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GIFTEDNESS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AS DETERMINANTS OF COMPETENCE SELF-PERCEPTION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Abstract

Conducting this research, we wanted to explore the competence self-perception in gifted elementary school students and to compare different aspects of gifted and non-gifted children's self-perception. In addition to this, we investigated gender differences as well as the correlation between self-perception and academic achievement.

The research sample comprised 62 participant, 31 gifted and 31 non-gifted children aged 10 to 15. A matched participant design was used and the controlling variables were: academic achievement in the current and previous grades, gender and a socio-economic status. All the participants were tested by two instruments: The Socio-Demographic instrument and the Self-Perception Profile for Children developed by Susan Harter (1985), which measures six aspects of self-perception (competencies): school competence, social competence, sports competence, physical competence, behavioral competence and general self-perception.

The results showed that the highest level of students' competence was observed for the school competence aspect, then behavioral one, followed by general self- concept, while a lower level of physical and sports competence was reached.

Furthermore, there is a statistically significant correlation between most of the personal competence sub-scales, except between sports competence on the one hand, and school competence and behavioral competence, on the other hand. This implies that competence self- perception is the construct comprised of different interrelated aspects and if one shows a tendency for positive self-perception in one aspect; most probably that person will have positive self- perception in another as well.

No statistically significant differences were found between the gifted and the non-gifted children, which means that giftedness is not an important factor of self-perception. Also, gender differences were significant only among the gifted children where the boys perceived themselves as more competent in the social and physical aspects.

Keywords: giftedness, personal competencies, academic achievement

Introduction

1. Giftedness

Giftedness is a term we regularly use, whether in the school setting or in sports, music, art and creativity. Due to its frequent use there are numbers of different definitions. In the scientific world there are about 140 different definitions of this term (Cvetković-Lay, 2010). Giftedness is a synonym of talent, because *gifted* are those students who display exceptional potential for success in different areas of activity, while *talented* refers to those students who show exceptional potential for success in one area of activity (George, 1997, as cited in Jurasić, 2011).

Marland (1971, as cited in Milligan, 2007) says that gifted children are considered to be those children who, because of their exceptional ability, are expected to have high achievement and have been identified by experts. They show the potential in some of these areas:

- General intellectual ability
- Specific academic skills
- Creative skills
- Leadership and management
- Artistic skills

- Psychomotor skills (dance, sports etc.).

Rendering to this definition, gifted children include 3-5% of the total school population.

All gifted children have developed some skills (as well as better genetic potential for their development) that allow above average achievement in a variety of tasks. This refers to general intellectual ability, which is expressed through high intellectual abilities and / or specific skills, which are exhibited through different specific areas of activity.

The definition of productive talent was accepted as conception of three rings of talents (Renzulli & Reis, 1985, as cited in Cvetković-Lay, 2010). According to this concept, productive talent is conditioned by three basic sets of characteristics:

- bove average developed skills,
- Personality traits, including the specific motivation for the work,
- Creativity.

The area of mutual overlapping of those three components represents the area of giftedness in specific areas of activity.

Giftedness is a quality that someone "has" or "does not have". The modern understanding is that giftedness is developed from the inherited dispositions in supportive environment and the maximum involvement of the child, parents, teachers and others.

The most important elements for the development of talent are indications that parents perceive and assuredness that the child has a high ability.

Socio-emotional development of gifted children is similar to development of children from the general population. In some ways, however, their life might be slightly different. Firstly, unrealistic expectations from the environment that a gifted child should be emotionally and socially developed above average. Such expectations can cause a variety of interpersonal difficulties. Furthermore, there are internal conflicts that occur to the gifted child because of the possible discrepancy between the intellectual and socio-emotional development.

A gifted child, due to the exceptional cognitive development, is often observed, with discord within themselves and among other

synchronized diversity and similarity with peers, which can cause intrapersonal or interpersonal difficulties.

The difficulties experienced by gifted children are associated with the personality traits and relate to the acceptance of self and emotions that are often in conflict with their thoughts and desires.

The gifted children besides being energetic, demanding, focused toward the goal, curious, durable, very often are self-critical. In everything they do they manifest their tendency to perfectionism, they set high goals for themselves, but if everything is not perfect or the way they imagined, gifted children are often stressed, frustrated and dissatisfied. Gifted children more often attribute their failures to themselves than to external factors.

On the other hand, gifted students with superior characteristics, have a specific status within the classes. Empirical results show that only a gifted child is favoured by teacher, while others fall into the category of the rejected due to underestimation of other students, a permanent testing and attracting attention because of selfishness, arrogance, low sociability (Collins, A., 1991, as cited in Bedeković, Jurčić & Kolak, 2009). This not only reduces their popularity, but it also obstructs the way to grasping their own place in a classroom and school. Gifted students are often unduly overestimated as students who are enjoying increasing popularity in the group to which they belong, while withdrawn and shy students get classified as "gifted" less often even if they actually are (Cvetković Lay & Sekulić-Majurec, 2008).

The aspiration for achievement is usually followed by fear and anxiety. Studies show that 20-25% of gifted children have social and emotional difficulties, which is twice as more than what we find in the standard population of school children (Cvjetković-Lay, 2010).

E. Winner (1996, as cited in Cvetković-Lay, 2010) lists several traits according to which gifted children differ from average children in terms of personality structure and social and emotional development:

- High motivation of gifted children to master some area that motivates them to work hard. They derive great pleasure from challenges and they may have an

unusually strong sense of awareness of who they are and what they want to do as adults,
- System of values - gifted tend to think independently and to express non-conformism which in many areas is not generally accepted as a desirable trait,
- Relationships with peers - gifted children tend to inwardness and loneliness partly because they have little in common with others, and partly because they need solitude to develop their talents.

2. Perception of personal competence

The perception of personal competence can be observed through four categories: academic, social, emotional and behavioural self-perception (Harter, 1982, as cited in Wilkinson, 2004).

Actual or objective competence includes abilities, knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, and level of qualification people have in an area is the key to adjust the individual in their professional and in their daily lives. However, the subjective experience of competence is often more important than the objective, especially among children and adolescents. Actual skills are not enough to make people successful. Hence, in order to function successfully, one needs certain skills, but also the belief that they will be able to use them effectively.

Harter (1999) and Rosenberg (1979, as cited in Dacey & Kenny, 1994) consider two main factors that affect the self-esteem of adolescents:

- be respectable and successful in an important area, and
- gain the respect of others.

High self-esteem is related to success in the areas that adolescent considers relevant. Adolescents are more prone to be happy about themselves if they believe that important people, such as parents, friends or classmates, have a good opinion of them. During this period the most important are opinions of peers, although the opinions of parents are still very important (Dacey & Kenny, 1994).

Research question

The goal of this research is to explore whether and to what extent the variable of success in school and giftedness contribute to the competence self-perception of children in elementary school.

Based on this research question we have posed the following hypotheses:

H1: It is assumed that the variable academic achievement and competence self-perception are significantly correlated among elementary school students.

H2: It is assumed that there are statistically significant differences in the different aspects of competence self-perception between gifted and non-gifted children.

H3: There are statistically significant differences in the competence self -perception between boys and girls.

Method

1. Sample

The sample is comprised of students in elementary school "Čengić Vila I" who were during their schooling identified as gifted students or who achieved outstanding results in various areas. The sample of gifted children included only students that were previously identified as gifted by the pedagogue and psychologist employed in the school.

The non-gifted students were found by the matching sampling method. Each gifted student had a matched pair in the average group. Controlling variable were academic success in school (not in the activity for which the gifted student is identified), socioeconomic status, class grade and gender. Pairing students was carried out with the help of professional personnel for pedagogical-psychological service in the school.

In this study we observed 62 students from the fifth to the ninth grade, with 31 gifted and 31 non-gifted students (average students). The study included 34 girls and 28 boys.

2. Instruments

Two instruments were used for obtaining data:

• *Questionnaire on socio-demographic characteristics* – a self-constructed questionnaire designed solely for the purposes of this research. This instrument provided an insight into the academic achievement of the students from the fourth to the ninth grade of elementary school, their work habits, organization of leisure time, extracurricular interests but also on their level of (dis)satisfaction with their achievements at school.

• *"Self-Perception Profile for Children"* - constructed by Susan Harter (1985). The instrument is designed to assess children themselves generally, in five different areas such as academic and athletic excellence, social acceptance and the area of physical appearance and behaviors. The scale consists of 36 items divided in six subscales. Each item represents two related sentences: one that describes a competent child and another that describes a less competent child. The assignment is to select the phrase that describes the child better. The result of participants is scored on a scale of four levels, where 1 means "minimum competency" and 4 "the highest competency". The total score is the average of the results on all the particles of each of the six subscales. This scale is a Likert type of scale.

3. Procedure

At the beginning of spring semester, consultations were held with the teachers and school psychologist who helped in identifying gifted children and matching, based on past experience and the application of appropriate tests. After obtaining the parents' consent for their children's participation in research, we started with the application of questionnaires and scales, in the presence of the pedagogue and the psychologist in school who helped with the implementation of the instruments. The research was implemented with respect of codes of ethics and in the presence of professional and competent people.

Results and discussion

Before testing hypotheses and application of statistical tools, we explored the normality of data distributions, and accordingly we used appropriate descriptive statistics.

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics data with skewness and kurtosis testing

	N	Min	Max	Median	Skewness		Kurtosis	
					Stat.	Std. err	Stat.	Std. err
School competence	62	14.00	24.00	20	-.328	.304	-.923	.599
Social competence	62	9.00	24.00	18	-.419	.304	-.091	.599
Sports competence	62	6.00	24.00	16	-.317	.304	-.490	.599
Physical competence	62	6.00	24.00	17	-.663	.304	-.388	.599
Behavioral competence	62	13.00	24.00	20	-.781	.304	-.202	.599
General self-perception	62	12.00	24.00	19	-.254	.304	-.768	.599

As we can see from Table 1, the data are not normally distributed, and therefore, nonparametric statistical procedures were used.

Observing the values of the medians for each of the competences listed in Table 1, it can be concluded that the highest level of personal competence students expressed is noticed for school competence (Median= 20), then the behavioral competence (Median= 20), followed by the general self-concept (Median= 19), social competence (Median=18), while the lowest level of competence expressed is in terms of physical competence (Median= 17) and sports competence (Median=16). These results were expected due to the age of participants, because they are elementary school students, who express affirmative behavior and high academic achievement. The students included in this sample are usually described as "the best students of school", the most desirable students because of their academic achievement but also because of their behavior.

This result is consistent with the results obtained by the authors Lebedina-Manzoni and Lothar (2010) who have come to the conclusion that the school competency is associated with the control of behavior, based on which we can conclude that those students who are good at learning perceive themselves as good in behavior as well.

Moreover, it is expected that the respondents do not feel competent enough physically, because the largest number of respondents is in puberty, the developmental period in which they perceive low levels of the scale physical competence, and are not satisfied with their appearance and the opinion of peers is an important criterion in the assessment of their appearance. Also, perceptions of sport competence are most often the result of feedback from significant people in their lives (friends, family, and teachers) and students do not feel skilled in this segment.

1. Correlation of academic achievement and perception of personal competence

Table 2. shows Spearman's correlation coefficients between academic achievement and different areas of personal competencies.

Table 2.
Correlational matrix of Spearman's coefficients

		School competence	Social competence	Sports competence	Physical competence	Behavioural competence	General self-perception
Competences	School	1.000	**0.364****	-0.043	**0.380****	**0.517****	**0.436****
	Social		1.000	**0.481****	**0.487****	**0.354****	**0.562****
	Sports			1.000	**0.386****	-0.062	**0.346****
	Physical				1.000	**0.358****	**0.767****
	Behavioural					1.000	**0.612****
	General self-perception						1.000
Academic achievement	IV grade	0.177	0.108	-0.036	-0.100	0.242	0.200
	V grade	0.139	0.028	-0.036	0.082	0.087	0.200
	VI grade	0.068	0.072	-0.121	-0.147	0.220	0.140
	VII grade	0.031	-0.057	-0.138	0.128	0.010	0.154
	VIII grade	0.255	0.094	-0.109	-0.156	0.292	0.228
	IX grade	0.254	0.214	0.122	0.278	0.272	0.254

**p<0.001
*p<0.005

From Table 2, it can be seen that six areas of self-perception are mainly interrelated. There are no statistically significant correlations only between sports competencies on the one hand and school competencies and behavioral competencies on the other hand. All other interrelations are statistically significant when it comes to different aspects of the self-perception.

Since this is a correlational study we cannot say what is the cause and what the effect, actually we cannot say what sub-type of competence might be the cause of some other sub- type, but, the thing that we can be sure about is that perception of competencies, the feeling of self-worth is a construct that is comprised of different aspects, but if a child has a positive tendency to develop a good competence self-perception, that the most probably all other aspects of the self-perception will have a positive direction. The only difference is between sports and academic and behavioral competencies. Nevertheless, our results are completely logical and supported by some other previous research findings.

Specifically, Čudina-Obradović (1991, as cited in Filipović, 2002) states that a positive self-image is the basis for the sense of self-worth, self-esteem, and expectations of success and results of activities undertaken by the individual. Self-image is formed on the basis of impartial data that are actually feedback achieved in some activities. It is based on the reviews, comments, praise and criticism from significant others from the environment. The result of the scale of perceived social competence is the degree of satisfaction with their child's behaviour, feeling that they do the right thing, behave as expected of them.

The previous memories, and past achievements are important for the creation of self-image. Real competence is an important basis for the adaptation of the individual, or the perception of personal competence or the expectation of efficiency in a specific situation. It further affects motivation that determines behavior, the persistence of the behavior and emotions. Peers- attitudes greatly reduce their own perception. A certain degree of social acceptance by peers and a good status in the group is particularly significant during the elementary school age characterized by a tendency to socialize and to feel acceptance. Fulfilling these aspirations brings children pleasant sense of worth, self-confidence and competence,

as evidenced by previous research findings (Coopersmith, 1967; Kulas, 1982; Lacković-Grgin, 1990; Mavrin, 1998, as cited in Filipović, 2002).

There is no statistically significant correlation between school competencies and sport competencies, but there is a significant correlation between the school and physical competence (rho = 0.380, p <0.001). According to Filipović (2002), the formation of physical self- competence is determined by trait norms and social stereotypes of the culture in which one lives. Expectations of the environment and reactions of people with whom one comes in contact are also important. By the time they start school, children have built an image of their body, though teachers' and peers' reactions to the child's physical characteristics are nevertheless important. If these others who evaluate person according to her/ her physical appearance, are also the significant others for that person, then their evaluation has an impact on physical competence development but also for general self – worth of that person. As such, physical competence is significantly positively correlated with social competence (rho = 0.487, p <0.001) and with sports competence (rho = 0.386, p <0.001).

Sports competencies are significantly positively correlated with social competence (rho = 0.481, p <0.001). Sports competence represents the child's sense that he/she is successful in sports and plays away from home. Social self-concept scores are related with sports skills because it is necessary to have positive communication with others who are members of their sports teams, or teams for the game.

School competence is also significantly positively correlated with behavioral competencies (rho=0.517, p <0.001). Behavioral competencies represent a degree of satisfaction with a child's behavior, a sense of proper behavior in certain situations and manifestations of expected behaviors. Students who achieved excellent results at school often displayed proper behavior and actions in accordance with social rules and standards, which is consistent with the results obtained. This explanation confirms a statistically significant positive correlation between behavioral and social skills (rho = 0.354, p <0.001).

Behavioral competencies showed statistically significant positive correlation with physical competence (rho = 0.358, p

<0.001). Children satisfied with their appearance and high physical self will gladly accept the role of promoters of positive behaviors and will have no problem standing in front of other peers for the purpose of affirming their skills but also themselves.

General self-perception is correlated significantly with all other aspects of self-competencies, which means that children will have a generally positive attitude toward themselves if all other aspects of self-worth are positive.

To conclude, we can say that if a child is prone to evaluate himself/herself in a positive manner in all aspects of self, then the general self-perception will be positive as well, and vice and versa.

When it comes to academic achievement, we wanted to explore whether there is a statistically significant correlation between academic achievement and self-perception. Results showed that there is no statistically significant correlation between different dimensions of self-competence and academic achievement in any of the class grades of elementary school. This means that school success is not related to the self-perception of worthiness, not even to perception of school competencies, which might lead to the conclusion that children do not perceive grades as important factors for their personality evaluation. Grades and academic achievement are just numbers that do not show how competent the child is, which is true and completely correct point of view of children, if so. Grades should be evaluation of the effort, interest, capacity and many other things, but not evaluation of how competent one is. Still, here we have to keep in mind that most of the students recruited in sample are excellent students, some of them very good students, since, mainly, gifted children handle school obligations with ease and mainly they are excellent students. The matched participants design was used, and we controlled the variable of academic success, which means that for each excellent gifted student we had excellent non-gifted student. So, these results should be checked by similar research encompassing higher variation in the variable of academic success.

2. Examination of the differences in the competence self-perception between gifted and non-gifted students

In order to examine differences between gifted and non-gifted students, we used Mann-Whitney's U test.

Table 3.
Sum of ranks for dependent variables observed from the variable giftedness and values of Mann-Whitney test

Subscales	giftedness	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp Sig
School competency	Gifted	31	36.02	1116.50	340.500	-1.986	**.047**
	Non-gifted	31	26.98	836.50			
Social competency	Gifted	31	30.29	939.00	443.000	-.532	.595
	Non-gifted	31	32.71	1014.00			
Sports competency	Gifted	31	30.89	957.50	461.500	-.269	.788
	Non-gifted	31	32.11	995.50			
Physical competency	Gifted	31	34.77	1078.00	379.000	-1.435	.151
	Non-gifted	31	28.23	875.00			
Behavioral competency	Gifted	31	27.85	863.50	367.500	-1.604	.109
	Non-gifted	31	35.15	1089.50			
General self-perception	Gifted	31	31.69	982.50	474.500	-.085	.932
	Non-gifted	31	31.31	970.50			

The results in Table 3 show statistically significant differences between the gifted and non-gifted students in the perception of academic competence. The gifted students perceive themselves significantly more competent when it comes to academic achievement, although we have to emphasize that there are no differences in grades between those two groups of children (participants are matched according the academic success – grades, SES and gender). This result is consistent with previous research findings (Cvetković Lay & Sekulić Majurec, 2008; Neihart & Betts, 2010; Lacković-Grgin, 1994; Collins, A., 1991; Filipović, 2002). Based on a series of research on the relationship of self, ability and achievements, it was concluded that the school self-concept of children is statistically significantly associated with their intellectual abilities (Marsh et al., 1988; Bronustein & Holahan, 1991, as cited in Lacković-Grgin, 1991). Ross and Parker (1980, as cited in Filipović, 2002) suggest that the perception of their own

intellectual competence is one of the basic differences between successful and unsuccessful gifted children and their non-gifted peers. Ross and Parker (1980), and Neihart (1999, as cited in Filipović, 2002) share opinion that the earlier information on higher general self-perception of gifted individuals arising from the fact that their general self-perception contributes the most to school competence, rather than some other aspects of self-perception. Because they have great skills, gifted individuals are faster in achieving quality results, which directly affects the development of their sense of competence, and when they succeed in school and receive praise they form highly positive self-perception.

The presence of competitiveness among the students is evident in everyday life, both in academic achievement, and the social status. The parents' pressure often leads to the student's great success becoming imperative and anything else is unacceptable. It is therefore expected that the gifted students are perceived as more competent in school achievement compared to average children. Teachers as individuals also significantly affect this result, because in situations of demonstrating knowledge they usually choose gifted and successful students, rather than average ones. Thus they will be more frequent and boast, while the other students will evaluate themselves as incompetent.

Other elements of self (social competence, sports competence, physical competence, behavioral competence and general self-concept) do not differ statistically between the gifted and ungifted students. However, the results related to social and sports competences are of particular interest. In fact, previous studies often reported that gifted children fit into peer environment with more difficulties, feel like they do not belong and are very rarely involved in sports activities. However, this is not the case in this study, which can be attributed to a type of stigmatization and prejudices that accompany gifted children. The media (especially the film industry) represent gifted individuals as strange, alienated individuals who find it difficult to adapt to social norms and hard to make friends, which is actually a generalization of one group, creating a misleading picture of the individual groups. Therefore, this result shows that today's generation is not a "slave" to stereotypes, developing affirmatively without distracting external influences and promoting positive social values.

Conclusively, there are statistically significant differences between gifted and non-gifted children in the school competence, while there are no statistically significant differences between them in other self-perception subscales.

3. Exploration of gender differences in the competence self-perception among gifted and non-gifted students

Table 4.
Sum of ranks for dependent variables considering the variable of gender

Subscales	gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp Sig
School competency	Male	28	30.25	847.00	441.000	-.499	.618
	Female	34	32.53	1106.00			
Social competency	Male	28	34.75	973.00	385.000	-1.297	.195
	Female	34	28.82	980.00			
Sports competency	Male	28	35.73	1000.50	357.500	-1.683	.092
	Female	34	28.01	952.50			
Physical competency	Male	28	34.50	966.00	392.000	-1.193	.233
	Female	34	29.03	987.00			
Behavioral competency	Male	28	29.21	818.00	412.000	-.913	.361
	Female	34	33.38	1135.00			
General self-perception	Male	28	34.07	954.00	404.000	-1.024	.306
	Female	34	29.38	999.00			

In terms of gender differences, we found that there are no significant gender differences in any of the dependent variable when observing the whole sample. Boys and girls do not differ significantly in the perception of academic competence.

Other subscales showed no statistically significant differences between the boys and the girls as well, although the review sums arithmetic means evident differences in the sports competence and physical competence.

The following table shows the rank sum and the value of the Mann-Whitney U-test individual subscales for gifted students only.

The results in Table 5 show that there are significant gender differences in the expression of certain levels of competence among the gifted students. At the subscale of social competence, the difference is statistically significant between the gifted boys

and girls, specifically, the boys perceived themselves as socially more competent than the girls. Girls experience more problems in terms of their physical appearance and acceptance by peers and find it more difficult to establish friendships than boys, which supports this result. Adolescents are more likely to be satisfied with themselves if they believe that their significant people (friends, classmates, and parents) have a good opinion about them and accept them well.

Table 5.
Sum of ranks for dependent variables observing gender differences for gifted students only

Subscales	gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp Sig
School competency	Male	14	17.57	246.00	97.000	-.884	.377
	Female	17	14.71	250.00			
Social competency	Male	14	20.75	290.50	52.500	-2.659	**.008**
	Female	17	12.09	205.50			
Sports competency	Male	14	16.82	235.50	107.500	-.459	.646
	Female	17	15.32	260.50			
Physical competency	Male	14	19.79	277.00	66.000	-2.117	**.034**
	Female	17	12.88	219.00			
Behavioral competency	Male	14	16.39	229.50	113.500	-.220	.826
	Female	17	15.68	266.50			
General self-perception	Male	14	18.68	261.50	81.500	-1.502	.133
	Female	17	13.79	234.50			

Also, according to the results of this study, there are statistically significant differences in the subscale physical competence, where the gifted boys again perceived themselves more competent in comparison to the gifted girls.

Based on the statistical data presented in Table 6, we concluded that there are no statistically significant differences between non-gifted boys and girls in the perception of personal competence.

These results imply that only gifted boys in comparison to gifted girls have superior physical and social self-perception, while there are no such differences between non-gifted students.

Table 6.
Sum of ranks for dependent variables observing gender differences for non-gifted students only

Subscales	gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp Sig
School competency	Male	14	13.43	188.00	83.000	-1.441	.150
	Female	17	18.12	308.00			
Social competency	Male	14	14.43	202.00	97.000	-.884	.377
	Female	17	17.29	294.00			
Sports competency	Male	14	19.46	272.50	70.500	-1.936	.053
	Female	17	13.15	223.50			
Physical competency	Male	14	14.86	208.00	103.000	-.638	.523
	Female	17	16.94	288.00			
Behavioural competency	Male	14	12.79	179.00	74.000	-1.813	.070
	Female	17	18.65	317.00			
General self-perception	Male	14	15.18	212.50	107.500	-.460	.646
	Female	17	16.68	283.50			

Limitations and practical implications of research

The conducted empirical research produced some very interesting results and data in the field of educational psychology, which can help identify the factors that influence the development and fostering of gifted students and the individualization of education. However, like all empirical research this research has its shortcomings and limitations as well. The study is correlational, and therefore establishing cause-effect relationships in explaining the results was impossible.

To obtain a complete and comprehensive picture of each student, further studies should examine the attitudes of teachers and students' parents, who can provide us with information from the other, a more objective perspective.

But still, despite all possible defects that could affect the quality of research, it is important to say that this study provides a lot of interesting information and data that could significantly contribute to new, future research.

The results of this and other studies that deal with this topic suggest some practical implications in the field of counselling. The results can be of use to the teaching staff as well as school

counsellors and psychologists in identifying the factors that determine the ability of children but also point to possible difficulties in socio-emotional development of gifted children.

Conclusions

1. The results of this study showed that the highest observed level of students` competence is on the school competence subscale, than on behavioral competence, followed by general self-concept, while the lower level was observed in the domains of physical and sports competence. These results were expected due to the age of participants, because they are students of elementary school, who express affirmative behaviors, and high academic achievement. Our findings are consistent with the similar research findings obtained by Lebedina-Manzoni and Lothar (2010) that have come to the conclusion that the school competency is associated with the control of behavior, based on which we can conclude that those students who are good at learning perceived themselves as good in behavior as well. In addition, it was expected that the respondents do not feel competent enough physically, because the largest number of respondents is in puberty, the developmental period in which they perceive low levels of the scale physical competence, and are not satisfied with their appearance while the opinion of peers is an important criterion in the assessment of their appearance.

2. Furthermore, there is a statistically significant correlation between most of the self-competencies perception, while there are no statistically significant correlations between sports competencies on the one hand and school competencies and behavioral competencies on the other hand. This implies that competence self-perception is comprised of different interrelated aspects and if one has tendency for positive self-perception in one aspect; the most probably that person will have positive perception in another as well. Children marked as gifted are mainly good in school, not only in academic but also in behavioral manner, so their perception of school competencies and behavioral competencies is high and correlated with the general self-perception. Their physical and sport competencies perception is a little bit lower and not correlated with other aspects of self-perception. Still we cannot conclude that

gifted children have low sports and physical self-perception, because most probably lower results in these subscales are due to the period of life in which participant were at the time of exploration.

3. There is no statistically significant correlation between different aspects of self-perception and academic achievement. Such results are interpreted by the fact that most of the students were excellent students, and only few of them very good students, hence these results on this part of hypothesis cannot be taken for granted, therefore it should be checked by some similar research with higher variance of academic success variable.

4. There are no statistically significant differences between gifted and non-gifted children in their self-perception on any of its aspects, which leads to the conclusion that giftedness is not an important factor for developing the competence self-perception in any of its aspects.

5. Gender differences occurred only among gifted children, where the boys perceived themselves as more competent in social and physical aspect. Again, it is most probably due to the age. Girls in this period are more sensitive when it comes to physical competence perception, but also social competence perception. Girls are more prone to develop a poor level of perception since they enter puberty earlier than boys, and usually feel unaccepted by peers, or they are not satisfied with their body or physical appearance. Other gender differences were not observed.

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Prethodno saopćenje

NADARENOST I AKADEMSKI USPJEH KAO DETERMINANTE PERCEPCIJE LIČNE KOMPETENTNOSTI KOD UČENIKA OSNOVNE ŠKOLE

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Sažetak

Ovim istraživanjem nastojali smo analizirati percepciju vlastitih kompetencija nadarene djece u osnovnoj školi i uporediti različite aspekte lične percepcije nadarenih sa djecom koja nisu nadarena. Također, promatrali smo i spolne razlike, kao i korelaciju aspekata samopercepcije i akademskog uspjeha.

Uzorak je sačinjavalo 62 ispitanika, od čega 31 nadaren i 31 prosječan učenik, dobi od 10 do 15 godina. Koristili smo uparivanje kao tehniku uzorkovanja, pri čemu su kontrolne varijable bile: školski uspjeh sad i u prethodnim razredima, spol, socio-ekonomski status. Svi ispitanici su bili podvrgnuti mjerenju po dva instrumenta: socio-demografski upitnik i Profil samopercepcije razvijen od Suzan Harter (1985), koji mjeri šest aspekata samopercepcije (kompetencija): školsku, socijalnu, sportsku, fizičku, ponašajnu kompetenciju i opću samopercepciju.

Rezultati pokazuju najviši nivo kompetencija na subskali školske kompetencije, potom ponašajne, zatim opće samoefikasnosti, a najniži nivo na fizičkoj i sportskoj kompetenciji.

Nadalje, postoji statistički značajna korelacija između većine subskala osobne kompetentnosti, osim između sportske kompetencije s jedne strane i školske i ponašajne kompetencije s druge strane. Ovo upućuje da je percepcija osobne kompetencije konstrukt koji se sastoji od različitih međupovezanih aspekata i da ukoliko neko ima tendenciju da se pozitivno evaluira u jednom aspektu, vjerovatno će ta osoba imati pozitivnu percepciju sebe i u drugom aspektu.

Nisu pronađene statistički značajne razlike između nadarene i nenadarene djece, što znači da nadarenost nije bitan faktor

samopercepcije. Također, spolne razlike su se pojavile kao statistički značajne samo kod nadarene djece, gdje su se dječaci percipirali kao socijalno i fizički kompetentnijim od djevojčica.

Ključne *riječi:* nadarenost, lične kompetencije, akademski uspjeh

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الملخص

سعينا من خلال هذا البحث إلى تحليل تصور الكفاءات الخاصة بالأطفال الموهوبين في المدارس الابتدائية ومقارنة الجوانب المختلفة للإدراك الشخصي للأطفال الموهوبين مع الأطفال الذين ليسوا من هذا النوع من الأطفال. أيضا، تابعنا الفروق بين الجنسين وكذلك العلاقة بين جوانب الإدراك الذاتي والنجاح الأكاديمي. شارك في العينة 62 مستجوبًا و 31 طالبًا موهوبًا و 31 طالبًا عادياً تتراوح أعمارهم بين 10 و 15 عامًا. استخدمنا الاقتران كأسلوب لأخذ العينات حيث كانت متغيرات التحكم: النجاح المدرسي الآن وفي الصفوف السابقة والجنس والحالة الاجتماعية والاقتصادية. تم تقييم جميع المشاركين وفق أداتين: استبيان اجتماعي ديموغرافي وتصور إدراك ذاتي طوره سوزان هارتر(1985) Suzan Harter ، والذي يقيس الجوانب الشائعة للتصور الذاتي (الكفاءة): المدرسية، والرياضية، الاجتماعية، والكفاءة البدنية، والسلوكية، والتصور العام الذاتي. أظهرت النتائج أعلى مستوى من الكفاءة في اختبار الكفاءة المدرسية، ثم السلوكية، ثم الكفاءة الذاتية العامة، وأدنى مستوى في الكفاءة البدنية والرياضية.

علاوة على ذلك، هناك علاقة ذات دلالة إحصائية بين معظم الفروع في الكفاءة الشخصية، باستثناء الكفاءة الرياضية من ناحية والكفاءة المدرسية والسلوكية من ناحية أخرى. هذا يشير إلى أن تصور الكفاءة الشخصية هو بنية تتألف من جوانب مترابطة متميزة، وإذا كان الشخص يميل إلى التقييم الإيجابي في جانب واحد، فمن المحتمل أن يكون لهذا الشخص تصور إيجابي عن نفسه في الجانب الآخر.

لم يتم العثور على فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الأطفال الموهوبين وغير الموهوبين، وهذا يعني أن الموهبة لم تكن عاملاً مهماً في تصور الذات. كما أن الفروق بين الجنسين تبدو ذات دلالة إحصائية فقط في الأطفال الموهوبين، حيث كان ينظر إلى الأولاد على أنهم أكثر كفاءة اجتماعيًا وجسديًا من الفتيات.

الكلمات الأساسية: الموهبة، الكفاءات الذاتية (الشخصية)، النجاح الأكاديمي