THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL LEADERS ON TEACHERS' ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT THROUGH AN INTERGENERATIONAL DIVERSITY LENS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the research study is to analyse how the leadership of school leaders could encourage teachers to participate more effectively in school improvement, taking into account the different generations of teachers and the specificities of those generations. The scientific literature suggests that a specific focus on intergenerational diversity is necessary to better understand differences in teacher engagement in school improvement. A qualitative methodology was chosen to provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the participants' real-world experiences and their subjective interpretations of those experiences. Fifteen school leaders from general education schools in Lithuania participated in the focus group discussion, and provided insights on how school leaders' leadership may impact teachers' engagement in school improvement initiatives, with the focus on addressing generational diversity. The proposed study does not aim to promote intergenerational stereotypes, but rather to focus on unique intergenerational values, behaviours and skills. The findings would be useful in developing research-based recommendations for school leaders' practices (e.g. recruitment and retention, job satisfaction, career development, motivation and empowerment, teacher role and performance, leadership, etc) for encouraging groups of teachers of different generations to become more engaged in school improvement.

KEY WORDS: *school improvement, teacher engagement, teachers' intergenerational diversity, leader's impact.*

Introduction

In contemporary educational institutions, much like other workplaces, an increasing number of individuals from diverse generational backgrounds are collaborating. This trend is a result of various factors, including longer life expectancy, declining population, higher retirement ages, and evolving perspectives on aging (Polat et al., 2019). Generations, in this context, are defined by the year of birth, and represent a cohort of individuals whose values, thinking and behaviour have been significantly influenced by social, economic, political, cultural and technological changes. These changes contribute to the formation of a shared identity within a particular generation, both in personal and professional contexts (Marcus, Leiter, 2017). The commonly referenced generational classifications in the current study include: the Silent or Traditional Generation (born between 1925 and 1942); the Baby Boom Generation (1943–1960); Generation X (1961–1981); Generation Y or Millennium Generation (1982–2000); Generation Z or Internet Generation (born after 2000) (Eisner, 2005; Hart, 2006). In today's schools, it is not uncommon to find Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and even the emerging Generation Z all working alongside each other. Each ge-

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neration contributes unique and valuable perspectives to school improvement initiatives. However, they also have specific needs and expectations (Romanes, 2019). Previous research has shown that intergenerational differences between teachers can influence their ability to harness their potential in initiating, planning and executing educational changes (Muijs, Harris, 2006; Sleegers et al., 2013). Hence, it is imperative for school leaders to comprehend, appreciate and address these generational differences between teachers in modern educational settings. While several studies have explored the management of generational differences in business organisations (Bencsik et al., 2016; Huber, Schubert, 2019; Dimock, 2019), limited research has been conducted in the educational sector concerning the management of teachers' generational diversity and its relationship with school improvement. Some studies have delved into differences between generational groups of teachers (Romanes et al., 2018), but no research has focused on how school leaders can facilitate teachers' engagement in school improvement through the lens of intergenerational diversity.

The aim of the research study is to analyse how school leaders' leadership could foster teachers' participation in school improvement.

The objectives of the study:

- To examine theoretically the generational differences between teachers in contemporary educational institutions.
- To understand the role of school leaders in comprehending, appreciating and addressing generational differences between teachers in modern educational settings.
- To develop a research design that avoids leading to prejudice, bias or stereotyping, while paying attention to the unique experiences and contexts of the education sector.
- To analyse empirically the impact of school leaders' leadership on teachers' engagement in school improvement initiatives, with the focus on addressing generational diversity.

The article provides theoretical insights into why teachers differ in their engagement in school improvement through an intergenerational diversity lens, to explain how these could serve in terms of school leader's impact on teachers. These objectives collectively aim to contribute to an understanding of how generational diversity in the teaching workforce can be managed effectively, and how school leaders can play a role in fostering teachers' engagement in school improvement in the context of intergenerational diversity. For this purpose, a qualitative methodology has been selected, and a focus group discussion as a means for qualitative data collection was implemented.

The proposed research does not seek to promote generational stereotypes; on the contrary, it specifically seeks to focus on generations' unique values, behaviours and skills. In order to avoid any prejudice, bias and stereotyping in the workplace, the article will seek to improve the rigour of the research design and the interpretation of the findings, giving greater attention to the unique experiences and contexts of the education sector.

1. Analysis of the problem

Achieving effective school improvement entails altering teachers' work environments and enhancing their teaching strategies to facilitate better student learning (Hopkins, Reynolds, 2001). Nevertheless, teachers' involvement in the process of school improvement varies in terms of the extent and quality of their active participation in the transformation (Wenner, Campbell, 2017). Consequently, fully engaging teachers in this endeavour remains a significant challenge (Sleegers et al., 2014). Numerous researchers have explored this challenge, primarily from the perspective of school leaders (Vanblaere, Devos, 2018; Pietsch et al., 2019). Their focus has been on how school leaders can cultivate an environment where staff members are motivated to actively engage in school improvement efforts by shaping conducive working conditions.

However, the above-mentioned studies do not reveal the aspect of school leader working with teachers' generational diversity. More specifically, there is a lack of generationally focused research aiming to understand the similarities and differences within and between teachers' generations, and their implications for school leaders with regard to teachers' work, life and social interaction, behaviours and skills. Meanwhile,

most general education schools currently employ at least three, and even four, generations of teachers. Taking into account the characteristics, work values and approaches to work in each generation, variations between teachers from different age groups in schools have a substantial impact on the school's overall improvement (Paniale, 2013). Teachers belonging to distinct generations possess distinct types of expertise. Younger teachers are often recognised as valuable resources for their proficiency in information and communication technology (ICT) and their adoption of innovative teaching methods. Conversely, teachers aged 50 and above are regarded as reservoirs of subject-specific knowledge and expertise in classroom management (Polat et al., 2019). These knowledge domains play a pivotal role in moulding the school's improvement, and are instrumental in guiding the day-to-day practices of teachers (Geeraerts et al., 2018).

However, there are limited research strands that investigate various aspects of teachers' generational diversity. These areas of inquiry include studies on Generation Y teachers (Bulman, 2002; Coggshall, Behrstock-Sherratt, Drill, 2011; Moore, Johnson, 2004; Williamson, Meyer-Looze, 2010), research into the generational composition of teaching staff (Lovely, Buffum, 2007; Moore, Johnson, Kardos, 2005; Strauss, 2005), the examination of intergenerational communication (Rinke, 2009; Walmsley, 2011), the exploration of teachers' intergenerational learning (Geeraerts et al., 2018; Dorczak et al., 2020), the scrutiny of generational career patterns (Hess, Jepsen, 2009), an analysis of generational leadership perspectives (Stone-Johnson, 2011), and investigations into technology use across different generations (Salajan, Schonwetter, Cleghorn, 2010; Worley, 2011; Ziegler, 2007).

The present research has particularly sought to address the aforementioned school-based generational knowledge gap. The generational diversity theory emerging primarily from business and organisational sociology disciplines proves the relevance of intergenerational diversity management: different generations that need new management tools to manage in organisations (Mathis, Jackson, 2012). The concept '*teachers of different generations*' refers to the diverse age groups and generational cohorts of individuals who work as teachers in schools. This term recognises that teachers, like any other group of professionals, are not a homogenous population, but instead come from various generations, each with its unique characteristics and experiences. Relevant knowledge of the deeper intergenerational phenomenon and its expression in the work environment is related to the fact that employees of different generations are unique in their skills, competencies and experience (Solnet et al., 2012), get engaged in work and organisation differently (Hammill, 2005), communicate differently (Harter et al, 2013), use technology in their activities differently (Marcus, Leiter, 2017), understand work satisfaction differently (Jones et al, 2018), have different abilities to adapt to change (Mathis, Jackson, 2012), and possess different work values and attitudes (Krahn, Galambos, 2014), different work motivation (Yrle et al, 2005), leadership understanding (Gentry et al, 2011), continuous learning and professional development (Stutzer, 2019), and collaborating and team work (Tamer, 2020).

Research on generational differences in Lithuania is relatively scarce. Narijauskaitė and Stonytė (2011) examined generational differences in the Lithuanian labour market. Stanišauskienė (2015) explored the evolving factors influencing career decisions in the context of generational shifts. Jakimuk (2016) delved into the role of leaders within the framework of generational dynamics. Sereičikienė (2017) investigated the unique motivators of the X and Y generations. Čiutienė and Railaitė (2013) conducted a study on managing age diversity among employees. Valickas and Jakštaitė (2017) focused on the attitudes of three different generations towards work and management in Lithuanian business organisations, aiming to identify strategies for effectively leveraging generational differences.

Despite these valuable contributions, there remains a notable dearth of generational research in the public sector, particularly in the field of education in Lithuania. Additionally, there is a pressing need to develop a new research methodology concerning generational diversity in the education sector. This methodological shift should move away from a managerial approach, and instead emphasise leadership for learning and continuous school improvement, as proposed by Baker and Hawn (2021).

Every generation of teachers contributes unique and valuable elements to the field of teaching and learning (Paniale, 2013). Recognising and embracing the diversity of teachers across generations is essential for fostering a vibrant and adaptable educational environment. It involves understanding generational differences, va-

luing the unique perspectives each generation brings, and creating opportunities for teachers to collaborate and learn from each other. This approach can contribute to the improvement of the school as a whole. It underscores the critical importance for school leaders to comprehend, appreciate and address the generational variations present in contemporary educational settings. Leaders who possess a thorough understanding of how to lead diversity in their teaching staff can harness the strengths of every teacher across different generations. This comprehension empowers both teachers and students to excel in the classroom, fosters collaborative teamwork, and equips individuals to better tackle forthcoming challenges (Hayes, 2013). Hence, school leaders who prioritise their human capital as the foundation of improvement can play a pivotal role in bridging these generational gaps, by delving into a deeper understanding of what motivates their employees (Lovely, Buffum, 2007).

2. Research study design

A qualitative methodology was used in this research study, as it gives a holistic, in-depth understanding of participants' experiences in real-world contexts, and provides access to what these experiences mean to them (Denzin, Lincoln, 2018). This methodology was used by adopting a constructivist-interpretivist approach. According to this approach, participants construct meanings in interaction with their context. The researcher can uncover the subjective meanings that participants give to their experiences by interacting with them (Denzin, Lincoln, 2018; Merriam, Tisdell, 2016). Focus group discussion was implemented in order to explore the under-researched aspects of interest, by drawing on a range of views (Hennink, 2014).

The participants in the focus group were school leaders from general education schools in Lithuania. Participant selection was done by purposeful sampling, in which choice is based on the wealth of information they can provide (Emmel, 2013; Patton, 2015). The criteria used in determining the school leaders were that they work as school heads in schools of different levels (pre-school education, primary school, pro-gymnasium, gymnasium), and to have different professional seniorities (years served). To provide diversity in terms of education level, professional seniority, and school type among the participants, the maximum variation sampling method was employed, which is one of the purposeful sampling techniques. With this method, a small sample is generated, and the diversity of the participants is reflected at the maximum level (Yıldırım, Şimşek, 2006). Researchers' personal networks and social media were used to complete the sample. As is pointed by Marrero Galván et al. (2023), the sample of about 15 participants could be considered as appropriate for such kind of a study, and a validation of its results.

In this research study, a qualitative methodology was employed, due to its capacity to offer a comprehensive in-depth understanding of participants' real-world experiences, and their personal interpretations of those experiences (Denzin, Lincoln, 2018). This methodology adhered to a constructivist-interpretivist approach, which posits that participants construct their meanings through interactions with their environment. Through direct engagement with the participants, the researcher aimed to reveal the subjective significance they attributed to their experiences (Denzin, Lincoln, 2018; Merriam, Tisdell, 2016).

A focus group was set up in October 2023 in a conference setting at Klaipėda University. The discussion lasted about three hours, and was audio-taped. Two researchers were present: one of the researchers started the session with a short presentation and the moderation of the discussion, and the other took notes. The participants in the discussion were first asked to introduce themselves and tell a short story about their activities (the introductory part of the discussion). Afterwards, guiding discussion questions were asked, which were described generally, and more salient features were sought in the utterances (the main part of the focus group discussion). At the end of the discussion, the expressed thoughts and positions were summarised (the final part of the discussion).

The instrument designed for qualitative data collection was developed by the researchers through a theoretical analysis of existing research publications. The instrument was composed of five guiding questions:

1. What generational differences have you observed between teachers in your school, and how do these differences manifest in teaching practices and interaction with students and colleagues?
2. How do you perceive the role of school leaders in supporting and managing the needs and expectations of teachers from different generations in your school?

3. How can school leaders effectively harness the diverse strengths and perspectives that teachers from different generations bring to the educational environment?
4. What practices do you believe school leaders can employ to create a cohesive and collaborative teaching staff that spans multiple generations?
5. How do school leaders impact the professional development opportunities and resources made available to teachers from different generations?

Qualitative content analysis was selected as the method for analysing the discussion data and presenting the research findings (Cole, 1988). Classic content analysis involves the process of categorising text into groups based on codes derived from variables that assess the presence, intensity or quantity of significant characteristics (Creswell, 2009). The data analysis unfolded in several stages: an initial reading of the discussion text; the categorisation of data based on key words; the subdivision of the content into categories and illustrative statements; and a description of the main categories supported by evidence extracted from the text (Žydžiūnaitė, Merkys, Jonušaitė, 2005).

To ensure the internal validity of the study, participants were furnished with a study report, inviting their feedback on the research findings. The informants responded positively to the study report. For external validity, a comprehensive description was provided (Rupšienė, 2007).

3. Research study results and implications

The analysis of informants' answers to the first question "What generational differences have you observed among teachers in your school, and how do these differences manifest in teaching practices and interactions with students and colleagues?" allowed to extract the following categories.

Table 1. Observed generational differences

Category	Illustrative statements
Value of experience	'It may seem that older generations have more traditional teaching styles, while younger teachers are keener with incorporating technology into teaching-learning and more student-centred approaches; however, the main thing here is that older generations have valuable experience which in any case will be beneficial'
Work habits	'Older generations may value long hours and dedication, while younger generations may emphasise work-life balance'
Communication	'Communication preferences of different generations can vary, with older teachers favouring face-to-face interactions and younger ones using digital tool.'
Handling change	'Younger teachers may be more adaptable to new teaching methods and technology, while older teachers may be resistant to chang'

This analysis provides insights into the generational differences observed between teachers in a school, as well as how these differences manifest in teaching practices and interactions with students and colleagues. This information is crucial for understanding the potential sources of generational differences in teaching practices and interactions between teachers. It underscores the evolving role of technology in teaching, with younger generations showing a more natural inclination towards incorporating technology into their teaching styles. The information provides a context for understanding how generational diversity among teachers can influence teaching approaches, communication preferences and classroom dynamics. School leaders can use this analysis to foster collaboration and mutual understanding between teachers of different generations, by recognising the unique strengths and contributions that each group brings to the educational environment at the same time by fostering teachers of different generations engaged in school improvement.

The analysis of informants' answers to the second question 'How do you perceive the role of school leaders in supporting and managing the needs and expectations of teachers from different generations in your school?' allowed for defining the following categories.

Table 2. The school leader's role in managing generational differences

Category	Illustrative statements
Recognition of unique strengths	'Recognising and valuing the unique strengths of each generation'
A supportive and inclusive culture	'Creating a supportive and inclusive culture that respects different teaching approaches'
Professional development opportunities	'Providing professional development opportunities that cater to various teaching styles and preferences'
Collaboration	'Facilitating open communication and collaboration between teachers from different generations'

A school leader tasked with managing a teaching staff comprised of individuals from various generational cohorts encounters a multifaceted workforce characterised by distinct opportunities and challenges. This diversity underscores the importance of a comprehensive approach that takes into account the following key considerations. Firstly, an awareness of generational disparities is paramount. School leaders must possess a deep understanding of the discrete characteristics, values and preferences associated with each generation in the teaching staff. Such an insight plays a pivotal role in facilitating the effective management and motivation of teachers. Secondly, it is imperative to capitalise on the inherent strengths and unique perspectives offered by each generational group. School leaders should proactively acknowledge and harness these individual strengths to construct a teaching team that is multifaceted, dynamic and well-rounded. Facilitating collaboration and knowledge-sharing between teachers from diverse generational backgrounds represents another imperative. The cultivation of opportunities for cross-generational teamwork can yield innovative teaching methodologies and contribute to the development of a supportive and synergistic school culture. Additionally, the tailoring of professional development initiatives to cater for the specific needs and preferences of teachers from disparate generational cohorts is of significant importance. This approach ensures that teachers receive training and development that aligns with their distinct backgrounds and requirements. This should be the most important factor for the engagement of teachers of different generations in school improvement.

The analysis of focus group participants' answers to the third question 'How can school leaders effectively harness the diverse strengths and perspectives that teachers from different generations bring to the educational environment?' allowed the following categories to be highlighted.

Table 3. School leadership towards diverse strengths and perspectives

Category	Illustrative statements
Inclusiveness and mentorship	'Encouraging cross-generational mentorship and collaboration'
A culture of continuous learning	'Creating a culture of continuous learning, where teachers can share their knowledge and expertise'
Enrichment of educational practice	'Recognising that different generations bring unique skills and perspectives that can enrich the educational environment'

Regardless of their generational background, teachers should be encouraged to adapt to evolving educational methodologies and technologies, fostering a culture of lifelong learning. Additionally, school leaders should assume the role of mediator or bridge between generational cohorts. By facilitating mutual understanding and cooperation between educators from various age groups, a culture of mutual respect and

shared objectives is cultivated. Lastly, school leaders must demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in their management styles, recognising that the motivational factors and engagement strategies effective for one generational group may not be as compelling for another. Tailoring leadership approaches to suit individual and generational needs is a critical component of effective leadership that contributes to the engagement of teachers from different generations in school improvement.

The analysis of the study participants' answers to the fourth question 'What strategies and practices do you believe school leaders can employ to create a cohesive and collaborative teaching staff that spans multiple generations?' allowed the following topics to be disclosed.

Table 4. School leader's practices towards teachers' generational diversity

Category	Illustrative statements
A culture of respect and appreciation	'Foster a culture of respect and appreciation for generational differences'
Team-building	'Implement team-building activities that encourage teachers to work together'
Knowledge-sharing	'Encourage mentorship and knowledge-sharing between teachers of different generations'
Open dialogue	'Create a safe space for open dialogue about teaching practices and generational concerns'

These strategies are designed not only to acknowledge generational diversity among teachers, but also to leverage it as a source of strength and innovation. They emphasise the importance of respect, collaboration, knowledge exchange, and open communication, to create a more inclusive and effective educational environment. These approaches align with the principles of modern education, which value diversity and inclusivity as essential components of effective teaching and learning, as well as the engagement of teachers of different generations in school improvement.

The analysis of the informants' answers to the fifth question 'How do school leaders impact the professional development opportunities and resources made available to teachers from different generations?' allowed the following categories to be summarised.

Table 5. The school leader's impact on the professional development of teachers of different generations

Category	Illustrative statements
Professional development options	'Offer a variety of professional development options, including traditional workshops and online courses'
Choice of professional development paths	'Allow teachers to choose development paths that align with their teaching style and needs'
Support and resources	'Provide ongoing support and resources to help teachers adapt to new technologies and teaching methods'
Encouraging sharing	'Encourage teachers to share their experiences and expertise through peer-led professional development sessions'

Furthermore, school leaders play an instrumental role in cultivating inclusivity in the school community. This is achieved through the promotion of open channels of communication, active listening, and the creation of a sense of belonging that is experienced by all educators, irrespective of their generational background. Another crucial factor involves the adept management of change. Diverse generational groups may exhibit varying responses to change and innovation. In this regard, school leaders should adopt effective strategies for change management, facilitating a smoother transition when introducing new policies and procedures. Promoting the importance of continuous learning and professional development is an overarching imperative.

It is essential to note that these generational traits are general characteristics, and may not apply to every individual in a given generation. Nevertheless, they provide a valuable framework for recognising trends and preferences among teachers from different age groups.

Understanding these generational differences can be beneficial for school leaders, as it allows for tailored support, professional development, and collaborative opportunities. By acknowledging the unique strengths and perspectives of teachers from different generations, schools can create a more inclusive and dynamic teaching environment that benefits both educators and students. In conclusion, managing a teaching staff composed of individuals from diverse generational backgrounds necessitates a holistic and adaptable approach. School leaders who possess an appreciation of generational differences and employ strategies to promote collaboration and a shared sense of purpose can contribute to the creation of a harmonious and effective educational environment. School leaders working with teachers from different generations should embrace the diversity of their staff, and find ways to harness the unique strengths and perspectives of each generation. Creating an inclusive and collaborative environment that values lifelong learning and effective communication can lead to a successful and harmonious school community.

The findings could serve the development of research-based recommendations for school leaders' practices (such as recruiting and retention, working conditions and satisfaction, career management, professional development, motivation and empowerment, role and performance, leadership, etc) towards generational groups of teachers, interconnecting them with the engagement of teachers in school improvement.

Conclusions

The essence of the research study lies in its pursuit of an in-depth analysis of how school leaders' leadership can effectively foster and encourage teachers' active involvement in school improvement. This study offers theoretical insights into the varying degrees of engagement exhibited by teachers in the context of intergenerational diversity. It seeks to explain how various factors contribute to a leader's influence over teachers. It is vital to emphasise that the research's intention is not to propagate generational stereotypes; quite the opposite, it centres on the unique values, behaviours and skills associated with different generations. By avoiding any potential biases, prejudices and stereotypes, the article aims to enhance the rigor of the research in its design and the interpretation of its findings. This approach places a strong emphasis on considering individual experiences and contexts specific to the educational sector, thus promoting a more equitable and informed understanding of generational dynamics in education.

A recognition of the unique contributions that each generation of teachers brings to the field of education is paramount for fostering a dynamic and adaptable educational environment. Valuing diversity within the teaching profession means understanding the specific characteristics and perspectives each generation contributes, and creating opportunities for collaboration and knowledge-sharing. By doing so, school leaders can harness the strengths of each teacher, regardless of their generational background, and ultimately drive school improvement. Teachers and students alike benefit from an inclusive, collaborative environment that leverages generational diversity as a powerful asset. School leaders who prioritise their human capital as the foundation of improvement can play a pivotal role in bridging generational gaps and enhancing the motivation and performance of their teaching staff. Therefore, a deep understanding of what motivates educators across different generations is a fundamental skill for school leaders, as they strive to create thriving and innovative educational institutions.

In this research study, a qualitative methodology was chosen, in order to provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the participants' real-world experiences, and their subjective interpretations of those experiences. The methodology embraced a constructivist-interpretivist approach, rooted in the idea that individuals construct their own meanings through their interactions with the surrounding environment. By directly engaging with the participants, the researcher aimed to unearth the subjective significance they attached to their experiences.

These insights from the empirical study provide a context for comprehending how generational diversity among teachers can influence various aspects of the educational environment. Managing a teaching staff

composed of individuals from diverse generational backgrounds necessitates a holistic and adaptable approach. School leaders who appreciate generational differences and employ strategies to promote collaboration and a shared sense of purpose can contribute to the creation of a harmonious and effective educational environment. Embracing the diversity of the teaching staff and harnessing the unique strengths and perspectives of each generation can lead to a successful and harmonious school community.

The findings from this analysis can serve as a foundation for developing research-based recommendations for school leaders' practices, encompassing areas such as recruiting and retention, working conditions and satisfaction, career management, professional development, motivation, empowerment, role and performance, leadership, and more, all combined with teachers' engagement in school improvement.

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MOKYKLOS VADOVO POVEIKIS MOKYTOJŲ ĮSITRAUKIMUI Į MOKYKLOS TOBULINIMĄ KARTŲ ĮVAIROVĖS KONTEKSTE

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Santrauka

Šio mokslinio straipsnio tikslas – išanalizuoti, kodėl skiriasi mokytojų įsitraukimas į mokyklų tobulinimą ir kaip mokyklų vadovų lyderystė galėtų paskatinti mokytojus efektyviau dalyvauti tobulinant mokyklą, atsižvelgiant į mokytojų priklausymą skirtingoms kartoms ir tų kartų ypatumus. Mokslinėje literatūroje teigiama, kad specialus dėmesys kartų įvairovei yra būtinas, siekiant geriau suprasti mokytojų įsitraukimo į mokyklos tobulinimo procesą skirtumus. Mokslinių tyrimų apžvalga leido nustatyti, kad skirtingų kartų mokytojai turi unikalių įgūdžių, kompetencijų ir patirties (Solnet ir kt., 2012), jie skirtingai: įsitraukia į darbą ir organizaciją (Hammill, 2005), bendrauja (Harter ir kt., 2013), bendradarbiauja ir dirba komandoje (Tamer, 2020), naudoja technologijas savo veikloje (Marcus, Leiter, 2017), supranta pasitenkinimą darbu (Jones ir kt., 2018), prisitaiko prie pokyčių (Mathis, Jackson, 2012), skiriasi jų darbo vertybės ir požiūriai (Krahn, Galambos, 2014), darbo motyvacija (Yrle ir kt., 2005), lyderystės supratimas (Gentry ir kt., 2011), skirtingi ir jų nuolatinio mokymosi bei profesinio tobulėjimo poreikiai (Stutzer, 2019). Atliekant empirinį tyrimą bus siekiama atsakyti į šiuos klausimus: kokius kartų skirtumus pastebėjote tarp savo mokyklos mokytojų, kaip jie pasireiškia mokymo praktikoje ir bendraujant su mokiniais bei kolegomis; kaip vertinate mokyklų vadovų vaidmenį remiant ir valdant skirtingų kartų mokytojų poreikius bei lūkesčius jūsų mokykloje; kaip mokyklų vadovai galėtų veiksmingai išnaudoti skirtingų kartų mokytojų stipriąsias puses kuriant ugdymo aplinką; kokias praktikas, jūsų nuomone, gali taikyti mokyklų vadovai, kad sukurtų darnų ir bendradarbiaujantį, skirtingas mokytojų kartas apimantį kolektyvą; kaip mokyklų vadovai sudaro profesinio tobulėjimo galimybes ir teikia išteklius, prieinamus skirtingų kartų mokytojams? Empiriniam tyrimui pasirinkta kokybinė metodologija, leidusi visapusiškai suprasti dalyvių realaus pasaulio patirtį ir subjektyvias tų patirčių interpretacijas. Metodologija apėmė konstruktyvistinį-interpretatyvistinį požiūrį, pagrįstą idėja, kad individai kuria savo reikšmes sąveikaudami su supančia aplinka. Tiesiogiai bendraudamas su dalyviais, tyrėjas siekė atskleisti subjektyvią reikšmę, kurią jie suteikė savo patirčiai. Siūlomu tyrimu nesiekiama propaguoti kartų stereotipų, priešingai – siekiama sutelkti dėmesį į unikalias kartų vertybes, elgesį ir įgūdžius. Empirinio tyrimo įžvalgos leidžia suprasti, kaip mokytojų kartų įvairovė gali veikti įvairius ugdymo aplinkos aspektus. Mokyklų vadovai, vertinantys kartų skirtumus, taikantys bendradarbiavimą skatinančias strategijas ir turintys bendrą tikslą, gali prisidėti prie darnios ir veiksmingos ugdymo aplinkos kūrimo. Atsižvelgdami į mokytojų įvairovę ir išnaudodami unikalias kiekvienos kartos stiprybes bei perspektyvas, mokyklų vadovai gali suburti sėkmingą ir darnią mokyklos bendruomenę. Išvados būtų naudingos, kuriant moksliniais tyrimais pagrįstas rekomendacijas dėl mokyklų vadovų praktinių vadybinių veiksmų (pvz., tokių, kaip įdarbinimas ir išlaikymas, pasitenkinimas darbu, karjeros valdymas, profesinis tobulėjimas, motyvavimas ir įgalinimas, mokytojo vaidmuo ir veiklos rezultatai, lyderystė ir kt.), skatinančių skirtingų kartų mokytojų grupes labiau įsitraukti į mokyklos tobulinimo procesus.

PAGINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: *mokyklos tobulinimas, mokytojų įsitraukimas, mokytojų kartų įvairovė, mokyklos vadovo poveikis.*

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