The Role of the Headteacher in the Cooperation Between a Music School and the Community

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Summary

One of the aims of the qualitative research case study on the theme of coo-peration between a music school and its environment was to investigate the role of the headteacher in the participation of the selected music school with parents, the founding municipality and public cultural institutions. The article answers on one of the four research questions of earlier mentioned qualitative research and relates to the article published in the *Napredak 157*(4), where

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importance of cooperation between a music school and its environment was discussed.

In the first part of the article, the role of the headteacher in the process of co-operation between a music school and community was studied theoretically. In the second part the results of empirical study of his role in this process were discussed.

The analysis of interviews and documentary materials showed that the role of the headteacher in the cooperation between a music school and commu-nity was related to the manner of headteacher's communication with the education stakeholders, to his active involvement in local organizations in the community, to his influence on employees and students, and to his active seeking of support for the operation of the music school.

Keywords: headteacher, cooperation, community, music school, communi-cation

Introduction

A school's involvement with the community should be essential for the succe-ssful and effective management of the school, as demonstrated by numerous studies by US principal associations, in which school principals ranked cooperation with the community as the first or second most important aspect of their work (Fiore, 2010, xvi). Headteachers should know and understand the challenges of the local and broader environment, define them and adjust their way of management accordingly (Koren, 1999b, 21).

Van Voorhis and Sheldon (2004, after Khalifa, 2012, 429) believe that in the cooperation between a school and the community the headteacher is the one who is responsible for the beginning and the process of cooperation. It is true that the public school aims and school curricula are set at the national level, however, development and work depend on the school itself, as well as on the teachers, employees and, abo-ve all, the headteacher who is responsible for the creation of a school image and for cooperation with the community (Bezić, 2003, 45). Pawlas (2005, 22) speaks of soci-al responsibility which, for the headteacher, means being responsible to all members of the community served by the school, such as teachers, students, parents, citizens without children, the elderly and the local environment.

The autonomy of the school and the headteacher moves in the direction of adap-ting to specific school conditions, the requirements of the environment, as well as the abilities and interests of parents and children (Resman, 1994a, 123). The decen-

tralized plan of school cooperation with the environment gives the highest responsibility to headteachers, who should understand their local community, form a more personal relationship between the school and the community, and make decisions based on the understanding of the needs and interests of the community (Fiore, 2010, 19). The task of a headteacher is therefore to hear public opinions, respond to them, devise them and develop programs that best serve the community in his/her opinion (Hughes and Hooper, 2000, 1). Thus, in the organized program of school cooperation with the environment the headteacher should develop a communication network and promote personal interaction between community members and school representatives (Hughes and Hooper, 2000, 36).

The responsibility that the headteacher accepts in cooperation of school with the community is related to building relationships and good relations with people and organizations from the local environment (Mertkan, 2011, 158). In such a role, the headteacher is the gatekeeper of changes and influences (Herbert, 2000, after Koren, 2006, 25). Since he/she is situated at the border between school and the environment, he/she decides what the school will give to the environment and what it will accept from it (Koren, 1999a, 41). Everard and Morris (1996, 178) named the headteacher's work *border management*, while the headteacher himself/herself has a *borderline* role in the cooperation between school and the environment (Trunk-Širca, 1999, 32). If he/she wants his/her school to be successful and able to respond to changes in the environment, he/she needs to ensure that the boundaries of the school are semi-permeable (Everard, Morris and Wilson, 2004, 222). Jones (1987., after Koren, 1999a, 40) stated that headteachers devote too much time to protecting school boundaries and inward orientation, instead of allowing action that crosses borders and turns outwards. Cross-border management does not emphasize the differences between school and the community, but rather focuses on everything that the school has in common with the community, while the leaders, in this approach, open their professional practice to assessing beyond the limits of their school in order to perform better (West- Burnham, 2011, 10).

Characteristics and capabilities
of a headteacher for cooperation

Schools that want to keep up with ever-increasing demands and ever-faster changes in the environment and society of the 21st century should be managed by competent and trained headteachers (Wing Ng, 2010, 1840). In the guidelines for headteachers, important characteristics, features and behavior of an effective headteacher are recorded, which are largely related to the cooperation of school with the community (ISLLC Standards, 2012):

– Headteacher should take care of the development, implementation and control of the vision of learning accepted and supported by the broader school community. Headteacher therefore needs to share the vision of the school with a broader community that supports this vision, which is only possible through two-way communication.

– Headteacher should be committed to and strive to create such a school culture that will have a positive impact on students' learning and the professional development of employees.

– Headteacher should take care of the management of the organization, its operation and the acquisition of resources in order to ensure a safe, efficient and successful learning environment. Headteachers who are trying to involve business and civil society organizations in their community perform this task much easier than those who are avoiding them.

– Headteacher should work with the families of children and with the local community to identify and respond to the different needs and desires of the community, thereby attracting and increasing resources from the local environment.

– Headteacher should be friendly, honest, fair and respect ethical principles.

– Headteacher should understand, respond and influence broader political, social, economic, legal and cultural matters.

In order to communicate effectively with the community, the headteacher should allow the public to express their views on the school, which means that the emphasis should be placed on two-way communication, where the information flows from school to the public and vice versa (Fiore, 2010, 5). Without good communication, a headteacher can not be successful in his/her work (Russo, Borovac Zekan and Peronja, 2012, 493).

If a headteacher wants to communicate effectively, he/she therefore needs to master the communication process, overcome the communication barriers, communicate verbally in an effective way, know how to form and pass feedback, as well as to communicate non-verbally (also there). The ability of good communication means being open to different opinions and taking into account ethical standards based on mutual respect (Gomez Gajardo and Rios Carmenado, 2012, 920). Therefore, in dealing with internal and external stakeholders, a headteacher should strive towards the development of healthy and good interpersonal relationships (Şahenka, 2010, 4299).

Authors such as Fiore, Whitaker and Stolp have found in many studies that headteacher is the one who determines the degree to which people feel welcome, comfortable and accepted at school. In order to work effectively with families and with the community, the headteacher needs to provide for the development of such a cli-

mate at a certain school in which participants feel equal, desirable, and consequently they will develop affiliation with their school (Auerbach, 2012, xiv).

Headteachers who want to lay a good foundation for cooperation with the community should make it possible for the school to be accessible to everyone, they need to actively seek out contacts with the community, they should respect the principle of cooperation in management, but also recognize the community and use it as a learning resource (Sayer, 1989, 12). Headteachers should therefore know the formal and informal leaders of different groups in the community and develop professional relationships with them in order to understand the needs, wishes, interests of individuals and the community, which is very important when these organizations and individuals can become an important means of support and financing of the school (Hughes and Hooper, 2000, 162). Between the school and key communicators, headteachers need to establish an understanding and trust that they bring to the community, and therefore headteachers should regularly invite them to school, provide them with information about the school, listen to their concerns about the school, distribute school newspapers among them, provide them with their telephone number, and always answer all questions, letters or phone calls personally, by telephone or in writing (Bagin, Gallagher and Moore, 2012, 135).

For a successful cooperation of the school with the community it is especially important that headteachers also inform all employees about their role in maintaining successful cooperation between the school and the community, in order for them to feel the responsibility and to represent the school the best they can (Bagin, Gallagher and Moore, 2012, 182).

Cooperation between headteacher, parents and external organizations

Headteachers should pay special attention to building good cooperation and relations between family, school and the community (Yilmaz, 2010, 3945). Headteacher is thus responsible for the systematic design of school policy towards parents, as he/she forms the conditions for participation, acts as a moderator of interpersonal relations, promotes innovation, knows and introduces modern guidelines in the area of cooperation with parents, coordinates quality and various forms of cooperation with parents, assesses the influence and the power of parents, shapes and cultivates such a school culture that focuses on the needs, demands, wishes and aspirations of students and their families (Šurc, 1999, 65), while at the same time being creative in enthusing parents to cooperate with the school (Athanasoula-Reppa et al., 2010, 2208).

Šurc (1999, 63-64) states that parents expect from management to organize and connect the school at all levels, to ensure the full safety of children, they expect help in case of their helplessness in bringing up their children, and an effective addressing of conflict situations for the benefit of the child; on the other hand, the management staff expects parents to be objective, to trust in the expertise of pedagogical workers, and that parents raise their children in an ideal way.

Headteachers can also create effective channels for communication with the community through parents, because if parents are also key leaders in the community, cooperation with them gives access to public opinion about the school and, consequently, increases the financial and mental support of the school and its goals (Fiore, 2010, 38). In order for headteachers to best represent their schools as key parts of the communities they often involve themselves in civil organizations and community projects, with their active involvement influencing key leaders in the community to devote to the school their time, abilities and resources (Fiore, 2010, 31).

Undoubtedly, the task of headteachers is the integration with the broader environment, whereby of great importance is their desire and knowledge to establish contacts with external parties and to actively participate in activities that take place outside the school (Erčulj, 1998, 27). Headteacher is therefore the key person at a particular school who by establishing and maintaining successful cooperation with teachers, students, parents, the local community and other organizations, significantly influences the development of the school and the progress of students (Cankar, 2009, 15). It depends on how much and in what way this connecting will contribute to the quality of life and work at school (Intihar and Kepec, 2002, 138). Therefore, headteachers should create such an atmosphere and culture at their schools that will enable students and employees to perform the best they can, to show what they know, and to share this with their immediate environment (Erčulj, 1996, 27).

Research methodology

One of the aims of the qualitative research case study regarding the cooperation between a music school and its environment was to determine the role of the headteacher in the participation of the selected music school with parents, the founding municipality and public cultural institutions.

This article answers on one of the four research questions of the above mentioned qualitative research case study, for which the methodology was thoroughly described in the article *The importance of cooperation between a music school and its environment* published in the *Napredak 157*(4). Since the results regarding the role of the headteacher in cooperation between music school and community presented in this

article originate from the above mentioned qualitative research case study the met-hodology remains the same and it will not be written down here again. The reader is referred to read the methodology of this research in Prevejšek (2016, 504 – 509).

The article presents answers on the 3rd research question pertaining to the role of the headteacher in the participation of the music school with the community.

Data analysis

Pertaining to the purpose and objectives of the research, on the basis of research questions four categories were developed according to the procedure described in methodology (Prevejšek, 2016, 504 – 509). One of them was entitled *The role of headteacher in the cooperation between the music school and the community*, which shall be presented in the following.

The analysis of interviews and documentary materials showed that in the co-operation between the music school and the community the communication of a headteacher is important, as well as his/her involvement in the community, his/her influence on the employees and the search for financial support for the functioning of the school. The content of the category *The role of headteacher in the cooperation between the music school and the community* is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The role of headteacher in the cooperation between the music school and the community

Starting topics	Organized topics	Category
— Personality traits and behaviour — Personal contacts	Communication	
— Managing amateur music groups in the municipality — Speaking at events about the meaning of amateur culture and music school — Political non-engagement	Integration into the community	The role of headteacher in the cooperation between the music school and the community
— Persuading students to enroll by adjusting schooling conditions — Persuading teachers and employees	Impact on students and employees	
— Seeking financial and material support — Cooperation with the municipality	Support for the functioning of the school	

Communication

Personality traits and behaviour

According to the opinion of the headteacher, the *headteacher's communication with the community is very important for the successful cooperation of the school with the community*. The headteacher believes that communication with the community depends on the headteacher's talent for communication. Thus, headteachers must constantly think about how they communicate with the environment which is more difficult for those headteachers who *do not have within themselves the ability to communicate*.

Parents who have participated in the research regard as very important in their communication with the headteacher the attitude of the latter and the way he behaves towards them and their children. (P1) stated that he regularly communicates with the headteacher and added: *[...] In particular, the headteacher is very fine, so that he always approaches others without being conceited, he is simply benevolent*. Furthermore, he stated that the contact he has established with the headteacher was *very genuine. You could say friendly. For example, when you meet him, he almost always shakes your hand which I find is something very nice*. (P2) agrees with that. (P1) believed that it is very important that the headteacher does not make a difference between parents with different social status, stating: *Exactly the fact that there is no distance, I am the headteacher and you are but a shopkeeper, and the child will pay anyway*. About the headteacher, she stated: *He is a man, with a big M*. (P2) also agreed with these statements. (P3) said the following about the headteacher's attitude towards parents: *He deals with all in the same way, no more no less, everyone is equal to him*., and further emphasized that *he has such a benevolent attitude*.

(P5) believed that in people in leadership positions this *humane aspect* is very important and that it is often forgotten. Thus, he stated the following about the headteacher: *And what matters is his simple human warmth. Many times we forget about this human part in these positions, about this ability to offer someone a warm hand, also comforting the children, if they make a mistake during their performance [...] to give them the will to move forward*.

Parents who participated in my research believed that the headteacher gives equal attention to all parents and children. (P2) stated: *He is interested in every little thing*. (P3) continued that the principal is interested *in the student, his parents, he is not only interested in us paying for this, and that the children will be there no matter the outcome, he's in charge of everything*. When talking about the cooperation between the headteacher and the parents, (P5) stated that the director in informal communication, at meetings with the parents, always *asks something, he is interested, you feel*

that every child is important to him, his/her progress, how he/she feels in the music school, he always finds nice words. On the other hand, the headteacher himself loves to help the parents and (P5) appreciates this very much, as he said: *[...] it is not difficult for him to do anything for the child, to take an instrument to Ljubljana, to have it fixed and bring it back. This is a small thing, but on the other hand it is great for us parents, for the child.* (P4) confirmed that the headteacher *likes to know every child and how he is doing, which means a lot to the children.* She believes that his behavior has created a certain authority and respect from both the parents and children. According to her, the headteacher also places emphasis on two-way communication, as she stated: *He is also susceptible to suggestions, criticisms, I think that there was never a problem to talk with him openly.*

The museum director was satisfied with the attitude he has with the headteacher and added that they always carry out what they agree upon. In the opinion of the mayor, it is very important that the headteacher has a sense of cooperation, saying: *[...] the key role here is that the headteacher has the feeling that he needs to cooperate*, adding that it would not be good *to have a headteacher who would be enclosed in himself.* (P4) believed that the music school is very keen to have a very good contact with parents as well as with the community, and that the headteacher has the managerial function of the connecting person. (P5) agreed with that, stating: *And he also connected a truly broader social community. He strongly linked everything.* The director of the JSKD believed that the success of the cooperation depends on how much *he is open to the outside, how he wants to expose the school to the public, or to involve it in some other programs, which is why this is the principal decision of the headteacher.* She said of the current headteacher that he is *very broad and looks for different ways* to participate, which she thinks is very important for the town where the school is situated.

Personal contacts

In communication with parents and the community the headteacher puts great emphasis on the importance of establishing personal contacts with people, stating: *It takes a lot of time and energy to establish normal contacts with people, not with institutions, with people.* The director of the library believed that when cooperating with the community the headteacher is the one who establishes the first contact. The director of the museum said that the role of the music school's headteacher is decisive in communication with the community. According to him the headteacher has the role of *a boss*, because *we always communicate on the level of boss-to-boss.* The director of the JSKD also emphasized that the headteacher is very important for cooperation between the music school and the community, and that the links betwe-

en the present music school and the community are very strong because the director devotes a lot of attention to the cooperation with the community.

Involving of the headteacher in the community

Managing amateur musical groups in the municipality

The headteacher of the music school is involved in the cultural life of the town, as in his free time he is also the conductor of the tamburitza orchestra and choirmaster of the mixed choir in the town. With both ensembles, he performs a lot at events at home and abroad as well as at national and international competitions. He said that he has also built good relations with the local community and the municipality through amateur culture.

(P3) stated that the headteacher has a great desire to participate in the events and said: *I think he does a lot for the people to attend, he reaches out where there is an event.* The mayor finds the most important *that the headteacher is someone who is already involved in cultural event in the municipality.* According to him, it is important that the headteacher does not come from another town, since in this case he would only be at work from seven to three, while in the afternoon the music school would not be present in the cultural life of the town, due to his absence. He believes that this would be bad for the music school in the long run and that the *music school would lose both on quality and visibility.* He therefore linked the presence of the headteacher and his living in the town where the music school is located with the cultural beat that the music school and its presence offers to the town. He stressed that *the key thing is that you have a headteacher who lives with the town, who is willing to do many things in addition to his regular working time, in order to cooperate with the local community, societies, other cultural people.*

Speaking at events about the importance of amateur culture and music school

The headteacher of the music school performs at various events in the town and also as a speaker at school events. It is very important to him that in his speeches he talks about the importance of culture, *about what a music school actually is, what the amateur culture represents*, and he believes that people who do not deal with culture do not know this. In my opinion, his speeches are in some way intended to raise people's awareness of culture, by saying, *I think that amateur culture is the one that defines a nation, not so much professional culture, because we only come in touch with professional culture rarely, while amateur culture is a part of our lives,*

everyday lives, we are in touch with it every day, and as I previously said, amateur culture raises the level of cultural life of a nation, in the community where it lives, where it is happening. In this way, it is what defines this nation, it speaks about what this nation really is, where it comes from, where it goes, what it wants, what it strives for. [...] and as a music school, through our programs, through the programs of amateur culture we are working on this.

Political non-engagement

When it comes to integrating into the community, the headteacher regards as very important not to engage in favour of any political party. According to him, political engagement is not appropriate for headteachers and he stated that in case of changing the government one can find him-/herself *on the wrong side*, and continues: *This is not good for your school collective, you have thus got an enemy and not a supporter.* He believes that political non-engagement in long term contributed to better relations with the leaders in the municipality, and said: *I was in very good relations with all the mayors, I never had any problems.*

Impact on students and employees

Persuading students to enroll and the adaptation of the schooling conditions

When the current headteacher took over the management of the music school in 1992, there was no string orchestra at the school. With the desire to expand the section for strings, he himself sought out and urged the students to enroll into the strings classes and also adjusted the conditions of schooling to their needs. He stated: *I urged them to come, we set different conditions for them, we gave them instruments to play and they did not pay the tuition fees.*

Persuasion of teachers and employees

The headteacher of the music school believes that teachers and other employees should be part of the cooperation with the community. He said that certain teachers who live in the place where the music school is situated are involved in amateur culture in the school district, thus contributing to the successful cooperation and presentation of the school in the community.

The headteacher is convinced that all the colleagues should follow the same goals in the school's cooperation with the environment. He highlighted the culture of the dressing up of teachers and other employees for performances and concerts. Since the performances are attended by parents, friends, relatives of students and

other listeners from the same community, the way of dressing at public events is also the way of presenting the music school and its employees. The director believes that inappropriate dressing of employees reduces the reputation of the school. For each student, the performance is something special, therefore he said that every teacher *should also show respect for what a student achieved, for his/her performance, with the aesthetics of the performance itself.* He had high praise for the janitor who prepares the stage for performers during the performance and said: *Our janitor, for example, works at every concert, he dresses like a performer, he carries out his work wearing a tie.*

Support for school operation

Finding financial and material support

The headteacher as a managerial body is responsible for the financial and material operations of the school (ZOFVI, 2008.). The founder of the music school is the municipality which has statutory financial and material obligations toward the school. The headteacher stated that these funds are sufficient for the basic functioning of the school, but are insufficient for a very successful cooperation with the community. If the school wants to do more than dictated by school programs, it needs to find additional financial and material resources for additional programs. Thus, he said: *We could operate normally if we only implemented what the school programs demand of us. [...] This is covered! We would only have two or three orchestras, not six of them. [...] That would mean much less work for the headteacher, for teachers, however, such a communication with the community would be much less efficient.*

In seeking additional financial and material support, the headteacher emphasized the importance of personal acquaintance with the people from whom he is seeking support and said: *Today, you can not go and seek sponsorship if you do not know the right person. [...] Personal contacts are the only good recipe for it, the only one! You have to persuade them to come to you, that you are doing something for the general good.* And it is very important to him to have a good relationship with people who can help the school, stating: *Of course, if you do not get along with people, you don't get anything. No, that's for sure.*

The mayor believes that because the school is *open and integrated into the local community* it is *gaining importance* in the community and that this is why the community itself responds more to the needs of the school. In the publication of the music school X (Glasbena šola X, 2011., 84) we find that the music school has 15 sponsors. The headteacher stated that financial support does not always mean that the school receives money, but that the municipality and organizations pay various

expenses, while sometimes certain sponsors want to remain anonymous. The headteacher said: *The municipality and the others do not give you money directly, but rather help you in a certain way; let's say that they pay you for something, like the bus, the press and the like, you can not even mention that you got it or where you got it.*

Cooperation with the municipality

Since the municipality provides the music school with the basic financial and material conditions for operation, the cooperation of the headteacher with the founder is very important. The headteacher emphasized: *If the headteacher fights with the municipality, the founder, there is already a problem.* He said that he paid much attention to good relations and cooperation with people employed in the municipality which, according to him, contributed to the fact that the municipality after seven years of his management bought the building with municipal funds, completely renovated it and devoted it to the operation of the music school.

According to the headteacher, it is precisely because of the constant search and establishment of good personal relationships with people who are in high places that the music school has succeeded in providing such good working conditions.

Conclusion

In this article, the role played by the headteacher in the cooperation of the music school with the community was discussed. The data analysis showed that the role of the headteacher in cooperation between the music school and the community is related to the manner of headteacher's communication with the stakeholders, with his active involvement in the community, with his influence on the employees, and with searching support for the functioning of the music school in the local community.

The headteacher of the music school presented is aware that with his way of communicating he influences the success of the school's cooperation with the community, whereby placing great emphasis on establishing good personal contacts with people which presents the basis for establishing and maintaining good relations with all the stakeholders in education.

The study showed that in order to provide good cooperation the headteacher is deliberately and actively involved in cultural organizations in the municipality. It would not be appropriate for the headteacher to be involved in the activities of political parties, since political changes of the leading parties in the municipality may exert a negative impact on the functioning of the school.

To secure successful cooperation the headteacher influences students and employees, by encouraging the adaptation of education to students' interest, involving the employees in amateur culture in the municipality, and drawing attention to the culture of dressing and behavior of employees that influence the school's image in the community.

In his managerial role, the headteacher takes care of the financial and material support of the school. The funds for the basic functioning of the school are provided by the Ministry of Education and Sport and the founding municipality. The school's openness and involvement in the local community helps it to acquire additional resources from the community for supplementary school programs.

On the basis of the research it can be concluded that good communication, personal knowledge of people in important positions in the local community, active involvement in the community, personal interaction and constant efforts to maintain good relations with all stakeholders in music school education represent the main roles of the headteacher for successful cooperation of the music school with the community.

Abbreviations
JSKD – Public Fund for Cultural Activities
P1, P2, P3, P4, P5 – Parents

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Uloga ravnatelja u suradnji glazbene škole sa zajednicom

Sažetak

Jedan od ciljeva kvalitativnog istraživanja studije slučaja na temu suradnje glazbene škole i okruženja u kojem djeluje bio je istražiti ulogu ravnatelja u procesu suradnje glazbene škole s roditeljima, osnivačem škole i javnim kulturnim institucijama. Članak odgovara na jedno od četiriju istraživačkih pitanja prije spomenute studije i nadovezuje se na članak objavljen u *Napretku, 157*(4), u kojem je bilo analizirano značenje suradnje glazbene škole s lokalnim okruženjem.

U prvom dijelu članka teorijski se istražuje uloga ravnatelja u procesu suradnje između glazbene škole i zajednice a u drugome se raspravljaju rezultati empirijskog proučavanja njegove uloge u tom procesu. Analiza intervjua i dokumenata pokazala je da je ravnateljeva uloga u suradnji sa zajednicom povezana s načinom njegove komunikacije s vanjskim dioničarima obrazovanja, s njegovim aktivnim sudjelovanjem u lokalnim organizacijama, s njegovim utjecajem na zaposlenike i učenike te s njegovim aktivnim angažiranjem u traženju podrške za rad glazbene škole.

Ključne riječi: ravnatelj, suradnja, zajednica, glazbena škola, komunikacija