

# TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP: IS IT EASY TO BE VISIONARY AND ORIENTED TO EMPOWERING ORGANIZATION COMMUNITY AND DISTRIBUTING LEADERSHIP? A CASE STUDY OF LITHUANIAN GENERAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS

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## Abstract

The article presents a research based on transformational leadership theory. The aim of the research is to establish whether, according to the teachers' opinion, school principals are visionary in their daily activities, able to empower the school community to act and distribute their leadership. The research method used is a written survey. 379 teachers from 17 Lithuanian general education schools were involved. The research results reveal that teachers believe that the principals are visionaries, however, only some of them are able to empower the school community to act and even less of them are able to distribute their leadership to others. Besides, the research reveals that although transformational leadership is characteristic of school principals, some of its aspects are expressed in daily activities of school principals differently. School principal's transformational leadership's some aspects depend on the period the school principal has been the head of school, i.e. school principals who have worked in this position from 5 to 10 years tend to be more optimistic when speaking about the future of the school, empower different school teams to act and believe in the talents and unlimited possibilities of each member.

**Key words:** transformational leadership, school principal, general education, Lithuania.

**Classification JEL:** M12 – Personnel Management.

## 1. Introduction

The leadership phenomenon in an educational organization has been examined for more than a decade. As Leithwood and Sun (2012, p. 388), claims, researches are usually 'theory free' in some cases and 'theory driven' in others. This paper presents a research based on the transformational leadership theory. This theory was chosen in view of the context of the education system of Lithuania and estimation of Bass and Riggio (2006, p. 75) that it is the transformational leadership in particular that is most suitable to solve problems related to change and transformation.

The education system of Lithuania has undergone considerable changes since the restoration of Independence in 1991. In 1991–2002 most attention was paid to the development of the original education content (general programmes of general education schools in Lithuania were approved) and reform of the education system with the focus on modernization of the education system and achievement of quality education, the development of social and pedagogic conditions for learning, and harmonization of the education system. In 2003, upon approval of provisions of the National Education Strategy 2003–2012 by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, improvement of management at different levels of the education system became one of the priorities. Improvement of management at school level and enhancement of school autonomy has been the object of modernization of the education system of Lithuania. Upon approval of the National Education Strategy 2013–2022 by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, strengthening of leadership of teachers and school principals is again among the priority activities, with the aim to attract the most gifted people, able to share their experience with others, to the education system. Thus the choice to investigate leadership of principals of Lithuanian general education schools is based on the assumption that in the context of current political, economic and social change school principals are most likely to function as transformational leaders.

The paper starts with the *analysis of the concept of transformational leadership* that reveals the specific way transformational leadership manifests itself in educational organizations. Three activities which can reflect the school principal's transformational leadership were selected for analysis and research: setting the direction of school activity, educational empowering of the school community and distributing leadership. Next, we present research methodology and results, and on the basis of teachers' opinion we analyse whether school principals manage to be more visionary in their daily activity, empower the school community to act, and distribute leadership to others. The hypothesis is that transformational leadership in schools depends on principal's personality but does not depend on the period the principal has been the head of the school. Conclusions seek not only to generalize the results, but also to formulate insights into future research.

## **2. School principal's transformational leadership: theoretical framework**

Transformational leadership, which is related with the word *to transform*, is defined as leadership which changes or transforms others (*Harris, 1999, p. 10*). Transformational leadership theory was first substantiated by J. M. Burns in his work 'Leadership'. Burns (*1978, p. 19*) distinguished two types of leadership: transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Burns (*1978, p. 19*) defined a transactional leader as a leader who leads through social exchange – he exchanges one thing for another, i.e. offers financial reward for good results and punishes financially if results are not achieved. Meanwhile a transformational leader inspires followers to seek significant results and develop their leadership skills (*Burns, 1978, p. 20*).

Transformational leadership research is usually based on transformational leadership models created by three schools of thought (B. M. Bass, J. M. Kouzes and B. Z. Posner, W. Bennis and B. Nanus). In 1985 Bass (*2008, p. 619*) grouped attitudes and behaviour of a transformational leader into three groups: 1) charisma, 2) intellectual stimulation and 3) individualized consideration. Bass (*2008, p. 645*) claims that in 1985 the prevailing assumption stated that transformational leadership is not identical to charismatic leadership, however, it is not possible to be a transformational leader without charisma. Bass (*2008, p. 634*) notes that transformational leaders help their followers change the way of thinking, encourage them to think and act independently and, when necessary, overcome the difficulties encountered. Besides, transformational leaders pay a lot of individualized consideration to the development of each of the followers, create conditions that encourage them to learn, expand their knowledge and gain new competence. Transformational leadership model substantiated by B. M. Bass was improved several times. First, Bass' transformational leadership model was improved in 1990, when charisma was referred as idealized influence. As Bass (*2008, p. 646*) claims, this decision was determined by the conception of charisma which prevailed in the society and which was associated with something bright, conspicuous, exiting or prominent. However, as Sosik and Jung (*2010, p. 15*) claim, according to Bass' transformational leadership model, behaviour of a transformational leader, who exhibits idealized influence, was understood as talking about the core values and expectations, as well as the importance of mutual trust, showing that it is important to share a common goal with the emphasis on moral or ethical outcomes of the decisions made and the importance of teamwork. Thus in 1990 Bass' transformational leadership model was composed of three components: 1) idealized influence, 2) intellectual stimulation and 3) individualized consideration. In subsequent research of B. M. Bass and his colleagues, these three components of transformational leadership model were complemented by a fourth one, i.e. inspirational motivation, which refers to transformational leaders who share high aspirations with their followers, who inspire them to engage in the organization and become a part of it (*Sosik & Jung, 2010, p. 16*).

Sosik and Jung (2010, p. 81) note that the component of idealized influence in Bass' transformational leadership model embraces both transformational leader behaviour and transformational leader's personal features and traits, whereas the other components, i.e. inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, analyse and reveal behaviours and relationship of a transformational leader with the followers. Thus, they divided the component of idealized influence in the transformational leadership model into two components: leader's attributes and leader's behaviours. Sosik and Jung (2010) claims that in order to be able to inspire the followers for a common activity, first of all, leaders need to base their activity on strong personal values and positive attitudes and view the group's interests as more important than personal ones. Transformational leaders consider organizational values, they openly speak about and discuss them with other members of the organization. Fostering of organizational values helps the transformational leader to gain trust of other members of the organization. Sosik and Jung (2010, p. 93) refer this to idealized influence attributes as a component of transformational leadership. When a leader communicates and cooperates with followers, his or her personal transformational leader's qualities come into foreground. Sosik and Jung (2010, p. 83) define them as following: transformational leaders are concerned with the diversity of environments, they gain respect of others, trust others and empower them to act, support and encourage when there is a need to solve difficulties. This, as the authors believe, makes up a component of transformational leader idealized influence behaviour. By generalizing the elaboration of Bass' transformational leadership model conducted by Sosik and Jung we can claim that Bass' transformational leadership model currently consists of five components: 1) leader's attributes, 2) leader's behaviours, 3) inspirational motivation, 4) intellectual stimulation, 5) individual consideration. This model helps reveal personal traits of transformational leaders and their behaviours in the organization.

In 1985 W. Bennis and B. Nanus, on the bases of concepts of transformational and transactional leadership proposed by Burns in 1978, aiming to reveal the essence of transformational leadership, which they first referred to as transformative leadership, developed four strategies of a transformational leader: 1) attention through vision, 2) meaning through communication, 3) trust through positioning and 4) the deployment of self through positive self-regard (Bennis & Nanus, 2007, p. 25). On the basis of this transformational leadership model transformational leaders must have a clear vision of the future of the organization (Northouse, 2009, p. 161). Vision should be simple, comprehensible, useful and energy-boosting, it should have impact on the followers and encourage them to support the organization. Bennis and Nanus (2007, p. 31) also emphasize communication of a transformational leader with the organization employees. He states that it is only through communication that any group, large or small, can seek to achieve great organizational goals. Easy to understand and clear communication of the goal is the passkey at all organizational levels. Transformational leaders gain trust of employees in the organizations by stating their position and following it (Northouse, 2009, p. 161). In this way they build trust by clearly articulating a direction and being consistent in implementing it. Bennis and Nanus (2007, p. 41) note that when transformational leaders gain trust of organization members, it provides them with the sense of self-respect that is similar to healthy identity. Positive self-regard demonstrated by transformational leaders has a reciprocal impact on organization employees, i.e. it creates a sense of confidence and high expectations.

In 1987, on the basis of data obtained in the research through a survey administered to 1300 middle and senior managers from private and public sectors J. M. Kouzes and B. Z. Posner developed their transformational leadership model that consists of five practices of transformational leadership: 1) modelling the way, 2) inspiring a shared vision, 3) challenging the process, 4) enabling others to act, and 5) encouraging the heart. Kouzes and Posner (2003,

*p. 13*) claim that ‘modelling the way’ is earning the right to lead and gaining the respect of the followers through direct involvement and action. They believe that people follow a personality first, and only then they follow an idea. Transformational leaders inspire followers to seek a common vision. They gaze across the horizon of time and imagine the attractive opportunities that are in store when they and their followers arrive at a distant destination. However, as Kouzes and Posner (2003, *p. 14*) note, visions that a leader sees is not sufficient to create an organized movement or a significant change in a company. People will follow the leader only when they accept a vision as their own. Thus transformational leaders have to get to know their followers and speak the same language in order to attract people to believe the vision. In order to attain great goals, transformational leaders seek and face challenges. They also create conditions for others to act, foster development of mutual cooperation and trust. When a transformational leader makes people feel strong, they work to the best of their abilities and achieve more than they actually expected to be able to achieve. Attainment of the vision is a long-lasting and effort-demanding process. People get tired, become disgruntled and frustrated. People are often tempted to give up. Thus transformational leaders sincerely encourage them to keep going (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, *p. 17*). Sincere concern elates and leads people forward.

These transformational leadership models presented in the scientific works by B. M. Bass, J. M. Kouzes and B. Z. Posner, W. Bennis and B. Nanus are widely applied in business, industry, military and other organizations. K. Leithwood and his colleagues modified and substantiated transformational leadership model that is more appropriate for the analysis of transformational leadership in educational organizations (Leithwood & Sun, 2012, *p. 388*). Transformational leadership was measured by three leadership practices: 1) setting direction (developing a widely shared goals for the school and holding high performance expectations); 2) developing people (providing individual support, providing intellectual stimulation and modelling a high level of professional practice); 3) redesigning the organization (strengthening school culture, building collaborative structures and providing a community focus), (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006, *p. 212*; Leithwood & Sun, 2012, *p. 399*).

Researches on transformational leadership at schools administered by different scholars reveal that the school principal’s transformational leadership has a positive effect on teachers’ motivation, creativity and job satisfaction (Geijsel, Sleegers & van den Berg, 1999, *p. 324*; Griffith, 2004, *p. 350*; Walumbwa, Orwa, Wang & Lawler, 2005, *p. 249*; Moss, 2009, *p. 251*), school culture and microclimate (Smith, Montagno & Kuzmenko, 2004, *p. 87*), and students’ performance (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000, *p. 124*; Marks & Printy, 2003, *p. 376*; Griffith, 2004, *p. 345*).

Bush (2009, *p. 77*), who analysed the results of research conducted by K. Leithwood and his colleagues, notes that a transformational school leader takes care of building the school vision and establishing school goals, involves everyone in the decision-making process, cherishes school values, integrates the school community for joint activities, supports it, disseminates best practice and creates positive school culture. The author believes that transformational leadership at school can be manifested only when the principal and other school staff share the same values and attain common goals.

Barnett, McCormick (2003, *p. 56*), Harris (2005, *p. 79*) claim that a school principal acting as a transformational leader, builds the school vision, consults others on school performance goals, fosters and nurtures the values that are consistent with the school mission, listens to all expectations, provides individualized support to the school community, fosters good relations between all members of the school community. However, Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004, *p. 8*) emphasize that vision formulation is not the only activity of a school principal. Other members of the school community feel more devoted and committed to school when they are involved in the process of building and attaining the

vision. The main objective of school principal's transformational leadership is to help the school staff to align their attitudes toward the school and decide on the vision and goals of school activity (*Leithwood & Jantzi, 2009, p. 47*). Creating the conditions for others to draw out their talent and develop can be delegated by school principals to their deputies or other low-level managers however the school principal is responsible for creating the microclimate at school that supports and encourages sincere help among teachers, peer assessment and recognition. Thus school principals acting as transformational leaders on a daily basis reveal the following: 1) their ability to pool the school community to build and attain school vision in order for the created vision to be acceptable and common (viewed as 'their own') to all members of the school community, and 2) their faith in school vision.

Smith, Montagno and Kuzmenko (*2004, p. 87*) claim that it is not sufficient for transformational leaders to have vision of the organisation, they have to know how to turn the vision into reality. Jucevičienė, Gudaitytė, Karenauskaitė, Lipinskienė, Stanikūnienė and Tautkevičienė (*2010, p. 26*) claim that a school principal, who is trying to attain the school vision, needs to be given organizational powers, i.e. possibilities to influence people, communities, organizations, events and processes by inducing change. Power gives more possibilities to act, encourages participation in decision-making, develops the ability to accept differences between each other, and enhances self-confidence and constructive potency of other people. Empowerment enables the expression of school principal's transformational leadership.

Harris (*2005, p. 79*) claims that a school principal acting as a transformational leader creates the school culture in which motivation is encouraged by not material reward, decisions are made and discussed and the emerging problems are solved together. According to Jucevičienė, Gudaitytė, Karenauskaitė, Lipinskienė, Stanikūnienė and Tautkevičienė (*2010, p. 29*), such features of the activity of a school principal acting as a transformational leader can be considered as educational empowerment, a process which is carried out by the empowered (inside and outside the school), who seek to share their power and provide school community members with possibility to create and control their activities take part in the decision-making process related to the school and its community activities, and develop their educational and training knowledge and competences. Empowerment operates through a two-way dialogue, which enhances the self-value of the participants and confidence in their power, and induces the development of competences they already have. The sense of empowerment helps a person to tolerate or even speed up changes.

Currie, Boyett and Suhomlinova (*2005, p. 269*) claim that a school principal acting as a transformational leader is characterised by democratic governance, strives to involve everyone in the decision-making, creates possibilities to plan and implement radical change at times. Cunningham and Cordeiro (*2009, p. 231*) claim that a school principal acting as a transformational leader creates conditions and motivates teachers to consult and discuss each other about the continuous improvement of student learning, choosing teaching and learning methods, allows teachers to take the responsibility for introduction of teaching and learning innovations. Such leaders created conditions for experiment, taking the risk and having open discussion, and encourage everyone to take action (*Bush & Middlewood, 2005, p. 10; Harris, 2005, p. 80; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2009, p. 46*). They encourage teachers to apply their experience, knowledge and abilities when implementing the planned activities and striving to attain the envisaged results (*Barnett & McCormick, 2003, p. 70*). Bush and Middlewood (*2005, p. 10*) claim that a school principal acting as a transformational leader creates the kind of atmosphere at school that makes any person who enters the school feel appreciated as a personality. Thus, school principals acting as transformational leaders in their daily activity also reveal their: 1) ability to encourage the school community through personal example to focus on the activity and strive for school success; 2) effort to encourage the

school community to plan together and participate in decision-making; and 3) effort to create conditions for the school community to learn from each other through team-work.

Jucevičienė, Gudaitytė, Karenauskaitė, Lipinskienė, Stanikūnienė and Tautkevičienė (2010, p. 29) notes that educational empowerment has to be distributed at school in such a way that the whole school community would be empowered in the educational sense. Thus, as Harris (2010, p. 33) claims, a school principal acting as a transformational leader is characterised by distributed leadership when a school principal pays significant attention to the professional formation of the school community and the development of new leaders. The best schools invest in the development of leaders. She claims that schools, where leadership is widely distributed, are distinguished by the culture that is characterised by professional trust and positive employee relations. In this way, decisions at school are made by the participation of teachers, other specialists, pupils, parents and the local community. One of the main signs of a transformational leader distributing his leadership is that school leaders, who are willing to learn from each other, are given the necessary space (Harris, 2010, p. 44).

A school principal acting as a transformational leader also takes care of professional development of teachers, as he understands, that change cannot be implemented at school if teachers lack knowledge or abilities (Geijsel, Slegers, Leithwood & Jantzi, 2003, p. 235). This also prevents frequent teacher turnover, strengthens teachers' satisfaction with the work they perform (Griffith, 2004, p. 350). Usually, schools that are managed by transformational leaders are characterised by the tradition of developing leaders and aspiration to improve the whole school community together (Harris, 2001, p. 11). Thus a school principal acting as transformational leader develops himself and 1) creates conditions for the school community to develop, and 2) develops new leaders at school through distribution of his leadership.

### 3. Methodology of research

The general set of the research presented in the article comprises all Lithuanian general education schools.

#### 3.1. Research sample and instruments

During the school year of 2014–2015, when the research was carried out, there were 1198 general education schools in the country. In order to design the research, schools were selected by stratified sampling, i.e. each layer of a school type (primary schools, basic schools, progymnasiums, secondary schools, gymnasiums) is represented in the sample. The method of simple random sampling was applied to select schools from each layer. Selection of schools was based on the official data of the register of education and science institutions on general education schools, that is accessible to the public in the system AIKOS (Aikos, online). A list of general education schools in the alphabetical order, that is available in this system, was formed and used for sampling. The list of schools of each layer was numbered and schools were sampled by means of a selection step whereby the number of general education schools of a particular type in the general set was divided by the number of schools in the sample. The first selection unit in each layer is selected at random. The total number of the selected general education schools is 17.

The data were collected in February–March, 2015. Each school was sent a number of questionnaires equal to the number of teachers. The total amount of questionnaires sent to schools is 480. Questionnaires were sent to schools by post in order to reach all selected schools in short time and keep the research costs low. The total amount of questionnaires filled in by the 17 schools is 379. The return of the questionnaires is 79 per cent. All questionnaires that were filled in were used in the statistical data analysis.

26.1% of the teachers, who were surveyed, work at small schools, with up to 150 pupils, 21.6% work at schools with up to 150–300 pupils, 29.0% work at schools with up to 500–

1000 pupils, whereas 23.2% work at large schools with more than 1000 pupils. The majority of the teachers who took part in the survey (64.0%) work at basic schools, 14.6% work at progymnasiums, 17.5% work at gymnasiums and 4.0% work at primary schools. The majority of the teachers (87.0%) have extensive teaching experience: 27.2% of teachers have worked at school for 11 to 20 years, 36.7% have worked at school for 21 to 30 years, and almost one quarter of teachers (23.1%) has worked at school for more than 31 years. Only 3.5% of the teachers, who were surveyed, have worked at school for less than 5 years, whereas 9.5% of the teachers have worked at school for 6 to 10 years. 16.8% of the teachers, who were surveyed, work at schools which are headed by the same principal for less than 5 years, 10.9% work at schools which are headed by the same principal for 5 to 10 years, 46.7% work at schools, which are headed by the same principal for 11 to 20 years, and 25.6% work at schools, which are headed by the same principal for more than 20 years.

**The research instrument** used is a written survey, which is based on a questionnaire for teachers designed by the authors. The questionnaire consists of several main parts: instructions, a demographic block of questions and several diagnostic blocks. The instructions briefly introduce the aim of the research, define the significance of the research, and emphasise the anonymity of the survey. The demographic block consists of 12 questions. Respondents are asked to indicate their gender, the length of their teaching experience and work at the school that is analysed, the subject taught, qualification category, education and the institution where they gained their degree, their age, the type of school they currently work at, its geographic location and size, grades they teach. The diagnostic blocks consist of closed-type questions, which are evaluated by a Likert scale. The Likert scale was used to evaluate the school principal's activity by expressing opinion on each statement presented in a 5-point scale (1 = never, 2 = very rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = very often, 5 = always or normally).

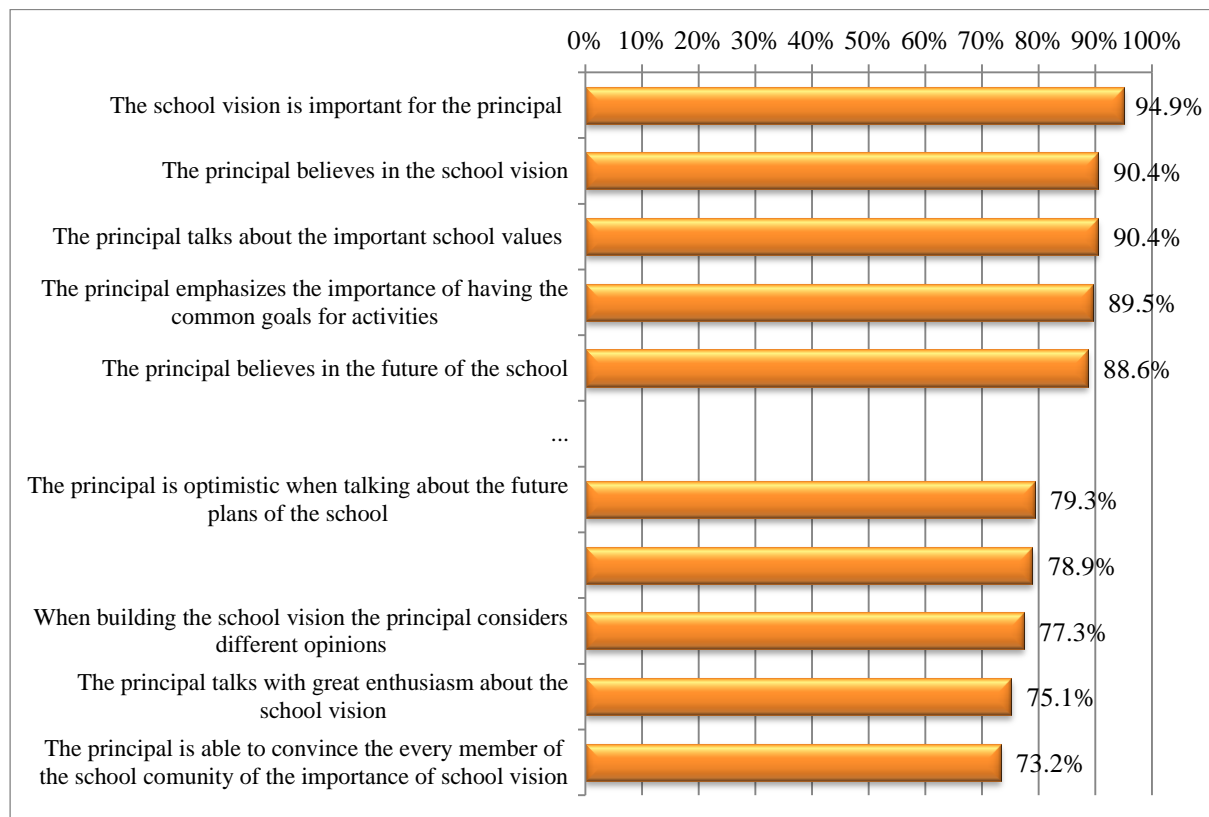
**Data Analysis.** The steps of data analysis are as follows: 1) *percentage distribution, average assessment score, and standard deviation*, were calculated for individual statements, which reveal general trends in the school principal's transformational leadership; 2) in order to identify differences of opinion on the school principal's transformational leadership the analysis of differences in average scores of teacher opinions was carried out (One-Way ANOVA); 3) in order to stratify the teachers' opinion *exploratory factor analysis* was carried out.

### 3.2. Research results

Transformational leadership was analysed by evaluating teachers' opinions about the school principal's activity in three areas: setting the direction of school activity, empowering the school community to act and distributing leadership. The school principal's transformational leadership in setting the direction of school activity was evaluated by 18 statements. The analysis of the teachers' responses (see Figure 1) reveals that almost all teachers claim that the school principal cares about the school vision (94.9% of teachers support this statement), the school principal believes in the school vision (90.4% of teachers support this statement) and talks about school values that are important to him/her (90.4% of teachers support this statement). These statements were given the highest ratings among 18 statements. Besides, the school principal emphasizes the importance of having common goals for activities (89.5% of teachers support this statement) and believes in the future of the school (88.6% of teachers support this statement). Less of teachers claim that the principal takes into consideration different opinions when building the school vision (77.3% of teachers support this statement), talks about the school vision with enthusiasm (75.1% of teachers support this statement) and is able to convince every member of the school community about

the importance of the school vision (73.2% of teachers support this statement). These statements were given the lowest ratings among 18 statements.

The analysis of principals' ability to pool the school community together to build the school vision at different schools shows that average assessment scores given by teachers for particular statements that assess the transformational leadership practice 'Setting the direction of the school activity' are scattered, with the standard deviation ranging from 0.508 to 0.908. The comparison of the period the principal has been the head of school (*One-Way ANOVA*) shows that (see Table 1) statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.005$ ) in the assessment of statements reflects transformational leadership of school principals who have worked for 5 to 10 years and those who have worked for 11 to 20 years. Teachers believe that school principals who have worked for 5 to 10 years are more visionary: they care about the school vision more, have stronger belief in it and emphasize the importance of having common goals for activities.



*Figure 1: Highest and lowest ratings of the statements evaluating transformational leadership practice 'Setting the direction of the school activity' in the viewpoint of teachers (approval, percent), (own study)*

These statements, which are used to assess principal's transformational leadership, were supported by more than 80% of the teachers who work at schools, which are headed by the same principal for 5 to 10 years, and only 52% of the teachers who work at schools, which are headed by the same principal for 11 to 20 years. Besides the teachers believe that principals, who have worked at school for 5 to 10 years, pay more attention to values and have stronger belief in the future of the school. These statements were supported by 73% of the teachers who work at schools which are headed by the same principal for 5 to 10 years and only by 37% of the teachers who work at schools, which are headed by the same principal for 11 to 20 years. Moreover, statistically significant differences were established when evaluating



statements ‘*The principal is able to convince every member of the school community of the importance of school vision*’ and ‘*The principal seeks to ensure that every member of the school community understands the school vision*’. These statements, which are used to assess principal’s transformational leadership, were supported by about 60% of the teachers who work at schools, which are headed by the same principal for 5 to 10 years and only by 36% of the teachers who work at schools, which are headed by the same principal for 11 to 20 years.

Empowerment of the school community to act as an area of the principal’s transformational leadership was assessed by 24 statements. The analysis of the teachers’ responses (see Figure 2) reveals that almost all teachers claim that the principal appreciates the effort put into the attainment of the school success (93.0% of teachers support this statement) and encourages everyone to strive for it (92.8% of teachers support this statement), the principal involves the school community into the planning of activity (90.4% of teachers support this statement) and is concerned about the unity of the school community (90.1% of teachers support this statement). These statements were given the highest ratings among 24 statements.

*Table 1: Differences in evaluation of transformational leadership practice ‘Setting the direction of the school activity’ by the period the principal has been the head of school (own study)*

Statements	Sum of squares (between groups)	F	Sig.
The school vision is important for the principal	4.813	4.890	0.002
The principal believes in the school vision	10.352	6.914	0.000
The principal emphasizes the importance of having the common goals for activities	11.276	5.812	0.001
The principal talks about important school values	9.968	6.814	0.000
The principal talks about important human values	12.168	5.812	0.001
The principal believes in the future of the school	11.354	6.616	0.000
The principal is optimistic when talking about the future plans of the school	17.576	8.439	0.000
The principal is able to convince the every member of the school community of the importance of school vision	10.574	4.922	0.002
The principal seeks to ensure that every member of the school community understands the school vision’	9.133	4.874	0.002

A relatively smaller number of teachers claim that the principal strengthens self-confidence of the school community (79.6% of teachers support this statement), empowers different school teams to act (79.3% of teachers support this statement), encourages extensive discussions among members of the school community (78.8% of teachers support this statement) and consults the school community before making important decisions (78.2% of teachers support this statement). These statements were given the lowest ratings among 24 statements.

The analysis of the principal’s ability to empower the school community to act at different schools revealed that the average assessment scores given by teachers of particular statements that assess this transformational leadership practice are scattered, with the standard deviation ranging from 0.656 to 0.844. The comparison of the period the principal has been the head of school (One-Way ANOVA) shows that (see Table 2) statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.005$ ) in the assessment of statements reflects transformational leadership of school principals who have worked for 5 to 10 years and those who have worked for 11 to 20 years. Teachers believe that school principals, who have worked for 5 to 10 years, are more focused on joint work in order to attain school success: they encourage everyone to strive for

the benefit of the school, they care about teamwork at school and participation of each member of the school community in the process of decision-making.

These statements, which are used to assess principal's transformational leadership, were supported by more than 80% of the teachers who work at schools, which are headed by the same principal for 5 to 10 years, and about 40% of the teachers who work at schools, which are headed by the same principal for 11 to 20 years. Besides the teachers believe that principals, who have worked at school for 5 to 10 years, show more appreciation of the effort of others put into the attainment of the school success, encourage teamwork and strengthen self-confidence of the school community. These statements were supported by 73% of the teachers who work at schools, which are headed by the same principal for 5 to 10 years and only by 33% of the teachers who work at schools, which are headed by the same principal for 11 to 20 years.

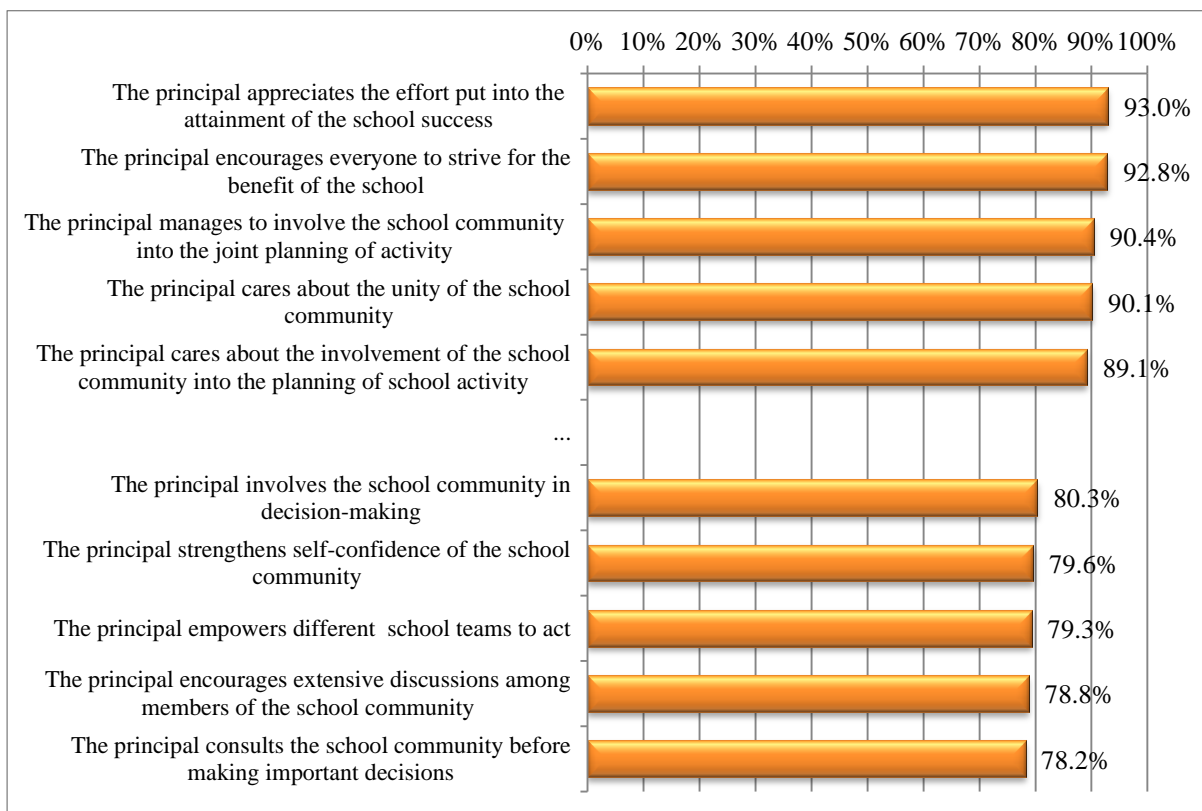


Figure 2: Highest and lowest ratings of the statements evaluating transformational leadership practice 'Educational empowerment of the community to act' in the viewpoint of teachers (approval, percent), (own study)

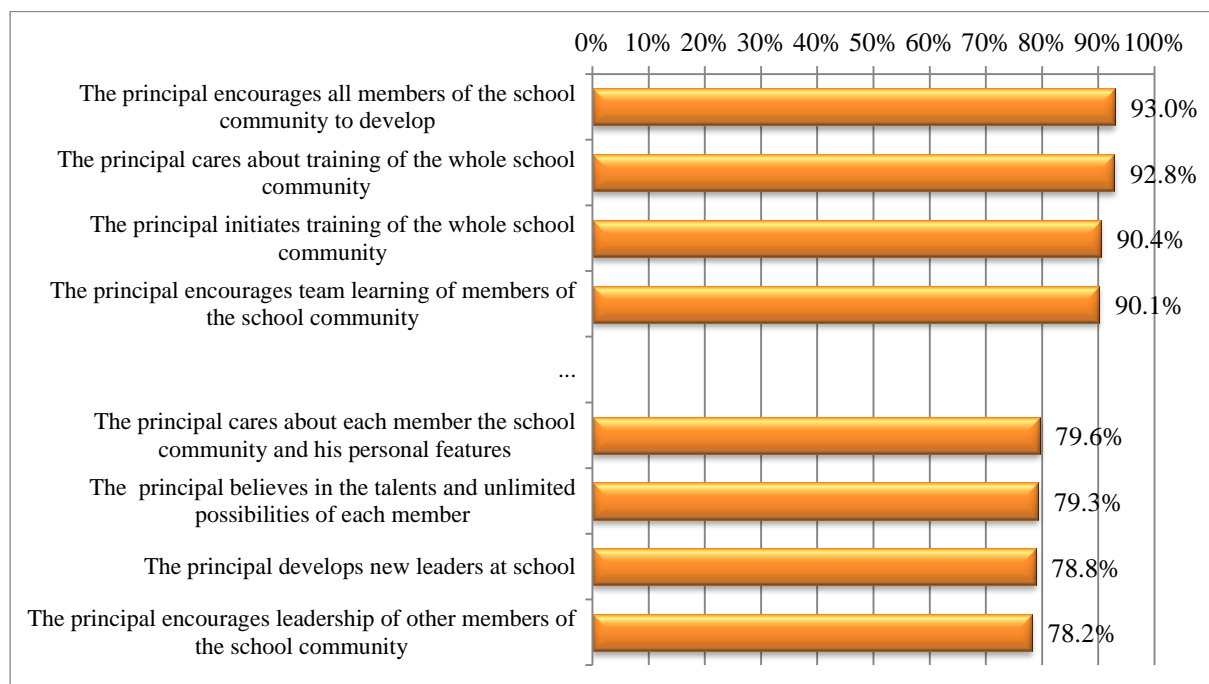
Moreover, statistically significant differences were established when evaluating statements 'The principal involves the school community into the planning of school activity' and 'The principal empowers different school teams to act'. These statements, which are used to assess principal's transformational leadership, were supported by about 55% of the teachers who work at schools, which are headed by the same principal for 5 to 10 years and only by 33% of the teachers who work at schools, which are headed by the same principal for 11 to 20 years.

The analysis of the principal's ability to distribute leadership to other members of the school community was assessed by 11 statements. The analysis of teachers' assessment scores (see Figure 3) reveals that the majority of the teachers note that the principal encourages all

members of the school community to develop (93.0% of teachers support this statement), cares about training of members of the school community (92.8% of teachers support this statement) and initiates it (90.4% of teachers support this statement). These statements were given the highest ratings among 11 statements. A relatively smaller number of teachers claim that the principal believes in the talents and unlimited possibilities of each school community member (79.3% of teachers support this statement), develops new leaders at school (78.8% of teachers support this statement), and encourages leadership of other members of the school community (78.2% of teachers support this statement). These statements were given the lowest ratings among 11 statements.

*Table 2: Differences in evaluation of transformational leadership practice 'Educational empowerment of the community to act' by the period the principal has been the head of school (own study)*

Statements	Sum of squares (between groups)	F	Sig.
The principal cares about participation of each member of the school community in the process of decision-making	9.677	5.433	0.001
The principal cares about teamwork of the school community	10.471	6.217	0.000
The principal encourages everyone to strive for the benefit of the school	6.189	4.503	0.004
The principal encourages teamwork at school	9.346	5.939	0.001
The principal appreciates the effort put into the attainment of the school success	8.906	4.816	0.003
The principal strengthens self-confidence of the school community.	12.664	6.133	0.000
The principal manages to involve the school community into the joint planning of activity	9.321	5.431	0.001
The principal empowers different school teams to act	8.5247	4.735	0.003



*Figure 3: Highest and lowest ratings of the statements evaluating transformational leadership practice 'Leadership distribution' in the viewpoint of teachers (approval, percent), (own study)*

The analysis of the principal's ability to distribute leadership at different schools revealed that the average assessment scores given by teachers of particular statements that assess this transformational leadership practice are scattered, with the standard deviation ranging from 0.698 to 0.986. The comparison of the period the principal has been the head of school (One-Way ANOVA) shows that (see Table 3) statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.005$ ) in the assessment of statements reflects transformational leadership of school principals who have worked for 5 to 10 years and those who have worked for 11 to 20 years. Teachers believe that school principals who have worked for 5 to 10 years encourage individual training of members of the school community. This statement that assesses principal's transformational leadership was supported by more than 68% of the teachers who work at schools, which are headed by the same principal for 5 to 10 years, and 44% of the teachers who work at schools, which are headed by the same principal for 11 to 20 years. Besides the teachers believe, that principals, who have worked at school for 5 to 10 years, have greater belief in the talents and unlimited possibilities of each school community member. This statement was supported by 56% of the teachers who work at schools, which are headed by the same principal for 5 to 10 years, and only 25% of the teachers who work at schools, which are headed by the same principal for 11 to 20 years.

*Table 3: Differences in evaluation of transformational leadership practice 'Leadership distribution' by the period the principal has been the head of school (own study)*

Statements	Sum of squares (between groups)	F	Sig.
The principal encourages individual training of members of the school community	8.933	5.395	0.001
The principal believes in the talents and unlimited possibilities of each member	9.218	4.565	0.004

Results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy ( $KMO = 0.970$ ) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Approx. Chi-Square 14 239.793;  $df = 1\ 378$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) reveal that the variables are suitable for factor analysis. Total Variance Explained (63.79%) and Communalities (none of the communalities is less than 0.2) show that the obtained factors retain sufficient information. Attention should be paid to the meaningful grouping of components within factors. The first factor, which explains 25.16% of variable dispersion (see Table 4), unites statements pertaining to the expression of encouragement, enhancement, care for teachers' professional development, and attention to building the professional school community, in school principals' activities.

This factor defines the transformational leader as someone who develops, creates conditions for development and encourages leadership and creativity. The second factor, which explains 22.11% of variable dispersion, unites statements pertaining to the expression of the principal's activities and attitudes to the involvement of the community into joint activity (planning, active teamwork, decision-making, etc.), formation of the collective spirit, and the aspect of employee involvement and pooling them together for joint activities.

Factor in Table 4 defines the transformational leader as someone who has organizational power and encourages motivation. The third factor, which explains 16.51% of variable dispersion, unites statements pertaining to the principals' involvement in the modelling of the school future, vision and goals, and interaction with the school community in the process of building the vision.

*Table 4: Results of factor analysis of teachers' responses about the expression and attitudes of school principals' transformational leadership (Rotated Component Matrix), (own study)*

<b>Statements</b>	<b>F1 Variance Explained 25.16%</b>	<b>F2 Variance Explained 22.11%</b>	<b>F3 Variance Explained 16.51%</b>
Total Variance Explained 63.79%			
Tries to help all members to develop their best skills	0.762		
Creates conditions to experiment, try innovations	0.758		
Encourages team learning of members of the school community	0.750		
Empowers different school teams to act	0.744		
Trusts the school community as a team	0.722		
Encourages individual training of members of the school community	0.697		
Initiates training of the whole school community	0.696		
Develops new leaders at school	0.678		
Believes in the talents and unlimited possibilities of each member	0.672		
Is a mentor of the whole school community	0.651		
Strengthens self-confidence of the school community	0.627		
Appreciates the effort of others put into the attainment of the school success	0.621		
Talks about human values that are important to him/her	0.607		
Gets personally involved in the teamwork at school	0.598		
Encourages all members of the school community to develop	0.557		
emphasises the importance of having a common goal	0.549		
Is personally involved in the teamwork at school	0.524		
Provides everyone with an opportunity to express their opinion about the school vision	0.520		
Encourages learning from each other	0.520		
Involves all the school community in various forms into the process of building the school vision	0.503		
Is proud of the school community	0.487		
Encourages extensive discussions among members of the school community	0.484		
Encourages leadership of other members of the school community	0.461		
Cares about the involvement of members of the school community in the planning of activities		0.715	
Cares about the opinion of the school community about the school vision		0.694	
Manages to involve the school community into the joint planning of activity		0.689	
Cares about the teamwork of the school community		0.678	
Cares about the unity of the school community		0.675	
Cares about participation of members of the school community in decision-making		0.669	
Cares about participation of each member of the school community in the process of building the school vision		0.662	
Cares about effort put into the attainment of the school success		0.640	
Cares about each member the school community and his/her personal features		0.606	
Cares about extensive discussions among members of the		0.602	

community			
Cares about training of the whole school community		0.590	
Manages to pool the school community for joint action		0.587	
Involves the community in decision-making		0.555	
Pools the school community for joint activity		0.549	
Cares about the school vision		0.545	
Takes into consideration different opinions when building the school vision		0.545	
Involves all members of the school community into the planning of school activities		0.541	
Consults the school community before making important decisions		0.524	
Listens to all opinions about the future vision of the school		0.520	
Encourages teamwork at school		0.505	
Is optimistic when talking about the future plans of the school			0.798
Believes in the school future			0.764
Is enthusiastic when talking about the school vision			0.761
Is able to convince every member of the school community about the importance of the school vision			0.673
Believes in the school future vision			0.638
Tries to make every member of the school community to believe in the school vision			0.596
Tries to make every member of the school community to understand the school vision			0.580
Looks for different views and opinions when building the vision			0.553
Talks about school values that are important to him/her			0.523
Encourage all members to attain school success			0.508

*Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis.*

*Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.*

*a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations*

This factor defines the transformational leader as a visionary and responds to the essential task of transformational leaders, as emphasized by many, to unite the community to build the vision. So, the results of the factor analysis reveal that school principals' transformational leadership is not a homogeneous construct and includes at least three different groups of variables that determine different aspects of transformational leadership.

#### 4. Conclusions

School principal's leadership is a prerequisite for effective management of the modern school. In the context of the ongoing changes in education, school principals can function as transformational leaders by determining the direction of school activities, empowering the school community to act and by sharing their leadership. The results of the research reveal that teachers believe that school principals as transformational leaders are characterised mainly by determining the direction of school activities, as one of the three transformational leadership practices. The research shows that the majority of teachers think that school principals have a clear school vision, are able to pool the school community together for discussion on the school vision, and try to consider different opinions on the school vision. Besides, about half of the teachers who took part in the survey emphasize that, in order to empower the school community to act, school principals act as transformational leaders: they create conditions to experiment, try new innovations, encourage members to attain school success, empower different school teams to act, and consult the school community before

making important decisions. So, it can be claimed that the transformational leadership in school depends on principal's personality.

However, the teachers observed the activity of distributing leadership least, i.e. only one third of the teachers note that the principals of their schools encourage leadership of other members of the school community and develop new leaders at school, i.e. most of the principals do not create favourable environment for distributed leadership. So, school principals are visionaries, however, only some of them manage to empower the school community to act and even less of them are able to distribute their leadership to others. Besides, the research shows that although transformational leadership is characteristic of school principals, some of its aspects differ in daily activities of school principals. School principal's transformational leadership's some aspects depend on the period the school principal has been the head of school, i.e. school principals who have worked in this position from 5 to 10 years tend to be more optimistic when speaking about the future of the school, empower different school teams to act and believe in the talents and unlimited possibilities of each member. This suggests that principals at these schools are more visionary, able to empower the school community to act and create more favourable conditions for distributed leadership.

### Limitations of the study

The main limitation of the research is the small sample. Clearly data from 17 schools provides a range of insights into school principal's transformational leadership, but limit generalisation. These findings should be validated with another larger sample of schools, principals and teachers.

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