CAREER MANAGEMENT IN ORGANISATIONS: THE INSIGHTS FROM LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Purpose – by systematically collecting and analysing recently published scientific articles to identify trends and hot topics in the field of organizational career management.

Design/methodology/approach – The methods of systematic review, bibliometric and content analysis were applied in this study. Using specified keywords we searched the Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection for relevant articles published from 2020 to 2022. The search was conducted using field tag "Topic" in order to search for keywords in title, abstract, author keywords and, Keywords Plus. The search was restricted to English language peer-reviewed and open access scientific articles. Then by reading titles and abstracts not relevant articles were excluded based on pre-specified exclusion criteria. In total 86 articles were included for the content analysis.

Finding – the findings of this study indicate that the vast majority of the recent papers related to organisational career management were empirical in nature. The most productive researchers in this line of study were from England and China. The journals with the most publications were the Frontiers in Psychology and Sustainability. The content analysis revealed that the majority of papers fall into these thematic categories, which can be considered as the most relevant career-related topics in 2020-2022 – women careers, sustainable careers, the impact of the pandemic on careers, international careers, organisational career development practices, and employees career resources

Research limitations/implications – several methodological aspects of this study can be considered as limitations. In order to draw sound conclusions in terms of recent trends in the field of organisational career management, the longer period (5 years timespan) selected for systematic review could fit better with the aim of this research. Furthermore, this study used one academic journal database for the articles search. Nevertheless, used database WoS is considered as the most trusted and powerful research engine delivering best-in-class publications.

Practical implications – this paper aimed to analyse scientific papers published in the last three years (2020-2022) on the organisational career management to identify the key points in this line of study which can be valuable for further research.

Originality/Value – this article contributes to the career management field by reviewing the latest articles, identifying top research streams and evaluating the state of the field of recent years.

Keywords: organisational career management, career development, systematic review, content analysis, bibliometric analysis.

Research type: research paper

Introduction

Employee career management, as an integral part of the human resource management system, is an important element of organizational management that contributes to the organisation's strategic goals. A well-developed career management system enables organisations to strengthen their human capital, adapt more easily to constant change, achieve a higher quality of work performance, and retain talented and committed employees to the organization (De Vos et al., 2009; Guan et al., 2015; Zhao et al., 2022).

However, the significant rapid changes in the societal, economic, and technological environment affect employee career management system and raise the need for a new approach to career management processes and practices. Traditionally, career management is analysed from two perspectives, i.e. individual (referred as individual career development, studied in the field of psychology) and organisational (studied in the field of management). However, career management and career domain itself are also of interest to researchers in the area of educology, who emphasize needs for career education (e.g. Jackson, Tomlinson, 2019), and ones in sociology who focus on the analysis of such issues, as government legislation on quotas for women or on ethnic minority candidates in the top management positions, etc. (e.g. Van Laer, Verbruggen, and Janssens, 2021).Consequently, recently career researchers identified the need to apply a more comprehensive and multidimensional approach to the career management which integrates individual, organisational and environmental (e.g. labour markets, state level, society) research levels (Akkermans et al., 2016; Baruch, 2015; De Vos et al., 2018). Individuals and organisations, which can be considered as autonomous systems, are interconnected and interact with each other in terms of career management. At the same time, organizations and individuals as systems are embedded and nested within a larger- scale system like labour market which in turn influences career-related decisions of employers and employees. Similarly, governments shape the market in terms of options, economy and social structure (Baruch, 2015). Thus, organisation career management system is enacted within complex environment and can itself be considered as a complex system (Rapuano, Valickas, 2021) which consists of highly interconected parts, is dynamic and hardly predictable.

Based on the complexity theory (Arevalo, Espinoza, 2015; Sapir, 2020), the prerequiste of managing complex systems, such as career management system of organisations, is first and foremost to have a big picture of „now" which means to gather and analyse relevant information on the subject in order to identify the main actors, their relations and dynamics of the whole system.

Thus, with reference to what has been set forth above the **purpose of this paper is** by systematically collecting and analysing recently published scientific articles to identify trends and hot topics which are relevant to organisational career management. In order to reach the aim of the paper mixed methods were applied: systematic review method was applied for the relevant literature search, bibliometric analysis was used to provide a broader picture of the articles in terms of the most cited authors, their geographical distribution and the most productive journals. Lastly, a content analysis method was applied to identify the key themes of the papers included in the study. The thematic categories identified may provide valuable insights for further research.

This paper is organised as follows: the introductory part presents the relevance and the purpose of the paper. The second part gives a brief overview of methods applied in the study. The results of the analysis are presented in the third part and, finally, the results are discussed in the conclusion part.

Methods

A systematic literature search was conducted following the stages of systematic literature review conducted by Stravinskienė and Serafinas (2021) (Figure 1).
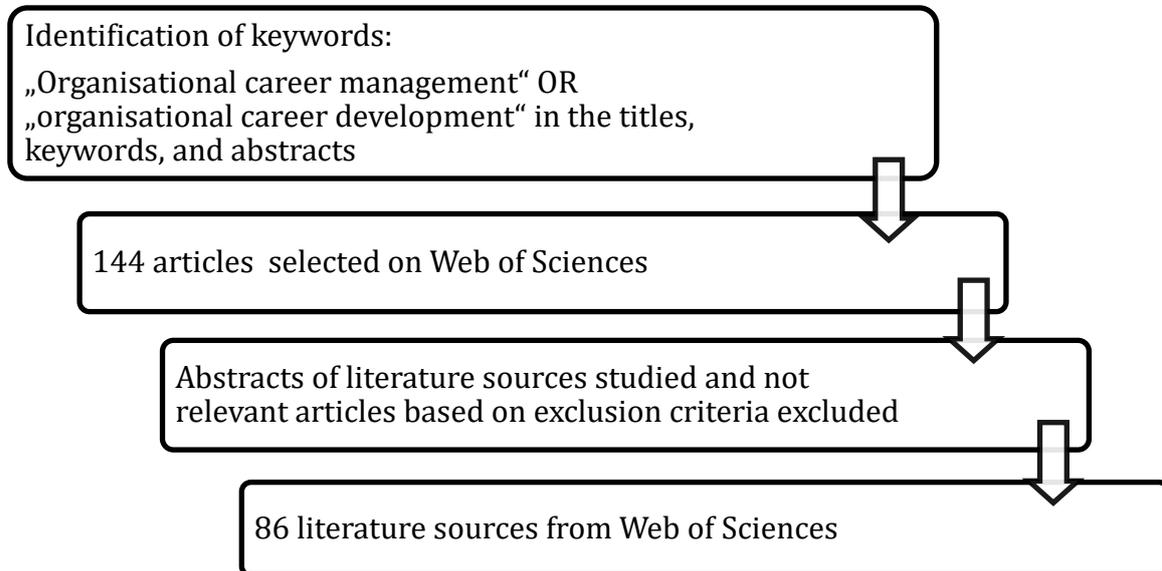
Identification of keywords:
„Organisational career management" OR
„organisational career development" in the titles,
keywords, and abstracts

144 articles selected on Web of Sciences

Abstracts of literature sources studied and not
relevant articles based on exclusion criteria excluded

86 literature sources from Web of Sciences

Figure 1. Systematic literature review

Using the keywords "organisational career management" and "organisational career development" we searched the Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection for the relevant articles published from 2020 to 2022. The search was conducted using the field tag "Topic" in order to search for the keywords in title, abstract, author keywords and, Keywords Plus. The search was restricted to English language peer-reviewed and open access scientific articles. The first five WoS categories were included in the analysis. Thus, the search procedure generated 144 articles in total. Then by reading titles and abstracts we excluded not relevant articles based on exclusion criteria which were pre-specified based on the recommendations of the Joanna Briggs Institute's (JBI) form (2020). Firstly, we excluded the articles that analysed career development with no appeal to the organisational management context. Secondly, we did not include articles where our specified keywords were mentioned once or twice without further discussion. In total 86 articles were included for bibliometric and content analysis.

Results

There were 86 scientific articles related to organisational career management included in the bibliometric and content analysis. Afterwards, the abstracts of all articles were reviewed to determine the kind of methodology used, whether empirical or theoretical-contextual. It appeared that 9 (11%) followed theoretical-conceptual methodology, 77 (89%) were empirical articles of which 27 (35%) applied qualitative and 46 (60%) quantitative methods, 4 (5%) applied both methods.

With regard to citations, (96) authors most cited (96) were A. De Vos, B.I.J.M. Van der Heijden, and J. Akkermans (2020) with the article on conceptual model of sustainable careers. In Table 1, the articles are ordered by the number and frequency of citations. About 35 % (31)

of articles were not cited at all, 45 % (38) had from 1 to 5 citations, 13 % (11) from 6 to 10, and 8 % (7) were cited more than 10 times.

Table 1. Articles' citations

Number of Citations	Frequency of Cited Articles
96	1
73	1
32	1
29	1
20	1
14	1
12	1
9	1
8	1
7	3
6	6
5	3
4	5
3	6
2	7
1	17
0	30

According to the geographical distribution of the authors (considering the first author of the article), publications related to the organisational career management were most frequently published in China with 15 publications and England with 10 papers respectively. Australia, Netherlands and South Africa had six publications each. The frequency of papers published according to the country can be seen in Figure 1.
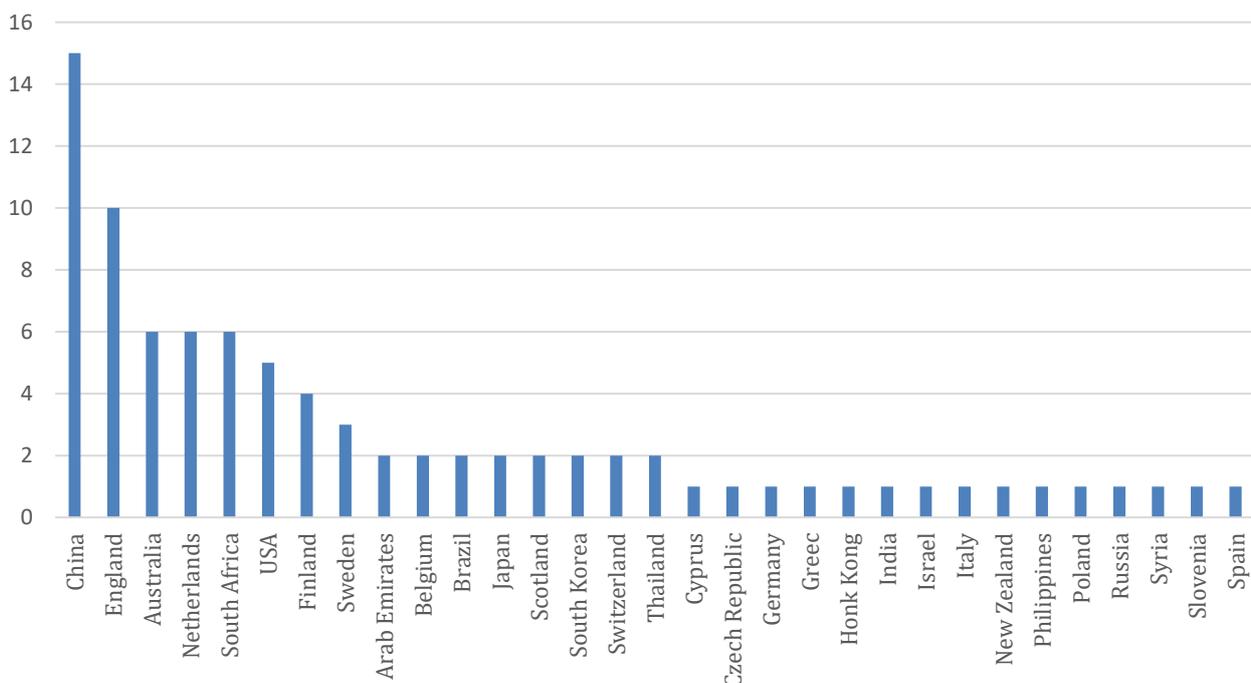

Figure 2. Frequency of publications according to country

As for the the journals with the most articles on the organisational career management published are shown in Table 2, which also shows the number of the articles and the quartile of the journal. As can bee seen, Frontiers in Psychology published the most publications, followed by Sustainability, Journal of Vocational Behavior, Career Development International, International Journal of Human Resource Managent, and SA Journal of Human Resource Management.

Table 2. Journals with more than two published articles

Journal	Quartile	Number of Articles
Frontiers in Psychology	Q2	12
Sustainability	Q2	8
Journal of Vocational Behavior	Q1	6
Career Development International	Q2	6
International Journal of Human Resource Management	Q2	5
SA Journal of Human Resource Management	Q4	3

Next, we aimed to identify the latest research directions within career management field. Therefore, by carefully reading the abstracts, reviewing introduction, theoretical background and conclusion parts of the articles we determined the thematic categories in which the aspects of organisational career management are discussed. Thereby, we have identified these thematic categories: women careers, sustainable careers, the impact of the pandemic on careers, international careers, career development practices, employees career resources, career transitions, and career shocks. About 80 % of all articles fell into these thematic categories. Some publications have fallen into several categories by the topics. Articles on career shocks, for instance, often mentioned and discussed the influence of the pandemic while the issue of women's career advancement are often analysed in the context of international careers.

Below, we discuss six dominant topics that emerged from our content analysis.

Women careers. We found 15 articles which discussed career-related issues of women with implications to the human resource development and career development. The predominant sub-topic of this line of studies was the barriers of women' career advancement leading to their under-representation in top management positions (Taser-Erdogan, 2021; Jayashree et al., 2020; Burkinshaw, White, 2020; Gebbels et al., 2020; Coetzee, Moosa, 2020). Although, the under-representation of women in leadership-position is well aknowledged topic in the scientific literature, still it remains a hot topic not only in countries with higher gender inequality, but also in Western culture which declares the equal opportunities for men and women. According to Thornton (2019), globally, the proportion of women in management positions is 25%, and in board positions, 17% indicating that pipeline block for women is a global phenomenon (**Jayashree** et al., 2020). Various females' career progression constraints are addressed in the scientific discource. Based on the previous studies, Coetzee and Moosa (2020) emphasized factors related to women career constraints such as glass ceiling, gender discrimination, organisational culture, work and family conflict, old boys network, stereotyping, poor support and personal characteristics. Dalati (2021) examined challenges affecting female researchers career advancement which include individual, demographic, insitutional, and sociocultural factors. Many of these career-related issues experienced by women can address organisations by promoting favourable context, structures and policies for the progression of women careers. It should be emphasized, however, that gender equality in top management positions should not only be promoted

because it is a requirement from progressive society for contemporary organisations. Organisational efforts in this regard should stem from the understanding that all people, regardless of their gender, have equal rights to hold leadership positions based on their competencies, knowledge and capabilities. Furthermore, the studies reveal that the higher percentage of women leaders is related to the better financial performance of organizations (Desvaux, Devillard-Hoellinger, Meaney, 2008). Moreover, the diversity in organizational demographics is related to increased knowledge (Smith, Morgan, King, Hebl, & Peddie, 2012). Thus, promoting a gender equality with regard to career progression benefits the organisations themselves.

Hence, the question arises as to how can organisations support women career advancement and continuity? The latest studies in this regard emphasize the role of HRM in elimating gender inequality, for instance, by implementing diversity training initiatives which target prejudices towards female leadership and create structures that facilitate transparent criteria for promotions and reduce the token status of women (Taser-Erdogan, 2021). Gebbels et al., (2020) suggest to promote an open-dialog on an inclusive listening environment to reduce the perceived gap between genders. Organizations could create career support system for women to address issues such as maternity transitions by providing family-friendly policies and maternity coaching (Sueur, Boulton, 2021). To sum up, organizations play an important role in sustaining and empowering women to climb organizational career ladder, and this support for high potential women benefit organizations themselves in the context of the war for scarce talent.

Sustainable Careers. Recently, the concept of sustainable careers has gained momentum in the scientific literature (Rapuano, 2020). Sustainable careers refer to "sequences of career experiences reflected through a variety of patterns of continuity over time, thereby crossing several social spaces, characterized by individual agency, herewith providing meaning to the individual" (Van der Heijden and De Vos , 2015 (p. 7). An individual in this theoretical framework is perceived as the central actor and in the context where he/she operates, many stakeholders exist. De Vos et al. (2018) identified three indicators of sustainable careers – health, happiness, and productivity. Accordingly, the research on career sustainability analyses individual and contextual factors affecting these indicators. Organisations are considered as the context of sustainable careers of individuals. From the standpoint of sustainable careers concept, organisational career management should apply more employee-centered approach differently from the more traditional attitude on employees' career development which is largely based on the needs of organisations. The studies on career sustainability within organizational context is linked with sustainable human resource management that incorporates social responsibility and a focus on the internal processes of HRM aknowledging the scarce human resources, aging workforces, increasing work-related health problems, etc (Ehnert, Harry, 2012).

The scarcity of human resources, in terms of number and competency, has become one of the key concerns around the world, thus the ability to attract and retain talent is a significant issue for most human resource managers. According to de Grip et al. (2020), offering sustainable employment to the older, most experienced employees has become strategically important. The study of the aformentioned authors, revealed that offering training opportunities to older employees increases the expected retirement age and, thus, enhances their career sustainability. Similarly, Nilsson and Nilsson (2021) discussed organisational measures and strategies for a healthy and sustainable extended working life and employability of individuals. Organisations are highly dependent on the employability of their employees. Since demographic changes place a strain on organisations, employers need to come up with measures to create a healthy and sustainable working life and to increase the

employees' employability untill older age. Another prerequisite of sustainable careers is work-life balance. The recent study (Wong et al., 2020) has found that work-life balance has a positive influence on career motivation (which was considered as one of the measure of organisational performance) of employees, indicating that employee-driven life-balance would be beneficial to organisations in the long run.

The impact of the pandemic on careers. The global pandemic has affected many areas of people' lives, but perhaps the biggest change has taken place in the work environment. A number of articles in recent years have focused on the impact of the coronavirus on careers of individuals and the resulting consequences for organisations. Rudolph et al. (2021) claims that the biggest challenge of the pandemic to individual careers is unemployment due to the closure of many organisations. The author (2021) argues that the longer unemployment can have a negative influence on career development and advancement (Schmillen, Umkehrer, 2017) as it diminishes critical career resources such as human capital, social capital and psychological resources, which are crucial for objective and subjective career success. Other claims (Akkermans et al., 2020) that the pandemic can act as a career shock which is an unexpected, negative event that triggers consideration about potential career transition. Moreover, the pandemic can also have an effect on career attitudes such as that the coronavirus induced job insecurity can foster activity in career engagement, such as more active career alternatives exploration or attempt to increase the marketability (Rudolph et al., 2021). From this point of view the pandemic can have also some positive influence on individuals in that it can lead them to become more proactive in career development.

With regard to the empirical research, Cahapay and Bangoc (2021) explored the association of technostress with career commitment of teachers in the context of emergency distance education brought by the COVID-19 crisis, however it appeared that a higher technostress did not affect career commitment. Similarly, Kuenzi et al. (2021) discussed how the pandemic, perceived as career shock, impact nonprofit workers' career intentions and their commitment to the sector, suggesting several areas for future research including human resource policy and leadership development. Another study conducted by Wei et al. (2021) revealed that employees with high career or calling orientation, when they experience death reflection related to the COVID-19 pandemic, tend to be more motivated to show better in-role performance and engage in extra-role behaviors promoting both the organization and colleagues. Similarly, Sharma et al. (2022) conducted a study with janitors at a large government hospital designated for treating COVID-19 patients and found that employees perceiving a sense of calling towards their work experience higher subjective career success and better job performance especially when they tend to get multiplied when workers are supported by their co-workers, supervisors, and the organization.

International careers. Global or international careers have become more the norm than the exception in the current world of work. The cross-cultural and cross-national career moves reflect the boundaryless career concept (Arthur, Rousseau, 1996) which means breaking down boundaries of traditional employement and moving between jobs, organizations and countries. International careers have captured the interest of scholars as it has a number of implications for individuals and organizations. Baruch et al. (2003) identified seven dimensions to analyse international careers covering key personal and HRM challenges: time spent in the host country, intensity of international contacts, breadth of interaction, legal context, international work instigator, extent of cultural gap, and specific position. Apart from these dimensions, the author (2003) distinguished two contextual sets of variables – individual (e.g. gender, family status, age, race, etc.) and organizational (e.g. international assignments impact on career progress).

Several recent studies on international careers focused on career capital development during expatriation. Toiviainen et al. (2021) argue that global workers often lack an appropriate learning opportunities offered by employers who tend to restrict such opportunities only to a distinct elite or provide material based on organisations' needs, rather than learners themselves.

Hence, they proposed a model which supports global employees in designing their own learning spaces, that responds their professional, emotional, social and cultural contexts. In the study of Kanstren and Suutari (2021) career capital development was analysed among the partners of expatriates. The authors suggest employers to design specific support practices (e.g. career counseling, cross-cultural and language training) for the partners and, in particular, expatriating dual-earner couples. Another recent article on international careers examined the roles of the host country nationals identification with the multinational enterprises and perceptions of subsidiary's career development support as key factors in explaining the host country nationals decisions to provide help to expatriates (Yamao et al., 2020). This study suggest a significant implication for organisational career management of host country nationals as the study results show that perceived organizational practices to support their careers fosters their willing to help expatriates. The authors suggest that organisations should not just offer their career support programs and practices but also actively demonstrate the advantages of such programs and practices which can be considered by them as a positive sign indicating that they are valued and cared for by the organization.

Organisational Career Development Practices. Another prevalent topic in the organisational career management literature is career development practices and their outcomes. These career practices are established by organizations to improve the career of their employees (Orpen, 1994) by giving them the opportunity to fulfill their personal aspirations while promoting and contributing to bussiness goals (Doyle, 2000). The most prevalent employees' career management practices are: career counselling, succession planning, career planning workshops, job postings (an internal reqruitment channel), outplacement and preretirement programs, assessment centers, dual-ladder systems, and mentoring programs (Baruch, 2003). According to Bagdadli and Gianecchini (2019) organisational career management practices, in terms of their relation to objective career success, can be divided into three groups: developmental (practices that enhance competencies, e.g. trainings, international assignements, lateral moves), informational (practices that provide information, e.g. formal education, assessment centers, performance appraisals), and relational (practices that affect relationships, e.g. mentoring, networking).

The studies on organisational career management practices often focus on the examination of the potential benefit of these interventions to organisations and employees. The study of Pinnington et al. (2021) examined the most effective organisational career management practices in relation to employees' career development and found that coaching, job assignement, web-based career information, external education provision, continuous professional development, and employee assistance programmes, as perceived by employees, were important to their internal career progress. The perceptions of employees on developmental practices are significant in that they tend to be related to organisational commitment if perceived as tied to career development (Meyer, Smith, 2000).

In terms of career management practices themselves, perhaps mentoring may be considered as the most widely discussed at the practical and scientific level of management. Mentoring is usually defined as developmental interactive relationship build between mentors and mentees in an organization in which mentors transmit knowledge, skills, and experience and provide support, guidance, and friendship to protégés (Haggard et al., 2010). The studies in this regard reveal the positive effect of mentoring on the outcomes of mentees

(Lapointe, Vandenberghe, 2017; Chen et al., 2020; Zeng et al., 2020). As studies show, mentoring also benefits the mentor himself since such interactions increase mentor's job performance (Fowler et al.,2021), leadership capacity (Chun et al., 2012), career development (Ghosh, Reio, 2013), and creative performance (Xu et al., 2021).

With regard to the novel career management practices, recently, the concept of idiosyncatic deals (I-deals) has been receiving increasing attention in career management field (Heijden et al., 2021; Katou et al., 2021). I-deals are defined as "voluntary, personalized agreements of a nonstandard nature, negotiated between individual employees and their employers regarding terms that benefit each party" (Rousseau et al., 2006, p. 978). I-deals regarding career, the so-called career I-deals refer to customized arrangements for securing professional advancement (Rousseau, 2005) and comprise a variety of elements like setting development goals, career coaching, special training, developmental assignments, or promotion opportunities (Hornung et al., 2014). Even if the concept is not new only now scholars start to recognise its' strategic value on human resources and their career development. According to Heijden et al. (2021) I-deals which are focused on employees' employability enhancement, can become a strategic HR tool for simultaneously meeting the goals of organisations as well as those of employees.

Employees' career resources. A number of articles included in this study fell into this thematic category. Career resources, in the most general sense, can be perceived as characteristics that are valuable in their own right or enitites that help to achieve valued outcomes, such as money (Hobfoll, 2002). More specifically, career resources can be described as positive self-evaluations which foster individual engagement in work, provide individuals with capabilities to perceive and manage one's abilities, act on work environment and recover fast (Bakker, Demerouti, 2008). There are variety of career models and theories in career psychology field which emphasize different career-related resources. Paradnikė et al. (2017) analysed various resources and divided them into these groups: psychological (e.g.,optimisms, flexibility); identity and career adaptability (e.g., self-knowledge,self-concept clarity); social (e.g., networking, social support); human capital (e.g., specific work-related knowledge); and self-presentation (e.g., self-profiling) resources. Career resources are most commonly examined in the field of career psychology with a focus on the advantages of these resources to individuals. However in this study we are interested in those career resources that were discussed and analysed in the conext of organisations with implications to employees' career development. Thus, we found that career adaptability and career ambition were predominant employee career resources studied in last three years within management field.

Career adaptability is defined as „readiness to cope with the predictable tasks of preparing for and participating in the work role and with the unpredictable adjustments prompted by the changes in work and work conditions" (Savickas, 1997, p. 254). The construct comprises four competences, namely career concern, career control, career curiosity and career confidence (Savickas, Portfeli, 2012). In the context of constant changes, unpredictibility and uncertainty employees are expected to adapt to changing job requirements. Hence, the adaptivity of employees has become one of the most important skill sought by employers since the adaptable workforce responds better to changes inherent in today's dynamic work environment. The study of Rasheed et al. (2020) found that career adaptability was negatively related to employee turnover intentions, indicating that organisations could benefit from finding ways to develop employees' adaptability skills to help them deal with the job and career-related challenges emerging in organisations. The study conducted by Lan and Chen (2020) demonstrated that employees career adaptability is dynamic construct that can be developed through managerial strategies, i.e. transformational leadership. Moreover, they demonstrated that career adaptability has a self-regulatory

function in the sense that it motivates employees to be willing and able to deal with new tasks and seize on the changing opportunities, which both contributes to increased job performance and organizational citizenship behaviour it turn.

Another employees career-related resource that has lately received considerable research attention is career ambition. Brewer (2018) defined career ambition as universal motivation for achievement in career and in personal success. According to Hirschi and Spurk (2021) ambition is fairly stable personal disposition, perceived as "the persistent and generalized striving for success, attainment, and accomplishment" (Judge, Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012, p. 759). The studies on ambition suggest that this characteristic should have an impact on broad range of work and career outcomes. For instance, the findings of Bui et al. (2021) suggest that career ambitious employees are likely to demonstrate better work performance leading to enhanced extra-role behaviour. However even if career ambition is in general perceived as a positive employee characteristic related to desirable personal and organizational outcomes, as showed the study of Hirschi and Spurk (2021), ambitious employees are more likely to leave organizations if they do not receive attractive career opportunities.

Conclusion

The present article reviewed the latest (2020-2022) studies related to organizational career management, applying methods derived from systematic, bibliometric and content analysis, with a purpose to capture the recent research trends and topics. The findings from bibliometric analysis identify the most cited authors, their geographical distribution and journals which published the most articles in this period.

The results of our contents analysis revealed eight predominant thematic categories, namely women careers, sustainable careers, the impact of the pandemic on careers, international careers, organisational career development practices, employees career resources, career transitions, and career shocks. These categories covered about 80 % of all career-related topics in the last three years. The results of our study show that the research field of organizational career management covers quite different topics in terms of content indicating that the field is responsive and is affected by the challenges faced by the transformations of current world. It can be also observed that our identified topics encompass different research levels - individual (i.e. career shocks, career resources), organizational (i.e. organizational career development practices), and environmental (i.e. the impact of the pandemic on careers). Consequently, we argue that in order to create organisational career management system which would be able to meet the emerging demands of employees, business objectives of organisations and respond to the societal issues, it is necessary for the researchers and practitioners to have a broad view of the context in which careers are enacted and to apply a system approach to the examination of careers.

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