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**ADMINISTRATIVE EXCELLENCE WITHIN PUBLIC SCHOOL  
HEADS' APPROACH**

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*Abstract*

This study investigates the administrative excellence of school heads within public schools in terms of the heads' and competencies evaluation experts' approaches, and differences of their attitudes. The research question is: Which administrative competencies are the most important, best mastered and need to be improved by public school heads? This study aims to reveal school heads' and experts' attitudes to the importance and developing of administrative competencies, and differences of their preferences. Gained data were analysed by using the comparative analysis and statistical methods; statistical analysis was performed by using SPSS. Findings revealed the differences of public school heads' and experts' attitudes to the general competencies: school heads a little more emphasises the importance of competence Communication and information, and less underlined competence Personal effectiveness. The comparative analysis of experts' and public school heads' attitudes to the administrative competencies let us provide recommendations for the state educational institutions on how to improve the evaluation of public school heads' competencies.

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**Keywords:** Administrative excellence, competence evaluation, school head.



## 1. Introduction

The recent rapid change in the political, economical, social, technological and informational environment raises complex challenges for education in Lithuania. Leadership of today's school is becoming more and more difficult task for the principals: "Some principals say they confront often incompatible demands, referring to the challenge of reconciling the demands of teachers, students and parents or guardians with the expectations of the system in which they work and the communities where their school is located. In contexts where most decision-making authority has been devolved to the school level, principals can be especially challenged by the number and variety of demands they face: increasing social diversity, inclusion of students with special needs, emphasis of retaining students until graduation, and ensuring that students have skills and knowledge necessary to participate in an increasingly competitive economy" (OECD, 2016: 450). One of the main challenges - the growth of educational quality standards - encourages schools to assume more responsibility in designing prospects and planning specific activities. The management of these complex educational change and development processes poses high demands for the administrative excellence of general education schools heads.

### 1.1 Relevance of the research

The main document governing the functionality of the education system of the country is the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Education (Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas, 2011) (further LRLE). It contains definitions of school, municipal school and public school concepts. In this work, we will define municipal school and government school as public school, in accordance with the European Commission Eurydice report (which presents key data on European teachers and school leaders): a public school is defined as an educational institution "which is directly or indirectly administered by a public education authority" (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013: 133).

The LRLE (Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas, 2011) establishes the general powers, functions and responsibilities of an educational establishments heads, but the concept of a school head is not provided in this document. Therefore, in this article, we will refer to the definition of a school head provided in the Euridyce report (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013), which is formulated by the describing of the manager's responsibilities and some activities. The school head is "Any person heading a school who, alone or within an administrative body such as a board or council, is responsible for its management/administration. Depending on circumstances, the person concerned may also exercise educational responsibilities (which may include teaching tasks, but also responsibility for the general functioning of the institution in areas such as the timetable, implementation of the curriculum, decisions about what is to be taught and the materials and methods used, appraisal of teachers and their performance, etc.) and/or financial responsibilities (often limited to responsibility for administering the resources allocated to the school)" (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013: 134).

The Description of Qualification Requirements for Managers of State and Municipal Educational Establishments (except for higher education) (Kvalifikacinių reikalavimų valstybinių ir savivaldybių švietimo įstaigų (išskyrus aukštąsias mokyklas) vadovams aprašas, 2011, 2016) (further DQR) provided qualification requirements for Lithuanian public schools heads. This document stipulates that an evaluation of some administrative/managerial competencies of aspiring school heads is carried out by the

National Agency for School Evaluation (Nacionalinė mokyklų vertinimo agentūra, 2017) (further NASE) during the evaluation of competencies of the applicants to educational establishments heads; remaining competencies are assessed during the competition for the position of the certain educational establishment researchers have the opportunity to get acquainted only with the aggregative data of applicant's competence evaluation which is conducting by the NASE. The last few years NASE data shows an annually increasing number of contenders that fail to the minimum threshold requirements, among them some applicants having the managerial experience (for example, in year 2016, even more than one-third (37.3%) of school leaders already have the school leadership experience, and almost of three quarters (74.1%) of candidates who have the managerial experience at the non-educational establishment failed to meet the minimum requirements thresholds (Bakonis, Bilotienė, 2015; Nacionalinė mokyklų vertinimo agentūra, 2017). Consequently, there is a growing need for the administrative excellence of school leaders in the context of the changing traditional school leaders' roles, and the expansion of their responsibilities. They need constantly improve their leadership competence in order to achieve the high quality of school administration.

The problem of general education schools heads' competence is extensively analysed at home and abroad. School principals' managerial competence and importance of its development are widely discussed in the strategic documents published by the Lithuanian Education Policy Divisions and European Commission (Council of the European Union, 2013; European Commission, 2010; LR Švietimo įstatymas, 2011; Valstybinės švietimo strategijos 2013-2022 metų nuostatos, 2012). The scientific literature examines the principles of leadership training, qualification improvement and mentorship programs for aspiring and acting heads of educational establishments, and the school heads' approaches to the development of managerial competence, as well as school principals' qualification upgrading problem (Bakonis, Bilotienė, 2015; Bush, 2015; Cibulskas, 2013; Cruz, Villena, Navarro, Belecina, & Garvida, 2016; Goldring, Preston, & Huff, 2010; Huber, 2013; Indrašienė, Merfeldaitė, & Petronienė, 2008; Melnikova, 2011, 2012, 2013; Mulford, 2008; Želvys, 2010). The analysis of the researches carried out in the Lithuania shows that an administrative excellence of school head, and competencies evaluation in terms of content and its expression within public school heads' approach has been poorly researched.

## **2.1 Theoretical justification of the study**

The concept of competence is analysed by researchers and education politicians in educational research reports, and in national and foreign research papers in various fields of science and in different contexts (Antonioni, 2013; Brocman, Clarke, & Winch, 2009, 2011; Chouhan, Srivastava, 2014; Day, Sammons, 2016; Hallinger, Huber, 2012; Le Deist, Winterton, 2005; Mulder, 2011, 2014; Jakubė, Juozaitis, 2012; Jucevičienė, Liepaitė, 2000; Kaminskienė, 2011; Ko siekiame kurdami nacionalinę kvalifikacijų sandarą?, 2012; Laužackas, Jovaiša, & Tūtlys, 2007; Martinkienė, 2009; Melnikova, 2014; Mulder, Weigel, & Collins, 2006; Vazirani, 2010). Within educological approach, the concept of competence is analysed as a subject of education, and in the theory of management it is analysed as a competence resource. May be, this is the reason why different terminologies are used in different countries, and so differ the concept of competences and their content.

As L.Jovaiša (2012) claimed, the basis of the competence concept depend on the world of activity, when the defined activities (for example, of the school leader) are conditionally divided into areas of activity, functions, elements, and management models. According to F.D.Le Deist and J.Winterton (2005), the concept of competence expresses the effectiveness of the individuals' interaction with the environment and is usually analysed in two main ways: oriented towards the person's behavior (behavioral) and focused on the performance of the person's functions (functional). From the first point of view, competency is an essential characteristic of a person, which expresses the person's ability to perform an assignment effectively or to perform a more complex task; the competence consists of the essential characteristics of the individual, and they are causal connected to the effective performance of the work. In the second perspective, competence refers to the knowledge and skills, and the relevant performance standards, where competence is the equivalent of work performance standards, a combination of knowledge and skills associated with productive activities (Brocmann et al., 2009; Vazirani, 2010). From the first point of view, competence can be understood as competency, which manifests itself in the performance of an employee, as the ability to effectively use his efforts (Laužackas, Tūtlys, & Spūdytė, 2009). Competence shows that a person is able to perform a certain function, as well as competence reveals the use of that ability in practice and the quality of its expression.

The terms used in this study correspond to those used in the LRLE (Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas, 2011). This law defines competence as the ability to perform certain activities on the basis of the whole set of knowledge, skills, values. It can be noted, that in Lithuania's educational documents and scientific literature is used the most common construct of competence consists of three main components: knowledge, skills, value propositions, and sometimes is added the fourth component related to personal characteristics (Bitinas, 2013a; Jucevičienė, 2007).

R. Laužackas, T. Jovaiša, and V. Tūtlys (2007) are the founders of the Lithuanian national qualification model. According to them, competence is the ability to do certain work in a real or simulated operational situation: "Competence is determined by the knowledge and skills acquired during studies. The quality of competency is influenced by the employee's accumulated operational experience. Competences acquired in VET institutions are certified by certificates. The competences required for a broader activity (profession) are defined as qualification" (Laužackas, et al., 2007: 98).

"In order for a worker to perform well all the tasks he has assigned, he must be competent, i.e. must have the appropriate cognitive, functional and personal skills combinations - qualification units" (Laužackas, et al., 2007: 56). Unit of qualification is the element that can be composed of a variable number of functional, cognitive and general competencies; the content and scope of the qualification unit are determined by the objectives of the activity (Ko siekiame kurdami nacionalinę kvalifikacijų sandarą?, 2012). Qualification level descriptors define what competencies a person has to acquire, and what activities to be able to perform. They specify the functional, cognitive and general competencies of a certain complexity, autonomy and variability required for the performance of a work activity: functional competencies describes what tasks, actions, functions a person is able to perform; cognitive competencies describes how he is prepared to acquire and apply special and general knowledge; general competencies shows what a general-purpose capabilities, based on certain personal qualities, a person has acquired, for example, creativity, initiative, ability to solve problems.

In order to perform his work qualitatively an employee must have the competence that enable him successfully carry out his professional functions. Since in each professional activity an employee performs several functions, he must have acquired a certain amount of competencies. The Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Vocational Education and Training states that the qualification is based on competencies, and a professional standard establishes competencies necessary to acquire for a particular qualification: "A qualification is granted to a person who has acquired all the competencies required for the qualification, determined by the relevant professional standard" (Lietuvos Respublikos profesinio mokymo įstatymas, 2007: art. 11, par. 3). A qualification is defined as the complex of the person's existing competencies or professional experience and the competencies that are necessary for a particular activity. Qualification is recognised in the procedure established by the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania. Consequently, the concept of qualification emphasises the aspect of competence recognition and evaluation.

The professional activities of school heads require a corresponding qualification, i.e. a body of competencies enabling independent and qualitatively, competently to act in the field of school management. The European Commission's and Lithuania's education policy documents emphasise that in the context of permanent education changes the quality of the functions performed by school leaders determines the implementation of educational reforms, and the managerial competence of school heads creates prerequisites for effective and high-quality school activities (Council of the European Union, 2013; European Commission, 2010; Darbo programa Švietimas ir mokymas 2010, 2007; Valstybinė švietimo 2013 – 2022 metų strategija, 2013).

The permanent change in performance characteristics and other factors have an impact on the de-qualification of specialists when their existing competencies begin to fail to meet the requirements, so each employee has to continuously improve their qualification potential. Qualification improvement is a process of updating and improving the available professional knowledge and skills (Laužackas, et al., 2009), in which competencies acquired enable new functions and operations to be completed and complement the existing vocational qualification. The provisions of the strategic education improvement stipulate that the competences of the heads of educational institutions must be continuously developed and updated. It orientates researchers to examining the content of school leaders' competencies, their education, training and development.

The DQR (Kvalifikacinių reikalavimų valstybinių ir savivaldybių švietimo įstaigų (išskyrus aukštąsias mokyklas) vadovams aprašas, 2011, 2016) was updated by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania in the period of 2012-2016. It defined administrative competencies necessary for the successful administration of an educational institution: general and management competencies - provisions, knowledge, skills and abilities that underpin all the activities of the educational establishment leader. "Taking into account the recommendations of Lithuanian and foreign experts, the list of competences relevant for efficient management of educational establishments has been developed... . This list has become the basis for the model of the entire system of educational establishment management. It is used when selecting aspiring heads of educational establishments" (Nacionalinė mokyklų vertinimo agentūra, 2017). Hope, this relevant research will enable the more successful formation and execution of the school head reserve policy.

## 2. Problem Statement

The factual evaluation results of administrative competence of aspiring heads of educational establishments disassociates with the research-based data on the importance of leadership competence, and actualised *the scientific problem*: which competencies (and components), defined by the DQR (Kvalifikacinių reikalavimų valstybinių ir savivaldybių švietimo įstaigų (išskyrus aukštąsias mokyklas) vadovams aprašas, 2011, 2016), are more relevant for efficient evaluation of school heads' administrative excellence? *The object* of this research is the school heads opinions on the competencies, defined by the DQR.

## 3. Research Questions

*The research question* is: Which administrative competencies are the most important, best mastered and need to be improved by public school heads within their approach?

## 4. Purpose of the Study

*This study aims* to reveal the public school heads' and education experts' attitudes to the importance and mastering of administrative general competencies, and differences of their preferences.

## 5. Research Methods

### 5.1. Research methods

The research literature and education document analysis, and questionnaire survey methods were used to collect the research data. In analysing the attitudes of public school heads to leadership competencies, were used these methods: analytical descriptive, comparative and statistical analysis, expert evaluation. In order to properly disclose the topic of study, the methods of data systematisation and generalisation, and meta-analysis were used. The paper applied the methods of expert analysis and evaluation (ranking), and questionnaire survey to evaluate the significance of school head's administrative competencies.

### 5.2. Research instrument

The research construct consists of the competencies defined in the DQR (Kvalifikacinių reikalavimų valstybinių ir savivaldybių švietimo įstaigų (išskyrus aukštąsias mokyklas) vadovams aprašas, 2011, 2016). The components are consistently arranged according to the purpose of the research, and based on the data of the research carried out in the state (Cibulskas, 2013; Indrašienė et al., 2008). The evaluation criteria is: the significance of competencies (and components) in the school head's work, the relatively higher level of their mastery, and the needs for improvement. The questionnaire method was used for the survey of public schools heads. The questionnaire was prepared by using the questionnaires created by the other researchers (Cibulskas, 2013; Indrašienė, et al., 2008). It was

approved by the expert evaluation method: the joint decision was made after the survey of the three specialists of research methodology.

### **5.3. Research sample**

A target sample of respondents was comprised of 74 aspiring school heads from 35 municipalities of Lithuania. Respondents were registered for the competency evaluation in NASE in 2017, since January to June. Having completed the questionnaires, the 4% of respondents did not specify their personal characteristics. However, this fact does not hinder the presentation of the main personal characteristics: the sample of respondents consists of more than four-fifths (77.0%) of women and almost one-fifth (18.9%) of men; among them the number of vice-principals is twice higher than number of principals (63.5% and 32.4%); on the other hand, only a quarter (26.3%) of women and two-thirds (64.3%) of men participating in the study are in charge of the principal's position; the majority of respondents manages the basic schools and gymnasiums (33.8% and 36.0%) of the cities and rayon towns (28.4% and 29.7%); most of them are older than 40-49 and 50-59 years old (33.8% and 36.5%); only one-tenth of school heads (10.8%) acquired the highest management category (I), half of the sample (51.4%) acquired the middle management category (II), and these two higher categories are acquired by almost seven-tenths of respondents over the age of 50 (69.6%); does not acquired a managerial category more than one-fifth of respondents (23.0%), these respondents are mostly younger than 30-39 (85.7%); almost two-fifths of respondents have more than 15 years of managerial work experience (36.5%); more than a quarter have participated up to 100 hours (27.0%), and the one-sixth (17.6%) – from 200 to 299 hours of qualification development courses; more than one-third have graduated the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, one-fifth – Siauliai University, one-tenth – Vilnius University (36.5%, 21.6% and 10.8% respectively), the one-fifth of the respondents did not indicate graduated higher education institutions (20.3%); one-fifth of school leaders have graduated master's studies (20.3%), half of them are over 50 years of age (53.3%), almost four-fifths are women (73.3%).

It can be noted, a big number of personal characteristics of respondents respond to the average data of European school leaders, for example: "the average age of the TALIS 2013 is 52 years old"; "The proportion of principals younger than 40 years old is small"; "45% of principals in lower secondary schools in TALIS countries are women"; "The percentage of women principals is generally lower than men"; "On average principals have 21 years of teaching experience" (OECD, 2016: 452).

### **5.4. Expert evaluation**

A structured interview method was used during the survey on administrative competencies evaluation (ranking) by the experts. Questionnaire for experts is based on questionnaire for school heads. The diagnostic questions of this questionnaire are intended to determine the significance of competencies and their components by using of the indirect evaluation method. Experts are provided with the opportunity to evaluate competencies and their components by ranking the indicators in a decreasing order of their significance, when the most significant one is awarded the rank equal to 1, the second according to the significance - the rank equal to 2, etc. Within educational research methodology

approach, the optimal size of expert group is between 8 and 10 (Bitinas, 2013b; Žydžiūnaitė, Sabaliauskas, 2017). Interviews conducted with 9 experts who were selected from the academic educational field and public institutions. All the experts have a high managerial work experience, as well as extensive experience in evaluation of school heads' competencies.

### 5.5. Limitations

(1) Although the sample of respondents could represent the heads of Lithuanian school municipalities according to the geography of the survey, insufficient number of respondents were still interviewed, therefore the study is classified as a survey, aiming to present common dominant tendencies and highlight the further field of research.

(2) Experts' assessments are based on the subjective opinions that are often different, therefore the compatibility of their assessments was analysed. The Kendall concordance coefficients were calculated in order to determine the level of compatibility of experts' assessments (Sėrikoviene, 2013; Podvezko, Podvezko, 2014). The calculated values show the compatibility of the block of general ( $W = 0.410$ ) competencies assessment; the compatibility of the particular competencies assessments is sufficient in the most case except of the competence 4. *Leading of a people* ( $W_4 = 0.115$ ), therefore, the assessment of this competence in the context of the expert evaluation will not be analysed.

### 5.6. Research ethics

The research ethics was followed up: information about the research objectives was provided to the involved persons; it was guaranteed physical, emotional and social security; it was followed to the principles of benevolence, respect for personal dignity, justice and the right to receive accurate information (Kardelis, 2016).

## 6. Findings

Expert evaluation data was analysed using the Multiple Criteria Decision Making – Simple Additive Weighting (Podvezko, Podvezko, 2014). The calculated sum of ranks allowed to set out the competencies and components in a decreasing order of their significance (according to experts, from the most important to the least significant ones). Weight coefficients were assigned to the sums of competencies and components ranks: starting from the lowest rank sum, giving it the maximum weight coefficient, and ending with the highest rank sum, giving it the lowest weight coefficient. The number of school heads' choices for each component of competencies (based on the three criteria) was multiplied by the weighting coefficient obtained from the relevant expert evaluation, and thus determined the weightings of the school heads' assessments in the context of the expert evaluation (Table 01).



**Table 01.** Assessments of general competencies and components (number / weight)

GENERAL COMPETENCIES AND COMPONENTS	Ranks sum / weight ratio		Importance		Higher mastery level		Needs for improvement	
<b>1. Personal effectiveness</b>	24	3	20.8	62.4	19.7	57.9	16.2	48.5
<b>1.1 Self-confidence and openness</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>276</b>	20	240	<b>25</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>1.2 Respect and self-respect</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>507</b>	0	0
1.3 Creativity, flexibility	65	6	23	138	26	156	18	108
1.4 Tolerance for social diversity	97	1	8	8	15	15	16	16
1.5 Positivity	56	8	21	168	<b>31</b>	<b>248</b>	6	48
1.6 Wide horizons	83	2	10	20	6	12	20	40
<b>1.7 Responsibility and honesty</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>370</b>	1	10
<b>1.8 Orientation, purposefulness</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>517</b>	18	198	17	<b>187</b>
1.9 Initiative	72	4	17	68	23	92	10	40
<b>1.10 Organisation</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>279</b>	22	198	16	<b>144</b>
1.11 Stress management	62	7	8	56	7	49	<b>41</b>	<b>287</b>
1.12 Courage and determination	83	3	8	24	6	18	<b>22</b>	66
1.13 Integrity - the coherence of words and behavior	69	5	16	80	7	35	18	90
<b>2. Strategic thinking and management of changes</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	26.3	<b>131.7</b>	25.2	<b>126.1</b>	21.9	<b>109.4</b>
<b>2.1 Conceptual thinking</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>208</b>	8	64	22	<b>176</b>
<b>2.2 Owning of a vision</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>360</b>	9	81
2.3 Systematic analysis	49	4	16	64	18	72	<b>34</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>2.4 Objective assessment and decision making</b>	39	<b>6</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>234</b>	27	162	14	84
2.5 Priority assignment	41	5	26	130	<b>30</b>	<b>180</b>	22	<b>110</b>
2.6 Working with an information	64	2	10	20	29	58	18	36
2.7 Selecting of information sources	70	1	5	5	12	12	<b>26</b>	26
2.8 Data collecting and analysis	61	3	6	18	18	54	<b>29</b>	57
<b>2.9 Openness to changes, planning and managing</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>385</b>	23	<b>161</b>
<b>3. Learning to learn</b>	34	2	<b>32.3</b>	64.6	<b>32.7</b>	65.4	<b>26.4</b>	<b>52.9</b>
<b>3.1 Lifelong learning provision</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>343</b>	11	77
<b>3.2 Openness for learning</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>230</b>	12	60
3.3 Self-perception	55	1	19	19	19	19	<b>29</b>	29
3.4 Acquiring of new information	51	2	27	54	28	56	28	56
3.5 Practical application of knowledge	43	3	26	78	32	96	<b>35</b>	<b>105</b>
3.6 Applying suitable and diverse learning methods	39	4	23	92	11	44	<b>48</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>3.7 Ability to share with knowledge and experience</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>264</b>	22	<b>132</b>
<b>4. Leading of a people</b>	24	4	<b>34.1</b>	<b>136.6</b>	<b>30.6</b>	122.3	<b>27.6</b>	110.4
<b>4.1 Team forming and managing</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>52</b>	312	19	114	<b>34</b>	204
4.2 Working in the team	39	4	16	64	<b>49</b>	196	11	44
<b>4.3 Encouraging and delegating of a functions</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>5</b>	32	160	<b>32</b>	160	16	80
<b>4.4 Motivating and inspiring</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>59</b>	413	<b>32</b>	224	<b>34</b>	238
4.5 Monitoring activities and feedback	46	1	24	24	31	31	29	29
<b>4.6 Aiming to help people develop their potential</b>	38	3	<b>38</b>	114	30	90	33	99
4.7 Moderating a meeting	39	2	18	36	21	42	<b>36</b>	72
<b>5. Communication and information</b>	38	1	<b>38.3</b>	38.3	<b>37.5</b>	37.5	<b>30.5</b>	30.5
<b>5.1 Business communication</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>205</b>	21	<b>105</b>
<b>5.2 Listening, hearing, understanding</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>360</b>	10	66
5.3 Negotiating	34	2	29	58	22	44	<b>41</b>	82
<b>5.4 Managing conflict situations</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>129</b>
5.5 Public speaking (oratory)	34	3	22	66	24	72	<b>42</b>	<b>126</b>
5.6 Preparation and providing of clear information in oral and written forms	42	1	37	37	39	39	26	26

Expert evaluation have allowed us to identify which competences they value as relatively more important and less important (the priority sequence of competencies is 2 – 4 – 1 – 3 – 5). In proportion to the number of components of each competence, several significant components were singled out: 5 components of competence 1. *Personal effectiveness*, 4 components of competence 2. *Strategic thinking and management of changes*; and 3 components of the each of remaining competencies 3. *Learning to learn*, 4. *Leading of a people*, 5. *Communication and information* (Table 02).

The numbers of components selected by the school heads according to the first criteria (the most important components for the school manage) were counted and the most significant components of each competence were distinguished (Table 2). The averages of the number of chosen components for each competence allowed to outline the competencies in the decreasing order of their significance – from the most important to the least important (priority sequence 5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1). Finally, a priority sequence of competencies was established in the context of expert assessment by multiplying of the averages and weighting coefficients (4 – 3 – 1 – 5).

The analysis of the obtained data suggests that both experts and school heads consider the competence 4. *Leading of a people* as the most important. According to experts the least important competence 5. *Communication and information* is regarded by the school heads as the most important. This competence is not evaluated during an evaluation of aspired heads' competencies at NASE, but attention to it is being paid during the competition for the position of the certain educational establishment head. In the context of expert evaluation, the sequence of school heads' priorities is closer to the sequence of expert priorities.

Experts' and school heads' assessments of the components significance coincide in all cases, except the assessment of 4. *Leading of a people* components, in this case, only the choice of two components coincides, and the component 4.6 *Aiming to help people develop their potential* is more important for school heads, while 4.3 *Encouraging and delegating a functions* is more important for the experts. It should be noted that the experts' evaluation fully corresponds to the tendencies of the evaluation of the general competencies performed by the NASE during an evaluation of aspired heads' competencies. It can be assumed that experts consider to be more important these competencies because of they are central to management theory, and are best reflected in the documents prepared by school heads (for example, strategic plans), while school heads consider more important to them those competencies that are the main from the practical point of view.

The correlation analysis was carried out in order to determine the relationship between the school heads' assessments and the characteristics of the respondents (gender, age, seniority, acquired management category, qualification upgrading, the type of school under management, level of urbanization, graduated higher school), and interconnections between assessments of each competence components. The Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated using the SPSS Version 22 program, since the features are measured by using of the dichotomous scale (Bekešienė, 2015) (Table 02).

**Table 02.** The most important components of general competencies and assessments correlations

Priorities	Correlation (confidence level)
<b>1. Personal effectiveness</b>	
1.1 Self-confidence and openness	Gender .316 (.006); Position .325 (.005); Age .317 (.006); Category .309 (.007); 1.11 Stress management .236 (.043) 1.12 Courage and determination .236 (.043)
1.2 Respect and self-respect	1.3 Creativity, flexibility -.257 (.027) 1.13 Integrity - the coherence of words and behavior .235 (.044)
1.7 Responsibility and honesty	1.8 Orientation, purposefulness -.254 (.029)
1.8 Orientation, purposefulness	1.7 Responsibility and honesty -.254 (.029)
1.10 Organization	
<b>2. Strategic thinking and management of a changes</b>	
2.1 Conceptual thinking	Age 0,262 (0.024)
2.2 Owning a vision	2.3 Systematic analysis .246 (.035)
2.4 Objective situational assessment and decision making	
2.9 Openness to changes, planning and managing	
<b>2. Learning to learn</b>	
3.1 Lifelong learning provision	3.2 Openness for learning -.284 (.014) 3.3 Self-perception -.292 (.011) 3.4 Acquiring of a new information .330 (.004)
3.2 Openness for learning	3.1 Lifelong learning provision -.284 (.014)
3.7 Ability and willingness to share with knowledge and experience	3.4 Acquiring of a new information -.277 (.017)
<b>4. Leading of a people</b>	
4.1 Team forming and managing (highlighted only by the experts)	4.2 Working in a team -.233 (.040) 4.7 Moderating a meeting .231 (.048)
4.3 Encouraging and delegating of a functions	
4.4 Motivating and inspiring	
4.6 Aiming to help people develop their potential (highlighted only by the school heads)	
<b>5. Communication and information</b>	
5.1 Business communication	5.2 Listening, hearing, understanding -.324 (.005)
5.2 Listening, hearing, understanding	5.1 Business communication -.324 (.005) 5.4 Managing conflict situations .261 (.025)
5.4 Managing conflict situations	5.2 Listening, hearing, understanding -.324 (.005)

We will discuss correlations between the most important components. The results of the data analysis showed that the assessments of the two components are significantly related to the respondents' characteristics: component *1.1 Self-confidence and openness* as a key is more often seen by women, vice-principals over the age of 60, who have a higher managerial category; component *2.1 Conceptual thinking* is related to age – it is more important for the respondents aged 40-59.

The identified correlations between the components assessments show: school heads who highlighted the importance of the component *1.1 Self-confidence and openness* emphasises the importance of *1.11 Stress management* and *1.12 Courage and determination* as well; who highlighted the importance of *1.2 Respect and self-respect* emphasises *1.13 Integrity and coherence of behavior*, but does not consider *1.3 Creativity and flexibility* as important; who highlighted the component *1.7 Responsibility and honesty* does not consider importance of the component *1.8 Orientation, purposefulness*; evaluators

of the component 2.2 *Owning a vision* appreciated 2.3 *Systematic analysis*; evaluation of component 3.1 *Lifelong learning provision* have the significant negative impact on the assessments of 3.2 *Openness for learning* and 3.3 *Self-perception*, and positive impact on the assessment of 3.4 *Acquiring of new information*; the assessment of component 3.7 *Ability and willingness to share with knowledge and experience* is negatively related to 3.4 *Acquiring of new information*; the assessment of 4.1 *Team forming and managing* is negatively related to 4.2 *Work in the team*, and positively to 4.7 *Moderating a meeting*.

The obtained results suggests the possibility to discuss the combining of some components into the one unit, for eg. 1.2 *Respect and self-respect* and 1.13 *Integrity – the coherence of words and behavior*; 3.1 *Lifelong learning provision* and 3.4 *Acquiring of new information*.

The data shows, the three competencies that are the best mastered by school heads are considered by them as more important (5 – 4 – 3), at the same time this competencies could be the most developed. In the context of expert evaluation, it is evident that the competence 2. *Strategic thinking and change management* should be the most developed.

**Table 03.** The best mastered and could be the most developed components of general competencies within the school heads approach

<b>Component Competence</b>	<b>The best mastered</b>	<b>Should be the most developed</b>
<b>1. Personal effectiveness</b>	<b>1.2 Respect and self-respect</b> <b>1.5 Positivity</b> <b>1.7 Responsibility and honesty</b>	<b>1.1 Self-confidence and openness</b> 1.11 Stress management 1.12 Courage and determination
<b>2. Strategic thinking and management of a changes</b>	<b>2.2 Owning a vision</b> <b>2.5 Priority assignment</b> <b>2.9 Openness to changes, planning and managing</b>	2.3 Systematic analysis 2.7 Selecting of information sources 2.8 Data collecting and analysis
3. Learning to learn	<b>3.1 Lifelong learning provision</b> <b>3.2 Openness for learning</b> <b>3.7 Ability and willingness to share with knowledge and experience</b>	3.3 Self-perception 3.5 Practical application of knowledge 3.6 Applying suitable and diverse learning methods
<b>4. Leading of a people</b>	<b>4.2 Working in the team</b> <b>4.3 Encouraging and delegating of a functions</b> <b>4.4 Motivating and inspiring</b>	4.1 Team forming and managing <b>4.4 Motivating and inspiring</b> 4.7 Moderating a meeting
5. Communication and information	<b>5.1 Business communication</b> <b>5.2 Listening, hearing, understanding</b> <b>5.4 Managing conflict situations</b>	5.3 Negotiating <b>5.4 Managing conflict situations</b> 5.5 Public speaking (oratory)

The analysis of the assessments helped us distinguish the three best-mastered and most upgradable components of the each competence (Table 03), according to the experts the most important competencies and components are highlighted). The data shows that the best-mastered components are those that both experts and school managers consider to be more relevant to the managerial work.

We put out the list of components that school heads pointed out for improvement. Only the three components were evaluated by the experts as important in the school heads' managerial work: 1.1. *Self-confidence and openness*, 4.4 *Motivating and inspiring*, 5.4 *Managing conflict situations* – and only the last was rated as important by the school leaders. The choices of the school heads in the context of experts' evaluation show that the most developed should be the components: 1.1 *Self-confidence and*

*openness, 1.11 Stress management, 2.1 Conceptual thinking, 2.9 Openness to changes, planning and managing, 4.1. Motivating and inspiring, 5.4 Managing conflict situations.*

## 7. Conclusion

The analysis of the research data suggests that both experts and school heads consider the competence *4. Leading of a people* as the most important in the public school management. According to experts the least important competence *5. Communication and information* is regarded by the school heads as the first priority. This competence is not evaluated during an evaluation of aspired heads' competencies, but attention to it is being paid during the competition for the position of the certain public school head.

Experts' and school heads' assessments of the components significance coincide in all cases, except the assessment of competence *4. Leading of a people* components. In this case, the choice of two components coincides, and the component *4.6 Aiming to help people develop their potential* is more important for school heads, while *4.3 Encouraging and delegating a functions* is more important for the experts. On the other hand, it was determined the insufficient compatibility of the experts' assessments of this competence by the calculating of Kendall concordance coefficient.

It should be noted that the experts' evaluation corresponds to the tendencies of the general competencies evaluation performed by the state institution during the aspired heads' competencies evaluation. It can be assumed that experts consider to be more important those competencies that are central to management theory, while the school heads consider more important to them those competencies that are more important within practical approach.

The research showed that the assessments of the two components are significantly related to the respondents' characteristics: component *1.1 Self-confidence and openness* as a key is more often seen by women, vice-principals over the age of 60, who have a higher managerial category; the assessment of component *2.1 Conceptual thinking* is related to age – it is more important for the respondents aged 40-59. This result and the identified correlations between components assessments suggests to discuss the possibility to evaluate a less number of components.

The data shows, the three competencies the best mastered by school heads are considered by them as more important, at the same time these competencies could be the most developed. The best-mastered components are those that both experts and school heads consider to be more relevant to the managerial work.

In order to improve the readiness for institutional competencies assessment, and to seek for administrative/managerial excellence it can be recommended to the public school heads to develop expert-evaluated competencies *2. Strategic thinking and change management* (components *2.1 Conceptual thinking, 2.9 Openness to changes, planning and management*) and *4. Leading of a people* (components *4.1 Team forming and managing, 4.4 Motivating and inspiring*).

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