas, žinodamas karjeros galimybes ir jos siekdamas, stengsis plėtoti turimą kompetenciją, nes, anot Hunt (1970, 1974) (pagal Arends, 1998), labiausiai tobulėjama tada, kai aplinkos sąlygos skatina asmens pažintinę ir emocinę raidą. Kompetencijos svarbos ir prasmingumo suvokimas būtini pasitikėjimui savo jėgomis bei autonomijai. Asmens autonomiją darbo kontekste gali lemti įvaldyti aukščiausio lygmens gebėjimai ir kompetencija. Kuo aukštesnis kompetencijos lygmuo, tuo aukštesnis gali būti pasiektas autonomiškumo lygis.

Esminis straipsnio akcentas – karjeros ir kompetencijos ryšio modelis ir jo pagrindimas. Tokio konstrukto pagrindimą suponavo tikslas išryškinti, kad kompetencijos kokybė yra esminė individo charakteristika, tiesiogiai susieta su efektyviu aukštesnio lygio veiklos atlikimu ir įtaka karjeros sėkmei.

Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjama mokslinė problema leidžia susisteminti Vakarų šalių bei Lietuvos mokslininkų žinias ir mokslinių tyrimų patirtį apie tyrinėtus karjeros ir kompetencijos fenomenus ir atsakyti į tris probleminius klausimus: 1) *kokiomis charakteristikomis pasižymi šiuolaikinė karjera?* 2) *kiek karjera priklauso nuo kompetencijos lygmens?* 3) *nustatyti koks karjeros modelis geriausiai reprezentuotų šiuolaikinę karjerą?* Taip nagrinėjant mokslinę problemą pasirenkami teisingi ir konkrečioje situacijoje tinkami tyrimo instrumentai.

Minėti probleminiai klausimai nagrinėjami trijose straipsnio dalyse. Pirmojoje straipsnio dalyje pateikiama karjeros samprata ir jos ypatumai, išryškinant tiek tradicinės, tiek šiuolaikinės karjeros aspektus. Siekiant pagrįsti kompetencijos svarbą bei įtaką karjeros procese, svarbu atskleisti tradicinę ir šiuolaikinę karjerų sampratą bei jų ypatumus. Pasak Hall (2002), šiuolaikiniame kontekste karjera traktuojama kaip individualiai suvokiama seka nuostatų ir elgsenų, susijusių su darbine asmenybės patirtimi per visą jo gyvenimo laikotarpį. Tai ne tik vertikalus, bet ir horizontalus judėjimas, aktyvi asmenybės pozicija ir požiūris į karjeros sėkmę subjektyvumas, nuolatinio tobulėjimo strategija ir jos garantuojamas profesinis lankstumas, mažesnis organizacijos vaidmuo. Pasikeitus požiūriui į karjeros sampratą, kaip teigia Brown, Scase (1997), labiau reikšmingi universalūs techniniai, socialiniai ir asmeniniai igūdžiai nei specifiniai, darbiniai igūdžiai, kurie nepraranda savo reikšmės, tačiau traktuojami tik kaip viena individo kompetencijos dalių. Tokiam nestabiliam ir organizacijoje neįtvirtintam šiuolaikinės karjeros modeliui reikalingas individo autonomiškumas, tačiau jis turi prasmę tik tada, kai paremtas kompetencija. Kaip teigia Jucevičius (1998), šiuolaikinės karjeros požiūriu individo autonomija yra viena iš karjeros sėkmės sąlygų, nes savęs pažinimas, savarankiškumas, atsakomybės jausmas ir tobulėjimas garantuoja ne tik žmogaus ir aplinkos sąveikos harmoniją, bet ir karjeros plėtojimosi galimybę. Vadinas, kompetencija yra pagrindinis reikalavimas siekiant karjeros.

Antrojoje straipsnio dalyje aptariama kompetencijos samprata ir kompetencijos lygiai karjeros kontekste, siekiama išsiaiškinti, kiek karjera priklauso nuo kompetencijos lygmens. Pastaruoju metu kompetencija tapo vienu iš svarbiausių pranašumų organizacijos vertės kūrimo procese bei vienas iš svarbių veiksnų, darančių įtaką darbuotojo karjerai. Kadangi šiandien žmogaus tinkamumą darbui lemia jo gebėjimai įgytą kvalifikaciją realizuoti veikloje ir, remiantis vertybėmis, asmens savybėmis ir požiūriais, siekti veiklos rezultatų, reikšminga tampa veiklos kompetencija, kuri įgalina asmeni

funkcionuoti kaip savarankišką profesionalą, sugebanti nuolat tobulinti praktiką ir atitinkamai reaguoti į besikeičiančią aplinką (WHO, 2002). Kalbant apie kompetencijos lygmens svarbą karjeros kontekste, kompetencija, remiantis Nickols (2000), Abraham (2001), Westera (2001), apibrėžiama kaip platus aukšto lygio įgūdžių ir elgsenų sąrašas, kuris sąlygoja gebėjimą sėkmingai veikti kompleksinėse, nenumatytose, praktinėse situacijose, naudojantis asmeninėmis savybėmis, elgesiu ir bruožais, reikalingais sėkmingam darbo atlikimui. Šiuo atveju kompetencijos lygių nustatymu pagrįsta karjera yra tikslinga ir būtina. Kaip teigia Haase, Fransis-Smythe (2007), kompetencija yra vienas iš atsvaros taškų, galinčių padėti siekiant aukštesnės karjeros. Karjeros siekiantis žmogus organizacijoje susiduria su kompleksiškomis taktikos ir strategijos elementų turinčiomis darbo užduotimis, kurioms atlikti reikia sugebėjimų valdyti vis didesnę informacijos ir naujų žinių srautą, tinkamai mastyti, greitai ir kokybiškai spręsti problemas.

Trečiojoje straipsnio dalyje atskleidžiami karjeros ir kompetencijos ryšiai bei pateikiamas modelis. Keičiantis sąlygoms, atsirandant naujoms veikloms, kurios iš veikiančiojo asmens reikalauja turimą kompetenciją pritaikyti naujos veiklos sąlygomis arba sugebėti kritiškai įvertinti savo patirtį ir mokytis pasikeitus veiklos situacijai, keičiasi ir kompetencijos lygis. Didesni reikalavimai kompetencijai sudaro prielaidas kurti organizacijoje kompetencijos lygiais paremtą karjeros sistemą. Kintanti karjeros samprata leidžia siūlyti atitinkamas karjeros vertinimo remiantis kompetencija ir jos lygiais perspektyvas. Kiekvienoje karjeros stadijoje yra įvertinama darbuotojo kompetencija: pasirengimo atlikti darbą ir gebėjimų lygmuo. Kompetencijos lygių nustatymu pagrįsta karjera parodo, jog neužtenka turėti tik tam tikrą kompetenciją. Svarbu nustatyti kompetencijos lygmenį, taip pat nustatyti kokių kompetencijų trūksta. Modelis pagrįstas ryšiais, jog kuo didesnis kompetencijos lygmuo, tuo geresni karjeros planavimo įgūdžiai bei didesnės karjeros.

Mokslinės literatūros analizė leido sukurti karjeros ir kompetencijos ryšio modelį (žr. 3 pav.), kurio idėja – atskleisti, kaip kompetencija įgalina veikti skirtinguose veiklos kontekstuose ir nuolat besikeičiančiomis veiklos sąlygomis, kokią įtaką daro individo karjerai. Kompetencijos lygiai koreliuoja su keturiomis karjeros stadijomis, kuriose akcentuojamas ryšys tarp individo amžiaus ir užimamų pareigų, parodoma, kaip darbuotojai organizacijoje „judą“ iš vienos karjeros stadijos į kitą. Judėjimas iš vienos karjeros stadijos į kitą sąlygoja veiklos pokyčius, funkcijų pasikeitimą, asmeninį augimą ir kompetencijos didėjimą. Keičiantis darbuotojo kompetencijos kokybei, didėja ir karjeros galimybės.

Raktažodžiai: *karjera, tradicinė ir šiuolaikinė karjera, kompetencija, kompetencijos lygiai.*

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