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Expression of the traits of organizational culture in general education schools in Lithuania

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INTRODUCTION

Previous research on the topic and justification of the scientific problem. Due to the different goals, interests, philosophical attitudes of researchers or the traits of organizational culture they want to distinguish, organizational culture is studied from various perspectives, using different methodologies, in the synthesis of various sciences and in various contexts, connecting with other objects of science and research. The concept of culture is very broad and multifunctional, as it helps to solve very different problems of human existence, being, and everyday life, meanwhile, organizational culture helps to solve organizational problems and cope with emerging challenges. Most of the concepts of organizational culture are based on cultural values or values, on the basis of which it is possible to unite the efforts of the members of the organization in the implementation of the desired strategies (Sorensen, 2002). Therefore, organizational culture is also about how individuals in the organization think, what and how they perceive things, and what model of beliefs, values, and expectations they create (Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly, Jr., & Konopaske, 2012). Therefore, the descriptions of personality, atmosphere (Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly, Jr., & Konopaske, 2012, 8), the *esprit de corps* feeling (Bamidele, 2022) are often used to describe organizational culture, because organizational culture is a group phenomenon that cannot exist only in one person, – it lies in the general behaviour of the organization, in values and assumptions as unwritten rules (Groysberg, Lee, Price, & Cheng, 2018). Because of these features, organizational culture becomes complex, systematic, and often difficult to overcome in practical terms.

The concepts of organizational culture, the distinguished characteristics and models have been studied by both Lithuanian and foreign researchers. Detailed analyses of the models of organizational culture have been carried out by both Lithuanian researchers Paužuolienė & Šimanskienė (2021), and foreign scholars: Mannion, Davies, Konteh, Jung, Scott, Bower, Whalley, McNally, & McMurray

(2009), Denison, Nieminen, & Kotrba (2012); Markowitsch (2018); and the information systematized by them made it possible to see the breadth of the concepts of organizational culture and the possibilities of different dimensions in the study of culture.

Particularly interesting and relevant research that allows us to see organizational culture in other contexts is the influence of organizational culture on school effectiveness (Duan, Du, & Yu, 2014), teacher engagement (Emmanuel & Prempeh, 2020), the links between organizational culture and teachers' ethics (Asgari & Bahmani, 2022), organizational culture and service quality (Ngugi, Gachunga, & Mukanzi, 2021), organizational effectiveness (Denison, Haaland, & Goelzer, 2003; Gillespie, Denison, Haaland, Smerek, & Neale, 2008; Boyce, Nieminen, Gillespie, Ryan, & Denison, 2015), and customer engagement (Wahyuningsih, Sudiro, Troena, & Irawanto, 2019). According to researchers, organizational culture is recognized simply as a phenomenon due to its multiplicity and multifunctionality, the ability to connect and integrate various systems and processes into one, first of all, because of the values, on the basis of which it is possible to unite the efforts of the members of the organization in the implementation of the desired strategies (Sorensen, 2002), developed or discovered core beliefs of a group of people, which are manifested in solving the organization's problems related to adaptation in the environment and integration within (Schein, 2004). Thus, organizational culture defines the appropriate behaviour and relationships of people, motivates individuals, shows how the organization processes information, on the basis of which it creates internal relationships (Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly, Jr., & Konopaske, 2012), describes the environment in which people work and how it affects their thinking, behaviour, and work experience (Warrick, 2017).

After reviewing the research on organizational culture conducted in Lithuanian educational institutions (Jucevičienė, 1996, 1997; Poškienė, 1998; Jucevičienė & Kudirkaitė, 2000; Želvys, 2003; Dukynaitė, 2002; Duoblienė, 2011; Lukšienė, 2013; Targamadžė,

2006, 2017; Survutaitė, 2016), we can clearly see that the interest in organizational culture has grown significantly over the last decade. The conducted studies show that although the importance of organizational culture in educational institutions is already well perceived and educational communities are beginning to pay more and more attention to it, however, culture in educational institutions is still viewed as a spontaneous and independently developing phenomenon, focusing on individual elements of organizational culture that happens by itself rather than being created by the power, efforts, and cooperation of all participants in education. In the field of organizational culture in the context of education, several main challenges are faced, which are also examined by researchers from other fields of science who are interested in organizational culture: how to integrate organizational culture into the processes of the educational institution and make it the basis for moving in the established direction of the organization, how to understand, respond to, and harmonize changing external expectations and needs and be able to implement changes consciously and effectively. Employees often take organizational culture for granted, underestimating its impact on their own decisions, behaviour, and communication (Paužuolienė & Šimanskienė, 2021). However, it is beginning to be realized that organizational culture allows finding a balance between internal integration and external adaptation, paying attention to culture both in a deep value sense and combining many organizational mechanisms for united and harmonious functioning. This requires a systematic and complex approach to culture and the interaction processes. Interdisciplinary research on organizational culture is extremely valuable (Jucevičius, 1998; Paulauskaitė & Vanagas, 1998; Zakarevičius, 2004; Kaziliūnas, 2006; Staniulienė, 2010; Vveinhardt, 2011; Balvočiūtė & Sandu, 2013; Staniulienė & Dilienė, 2014; Šimanskienė, 2021) and it is often in connection with other objects of scientific research – communication, innovation, leadership of the head of the institution (Stundžė, 2010; Stripeikis & Ramanauskas, 2011; Giedraitis, 2011; Katilienė, 2014; Grublienė & Urbonaitė, 2014;

Gudonytė & Marčinskas, 2016), in which the creation and improvement of organizational culture is valued as one of the most important means of organizational management, which has an influence on goals and results. Investigations of these scholars on the links between organizational culture and other objects provide useful insights for the integration of the experience and understanding in the context of education science.

However, consistent, complex, and more in-depth studies examining the organizational culture of educational institutions are missing in educational research. “There is no systematic characteristic of the culture of the Lithuanian general education school, which would allow a better understanding of the meaning, place, and role of school culture in the process of individual and institutional progress” (Survutaitė, 2016, 14). Therefore, the relevance of the chosen topic of the dissertation and the necessity of its research are primarily related to theoretical problems arising from differences in distinguishing the traits of organizational culture, which led to a practical problem – there is no clear, practically applicable tool of organizational culture for educational institutions and distinguished traits of organizational culture, on the basis of which the organization could diagnose, referring to the data, create and develop the existing organizational culture and initiate changes in the existing culture. Therefore, the research aims to analyse and systematize the traits of organizational culture and the indices underlying them, and to adapt the selected research tool to educational institutions.

Research object – expression of the traits of organizational culture.

Aim of the dissertation – to reveal the expression of the traits of organizational culture in Lithuanian general education institutions.

To achieve the aim of the dissertation, the following **objectives** have been formulated:

1. To reveal the context and concepts of organizational culture and the expression of the traits of the organizational culture.
2. To apply the theoretical model, methodology, and questionnaire of the Denison Organizational Culture Survey (DOCS) to the study of the expression of the traits of the organizational culture of general education schools in Lithuania.
3. To conduct research, present and analyse the results of the expression of the traits of the organizational culture in Lithuanian general education schools, presenting recommendations for changes in the organizational culture.

Scientific novelty and theoretical significance of the dissertation. The dissertation is undoubtedly relevant for the scholarly understanding and practical application of education, because:

1. It extensively examines the interdisciplinary field of organizational culture in the world and in Lithuania, which is relevant for the dissertation, and the challenges arising for educational institutions, which are relevant in the context of organizational culture.
2. It summarizes the researchers' theories, models, and characteristics of organizational culture, which are extremely useful in order to refine the appropriate traits of organizational culture to create, change, or develop the organizational culture in Lithuanian general education schools and which provide opportunities for educational institutions to examine organizational culture in the context of educational management.

Practical value of the results of the dissertation. Practical significance of the dissertation.

1. Referring to theoretical insights, the dissertation presents a summarized and systematized analysis of the expression of the traits of organizational culture in Lithuanian general education

institutions and the context, which allows individuals to analyze organizational culture from a practical perspective and construct the culture of their institution based on the detailed traits of organizational culture, and to better understand the context of organizational culture.

2. The results of the study allow us to assume the need for change in the organizational culture in Lithuanian general education schools. The primary research data used in the study of the expression of the traits of organizational culture in Lithuanian general education schools enable a deeper understanding of the country's organizational culture in search of a systematic approach and the integration of the traits into other processes of educational institutions and the general activities of the educational institution. In Lithuania, this dissertation is one of the first studies in the field of organizational culture, which answers questions that have not been researched much so far: What is the organizational culture in Lithuanian general education schools like? Based on what traits of organizational culture, it is possible to create or develop organizational culture in Lithuanian educational institutions?
3. Conclusions and recommendations formed on the basis of the research results provide opportunities for heads and teachers of educational institutions, scientists, researchers of organizational culture, and practitioners to create and develop organizational culture, to integrate the components of culture into other processes of the organization. Individually prepared and presented reports to educational institutions, which provided useful insights to the researcher when summarizing the research results and developing the scientific discussion, also give the dissertation a particularly weighty practical significance.
4. The results of the research are also important at the international level, as they will contribute both to the practical use of the Denison Organizational Culture Survey (DOCS) tool in the context of Lithuanian educational institutions and the theoretical

and practical insights, the justification and detailing of the tool in both theoretical and practical aspects.

5. Structure and scope of the dissertation. The dissertation consists of 6 chapters, conclusions, recommendations, a list of references, appendices, acknowledgments, and a summary in Lithuanian and English. The volume of the dissertation is 347 pages, including appendices, 71 figures, 22 tables, and 9 appendices. As many as 513 literature sources were used in writing the dissertation.

1. THEORETICAL CONTEXT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN GENERAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS IN LITHUANIA

1.1. Interdisciplinary field of organizational culture: where does the school/educational institution work?

In the course of global transformations, education and the challenges posed to education have become a more relevant and polemical field than ever. The business paradigm infiltrating education seeks to reform the traditional forms and content of education, to create a new understanding of education, to transfer business theory and practice into education, and at the same time, to change the nature and goals of schools, their social functions, processes, and relationships by transforming the logic of educational activities and the value system. The ideology of neoliberalism, characterized by a strong managerial orientation towards results and goals (Capano & Piattoni, 2011; Moos, 2017), irreversibly changes not only the roles of the participants in education, and their mutual relations, but also the approach to service provision. In education, the need is being formed to bring business market thinking models, management features of education as a service, and logic oriented to market demands into education, to manage schools from a business perspective in order to transfer and use models, theories, and concepts developed in the business sector in the field of education services (Bulley, 2014), prioritizing the economic mission of education (R. Želvys, R. Dukynaitė, J. Vaitekaitis, 2018), when making decisions and basing them on management logic (Moos, 2017), focusing not on values, but on measurable value measured by standards and assessments (Woo, 2013). The position of education as a “public good” supported by the state is reoriented to an individually oriented and applicable, competitive position with specific goals and results (Simmie, 2014), forgetting the essential objectives of education (Šliavaitė, 2018; Targamadžė, 2014; Vaitiekaitis, 2016).

Business practices and theories based on neoliberal ideology create a lot of tension for educational organizations, which change the traditional nature and values of education, and express value changes (Koppen, Lunt, & Wulf, 2002). Schools are encouraged to implement the principles of the new public management (Thom & Ritz, 2004), which are applied in the private sector for more effective management of schools (Iqbal, 2005). Schools are encouraged to re-establish and evaluate existing roles, responsibilities, and relationships (Adams, Harris, & Jones, 2016), increasing organizational flexibility and improving the efficiency of organizations' activities and the quality of services (Maurušaitienė, 2011), promoting orientation from process to results and the creation of a market mechanism in education (Tolofari, 2005; Želvys, 2015). The understanding of the consumerist orientation of demands is becoming relevant, which, permeating the school, forms relationships based on consumerist principles, characterized by increasing individualization, the pursuit of high status, and its demonstration. Imitation of the importance of values prevails, consumerism-oriented values increase (Melnikas, Jakubavičius, Strazdas, Chlivickas, Lobanova, & Stankevičienė, 2014), there is a considerable amount of opposition between particular moral values and real-life facts (Aramavičiūtė & Martišauskienė, 2009). Meanwhile, the development of the traditions of democratic culture and lifestyle or the satisfaction of spiritual needs that are not directly related to professional activity are almost no longer discussed (Želvys, Dukynaitė, & Vaitekaitis, 2018). Schools, under the influence of various reforms and decisions that are constantly being introduced, operating between radically different paradigms in their ideologies and philosophies, also base their activities on different principles, have different directions, and are guided by different values, and this has a great influence on the organizational culture of the school.

In the latest works of scholars, the relevance of organizational culture is particularly emphasized in the context of changes that occur continuously and, in most cases, cannot be predicted or prepared for. Therefore, understanding, assessing, and managing the organization's culture can help organizations achieve greater stability and adaptability

(Tanase, 2015), and the integration of the traits of organizational culture would make one feel stronger and more stable to create the desired culture. The business-based paradigm in education aims to establish a managerial organizational culture, the ideology of which permeates almost all areas of school activity, quite contradictory goals that are difficult to reconcile and implement are starting to be set for schools, and value and ethical issues arise, permanent fields of tension between professional judgment and the demand of the market to satisfy the consumer begin to prevail. These neoliberalist ideological principles protecting the business paradigm have a great influence on the culture of organizations, on the decisions made in schools at the organizational level, encode the relationship between school community members based on business principles, change the very mission of the school, the nature and direction of the school's activities.

In this context, the integration of organizational culture as a management system into other parts of the organization's structure becomes particularly important focusing on culture as a strategy, tool, or way to achieve the synthesis of all organizational processes to understand the attitude of all participants in education, the ability to adapt, react, and create in changing conditions. Organizational culture is a management tool and a future strategy that allows to make the processes in educational institutions more efficient and structured into a unified, culturally strong system based on common values, which provides opportunities both for managers to smoothly lead the organization forward, and to create engaged educators who are empowered to make decisions, who continuously learn, understand and are able to identify the expectations and needs of learners and other participants in education. The conducted analysis of scientific sources shows that organizational culture can be a tool for ensuring the successful operation of organizations, combining, and helping to solve the previously mentioned challenges, meanwhile, by using organizational culture as a method of management and control, it is possible to reduce the gap between the current and aspired organizational culture.

1.2. Conceptualization of organizational culture: concept and interpretations

Analysing and delving into the concepts of organizational culture in the dissertation and choosing which concept will be followed, without forgetting the concept of the culture of the organization as a natural, self-developed form of communication between people with values and attitudes that cover the entire organization, the content and components of which are the same (Vveinhardt, 2011), the dissertation focuses on *the concept of organizational culture as a culture consciously created by the organization itself and its people*. The main difference is that the culture of the organization is a self-created phenomenon, while organizational culture is a continuous phenomenon that is purposefully and consciously created, shaped, or changed by the participants of the organization. According to researchers, organizational culture is an artificial, consciously developed culture, the characteristics of which form the content of the government (management) of the organization and become distinguishing features (Vveinhardt, 2011), characterized by the attitudes, beliefs, expectations, norms, attitudes, habits and their total characteristic only of the members of the organization, to be treated as the group consciousness of people, which determines their reaction, the processes and behaviour taking place inside and outside the organization (Zakarevičius, 2004). Organizational culture helps to steer the organization's activities in the right direction, guided by it, a suitable way of solving the problem is found, the internal structure of the organization is developed, and the operational policy is improved (Kaziliūnas, 2006), it unites the efforts of all employees to achieve the common goals of the organization (Šimanskienė, 2008). As stated by Giedraitis & Ispiryan (2019), organizational culture is a tool for achieving the desired performance results. According to the authors, organizational culture creates a sense of order, continuity, and commitment that permeates every aspect of the organization. Organizational culture becomes an important element that encourages

employees to take initiative, work productively, and take care of customers. The research by Grublienė & Urbonaitė (2014) shows that a properly created organizational culture is one of the means to achieve non-material motivation of employees because if a person feels that he/she is sufficiently rewarded for working in an organization, he/she is inclined to compromise, change his/her beliefs and attitudes, and combine them with the organization's attitudes. Organizational culture affects not only the internal environment of the organization, primarily its employees, but also the external environment – customers and other operating participants, shapes behaviour, choices, and decisions. According to Balvočiūtė & Sandu (2013), organizational culture is like a model of internal managerial behaviour that includes a total of certain relationships, traditions, and manners of communication, a philosophy that forms a certain policy that is unique to that organization. The research by Dilienė (2014), Šimanskienė, Gargasas, & Ramanauskas (2015) revealed that many of the world's strongest organizations have been helped to achieve high results by a unique culture suitable only for specific organizations, which is seen as an effective management tool affecting performance results. Therefore, organizational culture is intricate and unrepeatable, because each culture is supported by the stories and myths of only that organization and manifests itself in ever different traditions, ceremonies, rituals, and symbols (Jucevičienė, Poškienė, Kudirkaitė, & Damanskas, 2000). According to Šimanskienė, Gargasas, & Ramanauskas (2015), every organization is unique because, while achieving its goals and solving problems, it is guided by the respective attitudes and values specific to that organization, namely which are the basis of the organizational culture, directing and shaping the behaviour of individuals in the organization, helping to achieve the set goals, creating conditions for mutual interaction between employees, promoting the development of the organization itself.

Thus, some researchers believe that culture is the solution to many organizational problems. Others believe that culture is the result, not the cause, of organizational practice and experience accumulated in

solving internal and external problems. Also, many of these researchers emphasize the benefits and importance of organizational culture and state that it is possible to improve the process of organizational management, to get excellent work results thanks to people. According to Akpa, Asikhia, & Nneji (2021), the word culture is derived from the idea of cultivation, which means development. Thus, the dissertation looks at the culture that forms, develops, and changes depending on the decisions made, the results sought, the feelings and emotions experienced, the beliefs of people, and their expression in the organization's activities. Everything is closely related.

Thus, some authors highlight the characteristics of the organization and its members' activities in the definition, others highlight the elements of organizational culture, and the impact of the components on the organization, and yet others treat organizational culture as an integral category, the ideology of the organization. In the dissertation, organizational culture will be viewed from an interdisciplinary field and perspective, when organizational culture is perceived as an effective means of educational management of the educational institution, which is purposefully and consciously created and shaped by the members of the entire organization, revealing how members of the organization communicate and work with each other, what behaviour is acceptable and what is not, describing how the organization responds to the external environment and adapts to constantly arising challenges to achieve its goals, combining the value system, influencing the performance of educational institutions, the relationship with the environment and the interested participants in education working together, to better understand their needs, meet public interests, and be able to adapt to changes in the environment, understand them, and be able to act accordingly.

1.3. Context of organizational culture in Lithuania: cooperation versus competition

In the neoliberal context, the ultimate goal is to establish and ensure competition as the main principle of the market, which is seen as a driving force that increases efficiency and improves standards (Stuart, 2018), and gives consumers more options. Neoliberalism legitimizes individual competition in relationships and questions collective structures (Amable, 2011), and seeks to consolidate the growth of competition between educational institutions at all levels – among students, teachers, schools, etc. (Marginson, 2006, 209). According to Kowalczyk & Jakubczak (2014), schools are gradually entering into a competition characteristic of the market, which is changing the traditional collegial behaviour model of community members, at the same time changing the role of not only managers but also teachers and family members. Meanwhile, it directs school management towards orientation towards results, quality of services and satisfaction of the needs of the family. As the study of Melnikova (2011) has shown, school heads face difficult problems due to “‘dirty’ school competition causing challenges for school heads in their managerial activities, therefore, the modern school head must have a clear vision of his/her organization, which would become the orientation of the activity and would allow the school to occupy its niche and compete in the market” (Melnikova, 2011, 111). The existence of competition in an educational institution of general education affects all participants related to its activities and unequivocally speaks of the constant tension and isolation experienced by its participants and does not in any way create added value and quality service (Lukšienė, 2000).

The researchers (Cerny & Mannova, 2011) state that cooperation and competition are the two extreme social elements, and that, while acting together, they cannot be incompatible. According to the research conducted by Muijs & Romyantseva (2013), cooperation and

competition can go together. An educational institution as an adaptive system is based on both cooperation and competition (Grumadaitė, 2018). Cooperation-based practice is considered a form of work and an opportunity for creating innovative practices in the organization to maintain a positive position of the organization in the competitive space of institutions (Kairienė, 2012). Competitiveness is not harmful to any educational institution, however, most educational institutions understand competitiveness as competition. Competitiveness in the organization can also be related to the ability to quickly respond to changes and adapt to them, to be able to quickly learn and acquire new necessary skills, to be able to generate and create new knowledge, to look for new ways of working to make the activity more efficient, to know one's customers or users and their needs, to be able to offer innovative new solutions or services (Beniušienė & Svirskienė, 2008).

In the context of education, *cooperation becomes more important than competition* because of the ongoing social, economic, and other problems, together with the pursuit of competitive advantage and the urgent need to solve the social problems facing the world today. Cooperation can provide great opportunities for long-term, meaningful solutions (Greer, 2017), in pursuance of self-sufficiency and sustainable development (Torres-Rahman, Baxter, & Rivera, 2015), to find a solution and move the forms of interaction to a higher level – from the interaction to achieve, accumulate, and protect knowledge to joint activities and solutions to develop and increase organizational knowledge (Girdauskienė & Savanevičienė, 2010).

2. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS/TECHNIQUES OF THE RESEARCH

The methodological basis of the dissertation is *Denison Organizational Culture Survey (DOCS) methodology* in connection with the positivist tradition of quantitative research (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Denison & Neale, 1996; Denison, Nieminen, & Kotrba, 2012; Denison, Janovics, Young, & Cho, 2006).

Denison, Janovics, Young, & Cho (2006), referring to previous research and theoretical insights of the scientists (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Denison & Neale, 1996; Denison, 1990; Gordon & DiTomaso, 1992; Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Sorensen, 2002) state that the tool allows to reveal the beliefs and assumptions that are the basis of organizational culture in identifiable and measurable ways that influence the organization and decisions. The organizational culture model is based on four traits of culture – involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission – that answer four main questions about the organization (Denison & Neale, 1996; Denison, Janovics, Young, & Cho, 2006):

- **Mission** reveals whether the organization knows where it is going, and defines a meaningful long-term direction of the organization that everyone at all levels of the organization strives for. Mission indicates a clear direction and goals that help predict the appropriate course of action of the organization and its members, allowing the organization to shape current behaviour, predict the desired behaviour in the future.
- **Adaptability**, which is defined as the transformation of the needs of the environment into activities, the organizational ability to change in response to external changes and needs, shows whether the organization listens to market demands. Is the organization able to adapt and respond to emerging challenges?
- **Involvement** shows whether people in the organization are involved and aligned with each other, feel responsibility; it defines the development of human abilities, ownership, and responsibility. The involvement trait of organizational culture reveals the extent

to which employees are committed to their work, whether they feel involved, and contribute to decisions that affect their work.

- **Consistency** reveals whether the organization has values, systems, and processes that it can follow, that are compatible with each other and create value. Consistency creates a culture based on a shared system of beliefs, values, and symbols that are understood by all members of the organization, and is the main source of integration, coordination and control, agreements, and core values. Behaviour is based on a set of core values, mutual agreements, and the integration of everyday functions.

Each of these traits is measured by 3 indicators or indices, and each of them is evaluated by 4 statements.

Scientific research methods: analysis of scientific literature (pedagogical, managerial, psychological, philosophical, culturological research methodological literature, documents on education), a quantitative research method – questionnaire survey, content analysis was used for the analysis of the research data – an open-ended question. Statistical analysis of the data was performed using the SPSS 23 software package.

Research sample. In order to reveal the expression of the traits of organizational culture in Lithuanian general education organizations, the research population was chosen – heads, deputy heads, administrative staff, and teachers of Lithuanian preschool and general education institutions. When selecting a sample for a quantitative study from the population, total (non-random) sampling was applied, that is, all Lithuanian educational institutions, heads of institutions, and teachers were invited to participate. The basis of the sampling is the number of Lithuanian preschool and general education institutions and employees. The research included 1817 subjects from state and private educational institutions, from all the ten counties of Lithuania. Individual respondents and organizations took part in the research. The educational institutions that participated in the study were provided only with their institution's research reports, meanwhile, their results and individual reports were delivered remotely.

3. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN GENERAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS

3.1. General comparison and evaluation of the indices of organizational culture

The results of the study revealed that the traits of *mission* and *involvement* (mean scores of 4.10 and 4.09) are the most expressed traits of organizational culture, the less expressed trait is *adaptability* (4.02 points), while the least expressed trait is *consistency* (3.91 points).

High scores of the *mission* trait (4.10 points) show that employees in educational institutions know the meaningful long-term direction of the organization and the general vision of the future. Characteristically high and evenly distributed scores for the indices that make up the mission trait (goals and objectives, strategic direction and intent, and vision) indicate that the mission trait is well-balanced, therefore, the organizational culture of educational institutions is characterized by a clear mission, employees know a meaningful long-term direction of the organization and a common vision for the future, have sufficiently clear goals and objectives. However, the results also revealed that educational institutions should pay more attention to the changes in creating the vision of the organization that would help motivate employees more. It is also noticeable that the organizational culture of educational institutions is characterized by not so strongly expressed competition between other educational institutions.

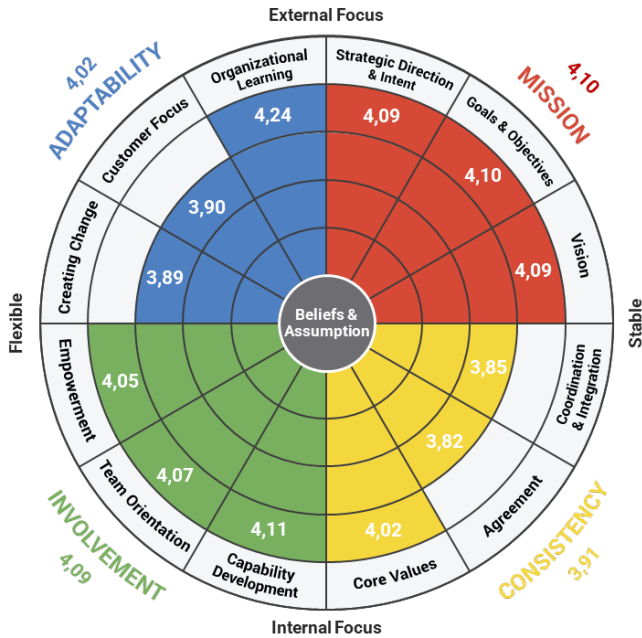


Fig. 1. Diagram of the traits and indices of organizational culture

The results of the indices (capability development, team orientation, and empowerment) constituting the trait of *involvement* (total score 4.09) revealed that the organizational culture of Lithuanian educational institutions is characterized by constant attention to improving the skills of employees; teamwork is also valued at the same time empowering employees to take initiative and take responsibility while working independently. However, it is noticeable that in educational institutions, employees do not always believe that they can make a positive impact with their work, also, employees do not always see the connection between the work they do and the organization's goals. There is an observed need to pay more attention to the redistribution of work so that employees have opportunities to work individually.

The results of the indices (creating change, customer focus, and organizational learning) that make up the trait of *adaptability* (4.02 points) show a particularly high evaluation of the index of organizational learning, however, the evaluation of the indices of customer focus and creating change was much lower. This indicates a certain lack of balance in the adaptability trait of organizational culture – educational institutions seek to acquire knowledge, develop skills, and learn from their mistakes, however, they have less ability to quickly respond to emerging challenges and anticipate future changes, and turn the needs of the environment into actions; they are also characterized by a less pronounced orientation towards the current and future needs of customers.

The results of the indices (core values, agreement, coordination, and integration) that make up the trait of *consistency* (3.91 points) revealed that educational institutions have quite clearly expressed values, which are supported by the staff of the institutions and which create a sense of community and clear expectations. However, employees lack agreement on critical issues and the ability to reconcile differences and find a common solution to complex disputes. The ability to share organizational functions and work between departments and work together to achieve common goals is also less expressed. The results of the study showed that the trait of consistency is more favourably evaluated among the subjects working in a public educational institution compared to those working in a private educational institution. The evaluation of the remaining traits of organizational culture (involvement, adaptability, mission) does not differ statistically significantly between subjects working in public and private educational institutions. It was also established that the coordination and integration index of those working in a public educational institution is higher compared to those working in a private educational institution, meanwhile, the estimates of the remaining indices of organizational culture do not differ statistically significantly between subjects working in public and private institutions.

The results of the study revealed differences in the expression of the traits of organizational culture between school heads and teachers. It was found that school heads' estimates of all the four traits of organizational culture are statistically significantly higher than teachers' (involvement $p < 0.001$, consistency $p < 0.001$, adaptability $p < 0.001$, mission $p = 0.002$). This shows that school heads evaluate the indices of organizational culture more favourably than teachers (the difference is statistically significant only for these indices: *empowerment, team orientation, capability development, core values, agreement, coordination and integration, customer focus, organizational learning, goals and objectives, vision*). However, the indices of *creating change* ($p = 0.551$) and *strategic direction and intent* ($p = 0.514$) do not differ between school heads and teachers, which indicates that both school heads and teachers evaluate the *strategic direction and intent*, and the *creating change* in educational institutions in a similar way.

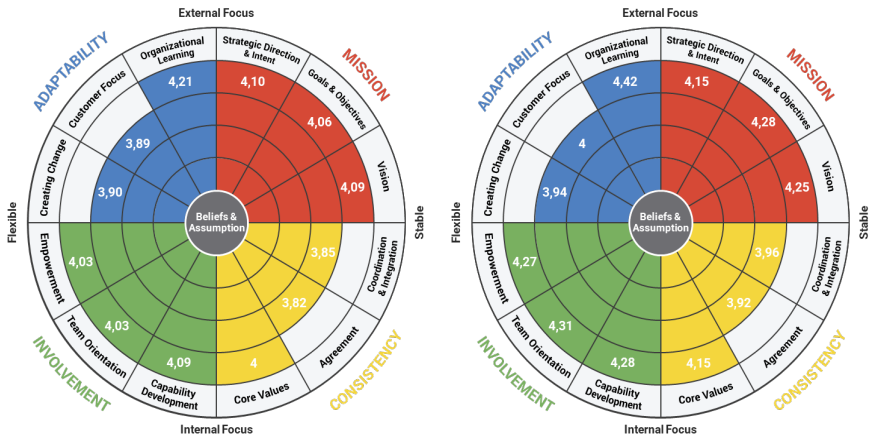
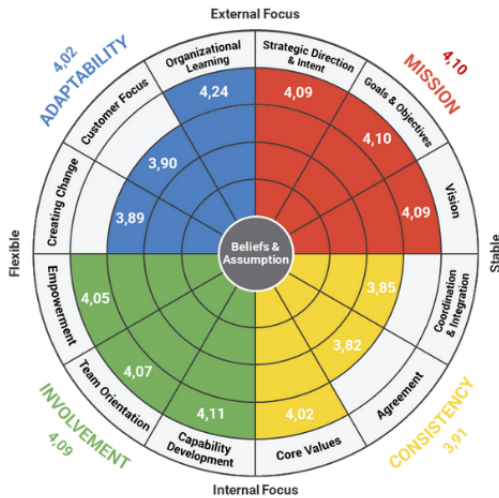


Fig. 2. Comparison of the traits of organizational culture of teachers and school heads

The results of the study also revealed differences in the expression of the traits of organizational culture not only between school heads and teachers but also between different age and seniority groups, number of employees in the organization, public and private educational institutions, between those participating with the school head's consent and without it individually.

3.2. Weaknesses and strengths of the organizational culture of educational institutions

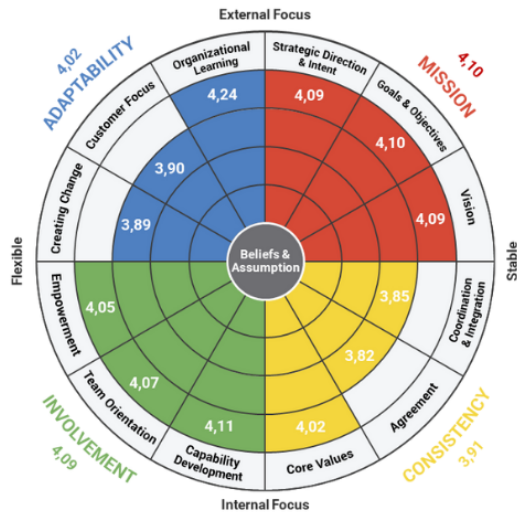
The results of the study showed that one of the strongest characteristics in the field of organizational culture of educational institutions is the ability to adapt to external environmental factors, including learning, the importance of which people realize in their daily work. People's involvement is driven by the planning of organizational activities, in which people can get involved at any stage of the process. This fosters people's responsibility and capability development. Furthermore, the consistent investment in promoting employees' skills indicates a continual improvement in their abilities. The results of the study showed that educational organizations have a clear strategy for the future, a clear mission prevails, which gives meaning to people's work and indicates the methods of work performance; long-term goals are foreseen and instructions are given on how to pursue them, and employees have opportunities to implement short-term objectives without harming the long-term strategy, meanwhile, in the implementation of the goals, the code of ethics, which indicates how to behave properly to achieve them, helps to achieve consistency.



ADAPTABILITY	4,58	Learning is an important objective in our day-to-day work.
MISSION	4,26	There is a clear mission that gives meaning and direction to our work.
MISSION	4,25	There is a long-term purpose and direction.
INVOLVEMENT	4,25	Organization activities planning is ongoing and involves everyone in the process to some degree.
MISSION	4,20	There is a clear strategy for the future.
ADAPTABILITY	4,19	We encourage direct contact with customers by our people.
CONSISTENCY	4,19	There is an ethical code that guides our behavior and tells us right from wrong.
INVOLVEMENT	4,18	The "bench strength" (capability of people) is constantly improving.
INVOLVEMENT	4,17	There is continuous investment in the skills of employees.
MISSION	4,17	We are able to meet short-term demands without compromising our long-term vision.

Fig. 3. Strengths of organizational culture

The results of the study revealed that educational institutions lack consistency, a coherent and systematic process, which aims at a smooth transition of the organization to the desired state seeking to achieve the mission and set goals. Although different departments of an organization often collaborate to create various innovations, however, there are difficulties in the processes of distribution of work between different divisions or departments, adherence to values and acceptance of responsibility for the consequences of non-adherence and decision-making processes, direct influence of customers on decisions made; there are no clear roles in these processes, each member of the organization does not fully understand the customer's requirements and needs.



CONSISTENCY	3,59	It is easy to reach a consensus, even on difficult issues.
MISSION	3,66	Our strategy leads other organizations to change the way they compete in the industry.
CONSISTENCY	3,68	It is easy to coordinate projects across different parts of the organization.
ADAPTABILITY	3,73	We respond well to competitors and other changes in the organization environment.
	3,73	Customer input directly influences our decisions.
CONSISTENCY	3,75	When people ignore our core values, they are held accountable.
ADAPTABILITY	3,75	All members have a deep understanding of customer wants and needs.
CONSISTENCY	3,81	There is a clear agreement about the right way and the wrong way to do things.
	3,81	When disagreements occur, we work hard to achieve "win-win" solutions.
ADAPTABILITY	3,83	Different parts of the organization often cooperate to create change.

Fig. 4. Weaknesses of organizational culture

In conclusion, it can be stated that the strength of the organizational culture of educational institutions is the attitude towards continuous learning at the workplace, the continuous development of one's abilities and the consistent strengthening and improvement of employees' skills. Educational institutions have a clear strategy for the future, a clear mission prevails that gives meaning to people's work and indicates the methods of work performance, long-term goals are foreseen, and instructions given on how to achieve them, and employees have the opportunity to implement short-term objectives without harming the long-term strategy. However, the weak points of educational institutions also became apparent. A common policy and operational methods prevail in the organization, which should ensure the consistency and stability of the organization's procedures, and a strong commitment to consistency in the long-term perspective. However, the lowest scores for the traits of adaptability and consistency and for the indices of agreement and customer focus show the tension in the customer value dimension, which arises between the desire of organizations to adapt to external market demands and the ever-changing environment and consistency which looks at internal values, systems, and processes. Since there are weak points and links in the areas of agreement, coordination, and integration, the factors of the external environment strongly affect educational institutions. The weakest areas remain coordination of consistency in operational processes, distribution of work, cooperation between different units or departments, creation of innovations, and the ability to adapt to the existing environment – communication of customer needs and requirements, roles and functions, and cooperation with customers.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE MODEL TO DEVELOP ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

After summarizing all the research results and presenting recommendations, a model for developing organizational culture is presented (see Figure 5), in which the spheres of the customer and the school are clearly separated, the general sphere of co-creation and cooperation, in which organizational culture is created, is emphasized, the traits and indices of the organizational culture are presented, as well as proposals reflecting the results of the study, in which direction the educational institution should move to achieve such an organizational culture that would be based on a clear mission, vision, strategy, clear unity of goals and results, which people both perceive and see their personal achievements in the whole system (mission). The model provides recommendations that allow learning and capability development to be directed towards the creation of involvement, which is required to understand what and why changes are required and what people themselves can do, taking responsibility for change, and how to contribute to the implementation of challenges (involvement). The model contains recommendations that direct the institution to increase adaptability in response to the external environment and encourage it to operate effectively in it, understand changing needs and respond to them (adaptability), and at the same time create consistent processes acceptable to the communities, which would allow to make decisions, resolve conflicts, and create new, effective systemic solutions that respond to community members (consistency).

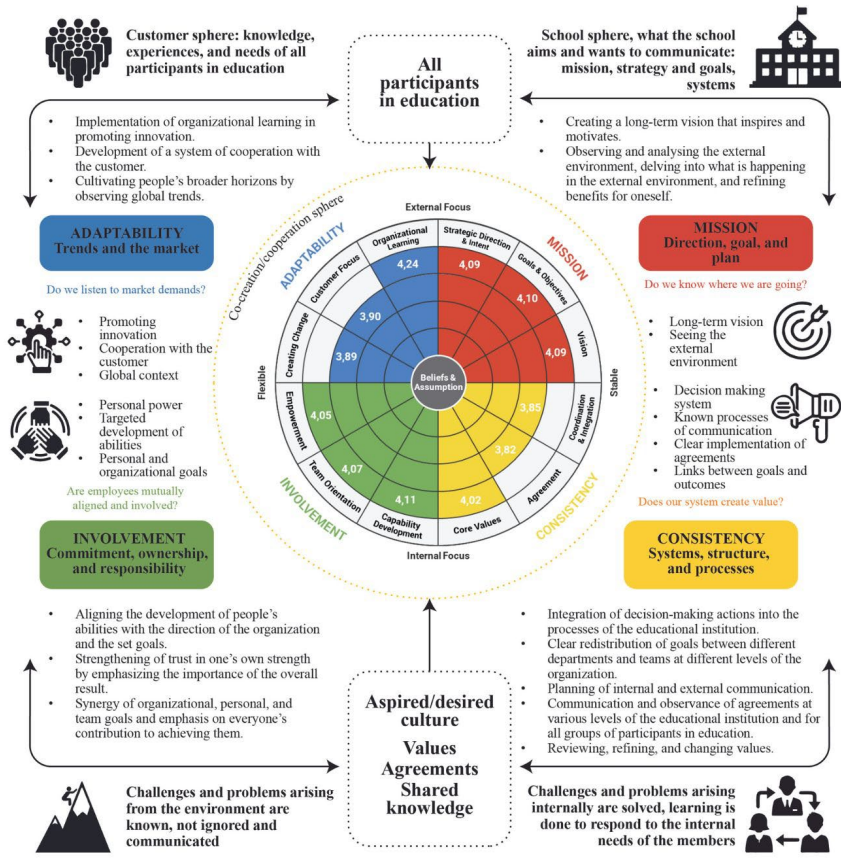


Fig. 5. Model of the expression of the traits of organizational culture in general education schools (compiled by the author)

CONCLUSIONS

1. Organizational culture is an effective management tool of an educational institution, which is purposefully and consciously created and shaped by the members of the entire organization, revealing how the members of the organization communicate and work with each other, what behaviour is acceptable, showing how it combines the value system and how it reacts to the external environment, adapts to constantly arising challenges to achieve its goals. Organizational culture in this context acquires great meaning to meet the changing needs of society, which requires new decisions and choices based on values, a common vision, and common requirements when creating relationships with participants in education. Organizational culture interacts with many processes of the organization that serve internal and external needs, increases the expression of adaptability and consistency, and the expression of the traits of involvement and mission increases the awareness that it is necessary to move the forms of interaction between education participants to a higher level – relationships based on cooperation, responsibility, and commitment.
2. In pursuit of the objective – to apply the theoretical model, methodology, and questionnaire of the Denison Organizational Culture Survey (DOCS) to the study of the expression of the traits of the organizational culture of Lithuanian general education schools, it can be stated and concluded that the chosen Denison theoretical model and tool have been successfully applied to the study of the expression of the traits of organizational culture of Lithuanian general education schools and are suitable for studying organizational culture.
3. The organizational culture of Lithuanian educational institutions is characterized by the most strongly expressed traits of mission and involvement, the weaker expressed trait of adaptability and the weakest expressed trait of consistency. This shows that

educational institutions have a clear mission, and employees are sufficiently involved, however, greater challenges arise in adapting to constant change and there is a lack of consistency in the organizational processes prevailing in the organizational culture. For involvement, there is a constant focus on improving the skills of employees, and teamwork is also valued while empowering employees to take initiative and take responsibility when working independently. Consistency shows that educational institutions have clearly expressed values, defined processes, and coordination, however, there is a lack of agreements and decision-making skills on critical issues. It is also difficult to share organizational functions and work among different teams, and to work together to achieve common goals of the organization. Adaptability indicates a certain lack of balance – educational institutions seek to acquire knowledge, develop skills, learn from their mistakes, however, they have less ability to quickly respond to emerging challenges and anticipate future changes, and turn environmental needs into actions; they are also characterized by a weaker orientation towards the current and future needs of customers. The organizational culture is characterized by a clear mission, and employees know the meaningful long-term direction of the organization and a common vision for the future, and have sufficiently clear goals and objectives. However, it is necessary to pay attention to changes in the communication of the organization's mission, vision, and strategic goals, which would help to motivate employees more to achieve the organization's goals.

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1. Starkutė, J. (2023). The Involvement as a Trait of the Organizational Culture in Lithuanian General Education Schools. *Pedagogy*, 152, 4, 133-157. <https://doi.org/10.15823/p.2023.152.7>
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