

| *Izabela Bednarska-Wnuk*

| **Boundaryless Career: Research Perspectives**

Abstract

Objective: The purpose of the article is to identify and describe the main constructs of a boundaryless career – psychological mobility, a boundaryless mindset, and organisational mobility. In its empirical layer, the aim is to determine the relationship between these constructs and to determine whether they depend on such independent variables as gender and age.

Research Design & Methods: The article presents the results of quantitative research, which was conducted among 259 employees by means of a questionnaire.

Findings: The respondents are characterised by a well-developed boundaryless mindset and a low level of organisational mobility. Women and men exhibited equal levels for both constructs, while for particular age categories the levels vary. The vast majority of respondents do not wish to pursue careers in only one organisation.

Implications/Recommendations: Contemporary employees are characterised by openness and readiness to change, are eager to learn new things, have high expectations regarding their own employability, and are looking for development paths outside their current workplace.

Contribution: The research provides important guidance for organisations in the context of employees' behaviour in the labour market.

Keywords: career, boundaryless career, boundaryless mindset, organisational mobility.

JEL Classification: J62, M12, M51.

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1. Introduction

The notion of the professional career has been the object of interest for theoreticians and practitioners of management for several decades (Akkermans & Kubasch 2017, Miś 2007, Bohdziewicz 2008). The subject literature ascribes various designations and criteria to the concept of a career. It is understood as promotion (advancement), a profession, a sum of professions acquired during one's life, the personal perception of attitudes and behaviours related to experience, the dynamic environment in which a person imagines his entire professional life, a sequence of work performed by an individual during his professional life, and a sequence of roles and experiences related to the role of the individual (Miś 2007, pp. 19–20).

The realisation of a career and its main attributes have evolved under the influence of changes in the work environment. As a criterion for the division of a career, time came to be classified based on the current socio-economic situation and the requirements addressed to the employee. Hence two main types of career have emerged: “traditional” and “modern”.

Traditional careers have been marked by the boundaries of a given organisation, and organisational promotion became a desirable way to develop them (Pocztowski 2008, p. 319). The organisation's manager, in deciding the scope of a career the employee, became responsible for managing that career (Sullivan 1999, p. 458). Most often it was consistent with the human development cycle and life stages. The predictability of a career meant that the individual did not have to think about its course and did not bear the financial and social costs associated with forging it. Such careers were characteristic of traditional organisations from the beginning of the 20th century, when the traditional model of the personnel function emerged, the basic issues of which were the division and efficiency of work, physical working conditions, control, social welfare, managerial work specialisation, cooperation and authority (Listwan 2010, p. 236). Along with the evolution of approaches to the issue of the personnel function and the changes taking place in the work environment – the virtualisation of work, work 4.0, the development of non-standard forms of employment, a change of psychological contract towards transactionality – a reorientation of the career paradigm emerged.

A departure from the linear and hierarchical career path in favour of its various transitions has been observed over the past decade or so. The role of the manager is also changing in terms of the attitude and approach to those he or she manages (from supervisor to creator of activities), to management and decision-making (from autocrat to democrat), the distance of power (from the asymmetric concept of power to the “blurring” of the boundaries between the superior and subordinate) and the manager's skill structure. The process of shifting responsibility for professional development and the employee's career from the organisation to the

individual – the externalisation of responsibility (Bańka 2016) – has also become important.

According to A. Miś, contemporary careers are becoming non-traditional, and the main reasons include globalised economy, the changing scope of work and the emergence of the most important characteristic – individualisation (Miś 2016, p. 124). Such contemporary careers include a protean career, a boundaryless career, an intelligent career, a post-corporate career, a multidirectional career or a kaleidoscopic career (Miś 2016). However, the best-known and most often described careers of this type are referred to in the subject literature as protean and boundaryless careers (Briscoe, Hall & De Muth 2006, Guan *et al.* 2019). Both feature the transformation of the relationship between the individual and the organisation into a more subjective one, resulting in a shift in the burden of responsibility for the course of a career (Bohdziewicz 2008, p. 188). They also aim to initiate, proactively shape and search for career opportunities by employees outside the borders of a single/existing organisation (Pocztowski 2018, p. 333). The careers listed above also form the basis for describing the professional activity of the individual (Briscoe, Hall & De Muth 2006). In recent years, they have significantly influenced the way of thinking about a contemporary career (Turska & Stasiła-Sieradzka 2015), especially about a boundaryless career (Bańka 2016, De Fillippi & Arthur 1996, Pocztowski 2018), whose main assumptions were shaped in the face of the emergence of new forms of work organisation and the increasing mobility and flexibility of employees. Hence the challenge of undertaking in this article a wider discourse aimed at identifying and describing the main constructs of a boundaryless career: a boundaryless mindset and organisational mobility at the theoretical level. However, on the empirical side, the goal is to determine the relationship between these constructs and to determine whether they depend on such independent variables as gender and age. The article also formulates recommendations for contemporary organisations, resulting from a specific orientation of the construct of a boundaryless career among the surveyed employees, especially in view of the growing crisis on the labour market caused by the current epidemiological situation.

2. The Concept of the Boundaryless Career

The concept of a boundaryless career was initially defined in various ways (Inkson *et al.* 2012). The term is also often used in publications as the “boundaryless career attitude” (Volmer & Spurk 2010). Most often, such a career was interpreted as boundlessness measured by the frequency of changing jobs (Feldman & Ng 2007). Its variability, unpredictability and lack of ordered sequences of actions have

been discussed (Arthur 1994), as has the possibility, as Sullivan (1999, p. 477) noted, that the term “boundaryless career” is misleading due to the need to determine and define the boundaries of systems. The term in fact does not refer to a career that has no boundaries, but to one that enables borders to be crossed (Inkson 2006). As emphasised by M. B. Arthur, S. N. Khapowa and C. P. M. Wilderom (2005), a boundaryless career concerns both intra-organisational and inter-organisational mobility, i.e. the movement of employees not only within organisations but also between them. A broader approach to a boundaryless career was proposed by M. B. Arthur and D. M. Rousseau (*The Boundaryless Career...* 1996, p. 6), who contrast the term with a traditional career and combine it with such components as work not only for one employer, and pursuing a career not only through promotion, but also through other forms of mobility, career support through external networks of connections and information, and subjective interpretation of one’s career and a sense of boundlessness in the face of structural limitations.

In addition, K. Inkson *et al.* (2012, p. 327) point out that a boundaryless career also means crossing professional boundaries, organisational boundaries, between roles and within organisational roles, shifting between various forms of employment and various professional relationships with people working in other professions or sectors (Inkson *et al.* 2012). A slightly different proposition for the description of a boundaryless career is quoted by S. Sullivan and M. Arthur (Turska 2014, p. 26), who distinguish two dimensions: physical (organisational) mobility – crossing specific boundaries by the individual (changing jobs, industries, employers or organisation), and psychological mobility, identified as the individual’s ability to make career changes, an openness and readiness to change, as well as a boundless way of thinking about their own attitudes in the workplace (Briscoe, Hall & DeMuth 2006, p. 33).

These two dimensions can take different values (from low to high), due to the minimum and maximum intensity of this feature. This leads to the identification of four profiles that are the basis for a description of a boundaryless career:

1) low physical mobility and low psychological mobility – characteristic of those who are satisfied with the current course of their careers and/or their current professional position;

2) low physical mobility and high psychological mobility – those who are open and ready for change, though for various reasons they do not change their employer;

3) high physical mobility and low psychological mobility – those who often change jobs, but do not achieve the psychological benefits they expect;

4) high physical mobility and high psychological mobility – those with high qualifications, for whom place of residence is not important but their own aspira-

tions and lifestyle; career nomads are often this type (Sullivan & Arthur 2006 for Turska & Stasiła-Sieradzka 2015, p. 220; Turska 2014, pp. 26–27).

Thus, the orientation of an individual towards organisational mobility means their actual movement between different professions and organisations. People with high organisational mobility usually choose to work in several different organisations, crossing organisational boundaries, taking up employment in another company. In contrast, psychological mobility, or boundaryless mindset, refers to a person's mental capacity to be mobile. Such a person likes to work on projects with people in many organisations, feels excited and enthusiastic about engaging in new experiences and meetings with other individuals outside the organisation (Volmer & Spurk 2010, p. 209). In addition, boundaryless careers can have both a positive and negative impact on the professional success of individuals, and these effects depend on various individual and contextual factors (Guan *et al.* 2019). The four career profiles without borders discussed above will constitute the theoretical basis for further research, thus constituting the subject of the empirical analysis.

3. Research Methodology

The research was anonymous. It was conducted in 2019 using a diagnostic survey method and a questionnaire technique. The sample selection was deliberate. The research was intended to determine the level of organisational mobility and psychological mobility among the respondents and to determine their dependence on such independent variables as gender and age. In the course of the research, it was assumed that the dependent variable would be psychological and organisational mobility, while the independent variables would be gender and age, which adopted the status of explanatory variables.

Analysis of the dependent variables (psychological and organisational mobility) was conducted based on the adaptation of the Briscoe, Hall and DeMuth's Boundaryless Career Attitudes Scale (Turska & Stasiła-Sieradzka 2015, Briscoe, Hall & DeMuth 2006). The name of the questionnaire may be used interchangeably with the term boundaryless careers. This tool has also been used to explore the concept of a protean career, which was not the subject of research in this article. It contains two subscales: psychological mobility (8 questions) and physical mobility (5 questions). The tool is constructed based on the five-point R. Likert scale.

As the tested mobility variables were elaborated using the Likert scale (ordinal scale), this limited the scope of the statistical methods used. Ultimately, however, the variable analysed for analysis is the sum of the scores from each question in

terms of organisational and psychological mobility. This procedure is also used in practice (Labovitz 1967, pp. 151–160).

This tool has been adapted to Polish cultural conditions by using the reverse translation method (Brzeziński 2003, p. 583) and subjected to psychometric characteristics. Factor loadings took the following values: from 0.23 to 0.89 for psychological mobility (MP) and from 0.72 to 0.83 for organisational mobility (MO). For subscales, the Cronbach's α coefficient of internal consistency was estimated as follows: $\alpha = 0.87$ for psychological mobility, $\alpha = 0.88$ for organisational mobility, and $\alpha = 0.84$ for a boundaryless career. Since the Cronbach's α coefficient has a value above 0.7, the subscales are highly reliable (Turska & Stasiła-Sieradzka 2015).

This article presents two research hypotheses:

H1: There is a relationship between the gender of the subjects and their level of psychological and organisational mobility. Women, in contrast to men, exhibit psychological mobility rather than organisational mobility.

H2: There is a relationship between the age of the subjects and their level of psychological and organisational mobility. The most "mobile" regardless of the type of mobility are employees at the beginning of their careers.

The correlations between the dependent and independent variables were checked using a Student's *t*-test. The statistical significance level was $\alpha = 0.05$. either the normality of the distributions of the examined feature nor the homogeneity of the variance was checked, so effects from weakening the assumptions for statistical inference are to be expected (Sheldon *et al.* 1997).

The research covered 259 employees, whose characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Surveyed Population

Variable	Percentage Distribution
Gender	Woman – 65.25% Man – 34.75%
Age	Under 25 years of age – 69.5% 26–34 years of age – 16.99% 35–44 years of age – 6.18% 45–54 years of age – 3.86% Over 55 years of age – 3.47%
Seniority	Less than 12 months – 13.9% From 1 to 2 years – 27.03% From 2 to 5 years – 37.07% From 5 to 10 years – 8.49% More than 10 years – 13.51%

Table 1 cont'd

Variable	Percentage Distribution
Position held	Managerial – 18.92% Non-managerial – 81.08%
Organisation size	Self-employment – 3.09% Micro enterprise – 13.13% Small enterprise – 18.92% Medium enterprise – 21.24% Large enterprise – 43.63%

Source: the author.

Employees up to 25 years old (69.50%) made up the largest group of respondents, 26–34-year-olds constituted 16.99%, 35–44-year-olds made up 6.18%, and 44–55-year-olds accounted for 3.86%. At 3.47%, those older than 55 were the smallest group. In terms of the gender distribution, 65.25% were women and 34.75% were men. The largest group of employees (37.07%) had 2 to 5 years' experience, followed by those with one to two years (27.03%), those with up to a year (13.90%), those with over 10 years (21.90%), and those with 5–10 years of work experience (8.49%).

Employees participating in the survey came from companies of various sizes. The most sizable group of respondents represented large enterprises (43.63%), followed by those from medium-sized enterprises (21.24%), small enterprises (18.92%) and micro-enterprises (13.13%). The least numerous group were people (3.09%) running their own businesses. Finally, 81.08% of all respondents were non-managerial employees, while only 18.92% of respondents occupied managerial positions.

4. Research Results

To assess each of the subscales, an internal scale consistency test was performed using the Cronbach's α coefficient (Table 2). The scales must have a Cronbach's α value higher than 0.7. The Cronbach's α coefficient calculated for the subscales indicates that both are internally consistent, i.e. the questions used measure the same thing and are significantly statistically and positively correlated with each other.

In the case of psychological mobility, the mean is equal to the median and dominant (indicated by about 9% of respondents), with the values ranging from 9 to 40. The difference in value relative to the mean is 19.09% – i.e. the homogeneity of the characteristic is demonstrated.

As for organisational mobility, however, the mean is similar to the median, but these values are much higher than the dominant (indicated by 9% of respondents). The values range from 5 to 27. The diversity of values relative to the mean is 37.53%. This also indicates, as with psychological mobility, that the trait is homogeneous. As many as 25% of respondents demonstrate low values of the trait, indicating extreme asymmetry of the distribution. Subsequently, descriptive statistics were presented for each subscale (Table 3).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for the Psychological and Organisational Mobility Subscales

Subscale	Number of Questions	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's α	Average Correlation between Positions
Psychological Mobility	8	28.0039	5.31103	0.785552	0.352799
Organisational Mobility	5	12.4672	4.67903	0.847578	0.533517

Source: the author.

Table 3. The Internal Consistency of the Subscales

Subscale (N = 259)	Mean	Median	Mode	Size of Mode	Minimum
Psychological Mobility	27.9536	28	28	23	9
Organisational Mobility	12.4671	12	7	24	5
Subscale (N = 259)	Maximum	Bottom Quartile	Upper Quartile	Standard Deviation	
Psychological Mobility	40	25	32	5.3357	
Organisational Mobility	25	8	16	4.6790	

Source: the author.

The analyses confirmed the relationship between psychological and organisational mobility, which is significant and moderate in strength. The results also indicate a higher intensity of the psychological mobility variable (Fig. 1, Table 4). The respondents therefore demonstrated higher psychological mobility than organisational mobility.

There was a negative correlation between psychological and organisational mobility, so as the average values of one characteristic increase, the values of the other decrease, i.e. the high value of psychological mobility in respondents corresponds to the low values of organisational mobility and vice versa.

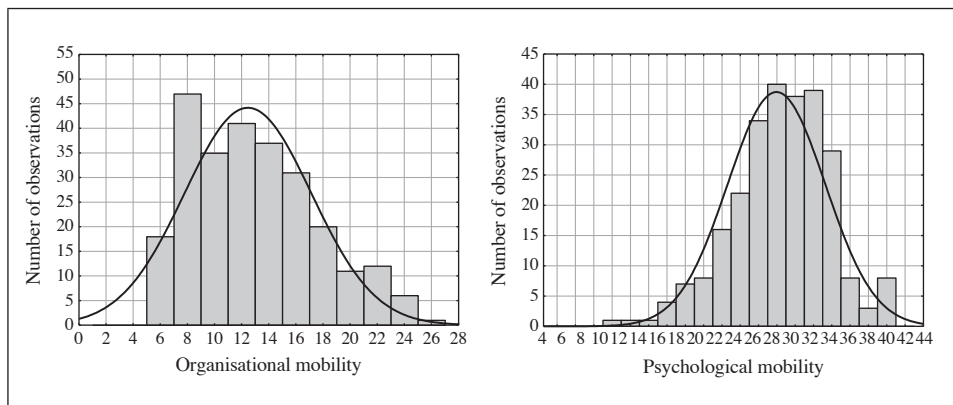


Fig. 1. Graphic Image of the Distribution for Organisational and Psychological Mobility
Source: the author.

Table 4. The Relationships between Psychological and Organisational Mobility

Subscale	Pearson Correlations	
	Psychological Mobility	Organisational Mobility
Psychological Mobility	1.0000	-0,3666*
Organisational Mobility	-0,3666*	1.0000

* $p < 0,0001$

Source: the author.

Statistical analysis showed that for both men and women, the relationship between psychological and organisational mobility is statistically significant but negative (Table 5). There is no difference in the strength of these correlations.

Table 5. Psychological and Organisational Mobility and Gender

Subscale	Women		Men	
	MP	MO	MP	MO
Psychological Mobility (MP)	1.0000	-0.3453*	1.0000	-0.3920*
Organisational Mobility (MO)	-0.3453*	1.0000	-0.3920*	1.0000

* $p < 0,0001$

Source: the author.

The mean for psychological mobility was 27.591 for women, and 28.633 for men. The mean for organisational mobility was 12.72 for women and 11.988 for men. The *t*-equality test for means for psychological mobility is $t = -1.499$ ($p = 0.1349$)

and for organisational mobility it is $t = 1.201$ ($p = 0.2306$). The t -equality test for means indicates that there are no statistically significant differences between the average values for psychological and organisational mobility in the group of women and men. It can therefore be concluded that the average value for psychological and organisational mobility is identical for both groups.

Another variable analysed was the age of the respondents. In age groups of over 34 years, there is no significant relationship between psychological and organisational mobility. This is mainly due to their low number, rendering confirmation unreliable. Both in the case of respondents under 25 years ($r = -0.269599$) and 26 to 34 years ($r = -0.530865$), there is a statistically significant, negative relationship between psychological mobility and organisational mobility ($p < 0.0001$). The test for the difference in the strength of correlation ($p = 0.035 < 0.05$) confirms a significant difference in the strength of these correlations, but for the 26–34 age group it is significantly higher than for the under-25 age group.

To verify whether the mean values in the group of men and women for the subscales of psychological and organisational mobility are identical, analysis of variance was used. The following values were obtained for the psychological mobility subscale $SS = 423.7363$, $df = 4$, $MS = 105.9341$, $SS Error = 6921.708$, $df = 254$, $MS = 27.25082$, $F = 3.88737$, $p = 0.004398$. However, in the case of the organisational mobility subscale, the values were: $SS Effect = 982.5800$, $df = 4$, $MS = 245.6450$, $SS Error = 4665.891$, $df = 254$, $MS = 18.36965$, $F = 13.337233$, $p = 0,000000$. The results of the analysis of variance indicate the differences in the average values of psychological mobility and organisational mobility in selected age groups.

Several important issues come to the fore when looking at the respondents' answers. Aspects including working with people from outside of the organisation, implementation of projects with people from other organisations, willingness to acquire new experiences and the contemporary ideal of a career are particularly interesting.

The largest share of respondents (42.86%) indicated that they like working with people from outside of their company to a considerable extent, while 30.89% indicated they liked it "to some extent", 10.04% to a limited extent and 2.32% "to little or no extent". As much as 56.76% of respondents indicate that they like working with people from outside their company more than average, and only 12.36% – more than fourfold less – like it at a below average level. 42.86% of respondents thoroughly enjoy work in which they can implement projects with people from various companies, and 10.42% of respondents indicate a very high degree of enjoyment. The lowest share of respondents, 3.09%, do not like at all or very little work in which they can implement projects that involve people from outside their organisation.

Table 6. Distribution of Answers (%)

Statement	To Little or No Extent	To a Limited Extent	To Some Extent	To a Considerable Extent	To a Great Extent
I enjoy working with people outside of my organisation	2.32	10.04	30.89	42.86	13.90
I enjoy jobs that require me to interact with people in many different organisations	6.18	13.9	32.82	31.66	15.44
I enjoy job assignments that require me to work outside of the organisation	4.26	19.77	36.05	29.46	10.46
I like tasks at work that require me to work beyond my own department	7.36	17.44	33.33	33.33	8.54
I would enjoy working on projects with people across many organisations	3.09	16.99	26.64	42.86	10.42
I have sought opportunities in the past that allowed me to work outside the organisation	20.46	14.29	18.15	28.57	18.53
I am energised in new experiences and situations	2.32	5.79	20.85	40.15	30.89
I seek job assignments that allow me to learn something new	0.77	2.70	14.67	36.68	45.17
I like the predictability that comes with working continuously for the same organisation	7.72	24.71	31.27	26.64	9.65
I would feel very lost if I couldn't work for my current organisation	31.66	27.03	22.78	10.81	7.72
I prefer to stay in a company I am familiar with rather than look for employment elsewhere	17.37	27.41	25.87	21.24	8.11
If my organisation provided lifetime employment, I would never desire to seek work elsewhere	35.52	26.64	21.24	10.81	5.79
In my ideal career I would work for only one organisation	43.24	27.03	15.44	10.04	4.25

Source: the author.

Respondents' perception of new experiences and situations as stimulating elements are likewise interesting. 71.04% of respondents indicated that new experiences and situations were stimulating above average while only 8.11%, or about eight times less, found them to be below average.

Respondents found tasks that allowed them to learn something new, it is worth noting that there is a clear upward trend, i.e. higher variants are indicated more often. 81.85% of respondents said that they seek out tasks that allow them to learn something new more than average, while 3.47% said they do not.

As as many as 31.27% of respondents indicated that they liked “to some extent” the predictability that accompanies working in the same organisation, while only 9.65% of respondents liked this predictability very much. 24.71% of respondents liked it “to a limited extent” and 7.72% “to little or no extent”.

Finally, 43.24% of respondents indicated that their ideal is not a career pursued in a single organisation. Only 4.25% of respondents would seek to spend their entire working life in one organisation. The results obtained show a clear downward trend, i.e. lower variants are more often indicated. Detailed answers to the questions discussed are presented in Table 6. The table contains the distribution of responses for all items in both subscales: psychological mobility (8 questions) and physical mobility (5 questions).

5. Conclusions from the Research

It should be first emphasised that due to the purposeful selection of the research sample, the conclusion relates only to the surveyed employees. Nevertheless, an interesting picture emerges from the research results regarding the pursuit of a contemporary boundaryless career. Those results indicate, first of all, a high level of psychological rather than organisational mobility among respondents. This does not mean that the respondents are not mobile in the organisational dimension, but they are less so. In addition, the lower level of physical mobility than of psychological mobility is quite puzzling, though remember the research was conducted before the pandemic period, in an economy that at the time was characterised by quite good macroeconomic indicators.

This distribution of data also suggests that current employees are characterised by openness and willingness to change. They are keen to learn new things and have no difficulty finding themselves in a different organisational reality. Such people have high expectations of their own employability or will seek development paths outside their current workplace. This is probably related to the current requirements for contemporary work, which increasingly requires an employee to expand their independence and responsibility for their own professional development as well as adaptability and flexibility to the changing labour market. These skills are particularly desirable in the context of unexpected changes, including those related to the current epidemiological situation. If contemporary employees are keen to learn something new and to gain new experience (as the research indicates), then many

people in the face of impending unemployment should be able to take up a new professional role. Undoubtedly, every organisation adapting to new conditions will need employees to have, according to K. Januszkiewicz, quick and ad hoc specific competencies, forcing them to transform their professional profile. Tyranny or even a pandemic of flexibility will bring about a new generation of employees who will be defined principally by their ability to “change” (Januszkiewicz 2018, p. 165). Interestingly, this assumption was confirmed by the research results, in which Generation Y employees are characterised by a higher level of psychological mobility than the other studied groups. Also, respondents will have different priorities depending on the particular stage of life they are in.

With regard to the age variable, it should be stated that empirical material only confirms the first part of the hypothesis – that there is a relationship between the age of the respondents and their level of psychological and organisational mobility. On the other hand, data pertaining to the second part of the hypothesis (the most “mobile” employees regardless of the type of mobility are those beginning their careers) was also partly confirmed, because all the employees surveyed are characterised by a higher level of psychological rather than organisational mobility – though the level varies by age. Interestingly, older employees (over 45 years of age) are characterised by a higher level of organisational mobility than younger ones. This is surprising as employers are largely convinced that employees are not so keen to change their physical location. Such judgment is also associated with the categorisation of generations functioning in the labour market (Wiktorowicz *et al.* 2016). On the other hand, the survey involved respondents representing the vast majority in two age categories – up to 25 years and from 26 to 34 years. The limitation resulting from the uneven number of respondents in terms of the demographic feature of the population – age – should be noted.

The results obtained in this study, especially as regards respondents’ high psychological mobility, also falls under the main assumptions of the 4.0 economy, which is bringing significant changes to the world of work. The focus is on problems related to the disappearance of organisational boundaries, the flexibility of working time and telework. The progressive computerisation of industry has enabled the creation of work structures that have hitherto operated only in innovative industries (Bendkowski 2017, p. 30).

In addition, given the current Covid-19-induced economic crisis, a high level of psychological mobility among employees may be important for the reconstruction of the future economy by adopting a proactive attitude in professional life. Characteristic of a boundaryless career, such an attitude could translate into opportunity not only for further professional development but also for “re-entering” the labour market and the rapid assimilation of the individual to new environmental conditions. Such an attitude is also consistent with the fact that most respondents do not

want to pursue careers in only one organisation. This is in line with the results obtained in this study.

As regards the second hypothesis, that there is a relationship between gender and psychological as well as organisational mobility, the research results show only partial confirmation. Both women and men are characterised by a high level of psychological mobility and a low level of organisational mobility. On the other hand, the notion that women, unlike men, exhibit psychological mobility rather than organisational mobility, should be rejected – the mobility constructs came in at the same level in both men and women. The research results correspond to the contemporary transformations of social and professional roles leading to the disappearance of differences in the way women and men behave (Wojciszke 2009). In addition, from an organisational perspective, treating employees, regardless of gender, age, race or other socio-demographic characteristics, is currently the basis for effective management (Bombiak 2016, p. 53). The results of the research can be considered positive: Given the current situation on the labour market, both men and women will be interested in taking up employment, regardless of the gender stereotype related to the given job.

6. Summary

Researching the world of careers is important as the modern world changes. The changing self-paradigm, psychological contract and externalisation of employment are three forces at work in the reorientation of contemporary careers. The boundaryless career is a mosaic of jobs, positions, employers, projects, tasks, and the transition from one element to another requires from the individual high physical and psychological mobility to constantly cross various boundaries and barriers (Turska 2014, p. 24).

The study has several limitations. First, the data were analysed in a cross-section rather than a longitudinal one. The sample selection (the sample selection was deliberate) and size – for example, in the examined age categories – are both problematic. Therefore, in-depth research should be conducted, characterised by the representativeness of the surveyed population in terms of other characteristics, such as place of residence or industry. In addition, the collected data and conclusions come from Poland and do not need to be confirmed in other countries. Nevertheless, the contribution of this study is that it treats the tested constructs, like the studies carried out by H. Hoffstetter and R. Rosenbalt (2017, p. 2153), as dependent variables, in contrast to most other studies, which treat them as independent variables (Enache *et al.* 2011).

Summing up, the study of the boundaryless career and its constructs can provide important guidelines for organisations in the field of employee behaviour in the labour market. The most important conclusions and recommendations for organisations in the context of the current situation include the following.

Firstly, organisations should not be afraid to take on employees from other industries. As the data shows, there are currently many sectors that need employees, including the construction, medical, e-commerce, IT, food industries, the shared services sector and the courier and groupage shipments sector (Bagiński 2020). With modern employees expressing a readiness for change, adaptation to a new work environment should prove easier than times when psychological mobility was lower. In addition, most of the respondents believe that the ideal career is a contemporary career pursued in many organisations, which further promotes future synchronisation on the individual-organisation line. So the organisation's fear of mismatching disappears.

Secondly, organisations must be aware that the present situation will force faster process automation and many jobs in the near future will be handled by robots. However, vacancies will also open up – in industries requiring creativity, for example. It is, therefore, a space for development for those individuals who are characterised by a high level of psychological mobility and who at the same time have become unemployed as a result of the epidemiological crisis.

In the light of these facts, continued research in this field is justified. Future research should focus on identifying the boundaryless career in specific organisations (for example international ones), industries, professions or at specific stages of an individual's career (Wiernik & Kostal 2019, p. 296). Moreover, the tool based on the adaptation of the Briscoe, Hall and DeMuth's Boundaryless Career Attitudes Scale is most often used to study the boundaryless career. Future research should therefore incorporate a wider range of operationalised constructs (Wiernik & Kostal 2019, p. 297). Determining the level of psychological and organisational mobility may be the basis for developing further guidelines for organisations in making informed decisions about how to deal with current employees (internal transfers, changing employment forms, changing the organisation of working time) who are thinking about changing their professional situation, e.g. industry, profession or acquisition of new competencies and qualifications.

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Kariera bez granic – perspektywa badawcza

(Streszczenie)

Cel: Celem artykułu jest wskazanie i opis głównych konstruktów kariery bez granic: mobilności psychologicznej i mobilności organizacyjnej – w warstwie teoretycznej, natomiast w warstwie empirycznej celem jest określenie zależności pomiędzy tymi konstrukcjami oraz ustalenie, czy są one zależne od takich zmiennych niezależnych jak płeć i wiek.

Metodyka badań: W artykule zaprezentowano wyniki badań ilościowych, które przeprowadzono na próbie 259 pracowników za pomocą kwestionariusza ankiety.

Wyniki badań: Badani pracownicy charakteryzują się wysokim poziomem mobilności psychologicznej oraz niskim poziomem mobilności organizacyjnej. Konstrukty te są na takim samym poziomie u kobiet jak u mężczyzn oraz są niezależne od wieku, choć w poszczególnych kategoriach wiekowych poziom ten jest zróżnicowany. Zdecydowana większość respondentów nie chce także realizować kariery tylko w jednej organizacji.

Wnioski: Współczesnych pracowników charakteryzuje otwartość i gotowość do zmian, chętnie uczą się nowych rzeczy, odznaczają się wysokimi oczekiwaniami dotyczącymi własnej zdolności do zatrudnienia, w większym stopniu poszukują dróg rozwojowych poza dotychczasowym miejscem pracy.

Wkład w rozwój dyscypliny: badania stanowią istotne wskazówki dla organizacji w kontekście podejmowanych zachowań pracowników na rynku pracy.

Słowa kluczowe: kariera, kariera bez granic, mobilność psychologiczna, mobilność organizacyjna.