

Qualification Development of the Lithuanian Parliamentarians: Issues and Attitudes

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyze the theoretical foundations and practices of parliamentarians' qualification development for a successful functioning of the Parliament and to introduce the empirical research related to the attitudes the Lithuanian parliamentarians towards training and participation in educational programs. The empirical research showed that qualification development of the Lithuanian parliamentarians is not systematic and the attitudes of the Lithuanian parliamentarians towards qualification development are ambiguous: from considerations that such activities are a waste of tax payers' money to taking personal responsibility and active involvement in qualification development. The system of qualification development of the Lithuanian parliamentarians should be improved. Special attention should be paid to the parliamentarians' consciousness, ability to understand their own limitations and readiness to learn.

Keywords: qualification development, parliamentarians, politicians.

Introduction

Parliamentarians are distinguished from other occupations and professions by the sovereign nature of the institution in which they work: the Parliament (Lewis, 2012). Most of parliamentarians have progressed through various posts and have taken non-parliamentary roles before coming into the Parliament and have gained skills, e.g. public relations and public speaking, media communications, negotiation, management of organizations. In some cases these skills are essential or similar to those needed to be an effective parliamentarian. In other cases previous careers have not equipped them well for their new careers (Coghill, Lewis and Steinack, 2012). The key constitutional duties of the members of the Parliament are to pass laws, approve the budget, develop government policy, account to the public and make decisions on behalf of the entire country. Therefore they must have a needed qualification that enables

them to fulfil their duties efficiently and effectively in a complex and globalized world (Donohue and Holland, 2012). With an increasing focus on quality in all organizations, it is not surprising that the issue of human resources development has emerged in the context of Parliaments and parliamentarians.

Across what might be called as professions, the issue of training and development is a critical foundation underlying professional development (Holland, De Cieri, 2007). There is the expectation that practitioners seeking recognition or accreditation within any profession shall have the level of knowledge, skills and abilities required to competently practice. They are usually provided through ongoing support to ensure they remain aware of professional standards, ethical codes of conduct, contemporary issues, advances and innovations. In some professions, practitioners are provided with mentoring by experienced colleagues in the early stages of their career. A profession is often regulated by a professional body which sets professional standards and committees comprising esteemed members of these professional bodies regularly review the core competencies and requisite skills which are then used by training institutions to inform their curriculum (Coghill et al., 2008b). Often years are needed to develop them, they are seen as central to ensuring on-going quality assurance and career development. Even such roles as company directorships have seen a move toward professional status based upon qualification to ensure quality and to maintain trust for the profession through consistent work, effectiveness in decision-making and outcomes. Judges in many jurisdictions are expected to undertake professional development notwithstanding their high, independent status (Coghill et al., 2008a, b).

However, in contrast, parliamentarians, because of uniqueness of their profession, usually

have no defined qualifications, identified core competencies, job description or criteria for evaluating the performance of their roles (Donohue, Holland, 2012). Those who are elected to public office are expected to possess indefinable qualities to accomplish a hardly describable job. In some present day Parliaments, many parliamentarians are tertiary educated and pursue their tasks as full-time professionals with salary packages linked to the lower and mid-levels of the senior public service. In addition to their constituent duties, many are engaged in negotiation, issue analysis, policy development and office management (Coghill et al., 2008a).

The theoretical logic, found in this field, of this paper suggests the existence of a positive relationship between training parliamentarians and improvement in the performance of their respective parliaments (Orton, Marcella and Baxter, 2000). Consistent with these approaches, recent studies (Stapenhurst, 2004) indicate that training of parliaments can improve the performance at both individual level of a certain member of the Parliament and the level of the Parliament as the organization. Scientific research directly related to the area of competence and qualification development of parliamentarians is limited: publications include parliamentarians' autobiographical works, which usually integrate political, not parliamentary, experiences (Kaufman, 1980; Button, 1998; Cain, 1998). Until recently, little research has addressed the perspective of parliamentarians themselves on their own training and development.

Thus the subject of this paper is a qualification development system of the members of the Parliament and attitudes of parliamentarians towards participation in training and educational programmes. The aim of this paper is to analyze the theoretical foundations and practices of parliamentarians' qualification development for successful functioning of the Parliament and to introduce the empirical research related to the Lithuanian parliamentarians' attitudes towards training and participation in educational programs. The methods of the research are theoretical and empirical (semi-structured interview), using which the parliamentarians' training and development have been analysed, also attitudes of the parliamentarians towards qualification development have been investigated.

Qualification development of the parliamentarians: background and issues

Review of scientific literature reveals that two theoretical perspectives provide a framework

for the analysis of a strategic approach linked to long-term development of an organization's human resources, including human resources of such unique organizations as Parliaments (Donohue, Holland, 2012). The first is the human capital theory, which links investment in the organization's key asset - employees - to increase productivity and sustain effectiveness (Smith, 1998). A strategic aspect is long-term enhancement of the organization's resource base by linking employee skills development through training and development, career management and progression (Garavan et al., 2001). The second theoretical perspective is a resource based view of the organization (Barney, 1991; Boxall, Purcell, 2011). It has been applied to organizations and has been a highly influential human resource management theory in terms of explaining how utilization of the organization's valuable resources can lead to increased effectiveness and performance. Among these resources, the organization's human resources (i.e. skills, knowledge and abilities of its members) are considered crucial for the development of competitive and effective organizations as they cannot be easily replaced and are difficult for other organizations to imitate (Donohue, Holland, 2012).

Building on the above mentioned perspectives it can be stated that by developing human resources of the Parliaments their members' capabilities and skills become valuable and inimitable, and that enhances the organization's (Parliament's) effectiveness over the long-term and potentially political careers as both their political party and the electorate see their increasing value (Barney, 1991; Garavan et al., 2001; Coghill et al., 2008a).

Whilst these theoretical perspectives provide a conceptual map for the qualification development of parliamentarians, concrete strategies need to be devised and implemented at the Parliamentary level to ensure basic skill and understanding to ensure the development and regeneration of knowledge and skills. Electoral cycles require critical understanding of the importance of a long-term strategic approach to the development of human resources (Donohue, Holland, 2012). It has been ascertained in the research that those organizations (political parties) that invest into training of new parliamentarians are able to convert a potential problem into an opportunity and to gain an advantage over their rivals (Boxall, Purcell, 2011).

However, the essential problem of qualification development of parliamentarians is that the role and functions of parliamentarians can hardly be defined.

There is no job description and no agreement between the members of Parliaments and the electorate to help shape reasonable expectations (Lewis, 2012). Therefore, in the face of indisputable evidence about the value of education and training for enhancing a person's capacity to perform effectively in a work environment (Boxall, Purcell, 2003), it remains a question what competences of parliamentarians should be developed.

The answer to the question could come from analysis of the roles and functions of parliamentarians. A number of parliamentary scholars (Stillborn, 2002; Silvester, 2012) have indicated the multiple roles required for parliamentarians, the diversity and complexity of the activities they have to perform and the inordinate and stressful nature of their workloads. Thus, training and developmental needs of parliamentarians and the factors that have an impact on the effectiveness of capacity building increasingly need to be investigated and enhanced within the context of this unique and critical occupation (Donohue, Holland, 2012).

The main roles and functions of parliamentarians indicated and analyzed in contemporary research projects (Coghill et al., 2012; Donohue, Holland, 2012) are the following: representation, legislation and scrutiny (or holding the government to account), deliberation, budget setting, making and breaking governments and the redress of grievances. The research presented by Coghill et al. (2012) identified their relevant importance in relation to each other: representation and legislation are the most important. Scrutiny, deliberation and budget setting all were seen as essential, but of lesser importance. Making and breaking governments and the redress of grievances were evaluated as the least important from the mentioned. Also it has to be noted that perception of the roles and functions of parliamentarians by parliamentarians themselves quite much differed from country to country (Coghill et al., 2012).

Although researchers (Coghill et al., 2012) found an agreement on the major roles and functions performed by Parliaments, interpretations vary as to what competences and qualifications are needed to best perform these roles and functions. It is evident that parliamentarians most need formal training in law. Representation is another issue, which requires particular competences. Knowledge of parliamentary procedures and processes is necessary. For example, when the members of the Parliament speak during parliamentary proceedings, they need to understand formal and informal rules that apply. Representational

skills are not confined to the capacity to represent views and attitudes in the Parliament. They also involve representing the community through media ranging from print, to radio and television and more recently through the increasingly popular internet-based social media (Coghill et al., 2012). Listening skills - the capacity to pay attention to the voices of constituents expressing their views, concerns and desires are also important, especially in some countries (e.g. South Africa) (Coghill et al., 2012). Analyzing the function of holding governments to account by scrutinizing their decisions, parliamentarians need knowledge about various accountability mechanisms and must be familiar with the role and functions of the supreme audit authorities (Coghill et al., 2012). When performing this role, parliamentarians need to obtain research skills, so they knew how to obtain information on the actions and performance of the executive and how to use their knowledge and skills effectively. The ability to communicate findings during parliamentary proceedings and to the public is crucial (Coghill et al., 2012). Although budget setting was considered as less important among high priority functions of parliamentarians, it is nevertheless one of the most commonly suggested areas requiring attention from education and training programs providers. Parliamentarians in most countries indicated they would like to have better knowledge and understanding of the budget process (Coghill et al., 2012).

Having evaluated the main roles and functions also competences needed to implement them, we turn our attention to the research that analyzes the practices of parliamentarians' qualification development. Needs analysis is the basic feature of the process of designing the content of any capacity-building program. Yet there is little evidence of effective systematic needs analysis being undertaken by those parliaments where training of parliamentarians were investigated. Few training providers thoroughly investigated either the capacities needed to enable the Parliament to fulfil its functions or capacity building needs of parliamentarians (Coghill et al., 2012).

Regarding the duration of training programs, it was found that they rarely lasted more than one week, most were shorter and varied, even between the two chambers of bicameral parliaments. For example, in Australia quite different programs were offered by each chamber, with each appearing to have taken little heed of the other's programs. The initial induction by the Australian parliament did not exceed 1,5 days for the Lower House and 2,5

days for the Senate. Such programs in emerging democracies were often longer. In the case of the South Africa's Parliament, various lengthy modules were offered and parliamentarians were encouraged and supported to undertake formal tertiary studies (Coghill et al., 2012).

Induction programs for the members of the Parliament generally focus on procedural rules and practices and arrangements for salaries and entitlements. Capacity building beyond this initial induction typically involves briefing sessions dealing with specialist topics or particular policies, which are implemented. IT training for parliamentarians nowadays is growing in importance. In some Parliaments, in the countries with more than one national language, language courses are usually offered. The availability of formal mentoring programs as part of induction entirely depends on party support (Coghill et al., 2012; Fox, Korris, 2012).

In Commonwealth Parliaments it appears to be common practice for the parliament itself to take primary responsibility for training programs. Taking into consideration the availability of resources, these programs are delivered by staff of the parliament (e.g. Australia, UK), augmented by the political parties and sometimes by outside experts. Developing countries in particular tend to rely on programs offered by external training providers such as the Centre for Democratic Institutions, the National Democratic Institute, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy or the political foundations of Germany's major parties (Coghill et al., 2012).

Teaching and learning techniques applied for parliamentarians also vary widely, ranging from the simple provision of documents for lectures on particular topics, to the application of adult learning techniques, such as mock sittings in which newly elected parliamentarians practice normal daily sitting procedures, advised and guided by senior experienced parliamentarians and parliamentary staff (Coghill et al., 2012). Usually the parliamentarians welcome such methods and evaluate them as enabling new parliamentarians to become more effective during shorter periods (Coghill et al., 2008a). However other scholars (Donohue, Holland, 2012) find that few capacity building programs for parliamentarians are designed around adult learning and active learning principles.

Differences in content, learning techniques and the length of education and training programs mostly depend on the available resources for

training. A small parliament with few staff in an economically poor country is often ill-equipped to allocate resources to training parliamentary staff while others, such as the UK House of Commons and the Australian Parliament, are able to do so. The analysis conducted by Donohue and Holland (2012) shows that even though there has been an increase in training offered to parliamentarians, few of the programs have been built around principles of adult learning, which allow participants to capitalize on previous experiences or to acquire new skills through simulated learning activities or mentoring by experienced colleagues (Coghill et al., 2012).

It was found that the variety of training programs for parliamentarians are based on certain standards, however they are conducted not taking into consideration the information about whether they enhance the parliamentarians' capacity to perform more effectively (Coghill et al., 2012). Australian Senate staff report that the performance of new senators, whose induction program included role play in a mock sitting, was noticeably superior to the performance of senators in previous parliaments where induction programs had not contained a role-play component (Coghill et al., 2008a). However the research finds that participation in training is best measured by accessing organizational records or by surveying training providers (Coghill et al., 2012).

Looking at the attitudes of parliament members towards training in several countries scholars (Coghill et al., 2012) find that parliamentarians are overwhelmingly in favour of training, although many state that it would be helpful if more personalized programs, which more easily accommodated members' of parliament busy diaries, were offered (Coghill et al., 2012). Other scholars (Steinack, 2012) find and acknowledge that the clear majority of parliament members who supported compulsory training for themselves and their peers could be partly down to a selection bias.

Our review of scientific literature indicated that there were no research investigating the attitudes of the Lithuanian parliamentarians towards qualification development neither as separate scientific investigations nor as part or wider parliamentary research projects.

Research methodology

The findings of this paper are based on the analysis of 19 semi-structured expert interviews conducted electronically (via e-mail) with the members of the Lithuanian parliament (original

sample was 32, however 13 of possible respondents refused to answer the questions). The applied method is considered to be a systematizing expert interview according to the classification of A. Bogner ir W. Menz (Bogner et al., 2009). The interview questions were related to form, topic, impact, implications of the contents of qualification development events and general attitudes towards qualification development.

The choice of the respondents was based on the assumption that the parliamentarians themselves could be the best informants investigating the questions, which are under consideration in this paper.

Distribution of the respondents according to gender was: 5 women and 14 men. 10 of the respondents were working in the Parliament for the first term, 9 – for the second or more terms. The respondents represented both positions: managing coalition parties and parties in the opposition.

All interviews were transcribed and de-personalised, providing each interview with a running code known just for the researchers (from E1 to E19) that helped to trace back particular quotes and in the paper are used for referencing. The data were analyzed according to all the stages of qualitative research: transcription, coding, thematic comparison, conceptualization and theoretical generalization.

The interviews were conducted during the period from May 5 to May 30, 2012. The time for the interviews is considered optimal, as a new election campaign had not yet been started.

Analysis of research results

The aim of the empirical part of the research was to explore the attitudes of the members of the Lithuanian Parliament towards qualification development and find out how they are developing their qualification. The following hypotheses were raised before the research:

H1 – The Lithuanian parliamentarians are passive in respect to qualification development and avoid sharing their attitudes towards the subject.

H 2 – Qualification development of the Lithuanian parliamentarians is not various and is limited to traditional forms – lectures and seminars.

H3 – The content (topics) of qualification development of the Lithuanian parliamentarians are most often related to public policy and therefore they lack variety, however, the members of the Parliament can easily indicate at least 3 topics or lecturers, who left the best impression.

H4 – The Lithuanian parliamentarians can easily indicate what they can apply in their work from qualification development events.

Attitudes towards qualification development were openly expressed by 11 respondents – experts. It was noted that not first term members of the Parliament were prone to avoid expressing their approach towards the subject. In the expressed opinions we found such attitudes as: “qualification development is just seeking to get the certificate, is unnecessary” (E1), “I have increased my qualification before becoming a member of the Parliament” (E1), “one must be qualified before becoming a member of the Parliament” (E5, E17, E19), “chancellery of the Parliament has to allocate funds for qualification development” (E6), “I have not develop my qualification as all the necessary information and educational materials about the work in the Parliament is provided by the parliamentary research department, chancellery of the Parliament and other institutions” (E11, E12), “question regarding qualification development of parliamentarians is very provocative, as qualification courses are provided just for the employees of the Parliament’s chancellery, i.e. assistants of the members of Parliament and others” (E13), “it is not ethical to participate in the expensive seminars which are paid from the budget” (E15), “work in the Parliament itself for those who are responsible and work much is constant day by day development of qualification” or “I have PhD in social sciences and will be ready (if the Constitution allowed) to help the colleagues to develop their qualification” (E16).

As it can be seen from the answers of the respondents that the attitudes to qualification development are quite differing and range from the approach that “qualification must be developed before work in the Parliament starts and that it is a kind of waste of funds” to such as “it is necessary for the chancellery to allocate funds for qualification development”. Thus the responses indicate that the first hypothesis (H1) was approved, as just some more than half of the experts replied to the question, and from those who answered it is difficult to make a consolidated opinion or discern groups of opinions about attitudes of the Lithuanian parliamentarians.

Exploring the second hypothesis (H2) regarding variety of qualification development forms, it became clear that just 3 experts-respondents (2 of them are first term members of the Parliament) could not indicate any of qualification development form, which was used developing their qualification.

Others noted at least several forms of qualification development which can be used by the members of Parliament. They are: conferences (mentioned by 10 respondents), work in the committees (mentioned by 4 respondents), participation in the seminars (mentioned by 4 respondents, e.g. E8 mentioned “preparing for elections we organized and participated in the seminar”), work in the Parliamentary groups (mentioned by 3 respondents), participation in and listening to parliamentary sessions (mentioned by 2 respondents), reading special books (mentioned by 2 respondents), thematic visiting of other countries (mentioned by 2 respondents), work in fractions (mentioned by 2 respondents, e.g. E14 stated “some sessions of the fractions, where officers and heads of various institutions are invited, can be equalled to seminars”), work with legal acts (mentioned by 2 respondents), and at least one respondent mentioned the following forms: communication with interests group, writing for the media, preparing and delivering reports for special events (e.g. E2 mentioned that he himself participated in the events where he delivered reports and replied to the questions thus developing the qualification of judges, prosecutors, lecturers and teachers), meeting with the representatives of the public (e.g. E7 stated “a member of the Lithuanian Parliament is constantly developing his/her qualification by participating in various conferences, meeting with representatives of the public and business”), work in working groups and participation in meetings (e.g. E18 indicated that “much other experiences I get participating in sessions, meetings, seminars, discussions and conferences of various spheres and topics”). Thus the conclusion can be drawn that the second hypothesis (H2) was approved in part, as conferences and seminars as the most popular qualification development form were indicated by the majority of the respondents, however in total 16 forms were mentioned. In respect to some of the forms of qualification development it can be discussed whether they really are qualification development forms, not just doing a regular job of a parliamentarian, however, as it was stated by expert E17 “I am for lifelong learning, but the Parliament must not be the place where you come to develop your qualification, especially if that is done using the money of tax payers” and just after these ideas as qualification development forms he indicated “participation in the sessions of the Parliament, activities of committees, parliamentary groups, meetings with the colleagues of foreign countries’ parliamentarians”.

The most important in qualification development is the value, which remains after qualification development events. It can be ascertain using various methods. The most often used of them is the one when after some time after the event the participants of such events are enquired about the topic of the event, who lectured and what was really applied in practice after the event. On the basis of this method we checked the third (H3) and the fourth (H4) hypotheses. H3 was disapproved, as from 13 respondents, who answered this question, the topics of qualification development events were indicated just by 5 of them (not taking into consideration such topics as foreign language and computer literacy). The indicated topics were: E1 – time management, personnel management, planning of personal life, decision making, situation analysis, E8 – preparation for presidency in EU, E8 and E12 – preparation for elections, E11 – successful goals, P.R.O.T.A.S., the art of making influence, E17 – international protocol, image formation, effective communication, media communication. The fact worth attention is that from 5 respondents who were able to indicate the topics of qualification development events, 4 were elected for the first time. The indicated topics are not just from the area of public policy, as it was hypothesized, and that indicates that the parliamentarians, who have interest to develop their qualification, are developing it in various spheres.

The fourth hypothesis (H4), stating that the Lithuanian parliamentarians can easily indicate what they can apply in their work from qualification development events, is also related to a remaining value from qualification development events. Just 5 respondents answered this question: E1 – “I use all of that in my job – speaking, writing, arguing, looking for better ways out from difficult situations, media and electorate communication”, E4 – “I use not just theoretical knowledge but also the presented statistical data. And the most important are contacts that you can make many during such events, they are very useful and essential in politics”, E7 – “I use that in improving legal acts”, E8 – “I expect to use the acquired knowledge during EU presidency period”. As it can be seen the replies are not concrete, therefore that fact and also minority of those who answered the question indicate that H4 was disapproved.

Conclusions

As members of the Parliament make decisions on behalf of the entire nation, they necessarily have to have the needed competencies and qualifications that enable them to fulfil their functions efficiently

and effectively in an increasingly complex and globalized world. Among the scholars there is an agreement regarding the main roles and functions of parliamentarians. However, it remains not completely clear what concrete competencies and qualifications are necessary in order to successfully fulfil them for the benefits of the nation. Therefore different countries of the world apply differing practices. There is no one-size-fits-all method for qualification development of parliamentarians.

The findings of our empirical research suggest that qualification development of the Lithuanian parliamentarians is not systematic. A closer analysis revealed that many parliamentarians avoid speaking about that or even negatively evaluate such efforts as a waste of the funds of the state budget allocated by tax payers. Significant part of parliamentarians formally support the principles of lifelong learning, however, some of them suppose that all necessary competencies and qualifications should be acquired before coming to work in the Parliament. Some part of the parliamentarians consider that they could better help to develop other people's qualification than their own. However, despite such attitudes majority or the parliamentarians who participated in our research do not differentiate various forms of qualification development and do not distinguish them from their regular job. Another important finding is that part of the parliamentarians, who have interest to develop their qualification, develop by taking individual responsibility in various spheres of their important job.

Thus to conclude it can be stated that the qualification development system should be improved. However, if we want the system to be operational we have to pay attention to human factor – parliamentarians themselves. Their consciousness, the ability to understand their own limitations and readiness to learn are crucial.

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Lietuvos parlamentarų kvalifikacijos kėlimas: problemos ir požiūriai

Santrauka

Parlamentas yra vieta, kurioje profesijų įvairovė labai didelė. Todėl egzistuoja didelė tikimybė, kad pasitais Seimo narių, kurie niekada neturėjo darbo patirties teisės aktų leidybos, fiskalinės politikos, žmoniškųjų išteklių valdymo ir kitose srityse. Gali būti, kad bus parlamentarų, turinčių daktaro laipsnį ir parlamentarų, kurie tiesiogine prasme yra beraščiai. Turime konstatuoti, kad parlamentarų žinių ir gebėjimų lygis yra netolygus. Tai gali turėti neigiamos įtakos Seimo darbo kokybei.

Pagal Lietuvos Respublikos valstybės tarnybos įstatymą, valstybės tarnautojams yra privalomas įvadinis mokymas ir kvalifikacijos tobulinimas (tęstinės studijos, specialių profesinių žinių plėtimas). Šis įstatymas netaikomas valstybės politikams, teisėjams ir prokurorams. Prokurorams pagal Lietuvos Respublikos teismų įstatymą yra privalomas įvadinis mokymas ir privalomasis kvalifikacijos kėlimas. Seimo narių veiklos įstatymas yra Seimo nario statusas, tačiau jame nerašoma apie Seimo narių mokymąsi, kvalifikacijos kėlimą.

Svarstoma, kokių būtent kompetencijų ir kokios kvalifikacijos reikia parlamentarams. Į šį klausimą gali padėti atsakyti parlamentarų vaidmenų ir funkcijų analizė. Moksliniuose tyrimuose sutariama, kad pagrindiniai parlamentarų vaidmenys ir funkcijos, šalia daugelio tų, kurie yra įvardijami, yra atstovavimas ir įstatymų leidyba. Kad parlamentarai galėtų sėkmingai atlikti šiuos vaidmenis ir su jais sietinas funkcijas, jiems yra būtinos teisės, ekonomikos, finansų srities žinios, gebėjimas bendrauti su rinkėjais ir žiniasklaida. Į Seimą išrinkti žmonės ne visada turi paminėtų ir kitų žinių, gebėjimų. Parlamentarų nuostatos kvalifikacijos kėlimo atžvilgiu turi didelės įtakos realiai kvalifikacijos kėlimo veiklai, todėl jos yra tyrinėjamos pasaulyje, bet Lietuvoje kol kas tam skiriama per mažai dėmesio.

Šio straipsnio tikslas yra įvertinti teorinius parlamentarų mokymosi ir kvalifikacijos kėlimo įtakos sėkmingam organizacijos (Seimo) funkcionavimui aspektus, išanalizuoti parlamentarų mokymosi organizavimo ir parlamentarų dalyvavimo mokymuose patirtį kitose šalyse, pristatyti 2012 metais atliktą kokybinį žvalgomąjį tyrimą, kurio tikslas buvo įvertinti Lietuvos Seimo narių požiūrį į jų pačių kvalifikacijos kėlimą.

Tyrimo metodai – teoriniai ir empiriniai (pusiau struktūruota kokybinė ekspertų, tai yra pačių parlamentarų, apklausa elektroniniu paštu). Remiantis minėtais metodais gilinamasi į parlamentarų mokymosi sistemą, analizuojamos Lietuvos parlamentarų nuostatos kvalifikacijos kėlimo atžvilgiu.

Empirinio tyrimo dalyviai – Lietuvos Seimo nariai iš įvairių parlamento grupių – opozicijos ir valdančios dau-

gumos, skirtingų partijų. Apklausa buvo atliekama elektroniniu paštu siunčiant vardinius laiškus su interviu klausimais. Tyrimas vyko 2012 m. gegužės 5–30 d. Tyrėjai mano, kad buvo parinktas optimalus laikas tikintis sulaukti politikų atsakymų: rinkimų data artėja, bet rinkiminė „karštligė“ dar neprasidėjusi, tie, kurie planuoja kandidatuoti į Seimą, tampa dėmesingesni klausiantiems, nors kyla pavojus, kad bus atsakinėjama nenuoširdžiai. Į išsiųstą elektroninį laišką neatsakė 13 Seimo narių. Analizuojami atsakymai – interviu yra užkoduoti (nuo E1 iki E19) ir buvo žinomi tik tyrėjams. Šiame straipsnyje analizuojama 19 Seimo narių atsakymų (8 Seimo nariai dirbo ne pirmą kadenciją, 10 buvo pirmos kadencijos Seimo nariai).

Empiriniame tyrime buvo iškeltos keturios hipotezės:

H1 – Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo nariai pasyviai žiūri į kvalifikacijos kėlimą ir vengia dalintis savo nuostatomis kvalifikacijos kėlimo atžvilgiu.

H2 – Seimo narių kvalifikacijos kėlimo formų įvairovė nėra didelė, apsiribojama tradicinėmis formomis, t. y. paskaitomis ir seminarais.

H3 – Seimo narių kvalifikacijos kėlimo temos dažniausia susijusios su viešosios politikos temomis, todėl stokojama turinio įvairovės. Parlamentarai nesunkiai gali nurodyti bent po tris temas arba lektorius, kurie jiems paliko geriausiai įspūdį.

H4 – Seimo nariai nesunkiai gali nurodyti, ką iš kvalifikacijos kėlimo gali pritaikyti savo darbe.

Atliktas tyrimas parodė, kad pirmoji hipotezė (H1) pasitvirtino, antroji (H2) – pasitvirtino iš dalies, trečioji (H3) ir ketvirtoji (H4) – nepasitvirtino.

Atliktas tyrimas taip pat parodė, kad Lietuvos parlamentarų požiūris į mokymus yra nevienareikšmis. Vieni jų entuziastingai pritaria kvalifikacijos kėlimo idėjai, kiti pasisako prieš mokymų privalomumą, bet nepaneigia pačių mokymų idėjos. Tam tikra parlamentarų dalis pasisako prieš kvalifikacijos kėlimą dirbant Seime, laiko tokią veiklą valstybės biudžeto ir mokesčių mokėtojų lėšų švaistymu, dar kiti mano, kad kvalifikaciją reikėjo įgyti ir kelti prieš pradėdant darbą Seime. Pasitaikė ir tokių parlamentarų, kurie jaučiasi labiau pasirengę mokyti kitus, o ne mokyti patys.

Pati Lietuvos parlamentarų mokymų sistema yra tobulintina. Didesnis dėmesys turėtų būti skiriamas parlamentarų sąmoningumui, suvokimui, kad kiekvieno žmogaus žinios ir gebėjimai yra riboti, pasirengimui mokytis.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: kvalifikacijos kėlimas, parlamentarai, politikai.

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