

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT CHANGE IN THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT PARADIGMS SHIFT

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Abstract

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and restored Independence of Lithuania post-soviet countries faced with inevitable transformations in educational management. The article presents school management changes and overlooks Lithuanian school management development and its tendencies after becoming an independent state in the context of educational management paradigm shift. It also unfolds the changing roles and functions of school principals in the alternations of political ideologies. Scientific literature unfolds exclusive role of school principals in the process of educational management transformation. The article is based on the principles of paradigm shift and systematic approach on management.

KEYWORDS: school principals, management, administration, educational management paradigms, educational change.

Anotacija

Po Sovietų Sąjungos griūties, atkūrus Nepriklausomybę, posovietinėse valstybėse vyko sparti švietimo vadybos transformacija. Straipsnyje siekta aprašyti mokyklų valdymo kaitą švietimo vadybos paradigmų virsmo kontekste bei pateikti Lietuvos mokyklų vadybos raidą ir tendencijas atkūrus Nepriklausomybę. Aptariamas kintantis mokyklos vadovo vaidmuo ir atliekamos funkcijos, keičiantis politinėms ideologijoms. Mokslinės literatūros analizė išryškina ypatingą mokyklos vadovo vaidmenį švietimo vadybos transformacijos procese. Straipsnyje laikomasi paradigmų kaitos teorijos nuostatų, sisteminio požiūrio į vadybą.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: mokyklų vadovai, vadyba, valdymas, švietimo vadybos paradigmos, švietimo kaita.

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Introduction

Within the Restoration of Lithuanian Independence social and economic life spheres have faced a plenty of challenges. Educational management has undergone significant changes in theoretical and practical levels. Despite the fact that Lithuanian education system has inherited a distinctive mental outlook that influences political decisions (Bulajeva, Duoblienė, 2009), what is also common to other post-Soviet countries, in the era of globalization with the growing expansion of education reforms Lithuanian educational management has experienced tangible transformations.

Lithuanian educational system can be characterized as a process of restructurization and dynamic changes in order to satisfy society's needs and expectations, and meet high standards for efficiency and quality of education that are delineated by the international organizations and the European Union. Concerning the

voluminous context of educational issues the process of managerial changes is complex to define (Whitson, 2014). Generally, it is interrelated with planned and unscheduled changes that influence *status quo* inside the institution (Whitson, 2014). Jašarevič and Kuka (2016) defines educational change as transformation of managerial and leadership competencies entailing the change of “rationality, economy, perseverance, reflection, authority, creativity, mobility, flexibility, innovations, and power” (Jašarevič, Kuka, 2016, p. 94). The authors claim that compiling typology and factors defining the notion of transformation the criteria of personal, organizational, global, regional, radical, progressive objectives must be considered (Jašarevič, Kuka, 2016).

Scholars associate educational management changes with educational management paradigms shift (Melnikova, 2011; 2012; Sallis, 2014; Earl, Hargreaves, Ryan, 2013; Želvys, 2015; Amanchukwu, Stanley, Olulubei, 2015). Educational paradigm can be broadly described as a foundation, idea or attitude towards the construction of the model of education (Melnikova, 2011) that leads to exigence to reconsider the school principals’ roles and functions. Meanwhile Mečkauskienė (2010) states that changes in the lives of the contemporary society have influenced the approach to performance and functions of a school as an institution providing education services. As relevant for public heightened expectations school principals’ are considered to be promoters of innovations. It is important to state that novel educational policy defines educational management as a guarantee for organisational development in the process of implementation of education strategy, focusing on upbringing a harmonious and civic personalities that are able to take reasoned decisions, set priorities, decide and negotiate on the path towards democracy, harmonious societal development and economic cohesion.

In relation to national education documents particular attention is paid on the change and improvement of educational management. It is stated in the *National Education Strategy 2013–2022* (2013) that education system must be grounded on the principles of efficient, accountable, and rational managerial culture. Whereas *Nathional Progress Strategy “Lithuania 2030”* declares the importance of managerial culture change comprising reasonable decision making, consensus of opinions and smart management. In this position, a school principal becomes a central figure of educational management transformation by ensuring effective management of human and financial resources, participating in market competition, implementing innovative managerial theories in the organization of education process, including being a leader and launcher of leadership concept. Even though managing an education institution has acquired concernment for the institution’s image and performance results (Melnikova, 2012).

European Council conclusions on effective leadership in education (2013) stresses that “good educational leaders develop a strategic vision for their institutions, act as role models for both learners and teachers and are key to creating an effective and attractive environment which is conducive to learning”, that indicates the connection between effective school management and effective school performance. Moreover, globalization, importance of investment into human capital, growing demand for knowledge and knowing, rapid technological progress, changes of expectations and requirements, international standardization, societal and political development of contemporary society have affected and influenced the ways of school management.

The purpose of the article is to analyze transformation of school management and administration. The object is transformation of school management.

The approach, that school principals’ competency highly influences the process of education management and is one of the most important factors ensuring efficiency of school activities, has been followed.

Research methods: analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of scientific literature and education documents.

Theoretical approach to the research. The research is based on the approach of paradigm shift (Kuhn, 2003) that claims existence of one paradigm till inner contradictions overlap forming a new paradigm. The article highlights the progress raised by paradigm shift, prediction of new solutions to the problems and forecasting innovative performance directions. Using systematic approach on management reveals the essence of educational management change in the notion of institution and its management as an indiscrete system or unit.

1. Directions of School Management Change

Scientific literature is rich in definitions of a paradigm concept and processes of change. The article follows Sigri’s (2010) approach to educational management paradigms. The author defines educational paradigm as “collective set of attitudes, values, procedures, techniques that form the generally accepted perspective of teaching and learning at a point of time” and highlights three main perspectives in paradigm shift: past, today, and tomorrow paradigms (Sigri, 2010, p. 206).

The educational management paradigm of the past focuses upon the interaction between instructors, learners and given subject matters that were significant in previous education stages (Sigri, 2010). A verbal flow, streaming from the instructor directly to the learners dominated in the following paradigm era. Hence, the instructor or teacher, in the case of school management a school principal, possessed all existing knowledge and practice possessing the right to decide in which

way and what knowledge should be transmitted. Whereas school principals performed the roles of casual school administration and governance deputed by local authorities to implement centralized decisions.

In Lithuania, past educational management paradigm was prevailed since the Restoration of the Independence and the appearance of *National School Conception* (1998). Želvys (2015) states that it is initial to know the history of Independent Lithuanian school management change in order to better understand present school management transformations. The scholar claims that the exceptional peculiarity of socialist education was high level of centralization and authoritarian management (Želvys, 2015). As a former Soviet country, Lithuania was distinguished by contained obsolete, inflexible, unable to function effectively institutions. In addition, the concept of management was not considered the same as it is now, while schools were not managed but in most cases, were administered or ruled. Nonetheless, the performance of a school principal was strictly regulated, whilst centralized education system obligated to adopt common education curriculum with strict guidance of its implementation. The following situation ensured the cardinal goals of Soviet annexation: russification, sameness, unification of behavior and thinking. Even though, in Lithuania, contemporary educational management tendencies have spread with the Restoration of Independence. This has raised turnout of modern management bringing the concepts of mission, vision, values, cooperation and collaboration, leadership, etc. (Želvys, 2015). Until then school management was identified with technique (Indriūnas, 1971), furthermore, Miškinis (1982, 1987) formulated the principles of school administration that were considered as innovative Soviet managerial practice. After the Restoration of Independence education reforms influenced school management transformations by emerging new managerial concepts. Thus, school principals were forced to apply contemporary managerial theories that had raised the demand of managerial knowledge. Following the current situation Lithuanian scholars (Jucevičienė, 1996; Mikoliūnienė, 1996; 2000; 2003; Targamadžė, 1996; 2016; 2017; Želvys, 1999; 2002; 2003; 2015; Mečkauskienė, 2009; 2010; Melnikova, 2010; 2011; 2012; 2014; and others) have made a significant contribution on the development of modern management strategies in school administration.

The educational management paradigm of today (Sigri, 2010) dispersed in the last decade of 20th century in Lithuania. The paradigm reflected an expression of how interaction between instructor, learners and contents may be experienced. Thus, school principal still played a central role and the main part of communication was based on his / her knowledge and experience, hence, the onset of collaboration and sharing of responsibility could be observed.

In spite of the fact that process of decentralization is being implemented in many countries still there is a confusion in defining it. There is a dichotomy between the approaches which could be divided into two main standpoints. The first, according to Winkler and Yeo (2007), defines decentralization as transmission of power instruments and decisions making from national and local authorities to school administration. On the other hand, the second standpoint claims decentralization as transmission of power positions from one level into another (Mwinjuma, Kadir, Hamzah, Ramli, 2015). Nevertheless, representatives of both standpoints agree upon the fact that school has become a central figure in decision making incorporating not only school principals, but also the whole community. Whereas Lithuanian scholars describe decentralization as reconstruction of social system management that contains definite directions (Astrauskas, 2007). On this basis an assumption can be made assuming that decentralization is feasible when precise objectives of changes are set to determine transformation of provided services by managing, monitoring and controlling educational process.

Researchers of educational processes (Stromquist, Monkman, 2014; Verger, Novelli, Altinyelken, 2018) notice cyclical trends in the processes of education centralization and decentralization. It must be considered that centralization is frequently influenced by economic or societal crisis facing complex historical periods when preservation of national identity becomes the essential goal (Gunter, Grimaldi, Hall, Serpieri, 2016).

Though many economically developed countries intending to improve national education policy indicate institutional autonomy as a priority axis (Urbanovič, 2009). As evidenced, following global education tendencies Independent Lithuanian education policy has turned from centralized into decentralized one. According to Bulajeva and Kaminskas (2009) the main documents of Lithuanian schools autonomy are *Education Act* (2003) and *Local Authority Law* (2000 and later amendments).

Despite successful transformation from socialist to decentralized Lithuanian education model, Želvys (2015) defines this stage as ideological romanticism because school principals attempted to implement modern management models into Lithuanian schools. It should be considered that not all attempts to implement innovative managerial strategies resulted positively. In many cases, the attempts resulted in chaotic transfusion influencing the beginning of standardization era (Želvys, 2015).

As one of tools for standardization school principals' certification was employed (*Rules of Comprehensive Schools Principals (Primary, Secondary and Gymnasium) Certification*, 1994). The process of certification was intended to ensure effective school administration, it also served as a tool to motivate school prin-

cipals by reflecting and evaluating the quality of their performance. Hence, five principles were applied to the certification of school leaders: 1) generality – school leaders had to undergo the process of certification within five years from the legislation of the law; 2) choice – school administrators could choose which qualification category to apply for and when; 3) continuity – certification was obligatory every five years; 4) objectivity – publicity of evaluation criteria and procedures, the right to appeal; 5) promotion – the salary depended on the qualification category. The process of certification encouraged school principals to apply modern management theories in their performance. The model of certification allowed to join various administration approaches into one coherent system that matched the requirements of innovative management. Despite successful implementation of certification model it was cancelled in 2017 as not meeting contemporary needs and expectations ensuring transparent evaluation process. *Education Act* (2017) amendment states annual public school principals' evaluation and five year terminal labour contracts that could be extended on the condition of effective management. The main objective of new amendment is to ensure transparent evaluation process and provide apropos support.

Lithuania's membership in the European Union and other international organisations has forwarded the process of standardization. European Commission takes active collaboration with European Union countries in forming educational systems. European Commission urges to seek for progress in education system by applying inclusive and lifelong learning by integrating innovations and comprising unified and standardized education policy direction that ensures coherent and sustainable management (Stones, Hatswell, 2017). Nevertheless, each membership country is individually responsible for implementation of specific curriculum, yet European Commission influences the main directions and principles of education policy.

The educational management paradigm of tomorrow (Sigri, 2010) is experienced in many parts of developed countries. It can be called as based on "e-learning", the paradigm with the "management knowledge base" (learning resource centre) element in which the phrase "e-learning" has to be perceived as "information technology". A distinct difference could be seen between the previous two and the tomorrow paradigms. The recent paradigm is distinguished by two-ways communication between instructor and learning resource centre. Moreover, the general idea now is to place the responsibility upon the shoulders of every member of the community. The spread of tomorrow's paradigm is associated with the spread of neoliberal ideology in education policy. Though William E. Deming (1982) compounded a set of quality management principles for business institutions, the majority of the principles can be applied in school management. Šimanskienė and Paužuolienė (2012) recognize that sustainable development of a country and high

quality services request effective management based on the principles of quality management that could be ensured only by active participation of society members in decision making. It should be also stated that quality management in schools assures provision of effective and beneficial education services (Martišauskienė, Trakšelys, 2017). In relation to this quality management in education system can be determined as philosophy or system that focuses on services improvement and has visible benefit for the school community.

In the context of modern school management and administration has emerged a novel concept of leadership that fluctuates depending on school principals' performed roles and functions. In the 20th century school leader was associated with issuing laws and performing functions of control. But in the turn of centuries a new tendency appeared that spread the idea of dissatisfaction with the approach of traditional management as not fulfilling the needs of notion of contemporary management. This lead to relate school management with the notions of efficacy and effectiveness. Considering new challenges sociologists, economists, politicians and psychologists have introduced innovative quality management model based on the principles of leadership. Rapid spread of decentralization has made a significant contribution in highlighting the importance of a leader's role in efficient management that ensures coherent managerial processes in institutions administration (Mwinjuma, Kadir, Hamzah, Ramli, 2015). It indicates that in education change circumstances increase the demand for leaders who could represent communities and meet their needs and expectations by implementing education goals and objectives and withstand the pressure of other interest groups (Želvys, 2015). Due to the mentioned reasons school principals' mission is extended by adding the following functions to nurture the staff empowering them to act, discover innovations and eliminating fair to fail. Navickaitė (2012) claims that school principal becomes a transformative leader who is able to unfold students' creativity, abilities and bring together a learning community. Moreover, Harris (2010) highlights school principal's, as a transformative leader's, major goals that are establishing motivating school culture not on financial motion, but on collaboration, sharing of ideas and responsibilities. These are the reasons for emergence of shared leadership that is characterized by professional reliance and possitive community relationships. Furthermore, school principal's shared leadership is defined according to three factors: forseeing the direction of school activity, empowerment of educational performance and sharing responsibility (Navickaitė, 2012). Therefore, shared leadership has become the major dimension in implementing multiple school principal's role while performing different functions.

Analyzing educational management paradigms Sigri (2010) limits upon the paradigm of tomorrow and does not prewise the future paradigm, thus the notion of

change presuppose postmodern condition of changes that are indeterminate, uncertain, unstable and representing fluid state of the society. Consequently, a need for postmodern paradigm has appeared. Moreover, having analyzed educational change it could be stated that in previous centuries the nature of education system was static and conservative, trying to preserve and convey traditional values. Education revolution stimulated a confusion in the curriculum by adding to it the notions of indeterminacy and relativism (Duoblienė, 2011). Furthermore, the change of life pace, emergence of new ideologies, combination of global and local policy has made high influence on school management. Edwards and Usher (2007) notice varied specifics of education that is characterized by oppositional attitudes: constraint vs liberalism, teaching vs learning, student vs teacher, etc. According to Duoblienė (2011), the following oppositions used to have definite conception and precise position in education system ensuring stability, thus postmodern education scholars claim that the synthesis of oppositions is impossible as the factors that prevent achieving goals create oppositions. It should be also stated that school management, previously ruling, has been associated with authorities for a long period of time. Bauman (2002) treats locally administrated lifestyles as obsolete and signifies that personalities tend to change collectively, and authorities have been replaced by experts whose main function is to embrace control. Applying Baumann's attitude school principal must be not only a personality but must satisfy the requirements of an expert. *Qualification Requirements for School Principals* (2018) indicate effective and rational management of human resources and financial allocations, ensuring success of every student by providing proper education methods, physically and mentally safe environment, appropriate behaviour and attendance, etc. The following requirements disclose multiple roles of school principals, hence, a school principal must be not only a manager of extensive range, but should also be an expert of education sciences, finance, a psychologist and maintenance specialist. The provided managerial model of school administration evokes postmodern rhizomatic role of school principals by trying to meet liberal and neoliberal challenges. What is more, liberal market economy has been raising a consumer and provoking consumerism in education institutions. Duoblienė (2011) identifies the dangers of upbringing excessive consumerism in young personalities leading to rejection of dignity, discouraging thinking and choice, focusing on the survival under the conditions of market economy. Furthermore, similar situation can be observed in schools that recently have been facing unfair competition by permissions to segregate students by applying entrance criteria. Additionally, school principals obtain obligation not only to survive, but to ensure stable work places, provide high quality education and unfold an exceptional and unique identity of a school. Meanwhile neoliberal policy strengthens private edu-

cation segment by identifying public education as not capable to provide proper quality education services, thus leading to elitism in education system. Therefore, school principals start to take active participation in the market by selling and buying services in order to sustain the image and reputation of a “good” school (Petersen, 2015). Hereby, school principals perform the roles that are not linked to organization, implementation and monitoring of education process. Consequently, school management transformation becomes a part of an unpredictable process and further development in the context of standardization, globalization, marketization and quality management is complex to forecast due to the spread of nomad education tendencies.

Discussion

Lithuanian education system can be characterized as a process of restructuring and dynamic changes in order to meet high requirements and demands of contemporary society, and the standards of quality and effectiveness that have been raised by international organizations. The process of change and educational management transformation is defined as a liquidation of *status quo* that affects inner and outer, planned and unscheduled changes in the education institution.

From the historic point of view on school management change in Lithuania several stages of transformation have been undergone. The first stage is related to social realism when school management was associated to commanding and control. After restored Independency new changes entered Lithuanian educational system. School management faced with the ideal romanticism as school principals attempted to implement modern management models into Lithuanian schools. In many cases, the attempts resulted in chaotic transfusion influencing the beginning of standardization era. Global changes, membership in European Union and other international organizations required to follow international standards in school management. Postmodern rhizomatic perspective is seen in trying to fulfil neoliberal challenges in education which lead to market economy in school management. Although, many educational management paradigms can be applied to constant managerial situation in contemporary Lithuanian school management, few predictions have been made on future school management in compliance with meeting new, postmodern requirements of the society and educational system that is facing changes as nomadic education tendencies are upspringing.

Nowadays, implementing a new reform on school management, voluminous discussions have spread in defining the best direction in the changes of established managerial practice. The question arises if recent resolutions on school principals' competencies evaluation will justify expectations and whether public evaluation

will ensure transparency and higher standards than the previous system. Still the open question is about the preparation system of school principals as little attention has been recently paid on this issue. Lithuania is one among those countries that do not provide university programmes for school principals' preparation. Though opponents may argue that there are several master programmes on educational management, but the studies focus on management of various institutions concerning different economic fields. Referring to scientific literature and educational documents analysis educational management change highly influences the requirements of qualifications for school principals that encompass not only to understand managerial functions but involves a wider context of social, economical, and political issues. In other words, the current situation presupposes to overlook the preparatory system of educational managers.

Having analyzed school management transformations in the context of educational management paradigms shift, it has become obvious that Lithuanian school management underwent several important evolutionary stages starting with socialist realism, ideological romanticisms, standardization influenced by globalisation and entering postmodern indeterminacy state. Therefore, the following question arises about foreseeing future vision of school management. *Nathional Progress Strategy "Lithuania 2030"* signifies the importance of change of managerial culture and implementation of smart management principles. Though the concept of "smart management" has not been defined yet, and school principals are forced to apply managerial knowledge, ingenuity and uninvented innovations in order to perform "in a smart way" and satisfy expectations of postmodern society and nomad education tendencies. Hence, the future educational management paradigm will require similar competencies and knowledge as they used to be before entering new paradigms as the future school management vision is open and unpredictable, thus leading to provision of novel ideas and discussions for prospective research.

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