

# Relationship between Attributions for Success and Failure and Self-esteem, Hopelessness and Depression in Secondary School Students

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## Abstract

*The aim of this research was to examine the correlations between stability, internality, controllability and globality of the causes for good and poor grades, and self-esteem, hopelessness and depression on a sample of 295 first, second and third-grade secondary school students. Another objective was to determine whether grade attributions could explain a portion of the variance of self-esteem, hopelessness and depression. The results have shown that stable causes of poor grades are negatively correlated with self-esteem and positively correlated with hopelessness and depression, while the explanations of good grades are positively correlated with self-esteem and negatively with depression. On the other hand, controllability of both poor and good grade causes was positively correlated with self-esteem and negatively with hopelessness and depression. Also, attributing both poor and good grades to global causes has shown negative correlations with self-esteem and positive correlations with depression. Apart from that, it was shown that controllability of poor grade causes, and stability and globality of good grade causes explained a significant portion of the variance of self-esteem. The results have also shown that explaining both poor and good grades by controllable causes explains a significant portion of variance of hopelessness and depression, while controllable explanations of good grades explain only the variance of hopelessness.*

**Key words:** *attributions of poor and good grades; controllability; globality; internality; stability*

## **Introduction**

Causal attributions are the ways people explain causes of events in their lives. Attribution theory studies the associations between attributions and their cognitive, affective and behavioural consequences. However, there is no single attribution theory, but rather different attribution theories that deal with different aspects of attributional reasoning (Kamenov, 1991).

Although criticized for its limitation to the achievement level, Weiner's attribution theory is a leading model underlying many studies of effective, behavioural and cognitive consequences of attributional processes.

Attribution model of motivation assumes that affective, cognitive, and consequently behavioural reactions to success and failure are dependent on causal attributions people use to explain the reasons behind such outcomes.

For example, if a consequence of failure on an important task is an unfavourable outcome (such as getting fired), attributions made for that outcome and their dimensions will affect a person's expectations with respect to future success, his/her emotions and behaviour in future similar situations. Therefore, Weiner's theory focuses on behavioural and motivational consequences of attributions and not the processes that underlie them (Weiner, 2010).

Originally, Weiner et al. thought that, in trying to explain their previous or future success or failure, a person uses four basic attributes; ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck (Weiner, 2010). However, with the expansion of research area, it has become obvious that there are numerous other factors used to explain achievement, such as mood, personality traits, peer influence, teacher bias, experience etc., i.e. that Weiner's four attributes explain only a small portion of attributes that people make.

Due to large number of attributes explaining success and failure, and the limitations in comparing the attributes across different areas of human functioning, a system of categorizing causal attributes was developed. Initially, the system consisted of two dimensions; internality and stability (Weiner, 2010).

Dimension of internality/externality refers to the degree to which a person thinks that causes of specific outcomes are inside them. Internal attributions indicate that a person considers himself/herself responsible for success or failure, while external attributions indicate that a person thinks that the outcome is due to external factors, environment or situational characteristics. Abilities and effort are considered to be internal causes of success or failure, while luck and task difficulty are seen as external causes.

Dimension of stability/instability refers to whether a person thinks that causes of success or failure will change with time. Task difficulty and ability are considered stable attributions because they cannot significantly change with the passage of time. Effort and luck are considered unstable causes because they can change with every task (Gleason, Arkin & Shaver, 1979).

Based on the above two-dimensional classification of success and failure causes, ability is classified as internal stable cause, effort as internal unstable cause, task difficulty as external stable, and luck is classified as external unstable cause (Weiner, 2010).

The dimension of controllability was introduced later to describe the degree to which causes of achievement can be controlled. With regard to this, effort is considered a controllable factor, while ability, task difficulty, mood, and luck are considered uncontrollable factors (Struthers, Weiner & Allred, 1998).

In addition, Abramson, Seligman & Teasdale (1978) added another dimension – globality/specificity, which refers to generalization of causes across different situations. Unlike stability, which implies temporal stability, globality implies cross-situational stability.

According to attribution theory, cognitive consequences of attributions usually include changes in expectations pertaining to future success. Studies have shown that it is predominantly a result of perceived stability of causes, in the sense that attributing failure to stable causes leads to decreases, while attributing success to stable causes leads to increases in future expectations of success. Regarding emotional reactions, controllability mostly determines the quality of emotional reactions following success or failure, internality affects the intensity of emotional reaction, and stability affects long term emotional reactions. Explaining success with stable causes is associated with self-confidence and satisfaction with oneself, while unstable causes are correlated with sense of uncertainty and anxiety. Also, attributing failure to stable and global causes has shown to increase fear in achievement situations and is related to lack of motivations, feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and depression (Weiner, 2010).

The relationship of attributions (or their placement along attributional dimensions) and depression, was the basis for the development and elaboration of models that emphasize the role of attributions of pleasant and unpleasant events, in trying to explain the development of depressive symptoms. Dominant models are learned helplessness theory and hopelessness theory.

Learned helplessness theory (Abramson, Seligman & Teasdale, 1978) assumes that different people have different attributional styles, i.e. ways in which they usually explain causes of negative events. Individuals who have a negative or depressive attributional style have a tendency to explain negative events with internal, stable and global causes, and positive events with external, unstable and specific causes. Negative attributional style increases the risk for depression because a person will probably have negative attributions after an unpleasant event, which will lead to helpless expectations. According to the authors, once these expectations develop, they necessarily lead to depression, because they are a sufficient, proximal cause of learned helplessness (Abramson, Seligman & Teasdale, 1978).

Hopelessness theory builds on learned helplessness theory by describing three cognitive styles that play a role in etiology of depression (Metalsky & Joiner, 1997). The

first cognitive style includes reaching conclusions about causes of events. Metalsky & Joiner (1997) think that explaining negative events with stable and global causes will most likely lead to hopelessness and depression.

The second cognitive style refers to drawing conclusions about consequences of negative events. Again, stable and global attributions contribute the most to hopelessness and depression, because a person would see negative outcomes as irremediable and generalize them across many domains of his/ her life, and will see negative events in the light of a number of catastrophic consequences.

The third cognitive style refers to reaching conclusions about oneself, in a way that after explaining negative events with internal causes, a person will consider himself/ herself inadequate. Hopelessness and depression occur when a person sees his/ her inadequacies as something that cannot be changed or remedied, and may cause future negative outcomes in many areas of one's life.

Each of these cognitive styles predisposes an individual for depression by increasing the likelihood that they might make depressive conclusions after negative events, which in turn, increases the likelihood of hopelessness. Once hopelessness develops, depression is inevitable, because hopelessness is considered a sufficient, proximal cause of depression (Metalsky & Joiner Jr., 1997).

Therefore, there are many models that assume a connection of attributions and depression, but also other variables that determine mental health of an individual, such as hopelessness and self-esteem. Many studies have confirmed correlations of both achievement attributions and attributional style with depressive symptoms in adults, as well as children and adolescents (Abela, Gagnon & Auerbach, 2007; Abela, Parkinson, Stolow & Starrs, 2009; Alloy, Just & Panzarella, 1997; Joiner & Deenen-Wagner, 1995; Kurtović, 2007; Kurtović & Marčinko, 2011). Studies have also shown that attributions for success and failure are significantly correlated with academic self-efficacy (Sorić & Vulić Prtorić, 2006), motivation for achievement (Bugan, Bajs & Stamać, 2001), and fear of examination (Vrbešić, 2007). As it is shown that depression rates rapidly increase at the beginning of adolescence, and that school success is an important determinant of adjustment, it seemed particularly useful to examine the effects of attributions for success and failure in secondary school students. Also, many studies and clinical practice have shown that depressive individuals are often hopeless and have low self-esteem, and that changes in self-esteem and the development of hopelessness often precede depression (Cheng & Furnham, 2003; Miller, Warner, Wickamaratne, & Weissman, 1999; Rector & Roger, 1987; Southall & Roberts, 2002).

## **Aim and Hypotheses**

The aim of this study was to determine the correlations of stability, internality, controllability and globality of causes of success and failure with self-esteem, hopelessness and depression. Also, the objective was to determine whether stability, internality, controllability and globality of poor and good grade causes could explain a portion of variance in self-esteem, hopelessness and depression.

Considering the theoretical models and the results of research, it was justified to assume that stable, internal and global explanations of poor grades would be negatively correlated with self-esteem, and positively with hopelessness and depression.

On the other hand, it was expected that stable, internal and global explanations of good grades would be positively correlated with self-esteem, and negatively with hopelessness and depression.

With regard to controllability, it was justified to assume that it would be positively correlated with self-esteem, and negatively with hopelessness and depression.

## **Method**

### ***Participants and Procedure***

The sample consisted of 295 first, second and third grade secondary school students. Students were 15 to 18 years old, with mean age 15.88 and standard deviation .81. There were 235 girls and 60 boys. Since the participants were under age, a parent / guardian consent for the participation was needed. Students were given a consent form that they were supposed to bring back after a parent or guardian has signed it. Prior to research, consent forms were gathered, and students also gave their consents by signing a form.

The examination was conducted during class. Students were given a general instruction to answer honestly and try to determine how true each statement is for them, they were also told that there are no true or false answers, and that the results would be used for scientific purposes and would not be analysed individually. They were also instructed to carefully read the instructions at the beginning of each questionnaire and to ask the examiner if they do not understand anything. The examination lasted one lesson.

## **Variables and Instruments**

### ***Attributions of Success and Failure***

Croatian adaptation of Benson's 4-ADS (4-Attributinal Dimensions Scale, Benson, 1989) was used to measure stability, internality, controllability and globality of causes of success and failure. The 4-ADS scale uses a procedure of direct cause evaluation. The participants are supposed to state the most likely cause of a given outcome, and then to evaluate it according to stability, internality, controllability and globality. For the purpose of this study, it was important to evaluate the causes of success and failure, so the participants were expected to state the cause of a good and a poor grade (i.e. a grade that represents success or failure to them, so they would not equate good grades with 4 and 5 (B and A), and poor grades with 1 or 2 (F and D)). Therefore, the scale was administered twice, once for good and once for poor grade. The advantage of the 4-ADS scale is that the dimensions are evaluated along 5-point scales, with every point having a verbal description. For example, for question 'Does this cause

affect your achievement in one subject or does it affect your achievement in other subjects?', the answers offered are '1-it affects my achievement in only one subject', '2-...in few other subjects', '3-...in several other subjects', '4-...in most other subjects' and '5-...in all other subjects'. On the other hand, for question 'Is this cause related to you personally, or is it related to other people or circumstances?', the answers offered are '1-it is completely related to other people', '2-it is mostly related to other people', '3-it is somewhat related to me personally', '4-it is mostly related to me personally', and '5-it is completely related to me personally'. Since the scale measures different causal dimensions, it would be difficult to find a single meaning for all of the reference points, which would be suitable and clear for every question.

The composite score for stability, internality, controllability and globality of causes of good and poor grades were computed by adding the answers on each dimension.

Originally the Scale consisted of 16 items, 4 per dimension, but due to significant number of measures used in the study, the scale was reduced to 3 items per each dimension, in order to make it easier on the participants.

For stability, items '1. Will this cause change with passage of time?', '2. Will this cause affect your achievement in similar situations in the future?' and '3. Will this cause change over time, or will it stay the same?' were kept. However, reliability analysis showed that item '2. Will this cause affect your achievement in similar situations in the future?' had a low item-total correlation and decreased the reliability of the subscale, so it was excluded from the composite score. Therefore, the theoretical range for stability was from 2 to 10, with reliability coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) .68 for poor grade, and .62 for good grade.

For internality, items '1. Is this cause more within you (like your characteristics or effort) or is it more outside you (like a difficult task, or luck)?', '2. Is this cause completely outside you or within you?' and '3. Is this cause related to you personally, or is it related to other people or circumstances' were kept. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients were .70 for poor grade and .76 for good grade, with theoretical range from 3 to 15.

For controllability, items '1. Can you personally control this cause?', '2. Can you control this cause, or can someone else?' and '3. Can this cause be controlled by anyone at all or no one at all?' were kept. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients were .65 for poor grade and .75 for good grade, with theoretical range from 3 to 15.

For globality, items '1. Does this cause affect your achievement in one school subject or in other things in your life (outside of school)?', '2. Does this cause affect your achievement in one subject or does it affect your achievement in other subjects?', and '3. Does this cause affect your achievement in other subjects?' were kept. However, item '3. Does this cause affect your achievement in other subjects?' decreased reliability coefficient so it was excluded from the composite score. Therefore, the theoretical range for globality was from 2 to 10, with reliability coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) being .79 for poor grade, and .73 for good grade.

### Self-esteem

Croatian adaptation of Self-Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967) was used to measure self-esteem (CUSP, short form B, Bezinović & Lacković Grgin, 1990). The questionnaire consisted of 25 items measuring attitudes and feelings about oneself. Participants were asked to evaluate whether or not a certain item was true for them. After recoding items with inverse scoring, the composite score was computed by adding all 'true' answers. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was .83.

### Hopelessness

Croatian adaptation of HSC scale (Hopelessness Scale for Children; Kazdin, French, Unis, Esveldt-Dawson & Sherick, 1983) by Živčić (1993) was used to measure hopelessness. The scale consisted of 17 items evaluating negative expectations about one's future. The participants were supposed to answer whether each item correctly or incorrectly described how they had been feeling lately. After recoding items with inverse scoring, the composite score was computed by adding all 'correct' answers. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was .75.

### Depression

Croatian adaptation of CDI scale (Children's Depression Inventory; Kovacs, 1985) by Živčić (1992) was used to measure depressive symptoms. The scale consisted of 27 groups of 3 items measuring wide range of visible depressive symptoms, such as sadness, sleep disturbances, appetite changes, and suicide ideation. In every group of items, a single symptom varied in severity, and the child chose the one that best described the way they had been feeling during previous two weeks. The answers were scored from 0 to 2, and the composite score was a simple linear combination of all answers. Though different authors report factor solutions of 2 to 4 factors, depending on the sample, the scale is most commonly used as a unidimensional measure of depression, and it was used as such in this study. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was .83.

## Results

Table 1 shows descriptive data for stability, internality, controllability, and globality of poor and good grade causes, and self-esteem, hopelessness and depression.

**Table 1.** Mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, and theoretical range of all measured variables

Variable (N=295)	M	SD	Theoretical range	Min	Max
Stability of poor grade cause	5.07	1.66	2.00-10.00	2.00	10.00
Internality of poor grade cause	10.85	2.14	3.00-15.00	3.00	15.00
Controllability of poor grade cause	8.15	1.48	3.00-15.00	3.00	15.00
Globality of poor grade cause	5.80	2.05	2.00-10.00	2.00	10.00
Stability of good grade cause	7.40	1.73	2.00-10.00	2.00	10.00
Internality of good grade cause	10.85	2.14	3.00-15.00	3.00	15.00

Controllability of good grade cause	8.32	1.57	3.00-15.00	3.00	15.00
Globality of good grade cause	5.80	2.05	2.00-10.00	2.00	10.00
Self-esteem	18.25	4.45	0.00-25.00	0.00	25.00
Hopelessness	2.50	2.27	0.00-17.00	0.00	12.00
Depression	12.50	6.42	0.00-52.00	0.00	42.00

In order to examine correlations between the variables, Pearson’s correlation coefficients were calculated. The correlation matrix is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Intercorrelations of stability, internality, controllability and globality of poor and good grade causes, and self-esteem, hopelessness and depression (N=295).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Stability of poor grade cause	-										
2. Internality of poor grade cause	-.25**	-									
3. Controllability of poor grade cause	-.37**	.44**	-								
4. Globality of poor grade cause	.03	.21**	-.02	-							
5. Stability of good grade cause	.03	-.00	.13	-.21**	-						
6. Internality of good grade cause	-.25**	1.00**	.44**	.21**	-.00	-					
7. Controllability of good grade cause	-.33**	.30**	.44**	-.10	.28**	.30**	-				
8. Globality of good grade cause	.03	.21**	-.02	1.00**	-.21**	.21**	-.11	-			
9. Self-esteem	-.21**	-.01	.40**	-.27**	.24**	-.01	.29**	-.24**	-		
10. Hopelessness	.22**	-.04	-.30**	.03	-.13	-.04	-.27**	.05	-.55**	-	
11. Depression	.17*	.01	-.35**	.20**	-.15*	.01	-.26**	.14*	-.74**	.58**	-

\* p<0.05 \*\* p<0.01

As can be seen in Table 2, stability of poor grade causes is significantly correlated with self-esteem, hopelessness and depression in the expected direction, while stability of good grade causes is correlated only with self-esteem and depression, also in the expected direction.

Contrary to expectations, internality of causes did not show significant correlations with self-esteem, hopelessness nor depression.

Controllability of both good and poor grade causes has shown significant correlations with self-esteem, hopelessness and depression in the same directions. That is, higher controllability is correlated with higher self-esteem, and lower hopelessness and depression, which was expected based on the meaning of controllability.

Interestingly, globality of both poor and good grade causes has shown the same direction of correlations with self-esteem and depression – higher globality of poor and good grade causes were correlated with lower self-esteem and higher depression. The result is partly contrary to expectations, because global explanations of positive events have usually shown negative correlations with depression.

The next step of analysis was to determine whether attributions of poor and good grades could explain a portion of variance in self-esteem, hopelessness and depression. In order to do that, stepwise regression analyses were performed separately for self-



esteem, hopelessness and depression as criterion variables. Predictor variables were stability, internality, controllability, and globality of poor and good grade causes. To save space, the results of stepwise regression analysis are presented together for self-esteem, hopelessness and depression in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Prediction of self-esteem, hopelessness and depression in adolescents (N=295)  
– results of stepwise regression analysis

PREDICTORS	SELF-ESTEEM		HOPELESSNESS		DEPRESSION	
	beta	t	beta	t	beta	t
Stability of poor grade cause	-.07	-1.25	.09	1.54	.07	1.07
Internality of poor grade cause	-.10	-1.61	.05	1.02	.04	.96
Controllability of poor grade cause	.30**	5.26**	-.17**	-2.50**	-.30**	-4.38**
Globality of poor grade cause	-.02	-.95	.03	.09	.01	.62
Stability of good grade cause	.16**	2.70**	-.06	-.95	-.06	-1.10
Internality of good grade cause	-.09	-1.45	.09	1.49	.11	1.75
Controllability of good grade cause	.05	.74	-.14**	-2.04**	-.11	-1.76
Globality of good grade cause	-.19**	-3.38**	-.01	-.09	.10	1.74
	<b>R=.43</b>	<b>adj. R<sup>2</sup>=.20</b>	<b>R=.26</b>	<b>adj. R<sup>2</sup>=.06</b>	<b>R=.36</b>	<b>adj. R<sup>2</sup>=.12</b>

As can be seen in Table 3, controllability of poor grade causes, stability of good grade causes and globality of good grade causes are significant predictors of self-esteem. Controllability of poor grade causes and stability of good grade causes are correlated with higher self-esteem, while globality of good grade causes is correlated with lower self-esteem.

Furthermore, controllability of both poor and good grade causes are significant predictors of hopelessness, and they are correlated to lower levels of hopelessness.

Also, controllability of poor grade causes was a significant predictor of depression, where explaining poor grades with controllable causes is related to lower depression.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the correlation of attributions for success and failure with self-esteem, hopelessness and depression. Many studies have reported that explanations used to explain life events, including success and failure, have a significant effect on students' motivation and achievement, and on their emotional well-being (Angold & Rutter, 1992; Joiner & Deenen-Wagner, 1995; Kurtović, 2007; Kurtović & Marčinko, 2011). Therefore, apart from correlation, the purpose of this study was to determine whether stability, internality, controllability and globality of poor and good grade causes could explain a portion of variance in self-esteem, hopelessness and depression.

Results of correlation analysis are, for the most part, in accordance with theoretical assumptions. Stability of poor grade causes is correlated with lower self-esteem and higher hopelessness and depression, while stability of good grade causes correlates with higher self-esteem and lower depression. Since stability refers to whether a person believes that a certain cause will result in the same outcome in the future, it

is closely related to expectations of the future. For instance, if students continuously explain their failure with stable causes, like ability, it is very likely that they will feel hopeless about their future. Also, attributions such as these, can affect one's self-esteem, in a way that they will see themselves as less worthy, which can result in elevation in symptoms of depression.

Explaining failure in this way can also have a significant effect on students' motivation and result in withdrawal and lack of effort, which can consequently lead to future failure and further affect self-esteem and depression in students.

Similar logic can be used to explain the correlation of stability of good grade causes with higher self-esteem and lower depression. If students explain their success with factors such as ability or effort, they have no reason to believe that they would not be equally successful in the future, which may have a positive effect on their self-esteem and protect them against depression.

The finding that only stability of poor grade cause correlates significantly with hopelessness suggests that people who attribute negative events to stable causes are prone to having hopeless cognitions. This is in accordance with hopelessness depression theory, which assumes that hopelessness is the key mechanism in the development of depression (Abela et al., 2009; Alloy, Just & Panzarella, 1997).

As opposed to stability, which has different correlations with self-esteem, hopelessness and depression depending on the event, controllability of good and poor grade causes has shown the same direction of correlations with self-esteem, hopelessness and symptoms of depression. The result have shown that both students who explain good grades and those who explain poor grades with controllable causes also have higher self-esteem, and are less hopeless and depressed. Sense of control over events in one's life, positive or negative, boosts self-confidence and faith in one's capabilities, which decreases the likelihood of the development of depression symptoms. This seems particularly important with regard to failure, because explaining failure with controllable causes implies that a person thinks he/she can affect and change the cause, which decreases the likelihood of hopelessness and depression. Also, if a person explains his/her success with controllable causes, he/she will probably expect to be able to influence the same outcomes in the future, which has a beneficial effect on self-confidence and self-esteem, and therefore protects against hopelessness and depression.

With regard to relationship of globality with self-esteem, hopelessness and depression, results have shown some unexpected findings. For instance, globality of both poor and good grade causes was correlated with lower self-esteem and higher depression. In the case of poor grade causes, the findings are in accordance with expectations, since globality implies generalizing causes across different situations. Thus, if students think that, for example, their inability will cause their failure in many subject, this can have a detrimental effect on their self-esteem and emotional health. However, according to attribution theory, globality of good grade causes should be negatively correlated with depression. One possible explanation of this finding could

lie in the *exaggerated optimism hypothesis* (Conley, Haines, Hilt & Metalsky, 2000). It states that if positive, in this case global, attribution of success, are not based on realistic assessment and actual experience, there is an increased risk that, when faced with failure, students will react with depression and negative view of oneself, once they realise that their view of themselves is not correct. Therefore, it seems that for the well-being of adolescents, it is important for their positive attributions to be realistic and based on experience; otherwise they may have negative effects.

Therefore, the correlation analysis has shown that stability, controllability and globality of poor and good grade causes are significantly correlated with students' view of themselves, the future and with symptoms of depression. However, from attribution theory perspective, it was expected that internality of poor grade causes would be negatively correlated with self-esteem and positively with hopelessness and depression, while internality of good grade causes would show correlations in the opposite direction. The finding that internality did not have significant relations with self-esteem, hopelessness and depression could be due to lack of experience. In fact, internal attributions are primarily associated with making inferences about oneself, thus affecting depression. It is possible that it takes more experience to make inferences about oneself, and that in this period of life students have not yet gathered enough experience to make any sort of stable conclusions that might affect depression. It is also possible that in this developmental period internality of success, and failure attributions do not yet have significant relations with depression, and that the correlations might be different if attributions of other events, such as conflicts with friend etc. were examined.

The second objective of this study was to ascertain whether differences in self-esteem, hopelessness and depression could be explained by differences in success and failure attributions.

Regression analyses with self-esteem as criterion variable have shown that controllability of poor grade, and stability and globality of good grade causes were significant predictors of self-esteem in secondary school students, with controllability having the biggest contribution in explaining self-esteem.

As mentioned before, explaining failure with controllable causes (such as lack of effort or using wrong strategies) can positively affect one's self-confidence and motivation to continue trying. In addition, explaining success with stable causes, which will lead to similar outcomes in the future (like intelligence) certainly enhances belief about oneself as a valuable and competent person. Finding that global attributions of good grade are correlated with lower self-esteem is in accordance with aforementioned *exaggerated optimism hypothesis*. It is possible that, based on the subject that they are successful at, students generalize about other subjects expecting that the same strategies will work there. But, since secondary school demands are bigger and require different skills and adapting different work methods, those kinds of generalizations can adversely affect students' achievement, and thus their self-esteem, when their overly optimistic expectations are not actualized.

Concerning hopelessness and depression, the results have shown that the key attributional dimension contributing to explanations of variance is controllability. That is, explaining poor and good grades with controllable causes is correlated with lower hopelessness, while controllability of poor grade causes correlates with lower depression. Findings suggest that sense of control over negative events is extremely important for the mental health of an individual. Apart from affecting motivation and fostering belief that desirable outcomes will happen in the future, sense of control also makes youth believe that they can avoid undesirable outcomes in the future, which is a very important factor in protecting against depression. In fact, studies show that expectations about how many good or bad things will happen in the future has a strong influence on depression, and the feeling that one can control which events will happen in the future, has a strong protective effect (Abela, Gagnon & Auerbach, 2007).

The results of this study emphasize the importance of studying attributions on a dimensional level when examining and explaining their relationship with depression. In fact, many studies in this field have investigated the relationship of negative attributional style (the tendency to explain negative events with stable, internal and global causes, and positive events with unstable, external and specific causes) with depression (Abela, Parkinson, Stolorow & Starrs, 2009; Lewinsohn, Joiner Jr. & Rohde, 2001; Metalsky & Joiner Jr., 1997). However, measures of attributional style sum up the results on different dimensions, which can mask correlations between individual dimensions and depression. Given that adolescence is a period marked by many cognitive and emotional changes, it seems particularly useful to study contributions of individual dimensions. In fact, the construct of attributional style implies a certain cross-situational stability, and it takes sufficient experience for it to develop. Since children and adolescents do not yet have enough experience with reaching attributional conclusions, it is likely that their attributional patterns are still not stable enough. Examining the relationship of attributions and depression on a dimensional level can offer additional insight into the meaning that attributions hold for children and adolescents, and thus help increase our understanding of attributional processes and their effects on mental health.

Since the school is the most important medium in which adolescents can experience success or failure, and develop their skills, results such as these have important implications for teaching practices. In fact, studies show that attributions are, for the most part, learned through experience and feedback from important people in one's life (Garber & Flynn, 2001). In that sense, in order to ensure students' well-being, it is important to obtain appropriate feedback about the causes of their failure. Explanations with causes like laziness or lack of ability should be avoided, because they increase the risk of a child making negative inferences about oneself, one's qualities or about possible expectations of the future.

Meanwhile, these results place in focus another aspect of attribution reasoning that is often neglected. That is, apart from adequate feedback about failure, adequate

and timely feedback about success is also very important. As results have shown, attributions for success are significantly correlated with self-esteem, hopelessness and depression. In that sense, school is an ideal place where students can get feedback about their achievement that will foster development of positive attributions, stable self-esteem and optimism.

## Conclusion

Given the sudden rise in depression rates in adolescence, models and research that explain and give insight into factors associated with depression are exceptionally important because they are a source of knowledge that can be used in creating preventive and intervention procedures. Results of this research are in agreement with other studies which confirm that attributions of success and failure are an important factor in protecting mental health in secondary school students. Furthermore, the results indicate that, for adolescents' well-being, attributions that foster sense of control over success and failure and positive expectations from the future are especially important.

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# Odnos atribucija uspjeha i neuspjeha sa samopoštovanjem, beznadnošću i depresivnošću kod srednjoškolaca

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## Sažetak

*Cilj rada bio je provjeriti povezanost stabilnosti, internalnosti, kontrolabilnosti i globalnosti uzroka loše i dobre ocjene sa samopoštovanjem, beznadnošću i depresivnošću na uzorku 295 učenika prvih, drugih i trećih razreda srednje škole. Također, cilj je bio provjeriti mogu li atribucije loše i dobre ocjene objasniti dio varijance samopoštovanja, beznadnosti i depresivnosti. Rezultati su pokazali da je objašnjavanje loše ocjene stabilnim uzrocima negativno povezano sa samopoštovanjem, a pozitivno s beznadnošću i depresivnošću, a objašnjavanje dobre ocjene na isti način je pozitivno povezano sa samopoštovanjem, a negativno s depresivnošću. S druge strane, kontrolabilnost uzroka loše i dobre ocjene pozitivno je povezana sa samopoštovanjem, a negativno s beznadnošću i depresivnošću.*

*Također, atributiranje loše i dobre ocjene globalnim uzrocima pokazalo je negativne korelacije sa samopoštovanjem, a pozitivnu s depresivnim simptomima. Osim toga, pokazalo se da su značajni prediktori samopoštovanja kontrolabilnost uzroka loše ocjene te stabilnost i globalnost uzroka dobre ocjene. Također, rezultati su pokazali da objašnjavanje loše ocjene kontrolabilnim uzrocima objašnjava značajan postotak varijance beznadnosti i depresivnosti, a objašnjavanje dobre ocjene takvim uzorcima objašnjava samo varijancu beznadnosti.*

**Ključne riječi:** *atribucije loše i dobre ocjene; globalnost; internalnost; kontrolabilnost; stabilnost*

## Uvod

Kauzalne atribucije su načini na koji pojedinci objašnjavaju uzroke događaja koji im se događaju u životu. Atribucijska teorija odnosi se na proučavanje veze atribucija i njihovih posljedica na kognitivnom, afektivnom i ponašajnom planu. Međutim, ne postoji jedna jedinstvena atribucijska teorija, nego je prikladnije govoriti o atribucijskim teorijama koje se bave različitim aspektima atribucijskog rezoniranja (Kamenov, 1991).



Iako kritizirana zbog ograničavanja na područje postignuća, Weinerova atribucijska teorija motivacije postignuća vodeći je model na koji se oslanjaju mnoga istraživanja koja se bave afektivnim, ponašajnim i kognitivnim posljedicama atribucijskih procesa.

Atribucijski model motivacije polazi od osnovne premise da afektivne i kognitivne, a posljedično i ponašajne, reakcije na doživljeni uspjeh ili neuspjeh ovise o kauzalnim atribucijama koje osoba koristi kako bi objasnila zašto je došlo do takvog ishoda

Na primjer, ako osoba na važnom zadatku doživi neuspjeh koji za posljedicu ima ishod koji je nepovoljan po nju (na primjer otkaz), atribucije koje osoba stvara za taj ishod i njihove dimenzije utjecat će na očekivanja osobe u vezi s budućim uspjehom, na njene osjećaje i na ponašanje u budućim sličnim situacijama. Dakle, Weinerova teorija fokusira se na bihevioralne i motivacijske posljedice atribucija, a ne na procese kojima one nastaju (Weiner, 2010).

Prvotno su Weiner i suradnici smatrali da, u nastojanju da objasni svoj prethodni ili budući uspjeh ili neuspjeh, osoba najčešće koristi četiri osnovna atributa; sposobnosti, zalaganje, težina zadatka i sreća (Weiner 2010). Međutim, s proširivanjem područja istraživanja postalo je očito da postoje brojni drugi čimbenici kojima se objašnjava postignuće, kao na primjer raspoloženje, crte ličnosti, utjecaj vršnjaka, pristranosti učitelja, iskustvo i sl., odnosno da Weinerova četiri atributa opisuju samo mali dio atribucija koje ljudi produciraju.

Zbog velikog broja različitih atributa kojima je moguće objasniti uspjeh i neuspjeh, ali i zbog ograničene mogućnosti usporedbe atributa u različitim područjima ljudskog djelovanja, razrađen je sustav kategorizacije kauzalnih atributa. U početku je sustav sadržavao dvije dimenzije; internalnost i stabilnost (Weiner 2010).

Dimenzija internalnost/eksternalnost odnosi se na stupanj u kojem osoba misli da su uzroci određenog ishoda u njoj samoj. Internalne atribucije upućuju na to da osoba smatra sebe odgovornom za uspjeh ili neuspjeh, dok eksternalne atribucije upućuju da osoba uzroke ishoda vidi u vanjskim čimbenicima, okolini ili karakteristikama situacije. Sposobnosti i zalaganje smatraju se internalnim uzrocima uspjeha ili neuspjeha, dok su sreća i težina zadatka eksternalni uzroci.

Dimenzija stabilnost/nestabilnost odnosi se na to da li se uzroci uspjeha ili neuspjeha mijenjaju kroz vrijeme. Stabilnim atribucijama smatraju se težina zadatka i sposobnosti, jer određena vrsta zadatka se ne mijenja s vremenom niti se sposobnosti mogu značajno mijenjati s vremenom. Nestabilnim uzrocima smatraju se trud i sreća, jer se oboje može mijenjati od zadatka do zadatka (Gleason, Arkin i Shaver, 1979).

Na temelju opisane dvodimenzionalne klasifikacije uzroka uspjeha i neuspjeha, sposobnosti su identificirane kao internalni stabilni uzrok, zalaganje kao internalni nestabilni uzrok, težina zadatka kao eksternalni stabilni te sreća kao eksternalni nestabilni uzrok (Weiner, 2010).

Kasnije je uvedena još jedna dimenzija – kontrolabilnost, koja opisuje koliko su čimbenici kojima se objašnjava postignuće podložni kontroli. U tom smislu, zalaganje se smatra kontrolabilnim faktorom, dok su sposobnosti, težina zadatka, raspoloženje i sreća nekontrolabilni faktori (Struthers, Weiner i Allred, 1998).

Naknadno su Abramson, Seligman i Teasdale (1978) dodali još jednu dimenziju – globalnost/specifičnost, koja se odnosi na generaliziranje uzroka na različite situacije, odnosno na stabilnost kroz situacije, za razliku od dimenzije stabilnosti koja prvenstveno podrazumijeva vremensku stabilnost.

Što se tiče posljedica atribucija, prema atribucijskoj teoriji, na kognitivnom planu posljedice se uglavnom očituju u promjenama očekivanja buduće uspješnosti. Pokazalo se da je to dominantno rezultat percipirane stabilnosti uzroka, pri čemu pripisivanje neuspjeha stabilnim uzrocima vodi ka smanjenom očekivanju uspjeha u budućnosti, a objašnjavanje uspjeha stabilnim uzrocima vodi do povećanog očekivanja uspjeha u budućnosti. Na afektivnom planu, dimenzija kontrolabilnosti u najvećoj mjeri određuje kvalitetu emocionalnih reakcija nakon uspjeha ili neuspjeha, dimenzija internalnosti pojačava te emocionalne reakcije, dok stabilnost, također, utječe na emocionalne reakcije i to one dalekosežnije. Objašnjavanje uspjeha stabilnim uzrocima povezano je sa samopouzdanjem i zadovoljstvom sobom, dok objašnjavanje nestabilnim uzrocima pokazuje korelacije sa osjećajem neizvjesnosti i anksioznošću. Također se pokazalo da objašnjavanje neuspjeha stabilnim globalnim uzrocima povećava strah u situacijama postignuća te da je povezano s manjkom motivacije, osjećajima bespomoćnosti i beznadnosti te depresivnošću (Weiner, 2010).

Upravo ta povezanost atribucija, odnosno njihovih položaja na atribucijskim dimenzijama, s depresivnošću bila je osnova za razvoj i elaboraciju modela koji, pri objašnjenju razvoja depresivnih simptoma, naglasak stavljaju na objašnjavanje uzroka ugodnih i neugodnih događaja. Dominantni modeli su atribucijska teorija bespomoćnosti i teorija beznadnosti.

Atribucijska teorija bespomoćnosti (Abramson, Seligman i Teasdale, 1978) pretpostavlja da različiti pojedinci imaju različite atribucijske stilove, tj. način na koji obično objašnjavaju uzroke negativnih događaja. Negativni ili depresivni atribucijski stil podrazumijeva tendenciju objašnjavanja negativnih događaja internalnim, stabilnim i globalnim uzrocima, a pozitivnih eksternalnim, nestabilnim i specifičnim uzrocima. Negativni atribucijski stil povećava rizik za depresivnost jer će osoba vjerojatno nakon neugodnih događaja stvarati negativne atribucije, što dovodi do bespomoćnih očekivanja. Autori smatraju da jednom kada se razviju takva očekivanja, ona nužno vode do depresije jer su dovoljan, proksimalni uzrok naučene bespomoćnosti (Abramson, Seligman i Teasdale, 1978).

Teorija beznadnosti nadograđuje se na atribucijsku teoriju bespomoćnosti tako što opisuje tri kognitivna stila koji igraju ulogu u etiologiji depresije (Metalsky i Joiner, 1997). Prvi kognitivni stil uključuje donošenje zaključaka o uzrocima događaja. Autori smatraju da će se beznadnost i depresivnost najvjerojatnije javiti ako osoba negativne događaje objašnjava globalnim i stabilnim uzrocima.

Drugi kognitivni stil odnosi se na zaključivanje o posljedicama negativnih događaja. I u ovom smislu, stabilne i globalne atribucije najviše pridonose javljanju beznadnosti i depresivnosti, jer će osoba tada negativne ishode vidjeti kao nepopravljive

i generalizirati ih na mnoge sfere svog života, te smatrati da negativni događaji imaju puno katastrofalnih posljedica.

Treći kognitivni stil odnosi se na donošenje zaključaka o samome sebi, odnosno na objašnjavanje negativnih događaja internalnim uzrocima, nakon čega osobe smatraju sebe neadekvatni i nedoraslim. Beznadnosti i depresivnost se javljaju kada osoba vlastitu neadekvatnost vidi kao nešto što ne može mijenjati ili popraviti te kao uzrok budućih negativnih ishoda u mnogim domenama života.

Svaki od navedenih kognitivnih stilova predisponira pojedinca za depresiju tako što povećava vjerojatnost da će nakon negativnog događaja donositi depresogene zaključke, što opet povećava vjerojatnost da se razvije beznadnost. Jednom kada se beznadnost razvije, depresija je neizbježna, jer se beznadnost smatra dovoljnim, proksimalnim uzrokom depresije (Metalsky i Joiner Jr., 1997).

Prema tome, postoje različiti modeli koji pretpostavljaju povezanost atribucija s depresivnošću, ali i drugim varijablama koje određuju mentalno zdravlje pojedinca, kao što su beznadnost i samopoštovanje. Mnoga su istraživanja potvrdila povezanost atribucija postignuća, ali i atribucijskog stila s depresivnim simptomima kod odraslih te djece i adolescenata (Abela, Gagnon i Auerbach, 2007; Abela, Parkinson, Stolorow i Starrs, 2009; Alloy, Just i Panzarella, 1997; Joiner i Deenen-Wagner, 1995; Kurtović, 2007; Kurtović i Marčinko, 2011). Također se pokazuje da su atribucije uspjeha i neuspjeha značajno povezane sa školskom samoefikasnošću (Sorić i Vulić Prtorić, 2006), motivacijom ka postignuću (Bugan, Bajs i Stamać, 2001) te strahom od ispitivanja (Vrbešić, 2007). S obzirom na to da se pokazuje da depresivnost naglo raste s ulaskom u adolescenciju te da je školski uspjeh bitna odrednica prilagodbe pojedinca (Angold i Rutter, 1992), čini se osobito korisnim ispitati učinke atribucija uspjeha i neuspjeha kod srednjoškolaca. Također, mnoga istraživanja i klinička praksa pokazuju da su depresivne osobe često beznadne i da imaju sniženo samopoštovanje te da promjene u samopoštovanju i razvoj beznadnosti često prethode depresiji (Cheng i Furnham, 2003; Miller, Warner, Wickamaratne, i Weissman, 1999; Rector, i Roger, 1987; Southall i Roberts, 2002).

## **Cilj i hipoteze**

Cilj ovog rada bio je provjeriti povezanost stabilnosti, internalnosti, kontrolabilnosti i globalnosti uzroka uspjeha i neuspjeha sa samopoštovanjem, beznadnošću i depresivnim simptomima. Također je cilj bio provjeriti mogu li stabilnost, internalnost, kontrolabilnost i globalnost uzroka loše i dobre ocjene objasniti dio varijance samopoštovanja, beznadnosti i depresivnosti kod adolescenata.

S obzirom na teorijske modele i dosadašnja istraživanja opravdano je očekivati da će stabilna, internalna i globalna objašnjenja loše ocjene biti negativno povezana sa samopoštovanjem, a pozitivno s beznadnošću i depresivnošću.

S druge strane, očekuje se da će nestabilna, eksternalna i specifična objašnjenja dobre ocjene biti pozitivno povezana sa samopoštovanjem, a negativno s beznadnošću i depresivnošću.

Što se tiče dimenzije kontrolabilnosti, opravdano je pretpostaviti da je pozitivno povezana sa samopoštovanjem, a negativno s beznadnošću i depresivnošću za lošu i dobru ocjenu.

## **Metoda**

### ***Sudionici i postupak***

Uzorak se sastojao od 295 učenika prvih, drugih i trećih razreda srednje škole. Raspon godina bio je 15 do 18 godina, a prosječna dob 15,88 uz standardnu devijaciju ,81. Bilo je 235 djevojaka i 60 mladića. Budući da su sudionici bili maloljetni, bila je potrebna suglasnost roditelja/skrbnika kako bi mogli sudjelovati u istraživanju. Učenicima su podijeljeni obrasci za roditeljski pristanak, koje su trebali potpisane vratiti razredniku. Prije početka ispitivanja provjerena su odobrenja roditelja za sudjelovanje u istraživanju. Pristanak učenika na sudjelovanje u ispitivanju dobiven potpisom na zajednički obrazac.

Ispitivanje se provodilo tijekom sata razrednika. Učenicima je u općoj uputi objašnjeno da nema točnih i netočnih odgovora, da je važno da probaju što točnije i iskrenije procijeniti koliko se tvrdnje odnose na njih te da će se rezultati koristiti za znanstveni rad i obrađivati zajedno. Također su upućeni da pažljivo pročitaju uputu ispred svakog upitnika te pitaju ako im nešto nije jasno. Ispitivanje je trajalo jedan školski sat.

## **Varijable i instrumenti**

### ***Atribucije uspjeha i neuspjeha***

Za mjerenje stabilnosti, internalnosti, kontrolabilnosti i globalnosti uzroka uspjeha i neuspjeha korištena je hrvatska adaptacija Bensonove 4-ADS skale (4-Attributinal Dimensions Scale, Benson, 1989), koja koristi postupak direktnog procjenjivanja uzroka. Zadatak sudionika je da za zadani događaj navedu uzrok koji je najvjerojatnije uzrokovao takav ishod, te da ga onda procijene na dimenzijama stabilnosti, internalnosti, kontrolabilnosti i globalnosti. Budući da je za cilj ispitivanja bilo bitno procijeniti atribucije uspjeha i neuspjeha, od učenika se očekivalo da navedu uzrok dobre i loše ocjene (ocjene koja za njih predstavlja uspjeh ili neuspjeh, kako ne bi poistovjećivali dobre ocjene s 5 ili 4, a loše s 1 ili 2). Prema tome, skala je primijenjena dva puta, jednom za dobru i jednom za lošu ocjenu. Prednost ove skale je i to što se dimenzije procjenjuju na petodijelnim skalama na kojima su sve referentne točke opisane riječima. Na primjer, u čestici «Utječe li taj uzrok na tvoje postignuće samo u jednom predmetu ili i na postignuće u drugim predmetima», ponuđeni odgovori su 1 – utječe samo na uspjeh u jednom predmetu, 2 – ... u malo drugih predmeta, 3 – ... u nekoliko drugih predmeta, 4 – ... u većini drugih predmeta i 5 – ... u svim drugim predmetima. S druge strane, u slučaju čestice «Je li taj uzrok vezan uz tebe osobno ili je vezan uz druge ljude ili okolnosti» ponuđeni odgovori su 1 – potpuno je vezan uz druge ljude, 2 – većinom je vezan uz druge ljude, 3 – donekle je vezan uz mene osobno,

4 – većinom je vezan uz mene osobno i 5 – potpuno je vezan uz mene osobno. Dakle, budući da skala mjeri različite dimenzije uzroka, bilo bi teško naći jedno značenje referentnih točaka koje bi bilo odgovarajuće i razumljivo za sve čestice.

Ukupni rezultati za stabilnost, internalnost, kontrolabilnost i stabilnost uzroka loše i dobre ocjene izračunati su zbrajanjem odgovora sudionika na pojedinim dimenzijama.

Originalna skala sadržava po 4 čestice za svaku dimenziju (ukupno 16), ali je zbog većeg broja upitnika odlučeno da se skрати na 3 čestice po dimenziji, kako se ne bi preopteretilo sudionike.

Za dimenziju stabilnost zadržane su čestice 1. “Hoće li se uzrok koji si naveo mijenjati s vremenom?”; 2. “Da li će ovaj uzrok i ubuduće biti uzrok tvog postignuća u takvim situacijama?” i 3. “Hoće li se taj uzrok promijeniti tijekom vremena ili će i dalje ostati isti?”. Međutim, pri analizi pouzdanosti pokazalo se da čestica 2. “Da li će ovaj uzrok i ubuduće biti uzrok tvog postignuća u takvim situacijama?” narušavala pouzdanost subskale (imala je nisku korelaciju s ukupnim rezultatom) te je stoga isključena iz ukupnog rezultata. Stoga je mogući raspon rezultata dimenzije stabilnost bio od 2 do 10, a koeficijenti pouzdanosti tipa Cronbach alpha bili su ,68 za lošu ocjenu i ,62 za dobru ocjenu.

Za dimenziju internalnost zadržane su čestice 1. „Da li se taj uzrok nalazi više u tebi (neke tvoje osobine ili trud) ili se više nalazi izvan tebe (npr. težak test ili sreća)?“; 2. „Je li taj uzrok potpuno izvan tebe ili u tebi?“ i 3. „Je li taj uzrok vezan uz tebe osobno ili je vezan uz druge ljude ili okolnosti?“. Koeficijenti pouzdanosti tipa Cronbach alpha bili su ,70 za dobru ocjenu i ,76 za lošu ocjenu, a mogući raspon rezultata od 3 do 15.

Za dimenziju kontrolabilnost zadržane su čestice 1. „Možeš li navedeni uzrok osobno kontrolirati?“; 2. „Možeš li navedeni uzrok ti kontrolirati ili to može netko drugi?“ i 3. „Može li ovaj uzrok uopće netko kontrolirati ili ne može nitko?“. Koeficijenti pouzdanosti tipa Cronbach alpha bili su ,65 za dobru ocjenu i ,75 za lošu ocjenu, a mogući raspon rezultata od 3 do 15.

Za dimenziju globalnost zadržane su čestice 1. „Da li taj uzrok uzrokuje samo za tvoje postignuće u jednom predmetu ili i u drugim stvarima u tvom životu (izvan škole)?“; 2. „Utječe li taj uzrok samo na tvoje postignuće u jednom predmetu ili utječe i na postignuće u drugim predmetima?“ i 3. „Uzrokuje li taj uzrok tvoj uspjeh i u drugim predmetima?“. Međutim, čestica 3. “Uzrokuje li taj uzrok tvoj uspjeh i u drugim predmetima“ narušavala je pouzdanost subskale te nije uračunata u ukupni rezultat. Stoga je mogući raspon rezultata na dimenziji globalnost bio od 2 do 10, a koeficijenti pouzdanosti tipa Cronbach alpha bili su ,79 za lošu ocjenu i ,73 za dobru ocjenu.

### *Samopoštovanje*

Za mjerenje samopoštovanja korišten je Coopersmithov upitnik samopoštovanja (CUSP, skraćena forma B, Bezinović i Lacković Grgin, 1990), koji je hrvatska adaptacija upitnika SEI (Self-Esteem Inventory; Coopersmith, 1967). Upitnik se sastoji

od 25 tvrdnji, a mjeri stavove i osjećaje prema samome sebi. Zadatak sudionika je odgovoriti je li tvrdnja točna ili netočna za njih, a nakon rekodiranja čestica s obrnutim bodovanjem, ukupni rezultat računa se zbrajanjem svih odgovora „točno“. Koeficijent unutrašnje konzistencije tipa Cronbach alfa iznosio je ,83.

### *Beznadnost*

Za procjenu beznadnosti korištena je Skala beznadnosti za djecu (Živčić, 1993), koja je hrvatska adaptacija HSC skale (HSC; Hopelessness Scale for Children; Kazdin, French, Unis, Esveldt-Dawson & Sherick, 1983). Skala se sastoji od 17 čestica koje procjenjuju negativna očekivanja vezana uz budućnost. Zadatak sudionika je da odgovori opisuje li tvrdnja točno ili netočno kako se oni u zadnje vrijeme osjećaju. Nakon rekodiranja čestica s obrnutim bodovanjem, ukupni rezultat računa se zbrajanjem svih odgovora „točno“. Koeficijent pouzdanosti tipa Cronbach alfa bio je ,75.

### *Depresivnost*

Za mjerenje zastupljenosti depresivnih simptoma korištena je Skala depresivnosti za djecu (Živčić, 1992), koja je hrvatska adaptacija CDI skale (Children's Depression Inventory; Kovacs, 1985). Skala se sastoji od 27 grupa od po tri čestice koje pokrivaju široki raspon vidljivih simptoma depresije kod djece, kao što su tuga, poremećaji sna, apetita, te suicidalne ideje. U svakoj grupi čestica varira jedan simptom depresivnosti, a dijete bira onu od ponuđenih rečenica koja najbolje opisuje kako se ono osjeća u zadnja dva tjedna. U skladu s ključem za bodovanje, odgovori se boduju od 0 do 2, a ukupni rezultat računa se kao jednostavna linearna kombinacija svih odgovora. Iako različiti autori izvještavaju o faktorskoj strukturi od 2 do 4 faktora, ovisno o uzorcima, skala se najčešće koristi kao unidimenzionalna mjera depresivnosti te je kao takva korištena i u ovom istraživanju. Koeficijent pouzdanosti tipa Cronbach alfa iznosio je .83

## **Rezultati**

U tablici 1 prikazani su deskriptivni podatci za stabilnost, inernalnost, kontrolabilnost i globalnost loše i dobre ocjen, te samopoštovanje, beznadnost i depresivnost.

### Tablica 1.

Kako bi se ispitala korelacije između ispitanih varijabli, izračunati su Pearsonovi koeficijenti korelacija. Matrica korelacija prikazana je u Tablici 2.

### Tablica 2.

Kao što se može vidjeti, stabilnost uzroka loše ocjene pokazala je značajne korelacije sa samopoštovanjem, beznadnošću i depresivnošću u očekivanom smjeru, a stabilnost uzroka dobre ocjene samo sa samopoštovanjem i depresivnošću, također u očekivanom smjeru.

Internalnost uzroka nije pokazala značajne relacije sa samopoštovanjem, beznadnošću niti depresivnim simptomima, što nije u skladu s očekivanjima.

Kontrolabilnost uzroka dobre i loše ocjene značajno je povezana sa samopoštovanjem, beznadnošću i depresivnošću i to u istim smjerovima. Naime, viša kontrolabilnost uzroka povezana je s višim samopoštovanjem i nižom beznadnosti i depresivnosti, što je i očekivano s obzirom na značenje kontrolabilnosti.

Zanimljivo je da globalnost uzroka loše i dobre ocjene ima isti smjer korelacije sa samopoštovanjem i depresivnošću – viša globalnost uzroka loše i dobre ocjene povezane su s nižim samopoštovanjem i višom depresivnošću. Nalaz je djelomično u suprotnosti s očekivanjima, jer se uglavnom pokazuje da je globalno objašnjavanje pozitivnih događaja negativno povezano s depresivnošću.

Slijedeći korak u analizama bio je provjeriti mogu li atribucije loše i dobre ocjene objasniti dio varijance samopoštovanja, beznadnosti i depresivnosti. Kako bi se to provjerilo, provedene su stupnjevite regresijske analize posebno za samopoštovanje, beznadnost i depresivnost kao kriterijima. Kao prediktori uvršteni su stabilnost, internalnost, kontrolabilnost i globalnost uzroka loše i dobre ocjene. Radi ekonomičnosti, rezultati stupnjevutih regresijskih analiza prikazani su zajedno za samopoštovanje, beznadnost i depresivnost u Tablici 3.

### Tablica 3.

Kao što se može vidjeti, značajni prediktori samopoštovanja su kontrolabilnost uzroka loše ocjene, stabilnost uzroka dobre ocjene i globalnost uzroka dobre ocjene. Pri tome su kontrolabilnost uzroka loše ocjene i stabilnost uzroka dobre ocjene povezani s višim samopoštovanjem, a globalnost uzroka dobre ocjene s nižim.

Nadalje, značajni prediktori beznadnosti su kontrolabilnost uzroka loše i dobre ocjene, koje su povezane s nižim razinama beznadnosti.

Također, kontrolabilnost uzroka loše ocjene značajan je prediktor depresivnosti pri čemu je objašnjavanje loše ocjene kontrolabilnim uzrocima povezano s nižom depresivnošću.

## Rasprava

Cilj ovog rada bio je provjeriti povezanost atribucija uspjeha i neuspjeha sa samopoštovanjem, beznadnošću i depresivnošću kod adolescenata. Naime, mnoga su istraživanja pokazala da objašnjenja uzroka događaja, pa tako i uspjeha i neuspjeha, imaju značajnog učinka na motivaciju i uspješnost učenika te također na emocionalnu dobrobit pojedinca (Angold i Rutter, 1992; Joiner i Deenen-Wagner, 1995; Kurtović, 2007; Kurtović i Marčinko, 2011). Stoga je, osim povezanosti, cilj rada također je bio provjeriti mogu li stabilnost, internalnost, kontrolabilnost i globalnost uzroka loše i dobre ocjene objasniti dio varijance samopoštovanja, beznadnosti i depresivnosti kod adolescenata.

Analiza korelacija najvećim dijelom je u skladu s teorijskim postavkama. Naime, stabilnost uzroka loše ocjene povezana je s nižim samopoštovanjem te višom



beznadnosti i depresivnosti, dok je stabilnost uzroka dobre ocjene povezana s višim samopoštovanjem i nižom depresivnošću. Budući da se stabilnost uzroka odnosi na vjerovanje osobe da će određeni uzrok i u budućnosti uzrokovati isti ishod, on je usko povezan s očekivanjima za budućnost. Na primjer, ako učenik kontinuirano objašnjava svoj neuspjeh stabilnim uzrocima, kao što su niske sposobnosti, vrlo je vjerojatno da će se osjećati beznadno u vezi sa svojom budućnosti. Također, takve atribucije mogu djelovati na samopoštovanje osobe, u smislu da ona sebe vidi kao manje vrijednu, što može rezultirati povišenjem depresivnih simptoma. Također, takav način objašnjavanja neuspjeha može značajno djelovati na motivaciju učenika te rezultirati odustajanjem i manjkom truda, što za posljedicu može imati daljnji neuspjeh, koji dodatno može djelovati na samopoštovanje i depresivnost učenika. Na sličan način može se objasniti i povezanost stabilnosti uzroka dobre ocjene s višim samopoštovanjem i nižom depresivnošću. Naime, ako učenik ili učenica objašnjava svoj uspjeh čimbenicima kao što su sposobnost ili trud, nema razloga vjerovati da i u budućnosti neće biti jednako uspješna, što može pozitivno djelovati na njihovo samopoštovanje i tako štiti od depresivnosti. Nalaz da je samo stabilnost uzroka loše ocjene značajno povezana s beznadnošću sugerira da su osobe koje negativne događaje atribuiraju stabilnim uzrocima osobito sklone stvaranju beznadnih kognicija, što je u skladu s pretpostavkama teorije beznadnosti da je beznadnost osnovni mehanizam razvoja depresije (Abela i suradnici, 2009; Alloy, Just i Panzarella, 1997).

Za razliku od stabilnosti, koja pokazuje različite korelacije sa samopoštovanjem, beznadnošću i depresivnošću ovisno o događaju koji se objašnjava, kontrolabilnost uzroka dobre i loše ocjene u istom je smjeru povezana sa samopoštovanjem, beznadnošću i depresivnim simptomima. Naime, rezultati pokazuju da učenici koji objašnjavaju loše i oni koji objašnjavaju dobre ocjene kontrolabilnim uzrocima, također imaju više samopoštovanje te su manje beznadni i depresivni. Osjećaj kontrole nad događajima u životu, pozitivnim i negativnim, potiče razvoj samopouzdanja i vjere u vlastite mogućnosti, te je manja vjerojatnost razvoja depresivnih simptoma. Ovo se čini osobito bitnim kada govorimo o neuspjehu, jer objašnjavanje neuspjeha kontrolabilnim uzrocima podrazumijeva da osoba misli da može utjecati na uzrok i promijeniti ga, što smanjuje vjerojatnost razvoja beznadnosti i depresivnosti. Također, ako osoba uspjeh objašnjava kontrolabilnim uzrocima, ona će vjerojatno očekivati da će i u budućnosti moći utjecati na iste ishode, što povoljno djeluje na samopouzdanje i samopoštovanje, te na taj način štiti od beznadnosti i depresivnosti.

Što se tiče povezanosti globalnosti uzroka sa samopoštovanjem, beznadnosti i depresivnosti, rezultati su pokazali neke neočekivane nalaze. Naime, globalnost uzroka loše i dobre ocjene povezana je s nižim samopoštovanjem i višom depresivnošću. Što se tiče loše ocjene, nalaz je u skladu s očekivanjima, jer globalnost podrazumijeva generalizaciju uzroka na različite situacije. Prema tome, ako učenik smatra da će, na primjer, manjak sposobnosti uzrokovati njegov slab uspjeh u mnogim predmetima, to može nepovoljno djelovati na njegovo samopoštovanje i emocionalno zdravlje.



Međutim, prema atribucijskim teorijama, globalnost uzroka dobre ocjene trebala bi biti negativno povezana s depresivnošću. Moguće objašnjenje takve povezanosti je tzv. *hipoteza pretjeranog optimizma* (Conley, Haines, Hilt i Metalsky, 2000). Naime, ako pozitivne, u ovom slučaju globalne atribucije uzroka uspjeha, nisu zasnovane na temelju realnih procjena i stvarnog iskustva, postoji povećan rizik da, u suočavanju s neuspjehom, takvi učenici reagiraju s depresivnim simptomima i negativnim viđenjem sebe, jer uvide da njihovo dotadašnje mišljenje o sebi nije točno. Prema tome, izgleda da je za dobrobit adolescenata bitno da njihove pozitivne atribucije budu realne i utemeljene na iskustvu, jer u protivnom mogu imati nepovoljne učinke.

Prema tome, analiza korelacija pokazuje da su stabilnost, kontrolabilnost i globalnost uzroka loše i dobre ocjene značajno povezane s učeničkim viđenjem sebe, budućnosti i s depresivnim simptomima. Međutim, iz perspektive atribucijskih teorija očekivalo se da će internalnost uzroka loše ocjene biti negativno povezana sa samopoštovanjem te pozitivno s beznadnošću i depresivnošću, dok će internalnost uzroka dobre ocjene pokazati suprotan smjer korelacija. Nalaz da internalnost uzroka nije imala značajnih relacija sa samopoštovanjem, beznadnošću i depresivnošću mogao bi se objasniti manjkom iskustva. Naime, internalne atribucije prvenstveno su vezane uz stvaranje zaključaka o sebi, te na taj način djeluju na depresivnost. Moguće je da je za stvaranje zaključaka o samome sebi potrebno više iskustva, te da u ovom razdoblju učenici još nisu skupili dovoljno iskustava da bi stvorili relativno stabilne zaključke koji bi mogli imati učinka na depresivnost. Također je moguće da u ovom razvojnom periodu internalnost atribucija uspjeha i neuspjeha još uvijek nema značajnih relacija s depresivnošću te da bi korelacije bile drukčije da su se ispitivale atribucije nekih drugih događaja, kao što su sukobi s prijateljima i sl.

Drugi cilj ovog istraživanja bio je provjeriti mogu li se razlike u samopoštovanju, beznadnosti i depresivnosti objasniti na temelju razlika u atribucijama loše i dobre ocjene.

Regresijske analize za kriterij samopoštovanje pokazale su da su značajni prediktori samopoštovanja kod srednjoškolaca kontrolabilnost uzroka loše ocjene te stabilnost i globalnost uzroka dobre ocjene, s time da je najveći doprinos objašnjenju samopoštovanja imala kontrolabilnost. Kao što je već spomenuto, objašnjavanje neuspjeha uzrocima nad kojima osoba ima kontrolu (kao na primjer manjak truda ili korištene strategije) može pozitivno djelovati na samopouzdanje i motivaciju učenika da i dalje ulaže trud. Također, objašnjavanje uspjeha stabilnim uzrocima koji će i u budućnosti dovesti do istih ishoda (kao na primjer inteligencija) sigurno da potiče vjerovanje o sebi kao vrijednoj i kompetentnoj osobi. Nalaz da su globalne atribucije dobre ocjene povezane s nižim samopoštovanjem u skladu je s prije spomenutom hipotezom pretjeranog optimizma. Naime, moguće je da učenici, na temelju onih predmeta u kojima su dobri, generaliziraju i na druge predmete te očekuju da će iste strategije i vještine djelovati i u tim slučajevima. S obzirom na to da su zahtjevi srednje škole veći i da zahtijevaju različite vještine i prilagođavanje različitim načinima rada,

ovakav način generaliziranja može nepovoljno utjecati na uspješnost učenika pa tako i na samopoštovanje kada se njihova preoptimistična očekivanja ne ostvare.

Što se tiče beznadnosti i depresivnosti pokazalo se da je ključna atribucijska dimenzija koja pridonosi objašnjenju varijance kontrolabilnost. Naime, objašnjavanje loše i dobre ocjene kontrolabilnim uzrocima povezano je s nižom beznadnošću, a kontrolabilnost uzroka loše ocjene s nižom depresivnošću. Ovakav nalaz upućuje na činjenicu da je osjećaj kontrole nad negativnim događajima, pa tako i neuspjehom, iznimno važan za mentalno zdravlje pojedinca. Osim što djeluje na motivaciju i potiče vjerovanje da će se poželjni ishodi događati i u budućnosti, osjećaj kontrole pruža mladima uvjerenje da nepovoljne ishode u budućnosti također mogu izbjeći, što je u kontekstu zaštite od depresivnosti jako važan čimbenik. Naime, pokazalo se da očekivanja o tome koliko će se lijepih ili ružnih stvari događati u budućnosti imaju snažan utjecaj na depresivnost, a osjećaj da se može kontrolirati kakvi će se događaji događati u budućnosti, ima snažan zaštitni utjecaj (Abela, Gagnon i Auerbach, 2007).

Rezultati ovog istraživanja naglašavaju da je u proučavanju i objašnjavanju povezanosti atribucija i depresivnosti korisno atribucije razmatrati na dimenzionalnoj razini. Naime, mnoga istraživanja u ovom području proučavala su odnose negativnog atribucijskog stila (tendencije objašnjavanja negativnih događaja stabilnim, internalnim i globalnim uzrocima, a pozitivnih događaja nestabilnim, eksternalnim i specifičnim uzrocima) s depresivnošću (Abela, Parkinson, Stolow i Starrs, 2009; Lewinsohn, Joiner Jr. i Rohde, 2001; Metalsky i Joiner Jr., 1997). Međutim, mjere atribucijskog stila zbrajaju rezultate na različitim dimenzijama, što može maskirati korelacije između pojedinih atribucijskih dimenzija i depresivnosti. S obzirom na to da je razdoblje adolescencije obilježeno mnogim promjenama na kognitivnom i emocionalnom planu, čini se osobito korisnim promatrati zasebne doprinose pojedinih dimenzija. Naime, konstrukt atribucijskog stila podrazumijeva određenu stabilnost kroz različite situacije, a da bi se ona razvila, potrebno je dovoljno iskustva. Budući da djeca i adolescenti još uvijek nemaju dovoljno iskustava s donošenjem atribucijskih zaključaka, vjerojatno je da njihovi atribucijski obrasci još nisu dovoljno stabilni. Promatranje odnosa atribucija i depresivnosti na dimenzionalnoj razini, prema tome, može pružiti dodatni uvid u značenje koje pojedine atribucije imaju za djecu i adolescente te tako pomoći povećati razumijevanje atribucijskih procesa i njihovih učinaka na mentalno zdravlje.

Budući da je škola najvažniji medij u kojem adolescenti mogu doživjeti uspjeh ili neuspjeh te razvijati svoje vještine, ovakvi nalazi imaju značajne implikacije za odgoju i obrazovnu praksu. Naime, istraživanja pokazuju da se atribucije najvećim dijelom uče na temelju iskustva i povratnih informacija od važnih osoba u životu (Garber i Flynn, 2001). U tom smislu, za dobrobit učenika važno je da u slučaju neuspjeha dobivaju primjerene povratne informacije o uzrocima takvog ishoda. U svakom slučaju treba izbjegavati objašnjavanje neuspjeha razlozima kao što su lijenost ili manjak sposobnosti jer znatno povećavaju rizik da će dijete na temelju takvih

informacija donositi nepovoljne zaključke o sebi, svojim kvalitetama i o tome što može očekivati u budućnosti.

Međutim, ovi nalazi stavljaju u fokus još jedan aspekt atribucijskog rezoniranja, koji je u praksi često zanemaren. Naime, osim primjerenog objašnjavanja neuspjeha, vrlo su važne i primjerene i pravovremene povratne informacije o uzrocima uspjeha. Kao što se pokazalo, atribucije uspjeha značajno su povezane sa samopoštovanjem, beznadnošću i depresivnošću. U tom smislu, škola je idealan medij gdje učenici mogu dobiti povratne informacije o svom uspjehu koje će poticati razvoj pozitivnih atribucija, stabilnog samopoštovanja i optimizma.

## **Zaključak**

S obzirom na nagli porast stope depresivnosti u adolescenciji, modeli i istraživanja koja objašnjavaju i pružaju uvid u čimbenike koji su povezani s depresivnošću iznimno su važna jer su izvor spoznaja koje se mogu iskoristiti za kreiranje preventivskih i intervencijskih postupaka. Rezultati ovog istraživanja u skladu su s rezultatima drugih istraživanja koja potvrđuju da su atribucije uspjeha i neuspjeha relevantni čimbenici u zaštiti mentalnog zdravlja srednjoškolaca. Također, rezultati upućuju na zaključak da su, za dobrobit adolescenata, osobito važne atribucije koje potiču osjećaj kontrole nad uspjehom i neuspjehom te pozitivna očekivanja od budućnosti.