

Internal Marketing and Schools: The Slovenian Case Study

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Schools in Slovenia are expected to address and respond to the changing environment. Breaking through the rigidity of traditions is a complex process. Internal marketing can be used for doing this. It is a process that focuses on teachers and students in order to increase effectiveness and efficiency of schools and also the level of satisfaction of 'school customers'. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the elements of internal marketing which are essential for teacher and customer satisfaction and to indicate opportunities for the implementation of internal marketing philosophy and related strategies in Slovenian schools. The paper provides a theoretical framework, an analysis of the Slovenian legal framework and the results of the case study conducted in a grammar school. Data were collected through a group interview, a questionnaire and individual in-depth interviews. The findings show that although the concept of internal marketing is unknown to the participants in the study, its philosophy and focus are present in the school.

Key Words: education, marketization, marketing, internal marketing, human resource management

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Introduction

Decentralization, deregulation and devolution of power are educational policies relating to marketization that are discussed in many countries (Kenway and Bullen 2001; Trnavcevic 2003). Dehli (1996) argues that the cover concept in discussing marketization is choice. Marketization is not the same as marketing nor is it only the application of marketing techniques into education. Our understanding of marketization of education refers to a range of educational policies associated with deregulation of education, lump sum financing and devolution of power to schools

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and, in Slovenia, deconcentration of power from the state to municipal level. Marketing refers to exchange relationships between providers and customers (Kotler and Fox 1985). In Slovenia, marketization of education has been a long process associated also with changes in society, while marketing in education has become evident in recent years. While there was extensive public discussion about decentralization, deregulation and devolution of power to schools, there has been little if any discussion about how public, compulsory and secondary schools understand and practise marketing. A research in the Slovenian educational context shows that marketing is still very much associated with selling and promotion (Trnavcevic 1995). A case study of two Ljubljana downtown schools showed that principals, teachers and school counsellors have different, often opposite attitudes toward marketing in education, although they practise and use some techniques and tools related to the promotion of schools (Trnavcevic 2002). Marketing is a broader concept than selling and promotion. It also embraces needs analyses, market segmentation, positioning and evaluation. Marketing is closely related to the concepts of quality schools and education and implies a 'marketing terminology'.¹

Internal marketing can be understood as a process, as an organizational philosophy or as a business function. There is a thin line between human resource management and internal marketing. Although human resource management is well researched, especially in the field of business sciences, there is little research on internal marketing. In the Slovenian education context there has been no research on the latter.

Annual conferences of principals in Portorož, Slovenia, discussions with colleague principals and with teachers who attend leadership courses provided by the National School for Leadership in Education indicate a concern about teachers. But too often these discussions reveal a perception of teachers as 'sources' of school success and not as 'customers of a school' who need to satisfy their needs in order to satisfy students and other school stakeholders.

We could take a critical stance to discuss the marketization of education, marketing and internal marketing in schools. It could be associated with 'economic extremism flourishing in education' (Magyari-Beck 2003, 69) that is 'an attitude, which tries to solve all the problems of life on the basis of economics' (Magyari-Beck 2003, 70). We could also take a market fundamentalism concept and discuss its rise from 'the mar-

gins of debate to become the dominant policy perspective across the global economy' (Somers and Block 2005, 260) and one that can also be seen in education. Also a 'new managerialism' (Beckmann and Cooper 2004) that requires rethinking the purpose of education could present the ground for our discussion. However, schools in Slovenia and elsewhere are jeopardized by a decline in birth rate, by expectations that education will solve the national economy and gain competitive advantage in national and international markets, and also by a decrease in funding – 'rationalisation'. An enhanced audit culture related to international comparisons and measurement of achievements enforces marketing in schools. Schools try to respond to pressures and expectations of society and of educational policies also by introducing the marketing approach to education. In our study, we have not taken a critical stance toward the current educational environment and marketing education. Our interest has been focused on school practices that are grounded in marketing.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the elements of internal marketing which are essential for teacher and customer satisfaction, and to indicate opportunities for the implementation of the internal marketing philosophy and strategies in schools. The paper provides a theoretical framework, an analysis of the Slovenian legal framework and the results of the case study conducted in a grammar school. Data were collected through a group interview and individual in-depth interviews. The findings show that although the concept of internal marketing is unknown to the participants in the study, there are some elements of internal marketing practices in the school under study which can support and enhance the school's effectiveness. The study will contribute to understanding the marketing as it is applied and understood in practice, and will provide a ground for further research.

The Legal Framework

The independence of Slovenia and its separation from the former Yugoslavia required major legislative changes and were also an opportunity for changing the educational policy. Between 1991 and 1996, when the package of legislation for under-graduate education was proposed, and in 1996 adopted by the National Assembly, there was an intense public and professional discussion about the role, structure, organization and financing of education in the new state. Expectations and solutions were embraced in the *White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia*

(1996) and related Elementary School Act, Gimnazije Act, and Vocational and Technical Education Act. The concepts of choice, equal opportunities and secular education were emphasized in these documents.

The school legislation does not impose any explicit requirements for the implementation of internal marketing, yet there are some incentives that can be related to the principles of internal marketing. For example, Article 49 of the Organization and Financing of Education Act determines the obligations and duties of principals such as organizing, planning and leading work in the school, preparing school development plans, pedagogical leadership, encouraging professional development and training, recommending the promotion of teachers to professional titles, and making decisions on the promotion of teachers to pay grades. Staff management is an obligation and a duty of the principal.

The need for internal marketing in undergraduate education is, hence, implicitly embraced in the school legislation, for example in *Pravilnik o napredovanju zaposlenih v vzgoji in izobraževanju v plačilne razrede* (the Regulations on the Promotion of Workers to Professional Titles),² *Pravilnik o nadaljnem izobraževanju in usposabljanju strokovnih delavcev v vzgoji in izobraževanju* (the Regulations of In-Service Training for Educational Professionals) and in the Act Regulating Wage Rates in Public Institutions, State Bodies and Local Community Bodies. Moreover, it emerges also from the need of a school to be successful in implementing changes and responding to the expectations of the environment. The satisfaction of teachers is related to the quality of services which are demanded from the school by both parents and students.

A number of regulations and rules are associated with teachers' promotion and the related increased income. For example, according to *Pravilnik o napredovanju zaposlenih v vzgoji in izobraževanju v plačilne razrede* (the Regulations on the Promotion of Workers to Professional Titles), teachers can be promoted to three professional titles/levels, and according to *Pravilnik o napredovanju zaposlenih v vrtcih in šolah v plačilne razrede* (the Regulations on the Promotion of Workers Employed in Education),³ school staff can be promoted to five pay grades. Promotion and a monthly assigned financial reward provide the basis for internal marketing because teachers and other professional staff (the psychologist, pedagogue, social worker) have to attend a certain number of training and development programs and perform other tasks related to students and defined by the Annual School Plan. A principal, who is sensitive to the needs of students and staff, can support staff development

and direct it towards addressing the needs of students. The principal can support and develop the activities aiming at improving students' life at school. Professional staff has the opportunity to develop and implement activities that contribute to its professional and personal growth and development and that are also needed and appreciated by students and parents. The monthly reward (the flexible part of the salary) is another element that enables and enforces internal marketing. The principal makes an autonomous decision about the stimulation. It can be regarded as a motivation and a recognition of the qualitative work done outside the classroom.

Internal Marketing

Marketing in education started to flourish in the late 1980s. A number of studies and papers are from that period, for example, the work of Gray (1991), Barnes (1993) or Marland and Rogers (1991). Kotler and Fox (1985) focus on marketing educational institutions, mostly in higher education, and transfer the business principles of marketing into education. In Slovenia, the question of marketing in education emerged in the 1990s and is associated with changes in legislation and with demographic changes (Trnavčević and Zupanc Grom 2000). It is slowly 'entering' education and is still considered to be a 'business rooted and oriented' concept. It is not an uncontroversial concept although changes in education policies, demographic trends and some other factors push schools to be managed almost like businesses. If marketing in education is considered to be a concept transferred from business, then internal marketing, especially in education, is even more controversial and also theoretically blurred. There is a discussion about the relationship between human resource management and internal marketing. Some authors, like Caruana and Calleya (1998, 109–113), state that there are elements of human resource management in internal marketing and, vice versa, that some contents of internal marketing can be treated as part of human resource management. Varey and Lewis (1999, 931) provide a critical view of internal marketing. In their opinion, internal marketing has an undefined conceptual status.

In this paper, we take the stance that in internal marketing teachers⁴ are considered to be the customers of a school. If so, schools need to pay attention primarily to the teachers, their needs, attitudes and values, and seek to satisfy them as much as possible. The underlying assumption is that satisfied internal customers/teachers can better serve external

customers, primarily students and parents. In order to satisfy customers' needs, organizations need to ground their work in a marketing approach while there are some 'consequences' that can be related to the focus of human resource management, i. e. employees' satisfaction and motivation for work.

Internal marketing is mostly discussed in service organizations. Papsolomou-Doukakis (2002), for example, studies the role of employee development in customer relations in UK retail banks. Internal marketing is often discussed as a philosophy, a set of techniques and as an approach to effective organizations.

As a philosophy, internal marketing is closely related to organizational culture (Snoj 1998; Snoj and Gabrijan 2004). Straughan and Cooper (2002, 253) argue that 'the link between internal marketing and service marketing goes beyond the traditionally stated objective of improving quality of service to external customers'. It is related to understanding teachers as customers, where 'the job experience itself is a service that is designed and delivered to internal customers – all teachers of an organization – and the internal customer satisfaction derived is a function of the quality of the internal marketing efforts of that organization' (Straughan and Cooper 2002, 253). From that point of view, internal marketing is a philosophy of an organization that means to 'care' about the teachers and consider them as internal customers. This understanding is built upon the relationship between teachers and the organization and is reflected in the process of change. The core concept of internal marketing as a philosophy includes needs, interests, expectations and satisfaction of teachers, which are as much as possible in tune with the needs of the organization, focused on internal and external customers and the achievement of organizational goals. Ewing and Caruana (1999, 20) claim that the emphasis of internal marketing is on the feelings of teachers who need to feel safe, cared for and accepted from the management side.

Keller (2002, 651) points out that 'if management wants its teachers to do a great job with customers, then it must be prepared to do a great job with its teachers'. Harris and Ogbonna (2002, 163) study service sabotage and develop a typology of it. Their starting point is that 'the attitudes and behaviours of frontline, customer-contact service providers are a significant factor in customers' perceptions and interpretations of service encounters'.

Keller (2002) also emphasizes the internal marketing mix, the elements

that are needed to satisfy internal customers' needs. His emphasis is laid on the strategies and techniques which can and need to be used in order to satisfy teachers' needs. Snoj (1998, 15) discusses internal marketing also as an approach to increase organizational effectiveness and efficiency, and states that the process of internal marketing in service organizations will be effective and efficient if:

- identifying teachers needs and forming and offering internal products is based on a continuous and accurate needs identification;
- people have their interests harmonized with the needs of the organization;
- teachers' needs correspond, to some extent, with techniques of marketing communication;
- effects of teacher satisfaction are reflected in the financial standard of efficiency.

Rafiq and Ahmed (2000, 450–453) mention three phases of the development of internal marketing: a) employee motivation and satisfaction, b) customer orientation, and c) broadening the internal marketing concept – strategy implementation and change management.

They define five main elements of internal marketing:

- employee motivation and satisfaction;
- customer orientation and customer satisfaction;
- inter-functional co-ordination and integration;
- marketing-like approach to the above;
- implementation of specific corporate or functional strategies.

All of the five main elements are joined in the definition which is (Rafiq and Ahmed 2000, 454):

Internal marketing is a planned effort using a marketing-like approach (4) to overcome organizational resistance to change and to align, motivate and inter-functionally co-ordinate and integrate (3) teachers towards the effective implementation of corporate and functional strategies (5) in order to deliver customer satisfaction (2) through a process of creating motivated and customer orientated teachers (1).

They state that this definition is sufficiently all-embracing; hence no other definition of internal marketing can avoid these elements.

A school performs services having all the characteristics of services. Schools also operate in an increasingly competitive environment. In the

current rhetoric of educational and school quality, measurement, effectiveness and 'audit culture', it is challenging to approach schools and school effectiveness through the perspective of internal marketing as a prerequisite for effective schools. From this point of view, efficiency and effectiveness of schools can be related to efficiency and effectiveness of internal marketing in schools.

Rafiq and Ahmed (2000, 453) discuss five needs which internal marketing is focused on, namely:

- the need to take an interest in teacher motivation and satisfaction;
- the need to be oriented towards teachers and the satisfaction of customers;
- the need to promote internal coordination and connection;
- the need to adopt marketing thinking;
- the need to present the specifics of an organization and a formal strategy.

In schools, these needs are relevant, too. Therefore, the concept of internal marketing might be valuable for schools as well as for other service organizations.

Case Study of a Grammar School in Slovenia

Grammar schools in Slovenia are confronted with higher demands from parents, students and higher education institutions. They are 'desirable' schools, in a way prestigious, as they provide general secondary education. The school under study is located 30 km from the capital of Slovenia and draws students from the surrounding geographical area. Just recently, because of good baccalaureate results and the reputation of being a 'good school', students from Ljubljana have started to enrol in this school although there is no special transportation arranged for them. The school has been operating for six years. The staff is quite 'young', the average teacher being 30 years of age and having a six years' work experience. A new program⁵ is being implemented at the school and has been used by the authors for studying internal marketing in this school.

METHODOLOGY

The study was designed as an exploratory case study, as Bouma and Atkinson (1995, 110) define it. The purpose of the study was to gain an insight into teachers' perceptions of internal marketing, the presence of

internal marketing in the school and the principal's role in internal marketing. We were interested in teachers' perceptions and practices that are central to the concept of internal marketing although we did not use the term 'internal marketing'. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- How do teachers understand internal marketing?
- How do teachers see the role of the principal in internal marketing?
- How does internal marketing lead to a successful introduction of a new program in school?
- What can be done to promote a 'new program' among teachers?

Data were gathered through a group interview and individual in-depth interviews. Since we assumed that the concept of internal marketing was not familiar to teachers, we started the study by asking all the teachers in the staffroom at break the following questions:

- Have you ever heard of 'internal marketing'?
- Could you, please, explain what 'internal marketing' means to you?

17 out of 26 full- and part-time teachers answered these questions. 11 teachers answered both questions with 'no'. Four teachers had heard of internal marketing but they did not know what it meant. Two of them were familiar with the term. On the basis of their answers we avoided the terminology which was unknown to the participants and used the 'introduction of a new program' as an example through which internal marketing in the school was studied.

The study was carried out in the following sequence. Firstly, a group interview was carried out and secondly, in-depth interviews were conducted.

The group interview was done with five teachers. They have all been employed in this school for more than two years and less than six years. One of the teachers has never worked before, while others had been employed at other schools.

We conducted in-depth interviews with five teachers. The group interview and individual in-depth interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The study has some limitations, one of them being the generalization of findings. We also have to mention that one of the authors of this paper is the principal of the school. Because of the 'researcher as principal' position, a lot of attention was paid to ethical issues. Firstly, in order to avoid possible recognition of participants in the group interview,

they were all given five-letter false names beginning with the letter D (Dunja, Darja, Denis, Dinka, David). The four-letter false names of the participants in individual in-depth interviews began with the letter T (Tine, Tone, Tomo, Tara, Tija). None of the teachers at school has any of the chosen names. Secondly, participants were informed that they could choose not to participate in the study or to withdraw at any time or stage of the study. Thirdly, they were informed about the findings when the study was completed.

Findings

The data were categorized as follows:

- orientation toward the satisfaction of students and the needs of the environment;
- readiness for change in the organization;
- orientation toward professional development and individual training;
- orientation toward social (job) security.

ORIENTATION TOWARD THE SATISFACTION OF STUDENTS AND THE NEEDS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

This orientation was reflected in the statements of participants. Denis pointed out that ‘the school must choose a program which the environment needs’. In this statement the orientation toward the needs of students and environment is embraced. Dinka understood the ‘readiness for change’ as being informed about the content of the program. She emphasized that ‘before the implementation of a new program students must be informed about its content’. Denis, Dinka and David discussed the employment opportunities for students by saying that ‘the new program should provide students with better employment opportunities’ and that ‘the new program, when completed, should lead to university studies’.

Denis and David said: ‘If we want a new program and the environment does not feel the need for it, then it makes no sense (to have it). If the implementation of a new program brought more employment opportunities for failed students then there would be an interest for it. These issues should be specified.’ Their discussion about the needs of the environment and students revealed an awareness and orientation toward

‘the environment out there’, which is not very common for schools. Fosskett (1998), for example, argues that schools in his study were still very ‘product and production’ oriented.

READINESS FOR CHANGE IN THE ORGANIZATION

Participants discussed issues around the introduction of a new program to the school, and their readiness for change was reflected in their perceptions about the requirements that have to be met before the implementation of ‘something new’. They specifically mentioned the vision of the program (Denis, for example). His view is interesting because he related the vision to the program not to the people who have already created a vision of the school and also not to the principal who is, according to the information from the participants in the courses at the Slovene National School for Leadership in Education, the person who is supposed to ‘take care’ of the vision. The vision is also significant (Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach 1998) for understanding the dimensions of transformational leadership. But the respondents assigned some important tasks to the principal. These are: sharing information (Denis), acquiring finances (Dinka) and also taking care of social/employment issues among the staff (David). The concern for job is very much associated with the decline in birth rate leading to less school population, with a ‘reduction of groups’ in some ‘less attractive’ and ‘less wanted schools’ and with a surplus of teachers in some areas and for some subjects. Their ‘market orientation’ and also ‘internal marketing’ are transparent also through their concern for students and the benefits that students will have after the change is implemented. Denis and Dinka specifically pointed out student motivation and their commitment to school.

Dinka said: ‘I have not thought a lot about the appropriateness of the program because I accepted the information as if it was well thought through and weighted out and that, I guess, various social factors have been carefully considered.’

ORIENTATION TOWARD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INDIVIDUAL TRAINING

Participants in the study also discussed their ‘willingness’ for professional development and individual training. The discussion was lively and they pointed out that the introduction of a new program as a change could be a personal/individual challenge (Dunja), which would result in the introduction of new teaching methods (Darja) and will also be a

good promotion for the school (Denis). They all agreed that the principal should support professional development and training. Professional development and training are also discussed through the perspective of a 'change process' (Fullan 2001; Goodson 2001). Goodson (2001, 45) discusses internal, external and personal segments of the change process. In his view 'In the new millennium it is argued that, as well as internal and external segments, increasing attention will need to be paid to the personal missions and purposes which underpin commitment to change process.'

One of participants said: 'I feel the need for change. Although I am flexible to content related changes, there is a need for improvement in order to keep quality and broaden things, also deepen them. The benefit of change is also in acquiring more knowledge and additional training.'

ORIENTATION TOWARD SOCIAL (JOB) SECURITY

This issue was specifically emphasized and seems to be of great concern to the participants. They discussed it from the following points of view: security, fearlessness and maintainance of good interpersonal relationships. Denis said: 'I guess everybody thinks what this would bring to him; would he have enough classes per week?' Dunja pointed out: 'For every individual it will be important whether he/she gets or loses classes. Maybe there is a need for a "written" version of the program. Then we can see what will be gained and what lost for individuals.' Darja opened a 'demographic perspective': 'From the point of view of the decline in birth rates, it might be better, in order to attract more students in the future, if there are two programs at our grammar school.' Denis said: 'Teachers must have all information about the new program so that they are fearless.'

Dunja was concerned with the relationships among the school staff. She expressed that concern by saying: 'For the introduction of the new program a lot of tolerance is needed, we need to solve problems collectively and come to mutual agreements. With such work we will maintain good relationships, and a harmony between teachers and students. Students will be able to achieve a sense of satisfaction and comfort.'

In conclusion

Regarding our research questions, the study resulted in the following conclusions, limited for 'the case' only.

Firstly, teachers were unfamiliar with the concept of internal marketing; however, on the basis of the introduction of a new program, they revealed practices that are central to the concept. We may therefore conclude that in the school under study internal marketing is in place as a process and a practice. Participants in the study provided conflicting data about the needs of the environment and ways of satisfying them. Teachers attributed great importance to the needs of their environment, they did not show resistance to the introduction of the program, and expressed their support for change if the introduction of the program is considered necessary by the school. However, they expressed some concerns about employment, structural changes and status. Their statements in this part were contradictory as they had previously advocated the needs of the environment. Their 'survival', however, is the fundamental issue. They need to know and be assured that they will keep their jobs. In this case, they are open to the challenges and needs of the environment.

They believe that the satisfaction of students lies in providing sufficient information about the program, in new forms and methods of work, in relations of teachers to students and personal characteristics of teachers, such as openness and readiness to help students in the field of their studies.

Secondly, teachers assign a significant role to the principal. Before the introduction of the new program, they expect extensive information about it. According to them, the school has good prospects for the future, which have to be preserved also after the introduction of the new program. They pointed out that students achieve good results and that the atmosphere in the school is good, which shows a relationship between school and loyalty. Trust in school leadership was mentioned several times. Teachers are convinced that the management knows the reasons for the introduction of the program.⁶ They see the principal as the link between the staff and the vision. On the basis of this vision, he is expected to gain support from the staff by explaining his expectations, clearing every doubt related to the introduction of the new program, encouraging the teachers at work and training and helping them in case of problems. Teachers believe that their responsibility towards students lies in the way they teach and prepare themselves for teaching, introduce the research work, use different teaching methods, show a positive attitude towards students, in mutual trust, and in accomplishing high results at graduation and in competitions.

Yet, leadership, vision and similar issues are the 'principal's businesses'. They view education from the point of view of communication, rhetoric and business. It seems that they trust the principal and expect him to take care of their social security, which they do not put in the first place. For them, their social security consists of providing a student-friendly approach in teaching and through the satisfaction of their needs. They see that as a prerequisite for a better enrolment of potential students in the future.

Thirdly, the introduction of the program represents a challenge for teachers. At the same time they feel the need to advance their education and gain additional professional knowledge. They want to improve their knowledge in both subject-related and pedagogical areas, which would lead to the improvement of their work with students.

The 'effects' of internal marketing practices found in the school under study were reflected in good opinions of teachers about the school, their trust in the school and leadership, in their commitment to the school, and in their concern and motivation to serve the customers/students and the environment well.

At this point, the findings can be related to human resource management. Namely, the processes of internal marketing 'result' in motivation, trust, commitment and readiness to work toward a successful implementation of a change (the new program). The awareness and readiness for an individual's professional development and consequently the 'growth' of an organization are also the elements of human resource management. We are, however, careful in claiming that staff development, motivation and satisfaction are simply consequences of internal marketing processes in the school. We also do not claim that these elements 'belong' to either internal marketing or human resource management only and have not long pre-existed in schools generally. The theoretical, internal marketing perspective and related research findings provide sufficient grounds for saying that the leadership based on the processes of internal marketing seems to lead to employees' readiness for change, trust, commitment and motivation in the school under study.

Fourthly, the key role in promoting the change (new program) to teachers was assigned to the principal, who should promote the introduced changes in a way in which teachers would see the satisfaction of their own needs regarding education, social security and promotion. The findings indicate that promotion of a new program should address the individual's needs.

Teachers 'do' internal marketing without being explicitly aware of it. Does it mean that they do not have to be aware of it at all and simply keep doing it? Or, might it be assumed that explicit awareness of internal marketing could change the culture of the school significantly and bring into focus exchange relationships between school customers – employees and/or students? On the basis of the findings, it seems that it is not an issue whether a concept or philosophy, and processes are labelled as long as they are practised. However, in order to assign meaning to the concept, include it in a broader educational framework and theorize about the implications, reflective practice is needed.

Notes

1. Terminology is an essential means of representing the marketing perspective. From this point of view education is seen as a service aiming at satisfying the needs of different customers and stakeholders.
2. Regulations and Decrees are not available in translation to English language.
3. The amendments were adopted as follows: 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2002.
4. When discussing organization and culture, we need to focus on all employees in an organization. For the purpose of this study, we only studied teachers because they were the only group associated with the introduction of a new program.
5. The school has applied for and aquired funds from the local Development Centre to initiate a new curriculum/program called Entrepreneur Grammar School. The program is expected to address the needs of the local community and of the region where employment opportunities are mostly related to the initiative of private entrepreneurs. The stimulus for change hence originates in the external environment and is not an internal (school) need. Despite the fact that the school delivers the national grammar school curriculum and that the students who successfully complete the program continue with their studies at the university level, entrepreneurial skills and knowledge are needed for employment. The program has to be accredited and approved by the national committee. The approvement is in process. Currently, there is no other program like this in Slovenian secondary education. It is a novelty in terms of the content, structure and syllabi. As any other change, also the implementation of this program is expected to be resisted by most of the teaching staff. Other employees are very little if at all affected by this curriculum-related change.

6. This trust can be challenged by the fact that the school is relatively new (7 years of existence), well positioned in the environment and also appreciated by the parents who see better educational opportunities for their children in this school than in a school in the capital Ljubljana.

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