Abstract
The article analyzes a topical contemporary problem: human resources quality management in preschools and primary schools. The said schools focus on (self-)development of a personality, and the formation of an autonomous and creative personality preparing for a higher stage of education; therefore, they should create environment appropriate for the physical, emotional and intellectual development and general socialization of children, as well as meet parents’ expectations affecting attainment of purposeful quality. The conducted research reveals the attitudes of preschool and primary school head teachers and teachers regarding the conception of quality and tendencies of human resources quality management in the aforesaid institutions. KEYWORDS: preschool education, quality, school, human resources.

Introduction
Ideas of quality have become significant in different spheres of life in the 21st century. Quality is considered as a priority; therefore, it attracts more and more attention. One of the most important factors of the improvement of the quality of educational institutions’ activity is quality management system, i.e. an aggregate of organization structure, procedures, processes and resources, which is essential in quality assurance and implementation of its constituent parts (quality planning, management, assurance and improvement).

An educational institution is expected to provide quality services, which would ensure successful integration into social and economic life, encourage social and economic growth of the state and competitiveness of educational institutions. It is obvious that these aims can be achieved only by institutions, which are managed by managers able to manage human resources; therefore, the issue of the quality of an educational institution’s activity is of great importance.

The issues of education quality are analyzed by a number of Lithuanian and foreign researchers and theoreticians of overall quality management (Ruževičius J., 2009; Pukelis K., 2004; Dukynaitė R., 2005 and others), who stress exceptional significance of an organization’s quality, satisfaction of clients’ needs, development of an organization and search for its constant improvement. Theoreticians of general and education quality management (Targamadzė V., 2009, Želvys R., 2003, Mikulis J., 2007 and others) analyze the conception and significance of an organization’s development as being related to changes and improvement of activity quality as well as enhancement of management efficiency.

Definition of human resources is integral to the conception management; it is applicable to both a social group and a process; therefore, special attention is paid to the human factor, which often determines success of an educational institution. Human resources are directly related to the success of an educational organization, whereas excellent ability of the manager to manage these resources enhances its competitiveness. The management of human resources demands that the goals of an organization meet the needs of its staff and motivate them to implement the set goals.

The status of educational institutions as organizations rendering education services provides a completely different conception of activity quality, when its objects and subjects are differently perceived. The quality of educational institutions’ activity is assessed by different standards and criteria as well as their implementation. Every educational institution interprets the obtained results in a different way with regard to own goals, objectives and current situation; therefore, the understanding of quality can differ (Marzano R., 2005).

Preschools focus on personality development as pre-primary education is the initial stage of education, which forms an autonomous and creative personality preparing for a higher stage of education. The key criteria of these institutions should be physical, intellectual and emotional development and
appropriate general socialization of children, as well as satisfied parents’ expectations, which affect the attainment of purposeful quality. Quality development of pre-school education is a global problem, the significance of which is topical in the world and Europe in particular. Its significance in enhancing efficiency and appropriateness is shown by the application of new methods and political measures, such as interpretation of educational curriculum, development of teacher abilities and quality assessment.

When analyzing the tendencies of human resources quality management in preschools emphasis is laid on the role of head teachers in this process. Research was carried out in 2013, which was marked by active involvement of L. Paulauskiene, head teacher of preschool N, and supervised by the author of the present article. The aim of the article is to reveal the attitude of the head teachers of preschools and primary schools towards human resources quality management.

The problem of the research lies in the following question: how can we help the head teachers of preschools manage human resources in an appropriate way?

Methodology. The methodological basis of the research is formed of different ideas of Lithuanian and foreign researchers on the tendencies of human resources management on the level of an educational institution, the conception of education quality. The questionnaire design is based on the methodology of internal audit of preschools.

The following provisions were observed when conducting the research:

- Systemic principle: the learner, class, school and teacher can educate systematically only in the interaction with the surrounding environment, which is characterized by mutual impact and harmony.
- Provisions of humanist psychology. Representatives of humanist psychology (K. Rogers, A. Maslow and others) focus on the analysis of human values, personality development and cognition, emphasize freedom of choice and autonomy, and link motivation with the nature of specific needs and their satisfaction.

Objectives of the research:

- To define human resources management quality and its significance in preschools and primary schools.
- To analyze the attitudes of head teachers and teachers of preschools, pre-primary and primary schools towards the quality of human resources management.

Research methods:

1. **Scientific literature analysis** helped to discuss the conception of human resources management, the significance of education quality for the changes of an educational organization, as well as to reveal the preconditions and tendencies of assuring preschool quality management;
2. **Written survey** which included closed-ended questionnaire;
3. **Statistical data analysis**, which was conducted using methods of descriptive statistics and calculating arithmetical mean of respondents’ opinions. IBM SPSS Statistics 21 and MS Excel were employed to process the obtained data.

Components of human resources management

Intellectual workers, i.e. people representing human capital, creating scientific ideas and paradigms and formulating various conceptions have become an important factor of economic growth in the 21st century. Thus, a human being becomes a creator of resources that influences social progress and economic growth in knowledge society.

According to V. Damašienė (2002), the main resources of an organization are people, capital, materials, technologies and information. B. R. Jewell (2002) states that human resources are most important resources of an organization, without whom the organization could not survive. L. Lobanova (2009) notes that an organization’s ability to survive depends on the awareness of the value of human resources management and ‘relative supremacy’ of specialists of human resources management in enhancing productivity of intellectual workers in knowledge society.

Thus, the competency and strategic thinking of specialists and managers of human resources management largely affects not only the quality of own work, but also efficiency, productivity, abilities and motivation of all the staff of an organization.

Numerous literature sources dealing with the issues of the practical value of human resources management (G. Dessler 2001; M. Armstrong 2003; J. Bratton, J. Gold 2003; A. Stankevičienė, I. Lobanova 2008 and others) describe the implementation of human resources management in the activity of an organization.

Human resources management involves complex analysis of human role, its cognition (values, cultural aspects), issues of staff and organization development. According to A. Stoner (2005), human
resources management is a management function related to the recruitment, selection, training and development of staff. P. Boxallo (2007) holds a similar opinion and states that human resources management is human and labour management seeking for the attainment of goals.

Definition of human resources is integral with the conception management, as this conception can be applicable to both a social group and a process. According to R. Čiutienė and R. Adamoniene (2009), it is important for every employee to fully disclose their potential and personal and professional competences, as well as to efficiently employ them to attain organization goals. People, thus, become human resources, who perform certain activities in an organization. Hence, these definitions help to understand that success can be achieved through efficient management of an organization.

The term human resources management is used in a number of ways: in its broadest sense it is used as a general term to define attitude towards human management; in its modern sense it can be used to define activities usually related to staff management. According to R. Korsakienė, L. Lobanova, and A. Stankevičienė (2011), human resources management expresses an innovative approach to human management, different from traditional practice: one group focus on the practice that permits increasing human loyalty and abilities to improve business results, whereas others emphasize the strategic nature of management.

Human resources management does not only involve staff recruitment, dismissal or social provision, but also includes staff resources for the implementation of an organization’s strategic goals. Strategic management of human resources that is related to different functions is stressed. That is the main difference between human resources and staff management. Thus, human resources management focuses on external and global environment, long-term prospects, generation of new ideas and provides possibilities for every employee to express own professionalism.

The school is legally (financially) autonomous educational establishment, and a structural element of the system of education; it is a specific organization, whose head teachers and teachers have a correspondent professional pedagogical qualification, a similar scale of values and experience, and which closely links five variables: the environment, values, state structure, human relations and strategy.

According to M. Barkauskaitė and R. Bruzgelevičienė (2002), education quality is defined as a totality of features, which help to evaluate how an educational establishment, the system of education or its individual subsystems implement characteristic national and regional educational aims and meet learners’/clients’ needs. It is obvious that the whole school community should participate in the process of education quality improvement, and have a public space for a dialogue, debates, discussions and cooperation. B. Bitinas (2011) notes that education quality is an aggregate of features, which determine capability of education to satisfy the ascribed expectations and personal or social needs, as well as implementation of the principles and goals of the system of education.

Standard education quality can be perceived as an aggregate of national and regional features of the quality of educational establishment, whereas education quality is the level of teaching in a particular educational establishment. B. Bitinas (2000) maintains that the term education quality at the level of a particular educational establishment is more precise, as it defines the quality of social and cultural processes and results inherent in an educational establishment. D. Adams (2005) defines the quality of educational process as a totality of standard values, which indicates the level, ways and measures applied by an institution to implement the goals of the national system of education, to satisfy learner needs, to help learners achieve personal maturity and to manage processes and circumstances.

R. Želvys (2001) defines key factors determining education quality (see Table 1).

Table 1. Factors determining education quality (adapted from R. Želvys, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Organization of education</td>
<td>focuses on modern society, where well-organized education becomes one of the most important factors of social life due to the rapid development of technologies, globalization and constant mobility of labour.</td>
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<td>2. Learning motivation</td>
<td>is based on activity and behaviour stimulation as occurring in human psyche. It clears out what can intensify or focus one’s behaviour. Motivation is causatively linked to learning outcomes.</td>
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<td>3. Teachers’ qualification</td>
<td>focuses on the most significant abilities of a teacher: methodological training (ability to choose the most appropriate methodology and optimal teaching contents), professional and subject-specific training, as well as psychological readiness (ability to communicate open-mindedly and sincerely, which ensures effective process of learning).</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Maintenance of educational establishments</td>
<td>Focuses on rational distribution of material resources and implementation of latest information technologies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Learner achievements and assessment</td>
<td>Focuses on the integration and aim of education and ensures learning feedback.</td>
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It is possible to claim that a majority of people being consumers search for quality and measure it by satisfying own needs and expectations. If their expectations are not met, they condition consumer dissatisfaction.

To self-evaluate and improve their activity, pre-schools have been using *Internal Audit Methodology of Pre-school Education*, which regulates the model of internal audit of a pre-school, procedures of the organization and implementation of internal self-assessment as well as requirements for the implementation of internal audit since 2005 (Order No. ISAK-1557 of 22 July 2005). The aforesaid methodology is applicable to pre-education establishments: nurseries, nursery-kindergartens, kindergartens, kindergarten-pre-schools and other institutions providing services of pre-school and primary education (hereinafter the School). The purpose of the methodology is to help the school develop a proportionate, coherent and flexible model of its activity assessment, which would help to obtain reliable data about the quality of school activity.

The rights and duties of assuring the quality of state education in the sector of formal education, i.e. sector of comprehensive school was delegated to the *National School Assessment Agency*, established following Order No. ISAK-2683 of the Minister of Education and Science of 30 December 2005. It aims at implementing quality assessment of comprehensive schools and provides methodological assistance and recommendations to schools and their promoters regarding quality development of school activity. Thus, a planned assessment of the quality of comprehensive schools’ activity has been implemented.

**Research results**

A closed-ended questionnaire was designed with regard to the literature analysis conducted in the theoretical part of the article. The questionnaire was designed for two target groups of respondents: for teachers and teacher assistants, and head teachers and deputy head teachers of nursery-schools providing pre-school, pre-primary and primary education in the city X. The questionnaire included 23 questions, 22 out of them were closed-ended and 1 open-ended questions. The open-ended question was meant to reveal respondents’ attitude towards the conception of education, which largely reflected the attitude of school community towards quality. The questionnaire consisted of typical parts: rapport, demographic questions and product specific questions. The head teachers and teachers were provided with the same questionnaire.

**Research sample.** According to the data provided by the head teachers of nursery-schools of the city X, 410 pedagogues (teachers and teacher assistants) were employed in pre-school, pre-primary, and primary education. Teachers were selected in random order after prior phone calls to state nursery-schools following *Registry Data on Educational Institutions* registered at www.mir.lt and asking for head teachers’ agreement to be involved in the research. Upon receiving the head teachers’ agreements, 410 questionnaires were distributed, 267 out of them were returned.

The first group of respondents included managers (head teachers and deputy head teachers for education): 25 questionnaires were distributed to deputy head teachers and 15 to head teachers; all of them were appropriately filled and returned. 227 questionnaires of teachers and 40 questionnaires of head teachers were statistically processed, the total sample being 267.

**Research ethics.** All the respondents participated in the survey voluntarily, which is convenient for the respondents in terms of time and place. Respondents were provided with the information on research aims and contents as well as received guarantees of confidentiality.

**Demographic indicators of research sample.** Females constituted 99.1% and males constituted 0.9% of the research sample. All the respondent fell into four groups in terms of their age: from 20 to 30 years, from 31 to 40 years, from 41 to 50 years, from 51 to 60 years, and over 61 years of age. It was determined that most respondents (43.2%) belonged to the third age group, i.e. from 41 to 50 years. The second age group, i.e. persons from 30 to 40 years of age, constituted 22.4%, whereas the group of 51-60 year-olds constituted 20.3%. The youngest age group, i.e. 20-30 year-olds amounted to 10.6%, and the group over 60 years of age made up only 3.5%.

More than a third of respondents (39.2%) indicated having pedagogical experience of 21-30 years. Respondents, whose pedagogical experience was 11-20 years, constituted 26.4%, whereas the ones, who had experience of less than 10 years or more than 30 years made up 19.8% and 14.6% respectively. The obtained results show that young and middle-aged teachers constitute a minor part of research participants, whereas the greater part included older and senior specialists. It is assumed that the reason of such a situation is the occupation of vacancies by middle-aged people. The social characteristics of respondents show that a teacher’s profession is mostly chosen by females, which may be conditioned by a lower social status, social stereotypes or attitudes.

Respondents were asked to point out what factors received greatest attention in their schools (see Pict. 1).
Having compared attitudes of teachers and head teachers, similar answers were received. **65% of head teachers** claimed that all statements were equally considered, 23% of respondents stated that attention was directed largely to the improvement of education quality and education (7%), whereas human resources were mentioned only by 5% of all respondents, education by 4%, and educational environment was indicated by 5%. The respondents provided no replies when asked to name other factors. It is assumed that most head teachers (65%) and teachers (62%) believed that education, educational environment, human resources and education quality are equally important in their educational establishments.

Respondents were asked to state which conception of quality reflected the attitude of school community towards quality, which helped identifying the prevailing conception. The generalized replies of respondents are provided in Picture 2 (see Pict. 2).

According to teachers and head teachers, the conception of quality was best reflected by the understanding that quality is appropriateness of the goals and attainment of the purpose (43% of head teachers and 33% of teachers), and quality is compliance with the requirements (37% of head teachers and 34% of teachers). Quality perceived as satisfaction of the needs of children and parents was also an important conception of quality (10% of head teachers and 20% of teachers held the opinion), whereas only 11% of teachers considered quality as development.
When assessing the attitude of teachers and head teachers towards pre-school and primary education quality, the prevailing reply was that education is quality when it complies with the needs and expectations of parents and local community – 47.1% of teachers and 62.5% of head teachers fully supported the statement. The statement that education, which focuses of the implementation of national standards for children’s achievements, was supported by 55% of head teachers and 70% of teachers agreed with the level of the attainment of national education goals. 40% of head teachers and 70% of teachers believed that pre-school and primary education is quality education when it complies with the level of the attainment of national education goals, which makes it the third most important statement. When asked to provide other answers, two head teachers indicated that ‘education is quality when it complies with the needs of the learner’ and ‘quality education should comply with children’s needs’. It is assumed that most teachers and head teachers understand education as a totality of features, which demonstrates how an educational institution, the system of education or its individual subsystems implement the characteristic national and regional educational goals for the attainment of the purposes and satisfaction of learner needs.

When analyzing the attitude of teachers and head teachers towards factors determining education quality, it appeared that teacher competence was considered as the most significant factor (77% of teachers and 92.5% of head teachers held the opinion). The second most important factor according to head teachers (85%) was the attitude and support of promoters, and the teachers believed the second most important factor was compliance of educational curriculum with the age group of learners (49.8%). On the other hand, a majority of head teachers (77.5%) maintained that parents’ involvement into children’s education was an important factor determining the quality of (self-)education at school, whereas a great part of teachers (42.7%) attributed qualification development to the most significant factors defining the quality of pre-school (self-) education. Hence, it is possible to state that teacher competencies are fragmentary and do not fully reflect the structure and contents of competence; therefore, their development is significant as they provide a possibility for the implementation of modern education goals, creation of favourable teaching/learning environment and satisfaction of learner needs.

Having analyzed the attitudes of teachers and head teachers towards factors determining education quality, it is assumed that a majority of respondents (90.3% of teachers an 95% of head teachers) maintained that teachers carry primary responsibility for the education quality at school; they are followed by head teachers of schools (74.9% of teachers and 90% of head teachers held the opinion) and all the remaining management of schools (68.3% of teachers and 80% of head teachers held the opinion). It is obvious that teachers can arrange individual curricula with regard to children’s needs and pursue to assure teaching/learning quality, design teaching contents with regard to children’s needs and abilities, parents’ preferences, capabilities of the promoter, regional peculiarities and value-based provisions. Thus, different education goals can be implemented through the quality expression of teachers’ professional competences. Moreover, successful implementation of teaching/learning quality is conditioned not only by the attitude and teacher support of heads, but also parents’ opinion, as they constitute one of the largest interest groups (head teacher’s opinion).

Dichotomous scale was applied to find out the opinion of head teachers and teachers regarding human resources (see Pict. 3).

Attitudes of head teachers and teachers differed in this respect. 42.5% of head teachers claimed that human resources are resources of skills, knowledge and aptitude, which are used when working in an institution, whereas 61.2% of teachers believed that human resources include totality of subject-specific, psychological and spiritual readiness of qualified employees. The teachers did not provide any replies in the section ‘other’; however, as far as 5% of head teachers indicated that human resources are made of the totality of all the four variants. Since there were no head teachers maintaining that human resources are resources, which promote the growth of productivity (their purposeful employment determines income growth), it is assumed that this statement cannot be applicable to define human resources. Human resources should be perceived as management of professionals having particular competencies, which affect the quality of school activity through decision-making and implementation.

It is noteworthy that both head teachers and teachers distinguish the following changes as affecting teaching/learning quality: development of quality system and collaboration with a child’s family; as the third most important factor, teachers distinguished facilities and financial resources, whereas head teachers pointed out the development of human resources (qualification development in an institution of outside) and life-long learning.

Having analyzed the attitudes of head teachers and teachers, it appeared that head teachers constantly discussed and assessed quality of the work with the staff, foresaw ways of its development, and initiated internal audit to evaluate the condition of the school and readiness of its community. Teachers and other staff were actively involved in the internal audit of the school, and analyzed their own or the school’s
activity. Staff involvement is one of the most significant principles of quality management. Despite that teachers and other staff were actively involved in the school internal audit, the analysis of teachers’ and head teachers’ opinions revealed that the latter (about a third) maintained receiving insufficient information, which could be hardly applicable to improve the processor education. It is noteworthy that consistent mutual interaction is essential. The research revealed that the strategic documents and priorities of the school were based on the internal audit results, their conclusions and recommendations; however, about a third of respondents claimed that this factor was characteristic to their school only in part. According to head teachers, teachers did not fully observe the provided recommendations for the development of education process and activity planning, as the questionnaire disclosed a substantial level of hesitation (only 50% claimed that this feature was characteristic, 47.5% claimed it characteristic in part, and 2.5% stated that it was not typical).

![Graph of teachers and head teachers' attitudes towards human resources](image)

**Pict. 3. Attitude of teachers and head teachers towards the conception of human resources**

**Conclusions**

1. Human resources management is a coordinated attitude towards human management, when attempts are made to integrate and combine different functions of the staff. The constituent parts and processes as well as different activities of human resources management are closely interrelated and planned. All the activities are combined by the common link – an employee, i.e. human resources with the delegated functions legalized in position descriptions and defined place in the structure of organization management. The quality of management work as well as the efficiency and productivity of all the staff of an organization is largely dependent on the competency and strategic thinking of specialists and heads of human resources management.

2. All the resources in an organization (financial, facilities, informational, innovative, and human) are significant in their daily activity; however, the importance of human resources and their impact on quality results of organizational activity is especial highlighted in educational institutions. It is claimed that human resources management and its development become one of the top priorities in the system of school development.

3. Educational institutions, which are lead by heads capable of human resources management and promotion of positive changes, can achieve an appropriate quality of services in contemporary society. Pre-schools and primary schools become competitive when the following factors affect their quality: organization of education, teacher motivation and competence, contemporary facilities, as well as learner achievements and their assessment.

4. The research revealed that the conception of quality is best reflected in the attitude of school community towards quality: quality as appropriateness of goals and implementation of the purpose, quality as compliance with the requirements, as well as quality as satisfaction of children’s and parents’ needs; the most important factor responsible for the quality of teaching/learning at pre-school is teachers; therefore, development of teacher competences is a topical issue, which determines the timely implementation of modern educational goals.

**Literatūros šarasas**


S VADYBA: IKIMOKYKLINĖ IR PRADINIO UGDYMO MOKYKLOS ATVEJO ANALIZĖ

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Santrauka

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ŽMOGIŠKŲJŲ IŠTEKLIŲ KOKYBĖS VALDYMAS: IKIMOKYKLINĖS IR PRADINIO UGDYMO MOKYKLOS ATVEJO ANALIZĖ

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