

# Linking protean and boundaryless career with organizational commitment

Linking  
protean and  
boundaryless  
career

## The case of young adults in finance sector

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – Due to the changes in the market, the shift to proactive and self-developed career management is evident. It results in the emergence of contemporary career attitudes, namely, protean and boundaryless ones. Individuals with protean career (PC) and boundaryless career (BC) attitudes may be more inclined to switch jobs, which affect decreased organizational commitment. The purpose of this paper is to analyze whether PC and BC attitudes affect organizational commitment of young adults in finance sector.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The data of 177 young Lithuanian adults from finance sector were collected in quantitative research.

**Findings** – The research results indicate that young adults in finance sector have contemporary career attitudes significantly expressed. The regression analysis findings show that affective commitment is positively predicted by self-directed career management and boundaryless mindset, and negatively predicted by values-driven career orientation and organizational mobility preference. Continuance commitment is negatively predicted by self-directed career management and organizational mobility preference.

**Originality/value** – This research is valuable as few if any studies cover contemporary career attitudes and organizational commitment of already working young adults in finance sector in a European country, namely, Lithuania.

**Keywords** Lithuania, Organizational commitment

**Paper type** Research paper

### Introduction

Due to increasing rates of change in the world, employers are no longer able to assure either their employees' tenures in their current roles or their capabilities to make careers within a single organization for their lifetimes (Volmer and Spurk, 2011). Naturally, that has led to the shift of organizational career orientation toward promoting a novel approach of proactivity and self-direction in career development, where employees themselves guide their own career development rather than relying on the organizations for which they work (Hall, 1996). Therefore, the traditional career pattern is now complemented by contemporary protean career (PC) and boundaryless career (BC) approaches, applications of which are usually referred to as examples of the "new career" (Briscoe and Finkelstein, 2009). A PC may be defined as a mode of self-directed career management where individuals guide their own career success depending on their personal values, work experiences and choices rather than by holding on to or considering organizational values (Hall, 1996, 2002). Likewise, individuals with BC attitudes are now expanding their experiences and personal development beyond their organizational boundaries (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996).

According to the definition of the "new career," individuals may be more inclined to switch jobs or even occupations (Finegold *et al.*, 2002), often "beyond the boundaries of single employment settings" (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1994, p. 307). Therefore, the question of how the "new career" affects organizational commitment has emerged and requires empirical



investigation (Çakmak-Otluoğlu, 2012). Additionally, the issue of how age affects contemporary career attitudes and organizational commitment has been raised. Apparently, young employees differ if compared to those of other ages: young employees tend to choose “new career” approaches (Briscoe and Finkelstein, 2009); their organizational commitment also differs when compared to those of older employees (Singh and Gupta, 2015).

The situation described above requires empirical investigation on whether and how the contemporary career attitudes of young employees affect their organizational commitment in various sectors. This issue has been explored in a few studies (Fernandez and Enache, 2008; Briscoe and Finkelstein, 2009; Çakmak-Otluoğlu, 2012; Enache *et al.*, 2013; Supeli and Creed, 2016). However, the studies have demonstrated mixed results. For example, boundaryless mindsets have a positive relationship with affective commitment in Fernandez and Enache (2008), whereas no relationship was found in Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009); self-directed career management is negatively related to the continuance commitment according to Çakmak-Otluoğlu (2012); however, no significant relationship between variables was indicated in Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009) or in Enache *et al.* (2013).

All the above-mentioned issues require further empirical investigation and testing in different settings in terms of different industries, sectors, countries and respondent characteristics. Therefore, this paper aims to close that under-researched gap. It is original as it complements the existing research on the relationship between contemporary career attitudes and organizational commitment, investigating young adults in the finance sector in Lithuania unlike any other previous research. The problem analyzed in this paper is whether PC and BC attitudes affect the organizational commitment of young adults in the finance sector.

This quantitative study aims to fill that research gap. The paper consists of the following major parts. It starts with an analysis of the major concepts involved, such as PC and BC attitudes and organizational commitment, as well as their interrelationship in the context of young employees in the finance sector. The empirical research testing the interrelationship between the main concepts is presented in the following part. The findings are presented, discussed and summarized in the final part.

## Literature review

### *The concept of career*

During the past few decades, the career has been widely explored by researchers and business practitioners in a variety of contexts and has become a popular debate theme both in academic and professional discourses (Collin and Young, 2000; Sargent and Domberger, 2007). The concept supports ideologies that underpin societies and their stability. However, the traditional nature of the relationship between employees and organizations has been challenged by the changing business environment, which has required for there to be a “new career” approach (Arthur, 2014). The traditional career orientation may be characterized by its static nature, where employment was predominantly experienced within the context of a single organization (Sullivan, 1999); a linear career progression would lead to higher positions, greater power, increased salaries, growing prestige and improved status within the hierarchical system (Levinson, 1978; as cited in Simó Guzmán *et al.*, 2010). Under the traditional approach, organizations were mostly responsible for the development of their employees’ careers, and individuals were usually excluded from their career-planning processes (Valickas *et al.*, 2012).

However, the continuity of one’s career has been challenged by changing economic conditions and flatter organizational structures (Creed and Hood, 2009), which has been accompanied by downsizing (Sullivan, 1999). Additionally, these influential processes have resulted in shifting occupational disciplines, decreasing job security and emerging realizations of career self-management (Turnley and Feldman, 1998). It is assumed that in

relation to this new trend of individuals starting to be concerned with their careers autonomously, PC and BC orientations are more appropriate for capturing the changing settings and have quickly become predominant concepts in the career literature.

Although both the concepts of PC and BC attitudes are united under the “new career” designation and they may share some similarities, they are perceived as being related, however, to distinct constructs (Briscoe *et al.*, 2006; Briscoe and Finkelstein, 2009). This notion has been followed up by a number of other researchers, namely Okurame and Fabunmi (2014), Böhmer and Schinnenburg (2016) and Kuron *et al.* (2016).

The term “protean career” was derived from the sea-god *Proteus* from Greek mythology, because of his powerful gift to alter his shape or substance at will. Hence, in the context of PC orientation, individuals are considered to be responsible for their own career and vocational paths (Briscoe *et al.*, 2006). PC orientation is defined as harnessing freedom and growth, flexibility, adaptability, professional commitment and personal identity to fit in with ever-changing career conditions (Hall, 2004; Hall and Chandler, 2005). Proactive individuals who take responsibility for managing their own careers have been discovered to experience more positive psychological outcomes and express higher satisfaction with their career success, well-being and self-efficacy (Seibert *et al.*, 2001).

Two dimensions of PC orientation were identified by Briscoe and Hall (2006). One of them was values-driven career orientation, proposing the idea that one’s career success is defined and measured depending mostly on internal values and beliefs rather than organizational ones. Another dimension was self-directed career management pursuing one’s own career proactively by defining vocational goals independently.

The BC attitude has been described by DeFillippi and Arthur (1994) as a “sequence of job opportunities that goes beyond the boundaries of a single employment setting” (p. 307). Hence, it is often characterized by an individual’s frequent changes in occupations and especially employing organizations, their portable competencies and the enhancement of their social networks. Arthur and Rousseau (1996) noted that BCs mean “independence from, rather than dependence on, traditional organizational career arrangements” (p. 6). It consists of two components (Briscoe *et al.*, 2006; Sullivan and Arthur, 2006): an organizational mobility preference (equivalent to physical mobility) and a boundaryless mindset (equivalent to psychological mobility). “Organizational mobility preference” refers to an individual’s expressed interest in remaining with the present employer, or their preference to transcend organizational boundaries and work at multiple organizations (Enache *et al.*, 2013). By contrast, a boundaryless mindset indicates the mental mobility of an individual, who enjoys engaging in new projects as a means of gaining new experiences, exploiting opportunities and enhancing new skills. Most importantly, these individuals are expressing comfort and enthusiasm about interacting with other people outside of one organization (Briscoe *et al.*, 2006).

Scholars have begun to note the gradual manifestation of contemporary career attitudes among young adults. A longitudinal study completed in the USA by Reitman and Schnerer (2003) revealed that, even though one-third of MBA graduates pursued the traditional path of lifetime employment, the remaining majority were following new career paths whose characteristics resembled protean or boundaryless attitudes. A relatively sparse number of studies on career orientations have been completed in the European context. Several significant surveys were performed in Britain, exploring the prevalence of “new career” elements among young graduates. King (2004), in his career orientations study of British graduates, defined this cohort as being prone to experiencing nontraditional careers. However, the respondents of this study still did not fully comprehend the notion of self-directed career management, emphasizing instead the importance to them of employability and valuing structured career paths, preferably at a single organization (King, 2004). The results of King’s study were in line with similar research conducted in the

UK by Pitcher and Purcell (1998), and by Sturges *et al.* (2000). In opposition to those studies, Sargent and Domberger (2007) indicated that a multiplicity of career orientations, whether traditional or new, was actually relevant to young graduates.

#### *The concept of organizational commitment*

The altering external environment has accelerated changes in the workplace, has naturally questioned the notion of organizational commitment and increased the number of studies on its influence on organizational effectiveness. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) defined organizational commitment as “a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets” (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001, p. 301). A multidimensional classification of organizational commitment, which received the greatest empirical support in the academic world, was proposed by the researchers Meyer and Allen (1991). The proposed framework contained three mindsets that were intended to characterize commitment, including affective, normative and continuance commitment. Affective commitment reflects personal identification with an organization, as well as a positive emotional attachment and relative engagement, by producing the desire to continue one’s employment. Normative commitment is associated specifically with the obligation to remain with the employing company. Finally, continuance commitment reflects the need to maintain one’s employed position due to the recognition of the associated leaving costs.

Even though normative commitment was originally distinguished as a separate dimension of organizational commitment, growing numbers of researchers have excluded it for the following reasons. Normative commitment is claimed to be closely interrelated (Meyer and Allen, 1991) and hardly distinguishable from affective commitment (Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Bergman, 2006). Moreover, no substantial discrepancy was indicated between the influences of affective and normative commitment on organizational outcomes (Felfe *et al.*, 2008). As a result, scholars are now using affective and continuance commitment components predominantly in their academic studies (Gautam *et al.*, 2004), including for studies on contemporary career attitudes and organizational commitment (Enache *et al.*, 2013). Thus, following the mentioned researchers, the same principle has been applied in this paper, and normative commitment has been excluded from our analysis.

It is assumed that higher commitment may be produced due to employment durability (Gaertner and Nollen, 1989; Ogilvie, 1986), which is closely related to an individual’s aging. Several studies suggest that organizational commitment differs across an individual’s career stages (Kaur and Sandhu, 2010; Allen and Meyer, 1990) and commitment is also most commonly defined using employees’ ages as a variable. Furthermore, some researchers have reported that, in their progression through career stages, older employees in their later career stages are expressing higher commitment than younger ones in the early stages of their careers (e.g. Allen and Meyer, 1990; Meyer and Smith, 2000). This idea has been supported by the study of Khan and Zafar (2013), who have empirically explored affective commitment across demographic groups within the banking sector. They have confirmed that while younger employees are less ready to express emotional commitment to an organization, the opposite is true for older employees with longer tenure (Khan and Zafar, 2013). Additionally, research in the banking sector was also completed by Maguire (2002), who put emphasis on psychological contracts and discovered diminishing organizational commitment and loyalty within those organizations that shifted from traditional to “new” psychological contracts oriented more toward self-directed careers.

#### *The relationship between career attitudes and organizational commitment*

In general, the examination of the relationship between contemporary career attitudes and organizational commitment is not new, but it is still under research. There are a small number of surveys extant representing particular countries and industries.

One of the most cited pieces of research was conducted by Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009) who sampled US MBAs. They assumed that all subscales of PC and BC attitudes correlated negatively with continuance and normative organizational commitment. Their research, however, showed a negative correlation between organizational mobility preference (BC attitudes) and all types of organizational commitment; values-driven career orientation (PC attitudes) correlated negatively with normative commitment only; self-directed career management (PC) and boundaryless mindsets (BC) did not have any significant relationship with organizational commitment.

Enache *et al.* (2013) pursued a similar research design in the context of distance learning students in Spain. Their research, similarly to the findings of Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009), indicated the significant negative relationship between organizational mobility preference (BC) and affective and continuance commitment. (Normative commitment was not investigated.) None of the other contemporary career subscales had significant relationships with organizational commitment.

Sample findings in Turkey (Çakmak-Otluoğlu, 2012) are in line with those of Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009) and Enache *et al.* (2013), as organizational mobility preference (BC) correlated negatively with all three types of organizational commitment. However, the results are ambiguous when Çakmak-Otluoğlu (2012) examined the other dimensions of contemporary career attitudes: self-directed career management (PC) was positively correlated with affective and normative commitment and negatively correlated with continuance commitment. Values-driven career orientation (PC) negatively correlated with normative commitment.

Supeli and Creed (2016) tested the relationship between PC attitudes and affective organizational commitment in their longitudinal study. They confirmed the assumption that higher PC attitudes were related negatively with affective organizational commitment when measured after six months.

Summing up, in general, the research indicates that there is a negative relationship between contemporary career attitudes and organizational commitment. However, the relationship is not necessarily confirmed when specific attitudes and specific types of organizational commitment are examined.

The lack of research in other contexts is obvious. Basically, contemporary career attitudes receive the greatest attention from western researchers (e.g. Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009), Briscoe *et al.* (2006) in the USA, and Enache *et al.* (2013) in Spain.) Of the few recent non-western surveys that have been undertaken, those by Çakmak-Otluoğlu (2012) in Turkey, and by Supeli and Creed (2016) in Indonesia have been notable. No research on contemporary career attitudes and organizational commitment has been found in the Lithuanian context, as of yet. Also, most of these studies have employed young graduate students as respondents. Therefore, this research targeted young adults, particularly those employed in the finance sector, and aimed to examine to what extent contemporary career attitudes are related to organizational commitment in Lithuania.

#### *Theoretical framework and hypothesis development*

We followed the research of Briscoe *et al.* (2006), Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009), Çakmak-Otluoğlu (2012), Enache *et al.* (2013) and Supeli and Creed (2016) for hypothesis development. PCs focus more on psychological rather than objective career success factors (Briscoe *et al.*, 2006). The reasons that keep employees committed to their companies are not improved statuses, higher salaries or necessity (continuance commitment), but emotional attachments instead (affective commitment). Çakmak-Otluoğlu (2012) confirmed the positive relationship between self-directed career management and affective commitment and its negative relationship with continuance commitment. Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009) assumed that both relationships between directed career management and organizational

commitment types are negative. No significant relationship was found in their survey; however, the correlation analysis indicated a more positive connection with affective commitment and a more negative association with continuance commitment. Therefore, as self-directed career management, as one dimension of PC development, has been seen to be positively related to affective commitment and negatively related to continuance commitment, for this study we proposed:

*H1.* Self-directed career management (SD) is positively related to affective commitment (AC).

*H2.* Self-directed career management (SD) is negatively related to continuance commitment (CC).

When considering values-driven career orientation, it is believed that an individual, who has not developed clear values, is predisposed to obtain the ones institutionalized by the employing organization (Enache *et al.*, 2013). Hence, it increases the likelihood of these employees bonding intuitively with their employers and expressing higher levels of affective commitment. This would be in line with the findings of Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009), and Çakmak-Otluoğlu (2012) where, although statistically insignificant, the negative relationship between values-driven orientation and affective commitment has been demonstrated.

Furthermore, values-driven individuals are argued to place emphasis on their own priorities and needs instead of their companies' (Briscoe *et al.*, 2006). Thus, it negatively affects continuance commitment. This assumption was raised by Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009) and Enache *et al.* (2013). Although the relationship was not statistically significant, there was a negative trend in both surveys. As a result, it is assumed that:

*H3.* Values-driven career orientation (VD) in career management is negatively related to affective commitment (AC).

*H4.* Values-driven career orientation (VD) in career management is negatively related to continuance commitment (CC).

For individuals with organizational mobility preference, more specifically, those expressing an interest in physical employment mobility involving a crossing of organizational boundaries, continuous work in a single organization is not an issue (Briscoe *et al.*, 2006). These individuals would "even prefer a career played out across several employers" (Briscoe *et al.*, 2006, p. 31). They are open to new employment opportunities outside of their companies and are not anticipated to experience continuance commitment. By contrast, Meyer *et al.* (2004) identified that employees who had lower organizational mobility preference were more risk-averse concerning their security, which led to higher continuance commitment. Additionally, high levels of organizational mobility preference were presumed to restrain the development of affective bonds between individuals and employing organizations. Moreover, the previous research studies of Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009), Çakmak-Otluoğlu (2012) and Enache *et al.* (2013) have confirmed the significant negative relationship between organizational mobility preferences and affective and continuance commitment. Hence, the following hypotheses are assumed:

*H5.* Organizational mobility preference (OMP) is negatively related to affective commitment (AC).

*H6.* Organizational mobility preference (OMP) is negatively related to continuance commitment (CC).

A boundaryless mindset, in general, signals a willingness to cross the boundaries of one organization. It is referred to as a broader attitude toward exterior business environments and is related to expressed comfort about developing and maintaining active relationships

beyond the company (Briscoe *et al.*, 2006). Even though the greater part of the previous research has promoted the assumption that boundaryless mindsets are related to organizational commitment, the relationship was not shown to be statistically significant in Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009), Çakmak-Otluoğlu (2012) or Enache *et al.* (2013). Moreover, the possible direction of the relationship (positive or negative) was found to be hard to predict. Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009) assumed that the relationship of boundaryless mindsets was negative with both affective and continuance commitment. Enache *et al.* (2013) proposed the same assumption in terms of boundaryless mindsets and continuance commitment; however, the author provides the opposite assumption for boundaryless mindsets and affective commitment. Fernandez and Enache (2008) argued that individuals who are more given to having boundaryless mindsets, together with organizational mobility preferences and self-directed career management, demonstrated high affective commitment.

We agree with the hypothesis of the previous research (Briscoe and Finkelstein, 2009; Enache *et al.*, 2013) and claim that boundaryless mindsets relate negatively to continuance commitment. However, we have followed in the direction of Fernandez and Enache (2008) and assumed that there is a positive relationship between boundaryless mindsets and affective commitment:

H7. A boundaryless mindset (BM) is positively related to affective commitment (AC).

H8. A boundaryless mindset (BM) is negatively related to continuance commitment (CC).

The theoretical framework of this research is visualized and presented in Figure 1.

### Research methodology

#### Research setting and sample

The relationship between contemporary career attitudes and organizational commitment was tested in the finance sector in Lithuania, which has never been done before. The survey conducted in Lithuania might provide additional insights for career and organizational commitment research due to the historical and political aspects of the country. Based on the country's historical background, during the Soviet occupation period, a career was perceived as a traditional linear path based on vocational orientation (Rosinaitė, 2010). Only after gaining the country's independence, did the career concept begin to assume more meaning for Lithuanians in response to external environmental changes (Rosinaitė, 2010). Although Petkevičiūtė (2013) claimed that a vertical career progression still remains the norm in a number of organizations and that it is too early to argue that the old paradigm of career has significantly diminished, some facts indicate a decrease in the traditional nature of careers and occupational tenure in Lithuania. Since 2008, the number of registered vacancies for temporary job positions significantly increased from 13,900 to 40,200 in 2014 (Lithuanian Labour Exchange, 2014). Similarly, the number of individuals seeking temporary jobs also increased from 13,700 to 26,900 during the same period. Moreover, a survey by Grafton Recruitment (2011) revealed a growing mobility among workers in the country, reaching 69.5 percent in that year. The issue of organizational commitment and the mobility of young

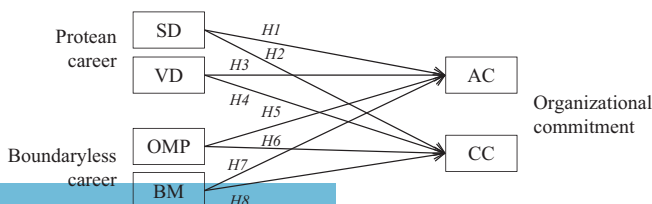


Figure 1. Theoretical research framework

adults in Lithuania has also been raised in the research of Vaiginienė *et al.* (2018). They interviewed managers who complained of the high emigration rates, low commitment and poor work attitudes among young people (Grafton Recruitment, 2011). Kajieta (2016) indicated increasing voluntary employee turnover in Lithuania, including in the finance sector. In general, working conditions in the finance sector depend on the positions studied and the company specifics. For example, large, multinational companies provide more career possibilities than small companies; some finance sector employees are freelancers (e.g. in insurance). All of the above facts indicate the relevance of investigating contemporary career attitudes and organizational commitment in Lithuania.

An online questionnaire was created to contact respondents who were young individuals working in the Lithuanian finance sector. According to the Republic of Lithuania’s Law on Youth Policy Framework, a young person is considered to be an individual aged between 14 and 29 years. Since few individuals enter the labor market at the age of 14 and because the financial sector does not employ underaged individuals, the range of this study consisted of adults who were over 18 years old.

Since it is barely possible to determine how many individuals aged 18–29 years are working in the finance sector, several samples of related surveys were revised, and these have been summarized in Table I. As can be seen, the respondents’ numbers in related studies varied; on average it was 157. Hence, this number was considered as a guideline for this study’s representativeness in terms of its number of responses.

The convenience sampling data gathering method was used. A link to the online questionnaire was sent to potential respondents by e-mail and through social networks. Considering the high rate of social network usage among young people, the chosen method was appropriate.

A total number of 191 online questionnaires were submitted, exceeding the estimated minimum of 157 responses. After handling the missing and inappropriate data, 177 survey entries were used for further analysis. The survey was completed by 130 women and 47 men, constituting 73.4 and 26.6 percent of the total respondents’ numbers, respectively. The average age of the respondents was 25.23 years, ranging from the youngest respondents, who were 21, to the oldest who were 29 years old. A total of 68.40 percent of the respondents held a bachelor’s degree, while 31.60 percent had a master’s degree. The majority of them (96 percent) worked for a bank, while the remainder (4 percent) were employed by other financial institutions.

*Instruments*

A structured online questionnaire was used. The scales proposed by Briscoe *et al.* (2006) were adapted and used to assess PC and BC attitudes. PC attitudes are described by:

- Self-directed career management. The sample statement was: “I am responsible for my success or failure in my career.” In this study, Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  of this scale, consisting of five items, was 0.668.

**Table I.**  
Number of  
respondents in  
similar studies

| Authors                          | Research   | Respondent numbers |
|----------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Volmer and Spurk (2011)          | Protean and boundaryless career attitudes: relationships with subjective and objective career success  | 116                |
| Simó Guzmán <i>et al.</i> (2010) | Career profiles and organizational commitment: analyzing necessary and sufficient conditions           | 134                |
| Enache <i>et al.</i> (2013)      | Organizational commitment within a contemporary career context   | 167                |
| Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009)   | The “new career” and organizational commitment. Do boundaryless and protean attitudes make difference? | 212                |



- Values-driven career orientation. The sample statement was: "I'll follow my own guidance if my company asks me to do something that goes against my values." Four items. Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.724$ .  
BC attitudes are described by:
- Organizational mobility preference. The sample statement was: "In my ideal career, I would work for only one organization." Four items. Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.866$ . The values of reversed questions were inverted for further analysis.
- Boundaryless mindset. The sample statement was: "I enjoy working with people outside of my organization." Five items. Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.795$ .

Organizational commitment was examined by employing the measurement developed by Allen and Meyer (1990):

- Affective commitment. The sample statement was: "I would be very happy to spend rest of my career at this organization." Four items. Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.826$ .
- Continuance commitment. The sample statement was: "Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire." Four items. Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.616$ .

Some demographic questions were included to evaluate gender, educational level, age and industry (filter questions). A seven-point Likert scale was used to evaluate the statements of the scales, where "1" meant "To little or no extent" and "7" meant "To a great extent." However, none of the demographical variables was found to be significant when included in regression analysis testing to determine the influence of contemporary career attitudes on organizational commitment ( $p > 0.05$ ).

The questionnaire was provided in the Lithuanian language. The available validated scales of Briscoe *et al.* (2006) and Allen and Meyer (1990) were translated into Lithuanian. The internal consistency of the scales was tested by calculating Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficients. All coefficient  $\alpha$  values were present within the categories of good and acceptable internal consistency intervals (Kline, 2000). Hence, all the scales were valid and reliable for further statistical analysis.

Besides internal scale reliability, multicollinearity, correlation and regression analysis was performed. The issue of multicollinearity between variables was considered. Multicollinearity analysis was performed, and no issues were indicated as variance inflation factor values ranged from 1.07 to 1.79. Also, the possibility of common method bias was checked by using Harman's one-factor test (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986). The factor analysis, with all variables entered, indicated that the greatest variance explained by one factor was less than 50 percent. Therefore, the common method bias was not a problem in this research.

## Research results

### *Descriptive data analysis*

As can be seen in Table II, the protean attitude had the highest mean value, while organizational commitment had the significantly lowest means. Self-directed career management in PC attitude was evaluated to be relatively high (5.39, SD = 0.894), and values-driven career orientation was a bit lower (4.94, SD = 1.095). Considering BC attitude, the expression of boundaryless mindsets was quite strong (5.12, SD = 1.158), while organizational mobility preference demonstrated lower values (3.93, SD = 1.433). Affective commitment and continuance commitment were evaluated similarly: 3.47 (SD = 1.333) and 3.59 (SD = 1.235), respectively.

### *Correlation and regression analysis*

Correlation was applied to verify the relationships between contemporary career attitudes and organizational commitment. Table II also describes the correlation between the scales.

At this bivariate level, the study's results were in compliance with the estimated negative relationship between self-directed career management (PC) and continuance commitment ( $r = -0.166, p < 0.05$ ). Thus, *H2* is accepted. Additionally, significant negative relationships arose between organizational mobility preference (BC) and both affective ( $r = -0.585, p < 0.01$ ) and continuance ( $r = -0.470, p < 0.01$ ) commitments. Also, values-driven career orientation (PC) resulted in a negative relationship with affective commitment ( $r = -0.171, p < 0.05$ ), as was anticipated by *H3*. Therefore, the following hypotheses were accepted: *H3, H5* and *H6*. Finally, no significant relationships were detected between self-directed career management (PC) and affective commitment, between values-driven career orientation (PC) and affective commitment, or between boundaryless mindsets (BC) and affective or continuance commitment. Therefore, the regression analysis was described further to test *H1, H4, H7* and *H8*.

In order to test how organizational commitment could be predicted by contemporary career attitudes, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. Affective and continuance commitments were analyzed separately as dependent variables for simultaneous regression on all career subconstructs. The Enter method for running the regressions was used. The contribution of each career attitude subscale to predicting organizational commitment is outlined in Table III.

In general, the regression results reported substantially high adjusted  $R^2$  values that represented the best fit of the degree of relationship. In particular, adjusted  $R^2$  values resulted in being 0.394 and 0.235 for affective and continuance commitments, respectively. This tells us that career attitudes can account for 39.4 percent of the variation in affective commitment and 23.5 percent of the variation in continuance commitment. Moreover, since the given *F*-ratio fell under the significance level of  $p < 0.01$ , the regression model predicting the outcome variable may be indicated as being statistically significant.

In line with Pearson's correlation results, regression analysis indicated a highly significant self-directed career management (PC) contribution to continuance commitment as well ( $\beta = -0.199, p < 0.01$ ). In addition, the analysis highlighted the strongest contribution being

**Table II.**  
Means, standard deviations and intercorrelations among study variables

| Variable                                  | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | 1       | 2       | 3      | 4        | 5       |
|---|----------|-----------|---------|---------|--------|----------|---------|
| 1. PC. Self-directed career management    | 5.39     | 0.894     |         |         |        |          |         |
| 2. PC. Values-driven career orientation   | 4.94     | 1.095     | 0.410** |         |        |          |         |
| 3. BC. Boundaryless mindset               | 5.12     | 1.158     | 0.326** | 0.168*  |        |          |         |
| 4. BC. Organizational mobility preference | 3.93     | 1.433     | 0.015   | 0.082   | 0.184* |          |         |
| 5. Affective commitment                   | 3.47     | 1.333     | 0.100   | -0.171* | 0.055  | -0.585** |         |
| 6. Continuance commitment                 | 3.59     | 1.235     | -0.166* | -0.064  | -0.082 | -0.470** | 0.426** |

**Notes:** PC, protean career; BC, boundaryless career. \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$

**Table III.**  
Regression analysis for contemporary career attitudes and organizational commitment

| Predictors                             | Affective commitment | Continuance commitment |
|--|----------------------|------------------------|
| PC. Self-directed career management    | 0.144*               | -0.199**               |
| PC. Values-driven career orientation   | -0.207**             | 0.046                  |
| BC. Boundaryless mindset               | 0.153*               | 0.064                  |
| BC. Organizational mobility preference | -0.598**             | -0.483**               |
| $R^2$                                  | 0.408                | 0.252                  |
| Adjusted $R^2$                         | 0.394                | 0.235                  |
| <i>F</i>                               | 29.621**             | 14.489**               |

**Notes:** PC, protean career; BC, boundaryless career. \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$

made by organizational mobility preference (BC) to the research model. Mobility preference proved to be strongly significant, having the highest negative relation to affective commitment ( $\beta = -0.598$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and continuance commitment ( $\beta = -0.483$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) compared to the remaining subscales. Although the remaining linkages between the constructs were not supported by correlation analysis, the regression analysis results demonstrated the significant contribution made by career attitudes in predicting organizational commitment, with the exception of the relationship of values-driven career orientation (PC) and boundaryless mindset (BC) with continuance commitment. More specifically, although under Pearson's correlation, affective commitment was negatively related to values-driven career orientation (PC) and mobility preference (BC), these subscales still shared the variance with self-directed career management (PC) and boundaryless mindsets (BC) in explaining the relationship itself.

To put it differently, the regression analysis indicated that affective commitment is negatively impacted by values-driven career orientation (PC) and organizational mobility preferences (BC), while it is positively impacted by boundaryless mindsets (BC) and self-directed career management (PC). It means that *H1* and *H7* are accepted. Continuance commitment is negatively influenced by self-directed career management (PC) and organizational mobility preference (BC). The other contemporary career management dimensions do not seem to affect continuance commitment. Therefore, *H4* and *H8* are rejected. To sum up, correlation and regression analysis showed which hypotheses could be accepted or rejected (Table IV).

### Discussion, managerial implications and limitations

From the overview of academic sources provided at the beginning of the study, we could sense a loosening relationship between employees and organizations (Volmer and Spurk, 2011). This phenomenon emerged due to employees becoming free agents in the labor market and continually looking to find the highest bidders for their expertise. Hence, that suggested a diminishing commitment to single employers and challenged the traditional notion of the linear career path (e.g. Briscoe and Finkelstein, 2009; Sargent and Domberger, 2007). Indeed, when examining labor relationships through the lens of the new career orientations, the results of this study were partially in line with the assumptions of the considered issue.

Furthermore, we discussed how the findings of this survey appear in the light of previous ones. This research provides feasible support for the previous research by indicating strong negative relationships between organizational mobility preference and both affective and continuance commitment. As was assumed, employees expressing a preference for stronger physical mobility in relation to passing across organizational boundaries were not supposed to develop affective commitment. Equally, study findings

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <i>H1</i> Self-directed career management (PC) is positively related to affective commitment                         | Accepted |
| <i>H2</i> Self-directed career management (PC) is negatively related to continuance commitment                       | Accepted |
| <i>H3</i> Values-driven career orientation (PC) in career management is positively related to affective commitment   | Rejected |
| <i>H4</i> Values-driven career orientation (PC) in career management is negatively related to continuance commitment | Rejected |
| <i>H5</i> Organizational mobility preference (BC) is negatively related to affective commitment                      | Accepted |
| <i>H6</i> Organizational mobility preference (BC) is negatively related to continuance commitment.                   | Accepted |
| <i>H7</i> Boundaryless mindset (BC) is positively related to affective commitment                                    | Accepted |
| <i>H8</i> Boundaryless mindset (BC) is negatively related to continuance commitment                                  | Rejected |

Notes: PC, protean career; BC, boundaryless career

**Table IV.**  
Outcomes of  
hypotheses tests

suggested that young individuals who did not perceive their careers to be limited by a single organization were not expected to develop emotional attachments with their employers. Since research respondents were young specialists working in the finance sector, this outcome is in line with Khan and Zafar's (2013) study findings in the banking sector, which similarly suggested a lower affective commitment among young individuals. Organizational mobility preference seems to be a vigorous negative predictor of organizational commitment, similarly to the studies completed by Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009) in the USA, Enache *et al.* (2013) in Spain and Çakmak-Otluoğlu (2012) in Turkey, who examined similar relationships as part of new career attitudes.

The relationship between boundaryless mindsets and organizational commitment was the hardest to predict, as it was not confirmed in several previous cases (Briscoe and Finkelstein, 2009; Enache *et al.*, 2013; Çakmak-Otluoğlu, 2012). Boundaryless mindsets were reported to be weak and insignificant in relation to continuance commitment. That goes in line with the findings of Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009) and Enache *et al.* (2013). However, a boundaryless mindset is a significant predictor of affective commitment. It contradicts the findings of Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009) and confirms the findings of Fernandez and Enache (2008) who believe that boundaryless mindsets relate positively to affective commitment if taken together with organizational mobility preference and self-directed career management. Our research shows that boundaryless mindsets predict affective commitment, even if taken alone. A boundaryless mindset is related to psychological mobility. Hence, probably as long as a company is able to provide more varied experiences and other opportunities inside the company, employees appreciate it and are willing to stay.

When putting the PC attitude under examination, research results indicated a negative linkage between self-directed career management and continuance commitment, which opposed the implications of the studies that have been referred to previously, both of Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009) and Enache *et al.* (2013), who found no significant relationship between self-directed career management and either affective or continuance commitment. On the other hand, it confirmed Çakmak-Otluoğlu's (2012) study, who also indicated that there was a negative relationship between self-directed career management and continuance commitment. We might assume that individuals who proactively manage their own careers are less focused on the perceived costs of leaving their organizations, as they are not afraid to leave their comfort zones. Thus, it may be concluded that self-directed career management does not favor continuance commitment and vice versa.

This study also found self-directed career management being a positive predictor of affective commitment. The findings contradict the studies of Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009) and Enache *et al.* (2013) and confirm that of Çakmak-Otluoğlu (2012), who indicated the positive link between the constructs. This finding itself was a bit contradictory. Çakmak-Otluoğlu (2012), for instance, assumed a negative relationship between self-directed career management and affective commitment. However, the research proved the contrary. We assumed that the positive impact of self-directed career management on affective commitment might be explained in the following way: as long as the organizational goals and policies match (or at least do not interfere) with independently defined individual career goals, an employee is willing to stay, and thus affective commitment is high.

Despite the hypothesized negative link between values-driven career orientation and continuance commitment, empirical research results could not support this assumption due to their lack of significance in the relationship, just as in the studies of Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009) and Enache *et al.* (2013). The findings revealed a negative link between values-driven career orientation and affective commitment. It replicated the same outcome of the researchers Enache *et al.* (2013), who also reported a negative (however insignificant) link between the variables. This finding indirectly related to Fernandez and Enache (2008), who argued that affective commitment is high when organizational mobility preference,

boundaryless mindsets and self-directed career management are high, when an individual is not demonstrating values-driven career orientation. That could be explained by the correspondence between an individual's and their organization's values. More precisely, as indicated by Enache *et al.* (2013), the level of expressed emotional attachment might perhaps be dependent on the extent to which personal values match the ones inculcated by an employing organization. Therefore, employees with high internal values manage their careers according to their own standards which does not necessarily correspond with their employers' values, resulting in a negative linkage to emotional commitment. Taking this into consideration, the linkage between values-driven career orientation and affective attachment apparently contains a broader context of situational factors. Still, in case the personal and organizational values do fit, the probability of a positive link to affective dedication and sense of belonging shall remain.

On the whole, contemporary career attitudes were evaluated to be higher than organizational commitment, and the majority of the contemporary career dimensions were related negatively to organizational commitment in this study of young Lithuanians in the finance sector. Indeed, all the discovered significant relationships between continuance commitment and career attitude dimensions were negative. Namely, continuance commitment demonstrated negative relationships with self-directed career management and organizational mobility preference, and affective commitment was negatively related to values-driven career orientation and organizational mobility preference. On the other hand, it is positively significantly predicted by self-directed career management and boundaryless mindsets.

In general, this study complements the discussion on the relationship between contemporary career attitudes and organizational commitment. It is valuable since none of the previous research examining young adults regarding this relationship was conducted in the finance sector in Lithuania. It is evident that young adults in Lithuania have highly expressed contemporary career attitudes which impact their organizational commitment. The Managerial implications section that follows offers practical guidelines about how companies can deal with this.

The paper also reveals some interesting findings concerning the conceptualization of contemporary career constructs as described further. Our findings resemble the study of Çakmak-Otluoğlu (2012) mostly. Since Lithuania and Turkey have little if any similarities in terms of their histories and cultures (e.g. [www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/](http://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/)), the results might be related to the resembling characteristics of the participants (white-collar employees in both studies) and their companies (private sector in both studies). Considering current and previously analyzed research, affective and normative organizational commitments are mostly significantly related to organizational mobility preference (BC), while they are least significantly related to the boundaryless mindset dimension (BC). As a matter of fact, boundaryless mindsets (BC) did not have any significant relationship with organizational commitment in any of the following studies: Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009), Enache *et al.* (2013) and Çakmak-Otluoğlu (2012). It is an interesting finding since both organizational mobility preference (BC) and boundaryless mindsets (BC) comprise BC concepts. It raises the need for further research and a rethinking of the conceptualization of the BC construct. The mentioned surveys indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship for only one dimension of BC construct with the other variables. An additional BC construct scale validation is proposed to assess whether these particular dimensions comprise the construct and how the question formulation can be adjusted.

#### *Managerial implications*

First of all, organizations should not strictly follow the stereotypes, rushing to classify their employees into traditional and contemporary career orientation categories, since it is evident

that the later concepts are still at their emergence stage. It does not necessarily mean that pursuing BC or PC orientations to some extent necessarily leads to immediately lower levels of commitment. Some elements of contemporary career attitudes, such as self-directed career management and boundaryless mindsets, actually increase affective commitment. This means that young adults decide to stay at companies when they feel emotionally attached to them. Thus, affective commitment can be increased by allowing individuals to take their own responsibility for career management and by informing/providing unexplored mobility opportunities inside the company (e.g. internal exchange programs, new project developments that cross the borders of one team or department, etc.).

At the policy level, since new career attitudes are related to better employability, the educational system might ensure the awareness and promotion of them. For instance, PC attitudes can be strengthened by helping students understand their own values, career goals and by delegating responsibility for them in formal or informal study programs. BC attitudes can be fostered by offering international study mobility opportunities or local/international work internships. That way, young people can gain new experiences and interact with various others in different settings.

#### *Study limitations and future research implications*

This research is limited on several grounds. First of all, the study sample was comprised only of young individuals aged up to 30 years old, each holding at least a bachelor's degree. Hence, future research could explore and compare samples of young individuals with older ones by additionally including a more heterogeneous group of respondents. Also, the sample size could be enlarged to increase its generalizability. Second, the study sample originated from a single sector in a single country. Consequently, it is suggested that cross-sector and cross-country research should be carried out. Moreover, additional organizational variables could be included, for example, size, sector, public vs private, local vs multinational companies and so on.

The normative commitment was excluded in this study following the ideas of Bergman (2006) and Enache *et al.* (2013). However, it might be valuable to include it in future research to make the results comparable with the other contemporary career and organizational commitment surveys (e.g. Briscoe and Finkelstein, 2009; Çakmak-Otluoğlu, 2012).

Finally, the regression analysis suggested that there must be more variables along with career attitudes to predict organizational commitment that are to be revealed in future studies. The study findings reveal some peculiarities among Lithuanian youth's career attitudes and organizational commitment. However, it does not include other specific aspects which might influence the organizational commitment of young employees. Some disadvantageous conditions at Lithuanian companies are as follows (Vaiginienė *et al.*, 2018): traditional working hours without any possibility of working remotely, slow career advancement, laggardly wage increase potentials, relatively low wage levels compared to other European countries, incompetent supervisors and so on. All of those factors mentioned have resulted in high emigration and low organizational commitment in Lithuania. Therefore, future research could include human resource management practices, work arrangements and leadership, together with career attitudes, to better predict organizational commitment.

In general, the majority of the findings of this study were in line with those of previous research. Not surprisingly, organizational mobility preference significantly negatively related to continuance commitment as in Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009), Enache *et al.* (2013) and Çakmak-Otluoğlu (2012). However, the other dimensions of contemporary career attitudes had contradictory relationships with organizational commitment. We admit that the research samples and designs in the mentioned surveys were different and made comparison harder. Nonetheless, this research has complemented the field of contemporary career and organizational commitment.

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