

KAZIMIERZ MROZOWICZ\*

## Predisposition as the basis of professional competence and organisational knowledge

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**Key words:** professional talent, ability

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**S u m m a r y:** Each participant in an organisation has a certain potential for development: skills, preferences and interests conducive to specific groups of occupations, types of activities or types of careers. Sufficiently early and accurate diagnosis of this potential is not only an important personal question, but first and foremost an issue of major importance for the society and organisation, including also economic aspects. Indeed, classics of economics have pointed out that the wealth of nations comes not only from the general principles of market management but also from that of how they are used for individual abilities, talents and motivation of creative activities. One of the main objectives of the education system at any level should be an early identification of skills and talents and training them for effective and creative activities. Age of workers should not be here a general factor, because the intellectual development of human resources is important at every stage of their career.

### 1. Introduction

In the era of knowledge society and changes in the business environment of its traditional resources in terms of classical theories of business, or work the land and capital have lost their dominant position (Calhoun, 2002). Revaluing their significance compels operators, as well as whole economies to seek new resources in order to decide the future of their competitive advantage. It seems that the resource potential of progressive investment and, according to Peter Drucker, even “the only economic resource” (Drucker, 1993 after Strojny, 1999, p. 12), is contemporary knowledge “recognised as the main and most important determinant of the capacity development of the economy and society” (Kornacka, Marek, 2001, p. 278). The higher intellectual

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\* Kazimierz Mrozowicz, PhD—Department of Management, Małopolska School of Economics in Tarnów.

potential of an organisation in terms of professional competence level of staff morale and staff employees, including the quality of transmission and accommodation resources, the higher is the knowledge, of course. An indispensable part of this process is a properly targeted strategy for an organisation, continuously stimulated and supported by middle and senior managers' activities.

Due to that, the main purpose of this study is a presentation of knowledge about methods of diagnosis of occupational preferences and interests. They were recognised as an example in the world of science and practice of the concept by John Holland, who reached the highest level of relevance in a study of children and adolescents (Bajcar et al., 2006, p. 33). It is worthwhile, however, presenting as an example organisational methods of enriching knowledge, as well as a research tool commonly used in the practice of vocational guidance in Poland. It should be reminded that the major support to education systems is expected from the counseling and psychological diagnoses and a focus on individual differences (mental abilities, special abilities, preferences and professional interests, talents). In this sense it can be postulated that current and constantly evolving knowledge of psychological theories comes from the very pragmatic need, thus describing various forms of mental focus and personality of members of an organisation. Managers and executives should have a wider than ever grasp of learning about the orientation mechanisms of the mind, shaping the direction of interest and motivation, which becomes a source of strategic potential of the organisation (Bajcar et al., 2006, p. 9).

## 2. Organisational knowledge as a strategic resource of an organisation

As a part of our culture and civilisation educational processes not only shape the minds and in general terms, but also prepare to choose a profession or career path. Knowledge and ability of employees (their cognitive styles, personality, intuition, intuition, experience, etc.), although a valuable source of information, like the signals from the environment of the organisation (customers, suppliers, partners, competitors), are not used by them, and even more—are overlooked. A way to solve such problems may be a new concept of managing an organisation as a “collection of processes for the creation, dissemination and use of knowledge to the objectives of the organization” (Murray, Myers, 1997, p. 35). Knowledge management, however, is still an exotic concept, which, as a practical allocation method of directing IT resources is ignored by the company (Mrozowicz, 2007, p. 441).

Every company, on the basis of available resources: databases, culture, intellectual resources in the form of trained staff, history and experience, could offer their own idea for a knowledge management system. Thomas Davenport and Laurence Prusak call for the start of the construction knowledge management system based on avail-

able resources. For such a system to be able to operate, there is a need for presentation of intellectual assets of organisations whose smallest element is a single worker, able to transform data into knowledge and use it for the benefit of the company (Dav-enport, Prusak, 1998). However, in many processes critical to the business collective knowledge may be as important or even more important (Mrozowicz, 2007).

In the minds of workers there is a large part of the knowledge base representing intellectual assets of a company, which are the sum of individual knowledge of workers and teams of employees that the organisation uses in its general activities. Knowledge is evolving, which is a manifestation of the learning process of an organisation (Probst, Raub, Romhardt, 2004). Evolution is, of course, also owned by an organisation's broadly and ambiguously understood intellectual capital. The above-mentioned ambiguity endorses diversity of terms, which specify the same values of intellectual resources, intangible assets, unmeasurable assets (Edvinsson, Malone, 2001).

Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi in their now classic monograph distinguish two types of knowledge: tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge (Nonaka, Takeuchi, 2001). Tacit knowledge is extremely difficult, or impossible to codify. It is this type of knowledge that is available to a shoemaker and by the existence of which, even reading a dozen books will not allow the researcher to make as good shoes. They cannot do so without personal contact and practices through which such knowledge can be transferred (this process is also called socialisation of knowledge, and its effect 'hot know-how'). Tacit knowledge can be seen as immanent, internal knowledge, the context in which we perceive the information gained. Thanks to this the very fact is subject to different interpretations by the public. It is due to tacit knowledge that an expert is an expert. It is hidden by a lack of knowledge, some people cannot cope with solving technical problems that are not explicitly described in the instructions. Explicit knowledge, in turn, is the knowledge that is relatively easy to codify. There are various types of process descriptions, instructions and explanations of methods, suggestions for determining how to perform their respective tasks, algorithms and often covert operations, etc. The knowledge to be transmitted during the socialisation process, group work and supervision of teachers, mentors, the 'masters'.

When you manage to capture, communicate and share tacit knowledge, the process of knowledge articulation (externalisation) takes place. Yes, presented knowledge is structured and classified in the process of joining (combinations). Finally, knowledge can be assimilated (internalisation) in the process of imitation, comprehension and learning. The process of knowledge management does not end, and each transition continuum—a cycle of knowledge management—should move us to a higher level of something like a spiral, through the progress of quality of organisational knowledge. Knowledge is incorporated in the system of values, attitudes and motivation of employees in the phenomenological and collective dimension to this composition in order to regulate emotions, thinking and behaviour of members of an organisation.

### 3. Professional preferences in the theory by John Holland

Preferences and professional interests are a highly important component of an individual personality, functioning in a very variable and diverse socio-economic reality. Preferences are, however, the fundamental character and determine the direction of a more primitive type of a cognitive person. Interests indicate the specific types of situations, objects and activities whose exploration is possible, interesting and important for the person. A profile of interest is a form of a behavioural preference for implementing the conditions created by the environment (family, peer, school, professional, etc.).

The theory developed by John Holland (Holland, 1985; 1992) correctly recognised the fact that the choice of occupation is not a narrow, unplanned, trivial and transcendent issue towards a unit, but a form of expression throughout her personality, and therefore also some trends are encoded in the subconsciousness. A psychoanalytical thread of this ascertainment seems to be confirmed by analyses indicating that the extent of the impact of heredity on the profile of professional interest is analogous to the impact of the succession process for the basic personality traits (Plomin et al., 2001). Holland calls it an attention to the fact that the choice of a profession and career path within our culture and civilisation is indeed an important aspect of the development of human personality. As a part of our culture, the choice of occupation and relationship to the career has become an important means of personality expression. However, the process of training and choice of profession are not made easily, and thus seamlessly. It runs through several stages, among which the process of differentiation of preferences and their convergence in the context of an entity is essential, and also offers of development paths available socially and educationally (Gottfredson, 1986; Nosal, Piskorz, Świątnicki, 1997). This process is most fully described by Raymond Cattell in the theory of the development of mental capacities and competences (Gottfredson, 1996).

#### 2.1. General regularity of professional development

The theory of Holland set up four cardinal assumptions which characterise the overall accuracy of professional development (Nosal, 1990, p. 2, 5), the structure of occupational preferences and interaction between the human being and their environment; it poses a different choice of career paths. Due to the nature of deductive analysis undertaken, we will introduce them briefly. First, the structure of occupational preferences of most people can be classified, taking into account the reference system in a form of six types of preferences: realistic, research, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional. Each of these types of preferences is associated with its specific way of acquiring, collecting and understanding information about occupations and career paths. These preferences should be considered as a type of theoretical (model) and the ideal focus for professional development. A preference type is a model com-

parator with real diagnosis results, and many factors related to personal characteristics and conditions of socialisation in the environment determine the choice of a person's career path. From the perspective of organisational knowledge the structure of occupational preferences of workers becomes striking and intriguing from a research angle.

Another issue is that, by analogy to the six types of basic occupational preferences we can distinguish six types of professionals (types of organisations) within which certain personality traits, styles and problem-solving behaviour dominate and offer professional development opportunities. So you can extract the environment and organisations which prefer action and realistic styles, research, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional. On an organisation scale traits describing the characteristics of the organisation of their intrinsic behaviour fall within the category of organisational culture, including values and norms. However, the degree of expression of certain preferences in a given environment can vary, in other words, the professional environment (organisational culture), as well as personality (types), characterised by a certain profile of preferences can be characterised by more or less distinct nature, to a greater or lesser degree of consolidation (cohesion).

In the process of professional development such people seek environments that allow them to optimise the use of their opportunities, resources, aptitudes and preferences (the ability, competence, attitudes), realise certain values, act and take the most valued social roles. The third assumption Holland's theory emphasises is the compatibility of the individual dimension—a social role, which represents an ideal substrate preference, orientation and adjustment unit to an environment in which it performs a variety of socio-professional roles. Mutual adjustment is a source of development.

At the end a diabolic aspect. Knowledge of the degree of compatibility between professional preferences of a person and the possibilities offered by the environment can be used as a basis to predict their behaviour in the context of occupational choices, ways of education, career paths and improve professional competences.

## 2.2. Professional preferences and environmental conditions

Further interpretation of Holland focuses on the following five aspects of the relationship between the preferences of a person and the offer of the environment: internal consistency, diversity, identity, external coherence, similarity-difference (Holland, 1992, p. 64). Relations within some pairs of preferences or types of work environment differ in scope consistency. Holland points out that e.g. realistic and research preferences are more closely related to each other than conventional and artistic preferences. In a statistical sense, you can put the hypothesis on positive correlation between the first pair of preferences, and the negative correlation within the second pair. Here the problem under consideration of the degree of consistency in the set of several or all six preferences is closely linked with the relevancy of Holland's theory and the method of diagnosing occupational preferences based on it.

Secondly, some types of occupational preferences or types of environments are more clearly defined (as defined) compared to the others. At stake here are the differences in the degree of expression of the type preferences and characteristics of the environment. For example, a smaller variation is indicated a person who has been clearly dominated by one type of preference than a person whose profile contains several kinds of preferences of similar severity. Similarly, professional environment differs in the degree of contrast (sharpness) preferences. For example, in manufacturing organisations (industry) there are more expressive attributes of the action and realistic style similar to the type of organisational climate (subcultures, organisational culture) than in the educational and scientific organisations. It should be noted, however, that in these organisations with a high degree of centralisation and bureaucracy (machine bureaucracy) the science climate will be passive and not very creative. By contrast, organisations operating in the artistic and cultural education can dominate the style of artistic freedom, focused on building an individual expression and the entrepreneurial spirit plus an innovative approach to managing an organisation and processes. Identity is an important general criterion for assessing both the individual and the entire professional environment (organisation). In both cases, the identity is the clarity of objectives and tasks, and stability functions. In other words, in interpreting the structure of trade preferences a complete data about an analysed diagnosed person or organisation: goals, values, structure, strategy, etc. should be considered.

Consistency referred to as external one (Bańka, 1995, p. 17) concerns the person-environment relationship, assessed in terms of the relevance of trade preferences and characteristics of the environment, i.e. a specific occupation and type of organisation. Different types of preferences require appropriate backgrounds to them. A high degree of match increases the chance of effective work, with the exercise of which one feels more pleasure and satisfaction from the activity in the workplace. Lack of consistency between preferences lowers the level of satisfaction, work values, reduces investment potential and competitive advantage, as well as the overall effect across all dimensions of organisational, economic, personal, ethical, etc.

### 3. Trade preferences in the concept by Holland

The author of the RT psychological theory of choice of profession takes under his theory that the basic preferences form quite a compact and closed system. This view is presented in the form of hexagonal structure model preferences. It follows from this that the basic preferences form a pair of related professional relationship or relationship of completing contradiction. Completion (system synergy, protagonist) includes all the pairs of adjacent preferences, such as completing a relationship (there is a kind of total) includes realistic and research preferences. Similarly, complementary social preferences and decisions related to enterprise professional. It has been men-

tioned earlier that according to the hexagonal model, adjacent preferences do exist and show a high positive correlation. In the hexagonal model, there are also three pairs of opposite preferences about the relationship (antagonism). These are pairs of preferences correlated negatively or poorly. It proves the existence of such opposites that favouring a particular profession is accompanied by an aversion to other professions.

In the present scheme by Holland there are three pairs of opposing (antagonistic) occupational preference categories: realistic versus social versus conventional art, research versus entrepreneurial preferences. In the light of modern research, you can believe that we get only part of the answer to finding the causes of the socialisation process, i.e. whether the process is in the nature coherent (adjusting themselves to the environment) or incoherent (matching the environment to itself, autonomy) (Holland, 1992, p. 40). A preference to conventional professions can provide a higher degree of social vulnerability and prioritise the schematic, imitative actions. Consequently, a preference for conventional professions remains in opposition to the artistic professions, often correlated with the freedom of action, more comfortable expressing and finding their own, individual career path.

The relation between opposite realistic and social preferences is explained by Holland and other researchers for professional development by referring to the more basic relationships, such as course development as a process of orienting to, the world of things and human world which affects the differentiation of opposing ways of development of professional interests.

With regard to the third pair of opposite preferences (research and entrepreneurial) Holland explains the reference to the differences in value systems and cognitive styles prevailing in the group of professions that require examination, as opposed to occupations that require different types of businesses. In his opinion, research preferences are more closely related to the mind and analytical thinking, and careful judging, and entrepreneurship is combined with managerial capabilities and abilities to influence others. However, you can see that such a simplistic and overly simplified schematic view simplifies both the scope of research activities as well as the diversity of management styles. The results of the meta-analysis, which was concluded at the end of this study suggest clearly that expressing the attitude of opposition preferences for research and entrepreneurship is highly debatable.

The Vocational Preference Inventory Questionnaire (name of the Polish Trade Preferences Questionnaire, KPZ, cf. Nosal et al., 1997) John Holland consists of 6 scales measuring basic vocational preference scales and 5 controls. Here is a brief characterisation of the measurement scales and the characteristics of professional behaviour and preferences, which enable their initial classification and self-esteem. A full description of the scales and correlates is included in Holland's work (1985) and the Polish version of a manual called VPI Vocational Preference Questionnaire (Nosal et al., 1997). Below you'll find their brief description.

### I. The scale for measuring realistic preferences

Good results on this scale get people interested in professions that require thinking concrete, practical and mechanical ability, such as electrician, electronics technician, carpenter, plumber. These people think in a concrete (physical), sober and practical way. They show no clear social interests. They do not like problems whose solution requires sensitivity to their own and others emotional states. Thus, by realistic preferences a person's distance and objectivity are manifested. The need of professional authority within the meaning of the theory of David McClelland is quite clearly outlined in this type of 'personality'.

### II. The scale for measuring research preferences

Good results on this scale get people interested in professions that require analytical and abstract thinking, such as a physicist, biochemist, author of scientific works. There are also those showing interest in science, characterised by openness, curiosity, and cognitive openness, focusing on theoretical issues, avoiding practical problems. Thus, open-mindedness, curiosity and insight are the hallmarks of people with distinct preferences for research. Such preferences correlate positively with a high need for achievement. Such individuals concentrate on discursive, theoretical, experimental issues, deselection a high level of individualism and intellectual autonomy.

### III. The scale for measuring artistic preferences

Good results on this scale get people interested in professions that require imagination, tolerance, and cognitive complexity originality, e.g. artist, actor, director and composer. They are characterised as creative people, interested in art, music, theatre and literature. They prefer activities focusing efforts on the cognitive and manual recognition of creative and abstract phenomena and processes. This kind is focused on their own inside and aesthetic experiences, here is alienation and a relatively low level of affiliation needs, which means that there can be difficulties in adaptive problems in teamwork, and antisocial attitudes.

### IV. The scale for measuring social preferences

Persons obtaining good results on this scale are interested in professions that require the ability to establish contact with other people, interpersonal efficiency and ability to understand other people, such as a teacher, psychotherapist, social worker, personal advisor, psychologist, educator, volunteer and social activist, etc. These individuals characterised by caregiving, emotional maturity and social responsibility, are both involved and interested in social issues in a general sense. They have developed emotional intelligence, which manifests itself in an attitude of empathy and social projects. Ground of their action is allocentric motivation, focusing attention on another person and their welfare, as well as a strong need for social belonging and acceptance.

#### V. The scale for measuring entrepreneurial preferences

Good results on this scale get people interested in professions whose purpose is to obtain a profit, such as a business owner, a businessman, a player exchange, real estate agent. The author's own research shows, however, that there is no relationship between personality traits inherent entrepreneurial and led by the entrepreneur in economic activities. In other words, the REGON number does not make an individual entrepreneurial, although it promotes the learning process itself. Individuals of this type are characterised by high levels of achievement motivation (need achievements), resourcefulness, risk-taking, leadership (of power needed). They prefer a task with a relatively low degree of structuring, choose innovative and unconventional solutions to problems.

#### VI. The scale for measuring conventional preferences

Good results on this scale get people interested in professions that require routine, conscientiousness and reliability, such as an accountant, auditor, librarian, cataloguer, doorman, a building administrator. These are rather conformist people, quickly internalise standards, identifying with the values widely applicable in the surrounding culture. They are satisfied with the role of a subordinate person. They like well-structuring of tasks, designed, and mental accounting nature. They prefer to play, imitate, be guided by the opinions of other people, the process of conditioning and socialisation runs very smoothly with them, which is associated with strongly accentuated in their behaviour and they respect the need for recognition and affiliation.

#### VII. The scale measuring self-preference

The high results on this scale get people showing aversion to the professions associated with danger and high risk, such as a mountain climber, rescuer, acrobat, stunt race car driver. These are inhibited, cautious, restrained, and quite passive people, characterised by elevated levels of neuroticism and anxiety. They are fearful of social contact, avoid companies by choosing proven, socially accepted roles and their solutions. According to Holland (1985), high scores on this scale indicate excessive self-control (censorship personality defense mechanisms), and the results show low impulsivity, high intensity extraversion, risk, average results indicate a healthy, open to new, spontaneous ways of life.

#### VIII. The scale of masculinity-femininity

This scale contains six occupations considered traditionally masculine (e.g. welder or umpire) and eight occupations considered traditionally female (e.g. elementary school teacher or social worker). Persons obtaining good results on this scale prefer men's professional roles, while those who obtain low results prefer female roles. According to Holland, the results obtained on this scale indicate the degree of traditional ways of categorising related to gender stereotypes. Individuals who have

internalised the process of socialisation patterns of men's professional roles choose occupations usually attributed to men. Regardless of the biological sex assigned to the state, recognition for the competition is high, they cannot perform, but be highly placed in the personal ranking of occupations.

#### IX. Status scale

Good results on this scale get people interested in professions enjoying high prestige and social recognition (e.g. university teacher, soldier, doctor) and showing no interest in low-prestige occupations (e.g. cleaner, labourer, porter, or warehouse). According to Holland, this scale is a measure for a high status, level of confidence and the quality level of self-esteem. The question arises: Do people who prefer games of this type look for ways how to reduce this type of need, namely the reduction of this demand? Attempts to achieve high social recognition professions provide their holders with a sense of power and independence.

#### X. Scale eccentricity

The composition of this scale includes both very popular games (artist circus, amusement park worker) and low social prestige (e.g. cloakroom or cleaner), as well as popular games, with high social prestige, such as a diplomat, an architect. According to Holland (1985), the person obtaining high performance on this scale but choosing 'worse' professions has unusual preferences. They are characterised by low self-esteem and disturbed relationship to culture. On the other hand, those obtaining low scores on this scale and choosing better jobs are characterised by high self-esteem and aroused aspirations, accelerated by high power needs and achievements.

#### XI. The scale of agreeableness

This scale measures the style of the person answering the test. It includes an assessment of the first 30 items of the questionnaire, diagnostic for different types of occupational preferences. Good results on this scale get people interested in a large number of occupations, regardless of the type of games. According to Holland, there are two types of people achieving high results on the scale described. The first type is characterised by lack of common sense, poor integration of personality and dispersed activity. The second type includes those integrated with many of the actual interests and abilities. The best results on this scale, combined with the dominant type of preferences show a strong vocational orientation.

## 4. Conclusion

Modern organisations operate in the post-industrial era, often rightly called knowledge economy, therefore it is not surprising that knowledge management has quickly become popular among researchers, consultants and managers, as a separate scien-

tific and practical discipline. The opinion that your store of knowledge determines the survival of today and the market successes of the company, not the technology or capacity manual workers is becoming increasingly popular. Indeed, it becomes a source of market advantage of an organisation. We mean all forms of organisational competitive advantage because it applies equally to the financial world and the humanistic value added in the form of the development of the modern civil society.

Knowledge of occupational preferences, talents, interests and styles of employees is significant enrichment of knowledge about their creative potential, no matter whether it is possible to apply diagnostic methods to enable their measurement and assessment which would be methodologically accurate. Please note that human personality is fairly stable for years and despite a slight (in normal individuals) change is characterised by high cohesion.

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## Predyspozycje zawodowe jako podstawa kompetencji i wiedzy organizacyjnej

**Streszczenie:** Każdy uczestnik organizacji dysponuje pewnym potencjałem rozwojowym: zdolnościami, preferencjami i zainteresowaniami sprzyjającymi określonym grupom zawodów, rodzajom czynności lub typom karier zawodowych. Dostatecznie wczesne i trafne rozpoznanie tego potencjału to nie tyle ważna kwestia osobista, ile przede wszystkim zagadnienie o doniosłym znaczeniu społecznym oraz organizacyjnym, w tym ekonomicznym. Już bowiem klasyki ekonomii podkreślali, że bogactwo narodów wynika nie tylko z ogólnych zasad rynkowego gospodarowania, ale także z tego, w jaki sposób wykorzystywane są indywidualne zdolności, talenty i motywacja do działań twórczych. Jednym z podstawowych celów systemu edukacji na dowolnym poziomie winno stać się więc wczesne rozpoznawanie zdolności i talentów oraz kształcenie ich dla sprawnej i twórczej działalności. Wiek pracowników nie powinien tu być czynnikiem kryterialnym, gdyż rozwój intelektualny kadr jest ważny na każdym etapie kariery zawodowej.

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Słowa kluczowe: predyspozycje zawodowe, zdolności

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