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THE ROLE OF A HEADMASTER IN THE ERA OF PUBLIC GOVERNANCE

ABSTRACT

Changes in school management in the world over the last decades have been a part of the increasing use of comprehensive tendencies in the organization of public sector services, which is characterized by the decline of the old public administration model and a new management approach commonly referred to as public governance. Any public sector institution management in the era of public governance includes use of public administration, quasi-market and network management paradigm principles. Following these changes and in connection with the planned reform of the curriculum and teaching approach of general education in Latvia it is important to answer such questions as: what is the role of a headmaster in contemporary school and what does it mean to be a headmaster – leader? The main goal of the article is to provide an overview of the main trends in the transformation of the role of a headmaster in the context of the development of public sector management and to look at the current findings of researchers in the work of headmasters. The research method is analysis of scientific publications. The article deals with the theoretical concepts of public sector management, school management and school leadership development. The author of the article concludes that the elements of manifestation of all three public sector management paradigms in the era of public governance also form the work of a headmaster, and headmaster must take the role of administrator, manager and leader at the same time. However, unlike the head of any other company or public sector institution, headmaster should focus on the leadership of the pedagogical process by improving teaching and learning and ensuring conditions for an effective learning process.

Keywords: *distributed leadership, instructional leadership, pedagogical leadership, public governance, transformational leadership.*

Introduction

The improvement of school management becomes the priority of education policy worldwide (Pont, Nusche, 2008). The provision of effective school management is increasingly seen as a major large-scale educational reform, which would improve the educational outcomes (OECD, 2009). In addition, it is not expected that headmasters will become better managers or administrators than before, but that they will become leaders of the school as the learning organization (Hargreaves, Halasz, 2008; OECD, 2016). As Andreas Schleicher, the director for the Directorate of Education and Skills of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), points out, there are three key components needed to build a high-quality school in the 21st century: (a) teachers who are confident in their ability to teach, (b) the desire to innovate, and (c) a strong school leader who promotes the conditions in the school, allowing the first two components to flourish (Schleicher, 2015).

In the context of the reform of the curriculum of general education initiated in Latvia, which also involves changing the teaching approach, the issue of the role of a headmaster has been raised. Schools will have to function as a professional learning community that are constantly changing and adapting to new circumstances to support each pupil's learning and implement a deep learning approach (National Centre ..., 2017). To implement the new curriculum and teaching approach, it will be necessary to strengthen and develop cooperation among teachers at the school level of planning and implementation of the teaching process. The new approach will require an active learning process, which means that there is nothing more important than the addressing of didactic issues in schools to match the curricula and improving educational programmes in order to regularly analyse learning outcomes and find the best ways to improve each pupil's performance so that the teachers share good pedagogical practice for teaching improvement purposes. In this way only, it will be possible to link new ideas and goals with practical teaching work, which is the task of school management. Good school management is perhaps the most important factor for introducing changes in teaching approach and ensuring school development. For a school to grow there is a need of a headmaster – leader, not just a headmaster – manager (Pont, Nusche, 2008).

There is an opinion that contemporary school should be managed as any other company (Kārklīņa, 2013). However, in the author's opinion and based on the awareness of challenge posed by the change, it is important to find answers to such questions as: Is the school really like any other company? What is the role of a headmaster in contemporary school? What does it mean to be a headmaster – leader? To answer these questions,

the article analyses the concepts of the transformation of the role of a headmaster in the context of public sector management development and examines the general conclusions of Western researchers and the OECD on the leadership content of a headmaster of contemporary school. Due to the limited scope the article does not include a detailed analysis of the situation and conclusions about leadership in Latvian schools, which will be discussed in subsequent publications by the author.

Methods and Materials

The research method is analysis of scientific publications in areas of public management development and school management and leadership. In the preparation of the article, general analyses and meta-analyses of leading researchers in the field of public administration and school management in the English language published in the last two decades have been used. In the general analysis of public sector governance reforms and development trends, studies from researchers of the University of Leuven Christopher Pollitt and Geert Bouckaert (Pollitt, Bouckaert, 2011), the Dutch researcher Louis Meuleman (Meuleman, 2008) and the Norwegian authors Nick Sitter and Kjell Arnold Eliassen (Eliassen, Sitter, 2008) have been used. The analysis of the transformation of the role of the headmaster and the findings of the content of management and leadership of the contemporary headmaster are based on the report by the Finnish researchers (Alava, Halttunen, 2012) and publications by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on improving school management in the OECD countries (Pont, Nusche, 2008; OECD, 2009; OECD 2013; Schleicher 2015; OECD, 2016). The relationship between public sector governance reforms and the development of school management has been illustrated by the studies of Bill Mulford (Mulford, 2003), Petros Pashiardis and Stefan Brauckmann (Pashiardis, Brauckmann, 2009). The impact of school management and leadership on student learning outcomes is analysed in meta-analysis by the New Zealand team of researchers (Robinson, Hohepa, 2009) and studied by the University of Nottingham (Day, Sammons, 2009). In contrast, the analysis of individual school leadership patterns is based on the publications of researchers who have developed the concept of leadership in their studies: professor from the University of Toronto Kenneth Leithwood and co-authors on transformational leadership (Leithwood, Tomlinson, 1996; Leithwood, Yantzi, 2006; Leithwood, Sun, 2012); professor at the Hong Kong Institute of Education Philip Hallinger, on instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger, 2009); Professor Peter Gronn of the Cambridge University and the American scientist James P. Spillane on distributed leadership (Gronn 2000; Spillane 2005; Spillane, 2015), and

the American scholars Helen M. Marks and Susan M. Printy on integrated leadership (Marks, Printy, 2003).

Results and Discussions

School management has significantly changed over time as there has been and continues to be a significant change in the society to which they provide educational services. Under the influence of globalization and the development of information technologies public sector management transformation processes are taking place, which promotes the application of new management approaches and principles in the management of public sector institutions, including schools. Though due to the differences of organizational structure of historical, cultural and educational systems there is a different school management approach in different countries, several common global trends that affect the development of school management in all OECD countries can be observed (Pont, Nusche, 2008).

In the research (Eliassen, Sitter, 2008; Meuleman, 2008; Pollitt, Bouckaert, 2011) since the beginning of the 20th century three public sector management development periods have been highlighted. These periods can be characterized by significant differences, emphasizing the prevailing public sector management paradigm in each of them:

- by the end of the 1970s – traditional public administration;
- from the late 1970s to the late 1990s – the new public management;
- Since the 1990s, continues the era what researchers call the public governance.

The traditional public administration corresponds to the hierarchical, bureaucratic management paradigm, the basic principles of which are in a strict compliance with norms and instructions, a hierarchical relationship, a role of a passive citizen or employee. In a traditional public administration model, the manager performs the functions of administrator. The main element of the new public sector management is the introduction of quasi-market and private sector business management principles in public administration, with the main emphasis on decentralization, competition, customer and service provider relations in the public-sector management. This paradigm management approach is dominated by managerialism, and the functions of the head of a public sector institution are somewhat similar to the work of a business manager. Over the past twenty years, with the development of communications technology, public administration has become more and more involved with such members of society as target groups and social partners by putting emphasis on the cooperation of different levels and directions of management, the paradigm of network is developing. Under the influence of these changes, heads in public sector organizations,

including schools, must be able to fulfil new competences by taking the role of a leader. According to management theorists, public sector management approaches based on all three paradigms in public sector institution management still exists at the same time, but the intensity of each management paradigm is different – one of the approaches in practice is usually dominant (Meuleman, 2008). It should be noted that public governance combines all three public-sector management paradigms – the principles of public and quasi-market management and the use of network management methods in the public sector (Meuleman, 2008; Pollitt, Bouckaert, 2011).

The comprehensive changes in the organization of public sector services in recent decades are also reflecting in school management (Mulford, 2003; OECD, 2009), and elements of all three paradigms in public sector governance forms the content of the work of a headmaster. Consequently, the headmaster is administrator, manager and leader at the same time (Pashiardis, Brauckmann, 2009).

When assessing which of the role of a headmaster in the era of public governance is more significant, one should not forget the basic function of the school activity – the pedagogical process. As Finnish researchers point out, school management is not just administration and management, but also pedagogical and knowledge-based leadership (Alava, Halttunen, 2012). The common trends in national education system reform management practices show that more and more attention is paid to the pedagogical autonomy of schools and the responsibility for the learning outcomes (Eurydice, 2007). Such national education policy is a part of a wider trend – to restore the emphasis on teaching and learning to improve pupils' performance (Pont, Nusche, 2008). Teaching and learning or emphasizing the meaning of the pedagogical process as a school activity, as compared to the understanding of the 20th century, significantly changes the role of a headmaster (Pont, Nusche, 2008). It is no longer enough that headmaster is a good administrator and manager. To ensure the growth of the school, the role of the leader of the school is becoming the key. In addition, the main task of headmasters is to become leaders in the pedagogical process by improving teaching and learning in schools and ensuring conditions for an effective learning process (Pont, Nusche, 2008). Headmasters are expected to take more active action in teaching management through teacher assessment and feedback to teachers on their work by organizing and leading teachers' professional collaborative teams for planning and directing the professional development of teachers. In contrast to the traditional roles of the administrator or manager, more and more emphasis is put on the primary role of the headmaster as a leader who maintains the vision and strategy of the school, constitutes the learning culture and purposefully encourages the formation of the school as the learning organization (Pont, Nusche, 2008).

The concept of leadership of a headmaster since 80s of the 20th century has gradually evolved and expanded to a comprehensive school leadership perspective, which in recent years has been called leadership for learning (Hallinger, 2009; Townsend, MacBeath, 2011; OECD, 2016) or pedagogical leadership (Robinson, Hohepa, 2009; OECD, 2013; Day, Sammons, 2016). The role of headmasters is based on two major theoretical concepts of effective school leadership – the concept of transformational leadership and the concept of instructional leadership. The two concepts are also the most studied in the context of school management (see, for example, Leithwood, Jantzi, 2006; Day; Sammons; 2009; Robinson; Hohepa; 2009; Leithwood, Sun, 2012).

Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership is the theory of general management, not the theory of education management (Robinson, Hohepa, 2009). The transformational leadership approach in schools is most often associated with identifying the school vision and direction of development, school restructuring and change management, the development of employees and curricula, the involvement of the external community (Leithwood, Jantzi, 2006). Research reveals seven transformational leadership roles: building a school vision and setting school goals; providing intellectual stimulation; offering personalized support; modelling and promoting good practice and maintaining the core values of the school; demonstrating high performance expectations to create a productive school culture; creating and developing structures that promote participation in decision making at school (Leithwood, Tomlinson, 1996). The transformational leadership features emphasize school's as organization's overall development and support for people, but this leadership model lacks the element of school education process management (Robinson, Hohepa, 2009). The report, which analyses 33 studies on transformational leadership in schools, concluded that the transformational leadership model had a small indirect impact on pupil learning outcomes or social growth outcomes (Leithwood, Jantzi, 2006). Researchers conclude that the transformational leadership approach is more conducive to creating a collaborative school staff culture, rather than contributing to increased pupil learning outcomes (Robinson, Hohepa, 2009).

Instructional leadership

The theoretical model of instructional leadership emerged in the first half of the 20th century in studies on school efficiency (Stewart, 2006). Unlike the transformational leadership, this model focuses on the way

school leadership improves pupil learning outcomes. The initial concept of instructional leadership was essentially focusing the headmaster on how teachers work towards the aim – helping pupils to learn. Based on early studies on school efficiency, instructional leadership was designed as an active part of the headmaster in promoting school curriculum coherence, setting the key objectives, setting high academic standards, visiting classrooms regularly, monitoring teacher attitudes and encouraging better teaching (OECD, 2016).

The instructional leadership model has been developed by Philip Hallinger, a professor at the Hong Kong Institute of Education (Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger, 2009). His instructional leadership model consists of 10 leadership functions in three categories: the definition of a school mission (with such functions as definition of school goals and information about school goals); the management of the learning process (with such functions as monitor and evaluation, coordination of curriculum and monitoring of pupils' progress) and monitoring the school environment (including learning time protection, promoting career development, raising awareness of the school, stimulating teachers and motivating them).

When analysing disadvantages of instructional leadership model, the researchers conclude that in many schools the headmaster is not a learning expert (Stewart, 2006). In addition, some headmasters think that their main function is merely administration, and therefore they are purposefully distanced from what is happening in the classroom. Hallinger also points out that in many cases headmasters have less knowledge of pedagogy and curriculum than teachers which they monitor. Furthermore, decentralization and the increase in the degree of autonomy of the school also diverts the headmaster's attention from the main mission of the school. Many headmasters are so overtaken with school management and administrative routine tasks that they rarely have time to influence and inspire others in teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2003).

Both of these leadership approaches vary depending on which school areas of activity headmasters and teachers focus to improve pupils' teaching and learning. Meta-analysis by the New Zealand researchers on the impact of different leadership approaches on pupil learning outcomes has concluded that the impact of instructional leadership is three to four times higher than the impact of transformational leadership (Robinson, Hohepa, 2009). The reason for such a significant dominance of the impact of the instructional leadership approach on the results of pupil learning outcomes is that the transformational leadership model focuses more on the relationships between leaders and their followers and on school restructuring, improving school conditions in general, and these processes do not have a direct impact on the quality of pupil learning outcomes

(Robinson, Hohepa, 2009). Instructional leaders, in turn, focus on school goals, curriculum development, learning and school environment (Stewart, 2006).

Distributed leadership

Over the last two decades, the initial concept of a headmaster as a sole leader in teaching, which has been actively involved in all learning process issues, has gradually changed as it did not involve the influence and leadership of other school staff. This lack of this instructional leadership concept has contributed to the development of the concept of distributed leadership model (Gronn 2000; Marks, Printy, 2003; Spillane, 2005; Spillane, 2015).

The concept of distributed leadership is based on the hypothesis that leadership is not a feature of one person or a person's leader role, function or behaviour, but rather the whole organization's characteristic. Respectively, leadership is distributed within the organization (Gronn 2000; Spillane 2005). It is formed by an interaction between the various employees of the organization and the environmental conditions, namely, it is a product of formal leaders and employees (leader's followers), as well as the interaction of circumstances and situation (Gronn 2000; Spillane 2005; Spillane, 2015). In addition, not only the leader affects the followers, but the followers influence the leaders as well in this interaction (Spillane, 2015).

Researchers emphasize that distributed leadership approach does not involve delegation or transfer of leadership to other school staff, but rather the dispersion of leadership roles within a wider range of staff, while ensuring a joint, coherent activity and emphasizing interaction between the headmaster and school staff (Fullan, 2003, Spillane 2005; Spillane, 2015).

When analysing this leadership approach in the context of public sector management paradigms, the author concludes that the distributed leadership model is in line with the public governance network paradigm, because it involves refusing of the traditional hierarchical structure in organization management, replacing it with self-organizing networks in which employees form the necessary structural interrelationships. Consequently, the management model of the leadership network enables organizations to create professional learning communities that allow employees to learn from one another, making the organization a learning organization.

Integrated leadership model – pedagogical leadership

In recent years, public sector researchers have begun to develop and test integrated leadership models that combine elements from the

original separate leadership concepts (Fernandez, Cho, 2010). Education management in this regard is no exception. Effective school management practices describe several integrated leadership models (Marks, Printy, 2003; Hallinger, 2009; Townsend, MacBeath, 2011; Day, Sammons, 2013; OECD, 2016). American scholars Helen M. Marks and Susan M. Printy suggest that leadership in school management is seen in a wider context by combining instructional leadership and transformational leadership concepts and justifies the opinion that there is a need of transformative leadership in school to promote the changes, but distributed instructional leadership is required to improve learning outcomes (Marks, Printy, 2003). According to researchers, the two leadership theories in the context of school management are not mutually exclusive and the implementation of the management principles discussed in contemporary schools can improve pupil learning outcomes by supporting and promoting teaching and learning conditions that have a direct impact on teachers and their work (Day, Sammons, 2013).

In recent years, the term “pedagogical leadership” is used to describe the integrated leadership model (Robinson, Hohepa, 2009; OECD, 2013; Day, Sammons, 2016), thus covering all school management activities which are focusing on teaching and learning.

The transformational leadership component in the pedagogical leadership model emphasizes the role of the headmaster leader in improving school environment. In practice, this implies the headmaster focusing on what might be called “secondary processes”, shaping the organization and culture of the school, and improving the skills of the staff. In the context of transformational leadership, one of the main tasks of a headmaster is to promote processes within the school framework and to create structures that ensure mutual professional cooperation between teachers and their participation in decision-making. This approach is based on the fact that teachers in many schools work autonomously and in isolation, which means that the headmaster should, instead of directly engaging in the learning process, promote the formation of a teacher-centred learning community aimed at improving school performance. In other words, the main task of the headmaster is to create a working environment in which teachers are strongly aware of the school’s mission, cooperate with and learn from each other (Hendriks, Scheerens, 2013).

The component of distributed instructional leadership in a pedagogical leadership model in school means cooperation between the headmaster and teacher in improving curricula, teaching and assessment. The headmaster stimulates teacher’s engagement and development and works together to improve learning process. Consequently, in the pedagogical leadership model, the headmaster is no longer the only teacher who is solely

responsible for instructional leadership initiatives at school but is a “leader in pedagogical leadership” (Stewart, 2006). In this context, the main task of the headmaster as a pedagogical leader is to focus on the emphasis and support of teaching and learning in schools and the promotion of the professional development of teachers to ensure that all teachers know how and can improve pupil performance (OECD, 2016). Thus, headmasters – pedagogical leaders – set goals, ensure that pedagogical staff is competent in executing their duties, assesses whether the goals have been achieved, provides teachers with feedback on their work and necessary improvements (Robinson, Hohepa, 2009).

Conclusions

- In the era of public governance, the headmaster must play the role of administrator, manager and leader at the same time. However, unlike manager of any other company or public sector institution, the headmaster should focus primarily on pedagogical leadership, emphasizing teaching and learning as the meaning of school activity.
- Pedagogical leadership is an integrated leadership model, which consists of the elements of the concepts of transformational leadership and distributed instructional leadership.
- In the context of transformational leadership, the role of a headmaster is to create school environment in which teachers are strongly committed to the mission of the school by interacting with each other professionally and learning from one another.
- Distributed instructional leadership component in the pedagogical leadership model means cooperation between the headmaster and teacher in improving curricula, teaching and assessment.
- In the pedagogical leadership model, the headmaster is leader of pedagogical leaders who sets goals together with teachers, ensures that teachers are competent in execution of their duties, assesses whether the goals have been achieved, provides teachers with feedback on their work and necessary improvements.

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