

# Expression of the Trait of Adaptability in the Organizational Culture of Lithuanian General Education Schools

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**Abstract.** In the context of organizational culture, in order for organizations to be adaptive, to develop adaptability in daily activities, it becomes important to look for solutions on how to systematically adapt to constantly changing conditions in the organization and help organizations to become more adaptive. However, it is not easy, and it becomes a problem, because adaptability in educational institutions is systemic and it is one of the processes of organizational culture. Therefore, the aim of the article is to reveal the expression of the trait of adaptability and its constituent indicators (creating change, organizational learning and customer focus) in the study of organizational culture in general education schools based on the internationally recognized Denison Organizational Culture Survey (DOCS). The results of the study revealed that educational institutions of Lithuania pay great attention to organizational learning, however, there are challenges in the creating change and customer focus fields of organizational culture.

**Keywords:** organizational culture, adaptability, creating change, organizational learning, customer focus.

## Lietuvos bendrojo ugdymo mokyklų organizacinės kultūros adaptyvumo charakteristikos raiška

**Santrauka.** Organizacinės kultūros kontekste organizacijoms, siekiančioms būti adaptyviomis, ugdyti adaptyvumą, kasdienėje veikloje tampa svarbu ieškoti sprendimų, kaip sistemaiškai organizacijoje prisitaikyti nuolat kintamomis sąlygomis ir tapti labiau adaptyviomis. Tačiau tai nėra lengva ir yra problemiška, nes adaptyvumas ugdymo įstaigose yra sisteminis ir vienas iš organizacinės kultūros procesų. Todėl straipsnio tikslas – remiantis tarptautiniu mastu pripažintu Denison organizacinės kultūros instrumentu (angl. *Denison Organizational Culture Survey* (DOCS)) atskleisti adaptyvumo charakteristikos ir ją sudarančių rodiklių (pokyčių įgyvendinimo, organizacinio mokymosi, požiūrio į klientus) raišką tiriant organizacinę kultūrą bendrojo ugdymo mokyklose. Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidė, kad Lietuvos ugdymo įstaigose skiriama daug dėmesio organizaciniam mokymui, tačiau kyla iššūkių pokyčių įgyvendinimo ir požiūrio į klientus organizacinės kultūros srityse.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** organizacinė kultūra, adaptyvumas, pokyčių įgyvendinimas, organizacinis mokymasis, požiūris į klientus.

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## Introduction

Over the recent decade, the Lithuanian education system has undergone continuous dynamic changes and upheavals, which cause both personal and organizational challenges, leading to experiencing usually not positive feelings in communities. Emerging changes not only change the organizational culture itself, adjust the relations of participants in education, but also encourage educational institutions to look for new opportunities for adaptation, to look for organizational resources how to overcome it. However, changes are inevitable, they are driven by constantly changing living conditions, changes in education policy and reality, therefore, the school must change as the environment around it changes (Želvys, 2003), learn faster than ever before to respond faster to a changing environment, embrace innovation and understand the needs of learners (Schleicher, 2016).

However, the need to be able to adapt to constantly changing conditions, able to understand and overcome changes, is still forming slowly in educational institutions. The need arises for the school to reflect on the process of change, to manage external and internal change processes (Valackienė & Želnienė, 2018), to be able to find solutions to overcome challenges and learn how to become an adaptive organization. The school's adaptability is revealed and shown by the organization's reactions to emerging internal and external tensions, how the school is able to see and identify what is happening in the context, find suitable optimal solutions, renew itself and, if necessary, transform itself. Thus, adaptability becomes the determining factor for both cultural and systemic changes in the organization, becoming the main factor in the development and evolution of individuals and organizations.

Adaptability is generally understood as the ability to constantly adapt to changing conditions and circumstances (Denison, Haaland, & Goelzer, 2003; Nenah & Heriyani, 2016; Collie, Holliman, & Martin, 2017), however, it is not widely studied by researchers in the organizational sense in the educational context (Damkuvienė, Balčiūnas, Valuckienė, Petukienė, & Pranckūnienė, 2021). Adaptability is more widely explored in the context of education as an ability that is very important to the healthy and effective work of teachers, so that teachers are able to respond successfully to any changing needs that arise in educational institutions (Corno, 2008; Parsons, 2012; Parsons, Williams, Burrowbridge, & Mauk, 2012; Collie & Martin, 2016), it is researched as a lack of adaptive behaviour skills (Samašonok, Gudonis, & Juodraitis, 2010; Juodraitis, 2010).

Constant transformation and changes seem to turn educational institutions into "turbulent systems" that are constantly searching, distracted, under constant external pressure to change and adapt. However, the school is not an independent element that exists and functions separately from the environment (Damkuvienė, Balčiūnas, Valuckienė, Petukienė, & Pranckūnienė, 2021). Although the school never reaches its *status quo*, the state of stability is constantly shaken by the changing needs of students, teachers and other participants in education, changing requirements for the quality of education and students' learning achievements, and other challenges of the global and local environment (Damkuvienė, Balčiūnas, Valuckienė, Petukienė, & Pranckūnienė, 2021), there-

fore, ignoring the changes taking place in the external environment in the hope that it will not affect its activities in any way is disastrous (Misiūnas & Stravinskienė, 2009).

Therefore, in the context of organizational culture, in order for organizations to be adaptive, to develop adaptability in daily activities, it is not the decision to respond or not to respond to changes that is important, but the decision how to do it, which would allow the organization to systematically adapt to constantly changing conditions and help to become more adaptive. However, it is not easy, and it becomes a **problem**, because adaptability in educational institutions is systemic and one of the processes of organizational culture. Thus, the **aim** of the article is to reveal the expression of the trait of adaptability of the existing organizational culture in Lithuanian general education organizations. The object of the research is the trait of adaptability of the organizational culture of general education schools. The methodology of the research is the Denison Organizational Culture Survey (DOCS).

### **Importance of involvement in the context of organizational culture**

In the analysis of various scientific literature, it is noticed that many authors explain the concept of adaptability quite differently and interpret it both from the perspective of the individual and from the perspective of the organization.

According to Denison & Mishra (1995), adaptability is the organizational ability to change in response to external changes and demands, the transformation of environmental demands into activity. According to the authors, organizations have a system of norms and beliefs that support the organization's ability to receive, interpret and translate signals from the environment into changes in internal behaviour that increase the likelihood of survival, growth, and development. According to McEvoy (2018), adaptability is the ability of a complex system to change in response to tensions, to learn from experience, the ability to find optimal solutions in changing circumstances, to renew itself (adapt and modify), proactivity in anticipating changes and new challenges, using changing circumstances, learning by doing.

As Denison, Janovics, Young, & Cho (2007) state, adaptive organizations turn the needs of the organization's environment into actions, they take more risks, learn from their mistakes, have the skills and experience in creating change. According to the authors, it is related to listening to external needs, trends, and perceptions, focusing attention on the current needs of customers that should be taken into account by internal actions, which requires the customer's attention and creativity to adapt and create the necessary changes. An adaptive organization operates in a dynamic environment, emphasizing the importance of the external environment. It is manifested in the efforts of organizations to maintain constant contact with their customers, it explores changes in the wants and needs of customers and tries to satisfy them.

Adaptability defines the ability to adjust (adapt) to changing conditions, the ability to minimize the difference between the desired and existing state, which is based on the ability to learn and expresses it as a characteristic of the organization as a system, i.e., learning expresses changes in the system that enable the system to perform the same task

more efficiently (Drungilas, 2014). Therefore, the ability to adapt is also evident in the consistency indicator, when it comes to the ability to agree in critical, difficult situations, decision-making and the abilities to reconcile differences when they arise.

As Collie and Martin (2015) state, adaptation is extremely important in the work of teachers, as it involves responding to constant changes and managing them not only in the classroom when teaching, but also in communication with parents, other participants in education, both in teams and at the organizational level. Thus, the ability to effectively respond to the novelty, changes, and uncertainty inherent in pedagogical work is a very important ability of teachers. According to Samašonok (2009), adaptive behaviour allows the individual to function effectively in social interactions, to function effectively in his/her usual environment, to successfully adapt to the requirements of the environment, in certain ways that are socially useful and acceptable, to respond to various life situations and their changes by adjusting his/her plans accordingly; helps to create and maintain effective relationships with others, effectively solve life problems and conflict situations, know his/her feelings, properly express emotions, manage and stabilize them in difficult situations. According to Juodraitis (1999, 2004), it is a two-way process between the individual and the environment, during which a person not only changes his/her behaviour and adapts it to environmental changes and requirements, but also creates the conditions himself/herself, changes those elements of the environment that he/she is capable of controlling. Adaptability is also associated with full involvement in the environment and the implementation of tasks posed by that environment, related not only to passive adaptation to external conditions, but also to the ability to identify and take advantage of opportunities for successful operation, constant interaction, acting and changing the environment itself according to the needs of the individual (Samašonok, 2009). However, this requires the strengthening of adaptability abilities, which depend on the level of people's skills, experience and behaviour that are acquired and available in the organizational sense; due to the lack of one or the other, they do not very successfully accept life changes and have difficulty overcoming the difficulties that arise.

According to Černiauskaitė (2002), adaptive behaviour is a dynamic construct defined by the expectations or demands of the immediate environment and community. Therefore, in the context of adaptability, the approach to all the needs of the participant in education becomes very important in the organization. Consequently, it is also important to ensure the ability to create change, understand the customer and meet his/her needs, and continue to learn as an organization (Kotrba, Gillespie, Schmidt, Smerek, Ritchie, & Denison, 2012).

Thus, adaptability is like an organizational, but at the same time individual competence of each employee and the organization as a whole, which enables educational institutions to operate in the tensions between different participants in education or their groups, when faced with incompatible or incomprehensible internal or external needs, as well as when faced with the inefficiency of usual solutions. According to Jucevičius, Bakanauskienė, et al. (2017), organizations operating as complex adaptive systems are able to successfully balance various emerging contradictions: individual initiative and

collective goals, flexibility and clear rules, creating conditions for employees to act and accountability for results. Adaptability allows one to respond adequately to changes in the environment, to look for ways to adapt to changing conditions, to be able to feel free in a new environment that is not familiar, to look for new ways of acting, to be interested in new things, to take risks, to easily adopt and learn new ways of doing things – to experiment and learn from mistakes, and all of this creates even more favourable conditions for the further ability to adapt both at the individual and organizational level.

### **Components of the trait of adaptability and their development at school**

Transformation and emerging changes and innovations reach the school as an organization from the outside as the will of the higher chain of the education management, indicating, encouraging to accept it and consolidate it (Shen, 2009). It often does not depend on the school itself. It is an external environment, and its delegated actions or decisions are simply not possible to change. However, schools can change how they respond to it, how they embrace change and how they are able to prepare both individually and systemically within the organization, how much attention and time they devote to integrating this knowledge and experience into the organizational culture. Consequently, there is a field in which schools can operate: reflect on changes, manage externally determined and internal change processes, implement them at the organizational level using the available knowledge and experiences taking into account the goals set by the organization itself, and continuously learn.

According to Denison & Mishra (1995), Denison, Janovics, Young, & Cho (2007) adaptability is measured by the following indicators – **creating change**, **customer focus**, **organizational learning**, which are closely related to each other and affect each other. These three aspects of adaptability affect the effectiveness of the organization, allow the organization to change its approach to continuous transformations and upheavals more flexibly, allow the entire organization to grow together and create new knowledge. First, learning to perceive the external environment and respond to it, focusing on the ability to adapt and change, is very important – not to resist, but to observe, to see what is happening in the environment. The second is the ability to respond to participants in education in the organization, regardless of the level or function performed. The third is the ability to use the inner potential and existing abilities to create something new, to change the old.

Firstly, it is important to be able to implement any emerging changes, which are often feared in the context of education when there is no knowledge needed to manage the changes, when its meaning and benefits are not understood on an individual and organizational scale, the change is accompanied by many individual and organizational attitudes and beliefs about previous changes. **Creating change** is defined by the researchers Denison & Mishra (1995), Denison, Janovics, Young, & Cho (2007) as the organization's ability to understand the changing environment, quickly respond to current trends, anticipate future changes, and create adaptive ways. According to these researchers, for the implementation of changes, it is necessary to monitor the external environment and respond to changes in the market without deviating from the goal, but to flexibly and easily change the workflow

if external factors that cannot be changed arise, to be able to improve the available methods of operation into those suitable for the current circumstances, to be able to collaborate and bring together different teams to create innovations (the best example is the transition of educational institutions to a remote space during the COVID-19 period, monitoring the environment, quick adaptation and creation of new ways of doing things using existing knowledge and methods in creating learning platforms between different specialists). According to Jacobs, van Witteloostuijn, & Christe-Zeyse (2013), implementing change in an organization is very important at all levels: at the micro level (where the focus is on how change works or can affect the individual level), at the meso level (how changes are implemented in the organization and how they affect all members of the organization), at the macro level (when the environment surrounding the organization and the ability of the organization to adapt and operate are analysed). How people respond or will respond to change depends on the attitudes, personality traits, behaviours, reactions, knowledge, skill level, and readiness to accept changes of the people related to a particular change. Thus, the employee's behaviour during changes is determined by the general characteristics of the organization (ability to plan changes, properly inform employees about them, etc.) and the employee's individual psychological characteristics, especially certain personality traits, his/her attitude, behaviour, reactions, knowledge, skill level and readiness to accept changes, i.e., psychologically adapt or resist them. Therefore, the implementation of changes must take place at all levels, which is not only related to individual, but also organizational learning.

Secondly, one of the most important indicators of the adaptability of organizational culture is the ability to learn at all levels in order to adapt to social, economic, cultural and other ongoing small and large changes, to be able to overcome constant challenges and improve at the organizational level. The main resources for organizational learning are information and knowledge about current and future changes (Ginevičius, Paliulis, & Chlivickas, 2006). Therefore, in the context of adaptability, **organizational learning** becomes important, which allows the organization to achieve successful performance results through the continuous learning of its members, the creation of knowledge at the individual, group, and whole organization levels. Organizational learning provides an opportunity to respond more flexibly and efficiently to changes in the external environment and within organizations, to develop individuals who are able to consistently participate in organizational learning, during which significant knowledge for the organization is created. According to Denison, Janovics, Young, & Cho (2007), when the organization receives, translates, and interprets the signals received from the environment, evaluates them as new opportunities and tries to learn and improve, promote innovation and acquire knowledge, and develop abilities, we can name it as organizational learning. According to the authors Denison & Mishra (1995), organizational learning occurs when, first of all, the organization makes certain that everyone is informed about what is going on across the organization, so that there is a smooth process of information dissemination and communication; secondly, that learning takes place continuously in day-to-day work and is understood as a daily function; third, that innovation and risk-taking are continuously encouraged and rewarded; fourth,

that there is tolerance for failures, which are treated as an opportunity for learning and improvement. Organizational learning is considered a process during which the employees of the organization individually and collectively are constantly able to learn, create, develop new knowledge, and share it, to acquire the necessary performance improvement competencies that are important for the organization's performance, in order to adapt to the requirements of the environment (Binham & Jerayr, 2012). In this way, a common understanding of the members of the organization is acquired and formed, common operational experience is gained and learning is carried out at the organizational level. During such learning, the individual knowledge of each member is developed and new collective knowledge is constructed. Thus, organizational learning not only allows to achieve a common understanding in the organization, not only provides opportunities for each member of the organization to improve their individual activities as a member of the organization, but also creates conditions for each individual to develop their personal knowledge, abilities, and attitudes (Hanson, Niqab, & Bangert, 2021). Organizational learning helps to apply knowledge to achieve organizational goals. In the long run, this process changes the behaviour of the organization, because the members of the organization learn to learn from the organizational learning process itself and the results obtained (Indumathi, 2016). However, it is important that the knowledge created through learning during and after the activity must be consolidated in the organization's operational agreements, systems, and culture itself, and the officially established learning mechanisms must be consolidated within the organization.

Thirdly, to increase the adaptability of the organizational culture, **customer focus** is extremely important as well as the available system of cooperation of the organization with customers. In fact, many of the changes coming from the external environment are also related to the customers' needs, which pose a number of challenges to educational institutions, because they are not understandable and clear, and the customer himself/herself is deeply unknown, with undefined roles and responsibilities in the educational institution. However, educational institutions also avoid talking about who he/she really is – a customer or a member of the community (Starkutė & Valinevičienė, 2013), what his/her role is, what he/she has to do, and what is not his/her domain anymore.<sup>1</sup> In this article, the approach to customers is pragmatic. It does not matter whether he/she is an

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<sup>1</sup> In the disclosure of the indicator of customer focus, the concept of "customer" becomes important, it has established attitudes for a decade, creates resistance (resistance to something that cannot be changed), there is no desire to understand how it can be used to create a new, high-quality relationship between participants in education using the managerial components of the "customer" or "consumer" mechanism (and this is what can be changed, i.e., another relationship that educational institutions want can be created). This article focuses not on "for whom to do it" (customers), but "what to do" (processes). In the context of this article, the customer can be understood very broadly (learners, parents, employers, society, or other organizations) (Želvys, 2003), double customer – parents and children (Fidler, 2006), in the field of education, parents are the real customers of the schools, who make decisions about the services provided by the school (Dasgupta & Prashar, 2020). However, without focusing on a deeper analysis of the concept of the customer, the article defines the customer as a person who has needs and expectations, who can provide the necessary knowledge and experience, useful insights for the emergence of innovations in the educational institution, for improving processes, for overcoming changes and for creating the desired organizational culture by engaging in processes that create common value, who is valuable to the educational institution as a co-creator.

internal or external customer (student, teacher or parents), however, it is viewed through the prism of opportunity – not only to get to know the client, to understand the changing world-view, wishes and needs, but to learn how to manage the value they create by including them in school processes, promote and develop the elements of decision-making and feedback that will shape new behavioural patterns in the organization.

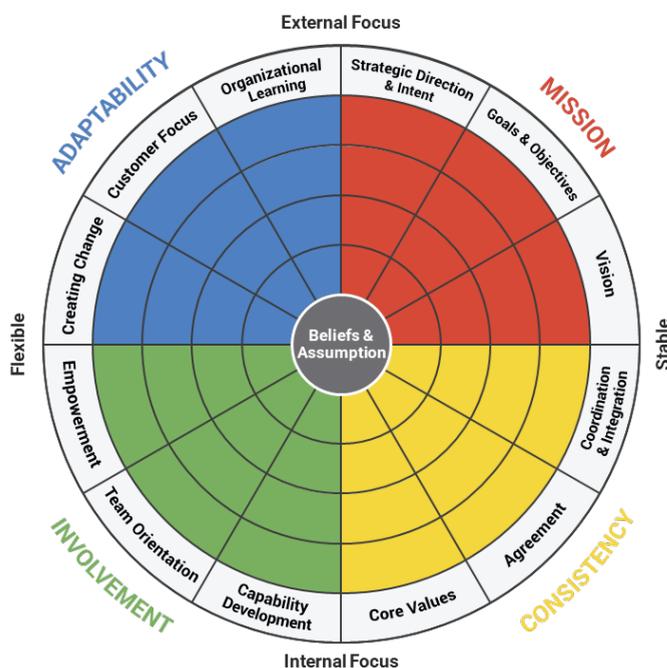
Denison & Mishra (1995), Denison, Janovics, Young, & Cho (2007) distinguishing the characteristic of adaptability of organizational culture – customer focus – defines it as the organization's ability to understand, respond to its customers, anticipate their current and future needs. This indicator shows how much and whether the organization seeks and wants to understand its customers, their expectations, current and future needs (Denison & Mishra (1995), Denison, Janovics, Young, & Cho (2007)). According to the authors, this indicator reveals the extent to which customers' wishes and recommendations lead the organization to changes, whether they are taken into account and whether their recommendations are used to renew performance, implement new methods of work, whether the information obtained is shared between different teams and whether it is used for cooperation in creating various innovations and integrating new methods of work.

Customers who are involved in the organization's processes are identified as value co-creators and treated as equal active cooperation partners (Oertzen, Odekerken-Schröder, Brax, & Mager, 2018). Co-creation provides an opportunity to be included in the service development processes, helps one feel confident, meets all one's needs related to the service, increases satisfaction (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Ostrom, 2002), creates conditions to provide feedback and get involved in decision-making, because, according to Damkuvienė, Balčiūnas, Valuckienė, Petukienė, & Pranckūnienė (2021), individuals shape the direction of the development of the school as a system when making decisions. Therefore, the participation of customers in the processes of the educational institution must be considered, with roles and responsibilities and a clear structure how a mutual relationship must be created, because customers, when creating value, use their knowledge, thinking, emotions and experience, and when using the service, give them their own meaning, provide useful insights and suggestions for service improvement. Educational institutions must receive it, understand it, and use it for improvement and growth. Customer involvement affects the creation and perception of value, as customers perceive the value they themselves create (Starkutė & Valinevičienė, 2013). According to Oertzen, Odekerken-Schröder, Brax, & Mager (2018), service co-creation involves a two-way transparent dialogue between the service provider and the customer and is focused on the customer and his/her experience. In the case of learning together, the place of value creation is transferred to the process of cooperation and creation of a common field, in which the organization is treated as the initiator and enabler of this process, and the customer is invited to participate in the value creation process. In such a context, the role of educators as co-creators appears, and parents and students as clients become equal active participants in education. Kristensson et al. (2008) believe that the involvement of customers in the creation of shared value transforms them from passive to active partners of the organization, sharing experiences and ideas, but at the same time also helps to create additional, exceptional value, which is no less

important than the final result of the service (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). The participants in education, related in this way, become partners in the common process and participants in learning; cooperation takes place by creating and involving them in the implementation of the educational process by accepting their knowledge, competences and experience while learning together and creating long-term relationships based on trust. Received information, feedback, and changes in behaviour lead to the emergence of something new, form the adaptability of the entire organization, because of which the organization is able to survive and sustain itself, constantly adapting to new realities and unexpected circumstances.

## Justification of methodology

**Justification of research methodology.** Methodological basis of the article is the methodology of the Denison Organizational Culture Survey (DOCS) (Denison, Nieminen, & Kotrba, 2012; Denison, Janovics, Young, & Cho, 2006; Denison & Mishra, 1995; Denison & Neale, 1996; Denison, Haaland, & Goelzer, 2004). The Denison Organizational Culture Survey measures four traits of organizational culture – *mission*, *adaptability*, *consistency*, and *involvement* and 3 indicators for each trait (see Figure 1), each of which consists of 4 statements in the questionnaire, consequently, each trait consists of 12 statements. A total of 48 statements are analysed. The scores for each trait of this study were obtained by calculating the means of the responses to the 12 statements that make it up, therefore, the traits and the indicators that make them up can have values from 1 to 5. **The trait of adaptability presented in the article includes the indicators of creating change, customer focus and organizational learning**, each of which consists of 4 statements.



*Figure 1. Visual presentation of the Denison Organizational Culture Survey (DOCS)*

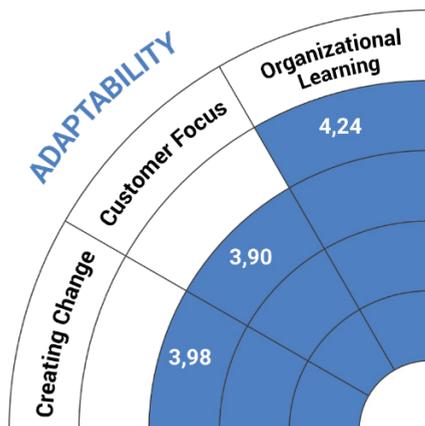
**Statistical data analysis.** Statistical analysis of the data was performed using the SPSS 23 software package. Frequency tables of variables were created to evaluate the indicators of descriptive statistics, means, medians and standard deviations were calculated. In order to evaluate the internal reliability of the Denison scale, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated. In order to compare the estimates of quantitative variables between two independent groups, the nonparametric Mann–Whitney–Wilcoxon test was applied, since the distributions are statistically significantly different from the normal ones, asymmetry and outliers are observed. The level of statistical significance  $\alpha=0.05$  was selected.

**Research participants.** A total of 1817 respondents participated in the study. Of them, 93.1 percent were from public educational institutions, 4.2 percent were from private educational institutions, 1.6 percent indicated other institutions, and 1.2 percent did not want to respond. According to the positions held, 62.10 percent of the respondents were teachers, 15.10 percent were principals and deputies of the organization, 4.5 percent were administrative workers, 15.4 percent were other, 2.9 percent did not want to specify. Respondents from all ten counties of Lithuania took part in the survey. About a third of the subjects (32.4%) participated in the study individually, independently of the participation of the organization in which they work, and 67.6 percent participated in the study together with the organization (with the consent of the head), after the organization agreed to participate in the study.

The majority of the respondents in the study were 50–59 years old – 38.6 percent, 40–49 years old – 21.7 percent, 60 years and older – 16.6 percent, 30–39 years old – 15.2 percent, meanwhile, 20–29 years old – only 4.2 percent. Almost a third of the respondents (33.1%) have been working in the organization for more than 20 years, meanwhile, the groups of 3–4 years (11.7%) and 5–6 years (10.6%) of experience are in the second and third place in terms of frequency. Most of the respondents who took part in the study work in organizations of 51–100 people – 43.5 percent, 32.3 percent work in organizations of 21–50 people, 13.9 percent work in organizations of 101–150 people, and only 1.7 percent of the subjects worked in organizations with up to 20 employees.

## **Results of the study of the trait of adaptability in the organizational culture of general education schools**

*The adaptability trait* is a quite strongly expressed trait of organizational culture in Lithuanian educational institutions, with a total average score of 4.02 out of 5 points, compared to other traits of organizational culture (mission – 4.10 points, involvement – 4.09 points, consistency – 3.91 points). Adaptability is defined as the ability of an organization to respond to external conditions through internal changes. The adaptability indicator shows how organizations are able to transform the needs of the environment into activities, whether they are able to adapt to rapid changes in the environment and anticipate future changes, respond to external factors, whether they pay attention to current needs.



**Figure 2.** Expression of the adaptability trait and indicators

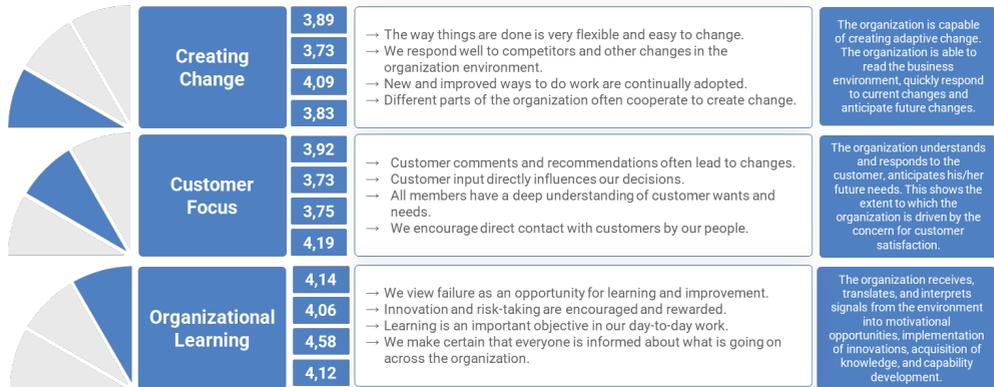
The adaptability trait consists of three indicators: creating change, customer focus, and organizational learning (see Figure 2). The *organizational learning* indicator of the organizational culture was rated the highest (4.24 points), however, the evaluation of other indicators that make up the *adaptability* trait, *creating change* and *customer focus*, is significantly lower (3.89 and 3.90 points).

The scores for the statements that make up each indicator are presented in Figure 3. In order to solve the challenges that have arisen, organizations use various measures that ensure a quick response to these changes. Organizational learning is one of them. The expression of the scores of the statements of the *organizational learning* criterion (see Figure 3) shows that *failures are tolerated in organizations and are viewed as an opportunity for learning and improvement* (4.14 points), *innovation and risk-taking are valued and encouraged in organizations* (4.06 point) and *it is made certain that everyone is informed about what is going on across the organization* (4.12 points). The strong attitude and belief of the respondents that *learning is an important objective in day-to-day work* (4.58 points) also emerged.

The *customer focus* indicator was rated by the respondents as 3.90 points (see Figure 2). However, when analysing the evaluation of individual statements in more detail, quite large differences are observed between the evaluation of the statements of customer focus. The research results show (see Figure 3) that educational institutions *encourage direct contact with customers by employees* (4.19 points), and *customer comments and recommendations often lead to changes* (3.92 points). However, the statement that *customer input directly influences our decisions* is rated much weaker (3.73 points), meanwhile *all members of the organization have a deep understanding of customer wants and needs* was rated as 3.75 points.

Organizational learning becomes especially relevant when implementing changes, changing the environment and introducing innovations. The expression of the scores of the statements of the *creating change* criterion shows that in educational organizations *new and improved ways to do work are continually adopted* (4.09 points), it is

more difficult for educational organizations to *cooperate between different parts of the organization to create change* (3.83 points), to achieve the goal it is more difficult to change the workflow flexibly and easily (3.89 points). The statement that *we respond well to competitors and other changes in the business environment* is the lowest rated (3.73 points).



**Figure 3.** Expression of the scores of the adaptability trait of organizational culture by statements

In order to evaluate possible differences in organizational culture between different socio-demographic groups of employees of educational institutions, the scores of the adaptability trait were compared between teachers and school heads, their age, type of organization, number of employees, length of service and other groups.

First, adaptability trait estimates were compared between school heads and teachers. 1129 teachers, 275 principals and deputies, as well as 82 other administrative staff participated in this study. For the purposes of this study, it was decided to combine principals, deputies, and other administrative workers into one group “school heads and other administrative workers” (in which principals and deputies make up 77 percent of administrative workers), and to compare their indicators of the adaptability trait of organizational culture with those of teachers.

The study compared the adaptability trait scores of school heads (and other administrative workers) and teachers, which revealed (see Table 1) that school heads’ adaptability trait estimates were statistically significantly higher than those of teachers ( $p < 0.001$ ).

When evaluating the indicators that make up the trait of *adaptability*, it was found (see Table 1) that school heads’ (and other administrative workers’) estimates of the indicators *customer focus* ( $p = 0.007$ ) and *organizational learning* ( $p < 0.001$ ) are statistically significantly higher than those of teachers, however, the difference in the *creating change* indicator is not statistically significant between school heads and teachers ( $p = 0.551$ ). This shows that school heads and teachers evaluate *creating change* in educational institutions in a similar way.

**Table 1.** Comparison of the trait of adaptability of organizational culture and its constituent indicators between teachers ( $n=966$ ) and school heads (and other administrative workers) ( $n=325$ ).

Variables	Position				Z	p
	Teacher		School head			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Adaptability	4.00	0.55	4.13	0.45	-3.50	<b>p&lt;0.001</b>
Creating change	3.90	0.66	3.94	0.62	-0.60	0.551
Customer focus	3.89	0.59	4.00	0.52	-2.69	<b>0.007</b>
Organizational learning	4.21	0.61	4.42	0.48	-6.13	<b>p&lt;0.001</b>

When evaluating the differences between younger and older subjects in the *adaptability* trait of organizational culture, it was found (see Table 2) that the estimates of the trait of adaptability of older employees of educational institutions are statistically significantly higher than those of younger subjects ( $p=0.034$ ). This shows that older (from 50 years old) employees of educational institutions evaluate the trait of adaptability of organizational culture and its constituent indicators more favourably than younger (up to 49 years old) subjects.

**Table 2.** Comparison of the trait of adaptability of organizational culture and its constituent indicators between younger ( $n=629$ ) and older ( $n=855$ ) subjects.

Variables	Age				Z	Z
	up to 49 years old		from 50 years old			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Adaptability	4.00	0.54	4.05	0.50	-2.13	<b>0.034</b>
Creating change	3.87	0.67	3.92	0.62	-1.76	0.079
Customer focus	3.90	0.59	3.91	0.55	-0.56	0.574
Organizational learning	4.21	0.61	4.27	0.55	-1.80	0.072

When evaluating the indicators that make up the trait of *adaptability*, there is a tendency that older subjects evaluate organizational learning ( $p=0.072$ ) and creating change ( $p=0.079$ ) slightly more favourably, however, these differences are not statistically significant. The difference in the indicator of customer focus is also not statistically significant between older and younger subjects ( $p=0.574$ ).

The trait of adaptability of organizational culture was also compared between employees working in public and private educational institutions. It was found that the evaluation of adaptability does not differ statistically significantly between the subjects working in a public and private educational institution ( $p=0.729$ ). Also, the differences between the indicators that constitute the trait of adaptability (creating change, customer focus and organizational learning) were not statistically significant between the subjects working in a public and private institution (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** Comparison of the trait of adaptability of organizational culture and its constituent indicators between employees working in public and private educational institutions.

Work in an educational institution						
Variables	Public		Private		Z	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Adaptability	4.02	0.52	4.01	0.48	-0.35	0.729
Creating change	3.89	0.64	3.92	0.68	-0.28	0.777
Customer focus	3.90	0.57	3.91	0.49	-0.14	0.890
Organizational learning	4.24	0.58	4.20	0.61	-0.52	0.605

The adaptability trait was also compared between those working in larger organizations (51 and more employees) and those working in smaller organizations (up to 50 employees), however, this difference is not statistically significant ( $p=0.623$ ). There are no statistically significant differences between the indicators that constitute the trait of adaptability (see Table 4) – creating change, customer focus and organizational learning – between those working in larger organizations (51 and more employees) and those working in smaller organizations (up to 50 employees).

**Table 4.** Comparison of the trait of adaptability of organizational culture and its constituent indicators depending on the size of the organization (number of employees)

Number of employees						
Variables	up to 50		51 and more		Z	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Adaptability	4.04	0.49	4.01	0.53	-0.49	0.623
Creating change	3.90	0.60	3.89	0.66	-0.05	0.963
Customer focus	3.92	0.56	3.89	0.57	-0.72	0.469
Organizational learning	4.25	0.56	4.23	0.59	0.66	0.512

When comparing the adaptability trait between employees with shorter (up to 10 years) and longer (over 11 years) work experience in this educational institution, the difference is not statistically significant ( $p=0.850$ ). Likewise, the differences in the indicators (creating change, customer focus and organizational learning) constituting the trait of adaptability were not statistically significant between employees with shorter (up to 10 years) and longer (over 11 years) working experience in this educational institution (see Table 5).

In order to evaluate the possible differences in organizational culture between the subjects who participated in the study with the school head’s consent *after the organization agreed to participate in the study* and the respondents who *participated in the study independently regardless of whether the organization participated in the study*, the differences in the adaptability trait between these groups were compared (see Table 6).

**Table 5.** Comparison of the trait of adaptability of organizational culture and its constituent indicators depending on length of service in the organization.

Work experience						
Variables	up to 10 years		11 years and more		Z	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Adaptability	4.03	0.50	4.02	0.53	-0.19	0.850
Creating change	3.91	0.64	3.89	0.64	-0.29	0.771
Customer focus	3.92	0.56	3.89	0.57	-1.26	0.207
Organizational learning	4.24	0.58	4.25	0.58	-0.56	0.574

**Table 6.** Comparison of the trait of adaptability of organizational culture and its constituent indicators depending on whether the subjects participate in the study independently or with the consent of the school head with the agreement of the organization.

Participate in the study						
Variables	Individually		With the organization		Z	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Adaptability	3.95	0.53	4.06	0.52	-3.93	<b>p&lt;0.001</b>
Creating change	3.78	0.67	3.95	0.62	-4.71	<b>p&lt;0.001</b>
Customer focus	3.85	0.58	3.93	0.57	-3.11	<b>0.002</b>
Organizational learning	4.18	0.61	4.26	0.58	-2.51	<b>0.012</b>

It was found that the estimates of the trait of adaptability of organizational culture of the subjects participating in the study with the consent of the school head are statistically significantly higher than those of the subjects who participated independently of the organization ( $p < 0.001$ ). Also, the estimates of the indicators (creating change, customer focus and organizational learning) that make up the trait of adaptability are statistically significantly higher among those who participate in the study with the consent of the school head compared to those who participate independently of the organization.

## Discussion and evaluation of the results

The obtained results revealed that *adaptability* is quite strongly expressed among the traits of organizational culture (*involvement*, *consistency*, and *mission*) evaluated in Lithuanian educational institutions. Analysing the indicators that make up the trait of adaptability – creating change, customer focus and organizational learning, – the obtained results show an extremely high evaluation of the indicator of organizational learning, however, the *evaluation of indicators of customer focus and creating change was significantly lower*. This shows a certain lack of balance in the adaptability trait of organizational culture – educational institutions seek to acquire knowledge, develop skills, learn

from their mistakes, however, they have less ability to quickly respond to emerging challenges and anticipate future changes, and turn the needs of the environment into actions, as well as they are characterized by a less expressed orientation towards the current and future needs of customers, they are not understandable and clear.

One of the tools to respond to continuous change is *organizational learning*. The obtained results show that in the organizational culture of educational institutions, the benefits and meaning of learning are valued, learning at work is valued as a means and a condition for adapting to constant changes both inside and outside the organization. However, it is important to pay attention to the promotion of innovation at the organizational level and a more open approach to the implementation of innovation, evaluating and encouraging employees who take risks in the application of innovations in the educational process.

The results of the *customer focus* indicator of organizational culture show that although direct cooperation between both parties is encouraged in educational institutions, however, there is a lack of listening to customers' requirements and needs, as well as the ability of customers to directly influence the decisions made is rated lower. The lower evaluation of the customer focus indicator of organizational culture could be caused by the concept of "customer" in the educational context, which is still unfamiliar to the employees of educational institutions, when talking about students and their parents, and this concept was used in the questionnaire during the research. Also, the lower evaluation of the customer focus indicator could be caused by the role of the teacher as an educational service provider, perhaps still not so common for the employees of educational institutions, and the changing relationship with students and their parents.

The results of the *creating change* indicator of organizational culture show that much attention is paid to new and improved methods of work performance, however, there are challenges in collaborating and creating change between different departments or units, and it is more difficult to flexibly change workflows as needed. The least attention is paid to monitoring the competitive environment and responding to operational changes in the market. This shows that the approach to competition and market monitoring among other service providers of educational institutions, coming from business management, is still quite alien to the organizational culture of Lithuanian educational institutions.

The obtained results revealed that heads (and other administrative workers) of Lithuanian educational institutions rate the trait of organizational culture, adaptability, and its constituent indicators (creating change, customer focus and organizational learning) more favourably than teachers. These results confirm that heads of educational institutions pay more attention to observing changes inside and outside the organization than teachers, therefore, it is natural that the evaluation of adaptability as a trait of organizational culture is more favourable among managers. Also, heads of educational institutions are more focused on customer needs compared to teachers because the long-term success of the organization depends on the satisfaction of customer needs. However, it is interesting that the evaluation of creating change does not differ between school heads and teachers. Probably, both school heads and teachers evaluate the possibilities of implementing systemic changes in educational institutions in a similar way.

The study found that older employees of educational institutions (from 50 years old) evaluate the trait of adaptability of organizational culture more favourably than younger (up to 49 years old) respondents. There is also a tendency for older subjects to rate organizational learning and creating change slightly more favourably, however, these differences are not statistically significant, and the difference in the customer focus indicator is not different between older and younger subjects. It is interesting that the evaluation of the adaptability trait and its constituent indicators does not differ between employees with shorter (up to 10 years) and longer (over 11 years) working experience in this educational institution, consequently, these results are rather contradictory comparing them to the obtained results between younger and older subjects. It is worth noting that the subjects were only asked about the length of service in the current organization, not total length of service, therefore, this could be one of the reasons why the conflicting results are observed.

It was found that the evaluation of the adaptability trait and its constituent indicators does not differ statistically significantly between subjects working in public and private educational institutions. These results could be due to one of the limitations of the study – a relatively small number of subjects working in private institutions ( $n=76$ , i.e., 4.2 percent of all the subjects). Although the number of respondents working in private schools observed in this study is low, it roughly corresponds to the observed ratio of private schools among all schools in Lithuania.

The evaluation of the adaptability trait and its constituent indicators was also compared between those working in larger organizations (51 and more employees) and those working in smaller organizations (up to 50 employees), however, this difference is not statistically significant. Previous scientific research suggests that other important factors may help explain the relationship between the size of the organization and adaptability. According to researchers, small organizations can respond faster to changes in the environment, large ones have more resources and are more ready for innovation (Ngatno & Dewi, 2016), however, small organizations are often rigid in terms of structure and thinking, therefore, the success of adaptability depends on the leading individuals (Girneata, 2014), and for large ones it is more difficult due to changing the strategy and other structural and systemic elements.

The study found that the employees of Lithuanian educational institutions who participated in the study with the consent of the school head after the organization agreed to participate in the study, evaluate the trait of adaptability of organizational culture and its constituent indicators (creating change, customer focus and organizational learning) more favourably than the subjects who participated in the study independently regardless of whether the organization participated in the study. One of the presumptions could be that more motivated organizations agreed to participate in the study, the organizational culture of which is evaluated more favourably, therefore, their motivation to participate in the study was also higher. Another presumption could be that perhaps employees feel a greater desire to provide a more favourable evaluation of the organizational culture, when it is known that the study is conducted throughout the organization with the

knowledge of the administration, compared to subjects who participate in the study independently of the organization.

## **Conclusions**

In the context of organizational culture, adaptability is understood as the organizational ability to create changes and adequately respond to them, to be able to successfully reconcile various emerging contradictions, to understand them, to look for ways to adapt to the changing participants in education and other conditions, requirements and expectations of the environment and transform them into a new activity, to understand the customer and meet his/her needs in line with the vision and goals of the organization and continue to learn as an organization.

Adaptability is measured by the following indicators – creating change, customer focus and organizational learning – which are closely related to each other and affect each other and influence the effectiveness of the organization, change the organization's approach to constant changes and upheavals, allow the entire organization to perceive the external environment and respond to it, to focus on the ability to adapt and change the current situation, to grow together and to create new knowledge to replace or supplement the old knowledge.

The results of the study revealed that the organizational culture of Lithuanian educational institutions is characterized by a rather highly expressed trait of adaptability, which is based on creating change, customer focus and organizational learning. Educational institutions pay great attention to organizational learning, however, there are challenges in the areas of creating change and customer focus in organizational.

Employees of Lithuanian educational institutions, who participated in the study with the school head's consent after the organization agreed to participate in the study, evaluate the trait of adaptability of organizational culture and its constituent indicators (creating change, customer focus and organizational learning) more favourably than the subjects who participated in the study independently, regardless of whether the organization participated in the study. The study also revealed that heads (and other administrative workers) of Lithuanian educational institutions rate the adaptability trait of organizational culture and its indicators (customer focus and organizational learning) more favourably than teachers, however, the evaluation of the creating change indicator does not differ between the school heads and teachers. It was found that older employees of educational institutions evaluate the adaptability feature of organizational culture more favourably than younger subjects, however, this difference between age groups was not found when evaluating the indicators that make up adaptability (creating change, customer focus and organizational learning). The evaluation of the trait of adaptability and its constituent indicators (creating change, customer focus and organizational learning) does not differ statistically significantly depending on the subjects' length of service in the organization, on the size of the organization (number of employees), between employees working in public and private Lithuanian educational institutions.

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