**Educational management and models of school management with regard to global trends and the role of competences in school principals**

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**Abstract**

The globalization of the economy means the increasing division of labour, the increasing competition, the changes in the employment structure and the changes in the required knowledge and skills. In the terms of globalization, changes in the context (economy, politics, science, culture) of education are dependent on changes in the international context. The themes of this paper are knowledge as the most valuable product of the global economy of the 21st century and the managing of schools as the primary educational institutions. The main thesis of this paper is to present the current level and quality of management of Croatian schools tested through the competences of school principals in the Croatian educational system. For the educational management to achieve its potential it is necessary to stimulate the human resources through internal communication within the school institution and to create the stimulating work environment. The results of the research, which involved 55 primary school principals of the Brod-Posavina, Osijek-Baranja and Vukovar-Srijem County, are presented in this paper. The results point to the complexity and difficulty of the leading positions in the educational institutions of the Republic of Croatia, which are necessary to be systematically revised by focusing on and emphasizing the modern models of school management.

Keywords: globalization, competence, principal, management in education, models of school management in the Republic of Croatia

**INTRODUCTION**

This paper deals with school management, the schools as primary educational institutions and the necessity for change of the traditional ways of management appointment in the 21st century schools. The aim is to research the structure and the competences of the school headmasters in the Republic of Croatia, the requirements for their appointment and their impact on the establishment of a positive working and educational environment, as well as any existing procedural variance in election and performance of their professional duties in schools across the EU member states.

General hypotheses:

H2: A significant statistical variance in competences of headmasters with respect to the time spent at said position is statistically insignificant.

H3: There is a statistically significant variance in headmaster competences with respect to their work experience at teaching positions.

At present, education provides the fuel for the development of economy based on knowledge while simultaneously the teachers are expected to exploit their own capacities in the knowledge acquisition process. The schools are expected to achieve certain goals while simultaneously plan and evaluate their activities. During the past few decades the schools have become more open towards the outside world, which is evidenced by their partnerships with the economy (OECD, 1991), parents and the local communities (OECD, 1997). This openness resulted in wider managerial duties of the school’s executive positions, with the headmaster turning into a “coalition constructor” and at the same time the “internal” school manager. The investment in education becomes key performance indicators for understanding that which is currently happening in the modern (global) economy and competition (Bahtijarević-Šiber, 1999, p.717.).

1. **Globalisation Processes and Outcomes**

**Globalisation** refers to a comprehensive and unifying social process that includes the entire world (Turek, 1999). From the economic viewpoint, one may say that the cause for the globalisation lies within the capitalistic production process, technological progress and international regulatory legislation. Globalisation processes have marked the beginning of a new era and planted the seed of a new global society. The outcomes and effects of the globalisation may be viewed as either positive or negative. The positive outcomes of the globalisation process include: the creation of a multipolar world, the possibility of fast information flow and exchange, the availability of new technologies and the creation of jobs in underdeveloped countries, widespread environmental consciousness and the taking into consideration the needs and comforts of individuals. The negative outcomes of globalisation include: rising unemployment, widespread poverty, widening of the gap between the rich and the poor, new diseases, political and economic interests placed above the interests of the humanity, strengthening of individual needs at the expense of the common needs. The unemployment rates in many countries are soaring and those who are made redundant do not migrate onto alternative positions with higher wages, but rather onto the growing unemployment lists..

1. **21st Century School Management**
	1. ***The Headship Role***

The headmasters of today are faced with a number of various tasks that, apart from the curriculum development, include financial and human resources management. The contemporary headmaster/ school manager is expected to perform several duties:

* Teaching staff and teaching staff’s needs management and care,
* Encouraging good relations with the parents, the local community and government,
* Defining a recognizable school ethos,
* Promotion of high-quality curriculum and teaching improvements.

Apart from the above, a number of administrative, financial and disciplinary responsibilities lie within the daily duties of a headmaster and represent part of the necessary skill set required for successful quality school management. The choice of the right candidate is crucial. Therefore, different criteria should be taken into consideration before appointment is made. Apart from certain formal requirements that should be fulfilled by all the candidates, a comprehensive skill development is necessary through different managerial styles which complement the contemporary complexity of the educational environment. The headmaster position is a complex one because of the management and leadership skillset required for successful management of the school and its staff. Evidently, we are dealing with an interdisciplinary phenomenon that includes educational qualities, psychological and social features, as well as marketing and management characteristics (Jukić, 2012). The above clearly points out the complexity and the demands of the leadership position within the schooling system which should be systematically reviewed, focusing on and emphasising the school management characteristics and requirements.

* 1. ***The Effects of the Globalisation on the Croatian Educational System Organization***

In the past, the Croatian educational system was divided into four spheres; a division that exists presently includes: preschools, primary schools, high schools and universities (Image 1). The Croatian government has drafted the Education, Science and Technology Strategy in 2013. The existence of said document is elaborated by the current state of the Croatian society which is the result of the changed global environment and the internal social, economic, cultural and demographic changes. This document of the Croatian government adheres to the European strategic document, The Lisbon Strategy[[1]](#footnote-1), which points out the need to promote education and establishment of a more competitive knowledge-based economy (Mlinarević et al, 2016). As an EU member state, the Republic of Croatia has recognized the importance of educational reform and in lieu with that, in 2015 has begun it comprehensive curricular reform which puts emphasis on the importance of organisational and structural changes of the educational system. One of the more prominent changes is the transition from the eight-year to a nine-year primary school system. Further on, the comprehensive curricular reform stresses out the need for a more vertically connected system which mirrors the changes required by all educational levels (from preschools to universities). At present, the organisational structure in Croatian schools is determined by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Founder (the county or the city), with the possibility of involving parents, social services administration, inspection services, legislature, political parties, the media et cetera. The school within the Croatian educational system are not competitive. Croatia has implemented a very limited decentralisation with a vague division of duties and responsibilities, a lack of deeper system analysis and weak management. The result of the aforementioned is a strict management hierarchy and inadequate management. The school management process is conducted in accordance with the Education Act[[2]](#footnote-2) according to which the school is managed by the School Board as well as the headmaster. Education system management includes key decision making regarding the system itself and the conditions required for their successful implementation. The key features of the Croatian education system management include a high level of centralized and administrative audit. Current lacks of the Croatian educational system could be viewed through:

* Insufficient funding of the educational system, as well as poor financial management of the available funds.
* Educational staff members are insufficiently technologically trained and are lacking in numerous skills required in 21st century schools.
* The election of the headmaster is determined by the formal mandatory regulations, often politically conditioned without any criteria that would ensure the choice of the best candidate.
* Not only do the headmasters lack the knowledge of the school management, but more often than not they lack the pedagogical and psychological requirements needed for implementation of innovation into the teaching process. Since any kind of external evaluation of the school’s performance is non-existent, it is impossible to determine the actual quality level of either the school or its management.

**Image 1 Schematic of the Croatian educational system[[3]](#footnote-3)**



* 1. ***Procedures and Requirement of the Headmaster Election in the Republic of Croatia***

The procedure of headmaster election is an important step towards the establishment of the school as a teaching organisation; therefore, a thought-through and transparent approach to the candidate selection is very important. What should be taken into consideration here are the abilities, comprehensive knowledge, skills and attitudes of each individual candidate. As in the majority of EU member states, in the Republic of Croatia the tender for the headmaster position is published in newspapers and school web pages, and the election process is left at the discrepancy of the school. The measure in which the public tender is regulated is determined by mandatory prescribed requirements related to the formal education level and educational work experience.[[4]](#footnote-4) After the election by the school bodies[[5]](#footnote-5), the headmaster is elected for a mandate of five years. The elections are reduced to the candidates’ years of working experience, without clear rules stating why a certain candidate would be better than the other, since all of them have to fulfil the same formal legal requirements: *„a person who fulfils the requirements for a teaching position or professional staff member may be appointed for a headmaster if they possess a minimum of a bachelor degree and five years of working experience in a primary or high school..”* Therefore, it must be said that the primary school headmasters are elected exclusively from within the teaching ranks and that they possess only the competences acquired through their initial positions.

* 1. ***Procedures and Requirement of the Headmaster Election in EU member states***

According to Eurodyce, in two-thirds of EU member states the public tenders are regulated quite differently.[[6]](#footnote-6) In some countries no special regulations exist and the general labour laws apply. Other countries have thoroughly developed procedures. In eleven countries, the headmasters are appointed based on the public candidate testing organized at the central level. For instance, in Lithuania there are two phases; at first, an independent body evaluates the leadership and managerial competencies as well as key competencies of the candidates, only then can a positively evaluated candidate participate in a testing procedure organized by the school owner (municipality or government body). Only four countries (Germany, Greece, Cypress and Luxembourg) use candidate lists as the only election method. In almost all the remaining countries the experience at the teaching position is the primary condition for appointment. In Lithuania, leadership and managerial competencies are clearly stated requirements.

1. **Managerial Tasks and Competencies of Headmasters**
	1. ***Experiences of the Republic of Croatia and the EU member states***

Croatian school headmasters are professional managers responsible for functioning within legal boundaries and the professional performance quality of their schools.[[7]](#footnote-7) In most countries school management is traditionally distributed between the official managing teams. This implies that the headmaster is aided by one or several deputy headmasters and sometimes administrative secretary or an accountant. In countries with prevailing school autonomy, the headmaster holds a key role in the division of managerial tasks. For instance, in Finland the headmaster is entitled to organize managerial teams and groups according to current issues and school needs. The members of managerial teams often include teacher team leaders, responsible for actual decision implementation.

* 1. ***Headship competencies and Croatian schools management***

A self-assessment research of school headship competencies was conducted at the County Professional Councils of primary school headmasters in November 2015. The research included 55 primary school headmasters from Brod-Posavina County, Osijek-Baranya County and Vukovar-Srijem County. The average age of the subjects is 47.6 (sd=8.28). The percentage of the first mandate headmasters was 50%, the second 20.4% , the third 18.5 % and 11.1% of headmasters who hold the position for more than three consecutive mandates. 3.7% subjects hold undergraduate degrees, 94.5% hold graduate level degrees and 1.8 subjects hold a doctoral degree. The number of students attending their schools ranges from 82 to 820 and the average number was 306.4 students (sd= 173.71).

***Table 1 Descriptive data for tested matters***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| r.br. | Matter | M | Range | SD |
| **Professional competencies**  |
| 1. | Administrative skills | 4,4 | 3-5 | 0,60 |
| 2. | Leadership skills | 4,9 | 4-5 | 0,29 |
| 3. | Communication skills | 4,9 | 4-5 | 0,26 |
| 4. | Organisational skills | 5 | 4-5 | 0,19 |
| 5. | Team leadership  | 5 | 4-5 | 0,19 |
| 6. | Time management | 4,8 | 3-5 | 0,43 |
| **Personal competencies** |
| 7. | Innovative | 4,6 | 3-5 | 0,65 |
| 8. | Self-questioning  | 4,7 | 3-5 | 0,53 |
| 9. | Visionary /strategic thinking | 4,8 | 3-5 | 0,46 |
| 10. | Polite | 4,8 | 3-5 | 0,46 |
| 11. | Considerate  | 4,8 | 3-5 | 0,51 |
| **Type of management** |
| 12. | Strategic management | 4,2 | 2-5 | 0,69 |
| 13. | Human resources management | 4,3 | 2-5 | 0,69 |
| 14. | Team management | 4,3 | 3-5 | 0,71 |
| 15. | Time management | 4,2 | 2-5 | 0,78 |
| 16. | Project management | 4,2 | 2-5 | 0,83 |
| 17. | Financial management | 4,3 | 3-5 | 0,65 |

Descriptive analysis of data in Table 1 showed a significant high level of headship competencies. The conclusion is that the results of the listed variables are positive due to the fact that the subjects recognized the needs and the importance of professional and personal competencies required for further contribution to the development and the functioning of schools. Further research is needed to conduct a deep analysis of the accomplished managerial aims in schools, the effects of the external communication as well as human resources. Hence, this research showed the need for further analysis through headship licencing programme, in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, as well further analyses of the teachers’ and administrative and technical staff’s attitudes on headship competencies.

***Table 2* *Differences in headship competencies with regard to the mandate: the results of the one-way ANOVA tests, variance analysis***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **F** | **df** | **p** |
|
| **Professional competencies** | 2,22 | 1 | ,097 |
| **Personal competencies** | 0,16 | 1 | ,922 |
| **Activity implementation** | 0,75 | 1 | ,527 |
| **Type of school management** | 0,34 | 1 | ,797 |

The ANOVA-tests showed no significant difference in the tested variables with regard to the headship mandate. The conclusion is, as above, that the awareness of the headmasters is recognized with respect to the managerial duties, legality of professional procedures, as well as professional performance of a school.

The ANOVA-tests showed a significant difference in personal competencies of headmasters with regard to their teaching experience. Statistically significant difference exists between the headmasters who have worked as teachers from 11-15 years (M=4,6) and headmasters who have worked as teachers for more than 25 years (M=4,9) (Graph 1).

**Graph 1 Differences in personal competencies of headmasters with regard to teaching experience F(5,49) = 3,5907, p=,00780**



1. ***Headship Professional education - experiences***

The Education Act for primary and high school, Article 126 a (National Gazette 152/14) states that a headmaster must hold a licence although this article is inapplicable due to the fact that there is no licencing procedure for headmasters in the Republic of Croatia. Professional education of headmasters is organized by the National Education Agency, and the competencies for performing headmaster duties (personal, professional, developmental, social and action) are implemented through a modular approach (9 modules)[[8]](#footnote-8). Apart from the competencies, the headmasters are offered programmes from the areas of: leadership, management, assessment and audit. Overall, the professional education of headmasters is a condition in 21 countries or regions, and permanent professional education of headmasters is considered a professional obligation in 23 countries or regions. The usual modules include management, team formation, communication and leadership skills, school development, educational legislature, and organization. In Slovenia, the government founded the National Headmaster School in 1995, aimed at providing professional education of headmasters and headmaster candidates.[[9]](#footnote-9) In Finland, the Institute for Educational Leadership, which operates within a university, offers professional education for headmasters and s heads of local education administrative units before and after employment. The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)[[10]](#footnote-10) in Great Britain is focused on teachers who wish to become headmasters.

**CONCLUSION**

The contemporary schools are tasked with preparing the young citizens for life in a world built on knowledge characterized by globalization and the use of ICT. The thinking and problem solving skills as well as the ability to function within a team are the competencies of constantly rising value and the teaching staff is expected to initiate the shift away from the traditional ways of teaching. They are expected to become the “managers of knowledge” in the service of their students as much as for their own benefit. The headmasters are supposed to share their role and responsibilities with all the interested parties; from teachers, students and parents to business subjects, local communities and others. As school management grows ever more complex, the headship becomes ever more professionalized. Apart from the equal legal requirements applicable to everyone, Croatia presently lacks the clear set of criteria concerning the headship employment and profile choice. The above circumstances lead to increasing number of differences between individual schools and the formation of a gap in headship management knowledge and skills in Croatian schools. The purpose of this research is to point out the complexity of the school management issue and its significance for the further development of our school system. The Education, Science and Technology Strategy calls for the implementation of certain aims and measures, which include the following: compiling of headship competency standards, headship education institutionalization and drawing up of headship licencing programme and procedures.[[11]](#footnote-11) These objectively measurable indicators would meet the requirements for the benefit of the individuals and the society that the Croatian educational system is faced with as the result of the globalisation process. It should be emphasized that the human resources based on the most qualified and motivated employees represent the indicators of success for future generations and education systems.

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1. Lisbon Strategy, i.e. Lisbon Agenda, dated March 2000, draws a programme linking the short-term political initiatives with mid-term and long-term economic reforms. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Narodne Novine br. 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90/11, 5/12, 16/12, 86/12, 126/12 94/13 i 152/14 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Preuzeto: http://www.croatie.eu/article.php?id=35&lang=1. Pristup (26-02-2015.) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Education Act for Primary and High Schools in the Republic of Croatia, Article 126. (NG 152/14) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. School bodies participating in the headship election process include the School Board, Board of Teachers, Board of Parents [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Source: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/Eurydice/thematic\_reports\_en.php; Accessed on:(05-02-2016) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Source: http://www.zakon.hr/z/317/Zakon-o-odgoju-i-obrazovanju-u-osnovnoj-i-srednjoj-%C5%A1koli, Article 125; accessed on: (25-02-2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. http://www.azoo.hr/ [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Source: http://www.solazaravnatelje.si/vsezivljenjsko-ucenje/ravnateljski-izpit/, Accessed on:(03-03-2016.) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. National Professional Qualification for Headship [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Source: http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2014\_10\_124\_2364.html, Accessed on: (13-12-2015.) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)