Barriers of School Principal’s Transformational Leadership in Change Process: Case Study of Lithuanian Schools

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Abstract

Expectations and requirements for school and school principals have changed a lot during the recent decades. A school principal becomes responsible not only for management of school as an institution (activity planning, organizing, staffing and controlling) but also for motivation of positive microclimate change, development of school as a learning institution, student achievements and etc. Therefore, the transformational leadership asserting in principal activities of school direction determination, concentrating school community for collective activities, building relationships among all members of the school community and etc. is essential for principal, who aims for successful work. School principal’s transformational leadership in the context of change process at school can be strengthened, supported or suppressed. The authors in this article determine the barriers that school principal’s transformational leadership faces in change process at school can be strengthened, supported or suppressed. The authors in this article determine the barriers that school principal’s transformational leadership faces in change process at school.

The article consists of three parts: according to the analysis of scientific literature in the first part the barriers of school principal’s transformational leadership in separate phases of change are distinguished, in the second part there is the research methodology of principal’s transformational leadership expression and its barriers in change process at school presented and in the third part there is given the analysis of the research results.

Keywords: transformational leadership, school principal, implementation of changes, barriers of transformational leadership.

Introduction

A school operates in a constantly changing environment and its activity is influenced by different internal and external factors. Consequently, there are episodic, short-term or of continuous flow, long-term changes proceeding in every school. Dawson (2003, quoted in Senior and Fleming, 2006), Daft (2008), Yukl (2010) notice that executives of nowadays institutions must become change leaders otherwise they lead their institutions to failure. To become a leader in change process is one of the essential and the most difficult responsibilities of leadership. As Bass and Riggio (2006) notice transformational leadership is the most appropriate one in resolving problems related with changes and transformations.

For a few decades scientists have been investigating the influence of transformational leadership in different levels of educational institutions, i.e. school, school principal and teacher’s leadership (Pounder, 2006; Carr, Blass, 2007; Karpinski, 2008), in different social contexts (Griffith, 2004) and also leadership at schools operating in different cultures (Yu, Leithwood and Jantzi, 2002; Lam, 2002; Lam et al., 2002; Cheng, 2003; Abu-Tineh, Khasawneh and Al-Omari, 2008). Influence of school principal as a transformational leader to teachers’ motivation, creativity and satisfaction was investigated by Geijsel, Sleegers and van den Berg (1999), Griffith (2004), Walumbwa et al. (2005), Moss (2009). School principal’s transformational leadership impact to students’ achievements was investigated by Leithwood and Jantzi (2000), Zvirdauskas and Juceviciene (2002), Griffith (2004). School principal’s transformational leadership influence to school’s culture and microclimate was investigated by Smith, Montagno and Kuzmenko (2004), Kelley, Thornton and Daugherty (2005), Song and Chermack (2008).

School principal’s transformational leadership is an essential assumption of successful school activity in change process at schools. Transformational leadership means a leadership that grows leaders in institution and purposefully stimulates changes and innovations by inspiring followers to achieve special results, improve themselves and take responsibilities for the institution. Bass and Riggio (2006) emphasize that transformational leadership inspires the followers to raise higher requirements for their activity, reach more ambitious goals, not to be afraid to make courageous decisions. Transformational leader, the authors believe, stimulates the followers to improve themselves intellectually, to reveal all their skills and abilities, pays his attention personally to each of the followers, assists, advises and teaches them. As a transformational leader he also initiates cooperation of all members of school community, gathers them together to develop a common vision, builds and motivates good relationships at school, concentrates school community for changes, inspires for collective work, supports and encourages everyone, looks for new leaders in school...
Expression of school principal’s transformational leadership performing changes at school is possible in all change phases, though the process of implementation of changes at school is quite difficult. Almost always changes are followed by some certain barriers, thus the expression of school principal’s transformational leadership in different phases of change can encounter different barriers. Their theoretical reasoning and empiric determination can provide valuable evidence why principals of some schools become transformational leaders in the context of change process while the others do not. Otherwise, it is also important to identify the real barriers that occur during the particular change phases and barrier links with the content of implementation of changes or change typologies. These issues make the essence of the scientific problem that is going to be discussed in this article.

The aim of the article is to identify barriers of school principal’s transformational leadership.

The method of research literature analysis has been used in this article. The empiric research is based on methodological conception of case study, the presented data has been collected by document analysis and semi-structured interviewing.

The article consists of three parts: according to analysis of scientific literature in the first part there are distinguished barriers of school principal’s transformational leadership in separate phases of change, in the second part there is a research methodology of principal’s transformational leadership expression and its barriers in change process at school presented and in the third part there is given the analysis of the research results.

Barriers of transformational leadership in different phases of change: theoretical aspects

According to Yukl (2010), efforts to implement changes in the institution can be productive if the leader understands the reasons why people accept or resist changes, knows about phases of change implementation, different types of changes and applies appropriate models to identify existing problems in the institution. An acceptance is more usual as a primary reaction to the presented change. It is related with leader’s power and influence directed to get people’s acceptance for changes. Though apart from acceptance, resistance is also a common phenomenon.

One of the methods exploring inadequate reaction to changes is the research of limitations or change blocking factors known as a barrier principle. Barrier study investigating school principal’s transformational leadership in change process at school provides better understanding why phenomenon of transformational leadership in educational system is not widely applied and even often regarded as an innovation.

In the literature the conception of barriers and their typology are investigated concerning innovations or innovation processes proceeding in the institutions. Piater (1984) refers to the barrier as any factor having negative impact for innovation processes in the institution. The barriers are also supposed to be interferences, restrictions and other factors blocking innovation processes.

There are several barrier typologies in the research literature. According to their background the barriers are grouped to internal and external ones. External barriers emerge from external institution environment and cannot be influenced by it while internal ones emerge from the inside of the institution. The institution can influence only internal barriers.

Barriers can also be divided to general that affect all institutions of such type and relative ones that affect only some certain institutions.

Barriers can be analysed in different levels, starting from micro level and finishing macro level. There are also distinguished individual, group, institutional, co-institutional, regional or national level barriers (King, 1990). Individual, group and institutional level barriers are regarded as internal barriers while co-institutional, regional and national level barriers as external ones. Classification of internal and external barriers is usually applied in discussions of scientific literature.

According to Hadjimanolis (2003), external barriers involve market, political, technical, social and co-institutional barriers and internal barriers are related to people, institution’s structure and strategy.

Internal barriers are related to characteristics of institution and its members and with control of change process in the institution. Internal barriers related with people can be investigated on individual or group level. They depend on the lack of change conception, motivation or competence, personal interests or personal goals that differ from institution goals.

According to different researchers, the following theoretical external barriers of school principal’s transformational leadership can be distinguished: general education policy (Jotautiene, 2003; Marzano, Waters and McNulty, 2005; Cibulskas, 2006; Fullan, 2007; Hargreaves and Fink, 2008; Bush, 2009; Zelvys, 2009), strict legal regulation of school activity (Jučevicius et al., 2003; Senge et al., 2008), interference of supervisory institutions (Jotautienė, 2003), little independence given to school in finance management (Welsh and McGinn, 2008) and the internal barriers: attitude of members of school community against the change (Jučevicius, 1998; Senior and Fleming, 2006; Fullan, 2007; Rupainiè, 2008; Kruse and Louis, 2009; Harris, 2010), conflict of interests among different members of school community (Rupainiè, 2008), disappointment members’ of school community with the proceeding changes (Cibulskas, 2006; Hargreaves, Fink, 2008), lack of organizational learning (Ramanauskienė, 2005; Jučeviciene, 2007), lack of trust and competence to reflect one’s activity (Jotautiene, 2003; Senge et al., 2008).

During the phase of change initiation the school principal as a transformational leader initiates cooperation of the whole school community, gathers it together to develop a common vision, informs what opportunities and challenges the changes might bring, builds and motivates...
good relationships, concentrates the school community for changes, inspires for collective work, supports and encourages everyone, looks for new leaders in school community, enables them to perform (Jučevičius et al., 2003; Marzano, Waters and McNulty, 2005; Miles, 2005; Graetz et al., 2006; Fullan, 2007; Senge et al., 2008; Rupainiene, 2008).

During the phase of change implementation the school principal as transformational leader reminds the common goals of the change, based on previous discussions and agreements, involves himself to the implementation of changes, demonstrates his own changed behaviour as an example or the implemented new activities, gathers the school community together for team work, encourages sincere cooperation, discussions and reflections, arranges trainings for school community that help to implement the planned changes, to get necessary knowledge or skills, ensures conditions to develop formal and informal leaders at school, involves new teachers to the implementation of change (Giacquinta, 2005; Lieberman and Grolnick, 2005; Marzano, Waters and McNulty, 2005; Miles, 2005; Fullan, 2007; Harris, 2010; Lambert, 2011).

During the phase of change institutionalization the school principal as a transformational leader discusses with school community the achieved results and topicality of school vision, notices the best practises of the change and appeals to them, acknowledges and appreciates the exceptional achievements, concentrates the necessary resources to make the new activity to flow into the school routines, supports the ones who cannot operate new practice skills yet, shares his leadership (Miles, 2005; Graetz et al., 2006; Fullan, 2007; Lambert, 2011).

The empirical research carried out drawing on the barriers of school principal’s transformational leadership distinguished in the literature aimed to confirm this list, supplement it with some new barriers and identify their significance in the process of implementation of changes at school.

Research methodology

The research of principal’s transformational leadership barriers performing changes at school is based on the methodological conception of case study. The aim of the research is to respond to the following research questions: 1) how is principal’s transformational leadership expressed when changes at school are implemented? 2) What barriers for the expression of principal’s transformational leadership emerge when changes at school are implemented? Document analysis of school activity, school teachers’ and principals’ survey in written form and semi-structured interview with school principals were completed for this purpose. The article will discuss in more detail the second research question based on the information of semi-structural interviewing of school principals.

Research sample. The research was completed in 2011. The method of criterion and experts sampling was applied. Executive external evaluators evaluating schools’ quality in Lithuania were experts in defining the sample. According to the data of the National Agency for School Evaluation, there were 35 external evaluators operating in 2011; 8 of them had been working as external evaluators since 2004, 10 evaluators started working in 2005, the others from 2007. One external evaluator evaluates approximately 5 schools a year, thus executive external evaluators who had evaluated from 20 to 35 schools were chosen as sample experts. Their experience is regarded to be sufficient to select appropriate schools for the research.

The following sampling criteria were applied to choose schools to form a sample: 1. The school principal is a potential transformational leader: a) school community respects and trusts the school principal; b) school has a clear vision, acceptable for all community members; c) the school principal is able to strengthen school employees’ motivation and dedication to their work; d) the school principal ensures good working conditions to develop creativity at school; e) the school principal involves school community to problem solving and decision making; f) the school principal improves himself and ensures good conditions to the others improve themselves; 2. There are obvious changes implemented at school during the last five years.

The research sample consists of 8 Lithuanian general education schools directed by school principals with working experience as principal from 8 to 24 years.

Method of data collection. Semi-structured interviews with research school principals make to reflect school principal’s work experience gained during the implementation of a certain change and collect information that might help to distinguish the school principal’s leadership expression and its barriers in each change phase.

According to traditions of semi-structured interviewing and arranging the research interview there are main questions the school principals are supposed to be asked: 1) Who was the initiator of change at your school? 2) What was the school community reaction to initiated change? 3) How did you, as a school principal involve yourself into the implementation of change? 4) How could you describe school community feelings during the implementation of change? 5) How did you manage to ‘freeze’ the results of the change in every day work? 6) What in your opinion helps or disturbs the implemented change to be transformed to the routine, ordinary school community work?

Questions 1, 3 and 5 of semi-structured interview should help to collect information for the first research question, ‘How does principal’s transformational leadership operate performing changes at school?’ and give the answer to it, whereas questions 2, 4 and 6 – for the second research question, ‘What barriers do occur for principal’s transformational leadership performing changes at school?’ and give the answer to it. To achieve the goal of this article in the third part of the article there will be analysed the school principals’ answers to questions of 2, 4 and 6 in the semi-structured interview.

Each school principal of research sample was asked all six questions of semi-structured interview. All interviews...
were recorded and transcribed. Each interview with a school principal approximately lasted for 80 minutes.

Method of data analysis. To process the information collected during the semi-structured interview there was the data processing method of descriptive content analysis applied. Applying a descriptive content analysis the content of information is given by structuring it according to the research set goals i.e. according to the questions of semi-structured interviewing.

Cases of change at schools

Background of schools. The analysis of school activity describing documents (strategically school activity plans accessible in the internet, articles about research sample schools, statistical data of Educational management information system) revealed the context of school activity.

School A is a basic education school located in the country area. There are 98 pupils, 14 teachers, a school principal, a vice principal and a social educator at school. During the interview with school principal in the case of school A the process of change performance which lasted for almost a decade was being analysed – the school implemented a ‘Programme of Character Development’ aiming to implant and develop moral and social values in children and make them to pursue education despite their social status and grow as honest, intellectual and respectable citizens of Lithuania. Implementing the ‘Programme of Character Development’ a lot of attention was paid to responsibility, compassion, diligence, appreciation, self-esteem, endurance, self-confidence and other values. During lessons and different events pupils are taught to acknowledge their character, understand its importance to learning and life, there are also value attitudes, social skills and self-confidence fostered.

School B is a basic education providing progymnasium located in one of the biggest cities of Lithuania. There are 622 pupils, 42 teachers, a school principal, a vice principal, a social educator and a special educator at school. During the interview with school principal in the case of school B the pupils’ project activities and implementation of pupils’ media skills at school were being analysed. Since 1997 the school joined national and international projects and aimed the project activity to improve pupils’ achievements. Systematic implementation of pupils’ project activity helped the school community to acquire reflecting and self-assessment skills.

School C is a four-year gymnasium located in the district centre where pupils can gain basic and secondary education. At school there are 513 pupils, 43 teachers, a school principal, 2 vice principals, a social educator and 2 head teachers. During the interview with school principal in the case of School C the process of becoming a four-year gymnasium was being analysed. School C before the school accreditation used to be a secondary school providing primary, basic and secondary education. Secondary school pursuing to become a gymnasium must accreditate the operating secondary education programme. During accreditation there are assessed the 11 and 12 forms pupils’ learning success and achievements, school leavers’ achievements of the last three years compared with average achievements of graduates’ of other schools in municipality area, education and qualification of school pedagogical staff, arrangement of classes, groups and schedules, opportunities to chose educational content and learning form, educational assistance of pupils, educational process support and the school management. Secondary school aiming to become a gymnasium must systematically rearrange its activity and assure the quality of secondary school programme performance according to the settle criteria. These were the main goals of School C which participated in the research. The educational process at school was systematically rearranged and improved to pursue the gymnasium status. Secondary education programme realizable at School C was accredited in 2009. The status of gymnasium enabled School C to dismiss lower forms and some teachers.

School D is a four-year gymnasium located in one of the biggest cities of Lithuania. At school there are 820 pupils, 56 teachers, a school principal, 2 vice principals, a psychologist, a social educator and a head teacher. In 2006, School D was involved in the national programme of School structure improvement of Lithuania initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania. Its main goal was to provide assumptions for effective school activity. Implementation of the programme aimed to prepare and test the models of school inner structure and management in the programme participating schools, to create, apply and test school inner documentation control software to administrate school activity, to improve principals and other participants’ management and computer literacy skills, to prepare them as school inner structure, management improvement and document operating consultants. After implementation of the programme at School D, the school management structure had been changed to the school managed by school principal, vice principal and environment deputy. There had been three educational departments established (humanitarian and social education, fundamental and natural sciences, arts and technology education and non-formal education and support), managed by the heads of the departments.

School E is a primary school located in one the biggest cities of Lithuania. There are 253 pupils, 12 primary teachers, a school principal, vice principal, speech therapist and social educator at school. In most Lithuanian schools of general education pupils and their parents are regarded as receivers of educational service or clients therefore the parents are not involved and they do not want to participate at school activities. The principal of School E from the very beginning decided to break the existing stereotypes and started to create and motivate the school culture of inevitable parents involvement. His creative attitude managing the school community and ability to involve teachers helped him to achieve the settled goals.

School F is a four-year gymnasium located in the district centre. There are 496 pupils, 38 teachers, a school principal, 2 vice principals, social educator and 2 non-formal education teachers at school. From 1998 there were
six educational environments as separate centres established by initiative and efforts of school community: Information centre, Music studio, Health centre, TV and radio studio, Technology centre, Record studio. Systematically school community work and efforts helped to create a secure environment at school and to ensure wider educational opportunities for pupils.

School G is a basic education school located in the country area. There are 133 pupils, 17 teachers, a school principal, vice principal and social educator at school. During the interview with school principal in the case of school G the school experience gained establishing the student oriented learning was being analysed. In 2002-2006 the school G joined the School improvement programme implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania and decided to change and improve the educational process arranged at school. The aim of implementation of the programme was to develop teachers' professional competences at basic education schools and improve teaching and learning conditions encouraging pupils’ active learning and teachers’ cooperation at school and between other schools. At the end of the School Improvement Programme in 2006-2009, School G together with other 41 general education schools of Lithuania participated in the national project ‘Network of learning schools’. The project aimed to enable schools to control changes at school, to teach school communities to work cooperating with each other, to direct the school activity to pupils’ and learning improvement.

School H is a four-year gymnasium located in the district centre. There are 473 pupils, 30 teachers, a school principal, a vice principal, a social educator and a psychologist at school. After school rearrangement in School H municipality, its community found the competition of other gymnasiums in the district and decided to look for the ways to become an exceptional school in their municipality. The community of School H understanding the necessity of change and improvement initiated the opportunity to establish an International Baccalaureate class at their school, where pupils could learn according to the International Baccalaureate diploma programme. This programme of two years secondary education is intended for 11-12 form pupils to prepare them for university studies. The course language is English (except Lithuanian language in Lithuanian language lessons). School H pursuing to get the right to perform International Baccalaureate diploma programme had to put some efforts and time to train its teachers, to prepare the training basis, to purchase manuals and also to get ready the school community to work according to the International Baccalaureate diploma programme. Finally, School H was awarded the candidate status of International Baccalaureate School.

Barriers of school principal’s transformational leadership in change process

In order to identify barriers of school principal’s transformational leadership initiating the particular change at school, the school principals were asked the question, ‘What was the reaction of school community to the initiated change?’

Analyzing the school principals’ answers to the question there can be mentioned that school principals’ transformational leadership during the phase of change initiation faces with two types of barriers - directed at the initiated change and directed at the school principal as a transformational leader.

The expression of principals’ transformational leadership related to initiating changes in the educational process at schools A, B, G and H faced the following barriers oriented towards the initiated change: teachers’ fear of change; incomprehension expressed by parents; pupils’ indifference to the change; incomprehension expressed by the founder; teachers’ scepticism towards the change. This is illustrated by the following thoughts of school principals:

‘... the teachers were against. … The teachers were afraid of changes as something new, they regarded them as useless and temporary thing’ (Principal of School A).

‘At the very beginning parents didn’t catch the idea. We had to discuss a lot and explain the main conceptions. … Pupils didn’t believe, they supposed it could be temporary, because it is quite difficult to believe in good things’ (Principal of School A).

‘At the beginning the founder didn’t understand. It was necessary to explain and prove that the main goal of our activity is a ‘Programme of Character Development’ and we understand that if we all changed the value system then there would appear pupils’ learning motivation and teaching and learning results’ (Principal of School A).

‘The teachers were quite sceptical themselves. When I told them we had to change, they explained that they had already changed only the children had to change’ (Principal of School G).

‘Some of teachers were obviously sceptical. There might be a kind of jealousy why someone was involved into the programme but not me’ (Principal of school H).

The transformational leadership of principals initiating changes related to the educational process encountered the barriers directed towards the school principal in schools B and G: teachers’ unwillingness to take more responsibility; teachers’ unwillingness to change themselves; negative public attitudes towards the school. This is illustrated by the school principals’ sayings:

‘...I had to go and ask personally to work as appointed, to apply to some teachers as human beings’ (Principal of school B).

‘...school in rural areas is not as attractive as urban school. Generally the country doesn’t have much attraction thus it is difficult to initiate any changes’ (Principal of School G).

‘As the saying says ‘A prophet is without honour in his own country’. The same happened at school, most teachers wanted to work further applying old methods’ (Principal of School G).

The transformational leadership in schools C and D faced the barriers directed only towards the school principal: teachers’ unwillingness to take more
responsibility; non-innovativeness of other schools and negative public attitude towards school. This is illustrated by the following thoughts:

‘...teachers used to say, ‘What is the purpose of changes? What does our director want from us? I used to pretend I didn’t listen to them though I used to hear such things quite often. I believed we would finally reach the point of success (Principal of School C).

‘Everyone understood that all of them will have to do certain works. <…> Some of them did not want to, but then they felt the taste. They understood that they could do it. They understood that they were not behind other district school teachers, and somewhere – even city teachers’ (Principal of School C).

‘There were works that teachers did not want to do. When they heard that they had to prepare some programmes or plans, which were not obligatory in neighbouring schools, then they asked you why teachers did not have to do them there, and here such things had to be done’ (Principal of School C).

‘Teachers were resisting a lot. Probably because teachers in general do not want to change, they are afraid of innovations. Teachers and pupils from the school board surprised most. They supported the idea to participate in the programme. They said, ‘Participate, try’. They had no doubts that the school would succeed. It was a bit different with other teachers. They had to be convinced. Sometimes even authoritarian government measures had to be used: dictate, write an order so that they could not leave it unimplemented’ (Principal of School D).

Transformational leadership of principals of schools E and F, who initiated changes in the concentration of parents’ community and creation of educational environments at school, did not encounter barriers in this phase. This is illustrated by the following ideas:

‘We started creating a school where it would be very good, where everyone would like to be. After the festival of the first of September we were shown on television as an exceptional case, as an unusual welcoming of children. These were untraditional speeches and etc. It was completely different from what people were used to – they came and participated in the festival themselves, they created it themselves. And since then parents started coming to us. And when they came, they came with their ideas. They started offering their ideas, and we started catching those ideas and synthesizing’ (Principal of School E).

‘We have changing school’s priorities: information technologies, art education and creation of a healthy school. Practically, we never did anything what would be related to the school’s priorities. We purified them a long time ago. <…> We still have a number of ideas, what we have to do, and we have left the same priorities for the following 5 years in the strategic activity plan’ (Principal of School F).

Therefore, transformational leadership of school principals who participated in the research during the change initiation faced both internal and external barriers directed at the initiated change as well as at the school principal as a transformational leader (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object of change</th>
<th>Researched school</th>
<th>Barriers directed at initiated change</th>
<th>Barriers directed at the school principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization of educational process</td>
<td>School A, School B, School G, School H</td>
<td>Teachers’ fear of change, Incomprehension of change expressed by parents, Pupils’ indifference to the change, Incomprehension of change expressed by founder, Teachers’ scepticism regarding the change</td>
<td>Teachers’ unwillingness to take more responsibility, Teachers’ unwillingness to change themselves, Unfavourable public attitudes towards the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School structure</td>
<td>School C, School D</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>Teachers’ unwillingness to take more responsibility, Non-innovativeness of other schools, Unfavourable public attitudes towards the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration of parents’ community</td>
<td>School E</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of educational environments</td>
<td>School F</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** – principal’s transformational leadership barriers were not distinguished in these schools
School principal’s transformational leadership barriers during change implementation

With a view to determine school principal’s transformational leadership barriers during the implementation of a particular change at school, school principals were asked ‘How would you describe the feeling of the school community, which accompanied the implementation of change?’

Analyzing the replies of school principals to the question it can be noticed that school principals’ transformational leadership in the phase of change implementation also encountered two types of barriers – directed at the change under implementation and directed at the school principal as a transformational leader.

The principals of schools A, B, G and H, having implemented changes in the organization of educational process, distinguished these barriers, directed at the change under implementation, which they, as transformational leaders, had to face: teachers’ disapproval of the change under implementation; disinterest of the founder in the change proceeding at school; new teachers’ non-preparation to change; teachers’ implemented biasing of parents against the change. This can be illustrated by the following:

‘A teacher only has a vision that it is extremely difficult to work this way, that a teacher becomes a slave at school’ (Principal of School B).

‘I don’t know, whether those teachers do not learn the way it should be, or they are not prepared yet, because we have to do enormous work, starting from the fact that there are education programmes, that they are guidelines what children need to be educated. Still, there are new teachers coming with an attitude that a textbook is the main mean of teaching, not the alternative. It has been spoken for ten years about the formulation of aims and lesson goals from the School improvement programme, but they know nothing about it. High schools could have heard of it as well during so many years’ (Principal of School G).

‘The founder encourages us to participate everywhere, but he is not interested in what is proceeding at schools. The result is not interesting. The change is not interesting. Therefore, the school community is not encouraged. Olympiad results and tenths are valued. <…> The founder has this attitude – they declare one thing, when they come from meeting they just read beautiful phrases from slides, but I think, they are very reluctant to do additional work – to have interest in changes happening at school’ (Principal of School G).

‘For many years children and parents were biased that this is one more nonsense, that nobody needs this, that it is a waste of time, that it is an additional work’ (Principal of School B).

Transformational leadership of these schools principals also encountered these barriers directed at the school principal, as a transformational leader, during the change implementation: teachers’ unwillingness to improve; teachers’ unwillingness to take more responsibility; negative teachers’ attitude towards the work they do; influence of negative leaders at school:

‘You know, I noticed an interesting phenomenon – there are people who can learn for a very long time, but everything flows like water from a duck’s back. We still have some 1-2 percent of teachers who do not admit of their own learning as a value and do not accept the knowledge provided to them’ (Principal of School A).

‘Teachers anger began, that it was additional work, that pupils needed more individual consultancies, that they worked far more hours’ (Principal of School B).

‘Most teachers work just because of salary, but there must be calling here. It is obvious which people do not have the calling. It is difficult to work with them. They just come and do not want to create or use the products created by others’ (Principal of School G).

‘You know, those negative leaders are usually strong. They are able to attract others. As soon as a new teacher starts working, we watch which side he/she will be attracted to, to keep a person with that positive attitude’ (Principal of School D).

Transformational leadership of principals of C and D schools that have implemented changes in school structure faced these barriers directed at the implemented change: teachers’ disapproval of the change under implementation, founder’s disinterest in a change proceeding at school; fears of pupils’ parents. This is illustrated by the following ideas:

‘Teachers say, ‘This is a small town, what people will think that I have to work with a weaker group’. And I said that I did not care of what other people would think. I said ‘I know what you are doing and it is not easier to work in a weaker group that in a stronger one’ (Principal of School C).

‘Teachers feared tenure payment of teachers’ work, because they imagined that teacher’s activity at school was just teaching and a teacher could not be a manager. Teacher’s work lasts only 45 minutes and that’s all – he doesn’t want to take any other activities. <…> There was very a strong resistance of teachers’ community, because they imagined that if management tenure at school fills, it would be more difficult for them to work’ (Principal of School D).

‘There was one such founder’s idea to ask for external audit in the district and to do everything with the hands of others. Indeed, external audit did not do this. Some meetings with teachers, with staff greatly changed the opinion of the district authorities about the school. Those activities, which appeared, all projects, all experiments, participation, search for innovations – such things remained unnoticed, in general, they were not very much interested in what was going on at school’ (Principal of School C).

‘Staff changes, teachers change, everything changes – those fears were quite big. <…> Parents’ opinions were very different. The main reason of fears was that some children would have to go to another school, others – to come here’ (Principal of School C).

Transformational leadership of these school principals also encountered barriers directed at the school principal as a transformational leader during the implementation of
change: teachers’ unwillingness to improve, teachers’ unwillingness to take more responsibility:

‘Older teachers – 50-55-year olds – are becoming a bit deadened. They imagine: ‘What will you do to me. You will do nothing’. Indeed, they change languidly and are not very eager to change’ (Principal of School D).

‘I was astonished by teachers’, who teach others (after all they are mature people and older than me), indifference and wish to evade from duties, which they must do anyway. It has not stopped surprising me up to now’ (Principal of School D).

Transformational leadership of the School E principal, who has implemented change in the concentration of parents’ community, faced only the barrier directed at the school principal as a transformational leader – teachers’ unwillingness to take more responsibility, ‘For teachers, such activeness of parents is not always convenient or handy. When parents are active, they are very close to us, close to school. They know what they want. So at times a teacher is forced to learn, to change, and to negotiate’.

Transformational leadership of the School F principal, who has implemented change in the creation of educational environment at school, encountered two barriers directed at the change under implementation: teachers’ indifference to the proceeding change and disfavour of external environment to change:

‘The most difficult thing here at work is that sometimes you hear such words from the authorities, which hurt a bit, that the staff do not understand everything, when they do not want to see what is going on, what is being done, that they see an innovation somewhere, which is an old thing here’ (Principal of School F).

‘Of course, there were even threats. <…> I received very angry phone-calls, which urged me to discontinue certain activities at school’ (Principal of School F).

Thus transformational leadership of school principals, who participated in the research during the implementation of change, faced both internal and external barriers, which were directed at the initiated change as well as at the school principal, as transformational leader (Table 2).

**School principal’s transformational leadership barriers during change institutionalization**

In order to determine school principal’s transformational leadership barriers when institutionalizing a specific change at school, school principals were asked, ‘What mostly helps or hinders in making the implemented change in the routine, everyday activity of the school’s community?’

Analyzing the school principals’ replies to the question it can be noticed that school principals’ transformational leadership in the phase of change institutionalization also faces two types of barriers – directed at the change under institutionalization and directed at the school principal as transformational leader.

Transformational leadership of principals of schools A, B, G and H who institutionalized changes in the organization of educational process, faced these barriers directed at the change under institutionalization: teachers’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object of change</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Barriers directed at the change under implementation</th>
<th>Barriers directed at the school principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Organization of educational process    | School A, School B, school G, School H | Teachers’ disapproval of the change under implementation  
Founder’s indifference to the change proceeding at school  
Non-preparation of new teachers for change  
Teachers’ implemented biasing of parents against the change | Teachers’ unwillingness to grow  
Teachers’ unwillingness to take more responsibility  
Negative teachers’ attitude to the performed work  
Influence of negative leaders at school |
| School structure                       | School C, School D | Teachers’ disapproval of the change under implementation  
Founder’s indifference to change proceeding at school  
Fears of pupils’ parents | Teachers’ unwillingness to improve  
Teachers’ unwillingness to take more responsibility |
| Concentration of parents’ community    | School E         | ***                                                                                                                     | Teachers’ unwillingness to take more responsibility                           |
| Creation of educational environments   | School F         | Teachers’ indifference to the proceeding change  
External environment’s disfavour to the change | ***                                                                            |

*** – principal’s transformational leadership expression barriers were not distinguished in these schools
unwillingness to act newly and teachers’ disappointment because they fail. This is illustrated by the following ideas:

‘I have worked here for 11 years, they are such teachers who are still objecting to such manner of work’ (Principal of School G).

‘There are some three teachers who feel underestimated, because that dialogue with a pupil is more difficult for them’ (Principal of School A).

Transformational leadership of the principals of these schools also faced barriers directed at the school principal as a transformational leader: incompletion of school financing mechanisms and low support from external institutions. This is illustrated by the following sayings of school principals:

‘Pupil basket is not enough for us. When the number of higher form pupils decreased, the pupil basket’s is no longer enough for us. We cannot do anything. We are alive due to average salaries, and thanks to God, that average. <…> It is very difficult to keep good teachers. Gymnasiums are now more attractive because they offer maximum coefficients, premiums, etc. The same work is differently paid there’ (Principal of School B).

‘We are now making discoveries, and it was discovered a long time ago. There are various centres that could prepare different material for schools. Eventually, districts’ departments of education, they should be more practical. There should not be just collection of statistical data. <…> There should be at least better selection of various recommendations, intended for schools, to check more what they issued’ (Principal of School G).

Transformational leadership of principals of schools C and D, who institutionalized changes in the school structure, faced only the barriers directed at the school principal as a transformational leader: negative impact of competitive schools and low support from external institutions. This is illustrated by the following sayings of school principals:

‘There were various whispers from that side, that it is bad here, that teachers would harm you. Such mood was not very good. But on the first of September all children came’ (Principal of School C).

‘Positiveness from the society is very desirable. The positiveness would probably be greater, if the school was supported by both the founder and the Ministry of Education and Science. Because now, when we are service providers, we have to follow the word that the customer is always right, although the customer is definitely not always right’ (Principal of School D).

Transformational leadership of principals of Schools E and F that respectively institutionalized changes in the gathering of parents’ community and in the creation of educational environments at school did not face any barriers in this phase:

‘It is easy and simple, because parents are involved in the classroom already. They have affection to the class. And the class is nothing else but a small part of us. It means they conceive affection to school together. <…> I know that there is no other school where parents are satisfied realizing themselves. And when they leave to higher level school, they miss it. They usually do not refuse duties they had in our school. <…> I always say to parents that if they are looking for a quiet school, they have found a wrong one. We will be inviting you, encouraging. You will definitely have to participate. If you are looking for peace, you have failed. You have come to the place where you will have to be restless’ (Principal of School E).

‘Now I fear that teachers will run out of ideas. It used to be different. Now there is European Founds money, other opportunities. They do not need anything. If I ask whether they need anything in their classroom – they see that they do not need anything. I always said – raise bigger aims than you can make. <…> Aims must be always motivating and not implemented to the end. Then you think how to achieve them. Now the situation is different, possibilities are different’ (Principal of School F).

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object of change</th>
<th>Researched school</th>
<th>Barriers directed at the change under institutionalization</th>
<th>Barriers directed at the school leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization of educational process</td>
<td>School A, School B, School G, School H</td>
<td>Teachers’ unwillingness to act newly&lt;br&gt;Teachers’ disappointment because they fail</td>
<td>Incompletion of school financing mechanisms&lt;br&gt;Low support from external institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School structure</td>
<td>School C, School D</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>Negative impact of competitive schools&lt;br&gt;Low support from external institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration of parents’ community</td>
<td>School E</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of educational environments</td>
<td>School F</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** – principal’s transformational leadership barriers were not distinguished in these schools
Thus transformational leadership of school principals, who participated in the research during change institutionalization, faced both internal and external barriers, which were directed at the change under institutionalization and at the school principal, as a transformational leader (Table 3).

Discussion
Comparing barriers of school principal’s transformational leadership defined during empiric research in change process at school and the theoretical ones distinguished by scientific literature, there can be noticed that in the cases of researched schools no one of school principals performing as transformational leadership faced any legal regulation barriers of general educational policy and strict school activity. According to school principals’ reflections they do not give any prominence to national educational policy, the school principals try to identify ideas that are being realized at school in existing documents.

School principals notice that in change process and especially in initiation and implementation phases their transformational leadership faced not with interference of supervisory institutions but vice versa – with founder’s disinterest in school activities. Thus the school founders operate as formal school activity observes and react only when something bad happen at school. School principals also distinguished a barrier of low external institution support and pay attention to the fact that not only school founders do not care about change process at school but even external competent institutions that are supposed to help schools to improve their activities take care of school support quite formally. The school principals also distinguished the non-innovativeness and negative impact to their school community of neighbouring schools. Thus it can be stated that the school principals’ transformational leadership encounters the barrier of external institutions’ disinterest in changes performed at schools that is evident in change initiation, implementation and institutionalization phases.

Comparing external barriers of empiric school principal’s transformational leadership expression and the theoretical ones distinguished by scientific literature there can be noticed that one distinguished external barrier coincides – there is no independence given to school finance management. However, the school principals say that they face this barrier only during the change institutionalization. That means the absence or lack of needed resource suppresses the school principal’s transformational leadership only in the phase of change institutionalization.

According to the analysis of interview information there were distinguished the following external barriers of school principal’s transformational leadership: unfavourable public attitudes towards the school, non-innovativeness and negative impact of other schools and external environments’ disapproval of changes. The completed analysis of scientific literature did not show these barriers.

Comparing internal theoretical barriers distinguished by scientific literature and empiric barriers of school principal’s transformational leadership expression there can be stated that in cases of the researched schools according to the school principals the inner barriers of transformational leadership were mostly related with teachers’ different personal attitudes (e.g. teachers’ personal attitudes and inflexibility), with teachers’ negative attitude to the change (e.g. their unwillingness to take more responsibility and change themselves, teachers’ negative attitudes related with the change, teachers’ unwillingness to work differently), also with pupils and their parents’ reaction to the change (e.g. pupils’ indifference, incomprehension of the change expressed by parents, unsound fears of parents). According to the completed analysis of scientific literature these factors refer to inner barrier of school community negative attitude towards the change. The expression of this barrier was typical in all change phases.

Comparing internal theoretical barriers distinguished by scientific literature and internal empiric barriers of school principal’s transformational leadership expression, there can me stated that both according to school principals’ opinion and analysis of scientific literature, the school principal’s transformational leadership encounters the barrier of teachers’ disappointment in proceeding changes.

Though in the cases of researched schools no one of the school principals mentioned the following theoretical barriers distinguished by analysis of scientific literature: conflict of interests among different members of school community, the lack of trust with each other and competence to reflect their activity and the lack of organizational learning. The assumption can be made that school principals as transformational leaders in their daily routine pay a lot of attention and energy to build positive relationships among members of school community that later helps to avoid any misunderstandings concerning the school future plans or necessity of some certain changes. The school principals as transformational leaders also understand the importance of teachers’ improvement and build the organizational learning culture at their schools that later also help them to implement the changes successfully.

Analysing the distinguished barriers according to character of implemented change there can be mentioned that principal’s transformational leadership in the change initiation phase faced some internal barriers despite the character of initiated change though it did not confront with external barriers if the change was initiated ‘from the bottom’. School principals initiating both short-termed and long-termed changes encountered the barriers directed both at the initiated change and at the school principal as a transformational leader. School principals’ transformational leadership initiating both internal and external changes and also both evolutionary and revolutionary changes faced the barriers directed at the school principal but the principals initiating internal and evolutionary changes also faced the barriers directed at the initiated change.
In phase of change implementation school principal’s transformational leadership encountered both internal and external barriers and also the barriers both directed at initiated change and the school principal as a transformational leader. Analysing internal and external barriers and also the ones directed at implemented change or school principal, according to the character of performed change at school there were no differences identified.

In phase of change institutionalization the school principal’s transformational leadership faced the external barriers despite the character of change institutionalization but did not encounter any internal barriers if there was institutionalized a short-term, external, revolutionary change initiated ‘from the top’. All school leaders encountered the barriers directed at school principal as a transformational leader in the change institutionalization phase despite the character of institutionalized change. Though the school principals as transformational leaders did not face barriers directed to institutionalized change if there was institutionalized a short-term, external, revolutionary change initiated ‘from the top’.

The completed empiric research helped to register and describe the barriers of school principal’s transformational leadership in all change proceeding phases. Comparing the theoretical barriers of school principal’s transformational leadership distinguished by scientific literature and the identified ones during the empiric research it can be stated that though the completed analysis of eight researched schools couldn’t identify all possible barriers of transformational leadership distinguished by scientific literature, however the list of barriers could be complemented by new external barriers identified during the research: external institutions’ disinterest in change proceeding at school, unfavourable public attitude towards the school, non-innovativeness of other schools and their negative impact and external environment disapproval of changes.

Conclusions

School principals both during their daily routines or implementing changes are able to operate as transformational leaders, though their leadership faces some certain internal and external barriers.

At the phase of change initiation the school principal’s transformational leadership faces these external barriers: incomprehension of change expressed by the founder; non-innovativeness of other schools and negative public attitude towards school and also these internal barriers: teachers’ fear of change, scepticism, unwillingness to take more responsibility and change themselves, pupils’ indifference, incomprehension of change expressed by parents.

At the phase of implementation of change the school principal’s transformational leadership faces these external barriers: the founder’s disinterest in change proceeding at school, external school environment disapproval of the change and also the following internal barriers: teachers’ personal attitudes and inflexibility, teachers’ negative attitudes related with the change, parents’ unsound fears.

During the change institutionalization the school principal’s transformational leadership faces these external barriers: incompletion of school financing mechanisms, lack of support of external institutions, negative influence of competitive schools and also the following internal barriers: teachers’ disappointment and unwillingness to change.

Comparing external barriers of empiric school principal’s transformational leadership and the ones distinguished by scientific literature there can be stated that in the cases of researched schools the principals as transformational leaders in change process did not face any external barriers related with national education policy or legal regulations of school activity though they named additional external barriers such as negative public attitudes towards school, external environment’s disapproval of changes and non-innovativeness and negative impact of other schools.

Comparing internal barriers of empiric school principal’s transformational leadership and the ones distinguished by scientific literature there can be stated that in the cases of researched schools, the principals as transformational leaders performing changes at school did not face internal barriers related with conflict interests among different members of school community, the lack of trust with each other and competence to reflect their activity and the lack of organizational learning. They did not name any other new inner barriers apart from those distinguished by analysis of scientific literature.

References


J. Navickaitė, B. Janiūnaitė. Mokyklos vadovo transformacinės lyderystės raškinė barjerai pokyčių procese: Lietuvos mokyklos atvejai

Santrauka

Pastaraisiais dešimtmeciais lėšėčiai ir reikalavimai mokyklai bei mokyklos vadovams stipriai pasikeitė. Mokyklos vadovas tampas atsakingas ne tik už mokyklos kaip organizacijos vadybos (veiklos planavimą, organizavimą, kontrolę, bet ir už pozityvinus kaita mikroklimato puoselėjimą, už mokyklos kaip besipirmokusias organizacijas kūrimą, už mokinių pasiekimus ir t.t.). Mokykla veikia nuolat kintančioje aplinkoje – jos veikalią įtaka daro daug vidinių ir išorinių veiksnių. Todėl kiekvieno mokykloje vyksta ežerų, trumpalaikiai arba tęstiniai, ilgalaikiai pokyčiai. Taigi, mokyklos vadovai turi būti pokyčių lyderiai, nes priešingai atveju jie vadovaujamos organizacijos yra pasmerktos išnykti. Lyderiauti pokyčių metu
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