INSTRUMENTS TO SUPPORT LIFELONG LEARNING – THE CONTEXT OF AN EMPLOYEE'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Research background: The need for lifelong learning should be considered for all categories of labor resources. This study takes into account the context of this process in relation to employees for whom the most important thing is to maintain employment, promotion in the workplace or professional promotion. Lifelong learning, enabling continuous updating of qualifications, ensures a better competitive position on the labor market.

Research methodology: The basis of the analyzes carried out in this research are studies conducted in Polish organizations by experts from the Institute of Labor and Social Affairs, including the author. The research was quantitative (interview questionnaire) and qualitative (group interviews).

Results: The research work hypothesis was: Most organizations in Poland do not apply statute defined methods of supporting employee careers. This hypothesis has been verified positively. Polish enterprises have a very limited scope, and in most cases do not use tools supporting employee education at all.

Novelty: An innovative approach in the development is to indicate the relationship between the possibility of supporting the process of employee education and the course of their professional career.

Keywords: lifelong learning, professional career, career development, educational support instruments, workers

JEL classification: D8, J2, M1

Introduction

Lifelong learning emerged at the beginning of the 20th century¹, but it did not develop until the 1970s (UNESCO initiative), and the process of its implementation took place in the 1990s. The essence of this concept is to raise the profile of learning, increase investment in education, employ educational advisers and increase the level of access to educational information. It is also extremely important to ensure adequate education opportunities for all, regardless of age and social status.²

The necessity of lifelong learning should be viewed from the point of view of the opportunities that the unemployed have in searching for a satisfying workplace, as well as from the point of view of the employed, for which the most important is the maintenance of the workplace or professional promotion.³ It is impossible to accurately plan the course of a person's life and to set their own professional goals in their youth and their subsequent implementation, so it is impossible to complete education at the school level. This stage should be treated as a starting point for a further deepening of knowledge. Continuous education, enabling high and constantly updated qualifications, provides a better competitive position on the labor market (higher income, higher standard of living). Therefore, lifelong learning is a way to permanently participate in the processes of management and career development.

In the literature on the subject you can find many theories describing the development of employees' careers. These trends include, among others, the theory of the life cycle of D. Levinson (1986, p. 46), the theory of needs of A. Roe (Roe, Lunneborg, 1990, p. 59),⁴ a theory based on the interests of E. Schein (1978, pp. 125, 180; Greenhaus, Callanan, 1994, p. 178)⁵ and theory based on the personality of the individual.⁶ In addition, one can also point to the feminist trend in theories, which makes the development of a career dependent on the cultural determinants resulting from the relationship between sex and profession, represented by D. Super, the creator of professional identity patterns, as well as sociological trend, based in particular on demographic phenomena but also taking into account professional aspirations and the choice of occupation as a function of the local labor market conditions (Miś, 2006, pp. 483–485).

¹ We have had to deal with manifestations of the process of implementing lifelong learning even earlier (Błędowski, Nowakowska, 2010).

² He wrote about the role of lifelong learning for the elderly, among others P. Tissot (2004, p. 103).

³ H. Sobocka-Szczapa wrote more on this topic (2014, pp. 212–215).

⁴ Among Polish authors, A. Bańka and A. Miś wrote about this theory (Bańka, 2000, p. 312; Miś, 2006, p. 480).

⁵ Among Polish authors, A. Miś wrote about this theory (2006, p. 480).

⁶ Among these theories the most interesting seems the hexagonal theory, which was developed by J. Holland (1985, p. 2).

The subject of interest in this study are first of all structural theories (Miś, 2006, p. 478), which, in contrast to individualist theories, assume that the employee's career is mainly determined by the organizational structure shaped by the organizational policy and the labor market.

There are many definitions of a career.⁷ They emphasize various aspects that affect the fact that one can speak about an employee's professional career. Only D.T. Hall describes the concept of career in four ways, understanding it as a specific profession, reaching higher and higher levels in the organization structure, the attribute of working people, as well as experiences related to the role (aspirations, aspirations, attitudes towards work, and satisfaction) (Hall, 1976, pp. 1–3).

However, from the point of view of the problems we want to raise in this study, the opinions of representatives of one of the directions dealing with defining a professional career as a derivative of the comprehensive development of an individual during their professional life were adopted to define a career (Pell, 1992, p. 1; Barwińska-Małajowicz, 2013, p. 57; Pocztowski, 2008, p. 306). This development, understood as shaping skills, abilities, skills, personality traits, interests, attitudes, values and knowledge, is one of the aspects of lifelong learning processes. Accepting by employees of attitudes that enable shaping a career through investing in one's own development is in fact a determinant of their achievements in professional life (Lelińska, 2016, p. 32; Hall, 1976), as well as the result of the implementation of their professional plans and aspirations. It is employees who are most responsible for the development of their professional careers, i.e. broadening their professional competences, participating in training, etc. (Driver, 1982) At the same time, assuming the importance of education for a professional career, it should be emphasized that this process should be consistent with the needs of the organization. From this point of view, two career dimensions can be distinguished: objective and subjective. The first one concerns the types and number of functions performed and the position achieved in the hierarchy of the organization, while the second is closely related to the personal development of the person, his/her aspirations, values and needs. This kind of defining a professional career was included in the study of J. Greenhaus and G. Callanan, who proposed to distinguish the term career, as an attribute of the profession or organization and as an attribute of the individual. It is in this case that a career understood as an attribute

⁷ Only some literature items are listed here (Filipowicz, 2014, p. 280; Zajac, 2007, p. 191; Suchar, 2010, p. 11; Griffin, 1999, p. 760; Lees, 2008, p. 175; Ściborek, 2010, p. 266; Derr, Laurent, 1989; Miś, 2006, p. 478; Suchodolski, 2010, p. 217).

of a profession or organization is an objective understanding of it, while the attribute of an individual is its subjective aspect (Greenhaus, Callanan, 1994, p. 5).

Career development takes place within the strictly defined path of this career. Its course can be characterized, for example, by means of a career concept model (Driver, 1982, pp. 23–32), which assumes that the main factors affecting this course are a relatively stable cognitive structure, defining its needs and interests, which an individual intends to pursue. On this basis, several patterns of career paths can be distinguished: linear, expert, spiral and transitional. The career pattern chosen by an individual depends primarily on the motives, and the key in this case is his/her satisfaction, being the resultant convergence of aspirations and the path of the professional path. When these elements turn out to be divergent, the career type changes to another (Kasprzak, 2013, p. 35).

Career patterns were also the subject of D. Super's interest, which separated them separately for women and men, recognizing that the career path is dependent on many factors in the mutual relationship (psychophysical features, including preferences, current situation in society, random chances, and opportunities favoring the individual) (Super, 1994, p. 65). He distinguished the following types of professional careers (Super, Bohn, 1971): stable, conventional, unstable and multiple attempts, while in relation to women he considered that they are similar to those previously indicated. Diversity may be in their case only a consequence of performing certain roles on the level of family life. Nevertheless, Super also distinguished career patterns that are specific only to women (housewives, a two-way career, consisting of combining maternity duties and resulting at work, interrupted, which is a consequence of a break in employment, resulting from the necessity to raise children) (Super, Bohn, 1971).

H.W. Wilensky drew attention to very important aspects of career patterns (order and direction) (Wilensky, 1961, pp. 521–539). He pointed to the existence of a relationship between both dimensions and the type of professional activity performed in practice. On this basis, H. Wilensky distinguished six types of career (ordered horizontal and vertical, unordered vertical and horizontal, ordered vertical developmental, and stable) (Wilensky, 1961, 521–539).

As a determinant of their development, E. Schein also dealt with career models. The reference point in his case was employee promotion. This process, in his opinion, can be analyzed in three dimensions (gaining experience in one company, vertical and horizontal promotion), while each of them can be considered from the objective (surrounding) and subjective (employee) perspective (Schein, 1978). At the same time, it should be emphasized that E. Schein is also the author of the concept of the so-called “career anchors” (Career, 1990), meaning a significant dependence between the preferences of the subject (needs, system of values, competences) and

the type of professional career realized by the individual. These anchors are a kind of guide, determining – not only professional – choices, reactions and behaviors of the individual.

Career patterns remain in the area of interest of researchers also in Poland (Kasprzak, 2013, pp. 134–148). The basis for distinguishing the career development pathway are criteria such as stability, mobility and continuity. E. Kasprzak, based on the results of research carried out in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie province, developed two proposals for career patterns. The first one divides careers into traditional and dynamic ones, while the second one concerns six types of careers, compiled in opposing pairs (dichotomic careers, that is based on opposites – stable and changeable career, mobile and immobile, and continuous and interrupted). The basis for the separation of the second classification is the strategy consisting of taking into account its individual features.

Generally, career development, widely discussed in the subject literature, does not take into account specific ways/sources of its course, related to shaping skills, abilities, skills, personality traits, interests, attitudes, values and knowledge. Career determinants, resulting from its definition, did not find any reflection in the formulas described above. The issue of employee education in organizations has just been reflected in one of the descriptions of the stages of professional career, developed by A. Stankiewicz-Mróż (2007, p. 269). She pointed to three professional stages in a career: initial, height and maturity, and declining. It is in the initial phase in which the employee is implemented to work and its integration with the organization, employers can invest in employee development so that in the next stage it can become a valuable resource of the organization.⁸ Combining the problem of career development with the stages and models of this career, taking into account its definition assumptions adopted in the study, it is possible to graphically formalize the basic relationships in this field (Figure 1).

As it results from the presented scheme, in order to be able to take a comprehensive approach to the career development of an employee, it is necessary to include in all aspects of this development the issue of education in organizations. Both employers and employees are aware of this, which results from research, because the work undertaken during the course of work can strengthen the career path and consolidate its course. Nevertheless, on the part of employers, this need is not supported by the willingness to actively participate in educational processes, primarily in the context of enabling employees to use the available and statutory guaranteed instruments to support lifelong learning.

⁸ H. Sobocka-Szczapa wrote more on the subject of her professional career (2018).

Figure 1. Basic relationships influencing the comprehensiveness of understanding the processes of career development of an employee

Source: own study.

The aim of the study is therefore to present ways to support an employee's career development, which are taken by managers in the organization. At the same time, the development of this career is identified above all with the possibility of educating employees and instruments that can support this process. The analysis includes statutory guaranteed support instruments. The research hypothesis is: In most organizations in Poland, statutorily defined ways to support employees' careers are not used.

1. Research methods used in the study

Achieving the research goal and verification of the research hypothesis required the use of research results previously carried out by experts of the Institute of Labor and Social Affairs, including the author.

The assessment of the instrument, which was the Company Training Fund, was based on the research of employers and social partners. The survey covered a randomly selected sample of 380 employers from large, medium and small enterprises, employing at least one employee. Free interviews were conducted with 10 employers having the Company Training Fund, while a focused group interview was conducted with 10 representatives of organizations associating the employers and headquarters of trade unions.

In the case of the assessment of the use of the instrument of trained leave and dismissal from the work day or part of it by Polish enterprises, the results of earlier expert examinations (with the participation of the author) were also used. These studies were purely qualitative. The study involved four large urban centers (Warsaw, Wrocław, Poznań, and Katowice). The research was carried out using two techniques, namely an individual in-depth interview and focus group interview. The first form was attended by 10 employees who were both directed to training and took advantage of training leave (5 persons) and were directed to training, but did not use training leave (5 persons). Employers (about 70 people) took part in focus group interviews (7). The research took into account the diverse selection of respondents (gender, age, industry). Field studies were conducted in May and June 2012 by a specialized company Public Profits Sp. z o.o.

Due to the adopted methodology of the analyzes carried out, a statistical description of the original data was obtained and as a result empirical research was used. They complemented theoretical considerations that have the character of critically analyzed literature on the subject.

2. Analysis and interpretation of results obtained in studies

2.1. Company Training Fund in organizations

The Act of 20 April 2004 on the promotion of employment and labor market institutions enabled employers to create a company training fund (CTF), intended to finance or co-finance the costs of lifelong learning for employees and employers, which in essence meant increasing the access of those groups to lifelong education. At present, the operation of this instrument has been transferred to the level of local self-government and the National Training Fund was established.⁹

However, let us look at the functioning of the CTF, because the likelihood of a similar situation as in the case of testing NTF is quite high.

The conducted research indicated that 212 employers (55.8% of the surveyed population) did not have any knowledge regarding the principles of creating and using CTF. Only 84 (22.1%) of respondents declared knowledge of the regulations governing the functioning of CTF, and another 84 (22.1%) “heard about it”¹⁰ (Figure 2).

⁹ The changes introduced in the act took into account the implementation of EU directives (Dz.U. of 2017, item 1065, 1292, 1321, 1428, 1543, 2371, 2494, from 2018, item 107, 138, 650, 730, 858, 1149. The Chancellery of the Parliament (Sejm) 21/06/2018).

¹⁰ All data referred to in the text come from the results of the research in the project Analiza efektywności funduszu szkoleniowego – instrumentu ustawowego wspierającego kształcenie ustawiczne, undertaken as part of the Sectoral Operational Program – Human Resources Development 2004–2006 (DWF_1.1._8A-2005), co-financed from the European Fund Social unless it will be marked differently (Kukulak-Dolata, Sobocka-Szczapa, 2008).

Figure 2. Structure of respondents according to declared knowledge of CTF (%)

Source: own study based on research results.

More often than not the lack of knowledge on this subject was declared in entities operating in rural areas than in cities, private sector entities than public entities, younger entities than older ones, as well as smaller than larger entities.

Respondents who declared knowledge of CTF were asked to identify and assess possible difficulties in the process of its creation and use (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. Difficulties in creating CTF and the size of the entity (N = 136) (%)

The size of the entity (number of employees)	The scale of difficulty in creating CTF				Total
	no difficulty	difficulties, that are relatively easy to deal with	difficulties, that need to be overcome to overcome	virtually insurmountable difficulties	
1–9	43.8	25.0	12.5	18.8	100.0
10–49	42.3	15.4	34.6	7.7	100.0
50–249	55.9	20.6	23.5	0.0	100.0
250 and above	46.7	30.0	21.7	1.7	100.0
Total	47.8	24.3	23.5	4.4	100.0

Source: Kukulak-Dolata, Sobocka-Szczapa (2008), p. 114.

Table 2. Difficulties using CTF and the size of the entity (N = 168) (%)

The size of the entity (number of employees)	The scale of difficulty associated with the use of CTF					Total
	no difficulty	difficulties, that are relatively easy to deal with	difficulties, that need to be overcome to overcome	virtually insurmountable difficulties	hard to say	
1–9	38.1	14.3	14.3	9.5	23.8	100.0
10–49	42.9	7.1	21.4	3.6	25.0	100.0
50–249	47.9	8.3	6.3	0.0	37.5	100.0
250 and above	54.9	11.3	7.0	1.4	25.4	100.0
Total	48.8	10.1	10.1	2.4	28.6	100.0

Source: Kukulak-Dolata, Sobocka-Szczapa (2008), p. 114.

Most of these respondents claimed that such difficulties do not occur at all, and if they do – they are temporary and can be eliminated. A small number of respondents talked about insurmountable difficulties, which were primarily employers from private entities located in rural areas. This means that this instrument worked better in larger entities, especially from the formal side. The main problems were: insufficient financial resources and formalized and unclear procedures for creating CTF. An important barrier to the creation of the CTF was also excessive control of training financed from the fund.

Moreover, quite often, what should be emphasized, employers were not convinced about the need to initiate and participate in the training of employees, which may be a consequence of the lack of the need to educate employees as a result of not recognizing direct benefits or misunderstanding the idea of lifelong learning, which largely concerned employers, and employees.

Employers, allowing the participation of the staff in the costs of education, limit this activity to people who, after finishing the course, will obtain specific qualifications, entitling them to perform a specific profession, and thus may contribute to the company's performance. They are not generally interested in the forms of education that serve the general development of an employee, expand his/her horizons of thinking, within which the so-called soft results (e.g. rules of communication, methods of active job search). In their opinion, also employees are not always convinced of the need to take up the effort of education. This particularly applies to those employees who have a taught or higher education. Sometimes the employees do not promise that the training will bring the desired effects for the company. A frequently emphasized argument of the lack of employers' tendency to refer employees to training is to leave the work of a trained employee, which means that the reimbursement of costs incurred is uncertain.

Regardless of the abovementioned barriers to the creation and use of CTF, most employers agreed on the need for the existence of this fund (57.4% of all respondents commented this way) (Table 3).

Table 3. The need to create CTF in Polish companies and the size of the entity (N = 269)

The size of the entity (number of employees)	The need to create CTF in Polish companies (%)	
	yes	no
1–9	86.1	13,9
10–49	69.0	31,0
50–249	81.7	18,3
250 and above	86.0	14,0
Total	81.0	19,0

Source: Source: Kukulak-Dolata, Sobocka-Szczapa (2008), p. 114.

Only slightly more than every tenth participant in the study was by far of the opposite opinion (13.4% of respondents). Acceptance, therefore, of this instrument was quite large. Worrying, however, is the fact that the negative attitude towards the CTF was primarily the participation of private sector employers, where due to the frequency of job creation, the highest mismatches in the qualification and occupational structure of labor demand and supply may occur. This may mean that the development of hired employees in the private sector will depend in the future on themselves and, above all, on their ability to invest in themselves. This opinion should be linked to the next section of employers expressing their opinion on the need for the functioning of the CTF. Most often, they did not see the need for CTF employers from small companies (31% of representatives of such entities), which is probably a consequence of the low need for lifelong learning and lack of knowledge about the benefits resulting from this.

The above-mentioned analysis regarding the knowledge of CTF has greatly influenced the scale of using training funds in Polish organizations. Among the total surveyed employers, only 49 (12.9%) declared having any training fund, of which 16 (4.2%) had a Company Training Fund, and 323 (85%) did not have any training fund (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Business entities according to having any training funds

Source: own study based on research results.

This means that the employers' population using this instrument was only a margin in Poland and these were mainly large entities employing over 250 employees. The main reason for the establishment of CTF indicated by employers was the training needs of employees, while the binding legal regulations or benefits for the company were of lesser importance. In general, such factors as: the nature of the company's operations, the implementation of the ISO quality assessment system and the will to secure the company's development were of no importance. This points to the greater importance of deciding on the creation of CTF factors related to motivating employees and maintaining employment, rather than the technologically understood needs of the company or legal requirements. Therefore, the most important for employers is the stabilization of the staff, resulting from the benefits for employees, which were the result of the educational process financed from this fund (professional promotion, maintenance of current

job position, increase of remuneration). Employers also pointed slightly less to other benefits resulting from the education they finance, namely increasing the flexibility of employees.

2.2. Training leave and dismissal from the work day or part thereof

Let us now look at the training leave and the dismissal of the work day or part of it as instruments to support the employee's career. The analysis will be based on the results of primary research carried out under the project "*Urlopy szkoleniowe i zwolnienie z dnia pracy, jako instrumenty wspierające podnoszenie kwalifikacji zawodowych pracownika* (Training leaves and dismissal from work, as instruments supporting the improvement of an employee's professional qualifications)"¹¹. In comparison to that period, the state of work in this area has not changed.¹²

Employees' opinions (Arendt, 2013, pp. 95–106) showed that employers are quite reluctant to engage in the training of employees. The basic barrier to their opinion is the organization of work and the need to perform their duties despite their absence due to their participation in educational development. As a result, various forms of education are often selected so that participation in them is as little as possible interfering with the performance of official duties (this applies in particular to training leave, in relation to its longest dimension, i.e. 21 days). Another barrier is the limited access of economic entities to external funds that would allow to co-finance the costs of employee participation in lifelong learning. On the other hand, institutional barriers pointed to the problem of selection and verification of training companies that carry out educational activities on behalf of employers (it mainly concerns issues related to experience in this type of activity), as well as the non-adaptation of education content to needs. One can guess that this is the result of accepting the price as the main criterion for selecting such training companies. Another problem that determines the effectiveness of education is the low level of knowledge of people who are sent on training courses/workshops, because without a proper knowledge base they are not able to use what they have learned as part of lifelong learning.

Generally, from the point of view of employees, their individual inclination to participate in lifelong learning is conditioned by three elements, obtaining financial support from an employer or other institution, linking participation in education (and properly acquired knowledge and skills in this education) with benefits that the employee should refer after completing education (raising salary or getting bonuses, greater opportunities for promotion and development as part of building a career development path) and obtaining additional time for education.

¹¹ All data provided in this part of the study come from the final report of the conducted research (Kryńska, 2013).

¹² The Act of June 26, 1974 – Labor Code. The legal status is valid as at: 17/06/2019. Dz.U. 2019.0.1040 t.j. art. 103.

The limited involvement of employers in employee education processes, identified in this study with the support of their professional careers, also contributed to the limited use of instruments that can be used for this purpose. In accordance with employees' declarations, the general rule applied in organizations was to minimize the amount of training leave that employers gave, which quite often resulted in the use of a part of vacation leave. The dependence of granting an exemption from part or all of the working day on the form of education as well as the necessity to work out the work related to education was also practiced. Training leave was sporadically granted in a flexible way, adjusting the moment of using it to the intensity of work that occurred at a given moment. At the same time, in the cases where there was no link between continuing education and the nature of the work performed, employees only used holiday leave.

In general, which was emphasized by the employees who used training leave, they did not encounter problems with getting time off (or part of a day) of work in connection with participation in lifelong learning. They received full pay for such a day. In addition, employees were characterized by limited knowledge of their entitlements for starting education, which, however, did not affect the assessment of these instruments, which was positive.

In the opinion of employers (Sobocka-Szczapa, 2013, pp. 116–152), as was the result of the conducted research, their willingness to educate employees, and thus support the career path, is to a large extent derived from the willingness of the latter to undertake educational activities related to increasing or supplementing qualifications. They enable employees to be educated more often, whose attitudes prove that they are involved in the company's functioning process as well as those who can work for many years in that company. An occasional reason for educating employees were also irregularities that were observed in the activities carried out by him/her in the workplace. The possibility of employee participation in education processes may also be – in accordance with their declarations – an important non-pay motivating instrument for more efficient work, as well as result in specific consequences of the payroll (salary increase).

The basic barrier of employers' participation in the processes of employee education, and thus in shaping the development of their professional career, was in their opinion the leaving of employees after finishing their education to another employer or starting their own business. The respondents also mentioned the problem of the quality of education, which they assessed very poorly and the lack of courses on subjects that interest them.

Generally, employers have admitted that the main reasons for their low inclination to provide training holidays, as well as employee training is primarily: lack of such demand, development opportunities of the company, lack of adequate forms and directions of education and the bad or uncertain economic situation and situation on the labor market. Nevertheless,

employers, in the light of the submitted declarations, willingly trained employees, primarily in the field of professional skills, but – due to the cost of education – they most willingly decided on the organization of training in a workplace or training free of charge, including – occasionally – financed from EU funds.

Increasing the willingness of employers to educate employees – according to the respondents – would be primarily possible in the case of greater economic stability, enabling mutual enforcement of the terms of the agreements concluded, as well as their signing and the situation on the local labor market.

Nevertheless, in practice, in organizations whose representatives participated in the study, we had to deal with activities supporting the career development of employees. It took place as a result of the use of various instruments, primarily of a financial nature (financing of commuting, renting company cars, financing part of the costs of education). Employers were also inclined to examine the problem of financing in whole or part of the employee education process.

However, referring to statutory provisions, indicating the possibility of giving employees training leave, and time off from the working day or part thereof, the respondents themselves emphasized the increasingly rare use of them. In particular, this concerned training leave, which from their point of view is too expensive, as well as sanctions imposed on the employee due to signed contracts. In addition, the granting of training leave was also – according to the respondents – dependent on the form and mode of education and the position held. A similar situation occurred in the case of using the employee's time off tool from part or the entire working day. At the same time, the respondents were unanimous in that they consider the use of these instruments only in the case of a specialized training process that is consistent with the company's business profile. Nevertheless, in general, employers – declaratively – willingly used the indicated instruments and did not see any difficulties in this respect, although often the barrier was that they did not inform employees about their entitlements, as well as the sanctions they used against full-time employees and their rights. At the same time, they were of the opinion that the described statutory instruments only to a minimal extent affect the increase in employees' inclination to study, and thus actively shape the path of their own professional development. A much greater role in this case is played by the incentive in the form of employer's participation in education costs.

Conclusions

The conducted research fully confirms that the participation of employers in the processes of the lifelong learning of employees, including the possibility of using statutory instruments to support this education, playing a significant role in the development of their professional career, is small. This concerned in particular the Company Training Fund, whose operation as a statutory instrument was liquidated. Perhaps the study just quoted was the reason for this. However, transferring the burden of continuing education support to the level of territorial self-governments in connection with the establishment of the National Training Fund may also not bring the expected results. The reason for this is the limited willingness of employers, declared in many studies, to cooperate with local government bodies (Kukulak-Dolata, Sobocka-Szczapa, 2008, p. 154). The self-creation of the training fund was too costly for employers, and the use of external funds may face institutional barriers related to applying for such assistance.

The limited willingness of employers to provide employees with training leave and time off from all or part of the working day is completely different. This is an instrument that applies, so its use should be much more common. The reasons for not applying these instruments given in the text of the study by employers and employees seem undoubtedly important, nevertheless they are primarily the result of the often demanding attitude of employees and the unilateral treatment of staff training by employers (costs). It seems that only one argument is right to exist, namely the frequent departure of employees after the educational process is completed and financed by the employer. Other arguments, especially those relating to the market for educational services, are hardly available at the moment. At the same time, it should be emphasized that at the moment the question of the situation on the labor market has gained much more importance. Lack of employees with qualifications corresponding to the requirements of employers may result in increased interest in educational processes, which in turn should change the attitude of employers to support instruments for lifelong learning and thus support an employee's career development in an organization. The premise for such applications is the increasing willingness to stabilize staff, which in periods of limited economic activity of the economy may affect the competitiveness of a company. Therefore, employers, regardless of the opinion they have about the legal act, enabling employees to increase their educational activity (preferring an employee, unjustified employee privilege), should apply statutory instruments to a greater extent, as well as link the effects of education to the determinants of career development of employees (promotion, bonuses, and rewards, etc.). For employees, the financial aspects of their professional activity

as well as issues of professional prestige are just as important, which is closely related to the development of this career.

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