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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL SILENCE AND EMPLOYEE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS: THE CASE OF LITHUANIAN TEACHERS

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A B S T R A C T
Organisational development requires creative and open employees, who must feel confident to use their inventiveness and share ideas. However, some entities encounter organisational silence. The lack of research into this phenomenon in Lithuanian educational institutions encouraged the authors of the article to investigate how demographic characteristics of teachers relate to types of organisational silence. The authors used two nonparametric tests for analyses, i.e. Mann–Whitney U to study gender and Kruskal–Wallis H to investigate age and marital status. The quantitative research targeted teachers of 104 Lithuanian secondary schools. The research findings contribute to filling the knowledge gap in the topic of organisational silence in Lithuania. The enclosed demographic characteristics can help rectify the current situation in educational institutions.

K E Y   W O R D S
organisational silence, organisational voice, organisational culture, demographic characteristics

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INTRODUCTION

The modern world is constantly changing and developing, which poses new challenges for organisations aiming to function successfully, offer new products, and adapt to novel situations. For the most part, the human factor is essential for organisations to survive. Contemporary employers attempt to involve employees in the management of the institution, expecting them to speak up, react to the problems and challenges in the working and broader environ-

ment, share their knowledge and experience, and stand up for their convictions. Usually, employees have ideas, information and opinions on how to improve their work constructively. Sometimes, employees share, but often they remain silent, keeping their personal opinion to themselves (Bagheri et al., 2012). The phenomenon when members of an organisation refuse to express their opinion regarding organisational matters because of various reasons is referred to as organisational silence (Chen, 2018).

Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008) noted that organisational silence might be a complex phenomenon. It may consist of different subjects, such as the effectiveness and the productivity of the workgroup, individual problems at work, and anxiety about the behaviour considered ethically inappropriate. The phenomenon can apply to different people working in an organisation, e.g., specialists, mid-level workers, heads, and top-level managers. Also, it can have different purposes and reasons, e.g., a desire to maintain the current situation or fear of being misunderstood (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). Thus, organisational silence may be a combination of different factors, including reasons, sectors, people, levels and types. Some scientists believe that organisational silence differs depending on gender (Fapohunda, 2015), age and marital status (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018), the role of an employee at the workplace (Fapohunda, 2012), and culture (Hess & Jepsen, 2009). Consequently, employee silence is a complex and frequent phenomenon which requires more attention from scientists.

Organisational silence is a topic, which should be considered vital by all organisations. The phenomenon is researched in different fields of economic activity, such as the public sector (Behtoui et al., 2017), health care (Yalçin & Baykal, 2019), accommodation services (Zhang et al., 2019), finance (Adeel & Muhammad, 2017), telecommunications and technologies (Emelifeonwu & Valk, 2019), and the heavy industry (Dedahanov & Rhee, 2015). The analysis of scientific literature revealed a lack of research into the manifestation of organisational silence in the sector of education. The system of education aims to teach children to think creatively and critically as well as look for open and innovative solutions to a situation (The National Education Strategy for 2013–2022). To achieve these goals, teachers must be brave, skilful, open to innovations, and capable of expressing their opinion. Furthermore, the diversity of employees in terms of gender and age promotes creativity and innovation in an organisation (Syed,

2014; Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). Hence, deliberate concealment of ideas may negatively affect the work of teachers, their development and the quality of education.

Based on the above, the authors of this article aimed to investigate how organisational silence was distributed among teachers with different demographic characteristics. The research also aimed to indicate how demographic characteristics of teachers related to types of organisational silence.

The research used several methods, including the analysis of scientific literature, quantitative questionnaire, descriptive statistics, reliability analyses, the Mann–Whitney U test and the Kruskal–Wallis H test.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. DEFINITION OF ORGANISATIONAL SILENCE

The investigation into the concept of organisational silence starts from knowing that "silence" and "voice" (i.e. having a voice in an organisation) are two opposing notions. In recent decades, more attention has been given to the concept of "voice" in the management of organisations (Allen, 2014). This concept is defined as a behaviour used by employees to express their opinions, suggestions and ideas. Employee voice facilitates staff participation in organisational decision-making (Emelifeonwe & Valk, 2019). Effective communication in an organisation requires two parties: a speaker and a listener. This way, two forms of communication — voice and silence — interact in the process.

Hirschman (1970) was the first to present the phenomena of voice and silence in an organisation. According to the author, silence in an organisation signified the loyalty of employees. On the other hand, the employee silence allowed assuming an agreement to policies, decisions and behaviours of colleagues and managers expressed by certain inaction as well as the confirmation of the status quo (Dyne et al., 2003). Such perception treated employee silence as a positive stance.

However, the turn of the century came with a better understanding of the importance of employee attitudes in the development and transformation of an organisation. According to Köylüoğlu et al. (2015), generation of information outrivalled the traditional understanding of production. The current globalised world requires increasingly greater staff involvement

in controlling the streams of information in an organisation. Therefore, since the last decade of the 20th century, organisational silence has been perceived as a negative phenomenon.

Silence in organisations was not only perceived as a sign of passive approval. Employee silence may be an active, conscious, purposeful and deliberate choice, but it also can be unintentional. In this respect, it is important to note theoretical insights by Cohen (1990), Morrison and Milliken (2000), Pinder and Harlos (2001). Cohen (1990) was probably the first to deny that silence necessarily meant assent. He proposed that silence could also mean a contradiction and disagreement, which could arise because of the lack of information or the absence of opportunities to use a voice (Pinder & Harlos, 2001). Therefore, under certain circumstances, silence may be a natural way of expression. Penuel et al. (2013) called this unintentional manifestation of silence "natural silence" (Le et al., 2019). The gist of silence was perceived as natural when an organisation had no other choice but to remain silent.

Morrison and Milliken (2000) defined organisational silence as a collective phenomenon. The authors were among the first to use the concept "organisational silence". They created the concept of silence climate to explain how standards of the organisational culture impacted employee silence (Wynen et al., 2019). The authors suggested that employees remained silent because they knew that it was pointless or dangerous to express their opinion in the context of their organisation. Employees take part in a model of organisational culture which comprises internal politics, demographic characteristics, convictions of the top management, feelings shaped in the collective, and communication processes. This model explains how lower-level employees become disappointed or afraid to speak up. According to Morrison and Milliken (2000), organisational silence becomes a collective behaviour when employees decide to conceal organisational matters.

Pinder and Harlos (2001) presented a different understanding of deliberate organisational silence, defining it as inhibition of a person's emotional, cognitive expression and behaviour, knowing that it may influence the person or the organisation. For instance, when a person does what is expected without speaking up, it may be a sign of protest in an organisation (Dedahanov & Rhee, 2015). Therefore, employee silence may have different meanings depending on motives. When employees have individual motives, they may choose not to reveal their opinion voluntar-

ily. Silence may have different motives. According to Mokhtari (2016), they can be of three different types:
- managerial (negative reaction of the employer to comments, a forcible style of management, employee fear of negative responses to their comments, the atmosphere of distrust and suspicion),
- organisational (the inertia of work, the centralised organisational structure and the absence of the bottom-up feedback procedure),
- social (following the crowd, group responsibility instead of personal responsibility, and group thinking), and
- personal (maintaining the status quo and the pessimism of the management) (Bordbar, 2019).

Therefore, employee silence may result from an organisational model as well as personal interests.

Different reasons may originate organisational silence. According to Milliken and Morrison (2003), the most frequent reasons for not speaking up can have consequences related to organisational silence. For instance, inexperienced employees consider their opinion meaningless and unable to change anything. In this case, employees usually choose to remain silent. This silence may affect the psychological health of employees and the whole organisation. Employees may choose silence not only because of low self-esteem but also due to the lack of information, fear, certain personal qualities and negative experiences. Therefore, the phenomenon of organisational silence and its reasons are defined differently by scientists, such as Morrison and Milliken (2000), Pinder and Harlos (2001), Cohen (1990), Dyne et al. (2003).

In the analysis of the concept of organisational silence, another important aspect is its impact on the organisation as a whole and each employee individually. According to Milliken and Morrison (2003), adverse outcomes can be expected, e.g., being labelled or viewed negatively, damaged relationships, retaliation or punishment, and belief that speaking up will make no difference. However, silence can bring even more significant negative consequences.

Human resources are the most critical component of educational institutions because they create value for future generations. Therefore, it is vital to know and understand employee attitudes towards work and their motivation when participating in the processes of education. When employee silence becomes a rooted conviction, people tend to perceive themselves as useless members of their organisation. Consequently, psychological contradictions appear between actions and thoughts, damaging employee job satisfaction, their loyalty and motivation (Akar,

2018). Such a situation may prevent employees from being creative and open to innovations.

Communication is believed to be crucial to the success of an organisation. The choice to remain silent may harm the communication and overall functioning of an educational institution (Bagheri et al., 2012). As educational institutions must exchange information and ideas on a daily basis, positive and negative relationships between employees can be detected easily. The lack of collaboration in such institutions makes it hard to ensure the necessary streams of information and achieve organisational goals (Köse & Köse, 2019). The choice to remain silent halts the clarification of mistakes and problems and distorts effective solutions. This way, organisational silence manifests as an ineffective process that wastes energy and efforts.

In some cases, employee silence may be useful as it can decrease the surplus of managerial information, deescalate interpersonal conflicts, and protect employee privacy (Dyne et al., 2003). However, this phenomenon is more frequently considered harmful. Organisational silence is a new phenomenon that has great significance for communication and consequences on individual and organisational levels. This issue is critical for most modern organisations (Köse & Köse, 2019), including educational institutions. Thus, organisational silence should be analysed in more detail in the field of education.

1.2. TYPES OF ORGANISATIONAL SILENCE

Organisational silence manifests in a variety of types, such as remaining silent in meetings, low participation, the lack of collective voice, etc. (Bagheri et al., 2012). To be able to recognise employee silence, it is necessary to know the types of manifestation as well as types of silence.

Scientific literature presents different typologies of organisational silence, most frequently mentioning acquiescent (Pinder & Harlos, 2001), defensive (Pinder & Harlos, 2001) and prosocial (Dyne et al., 2003) types of silence.

Pinder and Harlos (2001) (Amiri et al., 2018) were the first to mention the types of acquiescent and defensive silence. Acquiescent silence is a type of passive behaviour (Nafei, 2016), characterised by low participation, negligence and inactivity. Although employees who opt-out for this type of silence have important opinions or ideas, they try to distance themselves from issues, avoiding involvement. They believe that their opinion will make no difference. It

is incredibly hard to disturb this type of silence (Pinder & Harlos, 2001). Dedahanov and Rhee (2015) gave the following example of acquiescent silence: when managers do not react to information provided by employees or do not encourage them to take part in discussions on organisational issues, employees perceive this behaviour as a signal that it is useless to speak up as it would change nothing; thus, they become silent. In such a situation, silence manifests as deliberate passive behaviour when an employee does not provide the necessary information and is satisfied with the current situation.

Contrary to the above, defensive silence is active behaviour of an employee (Wynen et al., 2019). This type of silence means the belief that speaking up was risky for the held position because of possible arguments, contradictions or sanctions and that this risk outweighed the advantages of speaking up. Employees choose this type of silence consciously to "protect" themselves and to maintain their status quo (Bordbar, 2019). Therefore, the main motive of defensive silence is fear of possible detrimental consequences.

According to Dyne et al. (2003), silence can be fear-based passive behaviour, but also, it can be intentional and deliberate conduct chosen single-mindedly. This finding reveals a complex and manifold nature of silence (Amiri et al., 2018). Consequently, Dyne et al. (2003) suggested one more — prosocial — type of organisational silence. Prosocial silence is a refusal to reveal work-related ideas, information or opinions based on altruism and collaborative motives (Dyne et al., 2003). Prosocial silence might be the result of the public spirit within an organisation when employees aim to benefit their colleagues and the workplace without expecting a reward (Shahjehan & Yasir, 2016). Therefore, prosocial silence may be harmless to an organisation.

Pinder and Harlos (2001) also proposed that different types of organisational silence may have several meanings depending on the context where they occur. Therefore, much more comprehensive empirical research is required to define the manifestation of the types of silence in a particular educational institution.

1.3. TYPES OF ORGANISATIONAL SILENCE DEPENDING ON DEMOGRAPHICS

Many research efforts have been made to examine different types of organisational silence in relation to demographic characteristics. It might seem that historical and cultural conditions alone impact on

voice or silence of genders in an organisation (Hess & Jepsen, 2009). Some values, norms and attitudes are common to some cultural regions and age groups (Chen & Choi, 2008). Some age-dependent studies (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018) indicate that compared with middle-aged employees, younger members of staff are more likely to resist using their voice.

In some cultures, organisational silence is discussed as a social problem of gender discrimination (Fapohunda, 2015; Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). Some research indicates a relationship between the level of education of an employee and their trust (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). Hatipoglu and Inelmen (2018) stated that men with a higher level of education and positive trust assessed opportunities to use their voice more positively. A similar conclusion was made for women. Nevertheless, some research indicates no gender-based differences in organisational silence (Köse & Köse, 2019). Thus, the issue remains open.

2. Research methods

The research aimed to indicate the relationship between the demographic characteristics of teachers and the types of organisational silence. The analysis of the scientific literature revealed the shortage of research into the manifestations of organisational silence in the sector of education. As the system of education aims to teach children to think creatively and critically as well as look for open and innovative solutions to various situations, teachers must be brave, skilful, open to innovations and capable of expressing their opinion. Diversity in gender and age of employees promotes creativity and innovations (Syed, 2014; Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). However, deliberate concealment of ideas by teachers may have a negative effect on their work as well as the development and the quality of education. Thus, teachers from several secondary schools were chosen as the research sample.

The questionnaire was made from 30 statements by Dyne et al. (2003), applying the 5-point Likert's scale, where 1 meant "totally disagree" and 5 — "totally agree". This scale allowed indicating the three types of organisational silence (Table 1), i.e., acquiescent (Pinder & Harlos, 2001), defensive (Pinder & Harlos, 2001) and prosocial (Dyne et al., 2003). The demographic characteristics of gender, age, and marital status were collected for the analysis.

The sample size of 106 respondents was counted using a sample size calculator (Raosoft, 2019), applying the margin of error of eight per cent and, the confidence level of 90 per cent (Kardelis, 2017). The size of the population amounted to 29 042 (Statistics, 2019). The margin of error and the confidence level were counted as possible reliability while sampling. The research was organised at the end of 2019. The research data were gathered using an electronic questionnaire, ensuring anonymity for participants. The research applied the ethical principle of volunteering, providing a right for teachers to refuse participation. Teachers from 104 Lithuanian secondary schools filled-out the questionnaire.

With Cronbach's Alpha of 0.807, research data is considered reliable and valid.

Table 2 compares the demographic data of respondents compiled by the authors with Lithuanian statistics. In Lithuanian secondary schools, 16.2 per cent of teachers are male (SMM, 2017). Table 2 also presents the distribution of respondents by age, compared to the percentage part in national statistics (SMM, 2018). But the difference is not such significant, and it could be assumed that the range of respondents is valid for comparing data according to chosen demographics.

The authors applied the nonparametric Mann–Whitney U test for gender analysis. The nonparametric Kruskal–Wallis H test was used to analyse age and marital status. The difference between demographically divided groups was significant when $p < 0.05$. Data were analysed using the SPSS program.

Tab. 1. Types of organisational silence

General nature of behaviour	Primary employee motive	Specific type of behaviour
Passive	Disengaged (resignation)	Acquiescent silence
		Acquiescent voice
Proactive	Self-protective (fear)	Defensive silence
		Defensive voice
	Other-oriented (cooperation)	Prosocial silence
		Prosocial voice

Source: compiled by the authors, according to Dyne et al. (2003).

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

Mean values for analysed types of organisational silence (Table 3) particular to respondents indicate that Lithuanian teachers are rather passive than proactive as the mean value of acquiescent silence amounts to 3.51, while the mean value of defensive voice is 3.41 (Table 3).

The defensive voice could still be considered proactive behaviour compared to defensive silence. The Mann–Whitney U test (Table 4) used for gender showed that types of organisational silence did not depend on gender.

If to ignore the significance, some differences were found between passive behaviour of women and men when talking about acquiescent voice, and pro-active behaviour when comparing defensive and prosocial types of silence. Accordingly, men are more passive in using their voice and at the same time, proactively silent.

Analysis of organisational silence by age groups (Table 5) did not indicate statistically significant differences. However, mean values of age groups were rather diverse. The data suggest that such pro-active behaviour as defensive voice is more characteristic to more mature teachers in the age group of 25–40, and prosocial silence is more typical of young teachers in

Tab. 2. Research-related demographic data

CATEGORY	VARIABLE	PART IN THE RESEARCH (%)	PART IN NATIONAL STATISTICS (%)	DIFFERENCE (%)
Gender	Women	88.5	83.8	+4.7
	Men	11.5	16.2	-4.7
Age	18–24	5.8	0.52	+5.28
	25–40	22.1	14.54	+7.56
	41–55	56.7	48.16	+8.54
	56–65	15.4	33.84	-18.44
Marital status	Single	14.4	-	-
	Married	74.0	-	-
	Divorced	11.5	-	-

Source: compiled by the authors using the research data and SMM statistics (2017, 2018).

Tab. 3. Mean values and standard deviations for different types of organisational silence

TYPES OF ORGANISATIONAL SILENCE (OS)	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
Acquiescent silence	3.51	0.66
Acquiescent voice	1.89	0.76
Defensive silence	2.27	0.73
Defensive voice	3.41	0.75
Prosocial silence	1.86	0.71
Prosocial voice	1.99	0.70

Tab. 4. Results of the Mann-Whitney U test for different types of organisational silence

GENDER N (%) / TYPE OF OS	FEMALE		MALE		MANN–WHITNEY TEST	
	88.5	11.5	U	W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Acquiescent silence	52.55	52.08	547.0	625.0	-0.05	0.96
Acquiescent voice	51.36	61.25	447.0	4725.0	-1.08	0.28
Defensive silence	51.24	62.17	436.0	4714.0	-1.18	0.24
Defensive voice	52.55	52.08	547.0	625.0	-0.05	0.96
Prosocial silence	51.05	63.63	418.5	4696.5	-1.37	0.17
Prosocial voice	52.60	51.75	543.0	621.0	-0.09	0.93
Note: the difference is significant if p < 0.05						

Tab. 5. Differences in types of organisational silence (OS) by age groups

AGE N (%) ⟍ TYPES OF OS	18–24	25–40	41–55	56–65	CHI-SQUARE	ASYMP. SIG.
	5.8	22.1	56.7	15.4		
Acquiescent silence	47.25	51.37	52.68	55.44	0.37	0.95
Acquiescent voice	65.58	53.46	50.38	54.03	1.52	0.68
Defensive silence	74.17	51.22	49.62	56.84	4.04	0.26
Defensive voice	23.58	60.93	52.06	52.84	7.40	0.06
Prosocial silence	68.50	55.20	48.80	56.28	3.08	0.38
Prosocial voice	62.25	47.59	53.62	51.78	1.34	0.72
Note: the difference is significant if p < 0.05						

Tab. 6. Differences in types of organisation silence (OS) by marital status

MARITAL STATUS N (%) ⟍ TYPES OF OS	SINGLE	MARRIED	DIVORCED	CHI-SQUARE	ASYMP. SIG.
	14.4	74.0	11.5		
Acquiescent silence	44.47	51.57	68.50	4.57	0.10
Acquiescent voice	62.40	50.71	51.63	1.94	0.38
Defensive silence	62.90	50.32	53.50	2.22	0.33
Defensive voice	49.47	53.16	52.04	0.19	0.91
Prosocial silence	63.03	50.95	49.29	2.21	0.33
Prosocial voice	55.83	52.68	47.21	0.56	0.76
Note: the difference is significant if p < 0.05					

the age group of 18–24. For elder groups starting with 41 years of age, such passive behaviours as acquiescent silence and voice are more typical (Table 5). The analysis of different types of organisational silence depending on the marital status using the Kruskal–Wallis H test detected no statistically significant differences (Table 6). Nevertheless, some differences were found in mean values of such marital statuses as single, married, and divorced (Table 6).

Based on research data, the passive behaviour of single teachers is usually acquiescent voice, and their proactive behaviour is defensive silence, prosocial silence and voice. For comparison, passive behaviour of divorced teachers is usually acquiescent silence, and their proactive behaviour does not stand out, among others. No difference was found between passive and proactive behaviour of organisational silence among married teachers (Table 5).

4. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The research focused on the identification of organisational silence in relation to demographic characteristics, such as gender, age and marital status. Research results did not determine statistically significant, thus evident, differences between selected demographic characteristics. However, some differences can be discerned in the calculations of descriptive statistics.

Based on the research, men are more passive in using their voice and at the same time, more proactively silent. These results may be discussed in the context proposed by Jackson et al. (2014), stating that organisational silence may differ across genders due to differences in social expectations and expressions of ideas (Jackson et al., 2014). Men and women are emotionally different (Kring & Gordon, 1998). Women are more likely to show passive negative emotions, such as sadness (Brody & Hall, 2010). Men tend to react emotionally actively and show aggression (Kring & Gordon, 1998). Such research results indicate the impact and difference of emotions. Thus, organisations should consider such information to create a secure environment from the point of view of organisational silence. Such emotional differences were not analysed in this research and could be considered in the future.

The analysis of age groups showed that such proactive behaviour as the defensive voice was typical for teachers in the age group of 25–40, and prosocial silence was characteristic to very young teachers in the age group of 18–24. For elder groups starting with 41 years of age, such passive behaviours as acquiescent silence and voice were more typical. These research findings are different from those by Hatipoglu and Inelmen (2018) who determined that younger generations were expected to refrain from speaking up; thus, younger employees were rather passive compared to middle-aged (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). Differences between the results of the research could also arise due to cultural differences in investigated countries. This possibility should be considered in future research.

The presented research of types of organisational silence among teachers indicated the manifestation of such passive behaviour as acquiescent silence and such proactive behaviour as defensive voice. Such organisational silence could be considered as moderate, which is consistent with the research results by Köse and Köse (2019). Based on research results, single teachers are usually proactively silent, and divorced teachers are more passively silent.

Although marital status is not deemed a statistically significant characteristic for differences in types of organisational silence, overall findings indicate the need for further research. For example, research by Zhang et al. (2019) demonstrated that work and family of an employee were two interdependent and interrelated microsystems, suggesting possible impact made by the family on organisational silence. Future research should focus on the analysis of work-related factors in connection to organisational silence.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Knowing that organisational silence can be harmful to an educational institution, certain preventive measures should be taken before the silence occurs. The organisational silence could be measured using an adjusted scale by Dyne et al. (2003). This scale helps to indicate the situation and types of organisational silence in an institution. The scale could be expanded by additional aspects, such as creativity and innovative behaviour of employees as well as preventive measures against organisational silence.

Revolutionary systemic changes may be required in an institution to transition from the atmosphere of silence to culture that encourages the active involvement of employees. However, as scientific literature suggests, the change must start with top managers of an institution (Bagheri et al., 2012). The main focus should be on creating trust as organisational silence tends to decrease with growing confidence, and vice versa (Dedahanov & Rhee, 2015). Trust could be built by sharing responsibility. When delegating tasks to employees, managers express their trust and reinforce employee identity and emotional attachment to the organisation (Hassan et al., 2019). Involvement of employees in management creates a certain relationship and communication with the management. At the same time, it creates a safe atmosphere which encourages people to feel that they belong and can to speak up freely (Bagheri et al., 2012). Therefore, employees associate greater responsibility with the understanding that their contribution to the organisation is valued and that expressing their opinion and ideas helps the organisation to grow stronger and develop.

Apart from giving more responsibility to employees, the scientific literature lists other possible measures, i.e. the introduction of an HR management systems or seminars for the improvement of communication skills of the management and employees (Amiri, 2018). However, aiming to prevent or decrease organisational silence, all preventive measures must be initiated by top management. Leaders of an organisation must understand and demonstrate their wish to change employee behaviours, encourage openness and feedback. Additional research is required to identify the most suitable preventive measures for educational institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

The research presented in this article did not investigate statistically significant differences of maintained organisational silence in relation to demographic characteristics, such as gender, age or marital status. Thus, further research should focus on factors related to the work of teachers in educational institutions.

Calculations of descriptive statistics revealed some differences in organisational silence in relation to demographic characteristics such, as gender, age or marital status:

- men were more passive in using their voice and at the same time, more proactively silent than women. Thus, the gender aspect might be impor-

tant for the assessment of organisational silence manifested in a secondary school

- such proactive behaviour as the defensive voice was typical for teachers in the age group of 25–40, and prosocial silence was characteristic to very young teachers in the age group of 18–24. An assumption can be made that young teachers are less aware of their competence,
- aingle teachers are usually proactively silent compared to divorced teachers who are more passively silent. An assumption can be made that divorced teachers are less reactive than single teachers, and it could be related to their life situations, as it may be less constraining being single than being married or divorced.

The research described in the article focused the analysis on a narrow field of the broader topic of organisational silence. The specific strength of this research is the provision of new knowledge that fills the gap in the research field of organisational silence in Lithuania, enclosing data with demographic characteristics particular to educational institutions facing organisational silence.

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