

# THE FACTORS OF SOCIAL PEDAGOGUE'S CAREER TRAJECTORIES

**Vilija Stanišauskienė**

Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania

**Gintarė Edintaitė**

Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania

**Abstract.** *Career is one of the most important sources of personality self-awareness, self-esteem, self-expression, social status and life income. Human satisfaction with their career affects all areas of life. The balance of human life depends on career, which consists of the most important areas of human life: love, finances, social activity, leisure, physical environment, personal and spiritual development and health (Clawson, 2010). Career is the attitude and human behaviour related with work experience throughout life. Career trajectory is perceived like professional life and work experience of personality projection in his/her biography. It highlights the human career stages, values and career satisfaction dynamics. Human career trajectory is determined by internal (education, qualification, aims, expectations, personal attitudes and values) and external (social, economic, political) factors. There are still not enough research that are intended to reveal the specific factors of professions and career trajectories. Therefore, what does the career trajectory of social pedagogue look like? What factors determine the particular profession career? These are the research questions of this article.*

*The object of research - social pedagogues' career trajectory. The aim - to reveal the factors of social pedagogue's career trajectories. The article consists of three parts. In the first one it is theoretically the factors of social pedagogue career are grounded. In the second the research design is rationalized. The third is dedicated to the factors those influence the career trajectories of social pedagogues. Research methods: the analysis of scientific literature; semi-structured interview; qualitative content analysis. The results of research revealed that the trajectory of social pedagogue is determined by both internal and external factors. Trajectory has a clear layout in time, there are turning points, changes; each career stage is determined by various internal and external factors.*

**Keywords:** *social pedagogue's career, career trajectory.*

## Introduction

Career trajectories may be perceived as projections describing a person's professional life and work experience delineated in his/her biography. They emphasise the stages of a person's career, the dynamics of career values and satisfaction with career (Greenhaus & Callanan, 2006).

Career has been studied from different perspectives: the development of career was studied by Super (1985, 1990), Super, Savickas (1996), Super, Sverko (1995) and others; career-related decisions were studied by Krumboltz (1979), Gottfredson (2005), Schein (1990), Augustinienė (2007), Surgėlienė (2014) and others; issues of education career were analysed by Kučinskienė (2003), Stanišauskienė (2004), Railienė & Gudžinskienė (2012) and in other research studies; career management was analysed by Sakalas, Šilingienė (2000), Petkevičiūtė (2006) and other. However, they all focus on different aspects of career: psychologists mostly focus on self-knowledge, diagnostics of personality features, interests and dispositions, career consulting; managers pay attention to the management of human resources in organisations; sociologists study career as socially-determined and emphasise the aspects of social stratification and socialisation; education researchers focus on the need for career education and its issues.

Career trajectories of social pedagogues, as a specific group of education specialists, have not been studied before, especially in the context of educational policies and personal development.

A person who is seeking to find his/her place in the modern world of work has to be able to function purposefully in a changing situation and “to change course” during the lifetime with regard to market demands and the aims of personal self-expression. He/she needs career competences defined as a whole of attitudes, knowledge, understanding and abilities, which form a basis for self- and his/her career knowledge, career planning, management and combining with other aspects of life. A successful career of a person is the condition for his/her personal self-expression, happiness and efficiency of the organisation.

The following *research questions* emerge in this context: what determines the trajectories of social pedagogues' career? How are career changes related to the personal development of a social pedagogue and education policies? The object of research - social pedagogues' career trajectory.

Super (1980) claims that career is a wider term than profession and includes a sequence of a person's professional roles carried out, employment and positions occupied there. Career starts much earlier than professional activities and ends with retirement or with death (Kučinskienė, 2003). Career involves the whole lifetime of a person – from the training for the career until retirement. During that time a person evolves, his/her personality grows, it successfully develops while overcoming developmental crises and reaches maturity, or on the contrary – identity does not form or forms slowly, a person does not know what he/she wants, In addition, in terms of profession he/she fails to become productive and self-actualising in professional activities or even becomes unemployed or someone without a profession and doing casual jobs. All this intertwines with the life of an individual: health, feelings and their expression, ability to use cognitive powers

and successfully solve adequate for his/her age life tasks. Career involves not only the activities of an individual but also changing views, attitudes, knowledge and skills; it combines objective (benefits, salary) and subjective (feeling of success, pride) aspects (Palujanskienė, 2008).

Career is a sequence of attitudes and behaviours, it is related to work experience during a person's lifetime. Altogether career is more than a total of jobs a person had during the lifetime: it includes both learning to act individually and achieving aims and satisfying ambitions by carrying out different social roles (Stanišauskienė, 2004). Career trajectories can be perceived as projections delineating a person's professional life and work experience plotted in a concrete biography. They highlight stages of a person's career and dynamics of career values and satisfaction with career. They indicate not only individual factors (i.e. personality features, peculiarities of character or social skills that help seek for career), but also point to structural obstacles that are often reflected in society.

### **Factors determining career trajectories of social pedagogues**

Thus, what factors determine career trajectory?

According to Dromantaitė-Stancikienė, Gineitienė (2010), while planning one's career it is important to take into consideration a person's position, aspirations and values, education and aims, and environment, i.e. individuals around, current trends in society, and political and economic situation. Only when all those aspects are matched, a person can plan, form and carry out a career that will not clash with immediate surrounding and will not cause physical or psychological discomfort. As Valickas et al. maintain (2014), economic influence is a very important factor which does not miss specialists of any field. Economic factor is manifested through a person's position and trends in the labour market and different economic conditions. Economic changes affect a personal career of an individual in one way or another. Specialists have to be more flexible, more independent and more deliberate, they have to be more proactive and to react faster to changes. In order to adapt, they have to be able to learn, to be responsible and creative. This is when an ability to manage a personal career becomes important because organisations do not want to take on responsibility for employees' career. The environment changes rapidly, a long-term forecast of labour resources demand become complicated, therefore, the most efficient solution in this context of uncertainty is the ability by employees themselves to manage their career.

Internal factors are related to education and qualifications, aims and expectations and personal attitudes. Values are among the most significant factors making an influence on career choice, planning, designing and satisfaction with career. While creating career, work values play the most important role. The links

between them and career solutions and self-realisation have been within the focus of work and organisational psychologists (Schein, 1990; Arnold, 2011). Career-related values are classified in different ways. Macnab, Bakker, & Fitzsimmons (2005) distinguish three categories in the career values scale: work with others, self-expression and external rewards. The factor of work with others includes values determining relations with colleagues and customers: helpfulness, team work and influence. The factor of self-expression involves values related to the personality characteristics, determining career choice. These are creative work, independence, variety, risk, personal and professional development. The values of external rewards factor are characterised by the guarantees provided to an individual by the organisation: high pay, prestige, recognition, safety, and stability. A unique set of each person's work values determines his/her career decisions and satisfaction with activities carried out and career course.

These are the main factors determining the career of representatives of any profession. However, the profession of social pedagogues and their career are unique and exceptional due to the specific of their activities. Therefore, classifications determining general career trajectory factors are not sufficient to define the professional career of these professionals.

Research work revealing the career of social pedagogues and their trajectory is not abundant. This is caused by still ongoing discussions about the necessity of this profession and the issues of its importance within the context of Lithuanian labour market, and the vague definition of the profession itself and the issues of the development of the social system in the country. In contrast to other Western European countries where social work has deep traditions, this profession is interpreted differently in Lithuania.

Despite the confusion in the social system, Lithuanian researchers are trying to approach this professionally and to define the guidelines of social pedagogue profession and career. This helps understand how important the career of social pedagogue is and feasible its trajectories.

Social pedagogue is a person having the education of social pedagogue (or a complex of social work bachelor's degree and professional pedagogue) and is ready to work in social institutions with educational functions, i.e. able to carry out programmes of socialization, early prevention, aid, prevention and social rehabilitation, and successful social interactions within social groups of different levels. The main aim of social pedagogue professional activity is to seek for the child well-being, early prevention, development of social skills, and provision of social services for children and creating preconditions for a successful socialization and civil maturity of a growing person (Kvieskienė, 2001).

The career of social pedagogue embraces changes of socially significant roles, their sequence related to self-realization, professional and individual growth. Professional growth is tightly related to improvement of qualification,

determining the quality of development. Knowledge society poses new challenges to the profession of social pedagogue as the present-day social pedagogue is the creator of learning possibilities and spaces, not just a mere holder and conveyor of knowledge; s/he performs the roles of the coordinator and motivator in the learning process. O'Hagan (1997) distinguishes six general activities of the social pedagogue, which as he maintains, could be linked to the career of social pedagogue: 1) communication and commitment; 2) encouragement and empowerment; 3) assessment and planning; 4) intervention and supply of services; 5) work in organizations; 6) development of professional competence (O'Hagan, 1997).

The career of these specialists, perceived as a sequence of different socially significant roles of social pedagogue, is related to self-expression and individual professional growth and reflecting an individual's life vision and style. Qualitative change of career - development, improvement and progress – has become more important lately. In terms of the career of social pedagogues, it is very important to link it to their activity and environment in which the career is attained, planned and managed. The values foundation is of high significance in the work of social pedagogues. The value attitudes of social pedagogues highlight essential principles related to his/her career. Implementation of career process is based on six important principles (Šefčovič, 2013) which emphasize the extraordinariness of social pedagogue's career.

The first one is *autonomy*, manifesting through an intended personal choice, which is acceptable and satisfying growth in professional activities. Possibility to freely choose work projects, to decide how to carry out work, to set the schedule – are the signs of professional autonomy of a social pedagogue. The second principle describes *the ability to assess results and acquired competences of professional activities*. It is important because as an autonomous person, social pedagogue has to be able to manage and plan his/her activities, to be responsible for the results of own activities which, in turn, depend on decisions made autonomously. The third principle is *the ability to plan one's career, to organize one's growth and to realize it*, by ensuring the match between expectations and reality. While viewing the prospect of social pedagogue, one could notice that the career trajectory is more horizontal rather than vertical, which means that the specialist is improving and advancing his/her competences in professional activities, makes career-determining decisions but does not plan the career in terms of promotion. The trajectory of social pedagogue career depends on his/her professional identity as well (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). The identity of social pedagogue can be defined by different features at different stages of his/her development. If during the years of university studies, a would-be pedagogue had not achieved complete professional identity, variations of career trajectories are possible, and they are determined by the level of professional identity achieved.

*Diversity* is one more principle, the essence of which is to perceive career as one's establishment in the profession and society. Career-related decisions include pedagogical work, family, personal needs and other areas important for an individual. The importance of this principle was emphasized by Clawson (2010) and other authors when discussing about the importance of life balance. It is important in the career of social pedagogue to realize that *differences in career orientation* exist as well. It means that some individuals place autonomy higher, while others might value security and financial rewards more, some individuals are more interested in wider possibilities of getting promoted, while others – freedom to implement their ideas and to create or carry out activities in a community. The career of social pedagogue cannot be related to “climbing a career ladder”, it can be linked to the improvement of competences and getting deeper expertise in one's field and interdisciplinary sophistication.

Another principle characterizing the career of social pedagogue is *educational and social policy*. Social pedagogue's career possibilities are regulated by job descriptions, qualification and competences guidelines and other documents. They make a basis for developing and implementing personal career plans. Different institutions take an active part in the career process, they provide possibilities to specialists to plan and manage their own career, organize different qualifications improvement activities and help assess own competences and progress.

To sum up, the factors determining career trajectories could be divided into external and internal factors. *External* factors include economic, political and social situation in the state. The environments have a direct impact on the profession and career of social pedagogue. Social pedagogue has to consider the surrounding environment, social trends, and political and economic situation. Social and educational policies have a significant meaning to his/her career. *Internal* factors have a high influence on the career of social pedagogue. They include personal expectations, aspirations, education and values, the latter have to be highly emphasized. A unique set of social pedagogue's work values determine his/her career decisions and satisfaction in activities carried out and the course of career.

Therefore, while studying the trajectories of social pedagogue's career, one should consider the career prehistory, i.e. why and how the profession of social pedagogue was chosen and what factors decided this. The second question to be answered is: how does a social pedagogue evaluate his/her career? Next, it is important to identify the set of important values, how it was formed and changed in the course of career. Then the trajectory itself is plotted and career changes, turning points, subjectively perceived ups and downs are registered.

## Research design

To reveal the factors determining career trajectories of social pedagogues, the following has been done: research strategy and logic presented, research methods described, research tools justified, and research sample and ethics described.

The following *research logic* has been applied to accurately and consistently reveal the research topic: by using the analysis of scientific literature, the factors determining career trajectories of social pedagogues have been theoretically based. A *qualitative research method* has been carried out, data was collected by using a semi-structured interview, then, data was analysed and interpreted by employing content analysis method. Research results have been generalized and conclusions have been formulated. *Research tool*. Questions of a semi-structured interview encourage reflection of own career experience and to consistently recall its course, therefore, this particular data collection method was chosen. The interview questionnaire is based on the understanding of career trajectory as distribution of activities during an individual's life-time, while setting turning, change points and factors impacting career development. The research instrument is based on Kroger & Marcia (2011) theory. The questionnaire consists of four units of questions. The first unit is dedicated to pre-history of career with the intention to discover the first career choices of the respondents and factors determining them. The second unit of questions focused on discovering respondents' views on the career of social pedagogue. The third unit of questions allows to reveal the career values of the respondents and the change of the values during the course of time. The fourth unit of questions aims at identifying career changes, turning points and diversity and intensity of factors that determined them. *Research sample*. A purposive sample was constructed. Criteria of sampling were the following: social pedagogues of Kaunas city with more than ten years work experience in this area. Fourteen respondents participated in the study. *Research ethics*. The participants were personally introduced to the research, its aims and their queries were answered. The study was carried on the basis of free will. The participants who learned about the research, had a free will to make up their minds (they did not experience neither direct nor indirect pressure). An oral consent to participate in the study and to record their interviews was received from all the participants. The research was carried out by applying principle of parity, i.e., an equal; relation was being maintained between the research participants and the researcher. During the interview questions were presented in such a manner that they would reveal respondents' views on the research object without imposing the researcher's view or mislead them. It was useful for research participants to share their experience, and many of them were interested in receiving generalized research results.

## **Results of research on career trajectories determining factors of social pedagogues**

While analysing respondents' answers in category "**Beginning of career**", three subcategories of statements were identified. They included the diversity of factors determining the choice of social pedagogue's career and describing the career decision itself.

Subcategory *Initial Career Choice* includes statements depicting the career dreams of the respondents, what alternatives they had when choosing study or work areas. All respondents working as social pedagogues in this area longer than for ten years claim that social pedagogy came into their lives gradually. For most of them, their initial choice was work at school, with schoolchildren and pedagogical work ("*I worked as a teacher of geography*" (X4), "*I picked psychology*" (X13), "*I went to Siauliai anyway and I became an elementary school teacher*" (X5)), but there were choices that were very distant from education, social work and similar matters. E.g. X1 tells: "*After the secondary school I went to study culinary, it was my first speciality. I started working immediately, before my studies, I went to work at a hospital. I worked at a laboratory. I was working and studying at the same time, in the mornings I would go to my lectures and afterwards - to the evening work. This is how I completed my culinary studies, of course, I knew that I had to do everything very well, with excellent marks*". Subcategory *Factors Determining the Choice of Social Pedagogue's Career* include statements demonstrating how this was chosen after all. Factors of different kinds could be distinguished: "Existing conditions", "The influence of significant persons", "Spontaneous decision" and "Conscious pursuit". Factors characterized by abundance of illustrating statements could be named as "Existing conditions". The respondents shared their memories, how with the introduction of a position of social pedagogue at school the administration was looking for a suitable person within the existing staff. This is what X4 told: "*I was working as a teacher of geography, and then a new position of social worker was introduced at school. At first, there was a young woman who took the position, it was the very beginning of such activities and nobody knew exactly what they were supposed to do, that woman didn't do much <...> and then the administration got an idea. They asked me if I wanted to do social work. I said, why not, I could try. In those days we could both teach and do this work*".

The group of factors "The influence of significant persons" includes statements that reveal significant persons for that individual helped to become a social pedagogue. Most of all the leaders are mentioned ("*the director was supporting me, most probably she saw my enthusiasm and will to help children, not only to teach them, and she offered me to take this job, and later – to attend a course*" (X5) and parents ("*this is the influence of my mother, she advised me*

*because she knew me best...*” (X11)). Many social pedagogues emphasize the spontaneity of the decision to become a social pedagogue (Subcategory “Spontaneous decision”), and insufficient consideration of the decision about a career choice. An obvious trend could be observed, that not the respondents were looking for the job, on the contrary – “the job found them”. X9 told: *“There was no time to think, I had very little time to say if I agreed. At that time it was so new that I had little understanding into what kind of affair I was getting involved to”*. Another case was when the work of social pedagogue was the only one and a possibility at a difficult time to return to labour market and was taken without any consideration: *“<...> there was such time when I thought what I should do now, and I went to Labour Exchange, but there were many like me there. I started panicking, I started underestimating myself. Then afterwards, I wrote to numerous institutions and submitted a mountain of applications at the Education Office, we tried to look for a job through acquaintances. The situation resolved when I got a call from the Education Office, and they said: there is a work place for you, a job offer at school, you have to come to an interview about a position of a social pedagogue. At that time I was terrified and thinking, o, goodness, what does a social pedagogue do? But I thought that I would go. And I got the job”* (X3). X12 recalls: *“There was a funny situation after finishing school and deciding what to study. All the time I had thought and I didn’t mention, was that I would study economics. My mother was an accountant, I liked it when she would bring job home. Numbers, calculations. I would ask her to allow me to use those big calculators and to calculate, I would make calculations for tens of pages. And all the time I was thinking that my priority choice of studies will be economics, accounting. And then, when I had to take the application, I returned from school and rewrote everything at the last minute. And among the first choices were psychology and then, social pedagogy and social work.”* The stories of only a few social pedagogues revealed a conscious and consistent pursuit of the career of social pedagogue (subcategory “Conscious pursuit”). X7 maintains: *“I have always wanted to work with children, but not as a teacher because I hardly can imagine myself with a large class, and I am not fond of any specific subject to have a wish to teach. I was thinking about children’s social care home or a day centre, and that’s why I studied social work (Master’s degree in Social Work – authors’ note). When I got an opportunity to get employed at school, I was very happy”*.

In category **“Assessment of social pedagogue’s career”** a subcategory “Advantages of social pedagogue’s activities” is distinguished. It includes statements which help in retrospect to reveal significant positive aspects of social pedagogue’s activities important to the respondents: diversity, autonomy and direct communication with children. Diversity, absence of routine and ongoing learning have been indicated by the respondents as advantages, in relation to

personal traits: *“well, my character is like this, I can't stay calm, I need adventures and challenges. This is a great plus when you come to work in the morning and you don't know what is expecting you. You can think of tasks to do, but something happens at school and you rush...”* (X3). As an advantage of social pedagogue's job, the freedom to make independent decisions and choose activities was pointed out. Social pedagogues have more autonomy than teachers, they are not constrained by detailed plans and aiming at high results. X5 claims: *“you come to work and you can choose if you want to go into the classrooms, or do some projects, or to solve problems of a particular child”*. Many respondents admit that the biggest advantage of social pedagogue's work is a possibility to interact with children directly and to help a child to solve his/her problems. According to X2, *“I get personal satisfaction when I can help others, that I can be useful to other people, perhaps even to change somebody's lives, because, say, children from children risk group, what they see, their environment, <...> and you can show them that there are other ways, solutions and other kinds of life”*.

As negative aspects of social pedagogue's work (subcategory “Issues related to social pedagogue's activities”), poor work relations with colleagues, and inadequate attitude to social pedagogue's work of the school community, risk and emotional difficulties have been listed. Those who transferred to the position of social pedagogue from a teacher's position notice a significant change in relationships with colleagues: *“we used to socialize very nicely before, everybody was like a family, now I feel that I am becoming an enemy; everybody (at school – authors' note) imagines that I am a sort of prosecutor...”* (X1); *When I became a social pedagogue, in fact, I became pupils' advocate. Since then many teachers have regarded me as an enemy. Because, because <...> well, it doesn't make sense to tell her because she is on a pupil's side”* (X32). The status of a social pedagogue within a school community is not high and his/her functions are understood in a rather narrow sense. It is often related to organising meals, “dealing with troublemakers” and carrying out prevention programmes. X4 says: *“You know, a social pedagogue is like a scape goat, <...> s/he is with parents, with children and with teachers, everywhere you are a sort of a coordinator, you have to teach how to live, to provide help to people who don't want that help. Most often “nobody has problems”, so you are that bad participant who is getting into where it is not needed...”* Risk is often linked to the problems related with the work of social pedagogue. E.G., X6 states: *“...you are risking every day: when you are visiting families, you don't know what you will find there, what is awaiting you there, if parents are positively set, and the children... <...> every interaction, every situation is different and they require a quick reaction from you, and at the same time you are highly responsible for your actions because they can be treated in different ways....”*. Emotional difficulties experienced by social pedagogues are an integral part of social pedagogue's work. The respondents tell about the

attachment of socially neglected children to the person taking care of them on the one hand and the identification by the social pedagogue with the child's problems – on the other side. *“I can understand that it gets very unprofessional, but I can't do otherwise, maybe I can't; when I see that those kids come hungry and don't see anything good in their family, only the bad things... I can't help, I feel so sorry for them...”* (X6).

What career values work as a factor determining trajectories of social pedagogues' career, are illustrated by statements from category **“Career values”**. The most often named by the respondents are important values related to providing help (subcategory “Provision of help”). This is attention to the child (*“The most important for me are children's needs. And if I can see that I can help a child in a way, it means that my work is needed”* (X1)), trust in a child (*“...a social pedagogue is a person who has to believe everything, to see hope and good in every child, as I keep saying... we have to appreciate every minimal effort and minimal improvement. We need faith even in the most hopeless situations”* (X2)), fairness (*“you need to be fair, it sometimes may be very painful, but it is needed. <...> I often hear that they say about me: strict but fair”* (X8)), love (*“first of all you have to love children. Not to give out candies and indulge them, but you have to really and sincerely love them”* (X6)). As one of key factors determining movement forward and pursuit of career goals, is mentioned self-realization (subcategory “Self-realization”). The striving for self-realization is named by emphasizing the uniqueness of own personality: *“...I wouldn't be able to stay quiet. This work provides me a possibility to express myself, to do something meaningful, it is what I can do best...”* (X7). This way self-realization is linked to the meaning of life and the pleasure gained from work: *“Those not mine, although like my kids, they are a sort of life mission... to show them a different life, different relationships... I don't save my energy when I see meaning”* (X10). Social pedagogues put a significant importance on the values related to work relationships (subcategory “Work relationships”). They most emphasize team work (*“...we are three of a kind at school – we can break any walls, participate in programmes, everywhere where it is possible, we involve children into the projects...”*(X4)), close collegial bonds (*“in this are one really cannot do anything...”* (X6)), and respect (*“we most need recognition and support. To be respected as a specialist who is also doing important work at school even s/he doesn't teach...”* (X9)). Only a few respondents mention values related to external rewards (subcategory “External rewards”): security, stability and remuneration. Those career values are named but they somehow are pushed to the secondary importance: *“one will not earn millions in this job, you won't get rich, and no one who needs millions works as a social pedagogue or at school”* (X2).

While analysing career trajectories of the respondents and getting deeper into the biographies they told, a category of statements **“Career changes”** has been

identifies. It includes four subcategories: “Change of work place”, “Developing qualifications”, “Additional activities” and “Personal life events”. While plotting career changes points, social pedagogues most often record the change of employment, i.e., new employment means a new career stage, a turning point (subcategory “Change of work place”). Although the work trajectory of the respondents includes about 20 years (12 years as the shortest and 38 – as the longest), there are not many changes or turning points, about one in a period of 10-12 years. Social pedagogues identify the development and direction of the trajectory (forward, upwards) of their career with the development of their qualifications. Without exceptions, all respondents claimed that at the start of social pedagogue's career they had to change their qualifications (*“my qualifications changed: from a senior teacher I became a social worker, and later – a social pedagogue”* (X6)), and further while pursuing career goals, they had to qualify for higher levels (*“now I am an expert, I took higher category exams”* (X1)).

While analysing the development of social pedagogue's career, it turned out that the respondents tend to take up additional activities which sort of draw a parallel line of career trajectory (subcategory “Additional activities”). X8 tells: *“Afterwards I really became a lecturer, I still participate in pupils' council, up till now <...> perhaps there was a year when I didn't participate in its work, but all the time I was there and was developing all kinds of activities. Also a methodological club is my responsibility. Back then, from 2004 we started participating in a project and I have been conducting seminars since 2008 <...> then, yes, I am Olweus instructor for a number of years...”* (X3). Social pedagogues state that to realize themselves it is not sufficient to sit higher categories exams, they want to try and experience something new, therefore they choose additional activities such as, methodological clubs (*“I am the chairperson of town methodological club...”* (X8)), they join different associations (*“I participate in the activities of the Association of Lithuanian Social Pedagogues, I contributed to its establishment...”* (X11)). In addition, social pedagogues become instructors, lecturers, lead the pupils council and mentor classes (if you work at school, it is normal to be mentoring a class” (X10). Those additional activities give a lot of benefit both to social pedagogues and their organizations. One of the main aspirations why they take up additional activities is that acquisition of new competences and improvement of the ones they possess (*“it takes a lot of time and energy, but how otherwise – one cannot stay in one place... especially all those programmes and training give a lot of benefits”* (X5)).

Subcategory “Personal life events” presents statements revealing how respondents' personal life events impacted trajectories of their careers. There are not many statements in this subcategory, most respondents when telling about the development of their career do not put emphasis on events in other areas of their

lives. Only a few respondents observe that marriage and birth of their children had influence on the development their career as well. E.g. X4 tells: "*<...> after a year my daughter was born, so I spent four years with my both (children) at home; when I had to return, the principle didn't want to take me back, she said she would find me another work*". Master degree studies are also named as personal life events which were chosen as an expectation for personal development, not the requirements stemming from employment. As X8 says, "*I have always wanted psychology, it was very difficult when I started the studies. In addition, I had to pay for tuition a lot. But I am such a person, if I started, I had to complete that. I may apply something at work, but mostly this is for myself ...*"

To sum up the results of research, it could be stated that the career trajectories of social pedagogues are revealed in four aspects: beginning of career, career assessment, career values and career changes. Factors determining the direction career trajectory and intensity in this trajectory are highlighted in each aspect.

Beginning of career depends significantly on the initial choice of career. The choice of social pedagogue's career was determined by existing conditions and influence of significant persons. Social pedagogues reveal that in existing circumstances, the guidelines of educational policy determined a spontaneous decision to become a social pedagogue. In a sense, it was not the respondents who were looking for the job, it was "the job that found them". The decision of several was the only and without alternatives opportunity to try to return to the labour market during a difficult period in life. Only a small proportion of social pedagogues' careers demonstrates a conscious and consistent pursuit of social pedagogue's career.

Research into how *social pedagogues evaluate their career* shows that specialists can see many advantages of this work, which are strongly related to inner motivation and obvious calling for this work. The positive aspects of social pedagogue's activities are the following: diversity, autonomy and direct communication with children. Diversity, absence of routine, continuous learning are evaluated as advantages linking them to personal characteristics as well. Social pedagogues are highly satisfied that they have more autonomy than teachers and they are not restricted by detailed plans and pursuit of high results. The majority of social pedagogues in the study admit that the most important advantage of social pedagogue's work is the possibility to directly communicate with pupils, to help an individual child solve his/her problems. This again confirms that social pedagogues who have been in this job for many years evaluate their work as highly meaningful and important. Nevertheless, social pedagogues cannot avoid problems related to their activities, which include deterioration of relationships with colleagues, inadequate attitude of the school community towards the work of social pedagogue, risk and emotional difficulties while solving social - educational problems of children. The respondents emphasized

that when they started working in this position, their relationship with colleagues changed. In addition, one more disadvantage of social pedagogue's work is the attitude of the school community: the status of social pedagogue is not valued and his/her functions are perceived in a rather narrow way. This only adds to the heavy daily load of social pedagogue.

The analysis of research results has revealed that especially important group of career trajectory factors, career values, is directly related to work and surrounding environment at school. Social pedagogues appreciate that they can provide help and devote their attention to children. The respondents uphold a belief in the child, fairness is important to them, which demonstrates high professionalism achieved in their work. Also one of the factors determining movement forward, is self-realization with an emphasis on the uniqueness of the personality. It is related to the meaning of life and the joy obtained from work. Regarding the nature of work, work-related values get significant importance, team work and close collegial bonds are emphasised. A minor part of the social pedagogues interviewed mention career values related to external rewards, such as security, stability and remuneration. Those career values have been listed, but they remain outside the main focus. This demonstrates that in their career path social pedagogues are motivated by inner value aspects disregarding job guarantees so important to every employee. While characterising their career trajectories, social pedagogues named key *career changes* which determined their decisions. New employment, upgrading qualifications, additional activities and events in personal lives mean a new career stage and a turning point. One may observe a key career change in the career trajectories of all social pedagogues with extended work experience – they all had to change their qualification, i.e. from a subject teacher – to a position of social pedagogue. Social pedagogues claim that it is important to expand the range of activities, therefore, they tend to take up additional activities that draw a parallel line to the career trajectory. As they maintain, it is not sufficient to pass qualification examinations, one has to experience new activities. This, again, emphasises the “horizontality” of their competences, i.e. the width and diversity of activities and areas. This is proved by one of the main career pursuits – acquiring new competences and improvement of current competences, e.g. Master's studies that were chosen as an expectation of personal growth rather than requirements stemming from employment. Events of personal lives have also affected career trajectories of social pedagogues, but do not have a strong influence on the pursuits and values of their career.

## Conclusions

1. Factors determining career trajectories may be divided into external and internal. *External* factors involve economic, political and social situation in

the state. Educational and social politics have a special significance on the career of social pedagogue. *Internal* factors have a strong influence on the career of social pedagogue. They are personal expectations, pursuits, education, values, the latter have to be especially emphasised. A unique set of social pedagogue's work determines the decisions of his/her career and satisfaction in activities carried out and the development of career.

2. To identify empirically the factors determining trajectories of social pedagogues' careers, the research design was rationalized. The aim was to answer the following questions: what was the prehistory of a career? Why and how was the decision to become a social pedagogue taken? How does a social pedagogue assess his/her career? What is the set of social pedagogue's values? How did s/he shaped and changed in the course of career? What does the trajectory of the social pedagogue's career look like? Qualitative research strategy was chosen, data was collected from semi-structured interviews, data obtained was analysed by using the method of content analysis.
3. The trajectories of social pedagogues' career trajectories are revealed in four aspects: the beginning of career, career assessment, career values and career changes. In each aspect factors determining the direction of career trajectory and intensity of moving in that trajectory were highlighted. The beginning of social pedagogue's career trajectory was impacted by the first career-related decisions and the first work experience gained from the activities of social area. The choice of social pedagogue's career ten and more years ago was most often spontaneous, determined by existing conditions and influence of significant persons. The strongest internal factor that determined the trajectory of social pedagogue's career is his/her career values. Providing help, self-expression and close cooperation with colleagues. External rewards as an important factor, was not emphasized. Career trajectory is depicted by career changes: change of employment and upgrading qualifications. Next to the career trajectory of social pedagogues, the line of additional activities is drawn. Changed related to other areas of life (development of marital life, improving competences and studies) have influence on career trajectory – more precisely, they plot the points of changes in it but do not change the key attitudes of the person, his/her system of values, and determination to pursue a set goal.

### References

- Arnold, J. (2011). *Career concepts in the 21st century*. British Psychological Society.
- Augustinienė, A. (2007). *Mokinių gebėjimų priimti karjeros sprendimus ugdymo galimybės bendrojo lavinimo mokykloje*. Daktaro disertacija, KTU.
- Clawson, J.G.S. (2010). *Balancing Your Life: Executive Lessons for Work, Family and Self*. Singapore: Mainland Press LTD.

- Dromantaitė-Stancikienė, A., & Gineitienė, Z. (2010). Moterų padėtis Lietuvoje siekiant karjeros. *Socialinių mokslų studijos*, 4(8), 69-88.
- Garniene, D. (2006). *Bendrojo lavinimo mokyklos ugdymo karjerai modelis: parametria ir realizavimo principai*. Daktaro disertacija.
- Gottfredson, L.S. (2005). Using Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise in career guidance and counseling. *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work*, 71-100.
- Greenhaus, J.H., & Callanan, G.A. (Eds.). (2006). *Encyclopedia of career development*. Sage Publications.
- Holland, J.L. (1997). *Making vocational choices: A theory of vocational personalities and work environments*. Psychological Assessment Resources.
- Kroger, J., & Marcia, J.E. (2011). The identity statuses: Origins, meanings, and interpretations. In *Handbook of identity theory and research* (pp. 31-53). NY: Springer.
- Krumboltz, J.D., Mitchell, A.M., & Jones, G.B. (Eds.). (1979). *Social learning and career decision making*. Carroll Press.
- Kučinskienė, R. (2003). *Ugdymo karjerai metodologijos*. Klaipėda: Klaipėdos universiteto leidykla.
- Kvieskienė, G. (2001). Socialinio pedagogo kompetencijos samprata. *Pedagogika*, 53, 63-69.
- McNab, D., Bakker, S., & Fitzsimmons, G. (2005). *Career Values Scale: Manual & Users' Guide*. Edmonton: Psychometrics Publishing.
- O'Hagan, K. (1997). *Social Work Competence. An Historical Perspective. Competence in Social Work Practice*. London and Bristol: Pennsylvania.
- Palujanskienė, A. (2008). *Darbo ir karjeros psichologija*. Kaunas: Judex.
- Petkevičiūtė, N. (2006). *Karjeros valdymas*. Kaunas: VDU.
- Railienė, A., & Gudžinskienė, V. (2012). Gyvenimo įgūdžių ugdymo ir ugdymo karjerai sąsaja: bendrojo lavinimo kontekstas. *Acta Pedagogica Vilnensia*, 29, 61-72.
- Sakalas, A., & Šilingienė, V. (2000). *Personalo valdymas*. Kaunas: Technologija.
- Schein, E. (1990). *Career Anchors: Instrument: Discovering Your Real Values*. London: Prentice Hall.
- Stanišauskienė, V. (2004). *Rengimosi karjerai proceso socioedukaciniai pagrindai*. Monografija. Kaunas: Technologija.
- Super, D.E. (1985). New Dimensions in Adult Vocational and Career Counseling. *Occasional Paper 106*. Education Resources Information Center. Peržiūrėta, 2016 kovo 25, Retrieved from [http://www.eric.ed.gov/ericdocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content\\_storage\\_01/0000019b/80/2e/e4/96.pdf](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ericdocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/2e/e4/96.pdf)
- Super, D.E. (1990). A life-span, life-space approach to career development. In D. Brown, L. Brooks, Associates (Eds.), *Career choice and development* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Super, D.E., Savickas, M.L., Super, C.M., Brown, D., & Brooks, L. (1990). Career choice and development. *Career choice and development*, 197-261.
- Surgėlienė, J. (2014). *Edukacinės aplinkos, įgalinančios mokinius svarstyti karjeros pasirinkimą*. Daktaro disertacijos rankraštis. Kauno technologijos universitetas.
- Šeščovič, M. (2013). *The thematic report on teachers' Professional development*. Europos Komisija.
- Valickas, A., Chomentauskas, G., Dereškevičiūtė, E., Žukauskaitė, I., & Navickienė, L. (2014). *Asmens karjeros valdymas. Metodinė priemonė dėstytojui*. Vilnius, 14-15.



**INOVĀCIJAS VALODU  
IZGLĪTĪBĀ**

*Innovation in Language Education*

