

The Notion of Sustainable Team Management in Educational Institution

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with one aspect of a larger scale and long-term grounded theory research to explore and define the concept of the sustainable team management in educational institution. This article seeks the answers to research questions: what constitutes the management of educational institutions, and which sustainable development initiatives are implemented in the management of educational institutions.

This article aims to explore the concept of the sustainable team management of educational institution, as well as to coin the elements of the sustainable development of organization, which could serve as a basis to improve sustainable team management in educational institution.

The data were collected by the content analysis of the sustainable team management initiatives reflected on 47 homepages of educational institutions; case studies regarding the implementation of sustainable team management in educational sector and 12 interviews with school administration on the state of the art of sustainable team management. Research sample was 59 educational institutions: 17 primary schools, 29 secondary schools, and 13 state gymnasiums with broad geographical representation – the schools in the capital city, cities, small towns, and countryside.

Sustainable team management supports principals and their teams in leading their educational institutions towards sustainability, also, achieves institutional goals and cultivates a culture where collaboration, appreciation, and teamwork are valued. According to the data of the study, the institutions insufficiently implement the sustainable development initiatives in the education management process of the educational institution that does not meet state policy and vision, also, in order to implement sustainable development initiatives in educational institutions, attract funding from Erasmus+ or other projects. There is also a lack of the uniform understanding of sustainability among the members of education management team. The authors admit that the concept of sustainable team management in an educational institution needs to be defined at the national level.

Keywords: education management, organizational performance, sustainable development of organization, sustainable team, sustainable team management

Introduction

The education sector plays a vital role in an economic, social and environmental context since it has the capacity to transform society and educate students to adapt to needs and challenges from different perspectives. Sustainable team management (STM) contains a complex of activities accompanying various stages of personal and organizational development and therefore it is necessary to create the guidelines for educational institutions to implement this change.

International Commission on the Futures of Education (2021) highlights the importance of sustainability for future education, especially in the field of education management, which includes teamwork, collaboration and culture of organization. Among the priorities, there is mentioned steering educational opportunities towards inclusion and sustainability. It also states that: “Educational institutions should unite collective endeavors and provide the knowledge, science, and innovative approach to shape sustainable futures for all anchored in social, economic, and environmental justice and prepare their teams for environmental, technological, and social changes on the horizon” (International Commission on the Futures of Education, 2021, 15).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) defined by the United Nations (UN) recognize quality education as an integral element of sustainable development (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). Although each of the 17 SDGs (169 sub-goals) is presented as a separate initiative, it should be noted that the five pillars (Environmental, Economic, Social, Political and Corporate) of sustainable development are all interconnected (Morrissey & Heidkamp, 2022). UN define that developing SDG 4 (a quality education) is the foundation to improving people’s lives and sustainable development and, therefore, the education sector has a central role in the achievement of this SDG which also has a transversal impact on the rest of SDGs. So, SDG 4 (a quality education) is recognized as an essential means of achieving the other 16 SDGs (Liu & Kitamura, 2019).

The European Commission (EC) has established Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) to integrate the SDGs into everyday life of educational institutions. EMAS is a systematic approach that ensures the actions linked to the SDGs are not isolated, but framed within a broader vision and reporting on achievements can be easily integrated also in the environmental statement. EMAS also cooperate with “UNESCO Project School” and Eco-School projects. Regardless of the type of educational institution, these organizations need to evolve and adapt in order to prepare future generations for the changing environment and societal concerns. Working within a systematic approach like EMAS provides the education sector with the necessary tools to get prepared, innovate and have a real positive impact on society (European Commission, 2022).

Present article is a theoretical concept paper based on a literature review, analysis of case studies and interviews with principals, and the authors’ conceptual

work. It offers a model and seeks to support principals and their teams in leading their educational institutions towards sustainability. Also, the concept of the STM in educational institution is defined for each of the development stages, as well, a number of practical actions and management strategies are suggested and explained in detail.

According to the Law of the Education in Latvia (*Izglītības likums [Education Law]*, 1998), the quality education consists of four criteria such as goal-orientation, qualitative education, inclusive environment, and education management. Also, one of the main directions of Sustainable Development Strategy in Latvia until 2030 admits that is necessary to create new management forms according to SDGs goals (*Latvijas ilgtspējīgas attīstības stratēģija līdz 2030. gadam [Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030]*, 2010).

In 2016, the National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia started a project “Competence Approach to Curriculum” (Project School2030) to introduce a competence-oriented curriculum in all educational institutions from pre-school to general secondary school with the aim of promoting the acquisition of necessary skills for living in the 21st century. Project School2030 highlights the importance of team in educational institutions and the initiatives of sustainable development. The implementation of Project School2030 goals is related to significant changes in the structure of school and pre-school curriculum, the system of evaluation of learning outcomes, teacher education, and as a result, it affects the management of educational institutions (Skola2030, n.d.^b).

This article aims to explore the concept of the sustainable team management of educational institution, as well as to coin the elements of the sustainable development of organization, which could serve as a basis to improve sustainable team management in educational institutions.

Research questions:

RQ1: what constitutes the sustainable team management of educational institutions?

RQ2: which sustainable development initiatives are implemented in the management of educational institutions?

Literature review

The term of the sustainability of organisation is used as a synonym of sustainable development or organisation’s social responsibility – organisation’s sustainability is based on economic, environmental, social (Bagdonienė, Galbuogienė, Paulavičienė, 2009), political and corporate responsibility aspects (Morrissey & Heidkamp, 2022).

A sustainable organisation is becoming one of the most popular and ambitious concepts because environment and organisational performance are closely related

and its long-term success depends on the fact how the organisation is able to integrate human capital into the environment (Seivwright & Unsworth, 2016; de Haan, 2010).

Sustainable team management consists of seven factors such as:

- core management strategy;
- value for both internal and external parties;
- building cross-departmental bridges;
- democratic decision-making and the motivation of the participants in the long term;
- effective teamwork – leaders and group work;
- team-building methods;
- involvement of all groups of participants (United Nations General Assembly, 2015, Warner & Elser, 2015).

Kvelde and Odina (2022) distinguish several development stages for the team to reach the status of a sustainable team in an educational institution starting from a small group of people working together and sharing common interests, then a formal and appointed team of people – administration team taking care of the management of an educational institution, followed by collective team referring to small organizations where all people are considered as a whole, sometimes also called as family team (Warr & Nielsen, 2018). The next stage would be effective team demonstrating high level teamwork and finally sustainable team working cross-departmentally and centred on adding value to organisations (Wiek, Withycombe, Redman, 2011).

Combining the five pillars of sustainable development in education is a complex process that should result in a completely new vision of educational institutions. It raises the necessity for a management structure to encourage and support the sustainability initiatives within the organisation.

Sustainable development initiatives can be classified by attributing them to sustainable development pillars (see Table 1).

For last 20 years, the most demanded sustainable development initiative for organisations is corporate sustainability and responsibility, as well, it is evaluated according to the indicators of the sustainability index.

The sustainability index is an effective management tool based on an internationally recognized methodology. It helps organisations to diagnose the sustainability of their operations and the level of corporate responsibility in their everyday management.

Table 1. The sustainable development initiatives (created by authors)

Pillars of sustainable development	Sustainable development initiative
Environmental pillar (Mikulčić et al., 2017)	Climate change/global warming Air pollution Deforestation and desertification Rising sea levels Water scarcity Industrial waste Household waste
Economic pillar (Purvis et al., 2019)	Leadership and change Educational organisations International development Sustainable and ethical international cooperation Responsibility and ethics Population Corporate social responsibility Consumption and trade Economic globalization Economic growth
Social pillar (Murphy, 2017)	Intercultural understanding Sustainability in the built environment Sustainable communities Cultural diversity Health and well-being Peace, Security and Conflict Citizenship, Government, Democracy Human rights and needs Travel, transport and mobility Human rights Education accessibility and quality
Political pillar (Chitescua & Lixandrub, 2016)	Use of power in sustainability Effective management Fight corruption Employee evaluation, talent search Government and political transparency Business that promotes national production
Corporate pillar (Saufi e al., 2016)	Corporate environmental responsibility Corporate social responsibility

The sustainability indexes that have the largest impact and representativeness:

- in the Unites States, it is Domini 400 social index – a stock index focusing on companies that maintain high environmental, social, and governance standards (Fernando, 2022a);
- in Europe the two most popular are:
 - ▶ the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes: evaluate three spheres of action (*economic, environmental and social*) based on 24 parameters (Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria, 2019);

- ▶ FTSE4Good: is designed to measure the performance of companies demonstrating specific *environmental, social and governance* practices (Fernando, 2022^b);
- in Latvia, sustainability index is measured by the Institute of Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility (ICSR). ICSR evaluates organisations according to five criteria: local community, management strategy, organisational culture, environment and work environment (Institute of Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility, n.d.).

According to the European Commission (2022), a whole-school approach involves integrating learning about environmental sustainability throughout the institution, it can also help students develop a sustainable mindset. This means that by implementing sustainability in management, teaching and learning systems, educational institutions can provide learners with consistent opportunities to practise what they learn. In order to initiate change in educational institution, there are some key objectives to reach, in particular:

1. To develop an inclusive whole-school plan involving all stakeholders – students, staff, parents, partners and community stakeholders.
2. To develop a future-oriented perspective to increase the impact of whole-school plan and student motivation.
3. To shift from environmental education to learning about sustainability, as learning about sustainability sees learners as active and engaged agents of change (European Commission, 2022).

The case study on the implementation of STM in educational sector of 27 member states the European Union shows the evidence of successful EMAS. EMAS provides a better knowledge and anticipation of the environmental context as it prepares the organization to meet new challenges and societal needs, also guides the opportunity to concrete involvement of students, employees and families (for example, the creation of eco-teams, surveys and opinion polls, gamification activities, enrolment in environmental projects/initiatives, etc.), improves the working environment and facilitates organizations willing to consider also social actions to integrate them under a common tool and have a systematic approach to sustainability (European Commission, 2022). The data of register of EMAS (data from 2020) show that:

- 448 European educational institutions, with 101.130 employees, registered in EMAS;
- 231 of registered educational institutions have implemented EMAS in the education sector;
- 134 of these organizations have less than 49 workers, 50 are medium organizations and the other 47 have a really large workforce, 25 of these large organizations have more than 1.000 employees.

With regards to the geographical distribution, Germany represents 59% of EMAS registered organizations in the education sector (137 organizations), followed by Spain (25%) and Austria (10%) with 57 and 23 EMAS registered organizations respectively. Although with a smaller presence, other EU countries also have EMAS registered organizations, such as Italy, Sweden, Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Luxembourg and Poland. Important to mention that Latvian educational institutions are not registered in EMAS register (European Commission, n.d.).

Thereover, Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) in cooperation with Environmental Education Foundation of Latvia, has implemented the global Eco-School programme. The Eco-School programme is one of the most comprehensive and already popular models of environmental education in the world. It is based on the competence approach and is a method that helps to achieve the expected outcomes defined in the teaching standard and curriculum, as well as the goals of environmental protection and sustainable development. (Vides izglītības fonds/ [Environmental Education Foundation], n.d.).

The symbol of the Eco-School programme is the Green Flag award. Currently, more than 56,000 schools around the world are involved in the Eco-Schools programme, in Latvia they are almost 200 educational institutions, from primary schools to universities.

In order to achieve the EU's ambitious goal of becoming the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, the education sector must act and implement STM in educational institutions.

Methodology

Due to the need of exploring theoretical notions and defining the concept "sustainable team management", the research was organized using grounded theory method research design. The authors of grounded theory method, Glaser and Strauss (1967) originally introduced it to facilitate theory development that consisted of obtaining and analysing data. Bryant and Charmaz (2007, 1) describe it as a method containing "a systematic, inductive, and comparative approach for conducting inquiry for the purpose of constructing theory".

It is considered one of the most generally applied and popular qualitative research methods and is used in areas that have not been widely researched, or to acquire a new insight in previously researched areas (Mārtinsons, Pipere, 2021). In order to develop a theory, the researcher should start by defining research questions, as well as selecting participants, using theoretical sampling, followed by data collection, data analysis and validation stages. This is what the present research article also reveals as it deals with one aspect of a larger scale and long-term grounded theory research. The last stages, namely theoretical saturation stage when theoretical saturation is defined, meaning that in the development

of theory no new categories, concepts, dimensions or incidents arise and finally discovery and conclusion stage when the findings and restrictions of the research are demonstrated are not discussed in this article.

The data were collected by performing the content analysis of the STM initiatives reflected on the homepages of educational institutions in Latvia ($n = 47$), 122 homepages of educational institutions in Latvia were analysed. As it was stated before, a theoretical sampling was used as most appropriate type of sampling for the grounded theory research to select new research sites, events, activities, documents and actors to compare with those already studied. 26 percent of homepages (47 out of 122) contained information regarding sustainable development initiatives in the operation of the educational institution. The data were compared to the report presented by the EU regarding the implementation of sustainable development initiatives in the educational sector in EU ($n = 231$). Afterwards the interviews with school administration on the state of the art of STM in educational institutions ($n = 12$ principals) were carried out. As to sampling, first probability sample – simple random was applied. More than 20 invitations to participate in the interview were sent out as part of the research to principals from the different educational institutions. Answers were received only from five principals from four Latvian cities (Riga and its district, Rezekne and its district, Ventspils and its district and Limbazi and its district). Later purposive sampling was used to approach the school administration of other educational institutions in these cities that already participated in the research. The research sample consisted of three principals from each district and represented different academic levels, such as primary school, secondary school and gymnasium. Based on the principles of research ethics, the informed consent that respondents enter research voluntarily with full information about what it means for them to take part, and that they give consent before they enter the research was obtained. Before obtaining informed consent, the principles were informed about the aim, process, methods, expected benefits, potential risks and rights of research participants. They had the right to stop participating in the study at any time.

All in all, the research sample was 59 educational institutions: 17 primary schools, 29 secondary schools, and 13 state gymnasiums. Selection consisted of analysed homepages of educational institutions ($n = 47$) and the interviewed representatives of school administration ($n = 12$) – the homepages of 12 educational institutions participating in the interviews were not analysed in the research. 12 school principals represented four primary schools, four secondary schools, and four state gymnasiums, as well as geographically they were from the schools in the capital, cities, small towns, and countryside.

The content analysis was performed based on the concept of the STM in educational institution defined by Müller, Lude & Hancock (2020).

- Stage 0: Sustainability is not (yet) an issue – only individual teachers deal with SDGs topics in their lessons, no evidence on the institutional and management level;
- Stage I: Projects – SDGs topics are tackled in the lessons from time to time and there are initiatives of interdisciplinary cooperation projects (the creation of a school garden, recycling initiatives and others); education management is aware of the sustainable development activities in the educational institution;
- Stage II: System – the teaching staff regularly implements SDGs topics in the lessons and is involved in the development of teaching concepts and projects, such as the construction of a solar plant, the redesign of the school grounds, or cooperation with external partners; education management supports the sustainable development activities in the educational institution;
- Stage III: Profile – SDGs are integrated comprehensively into teaching and school life and sustainable development has been made a key issue and developed a specific, expressly communicated sustainability school profile that distinguishes the school from other schools, for instance, the certification according to a formal quality label such as, “UNESCO Project School” or the European “Eco-Management and Audit Scheme” (EMAS) or Eco-School. Education management initiates the sustainable development activities in the educational institution.

Results and Discussion

The content analysis of the STM initiatives reflected on the homepages of educational institutions and interviews with school administration: how much sustainable development constituted management initiatives integrated into educational institutions in Latvia. 59 sources of the education management hierarchy structure were examined, including 47 structures from the homepages of Latvian educational institutions and 12 from interviews with school administration.

According to Figure 1, the data of the analysis of educational institutions for the implementation of sustainable development initiatives show that 45 percent (28 educational institutions out of 59) have reached *Stage 0: Sustainability is not (yet) an issue*, because, there are little or no significant activities in the educational institution with regard to sustainable development initiatives. 35 percent (21 out of 59 educational institutions) have reached *Stage 1: Project* and the educational institutions have started a process to reflect on and consider sustainable development. Only 10% (6 educational institutions) have reached *Stage 2: System* and the educational institutions are managed in accordance with the

criteria of sustainable development. Also, only 10% (6 educational institutions) have reached *Stage 3: Profile* and have accredited Eco-School programme.

According to the data, the institutions minimally implement the sustainable development initiatives in the education management process of the educational institution that does not meet the vision of the Project School2030.

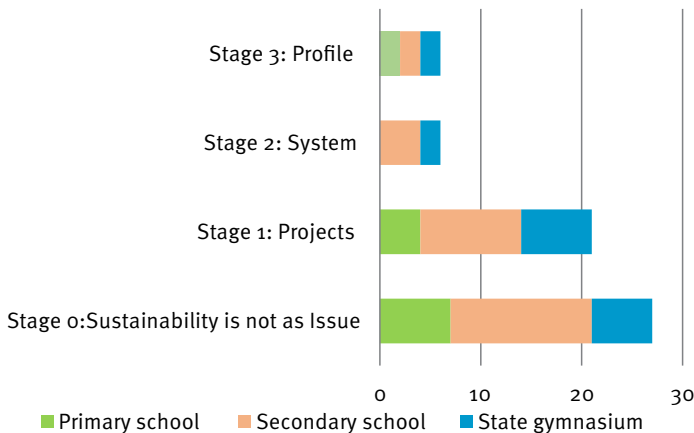


Figure 1. The data of the analysis of educational institutions for the implementation of sustainable development initiatives

According to the data on the implemented initiatives of sustainable development in education management of institutions (Figure 2) – 78 percent (46 out of 59 educational institutions) implement recycling and waste sorting initiative, also, 62 percent (37 out of 59 educational institutions) placed container for disposing of batteries. 44 percent (26 out of 59 educational institutions) implement Smart Management School Programme, they are focused on digital strategy development. Smart Management School Programme benefits with four key elements as interactive classes, cooperative activities, a motivating environment and digital content. Also, Smart Management School Programme helps to increase the digital competence of teachers of professional subjects in online training and create a digital platform in the MOODLE environment. 38 percent (23 out of 59 educational institutions) are involved in Erasmus Green Deal projects, one of the European Commission's six priorities for 2019–2024. The European Green Deal project aims to improve the well-being and health of citizens and future generations by providing eight actions: climate, environment and oceans, energy, transport, finance and regional development, research and innovation, agriculture and industry.

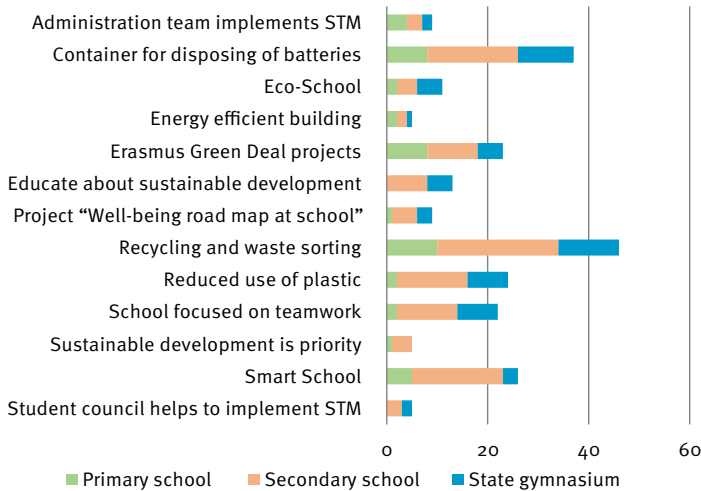


Figure 2. The implementation of sustainable development initiatives in education management of institution

Only 18 percent (11 out of 59 educational institutions) have got the accreditation of Eco-School programme and received the Green Flag as a symbol that sustainable development is one of priorities of the educational institution. Also, only 8 percent (5 out of 59 educational institutions) have energy efficient buildings, because educational institutions have been renovated in last 10 years. One of the participants of the study has received "Most Energy Efficient Building in Latvia 2020" award, given by the Ministry of Economics (MoE) in cooperation with the "Būvinženieris [Civil Engineer]" magazine and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (MoEPRD).

18 percent (9 out of 59 educational institutions) admit that administration team implements STM, as well, only 8 percent (5 out of 59 educational institutions) of educational institutions implement the student-centred approach and student council helps to implement sustainable development initiatives.

According to the data, the institutions minimally implement the sustainable development initiatives in the education management, majority of initiatives are related to environmental pillar. The limitation of the research could be the insufficient information on the homepage of the educational institution. It did not always provide an accurate picture of what was happening (project, initiatives, development strategy) regarding the implementation of the sustainable development initiatives in an educational institution.

Analysing the homepages, the indicators that meet the STM criteria, according to the Environmental Management and Audit Scheme (European Commission, 2021),

Global Eco-Schools Programme (n.d.) and Sustainable Development Initiatives (see Table 1, created by authors) were collected. The collected data reflect what initiatives are being implemented, which allows authors to understand whether there is a common understanding of STM in educational institutions in Latvia. According to the findings, there are no uniform sustainable development criteria for educational institutions of Latvia.

Twelve interviews with educational institution principals were conducted to analyse the policy of school regarding the implementation of the sustainable development initiatives in educational institutions. The aim of the interview was to understand the notion of the sustainable team management in educational institutions, as well as how the school administration promoted the teamwork and corporate pillar. Seven questions were asked to the representatives of educational institutions. First, they were asked to introduce themselves and their educational institution and justify why these things were told. School representatives were invited to describe what a prospective teacher should know about the educational institution, what a child's parent should know about the educational institution, and what a student should know about the educational institution. Also, it was requested to describe whether their educational institution worked as a team and what was the evidence of this, as well as the last question was asked to name the prerequisites for the team to continue to work successfully.

According to the data collected, the majority of principals admitted that sustainable development was important for “stable economic growth, conservation of natural resources, social progress and equality and environmental protection”.

According to the findings of the interviews, the majority of educational institution principals agreed that for last years, especially during COVID-19, the priority of the school was digitalisation and digital transformation. Regarding Project School2030, majority of principals noted that teachers “should implement sustainable development and SDGs initiatives in the context of the lesson”, also, “educate students about challenges of globalisation”, but, at this stage of the implementation of education reform, “teachers faced many situations when sustainable development was not a priority”.

Also, principals admitted that regarding the implementation of sustainable development and SDGs initiatives, it was important “to cooperate with student council and to involve parents' council”. Only eight of the twelve educational institutions had active student councils, and five (three secondary schools and two gymnasiums) had two student councils: primary school student council (from Forms 7 to 9) and secondary school student council (from Forms 10 to 12).

According to the findings of the interviews, students were mostly involved in Erasmus Green Deal project planning and implementation, also, focused on “teamwork culture and organise team-building events regarding sustainable development initiatives for teachers and students, excluding regular school events

such as class events, excursions, and visits to cultural events”. Furthermore, principals emphasised that students lacked knowledge in sustainable development initiatives, at least, if these initiatives were not taking place at their home, so it could be very useful to create guidelines to guide students for a better understanding of their contribution and involvement in STM processes.

In order to find out what fostered STM in educational institution, the principals were asked, “What is the evidence that your school is performing as a sustainable team?” 25% (three out of 12 educational institutions) named their teams as the collective, it should be noted that the principals represented small primary and secondary schools, where the teaching staff did not exceed 20 teachers. 33% (4 educational institutions) named their teams as sustainable teams, emphasized that they promoted sustainable development initiatives, as well, they had received the accreditation of Eco-School programme or had been involved in Erasmus Green Deal projects. They focused on teamwork and cooperation among administration team members, teachers and student council, also, had the Eco-Council in educational institution. The Eco-Council is primarily student-led, it aims to promote sustainable development initiatives, also, creates Green Action Plan and informs about Eco actions in educational institution. The Eco-Council in educational institution ensures that everyone in the institutional community is represented in the decision-making process, providing a link between students, teachers and the whole institutional community, and it takes the lead in delivering the Green Action Plan.

42% (five out of 12 educational institutions) named their teams as administration teams, also, noted that the priority of the school was to implement digital transformation, so, they did not pay enough attention to sustainable development and teamwork cooperation, which was influenced by the frequent change of teachers, COVID-19 pandemic and the workload of teachers, in connection with what had been happening in the world in the last two years.

According to the findings of the interviews, principals mentioned the elements of STM related to team performance, such as

organisational climate and environment, seminars or webinars about sustainable development and SDGs for teachers and students, competences of principals and teachers, organisational culture, team culture, team performance, cooperation with students and parents, initiatives comes from students or teachers, change management and adoption to new challenges, as well, to promote sustainability in society and taking the initiative and participating in youth and NGO conferences and forums regarding Sustainability.

According to the literature review, no one mentioned democratic decision-making and the motivation of the participants in the long term, but kept focus on creating partnerships with internal and external resources.

Less than half of the interviewed principals, 42 percent (five out of 12 educational institutions), continued to focus on “student well-being and the joy of learning at school”, indicating, “principals and administration teams do not understand how to develop and maintain STM”. Furthermore, the educational institution lacked “an appropriate environment for the long-term development of their team and organisation”.

The principal of gymnasium said:

It is important for us to create an environment and educate students, so, they will have sustainable mindset. We observe the problems of globalization, ignorance of sustainable values, so it is necessary to start talking about it in school and society. We can exist without digital technologies, but we cannot survive without clean air, before we transform a child into a “digital citizen”, we must teach them to respect nature, resources, human capital, only then technology and material values.

It is critical to emphasise this when answering the question, “Why is it difficult to implement sustainable development initiatives in your educational institution?”. Majority of principals noted that sustainability should be placed as priority on national level in everyday practises. Also, schools need to receive financial support for STM implementation, because, at this moment, principals and their teams are attracting Erasmus or other project funds.

The principal of a small countryside school described the problem in the implementation of “A whole-school approach to sustainability” suggested by European Commission. Principal said that:

Food is one of the key areas where schools can effectively transform their actions and implement sustainable solutions across the board. For example, if students grow their own food in school gardens, schools can build awareness by labelling the food in the menu of cafeteria and informing students about the environmental impact of the choices they make. Leftover food, with the help of local charities, can be distributed to those who need it most. Also, teachers can emphasize food-related sustainability issues through the curriculum, and students can discuss the issue at home.

However, principal and his team faced financial issues and this project was stuck, they were trying to cooperate with municipality and local farmers for the implementation of sustainable development initiative.

Answering the last question of the interview “What are the requirements for the successful implementation of STM?”, majority of principals admitted that they should talk more about sustainable development initiatives, as well, teachers should be educated about this topic. Principals also noted that they

should motivate teachers to organise events according to sustainable development initiatives. As well, few principals gave promise to explore communities and programmes, such as Eco-School, to be involved in. Principal of gymnasium admitted that: “We should educate our society to think for sustainability at workplace, at home and at school”.

Conclusions

The article deals with a systematic literature review, defining such terms as sustainable team and team performance as key elements for embedding STM in organization. The study expounds on the importance of sustainable development initiatives that proactively seek to contribute to sustainability equilibria of today, as well as their inter-relations within the time dimension (i.e., the short, long-term), while addressing the institutional system such as management and strategy, assessment and communication. The importance of team performance and organizational culture in educational institution is outlined as well.

The development of a STM in an educational institution depends on combining the five pillars (Environmental, Economic, Social, Political and Corporate) of sustainable development in education such as a complex process that should result in a completely new vision of educational institutions. It raises the necessity for a management structure to encourage and support the sustainability initiatives within the organisation.

Based on a preliminary data of a larger scale and long-term grounded theory research, it can be concluded that the institutions yet minimally implement the sustainable development initiatives in the education management process of the educational institution. That does not meet the vision of the Project School2030. Also, the most used initiatives are related to environment pillar.

The analysis of the data show that 45 percent (28 out of 59 educational institutions) have reached *Stage 0: Sustainability is not (yet) an issue*, 35 percent (21 out of 59 educational institutions) have reached *Stage 1: Project* and the educational institution has started a process to reflect on and consider sustainable development. Only 10% (6 out of 59 educational institutions) have reached *Stage 2: System* and the educational institution is managed in accordance with the criteria of sustainable development. Also, only 10% (6 out of 59 educational institutions) have reached *Stage 3: Profile* and have got the accreditation of Eco-School programme.

It can be concluded that according to the analysed data of the interviews, the majority of principals admitted that sustainable development was important for “stable economic growth, conservation of natural resources, social progress and equality and environmental protection”.

Although, less than half of the interviewed principals, 42 percent (five educational institutions), continued to focus on “student well-being and the joy of

learning at school”, indicating, “principals and administration teams do not understand how to develop and maintain STM”.

The following limitations of the study can be indicated, first of all, the information on the homepage of the educational institution does not always provide an accurate picture of what is happening (project, initiatives, development strategy) in the educational institution. Also, from such a small sample, general statements cannot be made, so the authors recommend to explore the notion of organizational performance for sustainable development education. It should be admitted that is necessary to describe the concept of a STM in an educational institution at the national level, as well as the role of students in it must be defined. In addition, there is no shared understanding of sustainability among the members of the education management team.

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