Partnership between University and Regional Organizations in Enhancing Students' Career Competencies

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Abstract

The aim of the publication is to discuss social and economic transformations of society and their influence on the formation of modern approach to career management, to reveal significant impact of university-business partnership on development of students' career competencies and enhancing of career planning processes, as well as to present a case study on how the university could deal with those challenges by implementing Service-Learning.

The presentation is divided into two parts. The first part contains the discussion on conceptions of career and career competencies and their importance in the contemporary labour market, the significance of creating possibilities to develop career competencies at different stages of preparation for the labour market. The increasing market influence that gives universities impetus to provide a range of more diverse intellectual services has been recently observed in higher education. Therefore the creation of possibilities to develop career management competencies is the way for a university to meet new challenges and cooperate with social partners.

The second part reveals the case study on possibilities for career competency development at Siauliai University by implementation of Service-Learning. By implementing Service-Learning the University creates a wide range of opportunities for students to develop their career management competencies and enhance partnership with regional organizations.

Keywords: career, career competencies, Service-Learning.

Introduction

Recent processes of globalization have greatly influenced the social and economic change of the society. The world of work has substantially changed due to occurring transformations. In recent period, a successful career seldom corresponds to the traditional concept of career where a person's activity is related to the hierarchical organizational structure and stable economy. In the middle of the previous century, the so-called lifelong career, as an archetypal model, was still being realized successfully – a stable work situation in one organization was treated as an ideal type of career. However, in the modern society, we see a constant change of technologies, organiza-

tional structures and forms, thus career assumes a notably wider meaning. The traditionally assumed conception of career is being replaced by a notably more dramatic attitude. Presenting a traditional definition of career, which defines career as the involving sequence of a person's work experience over time, Arthur et al. (1989) emphasizes that work is all that work can mean for the ways in which we see and experience other people, organization and society. Actualizing this definition, Baruch (2004, 2006) extends the perception of career by emphasizing that careers can indeed be seen as a sequencing of an individual's life, work roles and experiences. Most of the authors (Arthur, Baruch, Cypers, Schyns, Scheerens, etc) emphasize that careers take place in specified social environments, in particular, in organizations. Thus, career involves a process of progress and development of individuals, provides the "moving perspective" over time and unfolding interaction between person and society. These perspectives offer a link between an individual's initial identity and final integrity over the course of his or her life and stimulate university-business partnership. The **aim of the article** is to discuss social and economic transformations of society and their influence on the formation of modern approach to the career managing, to reveal significant impact of University-Region partnership on development of students' career competencies and enhancing of career planning processes. The aim of the article is achieved by analysing scientific literature with the view to reveal modern approach to career and career competencies and present possibilities of their development. On the basis of theoretical background the case study of implementing Service-Learning in Siauliai University is presented.

Theoretical Framework of the Research: Conceptions of Career and Career Competencies

Career was traditionally related to an organization where the following issues were being solved: what investments should be made in an individual's development, what career paths are to be given priori-

ties. However, transformations and reorganizations of organizations together with the economic turbulence are becoming the main factors stimulating the career paradigm shift (Baruch, 2004). The career paradigm shift is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Traditional and transformed career aspects

Aspects	Traditional deal	Transformed deal
Environmental characteristic	Stability	Dynamism
Career choice made	Once, at early stage in career	In series at different ages
Main career responsibility lies with:	Organization	Individual
Career horizon (workplace)	Single organization	Several organizations
Career horizon (time)	Long	Short
Employer expects/Employee gives	Loyalty and commitment	Long working hours
Employer gives /Employee expects	Job security	Investment in employability
Progress criteria	Advancement according to tenure	Advancement according to results and knowledge
Success means	Winning the tournament, i.e. progress on the hierarchy ladder	Inner feeling of achievement
Training	Via formal programmes; generalist	On-the-job, company specific, sometimes ad hoc.

Source: Baruch (2004). *Managing Careers: Theory and Practice*. Pearson Education.

Baruch (2004) compares the traditional and transformed career following several aspects: characteristics, how often career choice is made, whom the main career responsibility lies with, career horizon according to workplace and time, what employee expects and what employee gives, matching progress criteria, what means success, and way of training. Here we can see that traditional and transformed approaches as if become opposite to each other. The traditional career determines the dependence of individual's career on organization, provides some kind of stability, however it requires a person's loyalty to an organization. A career is chosen in an early age and for a long period, it is usually related to one organization or at least one field, and career success is measured by moving up the career ladder. This career conception is based on individual's learning by reflecting needs of an organization and usually in a formalized learning system. Such a career is possible when economic and social environments are stable.

Whereas in the recent epoch of changes, career has the characteristics of dynamism which means that an individual's choice may vary depending on age and situation of profession type. The duration of one or another type of profession may not be stable; in addition, an individual may work even in several organizations at the same time. This requires the individual not only to know the chosen professional field but also to be always able to learn, reflect and conceptualize his/her experience and to make appropriate career decisions.

The modern career conception distinguishes itself by "boundaryless" career approach, developed by Arthur et al. (2000, 2001). It is common that organizations usually see an individual's career and develop it thinking about his movement inside the organization, i.e. a career is usually related to one specific organization or a chosen professional field. However, in constantly changing economic and social situation, the competitive abilities of organizations are determined by openness, cooperation, networking with different operators of the market and not by separation or withdrawal. Thus an individual's activity field or professional field requires constant interaction with other individuals and organizations not only in his own professional field. Such an interaction may influence an individual's career and the quality of organization's activities as well. While explaining the concept of *boundaryless career,* Arthur et al. (2000, 2001) present an example when an accidental meeting of scientists may stimulate the creation of new knowledge, and this, in one way or another, influences their personal career as well, and through this the change of organization as well. "*Boundaryless*" organizations compete in the market by opening themselves for new forms and ideas of interaction, at the same time, individuals in organization of such type have the possibility to develop the boundaryless career. Boundaryless career unfolds being unconstrained by clear boundaries around job activities, by fixed sequences of such activities, or by attachment to one organization (Arthur et al., 2001). According to Greenhouse et al. (2000), the essence of *boundaryless career* is

independence from a particular organization and its existing career paths.

Thus the new attitudes towards the development of a career emphasize that a career may develop in different ways and it may not necessarily depend on a specific organization or requirements set out by it. "Multiple" career concept (Greenhouse et al, 2000) contains four different career patterns:

1) a traditional *linear* career that emphasizes upward mobility,
2) an *expert* career that focuses on stability in a speciality area (e.g., financial analysis) with little advancement,
3) a spiral career in which major career shifts occur periodically, perhaps every 7 or 10 years,
4) a *transitory* career, which is characterised by changes in career field as frequently as every 3 or 5 years.

As Greenhouse et al. (2000) emphasize, individuals need to take responsibility for understanding the type of career they wish to pursue and for making career decisions that are consistent with these preferences. Therefore it is possible to claim that the career success depends not only on specific professional knowledge and abilities. Indentified individual's *career competencies* help identifying frustrations arising in career situation and making appropriate decisions to solve that situation. As Arthur et al. (1997) explain, "*...career competencies are typically framed in conventional schema of "technical competencies", "interpersonal competencies" and "conceptual" or "strategic competencies". In contrast, the "career" spans wider social roles, occupies a much longer time-frame than the "job" and provides a more complex framework for conceptualizing competencies and their accumulation.*"

Greenhouse et al. (2000) distinguish 5 main abilities of an individual determining his/her career success:

– to gather relevant information about himself/herself and the world of work,
– to develop an accurate picture of his/her talents, interests, values and preferred life-style as well as alternative occupations, jobs and organizations,
– to develop realistic career goals based on this information,
– to develop and implement a strategy designed to achieve the goals,

– to obtain feedback on the effectiveness of the strategy and the relevance of the goals.

Analyzing what ensures the career success, Cypers, Schyns, Scheerens (2006) add these capabilities that are more oriented to the ability to recognize environment and to make a decision on the basis of this information:

– *Career-actualization ability* is related to objective features of career. The authors claim that the realization of career goals is mirrored in increased salary and high status if we assume that the personal ambition level is high enough.
– *Career reflection* will result in career choices that coincide with existing capabilities. As authors claim, the ability to reflect own or other individual's competencies with respect to his/her career leads to realistic image of capabilities.
– *Motivation reflection* on one's desires and values according to career perspectives will also help with making realistic choices.
– *Work exploration* from the perspective of external appreciation of a person's job in terms of salary and status, especially if the person is willing to explore how to use his/her competencies in the best way for the successful career paths, will help to understand the possibilities for career development.
– *Career control* in the terms of goal-oriented-learning emphasizes the ability to reflect self-directed learning process and results. The lifelong learning has become increasingly more important in the modern labour market, so individuals who are willing to learn about and train for their desired career will enhance their subjective and objective career success.
– *Networking* with various individuals, professionals etc. could help to achieve internal and external career success and understand the variety of career paths.

Arthur et al. (2001) mentions similar competencies; however, they are concentrated on 3 groups of competencies: *knowing-why, knowing-how and knowing-whom*. In Table 2 we can see the profiles of these bounded and boundaryless careers.

Table 2

Career profiles of bounded versus boundaryless careers

Competency	Career profile	
	Bounded	**Boundaryless**
Knowing-why Identity	Employer-dependent	Employer-independent
Knowing-how Employment context	Specialized	Flexible
Knowing-whom Locus Structure Process	Intrafirm Hierarchical Prescribed	Interfirm Non-hierarchical Emergent

Source: Arthur, Rousseau (2001). *The Boundaryless Career: A New Employment Principle for a New Organizational Era.* Oxford University Press, USA.

Arthur et al. (1997, 2001, 2005) explain that the *knowing-why* competencies help to answer the question: Why should one behave himself/herself in one or another way in a respective situation? This relates to the issues of personal identity and meaning and encourages a person to recognize his/her motives stimulating his/her relevant behaviour. In addition, the authors emphasize that these competencies are significant while understanding the culture of the chosen occupation field or organization and seeking to adapt to this cultural environment. These competencies relate to the abilities to reflect the development of career, to foresee the goals of personal learning and to organize the self-defined learning. In Table 2 we can see that an employee's identity depends on the career path chosen – he/she becomes dependent on the employer or is able to perform individually.

Knowing-how competencies are accumulated in the professional occupation and while learning. These competencies help creating one's own technical and managerial know-how in various spheres of performance, including the employment context and career. They may be successfully developed by purposefully choosing training programs, accumulating professional practise, learning additional qualifications, and growing career wisdom through various social roles. However, employee's chosen bounded or boundaryless career path determines whether the employee chooses a narrow, specialized path for development, or he/she develops various competencies relating not only to the present employment situation.

Knowing-whom competencies reflect career-related networks. They could be revealed not just as abilities to relate to others and to develop contacts, but also the networks of people, and reputation with other people, which are built up as the career progresses (Arthur et al., 1997). Such communication and networking allows a person to learn, contact various people, know and understand the particularity of occupation in different professional fields constantly and in this way to open oneself to greater career opportunities. However, in bounded career profile, we can see that a person's communication is determined by internal structure of organization, hierarchy, and field of occupation. Whereas the boundaryless career situation stimulates a person for a spontaneous, emergent communication, exceeding the boundaries of a company or even of a defined specialized occupation.

As we can see, the modern concept of career sets out rather demanding requirements for a person who seeks a successful career and for organizations as well by influencing the process of a person's career in various phases of a human development. The development of career competencies is inseparable from career management and it is a constituent of this process. Greenhouse et al. (2000) claim that if individuals understand the developmental task associated with each career stage, they can develop goals and strategies that are most appropriate for their particular career phase. And looking from the organizational points of view, an organization, seeking for the results of effective human resource management and combining organization's and employee's goals, can design developmental programs most relevant to an employee's stage.

Thus career development could be defined as "ongoing process by which individuals progress through a series of stages each of which is characterised by a relatively unique set of issues, themes and tasks" (2000). Career development implies more of a role for the individual and moves focus away from jobs to progression within roles. As Yarnall (2007) claims, it is more about means by which people achieve their career goals.

The author equates the process of career development to the model of general shift management which is illustrated in Figure 1.
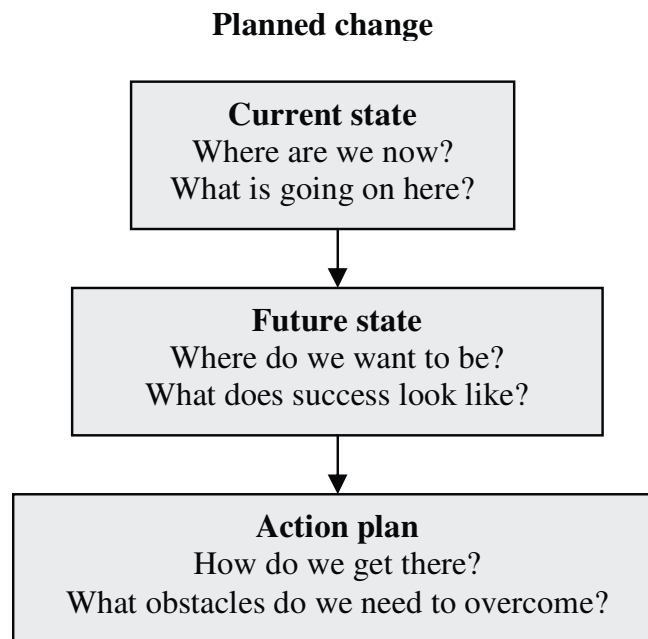
Planned change

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┌────────────────────────────────┐
│        Current state           │
│       Where are we now?        │
│     What is going on here?     │
└────────────────────────────────┘
                │
                ▼
┌────────────────────────────────┐
│         Future state           │
│     Where do we want to be?    │
│   What does success look like? │
└────────────────────────────────┘
                │
                ▼
┌────────────────────────────────┐
│          Action plan           │
│      How do we get there?      │
│ What obstacles do we need to overcome? │
└────────────────────────────────┘
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Fig. 1. The flow of change planning

Source: Yarnall (2007). *Strategic Career Management: Developing your talent*. Butterworth-Heinemann, Elsevier Ltd, USA.

Thus at the beginning of career development the current situation is defined by finding inadequacies between the current and desirable career state. Then, we need to forecast the future state by finding where we want to be and what success looks like. Seeing a vision and setting a goal will allow us to make an action plan, i.e. to envisage actions that would help to change the current situation into the desirable one. This model emphasizes individual's efforts to plan actions taking into consideration individual abilities, environmental (organization, professional field, education possibilities etc.) conditions. Thus a purposeful career management requires overcoming the career competencies mentioned above in the article – to know oneself and the market in which one wishes to perform, to make and evaluate career decisions. Career management model made by Greenhouse et al. (2000) (Figure 2) shows us consistent steps that help realizing the career development plan.

We can see that career planning starts when a person wishes to change the current career situation. Then the steps mentioned in Figure 2, boxes A-H, are consistently taken.

Career exploration – a person begins gathering information about her/himself, alternative jobs and about organization as a system (Box A). Career exploration should enable a person to become more fully *aware of her/himself and environment*, job options, opportunities and obstacles in the environment (Box B). A greater awareness of her/himself and environment can help to choose *career goal to pursue* (Box C). The goal may be to attain or to move to a specific position within a specific period of time or even to remain in the current position for the foreseeable future. The establishment of a realistic goal or a set of goals can facilitate *the development* (Box D) and *implementation* (Box E) of a *career strategy* (i.e. a plan of activities designed to attain the desired career goal). The *implementation of reasonable career strategy* can produce progress towards the stated career goals (Box F) and useful *feedback* to the person. This feedback, in conjunction with feedback from other work or non-work sources (Box G), can enable a person t*o appraise his/her career* (Box H). The career management cycle can be *continuing if additional information* derived from career appraisal becomes another vehicle for career exploration (see the arrow from Box H to Box A). Or, it is possible *to retain the goal*, but *revise the strategy* (see arrow from B to D).
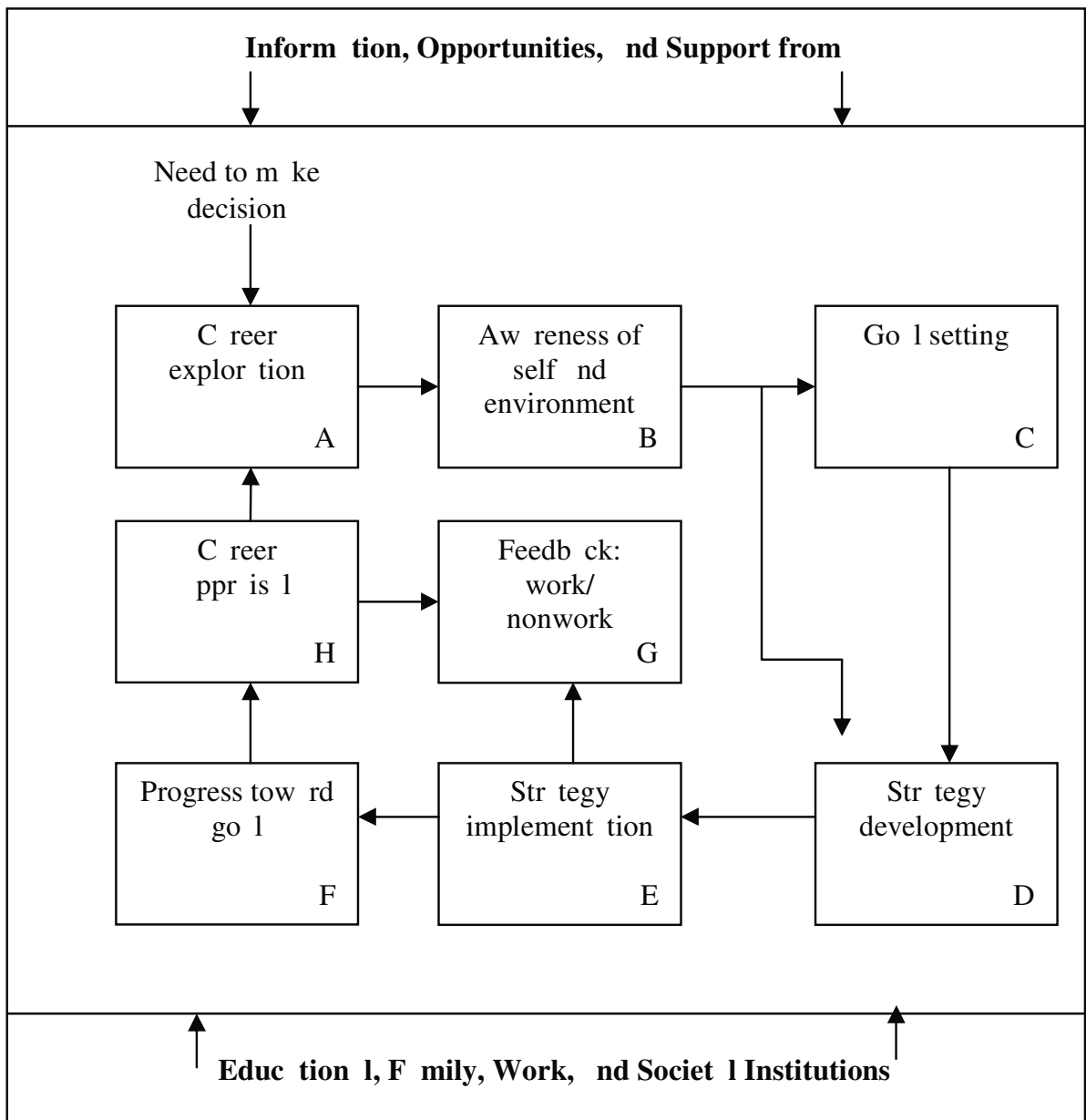
Inform tion, Opportunities, nd Support from

Need to m ke decision

C reer explor tion — A

Aw reness of self nd environment — B

Go l setting — C

C reer ppr is l — H

Feedb ck: work/ nonwork — G

Progress tow rd go l — F

Str tegy implement tion — E

Str tegy development — D

Educ tion l, F mily, Work, nd Societ l Institutions

Fig. 2. Model of career management

Source: Greenhouse, Callanan, Godshalk (2000). *Career management*. The Dryden Press, Harcourt College Publishers.

Thus, the authors claim that such *career management cycle* is a *problem-solving, decision-making process*. It is influenced by various people and organizations. Individuals have to take responsibility for their career and be proactive in its development process. The success of career development is determined by possibilities to exchange information among different participants of the process – employee and employer, former employees, colleagues, friends, acquaintances, family members, etc. It is also influenced by individual's abilities to analyze information and make appropriate decisions on the basis of that information.

In conclusion, it is possible to state that career competencies are not static, they need to be updated taking into consideration a person's career goals and plans of actions needed to achieve them. This is determined by boundaryless career development process which is continuing and its success is determined by the individual's personal characteristics, values and abilities and by the organizations influencing this process or participating in this process in different career phases.

Case Study on Implementing Service-Learning as Precondition for Students' Career Development in Siauliai University

As it was mentioned above, the modern career approach emphasizes a person's abilities to make appropriate career decisions. Assessing career as a

process that is continuous and demanding constant changes, we may distinguish different career stages in which a person makes relevant decisions. One of the most important stages that carry a vital importance from the perspective of a person's career is initial professional training. Requirements to create preconditions for student career development are also imposed on university as a participant of this person's career stage.

Higher education tendencies towards massiveness, which showed up in post modern knowledge society, set *new requirements for higher educational institutions*. Tjeldvoll (2004) suggests that the changes in the role of the university are determined by the society's expectations – the basic aims of the service university are oriented towards meeting demands of the society. Tjeldvoll (2004) further maintains that the modern conception of the service university emphasizes organizational ability to perceive its place in the context of the global market of education services and to take action in competitive environment. Cheng (2003) indicates that in the centre of the quality evaluation there is the student – the main consumer. According to Tjeldvoll (2004), the requirements of students and the ambitions to get established on the market of educational services make the university *satisfy the expectations of the consumers*.

The increasing market influence that gives universities and colleges impetus to render a range of more diverse intellectual services has been recently observed in higher education. Higher education is evidenced to be losing its elite position in the society, whereby its mission, formerly aimed exclusively at the education of societal elite, is also undergoing changes.

With recent tendencies showing up in the knowledge society and the conceptions of lifelong learning and successive training entrenching themselves in education, higher education is gaining the meaning of the individual's *permanent training* for a particular constantly changing workplace *in technological and social terms*. Universities, occupied with the satisfaction of the demands set by the knowledge society to them, should primarily actualize the *principle of dynamism that implies openness to the environment*, constant alternation and response to environmental challenges.

The university becomes *a participant in the learning market* providing individuals with learning conditions and, consequently, supporting *their competitiveness in the labour market*. Thus the development of career competencies is becoming the most important mission of the university on purpose to help the process of students' successful integration into the labour market.

In the process of realization of this new mission, Siauliai University performs actively creating conditions for purposeful development of career competencies. EU-funded project KOOPERIA was being implemented in 2006-2008. This Project was aimed at adaptation of *Service-Learning*, a method of modern studies, in Siauliai University.

For the last two decades, the method of *Service-Learning* (*Citizenship and Service-Learning, Cooperate Education*) has been developed in universities in the USA and implemented in educational institutions in Europe. It *involves a flexible and mobile subject or module of the study programme (different from students' traditional practice) combining theoretical subject lectures, seminars in classrooms and purposeful activities as well as provision of free services in the local community, social organizations and potential workplaces in enterprises and institutions.* This method is aimed at balancing, concretizing and applying students' knowledge, competencies and attitudes to local demands and at adapting university courses to regional demands. Service-Learning includes joint activities of lecturers, students as well as social and economic entities in particular local or regional educational institutions.

The given system of studies is based on *cooperation of various institutions*: higher educational institutions and their subdivisions, non-governmental organizations, enterprises, communities, municipalities, etc. Such kind of cooperation stimulates social-economic development of the region and facilitates a more rapid integration of contemporary scientific achievements into practice. In addition, it influences the development of students' career competencies directly as students solving real problems in real environment not only test and apply their theoretical knowledge in practice, but also familiarize themselves with the culture of professional occupation field chosen and of different organizations. While doing subject tasks, they integrate into organization's activities naturally, which helps them to observe and assess various career perspectives.

Precisely this Service-Learning perspective allows presenting the model as a good innovative experience of a higher school how to *establish assumptions for the development of students' career competencies*. Following this model, 32 modules and 8 bachelor study programs were adapted in 2006-2008. 663 students attend these modules.

The model of career competencies provided by Arthur et al. (2001) having been used every group was hypothetically given some certain career competencies the development of which was influenced by the method of Service-Learning.

The *Knowing-why* group contains the abilities to know oneself, and to identify oneself as a representative of a certain profession or occupation field. Whereas following the Service-Learning the activating methods such as project, case studies, etc. were used, in order to do the module task the student had to take different roles which studying in the usual environment of academic studies are typically understood in a narrow way. In the module "Preparation and Management of EU Projects", for example, the third year students of Public Administration educational program were given a task to prepare a social project for a specific organization. To this end, student groups were formed and various business, public sector and non-governmental organizations that had requested such voluntary help were offered. However, in order to do the task, theoretical knowledge about the processes of project preparation was not enough. The students had to find out by themselves the problems the organizations wanted to solve, how it could be done, to find out organization's readiness for innovations or changes of one or another kind which are inseparable from project realization and so on. To this end, the groups had not only to organize activities inside the group, for example, to spread roles, to *find out everyone's abilities and tendencies for certain activities*.

The greatest challenge for them was to *find out the needs of organization.* And in order to do this, they needed to meet representatives – managers of different levels, various specialists, etc. – of various organizations periodically. Thus, following the attitude that one can best know oneself in occupation, the students had the possibility *to check their tendencies, talents, to try themselves not only in the professional occupation*, which would be a requirement of a traditional educational program practice, but also in such spheres as negotiation on goals and scope of occupation, representation of subject idea, communication with different employees of organizations, cooperation with coursemates, time management and the like.

In addition, it was an excellent opportunity to get familiar with the fields of occupation of an individual specialist of a specific organization (e.g., Municipality's Vocational Schools), to understand hierarchical relations and distribution of responsibilities. Or it was a possibility to go deep into the occupation particularity and possibilities of a non-governmental organization or a public organisation. Such a way of work allows a student not only to get to know, reveal his/her own possibilities in a specific occupation, but also to understand the impact of organization's culture on human relations, occupational peculiari-

ties of different offices, responsibility and place in organization's hierarchical system, requirements imposed, etc. Thus, according to Greenhouse et al. (2000), Service-Learning helped a student to *gather relevant information about himself/herself and the world of work and to develop an accurate picture of his/her talents, interests, values and preferred life-style as well as alternative occupations, jobs and organizations*. Furthermore, especially in the educational program mentioned above, there is an integrated module per semester taught following the method of Service-Learning. This allows students to get familiar with different occupation models and to know the variety of organizations.

The *Knowing-how* group contains the ability to perform professionally in the field chosen, the knowledge of one's own occupation and the ability to recognize deficiencies in qualification and to find ways to remedy them. On the basis of problem-based learning concept, the method of Service-Learning stimulates to switch from *teaching* to *learning paradigm.* Students, for instance, having heard the marketing theory in Management educational program, select to perform surveys in a specific organization on a new product's bringing into market. It goes without saying that when trying to perform a research, they face knowledge deficiencies. They have to identify what knowledge is missing, to understand it is necessary if they are to find solution to the problem and to independently look for theoretical and practical ways to solve this problem. If the deficit of theoretical knowledge is solved by selecting appropriate literature with the help of the teacher, then they have to look for practical or know-how knowledge in specific organizations or to find out how other organizations solve this problem. Future managers, communicating in this way with marketing professionals, have a possibility to expand their knowledge about professional work in a specific field by solving a concrete case. Thus, according to competencies necessary for career development discussed by Greenhouse et al. (2000), they help s*tudents to develop realistic career goals based on this information and to prepare to make a strategy to achieve the goals*.

The *Knowing-whom* competencies include the abilities to create interpersonal networks. The method of Service-Learning is oriented to the solutions to specific problems or analysis of cases in the wide context of labour market. Thus students in educational programs in which there are several such integrated subjects (and in accordance with the method requirements there may be 1-2 such subjects per semester starting with the second year of studies) have excellent preconditions to contact different representati-

ves of professional occupation chosen. The students of Sciences and Philosophy of Society, a study program of Siauliai University, for example, have even 7 modules adapted following the Service-Learning method: Theories of Propaganda, Social Anthropology, Analysis of Political Parties in Lithuania, Religion Studies, Political Anthropology, Applied Ethics, Political Sociology. Thus we can see that they have rather wide possibilities *to know the peculiarities of professional occupation field chosen, to understand the variety of occupational fields, organization's differences and establish relations that might be useful in their career path*. In addition, doing the tasks of these subjects in organizations students understand the importance of self-representation and presentation on market for the success of personal career. Thus conditions under which they can try the benefits *provided by personal marketing* are established.

As we can see, the Service-Learning method is not only a possibility for students as future members of the market to learn to solve specific problems in the occupational field chosen, but it is also *a way to understand the peculiarities of bounded and boundaryless career and to improve the competencies of career management*. However, this method requires to be proactive while planning your own career. The benefit of such proactive behaviour on career was revealed by Chiaburu et al. (2006). They emphasized the direct link between proactive personality and career outcomes. Thus career development will be successful if individuals take responsibility at work by increasing their role size, self-efficacy and production ownership. In addition, the authors reveal such outcomes of proactive behaviour on career as: *proactive individuals are more adept in understanding organizational and environmental nuances, individuals with increased levels of performance are more proficient in anticipating changes than less proactive individuals are, proactive individuals are likely to select or create situations that support high levels of work performance*. Such individuals are also more likely to seek out professional and organizational information and career support, which lead to higher salary, promotions and career satisfaction, proactive personality along with other individual factors positively influence one's motivation to learn, the extent to which employees engage in developmental activities, and their career management strategies.

Discussion

To sum up, it is possible to state that the universities, as participants in preparation for successful career process, influence the career success *by establis-*

hing conditions under which career competencies are developed. And a person preparing to be a participant in labour market or to select a career path will be successful if he/she will be able or willing to behave in proactive way. The case of Siauliai University shows that these options could be developed by enhancing *networking* with various regional organizations. It means that traditional learning environment is extended to non-academic space and relocated by involving various organizations. As it was indicated in the case, partnership challenges university as well as organizations. Many advantages were identified, such as creating of communities of practice, enrichment of work processes or closer theory-practice connections. However, students, teachers as well as people from organizations also stressed lack of openness to innovations, readiness for diversity, receptivity, capabilities for negotiations, etc. Hence it could be summarised that extension of learning environment and enriching of study processes stimulate realization of modern career concepts, as well as enhances cooperation between various subjects. But success of this partnership is based on proactive behaviour of all participants, and especially manifests the active student role.

Conclusions

Specific requirements changing the traditional mission of a higher educational institution are set out on universities in the making of knowledge society. The university becomes a participant in the learning market *providing individuals with learning conditions and, consequently, supporting their competitiveness in the labour market*.

Career competencies are not static, they need to be updated taking into consideration a person's career goals and plans of actions needed to achieve them. This is determined by *boundaryless career development process which is continuing* and its success is determined by the individual's personal characteristics, values and abilities and by the organizations influencing this process or participating in this process in different career phases.

Implementing of Service-Learning makes it possible to integrate *career education* and broad general university education when serving the society's interests and dealing with regional issues.

Service-Learning is not only a possibility for students as future members of the market to learn to solve specific problems in the occupational field chosen, but it is also a way *to understand the peculiarities of bounded and boudaryless career and to improve the competencies of career management*.

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Universiteto ir regiono bendradarbiavimas stiprinant studentų karjeros kompetencijas

Santrauka

Straipsnio tikslas – atskleisti socialinių ir ekonominių veiksnių poveikį studentų kaip būsimų darbo rinkos dalyvių karjeros valdymo kompetencijų plėtojimo procesams bei pristatyti universiteto bei regiono organizacijų kooperacijos galimybes diegiant kooperuotas studijas (angl. *Service-Learning*). Pirmoje straipsnio dalyje nagrinėjamas įvairių autorių požiūris į karjeros kompetencijų plėtojimą ir šio proceso reikšmę studento sėkmingai integracijai į darbo rinką. Sėkminga karjera dabar retai atitinka tradicinės karjeros sampratą, kada asmens veikla siejama su hierarchine organizacijos struktūra ir stabilia ekonomika. Vadinamoji viso gyvenimo karjera kaip tradicinis modelis praėjusio šimtmečio viduryje dar sėkmingai buvo realizuojama – stabili darbo situacija vienoje organizacijoje buvo traktuojama kaip idealus karjeros tipas. Tačiau modernioje visuomenėje matyti nuolatinė technologijų, organizacijų struktūrų kaitą, taigi įprastinę karjeros sampratą keičia dinamiškesnis požiūris.

Dabartinėje pokyčių epochoje karjerai būdingas dinamiškumas, kada žmogaus pasirinkimas gali kisti, atsižvelgiant į amžių, veiklos situaciją, kaip pabrėžia daugelis autorių (Arthur, Baruch, Cypers, Schyns, Scheerens etc.). Tam tikros veiklos trukmė gali būti nepastovi, vienu metu žmogus gali veikti net keliose organizacijose. Tačiau tokia veikla neapribota laike, o jos sėkmę lemia pasiekimai, naujos žinios, asmens pasitenkinimas pasiekimais. Tai reikalauja iš asmens jau ne tik išmanyti apie pasirinktą profesinę sritį, bet ir gebėti nuolat mokytis, reflektuoti ir konceptualizuoti savo patirtį. Taigi ir karjeros planavimas bei realizavimas, arba karjeros vadyba, įgauna naujas formas.

Modernioji karjeros samprata išskiria karjeros be ribų sampratą, kurią pasiūlė Michael B. Arthur (1996). Įprasta, kad organizacijos dažniausia asmens karjerą mato ir ją plėtoja galvodamos apie jo mobilumą konkrečioje organizacijoje. Tačiau nuolat besikeičiančioje ekonominėje ir socialinėje situacijoje organizacijų konkurencingumą lemia ne atsiskyrimas ar užsidarymas, bet atvirumas, kooperacija, tinklinimasis su skirtingais rinkos veikėjais. Taigi ir asmens veiklos sritis reikalauja sąveikos su kitomis organizacijomis ar individais. Tokia sąveika gali pakeisti tiek asmens karjerą, tiek organizacijos veiklos kokybę. Arthur ir kt. (2001), aiškindami karjeros be ribų konceptą, pateikia pavyzdį, kada atsitiktinis mokslininkų susitikimas gali paskatinti naujų žinių kūrimą, o tai turi įtakos ir asmeninei jų karjerai, taip pat lemia organizacijos kaitą. Kaip teigia Greenhouse ir kt. (2000), karjeros be ribų esmė – nepriklausomybė nuo konkrečios organizacijos ir joje egzistuojančių karjeros kelių.

Apibendrinant galima teigti, kad karjeros kompetencijos nėra statiškos, jas nuolat reikia atnaujinti atsižvelgiant į asmens karjeros tikslus ir būtinų jiems pasiekti veiksmų planus. Tai lemia nuolatinis karjeros be ribų plėtojimo procesas, kuriame ypač svarbios tampa tiek individo asmeninės savybės, vertybės ir gebėjimai, tiek įvairios or-

ganizacijos, skirtingais karjeros etapais darančios įtaką ar dalyvaujančios tame procese.

Antroje šio straipsnio dalyje pristatomas Šiaulių universiteto atvejis diegiant kooperuotas studijas (angl. *Service-Learning*), analizuojama, kaip perkėlus mokymosi aplinkas į regiono organizacijas, sustiprinamas studento pasirengimas sėkmingai karjerai. Prieinama prie išvados, kad universitetas kaip vienas pasirengimo sėkmingai karjerai proceso dalyvių lemia karjeros sėkmę, sudarydamas sąlygas plėtoti karjeros kompetencijas. Asmuo, besirengiantis tapti darbo rinkos dalyviu ar pasirikti kitą karjeros kelią, bus sėkmingas, jei planuodamas karjerą veiks kaip proaktyvus darbo rinkos dalyvis. Ypatingą reikšmę šiame procese įgyja kooperacijos su įmonėmis bei organizacijomis galimybės. Mokymosi aplinkos, realizuojant karjeros be ribų konceptą, iš akademinės aplinkos išsiplečia į įvairias neakademines aplinkas – verslo įmones, nevyriausybines ar viešąsias organizacijas. Atvejo analizė atliekama remiantis Arthur ir kt. (2001) karjeros be ribų koncepcija. Joje išskiriamos šios karjeros kompetencijų grupės: *kodėl, kaip ir kas*.

Kodėl kompetencijų grupei priskiriami gebėjimai pažinti save, identifikuoti save kaip tam tikros profesijos, veiklos srities atstovą. Kadangi kooperuotose studijose (angl. *Service-Learning*) modulio užduotys yra atliekamos realioje aplinkoje, studentui tenka imtis netradicinių vaidmenų, kurie studijuojant įprastoje akademinėje studijų aplinkoje menkai praktikuojami. Pavyzdžiui, modulį „ES projektų rengimas ir valdymas" klausantiems trečio kurso viešojo administravimo studijų programos studentams buvo skirta užduotis parengti socialinį projektą konkrečiai organizacijai. Studentų grupės rinkosi įvairias verslo, viešojo sektoriaus ir nevyriausybines organizacijas, kurios pageidavo tokios savanoriškos pagalbos. Siekiant, kad užduotis būtų atlikta, neužteko tik teorinių žinių apie projektų rengimo procesus. Studentams reikėjo savarankiškai išsiaiškinti, kokias problemas nori spręsti organizacija, kaip ji gali tai padaryti, nustatyti organizacijos pasirengimą tam tikroms inovacijoms ar pokyčiams, kurie neatsiejami nuo projekto realizavimo ir t. t. Todėl grupėms reikėjo organizuotis įvairias veiklas grupės viduje, pvz., pasiskirstyti vaidmenimis, išsiaiškinti kiekvieno gebėjimus bei polinkius vienokioms ar kitokioms veikloms. Didžiausias iššūkis jiems buvo išsiaiškinti organizacijos poreikius. Jie turėjo nuolat susitikti su įvairiais organizacijų atstovais: skirtingų lygių vadybininkais, įvairiais specialistais ir t. t. Taigi, vadovaujantis požiūriu, kad pažinti save geriausiai galima per tam tikras veiklas, studentai turėjo galimybę pasitikrinti savo polinkius, talentus, išbandyti save ne tik profesinėje veikloje, ko reikalauja tradicinė studijų programos praktika, bet ir tokiose srityse kaip derybos dėl veiklos tikslų ir apimčių, dalyko idėjos atstovavimas, komunikacija su skirtingais organizacijų darbuotojais, bendradarbiavimas su kurso draugais, laiko valdymas ir pan. Be to, tai buvo puiki galimybė pažinti konkrečios organizacijos (pvz., savivaldybės, profesinės mokyklos) atskirų specialistų veiklos sritis, suvokti hierarchinius ryšius ir atsakomybių pasidalijimą, įsigilinti į nevyriausybinės organizacijos ar viešosios įstaigos veik-

los specifiką ir galimybes. Tokia veikla leidžia studentui suvokti organizacijos kultūros įtaką žmonių santykiams, skirtingų pareigybių veiklos ypatumus, atsakomybes bei vietą organizacijos hierarchinėje sistemoje, keliamus reikalavimus ir t. t. Taigi galimybė veikti konkrečioje aplinkoje padėjo studentui, pasak Greenhouse ir kt. (2000), įsigilinti į informaciją apie save ir palyginti ją su veiklos pasauliu, susikurti adekvatų savo asmeninių poreikių, talentų gebėjimų, vertybių bei pageidaujamą veiklos sritį, organizaciją ar darbo vietą. Kaip pavyzdys pateiktoje studijų programoje kiekviename semestre yra integruotas modulis, kuris dėstomas pagal kooperuotų studijų metodą, leidžia susipažinti su skirtingais veiklos modeliais ir pažinti organizacijų įvairovę.

Kaip kompetencijų grupei priskiriamas gebėjimas profesionaliai veikti pasirinktoje srityje, savo veiklos išmanymas ir gebėjimas atpažinti kvalifikacijos deficitus bei rasti būdus, kaip juos patenkinti. Kooperuotų studijų (angl. *Service-Learning*) metodas, remiantis probleminio mokymosi koncepcija, skatina perėjimą nuo mokymo (angl. *Teaching*) prie mokymosi (angl. Learning) paradigmos. Pavyzdžiui, studentai, verslo administravimo studijų programoje išklausę marketingo teorijos kursą, atlieka naujo produkto įvedimo į rinką tyrimus konkrečioje organizacijoje. Atlikdami minėtą tyrimą jie susiduria su žinių deficitais. Todėl studentams savarankiškai reikia identifikuoti, kokių žinių jiems trūksta, suprasti, kad jos būtinos, norint rasti problemos sprendimą ir savarankiškai ieškoti tiek teorinių tiek praktinių šios problemos sprendimo būdų. Jei teorinių žinių deficitas išsprendžiamas padedant dėstytojui bei pasirenkant tinkamą literatūrą, tai praktinių, arba „know-how", žinių tenka ieškoti konkrečioje organizacijoje arba domėtis, kaip šią problemą sprendžia kitos organizacijos. Taigi busimieji vadybininkai, komunikuodami su marketingo profesionalais praktikais, spręsdami konkretų atvejį, turi galimybę išplėsti savo žinias apie konkrečios srities profesinę veiklą. Remiantis Greenhouse ir kt. (2000) anksčiau aptartas būtinas karjeros plėtros kompetencijas. Tokie veiksmai padeda studentui plėtoti realistinius karjeros tikslus, parengti tinkamą strategiją norint juos pasiekti.

Kas kompetencijos apima gebėjimus kurti tarpasmeninius tinklus. Kooperuotų studijų (angl. *Service-Learning*) metodas orientuotas į konkrečių problemų sprendimus ar atvejų analizes plačiame darbo rinkos kontekste. Taigi studentams, kurių studijų programoje yra integruoti bent keli tokie dalykai (pagal metodo reikalavimus kiekviename semestre gali būti 1–2 tokie dalykai pradedant nuo antrųjų studijų metų), sudaromos puikios prielaidos kontaktuoti su skirtingais pasirinktos profesinės veiklos veikėjais. Pavyzdžiui, Šiaulių universiteto bakalauro studijų programos *Visuomenės mokslai ir filosofija* studentai turi net 4 modulius, kurie adaptuoti pagal kooperuotų studijų (angl. *Service-Learning*) metodą. Taigi jie turi gana plačias galimybes pažinti pasirinktos profesinės veiklos ypatumus, suvokti veiklos sričių įvairovę, organizacijų skirtybes ir užmegzti ryšius, kurie gali būti naudingi jų karjeroje. Be to, atlikdami šių dalykų užduotis organizacijose studentai suvokia tinkamo savęs pristatymo, pateikimo rinkoje reikš-

mę siekiant sėkmingai plėtoti asmeninę karjerą. Taigi sudaryta reali galimybė išbandyti asmeninio marketingo teikiamus privalumus.

Kaip matyti, kooperuotų studijų (angl. *Service-Learning*) metodas yra ne tik galimybė studentams kaip būsimiems rinkos dalyviams mokytis spręsti konkrečias problemas pasirinktoje profesinės veiklos srityje, bet ir vienas būdų, kaip suvokti karjeros be ribų ypatumus ir tobulinti karjeros valdymo kompetencijas. Tačiau šis metodas reikalauja būti aktyviam planuojant savo karjerą. Tokio proaktyvaus elgesio naudą karjerai atskleidė Chiaburu ir kt. (2006). Jie pabrėžė tiesioginį ryšį tarp aktyvaus asmens elgesio ir karjeros rezultatų. Taigi karjeros plėtojimas bus sėkmingas, jei individas prisiims atsakomybę atlikdamas užduotis, veikdamas konkrečioje organizacijoje, kartu suvokdamas ir pasiektų rezultatų prasmę bei reikšmę tiek sau, tiek organizacijai. Autoriai taip pat atskleidžia tokias šio proaktyvaus elgesio pasekmes karjerai kaip gebėjimas priimti pokyčius, generuoti idėjas, pasitenkinimas karjera, mokymosi motyvacija.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: karjera, karjeros kompetencijos, kooperuotos studijos.