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MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF EMPLOYEES' EMPLOYABILITY IN THE CHANGING PUBLIC SECTOR

Abstract:

Topic and purpose

Transformation of the public sector and spread of contract-based arrangements make the traditional approach to employee development less effective in contemporary public organizations. Simultaneously, many researchers point to the necessity of employability enhancement for employees' long-term career development. However, knowledge about employees' employability and factors influencing it in the public organizations is still limited. The purpose of this paper is to answer the following questions: what factors determine employees' employability in the public sector and what are the conditions of its maintenance and enhancement in the Polish public organizations.

Method

The aims of the paper are realized by presenting the results of the literature study based on the comparison of approaches to employability in the private sector with the reality of the Polish public organizations' functioning, which is provided in the context of the changes in the practice of HRM in the public sector. The paper reviews concepts of employability and considers how they have evolved over time. It also explains why employability of employees has become a subject of interest in the changing public organizations and seeks to identify factors which decide about employees' employability and conditions of its maintenance and enhancement in Polish public organizations.

Findings

The conducted literature study shows that employability is a complex phenomenon, which can be analyzed from different but interconnected perspectives, i.e. the individual, organizational and socio-economic perspectives. It was also found that transformation of public organizations, change of the required profile of employees' competences and new conditions of the psychological contract result in difficult challenges to employees, which they will be able to face only if they continuously enhance their employability. However, public organizations should support them in these efforts.

Originality

The downsizing of public employment and the requirements for human resources flexibility, which are accompanied with the difficult situation on the labour market, made maintenance and enhancement of employability of public sector employees' become an important problem, not only on the individual level but also on organizational and social levels. The paper provides deeper insight into specific factors determining employability of public sector employees as well as conditions of its enhancement distinctive for public organizations. It should be noted that these issues have been mostly examined in the context of commercial organizations.

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Keywords:

employability, human resource development, public sector

JEL Classification: J24, J45, O15

Introduction

Transformation of the Polish public sector considerably influences Human Resource Management in public organizations. The traditional model of lifelong employment in a public organization has weakened (Struzyna, 2009, p. 273; Fraczekiewicz-Wronka and Marzec, 2012, p. 215). The long-term relationships between an employer and employees have been gradually replaced by more temporary, contract-based arrangements. Security of employment has increasingly started to be replaced by "employability security" (Tangian, 2008, p. 100). Ongoing changes limit the role of the organization in employees' development. Changes in public organizations are connected with employment rationalization and restructuring, what sometimes leads to the necessity to dismiss some employees. Simultaneously, the responsibility of employees for their careers rises. High rate of knowledge obsolescence and its specialization impose on the employees the necessity of continuous learning and development to stay employable. This situation poses a serious challenge for public sector employees, which they will be able to overcome only if they have the opportunities to maintain and enhance their employability in organizations.

It should be emphasised that the requirements for the increase of human resources flexibility and the downsizing of public employment, which are accompanied with the difficult situation on the Polish labour market, made maintenance and enhancement of employability of public sector employees' become an important problem, not only on the individual level but also on organizational and social levels. However, the knowledge about public employees' employability and conditions of its maintenance and enhancement is still limited. Undoubtedly, it requires consideration of the specificity of public organizations, which results from aims, structures and processes characteristic for these organizations as well as characteristic features of public sector employees (Fraczkiewicz-Wronka, 2009, p. 32).

This paper tries to answer the following questions: what factors determine employees' employability in the public sector and what are the conditions of its maintenance and enhancement in the Polish public organizations. These aims are realized by presenting the results of the analysis based on the comparison of approaches to employability enhancement in the private sector with the reality of the Polish public organizations' functioning, which is provided in the context of the changes in the practice of human resource management in the Polish public organizations¹.

1 Employability: the notion and concepts

In the last decade the issue of employability has become a popular and often discussed subject in many different contexts (Fraczkiewicz-Wronka and Marzec, 2012,

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p. 215). The term of employability is understood in a variety of ways and there are many definitions of this notion, what stems from the complexity of this concept. Moreover, the concept of employability and its meaning have evolved over time. Four basic periods of development of the concept can be distinguished (Marzec et al., 2009a, pp. 475-476), i.e. the first period encompassing the beginning of the 20th century till the 1950s, the second from the end of the 1950s to the late 1970s, the third from the end of the 1970s to the 1990s, and the fourth period encompassing the end of the 1990s until now.

The notion of employability appeared in literature at the beginning of the 20th century. It was introduced in 1909 by Beveridge (1909, pp. 215-216) in his work "Unemployment: A Problem of Industry" regarding individuals who were able to work, i.e. who were "employable" in contrast to those who were not able to work, hence were considered as "unemployable". Therefore, in the first period, this term was mostly applied in relation to the individual's ability to work and studies were focused on the problems of unemployment and mobilization of the unemployed to find a job. Along with the Great Depression the interest in the concept decreased. It emerged again at the end of the 1950s. At that time the concept of employability started to be understood in a more diversified way. Some researchers analysed employability from the macroeconomic perspective. They concentrated on the labour market and its policy (Thijssen and Van der Heijden, 2003, pp. 154-170). In this approach employability was typically defined as the probability of finding a job. Other researchers tried to recognize barriers of employment for socially marginalized groups. They concentrated on the gap between limited abilities of the unemployed and the requirements of the labour market. In this period, the conception of employability also started to be understood more broadly and considered as an "employment potential" of an individual, which is determined by individual qualifications, skills and abilities and how these features fit the demands of the labour market.

In the late 1970s globalization, recession and growing competition led to increased interest in the issue of employability because companies looking for new sources of competitive advantage tried to limit costs connected with employment and the so called flexible forms of employment have become more frequently used (Marzec et al., 2009a, p. 454; Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden, 2006, p. 451; Fraczkiwicz-Wronka and Marzec, 2012, pp. 215-226). Simultaneously, many employees noticed that professional knowledge and skills are not sufficient to guarantee employment on the demanding and unstable labour market. In this period the importance of general competences started to be emphasized in the literature on the subject. Employability was often linked with matching employees' competences to the requirements of a job (Doyle, 2003, pp. 275-278; Marzec and Van der Heijden, 2003).

Since the end of the 1990s the issue of employability enhancement has gained great social and political importance because of the rising unemployment in the European Union member states, spread of the so-called flexible forms of employment and increased threat of job loss among many employees. Simultaneously, at this time the

concept of employability has been developed and it has started to be understood in more diversified ways.

In 1997 the Amsterdam Treaty was adopted during the Luxembourg Jobs Summit. It has become the basis for launching the European Employment Strategy (EES), which defined activities of the EU countries in aid of fight against unemployment, poverty and social marginalization (Szanferberg, 2006, p. 94). This strategy was based on four pillars, i.e. employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities. In Poland, the problem of employability gained greater political interest along with the accession to the European Union and implementation of its recommendations. The "National Development Plan 2004-2006" and "National Development Plan 2007-2013" determined activities aimed at employability enhancement of the Polish society, which was perceived as one of the greatest challenges which Poland had to face (Poland, Ministry of Economy and Labour, 2003; Poland, Ministry of Economy and Labour, 2005). However, also today the care for employability of the society is an important part of Polish social policy. New plans of development, i.e. The National Reform Programmes (NRPs) show how Poland is going to face new challenges, including human capital development, employability enhancement and improvement of the situation on the labour market. One of the important barriers for further development of Polish economy is inappropriate structure of labour supply connected with a low level of employability of many employees. NRPs assume closed relationships between developmental aims and priority areas determined in the strategy "Europe 2020", i.e.: 1) Infrastructure for sustainable growth, 2) Innovation for smart growth and 3) Activity for inclusive growth (Poland, Ministry of Economy, 2011, p. 3). The formulated aims, which are connected with employability enhancement of the workforce include, e.g.: increase in the employment rate, decrease in the number of people who finish their education early, a growing number of young people with higher education and the decrease in the number of people at risk of poverty and financial deprivation (Poland, Ministry of Economy, 2011, pp. 2-7).

Nowadays, the concept of employability is analysed from various perspectives. For some researchers taking macroeconomic perspective, the key issue is the employment policy and the evaluation of the labour market potential, while others are focused on individual factors determining employability as well as on conditions of its maintenance and enhancement in organizations. The problem of employability acquires such a great importance that it concerns practically everybody on the labour market (Berntson, 2008, p. 6). However, in the contemporary literature on the subject the individualistic approach to employability is gaining considerable popularity. Researchers representing this approach are focused not only on the analysis of these characteristics of an individual, which decide about his/her ability to get a job, but also on the factors that determine individual career success, because from this perspective employability has started to be presented as an individual "career potential" (Swigon, 2010, p. 22; Van der Heijden and Bakker, 2011, p. 232). The impact of organizational factors on employability of employees and the role of the organization in supporting maintenance and enhancement of employability is frequently emphasised. The

concept of employability has become to be associated with flexibility and adaptability of employees to changes in the internal and external labour market. Forrier and Sels (2003, p. 105) maintain that employability is a specific ability of an employee, which allows him/her to identify and to realize chances for employment in the external and internal labour market as well as other chances for career development. A similar view is presented by Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth (2004, pp. 15-21), who claim that employability is a specific multidimensional construct representing these individual features which encourage people's adaptive behaviours, increasing their chances for employment and career success. Additionally, they emphasize the significance of proactive orientation which decides about the possibility of employment and career success of an individual.

Special attention should be paid to the competence-based approach proposed by Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006). They define employability as "the ability of continuous maintaining, acquiring or creating work through optimal use of professional competences" (Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden, 2005, p. 143). They also present the model of employability encompassing five dimensions, i.e. (Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden, 2006, p. 453):

- Personal flexibility, which is connected with an employee's ability to move from one job to another, from one organization to another, individual capability to adapt to changes in the labour market,
- Occupational expertise, which includes general knowledge, as well as specialist knowledge and skills of an employee,
- Optimization and anticipation, which concern an employee's ability to anticipate changes in a job and to strive for the best possible results,
- Corporate sense, which concerns individual social recognition in the organization and which is also related with employee's feeling of community with other employees in the organization,
- Balance, which is an employee's ability to reconcile private and work life as well as self-interest and interest of the organization.

According to this model, employability is a combination of expertise and general competences. It should be noticed that this model was also verified in the research on employability of ICT professionals carried out in Poland and six other European Union countries (Marzec et al., 2009b).

Numerous researchers indicate that employability enhancement results in various benefits for both employees and organizations (Fraczkiewicz-Wronka and Marzec, 2012, pp. 215-226). It increases flexibility of organizational human resources because it enhances employees' adaptability to organizational changes which are not perceived by employees as a threat but as chances for their career development (Fugate and Kinicki, 2008, p. 503). Employability enhancement increases organizational commitment of employees because employees perceive organizational support as its care about their situation in the labor market and future career (Tansky

and Cohen, 2001; Fraczekiewicz-Wronka and Marzec, 2012). According to Social Exchange Theory, employees reciprocate higher organizational commitment in return for the possibilities of employability enhancement provided by the organization. Additionally, these possibilities positively influence the perception of work conditions what also results in higher job satisfaction of employees (Yousaf and Sanders, 2012, pp. 909-910). Moreover, employability is based on proactive orientation of individuals, which is positively connected with employees' performance (Fugate and Kinicki, 2008, p. 506). Employability enhancement limits the employees' fear of job loss and stimulates their creativity and initiative, as well as ethical and citizenship behaviours (Camps and Majocchi, 2010, p. 142). It increases the employees' chances for career success (Fugate and Kinicki 2008; Marzec et al., 2009a; Marzec and Van der Heijden, 2003).

2 Changes in HRM in Polish public organizations

Public organizations are strongly dependent on external influences since their main goal is reacting to emerging social needs (Boyne, 2002). The environment of public organizations is often unpredictable because of its politicization and pressures of different groups of stakeholders. The actions of public organizations are the subject of public interests (Marzec, Fraczekiewicz-Wronka and Struzyna, 2015, in print). Changes in the public organizations and their environment have proven the classical model of management based on bureaucratic rationality to be ineffective. At the end of 1970s this model was replaced with the New Public Management in the western public sector. However, according to numerous practitioners and theoreticians of public management, applying methods and rules of management which are successful in the private sector into public organizations have not brought the expected results due to other conditions under which public and private organizations operate. Numerous imperfections and weaknesses of NPM have caused it to be considered passé and the idea of New Public Governance has emerged.

In Poland the transformation of public sector began later, i.e. at the end of 1980s, along with the political and economic changes (Marzec, Fraczekiewicz-Wronka and Struzyna, 2015, in print). Before the systemic transformation, Polish public organizations were hierarchical and centralized. Their management was directed by political issues. In public organizations general guidelines of personnel policy were also made by the political authorities. Personnel management performed mainly administrative functions (Marzec, 2015). In the public sector the model of lifelong employment dominated, hence the security of employment was guaranteed, regardless of the employees' job performance. Many employees worked at the same public organization until their retirement (Marzec, 2015). Development of hierarchical career was mainly dependent on "political correctness" and personal connections of an individual with political decision-makers. This approach stifled public sector employees' motivation, ambition and willingness to develop (Dobosz-Bourne and

Janowicz, 2006, p. 2021). The situation led to marginalization of the issue of maintenance and enhancement of public sector employees' employability.

After the political transformation in 1989, particular emphasis was placed on reforming the public administration. The most important reform which restored local self-government for Polish administration took place in 1990, as well as in 1998, and it introduced three-stage territorial division and exempted central government from the management of local affairs. The process of decentralization began. These reforms also became the basis for subsequent changes in the Polish administration. The transformation of the administration was accompanied with changes in other Polish public organizations and their management systems to better fit the requirements of the turbulent and dynamic environment (Marzec, Fraczekiewicz-Wronka and Struzyna, 2015, in print). Economic transformation also resulted in the restructuring of many Polish public organizations. The change of political and economic conditions forced public organizations to focus on the results and effectiveness. They transformed from strongly centralized, hierarchical and resistant to changes, into organizations that are more market-oriented and flexible, promoting initiative and development of employees. Today, the importance of the quality of public services and customer orientation are strongly stressed in the Polish public organizations.

These processes have been accompanied by the growing awareness of the importance of Human Resources in the Polish public organizations. Traditional personnel administration has been gradually replaced with Human Resource Management, which has become the main driver of changes in the public sector (Brown, 2004, p. 304). Methods and techniques of HRM used in the private sector have started to be introduced into public organizations. Nowadays, it is emphasized that the new approach to HRM in public organizations should be particularly characterized by: performance orientation, managerial flexibility, life-long learning, lateral movements of employees, power delegation, information openness, enhancement of work ethics and fighting against corruption (Struzyna, 2009). "Closed" HRM systems which were in the past characteristic of Polish public organizations, have slowly transformed into more "open" systems (Steijn, 2002, p. 5). However, the changes which were established in the Western public sector many years ago have sometimes only just begun in some Polish organizations. These processes of changes encompass employment rationalization and restructuring. The necessity of downsizing public employment is often stressed. Life-long employment is slowly replaced with contract-based arrangements to increase flexibility of the human resources of Polish public organizations. However, public sector employees are still a large fraction of the workforce, i.e. in 2013 the average employment in the Polish public sector was 2,997,700 employees, what constituted 36.6% of total employment² (Poland, GUS, 2013, p. 24). By comparison, according to the European Commission report (2010, pp. 6-7) in the EU Member States the average employment in the public sector amounts to 20.3%, ranging from e.g. 11.8% in Austria to 33.9% in Sweden. Today, employment

² in 1st half of 2013.

in the Polish public sector still offers relatively higher job security and pay than employment in the private sector, e.g. in 2013 in the public sector the average monthly gross salary amounted to PLN 4,227.64, while in the private sector it only amounted to PLN 3,321.17 (Poland, GUS, 2013, p. 16).

Despite many difficulties and weaknesses, the increasing significance of personnel function can be observed in most of the Polish public organizations. Nowadays, human capital is generally considered as one of the key drivers for their success. Therefore, the changes in HRM are particularly visible in the approach to employees' professional development. Generally the necessity of public sector employees' competences' development is strongly stressed. However, this policy primarily focuses on public servants. According to the project "Strategy of Human Resource Management of Civil Service from 2010 to 2020" the quality of human resources is the basis for the trust of the society into public institutions (Poland, Office of Prime Minister, 2011, p. 13). The strategy emphasizes the necessity of development of employees' competences which will allow them to react quickly and effectively to new social and economic challenges (Poland, Office of Prime Minister, 2011, p. 22). One of the fundamental aims of the Strategy is to increase professionalism of civil service employees (Poland, Office of Prime Minister, 2011, p. 13). This aim is mainly realized by individual programs of professional development, trainings, and the enhancement of public service ethos (Poland, Office of Prime Minister, 2011, pp 22-28). As regards other public sector employees, the policy of professional development and the activities undertaken in the area of HRM are not so precisely determined and the provided financial resources are more limited, what undoubtedly also influences employees' employability.

It should be noticed that the main aim of public organizations is public interest but the complexity of organizational and legal conditions often makes it difficult to adjust the practice of HRM used in the private sector to the needs of public organizations. Many practices of HRM accepted in the private sector are contradictory to rules and procedures binding in the public sector. The characteristic feature of HRM in the public sector is also numerous legal rules, which limit freedom of Polish public organizations in the choice of the HRM instruments and practices. These rigid rules can lead to the decrease of flexibility and effectiveness of the personnel function. Another serious problem in the area of HRM in Polish public organizations encompasses, e.g. weak connection between the employees' work results and their salaries, the limited autonomy of managers, excessive specialization and low level of the learning value of the job, the lack of complex systems of professional trainings and development, the limited use of teamwork, etc. In some opinions even, current practices of HRM "do not support the implementation of public management into Polish conditions" (Kozuch, 2004, p. 140).

3 Maintenance and enhancement of employability in Polish public organizations

Changes in employment relationships result in increasing the sense of job insecurity and the growing concern of many Polish public sector employees for their employability (Marzec, 2015). Numerous individual and organizational factors influence employability of public sector employees. Literature study indicates that the key individual features which affect employability include: demographic characteristics (i.e. age, education, gender, etc.), some personality characteristics, life situation, motivation, health, etc. The essential organizational factors of employability enhancement encompass, e.g.: the possibility of training and development, an organizational climate and culture, the quality of the relationships between subordinates and supervisors, job content, leadership style, etc. (Van der Heijden and Bakker, 2011; Marzec et al., 2009b, Fraczekiewicz-Wronka and Marzec, 2012). The significant impact of general external, environmental factors on employability and their specificity in the public sector should also be mentioned. Particularly the macroeconomic conditions influence employability, e.g. social policy, labour market situation, macroeconomic stability, etc. Employment in the public organizations is also strongly affected by these factors because public organizations have to react to social requirements and should fulfill them at the best possible level, what also affects expectations regarding their employees (Boyne, 2002, p. 100). Polish public organizations must often reconcile contradictory interests of various groups of stakeholders and work under the pressure of public opinion. They possess limited financial resources and their expenses are under strict control. The levels of employment and salaries as well as investments into employees' development are the subject of public interest and political discussions.

Many researchers suggest significant differences between employees in public and private sector, particularly in relation to their motivations and values (Willem, De Voss and Buelens, 2010, p. 275; Struzyna, 2009, p. 285). The specificity of public organizations' aims, makes them attract employees whose motivations go beyond their own or organizational interests and who have a distinguished hierarchy of values (Fraczkiewicz-Wronka, 2009, p. 39; Kozuch, 2011, p. 92). The results of Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), obtained from 19 European countries, indicate that public sector employees are more pro-socially inclined than workers in the private sector (Tonin and Vlassopoulos, 2014, pp. 2-3). They are often motivated by the intrinsic need to act "pro publico bono" and despite limited autonomy and strong control they are characterized by a high level of job satisfaction. Some researchers even suggest that the job satisfaction is more important for public employees than other forms of rewarding (Crewson, 1997, pp. 499-518). This view is confirmed by empirical research carried out in public and private sectors, where it was found that salary and promotions were less important for managers in public organizations than in private organizations (Khojasteh, 1993, p. 395). These differences are also emphasized by Le Grand (2003) who divided public servants into "knaves and knights". Some public sector employees also show a tendency to

"wicked" behaviors to enhance their status and position but many of them are "knights" who want to serve the society and they are ready to sacrifice their own aims in the name of the common good. Undoubtedly, these motivations and values of employees determine their employability in the public organizations due to the role of public organizations in the society. It should be stressed that employability in the public sector is dependent on several specific competences of employees. Many employees in public organizations work with social sensitive groups, hence such characteristics of employees as empathy, communicative skills or ethical behaviors acquire special importance (Bennett, 2011, p. 347). According to Kozuch (2011, p. 92) the key competences of managers in the public sector encompass universal competences and competences connected with values. This division emphasizes significance of ethical competences of the employees.

Today Polish public organizations require employees who are able to act flexibly and adjust to changing conditions of the organizational environment. Kozuch (2011, p. 88) indicates that an important factor limiting employability of Polish public employees is their low flexibility, which is expressed in their low inter- and intra-sectoral mobility. In empirical research it was also found that public sector employees are more risk averse than private sector employees, what can also negatively affect their mobility, because the change of the job is perceived by many employees as a potential threat (Tonin and Vlassopoulos, 2014, p. 4). Despite the fact that today the model of lifelong employment "is the past", in Polish public organizations job security is still higher than in the private sector. Moreover, the average salaries of employees are also higher than in the private sector. Therefore, it is not surprising that employment in public organizations is perceived as very attractive by many employees and they do not show willingness to intersectoral mobility. Changes in Polish public organizations lead to rationalization of the employment structure, what is often connected with lateral movements of employees inside the organizations as well as the necessity to dismiss some employees and their move from public to the private sector. In this context the enhancement of employees' adaptability and their functional flexibility acquire special importance. Therefore, the policy of employability enhancement should be aimed at the development of general competences, which are transferable across organizations and strongly affect the employees' position in the external labour market.

Cohen and Wheeler (1997) maintain that in public organizations employability enhancement should be directed by the same rules as in private organizations. However, some distinct characteristics of public organizations such as, e.g. numerous regulations and procedures, extended organizational structures, bureaucratic culture, autocratic leadership style, high level of job specialization, centralization of decision making processes, limited autonomy of employees, etc. may also significantly impact employability of employees and they should be taken into consideration in the employability policy in public organizations. One of the most important factors influencing employability is organizational climate and culture because they affect employees' perception, expectations and interpretation of organizational environment. It is often emphasized that the culture of public organizations differs from private

organizations. Today, the culture of Polish public organizations has been changing to the culture which encourages adaptability and proactiveness of employees to a greater extent. Undoubtedly, public organizations striving to enhance employability of their employees should create organizational culture and climate, stressing the value of learning, which stimulates employees to actively look for the possibility of their professional development. This statement is also supported by results of empirical research carried out in one of the biggest public universities in Costa Rica, where it was found that learning culture positively influences employability of employees (Camps and Torres, 2011, p. 216).

Many researchers point to the importance of trainings and professional development provided by the organization for maintaining and enhancement of employability (Westerberg and Hauer, 2009, p. 590-191; Cunningham and Iles, 2002, p. 480). Polish public organizations mostly offer their employees the possibility of trainings. Sometimes it is even imposed by legal regulations (e.g. in the Civil Service). However, these trainings concentrate on the current area of expertise and they are subordinated to employees' career plans due the high specialization level, which is characteristic for jobs in public organizations. Trainings in adjacent areas of expertise or in different areas are relatively rare, hence they primarily support maintaining and enhancing internal employability.

An important factor affecting employability is also the quality of relationships between supervisors and subordinates because close relationships that are based on trust stimulate the exchange of thoughts and mutual learning. However, hierarchical power and autocratic leadership, which are typical for Polish public organizations, do not encourage creating such relationships. Today, supervisors should become partners of employees in a continuous process of knowledge and skills development (Waterman Waterman and Collard, 1994, p. 90). Participative supervisors share their knowledge and experiences with employees and motivate them to professional development. They become role models and mentors for their subordinates. Numerous empirical studies confirm that the good quality of relationships between supervisors and subordinates positively affects employees' employability, supports their career success, increases job satisfaction and performance (Chiaburu, 2005; Kinicki and Vecchio 1994; Epitropaki and Martin, 1999).

Due to the high level of specialization, a difficult challenge for managers of public organizations is also to help employees in employability enhancement by providing them with diversified and interesting job tasks. In practice, the learning value of the job is the most unappreciated factor of employability enhancement in Polish public organizations. Research carried out in the Egyptian public sector showed that the proper job design affects flexibility and adaptability of employees (Badran and Kafafy, 2008, p. 35). It was observed that the assignments of challenging and complex tasks as well as a variety of new work experiences positively influence employability (Juhdi et al., 2010, p. 6; Groot and Maasen van den Brink, 2000, p. 579). Literature study indicates that the job content should be complex and diversified and employees should have some degree of autonomy in the realization of job tasks to maintain and

enhance their employability (Van der Heijden and Bakker, 2011, pp. 233-4). Specialization, highly-routinized tasks, numerous procedures and limited independence which are characteristic for many jobs in public organizations can negatively affect employees' employability.

It should also be noticed that in the public sector the problem of employability enhancement has two different aspects. On the one hand, it concerns employability of the public sector employees. On the other, it is the key aim of activity for many public organizations. Nowadays, in this domain a lot of new initiatives are undertaken and many governmental agencies have started to support employability enhancement of Polish employees by various wide-ranging programs aimed at human capital development. Governmental agencies allocate considerable financial resources to trainings and consulting services to develop Polish employees' competences, allowing them to deal with requirements of the contemporary demanding labor market.

Discussion and Conclusions

The conducted literature study shows that employability is a complex phenomenon, which can be analyzed from different but interconnected perspectives, i.e. the individual, organizational and socio-economic perspectives. They also determine the way in which employability is examined and defined. The changes of employment relationships in the labour market result in a shift of responsibility for professional development from organizations to employees. Individualistic approaches to employability also gain popularity. These approaches are focused on the supply side of employability and they emphasize the importance of employees' competences which decide about their position of on the labour market.

At present, a job in the public sector becomes more temporary and uncertain. New conditions of the psychological contract between the public organization and its employees do not guarantee the employee life-long employment. Transformation of public organizations leads to the change of the required profile of public sector employees' competences. Contemporary public organizations need committed, adaptable and proactive employees, who are characterized not only by the high level of expertise but also generic competencies. Pressure on results and unstable work environment result in increasing expectations towards public sector employees, which they will be able to meet only if they continuously develop their competences to maintain and enhance their employability on the external and internal labour market. However, public organizations should support their employees in these efforts by providing them with various opportunities for professional development. This requires taking into consideration characteristic features of public organizations which impose expectations regarding their employees. The future empirical research should be aimed at identifying essential organizational and individual factors affecting employability of public organizations' employees. It should also be noticed that there are no validated measurement instruments of employability which could be adjusted to the specific needs of public sector employees. Moreover, the effects of employability

enhancement should be examined in public organizations, e.g. its impact on employees' performance, commitment or career success.

Summing up, in the public sector the issue of maintenance and enhancement of employability is rarely analyzed by researchers and few empirical studies on employability of public sector employees have been carried out. However, changes in employment relationships result in the growing importance of this area of public management for further research. Its results can help public organizations to maintain and enhance employability of their employees by appropriate practices of HRM adjusted to the specific needs of public sector employees³.

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