

## OVERVIEW OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CAREER CONCEPTS

### PŘEHLED CHARAKTERISTIK KARIÉRNÍCH KONCEPTŮ

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#### **Abstract:**

*The aim of the paper is to organize the main characteristics of career concepts. The methods of secondary data analysis and comparison were used by the authors. Characteristics in the form of several words were collected. Sub groups of characteristics were defined by using the method of deduction. Subsequently, both concepts (traditional and contemporary) were compared in view of their characteristics. The result is 8 main characteristics which are to a certain extent mutually dependent. The resulted characteristics are: responsibility for career, organizational structure, focus of job positions, mobility of employees, career paths, career advancement, and career planning and reward systems. These characteristics are the basis for examining the impact of individual factors on career management and career concepts because in today's turbulent environment, the differences between career concepts blur, businesses can create their own hybrid concepts. What does not change is the substance of the defined characteristics included in the original concepts.*

#### **Key words:**

*Career path, career advancement, conflict, mobility, employee, career, succession concept, development*

#### **Abstrakt:**

*Záměrem článku je utřídit hlavní charakteristiky kariérních konceptů. Příspěvek byl vypracován metodou sekundární analýzy dat a komparace. Byly vybírány charakteristiky v podobě několika slov. Metodou dedukce proběhlo vymezení a pojmenování jednotlivých sub skupin charakteristik. Následně byly porovnány oba koncepty (tradiční a současný) podle vypracovaných charakteristik. Výsledkem je 8 hlavních charakteristik, které se do jisté míry vzájemně podmiňují. Jedná se o odpovědnost za kariéru, organizační strukturu, zaměření pracovních míst, mobilitu zaměstnanců, kariérní trasy, kariérní postup, kariérní plánování a systém odměňování. Tyto charakteristiky představují podklad pro zkoumání vlivu jednotlivých faktorů na kariérní management a kariérní koncepty, neboť v dnešním turbulentním prostředí se rozdíly mezi kariérními koncepty stírají, podniky si vytváří vlastní hybridní koncepty. Co se však nemění je obsahové vymezení charakteristik určující zařazení do původních konceptů.*

#### **Klíčová slova:**

*Kariérní trasa, kariérní postup, konflikt, mobilita, zaměstnanec, kariéra, koncept následnictví, rozvoj*

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## **1 Introduction**

For today's profession are characteristic changes and development, which requires new knowledge and skills. The company has two options for obtaining the required knowledge. The first is to get knowledge from outside sources (Donelly, 1997). Another option is to search for suitable candidates within the company.

Searching, relocation, staffing, training, development and promotion of internal candidates are an internal forming of work forces (Milkovich, 1993).

Both types of staffing are cost-intensive. In the internal forming should be included cost of candidates interests awaking, review the characteristics of candidates, relocation of employee and occupying of free position (Milkovich, 1993). However, it is more cost effective to promote proven internal candidate than pay commission to work agencies, than pay costs associated with orientation and training of new employees (Branham, 2009).

According to Branham (2009) 80% of employees regard staff training and development programs as critical, but only half of the available options satisfy them. Colvin (2010) adds that the employees mention continuous professional growth to the top criteria in the employment selection process. Employees seek out employers who help them learn, grow and develop. But it must be a really interest, because as the years have shown many companies proclaims "career development" but they have no way how to effectively uncover talents of its employees in fact (Colvin, 2010; Geffroy, 2001). In a survey of The Conference Board (in Branham, 2009) were career opportunities evaluated as the main cause of employees dissatisfaction (59%). In a study of agency Towers - Perrin (in Branham, 2009) reported 85% of employees promotion as the most important reward, but only 49% of companies offered it.

## 2 Material and Methods

The aim of the paper is to organize and define the main characteristics of career concepts. Individual authors (see resource list) assigned to the two concepts number of characteristics which are identical or complementary. These individual characteristics can be grouped into sub groups of characteristics.

As a basis for the insight into problematic were used monographic and for the concepts' characteristics were used professional and scientific articles. The paper was prepared by the method of secondary data analysis and comparison. Characteristics were selected based on several words or phrases. For example, "In the traditional concept is typically high organizational structure, descriptions of job positions are fixed " were selected characteristics - organizational structure and job position. Than has followed definition of the various sub groups when based on the deduction method were named sub groups. For example, „multidimensional x one-dimensional career path", "vertical x horizontal career" and "career choice - always x at the beginning" were grouped into characteristic "career paths ". Subsequently, both concepts (traditional and contemporary) were compared as elaborated characteristics.

## 3 Material and Methods

Career management of company is a process of career managing and planning carried out by individual career paths. It is ongoing from career concepts by respecting individual and organizational factors that influence these concepts (Armstrong, 2007; Colvin, 2010; Halík, 2008; Bartoníčková, 2007, Harold, 1991, Kirovová, 2011, Baruch, 2004; Milkovich, 1993). It can be defined two main career concepts and it is traditional concept and the contemporary concept (Kirovová, 2011).

The traditional concept is related to the industrial era. This concept has origin in the background of Weber's concept of bureaucratic management, which depersonalized job positions in the company. These job positions provide certainty by the acceptance of bureaucratic procedures and principles of seniority (Furnham, 2006 in Kirovová, 2011). Weber created rules, standards and procedures that should ensure the effectiveness of relations and disengage from dependence on a subjective decision of an individual. The concept influenced Taylor's concept of scientific management as well, recommending a narrow specialization of jobs position (Kirovová, 2011). Taylor's concept has used scientific method, when has based decision on precisely formulated rules.

Since the sixties of the 20 century, human society passes on post-industrialisms and postmodernism. At the same time is coming globalization, development of information and communication technologies. Socio-economic and organizational conditions are changing which impact on the life of individuals, companies and whole society is enormous. The contemporary concept thus offers a more comprehensive, more complex and less predictable career (Gallagher et al., 1997 in Kirovová, 2011, Baruch, 2004). While the traditional concept

recognizes only one "concept", the contemporary concept consists of several sub-concepts. It is a protean career, a boundary less career, a post-corporate career, an intelligent career and a portfolio career (Fenwick, 2006; Zaleska, de Menezes, 2007). These careers often cross borders of business and profession. Individual becomes independent and separate (Sullivan et al., 2000). In this context can be mentioned so called job hopper, i.e. individuals who are seeking for short-term employment, often change positions and companies according to the principle that there is always someone who will be willing to pay for their services as much as they want.

In fact it is not an employee but the company who determines the applied concept (Harrington Hall, 2007). Companies often choose the concept intuitively, based on partial strategies; work and organizational design; plans and objectives. Zaleska and de Menezes (2007) added that the traditional concept is preferred by employees, since it complies with the requirements for a reward for commitment. According to the findings of Kirovová (2011) is a traditional concept still dominant paradigm, because employees require certainty and stability over time.

The result is 8 major characteristics that are somewhat intertwined and mutually dependent. For example, responsibility for careers is related to the characteristic employees mobility. If the primary responsibility for their career is left on the employee, it is required a certain degree of flexibility. Responsibility is also related to the characteristics career planning, because if is primarily responsible employee, it can be assumed the application of planning methods, where employee participates significantly. These characteristics are not exhaustive, but they help to clear sort companies "in groups" which can serve as a basis for further exploration of the impact of contextual and individual factors. The Imagine 1 is a table where are digestedly introduced 8 characteristics with clearly questions and dimension of answers with should be answers be sorting a concept via characteristics.

**Table Chyba! V dokumentu není žádný text v zadaném stylu..1: Characteristics with questions and answers**

Characteristics	Questions	Dimension of answers
Responsibility for career	Who is responsible for career? Who determines who, when and how will develop? Who determines who will promote in the company's hierarchy?	company
		team leader
		employee
Organizational structure	What shape has organizational structure? How many degrees does it have? Is the organizational structure flexible or fix?	high
		narrow
		functional
		divizional
		wide
Coverage of job position	Are the job position wide or narrow specified? Is there a trend to wide and grouped job position?	flat
		specialization
		widening
Employess' mobility	Is employee flexible? Is he independent and resistant? Is he able to adapt on changed conditions?	re design
		dependance
		independace
Career paths	How proceeds the career of employee? Which steps has it? In wich order are the job positions?	mobility
		flexibility
		career ladder
		horizontal,spiral, expert

		job hopper, concept of favourite, roped party
Career advancement	Based on what is employee promoted? Is seniority important?	seniority
		performance
Career planning	How proceeds the career planning proces in company? Which type of methods are used?	succession plan
		development plan
Renumeration system	Based on what is paid reward? Is growth reward? How important is the length of employment?	length of the employment relationship
		performance

*Source: own proceeding based on literature review*

### First characteristics – The responsibility for career

Both concepts are distinguished in the answers to questions like "Who is responsible for career?", "Who determines who, when and how will develop?", "Who determines who will promote in the company's hierarchy?". The traditional concept is treated to the individual as to cost item. Responsibility for planning and career management carries companies, so it is often referred as organizational career that represent the dominant influence of company on the employees' career (Baruch, 2004). Individuals are interchangeable items that have "similar" knowledge.

The transition to post industrialism brought changes in the socio-economic environment. The external environment is becoming dynamic; responsibility is moved to the employee. The individual is responsible for career planning and creating a line between personal and working life, which is typical for the contemporary concept (Zaleska, de Menezes, 2007; Iles, 1997). The company conducts in a secondary position, and is responsible for career management and career evaluation. The contemporary concept is also referred as the individual's career, just due to the importance of individual (Savickas, 2002). As a result of changes in responsibility for career is created a new psychological contract. While the old psychological contract offered secure employment for all, new contract offers opportunities for development. It offers assurance of employability.

### Second characteristics – Organizational structure

For the traditional concept is characteristic strong hierarchical structure, in shape of high pyramid (Kirovová, 2011). Relationships are clearly defined hierarchically with a high number of organizational degrees. Career advancement is clearly determined by the upwards promotion through the organizational structure (Furnham, 2006 in Kirovová, 2011). The organizational structure in the traditional concept is characterized by certain rigidity, which has not been able to reflect changes which began in the second half of the twentieth century. These changes in the socio-economic, technical and legal environment lead to flattening of organizational structures. For the contemporary concept is typical low hierarchical structure, with a small number of degrees and authority and responsibility decentralization to the lowest level. It is often used so-called additional organizational structures whose life is temporary (Gallagher et al., 1997 in Kirovová, 2011).

### Third characteristics – Coverage of job position

The organizational structure is consistent with the coverage of jobs positions. A job position can be defined as part of the work system defined by work tasks, work conditions (workplaces, work practices, etc.) and worker's claims. It can also be characterized as a specific place in space and time (Armstrong, 2008). In the traditional concept are job positions fixed defined, which is related to fix organizational structure and stable working conditions. Individual positions are depersonalized and narrowly specialized (Iles, 1997). Employee knows what he should expect from each job position. In contrast, the contemporary concept has broadly defined job positions; requires a greater range of knowledge and skills, which implies greater need for training and development. The contemporary concept also allows continual re design of positions. This leads often to

connect previously specialized positions, which brings demands for "versatility" of employees (Armstrong, 2008; Branham, 2004).

#### **Fourth characteristics – Employees mobility**

In the traditional concept is mobility not required, because the concept is characterized by long-standing job and reward for performance is promotion. Traditional concept offers lifelong career on clearly defined career paths. All this leads to a fixed job descriptions and narrow employees' profiling, as was mentioned in previous paragraphs. The contemporary concept used participative and transformational leadership styles, creates new jobs and professions. From employees is required flexibility, adaptability, positive attitude to changes and lifelong learning (Baruch, 2004; Kirovová, 2011; Armstrong, 2007). It is request physical and psychological mobility. Physical mobility is a change in the physical environment, i.e. interdisciplinary mobility (job position change, work environment change) and geographic mobility (change of location, country, and continent). Psychological mobility is then a change in thinking and attitudes of individuals (Kirovová, 2011, Baruch, 2004).

#### **Fifth characteristics – Career paths**

In relation to career paths raises questions like "How proceeds the individual's career?", "In what sequence are each job position ranked?". Career path is order of jobs and functions, which an employee progresses in his working life (Branham, 2009; Donelly, 1997; Kociánová, 2010; Heller, 2004). In the traditional concept are career paths one-dimensional, by using a vertical career ladder (Baruch, 2004; Schmidt, 2011; Branham, 2009). The advantage of the ladder is structured linearly progresses over a predetermined route. Career choice is made at the beginning of the career and no more. In contrast for the contemporary concept is typical increase in the amount of career options (Baruch, 2004). Career choices appear during the entire working life. In the contemporary concept proceed career in all directions (Baruch, 2004; Dvořáková, 2004; Schmidt, 2011). Career paths are less stringent and more variable. Greater emphasis is placed on horizontal and diagonal career path. There are also un-building of traditional career ladder. This is due to the possibility of jobs re design, temporary organizational structures. For linear advancement is than rather used a career grid, because there are linear career opportunities in all directions (Harrington Hall, 2007). This is linked with the growth of individual career responsibility. In the traditional concept had the primary responsibility companies and therefore were used simple, unified and clearly defined paths. The contemporary concept lays the crucial part on the individual which leads to subjective choices based on several criteria.

#### **Sixth characteristics – Career advancement**

Both concept blend together in the possibilities of career advancement. In the traditional concept employee shall proceed in the career ladder based on seniority - age, years spent in the company, i.e. on the basis of unified criteria. Employee progresses, if he fulfills tasks and keeps the working rules (Gallagher et al., 1997 in Kirovová, 2011; Blaton, et al., 1997). This is related to job certainty, when for employees is declared a slow but steady progress. In this context, is often mentioned Peter's Principle, which states that people promote up to the amount of their own incompetence, if they adhere to the rules (Kirovová, 2011). The contemporary concept is career advancement defined based on seniority, but there is also based on performance, results or competencies (Dressler, 2003).

#### **Seventh characteristics – Career Planning**

Method of career planning summarizes most of the above characteristics. In fact, it is possible to plan either by succession plan or on the basis of development plans. Succession, sometimes succession in function is career planning and management of selected employees to prepare them to fill vacant senior positions in the company resulting from promotion or retirement (Hroník, 2006; Dvořáková, 2004; Kociánová, 2010). Both concepts, traditional and contemporary, are using both methods. The only difference is that in the contemporary concept is rather short-term career planning. The employee becomes a partner and significantly participates in the planning and management of his career, influenced by varying needs (Branham, 2009; Heller, 2004). Succession is in the contemporary concept also known as a talent career accelerator (Branham, 2009).

### **Eighth characteristics – Remuneration system**

In the traditional concept is remuneration linked to the length of the employment relationship, employees are inflexible and totally dependent on the company (Branham, 2009; Kirovová, 2011, Baruch, 2004). In the contemporary concept, the system moves towards pay remuneration by contribution to business performance and share of value creation. The reward for performance is growth and recognition (Heller, 2004; Lawrence, Gibson, 2010).

## **4 Discussion**

As society develops, evolves career management as well. Concepts and their characteristics also develop. Although the traditional concept is related to the industrial era and is given as a constant, its elements can be found in today's hybrid career systems of companies. The traditional concept is still used in companies, because it gives certainty, it is easily applicable and imaginable in linear working life. But today's environment is very turbulent. It brings many changes in the socio-economic, political, cultural and technological environment.

To the forefront is coming an individual who becomes an independent entity. It grows its own responsibility for the work career and satisfaction with working life. It is required growth of mobility; in Western countries is expected employees' willingness to "move away for work." In the Czech Republic is mobility still limited, although it is becoming a significant characteristic of the career concepts.

Defining the content of individual characteristics brings many problems. How to determine what is high and low organizational structure, when are ongoing pressures on the flattening of organizational structures. It could be thought about coverage of job positions because what by one company appears as narrowly specialized jobs may be in another company merged with several other positions in one. It can also be considered a contradiction, since the specific concept is chosen by company and determines its precise form. An individual can "only" choose company and does not affect the choice of career concept.

It is therefore necessary to take career concepts and their characteristics as a starting base for further exploration. Concepts and their contents classify firms into groups according to similarities in individual characteristics and within these groups is possible to examine the impact of contextual and individual factors. Only if we understand the traditional and contemporary career concepts, we will be able to understand the further development of the career management.

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