COMPETENCE OF THE LEADERSHIP INFLUENCE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

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ABSTRACT
School leadership is now an education policy priority around the world. As countries are seeking to adapt their educational systems to the needs of contemporary rapidly evolving society, expectations for schools and school leaders are changing. School leadership practice has been greatly influenced by changes in educational governance and school contexts. Many researchers agree that school leaders are crucial for school success and sustainable educational reform, and there is a strong need for leaders who demonstrate key attributes and qualities of professionalism. In these circumstances, the attention should be drawn to professional training and development opportunities for school leaders as well as to knowledge and skills that today’s school leaders should possess in order to manage schools successfully.

Introduction

Modern education management conceptions regard school leadership as key dominant of successful school activity. Scientific researchers disclose the links between leadership and school results. Various methodological approaches can be identified (leadership as a factor of school effectiveness: Bagdonas, 2002; Gurr, 2005; 1996; Leithwood, 1992; Reynolds, 1992; leadership and pupils’ academic outcomes: Žvirdauskas, 2006; Caldwell, 2002; Fullan, 1998; Tomlinson, 1999; leadership and school as learning organization: Simonaitienė, 2004; Caldwell, 2002; Fullan, 1998; Tomlinson, 1999). In the current study it is complied with the provi-

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that in “paradigm of change” the deep changes of school have become relevant – school is obliged to promote its own improvement, i.e. become a learning organization, which is able to redesign itself and is capable of inventing own new models in response to external changes. In such a context school leadership undergoes transformation. New roles of school heads presuppose appropriate fields of activities and functions.

Under the conditions of systemic change the arrangements of school heads competencies development have undergone transformation (Bush, 2008). Leadership development should respond the needs of school heads in different stages of professional and organizational socialization (Crow, 2001; Heck, 2003). In addition, leadership development should be linked with management career path in education (Bush, 2008; Huber, 2004; Hallinger, 2003) and refer to a specific quality assessment conception (Želvys, 2003; Dempster, 2002;). Recognizing that school heads’ competencies development has an indirect impact on school results (Bush, 2008; Hallinger, 2003; Lindstrom, Speck, 2004), in the paradigm of permanent change there is a strong need to ensure the quality of school leadership development by re-examining quality determining factors: peculiarities of content, process, context, assessment (Bolam, 2004; Bush, 2008; Goldring et al., 2010; Guskey, 2004; Hallinger, 2003).

Substantiation of research relevance. The question of school heads’ competencies and competencies development receive much attention in foreign scientific literature, however there is a lack of focused empiric researches. Although the majority of education management theorists (Avolio, 2005; Brundrett et al., 2006; Bush, 2008; Goldring et al., 2010) explicitly recognize that school heads competencies development has an impact on school results, but it remains an axiom statement. For instance, Brundrett et al., (2006) argue that leadership development is a „strategic necessity“ because of the intensification of the principal’s role in the context of rapid change. Avolio (2005) makes a compelling case for systematic leadership development based on the view that leaders are „made, not born“. Hallinger (2003), Huber (2004; 2008) stress the relationship between leadership development and the quality of school leadership, Lindstrom, Speck (2004) argue that school leadership development is the essential factor of school improvement. Leithwood (2009) emphasizes the links between leadership development and school results. However, empirical support for such assumptions is weak and usually of descriptive nature only (Bush, 2008; Leithwood, 2009).

Strategic documents of European Commission (A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, 2000; EC Communication „Improving Competences for the XXI Century: An Agenda for European Cooperation on Schools“, 2008; Work Programme „Education and Training“, 2010) argue that the quality of schools can be improved by well prepared, trained and continuously developed school heads. It is emphasi-
zation in the implications of European Council on school heads’ and teachers’ professional development (2009) that “considering that school heads have a significant impact on educational environment as well as on motivation of personnel, work results, teaching practice, on the believes and needs of students and their parents, there should be ensured sufficient opportunities for school heads to retain and develop skills for effective leadership. Such a provision on school heads’ professional training corresponds with the recommendations of OECD, ETF, CEDEFOP as well as with Bologna Process. The major regulatory documents of Lithuanian education policy (State Strategy on Education 2003–2012; LR Law on Education (2003); Education Guideline (2002)) as well stress the significance of competent leadership and school heads’ competencies development under the conditions of education change. The documents emphasize the quality of school leadership that is necessary for successful implementation of reforms. Professional leadership is treated as an important premise for school autonomy and innovativeness.

Recognizing the significance of school leadership, there have been implemented different projects in Lithuania (School Improvement Programme 2002–2005, Improvement of School Structure 2006–2009, Time for Leaders 2007–2013). The project “Time for Leaders” stresses the importance of sound school leadership as a factor of school improvement. It should be noted, that these projects are based on global trends in education management and apply foreign models in Lithuanian education thus ensuring successful dialogue between Lithuania and Western countries. The impact of global trends on Lithuanian education and modelling of its segments according to foreign examples is encouraged by various international organizations and foundations: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), European Training Foundation (ETF), European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), World Bank etc. This fact is important for research, which is also based on foreign countries (UK and USA) expertise in school leadership development, but is designed and implemented in Lithuanian context.

During the last few years various sociological studies, commissioned by Ministry of Education and Science, have been conducted (“The expression of school principal leadership traits“, 2006; Modern management functions in the organization of school activity“, 2008 etc.). It is important to mention, that these particular studies are defined as diagnostic, i.e. aimed on diagnosis of current situation (Bitinas, 2006). However, research, aimed on examining of school heads’ competencies development as a theoretical object, have not been revealed.

On the basis of analysis of sociological research, reports of Ministry of Education and Science, experts’ evaluation reports, recent legal documents it has become clear that there occur purposeful transformations in the field of school heads’ competencies development in Lithuania. However, research results suggest that the cur-
rent professional training and development of school heads is usually interpreted in a narrow sense as a response to visible needs of school (Leadership in education: Lithuania report, 2008). This direct response is fragmentary, underpinned by concrete situation and therefore a broader approach, tied with more ambitious aims, conformed with the requirements of change and targeted on the demands of constantly changing school, is not promoted. There is a lack of strong empirical evidence on the aspects of school heads’ competencies, lack of systematic research on the process of competencies development, insufficient data on the factors, influencing quality of competencies development. Hence, the optimization of school heads’ competencies development in the context of education management paradigm shift is the relevant scientific problem, which is concretized by the problem questions:

- How the areas of school heads’ activity and their leadership models are changing in the context of education management paradigm shift and, accordingly, which relevant competencies should be developed?
- How should be arranged the development of school heads’ competencies seeking to ensure successful acquisition and development of relevant competencies?
- What is a hypothetical model of interconnection between school heads’ competencies development and school improvement, focused on the paradigm of systemic change?

The object of the research – school heads’ competencies development

The aim of the research – to design a theoretical model of interconnection between heads’ competencies development and school.

Research methods

Scientific literature analysis has helped to analyze theoretically school heads’ activity areas, leadership models, and necessary competencies in the context of education management paradigm shift as well as to disclose the principles of arrangements of competencies development and to determine the factors of its quality.

Documents analysis has helped to complement the notions of school heads competencies, leadership development and its transformation.

1. The theoretical background of the study

Theory of paradigm shift. The shift of education management paradigm is substantiated on the Kuhn (2003) conception of paradigms in science. The notion “paradigm” refers to the set of practices that define a scientific discipline at any particular period of time. Each paradigm exist until the inner contradictions have matured,
then a new paradigm is developing instead. This promotes a scientific progress. It is hold to the opinion that paradigms do not deny each other; new paradigms are incommensurable with old ones and several paradigms can coexist simultaneously. It is emphasized that the shift in paradigms provokes the necessity to solve new problems, anticipate new perspectives; therefore the analysis of paradigms is the indispensable context or background for the design of the research.

Philosophy of Pragmatism, which treats the purpose of education as developing learner’s ability to solve real life problems and, having achieved the expertise on their solution, to achieve maximum personal well-being without prejudice to the norms of society. In a constantly changing life conditions, education endeavours to assist individual to change adequately. The central category of education is the personal expertise of a learner.

Theory of Social Reconstructionism, which emphasizes the necessity to restructure the system of institutional education in order to achieve purposeful improvement of society. The process of continuous change requires competent, creative, critically thinking members of society, who would be able to implement social reforms. The system of institutional education should flexibly respond to changes in social environment and to carry out a social order.

The concept of lifelong learning, which stresses the development of human potential through the process of constant support for an individual, stimulating and empowering him/her to acquire through the life all the necessary knowledge, skills, values and understanding and to apply them confidently in various life roles. In the conditions of accelerating change, rapid renewal of information individual is obliged to learn constantly: to acquire new social and professional competencies, upgrade existing qualification or to acquire a new (Barkauskaitė, 2006; Longworth, 1999).

School heads’ competencies development as the object of the research is grounded in multidiscipline approach, combining the spheres of education management, human resource management, theory of professional education, andragogy, which allows to achieve deeper epistemological understanding of the particular object.

School heads’ competencies development is analyzed in a holistic approach. Holistic approach to the object of research allows to examine it as a single complex system, with reference that the object’s components as a whole is greater then their sum. According to this approach, it is sought to provide the complex view of school heads’ competencies development as a phenomenon (Bitinas, 2006). This requires the analysis of school leadership as well as of the development of school leaders in conjunction with school improvement.

Systems theory allows substantiating the interconnection between school heads’ competencies development and school improvement as a sustainable and coherent system, consisting of interrelated parts. Systems theory stresses that any system segment’s activity affects the overall system performance, and this interaction is characterized by coherent mutual interdependence and interrelation (Bertalanffy, 1969).
The development of school heads’ competencies is based on the theories of adult learning:

Constructivist learning theory, which argues that the reality cognition is based on individual knowledge structures that are formed on subjective experience, while learning occurs when a person doubts about his/her beliefs, personal theories and current understanding. Knowledge creation is an active process, because a learner develops new concepts, ideas, meanings on the basis of previously acquired knowledge and experience (Piaget, 1976). Self-directed learning theory, which explains the learning process as a learner’s responsibility for his/her learning and learning outcomes (Knowles, 1975). According to this theory, a learner is able to identify his/her own learning needs, taking into account the planned life path. The one is able to identify current and future roles, is characterized by motivation, ability to plan the learning process and its outcomes, choose the learning strategy, taking into account the results and circumstances of life, to adjust the learning plan and represent acquired competency (Jučiūtė et al., 2010). Experiential learning theory, which emphasizes the effectiveness of learning through experience. Experiential learning occurs while observing and reflecting one’s experience, and on the basis of experience abstract concepts are formed and justified in new situations. Experiential learning theory stresses the holistic nature of learning, the idea of sustainable development and highlights he experience as the key assumption of learning (Jarvis, 1987; Jarvis, Holford, Griffin, 2004; Kolb, 1984). Conceptions of reflection and critical reflection, which emphasize the abilities of an individual to explore own activity on the basis of life experience, seeking to deeper understanding of linkages between events, foreseeing of goals, anticipating problems in unfamiliar situations etc. (Argyris et al., 1985; Willis, 1980). Action science theory, which treats the practical knowledge as a tacit knowledge. According to this theory, tacit knowledge could be expressed by reflexive exploration. From action science theory perspective, the activity of an individual is based on rules and hidden personal acting theories. When confronted with any situation, a person guides his/her own action theories that help to “create” an action form the repertoire of acquired conceptions, activity schemes, strategies (Jučiūtė et al., 2010; Argyris et al., 1985).

2. The process of school leadership in the context of education management paradigm shift

In this chapter it is sought to define the notion of education management paradigm and to detail the core paradigms as well as their implications on school leadership. The education management paradigm is defined as an approach to designing of a model / strategy of education (Mulford, 2008). On the basis of scientific literature analysis (Želvys, 1999; Fullan, 2003; Mulford, 2003; Olsen, 2002) three main
paradigms are identified: Old Public Management, New Public Management, and the “Paradigm of Change”. It is suggested in the study that the paradigms presuppose organization of education and are reflected in the nature of leadership and in principals’ roles.

The paradigm of Old Public Management in education assumes that schools are hierarchical systems in which heads use rational means to pursue agreed goals. Heads possess authority legitimized by their formal positions within the organization and are accountable to governing bodies for the activities of their institutions. It is pointed to some advantages and weaknesses of bureaucratic approach in education and stated that irresponsibly to the inadequacy of OPM under the conditions of systemic change, it still has much to contribute to understanding of school operation.

New Public Management, emerged as the dominant paradigm in many countries under the conditions of rapid globalization and technology progress. Under the influence of NPM the restructuring of education has been characterized by such trends as decentralization, accountability and markets, community involvement. New public management expanded the role of school principals. School heads became managers, responsible for strategic planning, management of human resource, human relations and conflicts, information and projects etc. in their organizations. The implementation of the certification system was an important step, seeking to ensure the quality of school heads’ management activity.

The paradigm of systemic change is stipulated by knowledge society and its challenges. It is argued in the study that in order to meet heightened, multiply expectations placed by systemic change, schools need to become learning organizations, consciously and continuously pursuing their improvement. Schools as learning organizations are capable for adapting in changing consequences and stand out by virtue of trusting and collaborative climate, a shared and monitored vision, initiatives and risks, ongoing and relevant professional development, distributed leadership etc. It is argued in the study that school improvement depends on principal, who can foster the necessary conditions for sustained school activity in rapidly changing society.

The rapid paradigm shift expanded expectations for school heads emphasizing the need for schools as learning organizations continuous improvement. This has strong implication on core areas of school heads’ responsibilities and their functions. School heads have a significant impact on school processes and catalyze school improvement and becoming a learning organization.

The analysis of scientific literature (Leithwood et al., 2004; Waters, Marzano, McNulty, 2003) allowed identifying the core areas of school heads’ activity. School heads are responsible for the managing of educational process, school managing and administrating, direction setting and organization redesigning. Each area involves specific functions of school principals. The area of managing of educational
process covers principal’s direct participation in educational process, organization and evaluation of educational process as well as creation of sustainable learning environment. The area of school management and administration involves resource management, monitoring of effectiveness and accountability for school results. The area of direction setting covers creation of school vision and its implementation, strategic planning, formation of values system, planning of organizational development. The field of organizational redesigning involves creation of school culture and climate, development of leadership, partnership networks, designing of school image, organizational learning, change management, etc.

The analysis of school heads’ activity areas and functions is linked to the conception of first order and second order changes (Lethwood, 1992; Waters, Marzano, McNulty, 2004). First order changes explain leadership functions in a stable environment. Second order changes are aimed primarily at changing organization’s normative structure and foster school becoming a learning organization. The first and second order changes require specific practical actions from school heads. That is why the analysis of leadership models is important.

Leadership models is a methodological approach to the analysis of school heads practical activity and its impact on school organization. The scientific literature confirms that there is a relationship between school leadership and school improvement, so it is important to deconstruct leadership to examine the extent to which the various models facilitate the conditions that allow for school improvement. There are various typologies of leadership models. Eminent among them are the instructional, transactional, and transformational models of leadership. These three models of leadership are subject to scrutiny in this chapter, using a typology adapted from Leithwood, Jantzi, Steinbach (1999).

**Instructional leadership** focuses on teaching and learning and on the behavior of teachers in working with students. Heads’ influence is targeted at student learning via teachers. Instructional leadership is important for improving the quality of learning. **Transactional leadership** supports the implementation of the school mission through resource management. Transactional principals focus on nurturing the on-going climate of the school through development of positive interpersonal relationship among members of organization and effective day-to-day operational procedures for the school. **Transformational leadership** describes a particular type of influence process based on increasing the commitment of followers to organizational goals. This form of leadership assumes that the central focus of leadership ought to be the commitments and capacities of organizational members. Higher levels of personal commitment to organizational goals and greater capacities for accomplishing those goals are assumed to result in extra effort and greater productivity. Transformational leadership is essential for schools as learning organizations.
It is argued in the study that schools, reflecting on the demands of society, should be delivering. Acknowledging with such demands provokes the role of principal become complex, emphasizing that of change agent, strategic planner, and a leader. This role far exceeds the role of instructional leader. Instructional leadership while suitable for addressing first order changes such as curriculum innovation is inadequate for the kind of systemic changes. Therefore while instructional leadership is still important, the paradigmatic shift to a transactional and a transformational model of leadership may be necessary for the effective functioning of modern school. So, there is no one best model of leadership for all situations; rather, effective principals adopt the integrated leadership model appropriate for the situations. Hence, it is argued that the integrated model of school leadership presupposes school improvement. The successful realization of leadership models requires appropriate competencies, therefore the attention is drawn on the analysis of school heads’ competencies.

The quality of leadership is vital for school improvement and students outcomes. Hence, the attention is drawn to the development of appropriate competencies of school heads.

3. The notion of school heads’ competency and the holistic capability model

The notion of competency and capability are analyzed in the subchapter. The managing and leading tasks of school leadership are both complex and interrelated, so that there are no clearly defined concepts of leadership competence and competency. Competency refers to the capacity to perform professional work and is developed by means of professional education and training (Eraut, 1994; Scott, 2010; Stephenson, 2000; Trotter, Ellison, Davies, 2001). Competence in general is understood as the whole of values, skills, knowledge and understanding which enables the person to act successfully in a certain field of life (Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, 2005). Competence is constituted by a number of professional competencies as well as practical experience. Therefore it is important to identify the structure of the school heads’ professional competence.

A competence model is a list of competencies required for a specific job or field of occupation, a commonly recognized body of knowledge, skills competencies and behavioural models and qualities that help the individual to perform his/her job as successfully as possible and provide the basis for individual evaluation and development. The competence model consists of:

- core competencies (they complement specific competencies required for a specific job or field of occupation);
- knowledge required for these competencies;
- skills and abilities based on competencies.
On the basis of theoretical analysis (Bush, 2008; Hallinger, 2003; Huber, 2004; Leithwood et al., 1999; Scott, 2010) the holistic model of school heads’ competence was developed.

The holistic competence is a combination of six competencies: personal, social, instructional, educational, self-management and managerial competencies.

Personal competency is understood as self-recognition and self-analysis. The ability to analyze one’s strongest and weakest traits is a precondition for the development of a mature personality and successful self-realization. Social competency is associated with high communicational culture in organization. This is the ability of school leaders to create and sustain collaborative culture, mutual respect and understanding. In a wider range, it’s creating of a partnership with community. Instructional competency of a school leader is an ability to manage effectively the educational process, design curricula, monitor academic achievements, etc. School leaders demonstrate expert knowledge of teaching-learning process, inform, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate it, manage educational curriculum, build an environment that maximizes students learning, this competency empowers school leaders to develop and sustain learning communities in a school. Educational competency is expressed in self-education. Changes in education as well as in modern society inspire the life-long learning that is why educational competence has become very important today. Self-management competency is a skill of carrier planning. School leaders use their knowledge and research data to maximize overall performance of themselves and their organizations. They effectively develop plans and evaluate the implications for their actions. Managerial competency is an ability of a school leader to seek for overall school as organization effectiveness, to ground management on modern management principles such as quality management; human resource management; learning organization management, etc. School leaders efficiently and effectively apply expert knowledge of legislative, syllabus and policy requirements. School leaders develop and implement effective personnel management structures, strategies and procedures. School leaders manage effectively and accountably within their delegated responsibilities. School leaders create and utilize effective management systems and processes.

The possession of competencies in the six domains is necessary but not sufficient for effective professional performance under the conditions of systemic change. Equally important is the possession of the following higher order thinking skills: emotional intelligence, critical thinking, diagnostic skills (Scott, 2010). Emotional intelligence means that school leaders have highly developed personal and interpersonal skills based on the ability to empathize with the perspective of others. School leaders have the capacity to interact with people and work constructively in a team. Critical thinking helps school leaders see the core issues and anticipate difficulties in complex technical and human situations. Diagnostic skills mean that
school leaders accurately read the signs to figure out what is actually going on in each new situation.

The model of holistic capability constitutes from professional competencies, each including professionally specific skills and knowledge, as well as the domains of emotional intelligence, critical thinking and diagnostic competency that enable to respond to the challenges of the systemic change. The analysis of literature shows that the focus on capability requires a shift in a professional training and development of school heads. Professional training and development aim at transfer of professional knowledge, while the development of competencies focuses on metacognitive skills, which allow applying new skills in a professional environment.

4. Principles of arrangements of school heads’ competencies development

The development of school heads’ competencies is implemented to develop or change the management practices in schools and is to be linked to meaningful change. Therefore the attention is drawn to the principles of sustainable school leadership development. The chapter discloses core principles as requirements for effective arrangements of the development of school heads’ competencies. It is argued that in the paradigm of change school leadership development should be a purposeful, consistent and coherent process, reflecting the needs of school heads at various stages of professional and organizational socializations (Bush, 2008; Hallinger, 2003; Huber, 2004; Leithwood et al., 1999).

The managing and leading tasks of school leadership are both complex and interrelated, so that there is no clearly defined concept of leadership. Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person or group over other people or groups to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organization (Yukl, 2002). Leadership cannot be regarded as a singular activity carried out by the principal. Most schools now have an extensive leadership apparatus, including deputies and/or assistant principals. Recently the developing interest is connected to distributed leadership (Hargreaves, Fink, 2006), which means involvement of larger numbers of staff in school leadership. The emphasis of this article is on school leaders, including but not confined to school principals.

In a paradigm of distributed leadership school leadership and questions concerning the optimum approaches for leadership succession have become matters to which increasing concern has been devoted in education systems internationally. Effective succession means having a clear strategy to create positive and coordinated flows of headship (Bush, 2008; Hargreaves, Fink, 2006). In many countries, leadership succession relies on self-selection of talented candidates rather than on clear strategies to identify and develop future leaders. Research reports (Hargrea-
ves, Fink, 2006) quite clearly show that insufficient attention is being given to identifying and fostering potential future leaders in most countries. Self-identification as leaders is a gradual process of trial and error during which individuals are emotionally vulnerable and often lack professional and systems support (Gronn, 1999).

Researches (Bush, 2008; Hargreaves, Fink, 2006; Pont et al., 2008) argue that more emphasis should be put on nurturing and developing leadership within schools, it should be focused on how best to identify and support future leaders early in their careers. That is why succession planning is essential to widen the applicant pool for school leadership and increase the quantity and quality of future school leaders. Succession planning involves fostering interest in leadership by providing opportunities for teachers to participate in leadership and to learn more about the day-to-day tasks it involves, as well as offering training for aspirant leaders. Individuals who have gained some experience in leadership or aspects of it are more likely to be interested in leadership and to be confident in their capacity to do it. It is therefore important that potential leaders are given opportunities to participate in leadership early in their careers. This can be done by distributing leadership within the school and encouraging teachers to take on responsibility for certain areas or aspects of leadership. Interest in leadership can also be fostered by shadowing programmes which allow teachers to observe and learn more about the concrete activities it entails.

High potential teachers need to be identified proactively and encouraged to develop their skills. Professional development opportunities can be a good way for teachers to test their potential for management and leadership. Training opportunities may be targeted to develop leaders for schools particularly in need, or they may be embedded in larger strategies for school leadership development. In addition, including leadership topics in initial teacher training can foster interest among teachers with leadership potential in the longer term (Pont et al. 2008).

Succession planning is essential to increase the quantity and quality of future school leaders. It is a way to counteract principal shortages and to ensure that there is an adequate supply of qualified personnel to choose from when the incumbent leader leaves the position. Succession planning involves proactively identifying potential leaders and encouraging them to develop their leadership practices. This can be done by offering training programmes for aspiring leaders and providing opportunities for young teachers to learn more about leadership through close contact with current leaders. It can also be done by including leadership topics in initial teacher training.

Consistent with the concept of lifelong learning, and assuming school leadership involves a career - the stages in a school leader’s career are receiving growing attention. For example, implicit in the data collected in Earley at al’s (2002) recent study is a call for a coherent school leadership professional development fra-
work which begins shortly after qualification as a teacher and continues through and beyond headship. A number of models have been developed to describe various stages of school leadership career (Bush, Jackson, 2002; Bush, 2008). The eminent among them is a five stage structure: Emergent leadership for teachers who are beginning to take on management and leadership responsibilities, including heads of subject/area. Established leaders for experienced leaders who do not intend to pursue headship, including assistant and deputy heads. Entry to headship for aspiring to first headship and newly-appointed first-time headteachers. Advanced leadership for experienced headteachers looking to develop their professional qualities, competences and expertise. Consultant leadership for experienced headteachers and other school leaders who are ready to further develop their facilitation, mentoring and coaching skills. The framework is thought to provide a coherent and flexible model for the development and support of school leaders at all stages of their career.

Leadership development needs to be seen as a lifelong learning process. Most evidence on development impact points to the fact that leadership development is broader than specific programmes of activity or intervention. It can be learned and developed through a combination of formal and informal processes throughout the different stages and contexts of leadership practice. The school leadership career needs to be supported through the different stages in a balanced manner, including pre-service, induction and in-service provision and be complemented when important changes come about.

The significance of pre-service preparation of school leaders has been analyzed by Browne-Ferrigno (2003), Bush, Jackson (2002), Hallinger (2003). The notion of preparation suggests a preconceived orientation towards career development by the potential principals and/or other education system participants. In many countries it is required for aspiring principals to complete approved pre-service qualification before being considered for an appointment, in other settings, there are no formal prerequisites except for the need to be qualified and experienced teachers. Hallinger (2003) argues that the considerable criticism of pre-service courses reflects their lack of coherence and detachment from the realities of the principal’s workplace. The predominant mode of delivery usually is lecture and discussion. Recognizing the importance of pre-service preparation for aspiring principals (Bush, Jackson, 2002) it is agreed that there is a need for a fundamental rethinking of the content, structure, delivery, and assessment of leadership learning. This involves the development of a framework for leadership preparation to ensure that formal university based programs and programs offered by and other providers of leadership development are complementary. Research studies have been designed to identify characteristics of effective leadership preparation programs. Some of the characteristics of effective programs include (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003): a clear sense of mission and purpose; curriculum coherence and alignment, including integrated sets of topics based on learning objectives; linkages between certification requirements and professional de-
velopment; instructional strategies related to the nature of the material taught and the learner needs, including: experiential learning, new information technologies, small group work, simulation, videotapes, role-playing, and case study; length and time structure; linkage to the mission, beliefs, and values of relevant employing authorities; and learning strategies that motivate through thinking, reflection, and analysis, with a strong component of coaching and feedback.

Preparation for leadership should be part of a continuous process involving both formal study and field based learning. The important connections between the self-identity and career goals of individuals need to be taken into consideration when planners are designing leadership learning opportunities.

Great attention in education management literature is dedicated to the process of induction to school leadership (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Bush, Middlewood, 2005). *Induction* is the process by which new incumbents become familiar with the context in which they are leading, including the school culture. All first time participants need professional socialization (preparing to enter profession) and organizational socialization (learning how to lead in a particular context) is also required. Induction has three main dimensions (Bush, Middlewood, 2005): 1) Socialization: enabling the employee to become part of the organization; 2) Achievement of competent performance: enabling the new employee to contribute to the organization effectively; 3) Understanding the culture: enabling the employee to appreciate the core values of organization.

Induction may be a deliberate process with clear objectives and defined components or an incidental activity, largely determined by the principal. Regardless of its nature, a learning process is inevitable, whether planned or unplanned. In some countries newly appointed principals receive little induction - a one or two-day induction program at the beginning of the school year, with some in-servicing regarding the employing authorities’ agenda for the year, is considered sufficient. In other settings new principals have a formal, structured program available to them as one component of a multi-faceted approach to enhancing their leadership capabilities and building leadership capacity in schools. Newly appointed principals are in special need of assistance when taking on responsibility for a school (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). Integrated and articulated strategies of professional support, guidance, and development must be available to new principals. These might include mentoring; inter-school and district visitations; peer pairings; network interactions; face to face and online sharing of good practice; and access to modular programs to address specific skills in areas of leadership responsibility relevant to the particular setting in which principals are located. Induction programs might include the development of mentoring relationships by joining early career principals with experienced principals; on line discussions; collaborative inquiry, participation in networked learning communities; coaching; inter-visitations; and engagement in
seminars and other learning activities relevant to their own needs and the needs of their school and employing authority.

Successful induction should smooth the path for new principals, accelerate their socialization, enable them to make sense of the complex reality of the school leadership and built their confidence to perform the role effectively. Inadequate or tacit induction is likely to slow down the learning process, and leave principals with damaging sense of uncertainty about whether they are leading effectively or not. Where induction occurs, it may be regarded as a key stage in the ongoing process of continuing development.

Researches draw attention on the significance of professional development for successful school leadership (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Bush, 2008; Hallinger, 2003). Leadership development is often a generic term to describe any form of preparation or training for headship, or it is specifically used to refer to activities undertaken following appointment as a principal, that is in-service training. Induction is one phase of this process but leadership development should be seen as any professional activity undertaken once principals have taken their posts. Such provision may be complimentary to pre-service preparation or as a substitute for it.

In studies of the professional development needs of experienced principals attention has been drawn to the need for experienced principals to have available to them a range of learning opportunities from which selection can be made in accordance with specific needs. These learning experiences may usefully involve: study groups; advanced seminars; reading and discussion groups; presentations by current thinkers or expert practitioners; attendance at national academies or conferences; and opportunities to become coaches, facilitators, or trainers themselves (Bush, 2008). Hallinger (2003) argues that in-service opportunities are often haphazard, under-funded and limited in both scope and content. The content of in-service programmes, however, is more varied in approach than the pre-service curriculum and is more firmly connected to the needs of principals. The greater involvement of practitioners in planning, mentoring and delivering programmes has had a beneficial effect and is in sharp contrast to pre-service programmes. In-service learning should not however be haphazard or fragmented. Rather the curriculum should be: carefully designed with attention to prior learning; coordinated and aligned across all learning providers and activities; provide core skills and knowledge that will enhance leadership, but also knowledge and skills related to the specific certification requirements (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003).

The continuing professional renewal of experienced principals is an important part of what is essentially a process of lifelong learning. At the same time as programs of professional development should be made available to principals seeking to enhance their own professional growth and development, principals themselves can play an important part in the professional advancement of aspiring principals and others who have been newly appointed to the position of principal, and indeed to other positions of leadership in schools and educational institutions more generally.
One of the issues of a major importance is a necessity to ensure *coherence of provision by different institutions*. A broad range of providers can cater to the varied training needs for school leadership. Training is provided by Ministries of Education or local governments, or outsourced to specialized institutions, to teacher training institutions or to a specialized body established to focus on school leadership training. Universities have also a broad range of supply. In addition, teacher and school leaders’ institutions have developed their own training programmes. Where there is no national orientation but a range of institutions catering to local or regional needs, it is important to have clear standards that ensure that suppliers focus on good leadership development. Designing, delivering and assessing leadership programmes require complex skills, including leadership experience, understanding of relevant research and literature, and highly developed oral and written communication skills. That is why a lack of suitable course leaders and staff may be experienced. Bolam (2004) discusses the challenge facing research-ambitious universities to produce high-quality research and publications on school leadership development. Another strategy is to encourage practitioner research, develop school leaders to become consultant leaders and contribute to programmes as facilitators, consultants and coaches.

The analysis of leadership development programmes (Bush, 2008; Bush, Jackson, 2008; Pont et al, 2008) allows generating a “*content model*” for leadership development. Programmes may vary in structure, content and effectiveness. Some of the differences perceived depend on how the role of school leadership is conceived. Whether school leadership development focuses on managerial responsibilities, including business skills and resource management, and/or on instructional leadership skills will depend on the level of autonomy and decentralisation granted to schools and the roles leaders are asked to play. However, a core curriculum most likely comprises five main themes: *Instructional leadership*: the topics related to teachings and learning, pedagogical leadership, managing teaching and learning. Leaders seek to achieve good outcomes by influencing the motivation, commitment, capability of teachers. They monitor teaching and learning to check that high standards are being achieved. So the course modules on instructional leadership need to address these themes. *Law*: The purpose of a module is to ensure that leaders understand the main requirements effecting schools and their management. *Finance*: Principals need skills to set and manage budget, audit spending and ensure that expenditure is targeted and meets school objectives. *Managing people*: Principals may be responsible for the full range human resource management: staff selection, induction, mentoring, staff development, deployment, appraisal, discipline. Module should include these themes. *Administration*: administration should be regarded as a function that supports the educational purpose of a school.

The most controversial area associated with principal development is that concerned with the setting of *standards for school leadership*, and the *licensure/certi-
The standards are being used for certification as a principal, for principal evaluation and for professional development programmes. These principles underpin the knowledge requirements, personal qualities, and actions of leaders certain leadership areas. These standards offer a framework to guide professional learning and a basis for the development of leadership programmes. Only a few countries have made significant advances in the identification of a set of commonly agreed national standards for educational leadership. Even fewer countries have used national leadership standards as a basis for the design and accreditation of leadership programs for school leaders and for the development and implementation of assessment tools for the licensure/certification of beginning principals and the re-licensure of practicing principals.

There are two basic approaches to standards of school leadership: competency based approach and performance based approach (Louden, Wildy, 1999). A competency framework for standards of school heads work usually identifies key areas of principal’s responsibility. Within each of key areas there is a subdivision of further competencies. The standard of performance in each competency is to be judged by certain indicators of principal’s work. The competency based model for standards is one that describes observable behaviors based on a close scrutiny and analysis of the role of school principals. The weaknesses of this approach are the hierarchical lists of dispositions, knowledge and duties; the decontextualizing of performance and the promise of false dichotomies of those who reach a prescribed standard and those who fail. The purpose of the performance based model for leadership standards is to specify and illustrate the range of performance within the school principal’s work. The project consists of three stages. The first stage is an initial research into selecting dimensions of school head’s work and establishment of a continuum of performance. The second phase provides an account on of the content of principal’s work. The third stage is designed to develop progress maps that describe the progression in development in performance in each dimension. Rich in reality of case studies, performance based approach appears a potential alternative to lists of hierarchical duties and responsibilities in competency based model as well as provides insight to leadership development programmes.

Differences in approach reflect deeply held differences in philosophy regarding professional learning and career planning. On the one hand, it is argued that the presence of standards and mandatory requirements creates hurdles that function as disincentives for people who might consider applying for leadership positions. On the other, the determination and assessment of standards and certification is necessary in order to enhance professionalism and ensure quality.

A recent study by Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) identified differentiated elements as contributing to the success of pre-service and in-service training programmes.

For successful pre-service training, starting with the targeted recruitment and selection of teachers with leadership potential, key elements were:
• a coherent curriculum aligned to state and professional standards which emphasize instructional leadership and school improvement;
• active student-centered instruction;
• social and professional support as well as formalized mentoring and advising;
• designed internships that provide exposure.

Successful training of practicing principals involves them having a training continuum, which includes pre-service, induction and in-service. Particular elements that made for successful training are:
• leadership learning grounded in practice, including analysis of classroom practice,
• supervision and professional development using on-the-job observation;
• collegial learning networks such as principals’ networks, study groups and
• mentoring or peer coaching that offer communities of practice and ongoing sources of support.

The delivery methods and timing of preparation and professional development may vary dependently on specific national contexts. Some countries or regions may focus primarily on on-the-job development, while other countries emphasize strong initial training for leadership. A third strategy is to provide specialized training at educational institutions at different stages of a leader’s career. The content of leadership development programmes needs to be tailored specifically to the changing needs of the participants, whether it is pre-service preparation, induction during the first years, or in-service provision for more experienced leaders. An overview of how the programmes for each stage link with each other and with leadership standards and/or certification requirements is vital for a strategic view of leadership development. Of particular importance is the need to contextualize approaches to ensure relevance and to customize approaches to ensure responsiveness to particular needs. The number of continuing professional learning approaches identified is of particular importance. These approaches – reflective practice, action science, mentoring, field based learning, etc. – are considered to be essential elements in a framework intended to support continuing professional development for school leadership.

5. The theoretical model of interconnection between development of school heads’ competencies and school improvement

School leadership and questions concerning the optimum approaches for effective recruitment, assessment and development of principals have become matters to which increasing concern has been devoted in education systems internationally. Systems of preparatory training, certification, selection, assessment, induction and ongoing deve-
Development for school leaders are necessarily rooted in specific national conditions and contexts. In evaluating these diverse approaches, researches should first of all acknowledge the vital importance of culture and context shaping education, leadership and leadership development in each country (Bolam, 2004). However, despite such differences, there has been a global trend toward more systematic provision of leadership and management development for school leaders directly tied to school improvement process. Huber (2004) offers generalizations about current trends in school leadership preparation:

- Stronger coherence and coordination around state leadership development vision and practice standards, national accreditation standards, and research findings;
- Stronger focus on instructional leadership and leadership for change, improvement, and reform;
- Greater emphasis placed on identifying and recruiting potentially stronger and more effective leaders;
- Greater emphasis placed on the importance of leadership at all levels (teacher leaders, school leaders, district leaders, and state leaders) coupled with an emphasis of continuous evolution and development of leadership capacity;
- Stronger use of both informal and formal internship and mentoring features as specific components of both initial preparation and continuing education programs;
- Increasing partnerships and coordination between universities, regional service centers, departments of education, local districts, and private foundations and corporations;
- Emphasis on acquisition and continued enhancement of knowledge, skills, competencies, and practices.

The above mentioned factors have an indirect positive impact on school improvement process. Basing on the data of longitude researches, Bush (2008), Watson (2003) provide an approach to school leader professional development which:

- is centrally concerned with improving the quality of schooling and the achievement of pupils;
- is systematic, comprehensive and of high quality;
- makes available continuing opportunities for every career phase;
- has a concern for practical skills but also for a more philosophical approach;
- involves a range of providers;
- provides core training, but supports development opportunities that mean more than this; and,
- is based on the best available evidence and fosters the research that generates this.

On the basis of the theoretical analysis of school leadership development organization the model of school leadership development system is designed (Fig.1). The criteria for the model analysis are summarized in the table 1.
Researches (Bolam, 2004; Pont et al., 2008) have introduced the main criteria for the analysis of school leadership developments systems. Summarizing the introduced criteria the following theoretical approach to school leadership development system analysis is developed:

![Diagram]

*Fig. 1. Theoretical model of interconnection between development of school heads’ competencies and school improvement (Source: authors)*
Table 1. Criteria for the analysis of the model of school leadership development (adapted from Bolam, 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-model</th>
<th>Key issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision and responsibilities of school leadership</td>
<td>What concept of school leadership underpins the vision of school leadership development? What is the level of school leadership autonomy? Are the core leadership responsibilities defined and delimited? What are they?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School leadership framework/standards (competences)</td>
<td>What leadership competences should school leaders possess? Is there a leadership framework/standards/competences that provide guidance on the main responsibilities of effective school leaders and signal the vision of school leadership. Are the standards a basis for consistent recruitment, training and appraisal of school leaders? How does leadership development system interrelate with leadership standards? Do leadership standards guide professional development of school leaders? Does the system ensure leadership competences acquisition and development process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School leadership succession</td>
<td>Are there clear strategies of school leadership succession planning in a country? Does succession planning involves identifying potential leaders and encouraging them to develop leadership practices?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment for school leadership</td>
<td>Is there a systematic framework insuring that the recruitment procedures and criteria used are effective, transparent and consistent? What are the eligibility criteria for school leadership? What are the selection criteria for selection candidates from a pool of eligible candidates? What are the recruitment procedures?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career development options for school leaders</td>
<td>Are there career development prospects for school leaders? Are there any opportunities provided to step up towards new opportunities (e.g. jobs in educational administration; consultant leadership etc.)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status and duration</td>
<td>What is the employment status of a school leader? What is the duration of appointments to principalship?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration and motivation system</td>
<td>What are the factors influencing the motivation of individuals to apply for school leadership (e.g. intrinsic motivation; factors related to recruitment and working conditions; work overload, work-life balance; salary levels; career prospects etc.)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention system</td>
<td>Are the incentives promoted that add value to leaders’ professional experiences, work conditions and personal concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification/licensure requirements</td>
<td>How does leadership development system address certification/licensure requirements? Are the programmes adjusted to certification requirements?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs analysis</td>
<td>How are school leaders’ development and training needs established? How are the needs and demands of school leaders analyzed?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A theoretical model of interconnection between development of school heads’ competencies and school improvement provides a starting point for the construction of a methodological framework for school leadership development studies in Lithuania that would respond a global trend towards more systematic provision of leadership development as human resource management, particularly for school principals.
As the expectations of what schools should achieve have changed dramatically over recent years, Lithuania as well as other European countries needs to develop new forms of school leadership better suited to respond to current and future educational environments. In order to do so, according to Pont et al (2008), Lithuania needs to address two sets of challenges simultaneously.

First, Lithuania needs to support and retrain the school principals who are currently on the job. Most of them were hired into schools in educational environments that were fundamentally different from today. Over time the rules of engagement for principalship/leadership have changed. As the roles and responsibilities of principals have evolved, the terms and conditions of service also need to be revised. Today’s school leaders need to learn to adopt new forms of more distributed leadership. They need in-service training to develop and update their skills and they need more adequate rewards and incentive structures to stay motivated on the job and provide high quality leadership.

Second, Lithuania needs to prepare and train the next generation of school leaders. Especially at a time of high demographic turnover in leadership, thinking about and caring for the future is an essential aspect of system leadership. Lasting improvement depends on a clear definition and better distribution of leadership tasks within schools, planned succession mechanisms, professionalized recruitment processes, preparatory training, mentoring of new leaders, working conditions that attract high quality graduates to educational leadership and a commitment to greater leadership density and capacity within schools from which future high level leaders can emerge.

At the same time, it is important to contextualize school leadership policies. There is no single model of leadership that could be easily transferred across different school-level and system-level contexts. The specific contexts in which schools operate may limit school leaders’ functions, or provide opportunities for different types of leadership. Depending on the school contexts in which they work, school leaders face very different sets of challenges. Approaches to school leadership policy need to be based on careful consideration of the context in which schools operate and their particular challenges.

A theoretical model of interconnection between development of school heads’ competencies and school improvement introduced in the study provides a starting point for the construction of a methodological framework for school leadership development studies in Lithuania that would respond a global trend towards more systematic provision of leadership development, particularly for school principals and the process of school improvement.
Conclusions

• In the current study school heads’ competencies development as an object of the research is conceptualized in the context of education management paradigms. The analysis of education management paradigms sets a framework for describing processes in education, disclosing casual links and searching for perspective decisions. Theories, conceptualizing paradigms, allow to explain the changes in school management that encompass the transformation of school heads roles, activity areas, functions, leadership models, subsequently specific competencies have become relevant, what leads to the necessity to revise the principles of competencies development. The design of the research is rooted in the paradigm of systemic change and in the theories that conceptualize this particular paradigm (school improvement, school as learning organization).

• The theoretical analysis of the process of school leadership discloses the key areas of school heads’ activity and their functions. It is argued that school heads are responsible for the management of educational process, school management and administration, school redesigning and direction setting. The analysis of activity areas and functions is adjusted to the conception of first order and second order changes that allows characterizing the activity of school heads under the conditions of systemic change.

• The conception of school heads’ leadership models as a methodological approach for the analysis of principals’ practical activity provides a possibility to identify theoretically connections between leadership and school processes. It is stated that realization of an integral leadership model (that combines instructional, transactional and transformational leadership) presupposes school improvement in the paradigm of systemic change.

• The conceptions of school heads’ competency and holistic capability are defined by means of theoretical analysis. It is revealed that under the conditions of systemic change school heads must possess the holistic capability that includes certain competencies: management of educational process, strategic, operational, interpersonal, personal, continuous learning as well as dimensions of emotional intelligent, critical thinking and diagnostic competency. Each competency is constituted of certain skills. School heads competencies are the key premise of their management competence.

• The certain principles of the arrangements of school heads’ competencies development have been extracted by means of theoretical analysis. In the paradigm of systemic change school heads’ competencies development must be a purposeful and a coherent process tailored to different stages of management career in education and must adjust appropriately to meet
the specific needs of school heads and their organizations. School heads’ competencies development must be a priority of school heads’ as human resource management.

- The factors, constituting the quality of school heads’ competencies development, are identified theoretically. It is argued that in the paradigm of systemic change the quality of competencies development depends on the peculiarities of content, process, context and assessment as well as on consistent analysis of needs for competencies development.

- A theoretical model of school leadership development provides a starting point for the construction of a methodological framework for school leadership development studies in Lithuania that would respond a global trend towards more systematic provision of leadership development as human resource management, particularly for school principals.

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**VADOVO KOMPETENCIJŲ ĮTAKA MOKYKLOS TOBULINIMUI**

Kęstutis Trakšelys, Julija Melnikova, Dalia Martišauskienė

**Santrauka**

Mokyklos vadovų kompetentingo vadovavimo ir kompetencijų ugdymo(si) svarbą nuolatinės švietimo sistemos kaitos sąlygomis akcentuoja ir Lietuvos švietimo politikos dokumentai. Tai aktualizuoja mokyklų vadovų plataus spektruo kompetencijų ugdymosi ir jų nuolatinio plėtojimo, kompetencijų ugdymo sistemos modernizavimo, kompetencijų ugdymo renginių kokybės užtikrinimo problematiką. Remiantis nuoseklumo principu, kompetencijų ugdymo procesas turi apimti pirminio rengimo, įvedimo į pareigas ir nuolatinio kompetencijų tobulinimo etapus. Sisteminumo principas atsiskleidžia karjeros švietimo srityje koncepcijoje. Tad mokyklų vadovų kompetencijų ugdymas turėtų būti nuoseklus, sisteminės procesas, suderintas su mokyklų vadovų karjeros etapais ir specifiniais poreikiais bei lūkesčiais. Šios vadovų išugdytos kompetencijos mokyklos bendruomenei laiduoja švietimo paslaugų (edukacinių ir socialinių) efektyvumą, rezultatyvumą, naudingumą ir prieinamumą.