

# How Children Choose High Schools: The Role of Career Self-Efficacy and Academic Performance

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## Abstract

*Despite its relevance and potential long-term consequences for each individual, the process of students' transition from elementary schools to high schools has still not been sufficiently explored nor understood. Therefore, the present study was conducted with the goals of describing how students make decisions regarding their future high schools and establishing the contribution of individuals' earlier school achievement and own perception of such achievement for their career decision self-efficacy and expectations regarding high schools. In addition, the study aimed to determine the relevance of career decision self-efficacy for the explored decision-making process. The obtained results indicate the correlation between students' evaluation of own academic performance, but not their objective school achievement, and their evaluation of personal efficacy in career decision-making. Perceived academic control, as well as students' knowledge of potential occupations and the world of work in general, were revealed as significant predictors of their career decision self-efficacy. Furthermore, career decision self-efficacy and perceived academic control were identified as significant predictors of students' high school expectations. The obtained results confirm the relevance of developing students' career competencies that are crucial for the formulation of more positive expectations and a more active engagement in choosing their future high schools.*

**Key words:** *career decision self-efficacy; career management; decision-making; expectations; perceived academic control.*

## Introduction

During his or her lifetime, every person encounters several big life transitions that imply numerous changes, and require the individual to engage in active and

autonomous decision-making. Some of these necessitate making complex decisions regarding one's education and future career that require a committed evaluation of own characteristics, abilities and wishes. In this context, it is important to emphasize that choosing one's career and future occupation is not a decision made during a short time period, but a process that includes numerous small decisions and transitions and should, therefore, be considered in a developmental and lifelong perspective. In accordance with this approach, the career construct is defined as a series of occupations and other professional activities and roles whose combination reflects individuals' lifelong commitment to a certain professional area (Arnold, 1997; Super, 1977). These characteristics of career development have been recognized in numerous professional development models and theories (Ginzberg, 1972; Gottfredson, 1981; Stitt-Gohdes, 1997; Super, 1980). For example, according to Ginzberg's (1972) view, professional development includes three stages, first of which is dominated by fantasizing about attractive professional roles, while the last one is characterized by more realistic explorations, stronger focus on the available options and commitment to the final choice. Similarly, Super's (1980) theory also assumes that career development includes several stages in which individuals make numerous smaller educational and professional decisions that influence their final career choices. It is also interesting that this theory emphasizes the importance of individuals' professional identity for their self-image as well as the role of one's career in considering his or her life as a whole (Super, 1980).

It is important to emphasize that all, even small educational and career choices may represent challenging tasks that require one to evaluate own abilities and wishes during different developmental stages. For example, graduating from high school represents a significant event for all students, both those who continue their education in college and those who enter the job market. This transition encourages the process of gaining emotional and behavioral independence from one's parents and may be additionally burdened by uncertainties in choosing colleges, jobs and other future options, financial pressures and other factors (Lacković-Grgin, 2000). During this time, adolescents slowly enter the adult world in which they will have to prove themselves and show all their skills and abilities in order to be competitive in college and the job market (Havighurst, 1972; Parker, Summerfeldt, Hogan, & Majeski, 2004). Therefore, it is not surprising that students typically recognize the importance of this choice and often experience difficulties deciding about future college majors and jobs (Cantor, Norem, Niedenthal, Langston, & Brower, 1987; Galotti, 1999; McDaniels, Carter, Heinzen, Candrl, & Wieberg, 1994). Similarly, the transition from elementary to high school is significant as it, for many individuals, represents a chance to make first independent decisions regarding future occupations and educational programs that would prepare them for those. After their eighth grade of elementary school, students transition into high schools in which they expect numerous changes, often having to change the surroundings they grew up in and say goodbye to their old colleagues, friends and

teachers (Akos & Galassi, 2004; Blyth, Simmons, & Carlton-Ford, 1983). In addition, high schools, vocational ones in particular, are often more focused with regard to the academic content they offer to students, and may significantly alter their long-term perspectives and reduce the options that would be available during their transition to college and job market. Therefore, it is important to make decisions regarding future high schools consciously, and try to attune one's abilities, interests and values with the available educational and professional opportunities.

Although choosing future careers represents a relevant topic within the educational and developmental context, the process of choosing high schools, that represents a significant career transition for all individuals, is still not well understood (Blyth et al., 1983). However, it has been established that career decision making, similar to making all other life choices, is influenced by numerous personal characteristics such as personality traits, emotions, motivation, values, knowledge and others (Gati, Landman, Davidovitch, Asulin-Peretz, & Gadassi, 2010; Germeijs, Luyckx, Notelaers, Goossens, & Verschuere, 2012; Gottfredson & Brown, 2002; Harren, 1979; Phillips & Paziienza, 1988; Roe & Lunneborg, 1990). In addition to these, in this context it is important to mention the relevance of previous academic experiences, academic achievement and one's perception of own achievement. Specifically, in addition to strongly influencing their chances of enrolling into different high schools (MZOS, 2014), students' elementary school achievement may also influence their career decision making process (Lacković-Grgin, 2006). In addition to their objective performance, it is also important how students perceive their academic success because their beliefs regarding own abilities and accomplishments represent an important factor in understanding school performance and academic behaviors more generally (Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1984; Nasta, 2007). For example, students' perceived academic control, a trait that reflects their confidence in having sufficiently developed traits such as intelligence, efficient cognitive strategies and social skills important for academic success, might be very relevant in this context (Perry, 1991). Although this characteristic is primarily relevant for academic behaviors, in accordance with previous studies indicating a close connection between the academic and career domains (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994; Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1986), it could be expected that students' beliefs regarding their own academic abilities would be correlated with their evaluation of own career competencies. Such sets of beliefs regarding one's ability to successfully accomplish tasks relevant for career management reflect individual's career decision self-efficacy (Betz & Hackett, 1986), a trait strongly related to one's academic engagement, persistence, career exploration, stability and complexity (Blustein, 1989; Gianakos, 1999; Peterson, 1993).

Given its relevance, the present study investigated students' career decision self-efficacy within the context of their transition from elementary to high schools. Specifically, the goal of the study was to explore the relevance of career decision self-efficacy for the process of choosing high schools. First, the study aimed to explore

students' plans and expectations regarding high schools, and determine whether these could be related to their perceived academic control and career decision self-efficacy. Furthermore, it aimed to determine the contribution of students' academic achievement and the perception of such achievements for their career decision self-efficacy and high school expectations. It was hypothesized that students characterized by a higher degree of career decision self-efficacy would be more efficient in making their high school choices. It was also expected that students' perception of own academic abilities and achievements, namely their perceived academic control, would contribute to explaining their career decision self-efficacy and high school expectations.

## Methods

### *Participants*

The present study involved 303 elementary school students from five schools in Croatia enrolled into their final (eighth) grade. Among them, 163 (53.8%) were male and 140 (46.2%) female.

### *Procedure*

Participants were approached at the beginning of the second semester (February) of their eighth grade of elementary school when they completed the prepared questionnaires. Their participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous. At the beginning of the session, participants were familiarized with the study protocol and were asked for their collaboration and honesty in responding. On average, they required 20 minutes to complete the questionnaires. Several questionnaires were used in this study: *Perceived academic control scale* (Perry, Hladkyj, Pekrun, & Pelletier, 2001; Sorić & Burić, 2010), shortened *Career decision self-efficacy scale* (Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996; Taylor & Betz, 1983), *Knowledge of the world of work subscale* from *Childhood career decision-making questionnaire* (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, Mylonas, Argyropoulou, & Drosos, 2013) and a *High school expectations scale* that was prepared for the purpose of this study. In addition, the participants also completed the *General demographics questionnaire* in which they reported their gender, previous academic achievement (grade point average in 7<sup>th</sup> grade; GPA) and enrollment into various extracurricular activities. In addition, information regarding their preferences for high schools they would like to attend in the future was collected.

*Perceived academic control scale* (Perry et al., 2001; Sorić & Burić, 2010) is a questionnaire designed for measuring perceived academic control, a construct that reflects individuals' beliefs regarding the ability to influence their own academic achievement outcomes. This scale consists of eight items, and participants' task is to rate, on a 5-point scale, their agreement with each item. Two items were omitted from the analysis due to the unsatisfactory factor loadings, and individuals' scores were calculated based on the remaining six items. A higher score on this scale reflects a higher degree of perceived academic control.

*Career decision self-efficacy scale* (CDSSES; Betz et al., 1996; Taylor & Betz, 1983) is an instrument designed for measuring individuals' beliefs regarding their ability to successfully perform tasks necessary for efficient career management. Two forms of this scale have been developed, a longer one comprising 50 and a shorter one comprising 25 items, that are primarily adapted for high school and college students. Consequently, in the present study 10 items were administered that were, based on a content analysis, chosen as appropriate for elementary school students. Within this scale, students rated their ability to successfully complete several career related tasks using a 5-point scale. A higher score on this scale reflects higher career decision self-efficacy.

*Knowledge of the world of work scale* is a subscale of the *Childhood career decision making questionnaire* (CCDMQ; Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou et al., 2013) designed for exploring the process of career decision making in children. The full questionnaire comprises 27 items that represent three subscales: *Concerns/fears regarding career future*, *Investment on decision-making process* and *Knowledge of the world of work*. For the purpose of the present study, the *Knowledge of the world of work subscale* comprising five items was administered. The participants' task was to rate how well each item describes them using a 5-point scale. A higher score on this scale reflects individuals' higher familiarity with different available occupations and the world of work in general.

*High school expectations scale* is a questionnaire specifically prepared for the purpose of the present study. It measures students' expectations regarding their future high schools and consists of six items that the participants need to rate on a 5-point scale. A higher result on this scale reflects higher expectations regarding students' future high schools.

Psychometric properties of all used instruments are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

*Psychometric properties of the administered instruments*

Measure	M	SD	Min	Max	$\alpha$
Perceived academic control	22.14	4.91	6	30	.711
Knowledge of the world of work	17.88	4.27	5	25	.732
Career decision self-efficacy	37.05	6.72	10	50	.772
High school expectations scale	22.82	4.97	6	30	.770

Note: M – mean; SD – standard deviation; Min – minimum; Max – maximum;  $\alpha$  – Cronbach reliability coefficient.

## **Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted using *Statistica 11* (StatSoft, Inc.) statistical package. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted in order to explore students' school achievement and plans regarding their high schools. Independent samples t-tests were used for comparing students who had already decided, and those who have still not decided which high school to enroll into. Correlation and regression analyses were conducted in order to analyze the relationship between the measured variables.

## Results

### ***Students' Plans Regarding Future High Schools***

In order to establish students' academic achievement, their grades from the previous, seventh grade of elementary school, were analyzed. The obtained results indicated that students' grade point average (GPA) was 4.00 ( $SD = .70$ ). In addition to meeting their school obligations, 162 (46.5%) students were engaged in various extracurricular activities, which was not the case for 141 (40.5%) students. Furthermore, in order to explore students' plans for high schools, we determined the number of students who already knew which high school they wanted to attend after elementary school and their preferences for such schools. The obtained results indicated that, around half a year prior to enrolling into high schools, 195 (64.4%) students knew which school they wanted to attend which was not the case for 108 (35.6%) students. In addition, we established which schools students wanted to enroll into, and their motives for choosing those. Students who had already made their choices mostly chose grammar schools (64; 21.1%) and technical schools (43; 14.2%), and also mentioned tourist-hotelier (24; 7.9%), medical (17; 5.6%), economic (16; 5.3%) and various vocational high schools (21; 6.9%). The number of students who did not answer this question was 109 (36%), while 121 (39.9%) of them could not describe their main motivation for making a decision regarding a future high school. In contrast, 93 (30.7%) students reported their interest for topics expected in preferred schools as their main motivation for choosing those. A much smaller number of students mentioned their interest in future jobs (18; 5.9%) or colleges (17; 5.6%) that these schools should qualify them for, as well as their estimate that a certain school is appropriate for their abilities and other personal characteristics (16; 5.3%).

### ***Differences between Students Who Had Already Decided and Those Who Had Not Decided Which High Schools to Enroll into***

As the first step in a more detailed exploration of the role of students' personal characteristics in the career decision making process, differences in perceived academic control, career decision self-efficacy and high school expectations between students who had already decided and those who had not yet decided which high schools to enroll into were tested. The obtained results indicate that students who had already made decisions regarding their future high schools had a higher degree of career decision self-efficacy ( $t(301)=4.35, p<.001, d=.52$ ), more knowledge of the world of work ( $t(301)=2.00, p=.047, d=.24$ ) and more positive high school expectations ( $t(299)=2.77, p=.01, d=.33$ ).

### ***The Relationship between Students' Academic Achievement, Perceived Academic Control, Career Decision Self-Efficacy and High School Expectations***

In order to investigate the correlations between students' academic achievement, perceived academic control, career decision self-efficacy and high school expectations,

a correlation analysis using the Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted. The obtained results indicated a positive correlation between perceived academic control, students' GPA and their career decision self-efficacy that was also related to their knowledge of the world of work and high school expectations. The remaining correlations are presented in Table 2.

Table 2  
Correlation matrix for the tested variables

	v2	v3	v4	v5
Perceived academic control (v1)	.24**	-.01	.39**	.32**
Career decision self-efficacy(v2)		.26**	.43**	.02
Knowledge of the world of work (v3)			.16**	-.12*
High school expectations (v4)				.08
Grade point average (GPA; v5)				

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

In order to establish the contributions of gender, school achievement, engagement in extracurricular activities, perceived academic control and knowledge of the world of work in explaining students' career decision self-efficacy and high school expectations, two regression analyses were conducted. In these analyses, career decision self-efficacy and high school expectations were used as criteria, while gender, school achievement, engagement in extracurricular activities, perceived academic control and knowledge of the world of work served as predictors. In addition, career decision self-efficacy was included as an additional predictor for high school expectations. The obtained results indicate perceived academic control and knowledge of the world of work as statistically significant predictors of career decision self-efficacy that, together with the perceived academic control, served as a significant predictor of high school expectations (Table 3).

Table 3  
Results of regression analyses using career decision self-efficacy and high expectations as criteria

Predictors	$\beta$	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	p
Criterion: Career decision self-efficacy					
Gender	.005				
Grade point average	-.03				
Extracurricular activities	.019	.357	.128	8.631	.000**
Perceived academic control	.249**				
Knowledge of the world of work	.263**				
Criterion: High school expectations					
Gender	.065				
Grade point average	-.04				
Extracurricular activities	-.05				
Perceived academic control	.320**	.535	.287	19.688	.000**
Knowledge of the world of work	.078				
Career decision self-efficacy	.334**				

Note: \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ;  $\beta$ —standardized regression coefficient; R—multiple correlation coefficient; R<sup>2</sup>—variance explained by the predictors; F—F-ratio; p—level of significance.



## Discussion

The present study explored elementary students' plans and expectations regarding their future high schools, and investigated the relevance of their career decision self-efficacy for the process of choosing future schools and formulating expectations related to those schools. The obtained results indicate that, around half a year prior to enrolling into high schools, more than half of the students already know which school they want to attend, and are most often motivated by their interest in the expected topics in making their choice. When compared to other students, those who already know which school they want to enroll into have a higher degree of career decision self-efficacy, more knowledge of the world of work and more positive expectations from high school. Therefore, it is not surprising that perceived academic control and knowledge of the world of work were identified as significant predictors of students' career decision self-efficacy. Furthermore, perceived academic control, together with career decision self-efficacy, was revealed as a significant predictor of students' high school expectations.

First, the conducted study aimed to determine whether students, half a year prior to leaving elementary school, already know which high schools they later want to attend. The obtained results indicate that more than half of the interviewed students know which school they want to enroll into. These students differed from others with respect to their career decision self-efficacy, knowledge of potential occupations and the world of work, as well as high school expectations. Specifically, students who had already made their decisions had a higher degree of career decision self-efficacy and were more familiar with various options that would be available after high school. As will later be explained in more detail, this result was expected given that career decision self-efficacy significantly influences all our decisions regarding future careers, as well as educational paths (Betz, 2007; Betz & Hackett, 2006; Nasta, 2007). Furthermore, in the present study students were asked to name the schools they were planning to enroll into as well as the main motives underlying their preferences. The obtained results indicate that students who had already made their choices most frequently choose grammar schools, namely high schools that provide general education with minimal specialization. In contrast, a much smaller number of students chooses vocational schools and occupations that are often considered as deficient on the work market, such as a cook, waiter or mason (MRMS, 2014). Therefore, despite the fact that the importance of coordinating high school enrollment quotas with the job market needs is often emphasized (MRMS, 2014), such needs and efforts are not recognized and students still do not show stronger interest towards deficient occupations. Therefore, it is important to provide students with all the relevant information more efficiently and to help them in attuning their wishes with the job market situation. Similarly to the finding reported earlier regarding a high number of undecided students, this result also suggests that many students could profit from professional counseling, whose relevance is often emphasized (OECD; Hartung, Porfeli, & Vondracek, 2005; Wonacott,



2002), and that is available outside their schools (HZZ, 2013). In addition, a modern information-communication technology available to students today also allows them to easily access relevant information and professional counseling programs (Savickas, 2003; Stevens & Lundberg, 1998; Tang, 2003). Although all of these sources allow much better awareness of various occupations, it is also important to provide career guidance services within elementary schools themselves because students, due to a lack of information or unsatisfactory decision making, without such help often hold unrealistic impressions of available career options (Ediger, 2000).

While naming their main motives for choosing the preferred high schools, the majority of students had problems determining their motivation, which may be related to their lack of more serious consideration of own future. However, it is encouraging that most students who answered this question mentioned their interests in the topics, namely academic content they expect to encounter in preferred high schools, as their main motivation. Based on this, it is possible to assume that at least some students gathered information relevant for the occupations of interest and used these for making their decisions regarding high schools. Such results were expected and may be related to previous findings that indicate the relevance of personal interests for making career choices in childhood and adolescence (Ginzberg, 1972; Trice, Hughes, Odom, Woods, & McClellan, 1995). Furthermore, these results may suggest that adolescents are aware of the fact that they will not be able to satisfy their needs without a high school education (Brlas, 2007; Gottfredson, 1981). However, it is somewhat surprising that the students did not mention practical and other reasons (e.g., financial or parental pressure) as the main motives for making their choices more frequently, given the results from previous studies (Borchert, 2002; Goodson, 1981; Julien, 1999). This finding may be related to the fact that many students in the present study did not answer the question regarding their motivation, and it can be speculated that more indecisive and impulsive students would be more likely to later base their high school choices on more extrinsic reasons.

In addition to students' plans regarding the preferred high schools, the present study also investigated the relationship between some of their academic and career characteristics. First, as expected, the obtained results indicated a significant positive correlation between their perceived academic control and academic achievement. Specifically, earlier studies have also indicated a connection between students' perceived academic control and school achievement, showing that students with higher perceived academic control invest more effort into school assignments, are more motivated for learning and have higher beliefs in their abilities to control own academic outcomes, which all contributes to their higher academic success (Perry et al., 2001; Richardson, Abraham, & Bond, 2012). Furthermore, the results obtained in the present study indicate a statistically significant correlation between perceived academic control and career decision self-efficacy, suggesting that students who hold higher self-beliefs in the academic domain also have more positive beliefs regarding

their career management abilities. As previously described, career decision self-efficacy includes a set of beliefs regarding individuals' behaviors related to their professional lives and careers, namely beliefs regarding their ability to make certain decisions and execute actions that will result in the desired career outcomes (Betz & Hackett, 2006; Lent et al., 1994). They reflect the way individuals value their ability to accurately evaluate own abilities, gather relevant information, choose future goals, plan for the future and solve problems (Taylor & Betz, 1983). Thus, the more students believe they have the characteristics necessary for academic success, the more positively they will value their own competencies for successful career decision making. This connection is in accordance with previous results that have indicated a close relationship between academic and career domains (Lent et al., 1994, 1986), as well as those indicating a correlation between the perception of career competencies and other, more general forms of self-evaluation (Betz & Klein, 1996).

Furthermore, considering their higher familiarity with the world of work and awareness of career importance, it is not surprising that students characterized by a higher degree of career decision self-efficacy, as well as perceived academic control, have more positive expectations from future high schools. Specifically, the results of the present study indicate that students who believe that they have the abilities and skills necessary for successful study and career decision making also believe they would be able to successfully meet the requirements of their future new surroundings. This resonates with previous findings that have indicated the relevance of career decision self-efficacy for professional judgments and behaviors that, naturally, also include the formulation of expectations regarding future educational outcomes (Betz, 2007; Nasta, 2007). Specifically, it is possible to compare and relate career decision self-efficacy with other forms of beliefs regarding own abilities that form the basis of expectations related to the outcomes of our behavior (Betz & Klein, 1996). Consequently, different forms of self-efficacy represent important mediators of our behaviors and influence our approach or avoidance of certain situations (Bandura, 1989, 1993; Bandura, Adams, & Beyer, 1977). In accordance with this, the way students formulate expectations regarding high schools is very important as these will influence their future behaviors, and may occasionally even become self-fulfilling prophecies (Dieckmann, Slovic, & Peters, 2009). Therefore, it is important to help students gain more accurate knowledge of themselves and the relevant external factors while choosing their future careers, so that they can choose appropriate schools and formulate realistic expectations related to them. As mentioned earlier, in order to establish this, it is important that students develop decision making skills and acquire all the relevant information regarding future options on time (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou et al., 2013). Although students may accomplish these goals by themselves, it is important and beneficial to help them in this process by providing the relevant information and guidelines within professional guidance programs (Hartung et al., 2005; Wonacott, 2002).

Overall, the results of the conducted study indicated significant individual differences among elementary school students that are related to their approach

and efficiency in choosing future high schools. While interpreting these findings, the correlational nature of the study needs to be considered, as these results may not offer insights into the causal relations between the explored academic and career variables. In addition, it is important to take into consideration the chosen sample of participants and the fact that the study was conducted among children from five elementary schools, suggesting that future studies should address the generalizability of the obtained results. Despite these limitations, the obtained results are valuable and offer important implications for the educational system. Specifically, different agents within the educational system should recognize the importance of students' career development and be aware of the challenges associated with this process. It is very important to support students across all stages of this process, especially during the transition to high school which is crucial for their professional identity and strongly influenced by the success in achieving developmental career goals during elementary school (Hartung et al., 2005; Havighurst, 1972; Lacković-Grgin, 2006; Schultheiss & Stead, 2004).

## Conclusions

The conducted study explored elementary students' plans and expectations regarding future high schools and investigated the relationship between their academic and career self-beliefs in more detail. The obtained results indicate that, although the majority of students knew which high school they would like to attend half a year before finishing their elementary education, a big number of students did not make that decision and is unsure of their own motivation for making that choice. Students' evaluation of their abilities for making decisions regarding own professional life is associated with their academic self-image, as well as expectations regarding their future schools. The obtained results indicate the importance of developing students' academic and career competencies and strengthening their evaluation of own abilities, so that more positive expectations and a more active approach in choosing high schools would subsequently result in their better adaptation to the new surroundings, higher academic achievement as well as higher satisfaction with the new school.

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# Kako učenici biraju srednje škole: Uloga samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri i školskog postignuća

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## Sažetak

*Iako se radi o relevantnoj problematici koja za svakog pojedinca ima dalekosežne posljedice, dosada se relativno malen broj istraživanja bavio ispitivanjem procesa odabira srednjih škola. Stoga je provedeno istraživanje kojem je cilj bio detaljnije opisati način na koji učenici donose odluke o srednjim školama te utvrditi doprinos prijašnjeg školskog postignuća i vlastitog doživljaja akademskih sposobnosti samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri i očekivanjima od srednje škole. Također, istraživanjem se željela utvrditi važnost samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri u procesu odlučivanja o budućoj srednjoj školi. Dobiveni rezultati pokazuju povezanost učeničkog doživljaja vlastite školske učinkovitosti, odnosno percipirane akademske kontrole, ali ne i objektivnog školskog postignuća, s procjenom osobne samoučinkovitosti u području donošenja profesionalnih odluka. Pritom su percipirana akademska kontrola, kao i učenička znanja o svijetu rada, izdvojeni kao značajni prediktori njihove samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri, a samoučinkovitost u odlučivanju o karijeri i percipirana akademska kontrola kao prediktori učeničkih očekivanja od srednje škole. Dobiveni rezultati upućuju na važnost razvoja učeničkih profesionalnih kompetencija koje su ključne za postavljanje pozitivnijih očekivanja i aktivniji pristup odabiru srednje škole.*

**Ključne riječi:** očekivanja; odlučivanje; percipirana akademska kontrola; samoučinkovitost u odlučivanju o karijeri; upravljanje karijerom.

## Uvod

Tijekom života svaki se pojedinac suočava s više velikih životnih raskrsnica koje sa sobom donose brojne promjene, a istodobno zahtijevaju aktivno i samostalno odlučivanje. Neke od njih uključuju i donošenje složenih odluka o školovanju i budućoj karijeri koje iziskuju promišljanje osoba o sebi, svojim sposobnostima i željama. Pritom treba naglasiti kako se odlučivanje o karijeri i budućem poslu ne događa u nekom kraćem razdoblju, već ono uključuje mnogo manjih odluka i prijelaza te ga stoga treba promatrati u razvojnom i cjeloživotnom kontekstu. U skladu s tim pristupom i pojam karijere definira se kao niz zanimanja i drugih poslovnih aktivnosti i uloga čija kombi-

nacija odražava cjeloživotnu privrženost pojedinca nekom profesionalnom području (Arnold, 1997; Super, 1977). Te osobine procesa oblikovanja karijere prepoznate su i u brojnim modelima i teorijama profesionalnog razvoja (Ginzberg, 1972; Gottfredson, 1981; Stitt-Gohdes, 1997; Super, 1980). Na primjer, prema Ginzbergovoj (1972) teoriji, profesionalni razvoj uključuje tri stupnja, pri čemu prvi karakterizira dominacija mašte i zamišljanja privlačnih profesionalnih uloga, a posljednji znatno realističnije istraživanje i kristaliziranje različitih mogućnosti te posvećivanje konačnom odabiru. Slično tome, i u Superovoj (1980) teoriji pretpostavlja se da profesionalni razvoj uključuje više stupnjeva u kojima pojedinci donose niz manjih odluka koje utječu na njihov završni odabir posla i karijere. Zanimljivo je da se unutar te teorije naglašava važnost profesionalnog identiteta pojedinca za njegovo samopoimanje kao i uloga karijere u cjeloživotnoj perspektivi (Super, 1980).

Treba naglasiti kako svi, čak i manji obrazovni i profesionalni odabiri, za pojedinca mogu predstavljati zahtjevan izazov koji iziskuje samoprocjenu vlastitih sposobnosti i afiniteta u različitim razvojnim fazama. Na primjer, napuštanje srednje škole predstavlja važan događaj za sve srednjoškolce, podjednako one koji nastavljaju svoje školovanje i one koji izlaze na tržište rada. Taj prijelaz potiče proces emocionalnog i ponašajnog osamostaljivanja od roditelja koji dodatno mogu opterećivati i nejasnoće oko izbora fakulteta, posla i budućnosti uopće, financijske teškoće i sl. (Lacković-Grgin, 2000). Mladi u tom razdoblju polako ulaze u svijet odraslih u kojem se potrebno dokazati i pokazati sva znanja i sposobnosti kako bi bili konkurentni na fakultetima i tržištu rada (Havighurst, 1972; Parker, Summerfeldt, Hogan, i Majeski, 2004). Stoga ne čudi što učenici prepoznaju važnost tog izbora te često doživljavaju poteškoće u odlučivanju o budućim studijima i željenim poslovima (Cantor, Norem, Niedenthal, Langston, i Brower, 1987; Galotti, 1999; McDaniels, Carter, Heinzen, Candrl, i Wieberg, 1994). Slično tome, dojmljiv je i prijelaz iz osnovne u srednju školu koji za većinu mladih označava vrijeme donošenja prvih samostalnih odluka o izboru budućeg zanimanja, odnosno obrazovnog programa koji će ih pripremiti za to zanimanje. Naime, učenici nakon osmog razreda prelaze u srednju školu u kojoj mogu očekivati velike promjene, a istodobno nerijetko mijenjaju sredinu u kojoj su odrastali i odvajaju se od svojih starih kolega, prijatelja i nastavnika (Akos i Galassi, 2004; Blyth, Simmons, i Carlton-Ford, 1983). Također, srednje škole nerijetko su sadržajno usmjerenije od osnovnih te, osobito u slučaju strukovnih škola, učenicima mogu znatno promijeniti dugoročnu perspektivu i smanjiti mogućnosti koje će im se nuditi prilikom prijelaza na fakultet ili u svijet rada. Stoga je izrazito važno odluku o budućem školovanju donijeti promišljeno i pritom pokušati što bolje uskladiti svoje sposobnosti, interese i vrijednosti s mogućnostima školovanja i budućeg zapošljavanja.

Iako odabir buduće karijere predstavlja važan problem u obrazovnom i razvojnom kontekstu, zasad se nedovoljno zna o procesu odabira srednje škole kao jednom od važnih profesionalnih prijelaza u životu svakog pojedinca (Blyth i sur., 1983). Unatoč tome, poznato je da na odlučivanje o karijeri, slično kao i na donošenje svih naših životnih odluka, utječu brojni osobni činitelji poput osobina ličnosti, emocija, motivacije, sustava vrijednosti, znanja i drugih osobina (Gati, Landman, Davidovitch,

Asulin-Peretz, i Gadassi, 2010; Germeijs, Luyckx, Notelaers, Goossens, i Verschueren, 2012; Gottfredson i Brown, 2002; Harren, 1979; Phillips i Paziienza, 1988; Roe i Lunneborg, 1990). Uz njih, u tom kontekstu treba istaknuti važnost dotadašnjih školskih iskustava, školskih postignuća i percepcije tih postignuća od samih učenika. Naime, uz to što u velikoj mjeri uvjetuje vjerojatnost upisa pojedinih srednjih škola (MZOS, 2014), školski uspjeh može utjecati i na način donošenja odluka o karijeri (Lacković-Grgin, 2006). Osim samog školskog uspjeha važno je i kako adolescenti doživljavaju taj uspjeh, jer njihova uvjerenja o vlastitim sposobnostima i postignućima mogu utjecati na razumijevanje učeničkog školskog uspjeha i ponašanja u školi općenito (Lent, Brown, i Larkin, 1984; Nasta, 2007). Primjerice, u ovom kontekstu važnu ulogu zasigurno ima percipirana akademska kontrola koja odražava učenička uvjerenja o tome posjeduju li određene osobine kao što su inteligencija, učinkovite kognitivne strategije ili društvene vještine koje mogu pridonijeti njihovoj školskoj izvedbi (Perry, 1991). Iako je spomenuta osobina ponajprije važna za akademska ponašanja, s obzirom na prethodna istraživanja koja pokazuju povezanost školske i profesionalne domene (Lent, Brown, i Hackett, 1994; Lent, Brown, i Larkin, 1986), može se očekivati da su uvjerenja učenika o njihovim akademskim sposobnostima povezana i s procjenom vlastitih sposobnosti upravljanja karijerom. Taj skup uvjerenja, odnosno prosudbi o stupnju vlastite sposobnosti uspješnog obavljanja zadataka relevantnih za upravljanje karijerom, predstavlja samoučinkovitost u odlučivanju o karijeri (Betz i Hackett, 1986) koja je tijesno povezana s posvećenošću školi i fakultetu, ustrajnošću, istraživanjem karijere, njenom stabilnošću i složenošću (Blustein, 1989; Gianakos, 1999; Peterson, 1993).

S obzirom na potencijalnu važnost te osobine, u provedenom istraživanju detaljnije je ispitana samoučinkovitost u odlučivanju o karijeri učenika, i to u kontekstu prijelaza iz osnovnih u srednje škole. Naime, cilj je ovog istraživanja bio ispitati važnost samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri za proces odlučivanja o budućoj srednjoj školi. Na početku, istraživanjem se željelo ispitati planove i očekivanja učenika koji su vezani uz upis srednje škole te odrediti uolikoj se mjeri oni mogu povezati s njihovom percipiranom akademskom kontrolom i samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri. Nadalje, istraživanjem se željelo odrediti kakav je doprinos školskih postignuća i učeničke percepcije tih postignuća samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri i očekivanjima od srednje škole. Pritom se očekivalo da će učenici s većom razinom samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri biti učinkovitiji u odabiru željenih škola. Također, očekivalo se da će učenički doživljaj vlastitih školskih sposobnosti i postignuća, odnosno percipirana akademska kontrola, doprinijeti stupnju razvijenosti njihove samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri, kao i postavljanju pozitivnijih očekivanja od srednje škole.

## **Metode**

### ***Uzorak***

U istraživanju su sudjelovala 303 učenika osmih razreda iz pet osnovnih škola na širem području grada Splita. Među njima bilo je 163 (53,8 %) učenika i 140 (46,2 %) učenica.

## Postupak

Istraživanje je provedeno u osnovnim školama u kojima su učenici na satu razredne zajednice na početku II. polugodišta osmog razreda zajedno popunjavali upitnike. Sudjelovanje u istraživanju bilo je dobrovoljno i anonimno. Sudionicima je na početku kratko objašnjen postupak i svrha istraživanja, nakon čega su zamoljeni za suradnju i iskrenost u odgovaranju. Popunjavanje upitnika trajalo je u prosjeku 20 minuta. U istraživanju su primijenjeni sljedeći instrumenti: Skala percipirane akademske kontrole (Perry, Hladkyj, Pekrun, i Pelletier, 2001; Sorić i Burić, 2010), skraćena verzija Skale samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri (Betz, Klein, i Taylor, 1996; Taylor i Betz, 1983), subskala Znanje o svijetu rada iz Upitnika odlučivanja o karijeri kod djece (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, Mylonas, Argyropoulou, i Drosos, 2013) i za ovo istraživanje pripremljena Skala očekivanja od srednje škole. Također, uz pomoć Upitnika općih podataka prikupljeni su podaci o spolu učenika, njihovom školskom uspjehu u prethodnoj školskoj godini i pohađanju izvanškolskih aktivnosti. Uz to, prikupljeni su podaci o srednjim školama koje učenici žele upisati nakon osnovne škole.

*Skala percipirane akademske kontrole* (Perry i sur., 2001; Sorić i Burić, 2010) upitnik je kojim se mjeri percipirana akademska kontrola, konstrukt koji odražava učenikova uvjerenja o tome posjeduje li sposobnosti potrebne za upravljanje vlastitom školskom izvedbom. Sastoji se od 8 čestica, a zadatak ispitanika bio je da na skali od pet stupnjeva procijeni stupanj slaganja sa svakom iznesenom tvrdnjom. Zbog nezadovoljavajućeg faktorskog opterećenja iz analize su isključene dvije čestice, a ukupan je rezultat ispitanika izračunat na temelju šest preostalih čestica. Veći rezultat na skali označava veću razinu percipirane akademske kontrole.

*Skala samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri* (Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale; Betz i sur., 1996; Taylor i Betz, 1983; Mindgarden, Inc.) upitnik je koji mjeri uvjerenja pojedinca o vlastitoj sposobnosti uspješnog obavljanja zadataka nužnih za uspješno upravljanje karijerom. Razvijene su dvije verzije upitnika, dulja od 50 tvrdnji i kraća od 25 tvrdnji, koje su prije svega prilagođene srednjoškolcima i studentima. S obzirom na to za potrebe ovog istraživanja odabrano je 10 čestica iz kraće verzije upitnika koje su, na temelju sadržajne analize, procijenjene kao prikladne za primjenu na učenicima osnovnih škola. Prilikom popunjavanja upitnika učenici su procjenjivali koliko su sposobni obaviti nekolicinu profesionalnih zadataka koristeći se skalom od pet stupnjeva. Veći rezultat na tim skalama označava višu razinu samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri.

*Skala Znanje o svijetu rada* predstavlja subskalnu *Upitnika odlučivanja o karijeri kod djece* (Childhood career decision making questionnaire; Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou i sur., 2013) kojim se ispituje proces donošenja odluka o karijerama kod djece. U originalnoj verziji upitnik se sastoji od 27 čestica koje reprezentiraju kognitivne (npr. nedostatak informacija) i afektivne (npr. strah ili nada) dimenzije donošenja odluka

o karijeri, a grupirane su u tri subskale: *Briga o budućoj karijeri*, *Ulaganje u proces odlučivanja* i *Znanje o svijetu rada*. Za potrebe istraživanja koristila se subskala *Znanje o svijetu rada* koja sadrži 5 čestica. Prilikom rješavanja upitnika učenici su na skali od pet stupnjeva procjenjivali koliko se svaka tvrdnja odnosi na njih. Veći rezultat na skali označava veći stupanj upoznatosti učenika sa zanimanjima koja se nude nakon školovanja i svijetom rada općenito.

*Skala očekivanja do srednje škole* pripremljena je za potrebe ovog istraživanja i mjeri učenička očekivanja od srednje škole. Skala se sastoji od ukupno 6 čestica, a zadatak ispitanika bio je da na skali od pet stupnjeva procijene koliko se svaka tvrdnja odnosi na njih. Veći rezultat na ovoj skali označava pozitivnija očekivanja od srednje škole.

U Tablici 1 prikazane su ostale mjerne karakteristike korištenih skala.

Tablica 1

### **Obrada rezultata**

Obrada rezultata provedena je uz pomoć statističkog programa *Statistica 11* (StatSoft, Inc.). Za ispitivanje učeničkog školskog postignuća i planova za srednju školu korištene su metode deskriptivne statistike. t-testovi za nezavisne uzorke korišteni su za usporedbe skupina ispitanika koji su odlučili te onih koji nisu odlučili koju srednju školu upisati, dok su korelacijska i regresijska analiza korištene za ispitivanje odnosa između mjerenih varijabli.

## **Rezultati**

### **Planovi učenika u vezi s upisom u srednje škole**

Kako bi se utvrdilo školsko postignuće učenika, analizirane su njihove prosječne ocjene koje su postigli u sedmom razredu. Dobiveni rezultati pokazali su da je prosječna ocjena učenika bila 4,00 ( $SD = ,70$ ). Pritom su 162 (46,5 %) učenika uz školske obaveze bila uključena i u dodatne izvannastavne aktivnosti, što nije bio slučaj sa 141 (40,5 %) učenicom. Nadalje, kako bi se ispitali učenički planovi vezani uz upis u srednje škole, određeno je koliko učenika u trenutku ispitivanja već zna koju srednju školu želi upisati te o kojoj se školi radi. Dobiveni rezultati pokazali su da 195 (64,4 %) učenika gotovo pola godine prije upisa srednje škole zna, a da njih 108 (35,6 %) ne zna koju školu želi upisati nakon osnovne škole. Također, za učenike koji su već odlučili koju srednju školu žele upisati, određeno je koje su škole odabrali, a određeni su i motivi koje su naveli za svoj odabir. Učenici koji znaju koju srednju školu žele upisati u najvećem broju biraju gimnazije (64; 21,1 %) i tehničke škole (43; 14,2 %) uz koje još navode i turističko-ugostiteljsku školu (24; 7,9 %), zdravstvenu školu (17; 5,6 %), ekonomsku i komercijalnu školu (16; 5,3 %) te različite trogodišnje srednje škole (21; 6,9 %). 109 (36 %) učenika nije znalo odgovoriti na to pitanje, a njih 121 (39,9 %) nije dalo odgovor na pitanje o glavnoj motivaciji za odabir srednje škole. Za razliku od njih 93 (30,7 %) učenika kao glavnu motivaciju svog odabira navela su interes za sadržaje koje očekuju u željenim školama. Znatno manji broj učenika kao

glavni motiv naveo je interes za buduće poslove (18; 5,9 %) ili fakultete (17; 5,6 %) za koje ih škola treba kvalificirati te svoju procjenu da je određena škola primjerena njihovim sposobnostima i ostalim osobinama (16; 5,3 %).

### ***Razlike u karakteristikama učenika koji znaju i koji ne znaju u koju se srednju školu žele upisati***

Kao prvi korak u detaljnijem ispitivanju uloge individualnih karakteristika učenika u procesu donošenja odluka o karijeri utvrđene su razlike u percipiranoj akademskoj kontroli, samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri i očekivanjima od srednje škole između učenika koji su odlučili i onima koji još nisu odlučili koju srednju školu žele upisati. Dobiveni rezultati pokazali su da učenici koji već znaju koju školu žele upisati imaju višu razinu samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri ( $t(301) = 4,35, p < ,001, d = ,52$ ), više znanja o svijetu rada ( $t(301) = 2,00, p = ,047, d = ,24$ ) i pozitivnija očekivanja od srednje škole ( $t(299) = 2,77, p = ,01, d = ,33$ ).

### ***Odnos učeničkog školskog postignuća, percipirane akademske kontrole i samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri i očekivanja od srednje škole***

Kako bi se ispitala povezanost učeničkog školskog postignuća, percipirane akademske kontrole, samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri i očekivanja od srednje škole provedena je korelacijska analiza uz pomoć Pearsonovog koeficijenta korelacije. Dobiveni rezultati pokazali su pozitivnu povezanost percipirane akademske kontrole s općim uspjehom učenika te njihovom samoučinkovosti u odlučivanju o karijeri, koja je također povezana sa znanjem o svijetu rada te očekivanjima učenika od srednje škole. Ostali rezultati prikazani su u Tablici 2.

#### Tablica 2

Kako bi se ispitao doprinos spola, školskog postignuća, pohađanja izvanškolskih aktivnosti, percipirane akademske kontrole i znanja o zanimanjima u objašnjenju učeničke samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri i njihovih očekivanja od srednje škole, provedene su dvije regresijske analize. U njima su kao kriteriji bili uključeni samoučinkovitost u odlučivanju o karijeri i očekivanja od srednje škole, a kao prediktori spol, školsko postignuće i izvanškolske aktivnosti, percipirana akademska kontrola i znanja o zanimanjima. Uz to, u regresijsku analizu u kojoj su kriterij bila očekivanja od srednje škole, kao dodatni prediktor uključena je i samoučinkovitost u odlučivanju o karijeri učenika. Dobiveni rezultati pokazuju da percipirana akademska kontrola i znanja o svijetu rada predstavljaju značajne prediktore samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri koja, uz percipiranu akademsku kontrolu, predstavlja značajan prediktor pozitivnijih očekivanja od srednje škole (Tablica 3).

#### Tablica 3

## Rasprava

Provedenim istraživanjem ispitani su planovi i očekivanja učenika koji se odnose na odabir željenih srednjih škola, te je detaljnije istražena važnost samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri za proces odlučivanja o srednjoj školi, kao i postavljanje očekivanja vezanih uz nju. Dobiveni rezultati pokazali su da, pola godine prije završetka osnovne škole, nešto više od polovine učenika već zna koju srednju školu želi upisati, pri čemu se u odabiru te škole najviše rukovode interesom za akademske sadržaje koje u njoj očekuju. Pritom učenici koji znaju koju školu žele upisati imaju višu samoučinkovitost u odlučivanju o karijeri, više znanja o svijetu rada i pozitivnija očekivanja od srednje škole od ostalih učenika. Nadalje, njihova je percipirana akademska kontrola, ali ne i realno školsko postignuće, povezana s procjenom osobne samoučinkovitosti u području donošenja odluka o karijeri. Ne čudi stoga što su percipirana akademska kontrola, kao i učenička znanja o svijetu rada, izdvojeni kao značajni prediktori učeničke samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri. Također, percipirana akademska kontrola, zajedno sa samoučinkovitošću u odlučivanju o karijeri, izdvojena je kao značajni prediktor učeničkih očekivanja od srednje škole.

Na samom početku provedenim istraživanjem željelo se odrediti znaju li učenici, pola godine prije završetka osnovne škole, u koje se srednje škole žele upisati. Dobiveni rezultati pokazali su da više od polovine učenika zna koju školu želi upisati, pri čemu se ti učenici razlikuju od ostalih s obzirom na stupanj samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri, količinu znanja o zanimanjima i svijetu rada, kao i na očekivanja koja imaju od srednje škole. Naime, učenici koji su odlučili koju srednju školu upisati imaju veću razinu samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri te su bolje upoznati s mogućnostima koje im se nude nakon osnovne škole. Kao što će poslije biti detaljnije opisano, taj je rezultat bio očekivan s obzirom na to da samoučinkovitost u odlučivanju o karijeri značajno utječe na donošenje svih odluka o karijeri, pa tako i odluka o daljnjem školovanju (Betz, 2007; Betz i Hackett, 2006; Nasta, 2007). Nadalje, od učenika se u provedenom istraživanju tražilo da navedu koje srednje škole namjeravaju odabrati, kao i glavne motive svog odabira. Dobiveni rezultati pokazali su da učenici koji znaju koju srednju školu žele upisati najčešće biraju gimnazije, odnosno srednje škole koje nude opće obrazovanje s najmanjom razinom specijalizacije. Za razliku od njih vrlo malen broj učenika odlučuje se na upis srednjih škola koje nude programe za kojima postoje nezadovoljene potrebe na tržištu rada, kao što su kuhar, konobar ili zidar (MRMS, 2014). Dakle, unatoč činjenici da se često ističe potreba za usklađivanjem kvota u srednjim školama i stvarnim potrebama na tržištu rada (MRMS, 2014), te potrebe i naponi nisu prepoznati, odnosno učenici i dalje ne pokazuju značajniji interes prema tim zanimanjima. Stoga je važno učenicima učinkovitije ponuditi sve relevantne informacije te im pomoći u usklađivanju njihovih želja sa situacijom na tržištu rada. Slično kao i prijašnji pokazatelji o velikom broju neodlučenih učenika, i ovaj rezultat upućuje na zaključak da bi mnogi učenici mogli profiterati od usluga profesionalnog usmjeravanja koje su im dostupne izvan osnovnih škola (HZZ, 2013), a čija se važnost



danas često ističe (OECD; Hartung, Porfeli, i Vondracek, 2005; Wonacott, 2002). Uz to, učenicima danas na raspolaganju stoji i razvijena informacijsko-komunikacijska tehnologija koja omogućuje jednostavan pristup brojnim informacijama i programima profesionalnog usmjeravanja (Savickas, 2003; Stevens i Lundberg, 1998; Tang, 2003). Iako im svi ti izvori omogućavaju bolju informiranost o različitim zanimanjima, važno je i unutar samih škola pružiti usluge profesionalnog usmjeravanja jer bez takvog savjetovanja učenici, zbog nedostatka informacija ili lošeg odlučivanja, često imaju nerealnu sliku o dostupnim profesionalnim mogućnostima (Ediger, 2000).

Prilikom navođenja glavnih razloga za odabir željenih srednjih škola može se primijetiti kako je većina učenika imala poteškoća s određivanjem svoje motivacije, što možemo dovesti u vezu s nedovoljnim promišljanjem o vlastitoj budućnosti. Međutim, ohrabruje to što je većina učenika koja je odgovorila na to pitanje primarno zainteresirana za temu, odnosno sadržaje koje očekuju u željenim srednjim školama. Stoga je moguće pretpostaviti da je barem dio učenika prikupio informacije relevantne za željeno zanimanje te na temelju njih donio odluku o srednjoj školi. Takvi su rezultati bili očekivani i možemo ih povezati s rezultatima prethodnih istraživanja koji su pokazali važnost osobnih interesa za odlučivanje o karijeri u djetinjstvu i adolescenciji (Ginzberg, 1972; Trice, Hughes, Odom, Woods, i McClellan, 1995). Također, navedeni rezultati mogu navesti na zaključak kako su mladi itekako svjesni da bez završene srednje škole ne mogu zadovoljiti svoje potrebe (Brlas, 2007; Gottfredson, 1981). Međutim, donekle iznenađuje relativno mala čestotnost spominjanja praktičnih i drugih razloga (npr. financijski razlozi, pritisak roditelja i sl.) kao glavnih motiva odabira srednje škole, što se moglo očekivati s obzirom na rezultate prethodnih istraživanja (Borchert, 2002; Goodson, 1981; Julien, 1999). Rezultati se vjerojatno mogu povezati s činjenicom da mnogo učenika nije dalo odgovor na pitanje o svojoj motivaciji, a može se spekulirati da će upravo oni neodlučni i impulzivni poslije biti skloniji voditi se ekstrinzičnim motivima prilikom odabira srednje škole.

Osim učeničkih planova vezanih uz odabir srednjih škola u provedenom je istraživanju ispitana i povezanost nekih njihovih osobina koje su relevantne za školu i odabir karijere. Na samom početku dobiveni rezultati očekivano su pokazali vezu između percipirane akademske kontrole i školskog postignuća. Naime, i rezultati drugih istraživanja pokazali su povezanost percipirane akademske kontrole i općeg uspjeha učenika i studenata te ukazali na to da učenici s većim stupnjem kontrole ulažu više truda u školske zadatke, više su motivirani za učenje te više vjeruju u svoju uspješnost u školi, što pridonosi boljem školskom uspjehu (Perry i sur., 2001; Richardson, Abraham, i Bond, 2012). Nadalje, rezultati provedenog istraživanja također pokazuju statistički značajnu povezanost percipirane akademske kontrole i samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri, odnosno upućuju na to da učenici s većom razinom uvjerenja o vlastitim akademskim sposobnostima imaju i pozitivnija uvjerenja o svojim sposobnostima u području upravljanja karijerom. Kao što je prije opisano samoučinkovitost u odlučivanju o karijeri pritom predstavlja skup vjerovanja

pojedinaca koja se odnose na njihova ponašanja vezana uz profesionalni život i karijeru, odnosno uvjerenja o tome koliko su sposobni donijeti neke odluke ili uspješno provesti ponašanja koja će dovesti do željenih profesionalnih ishoda (Betz i Hackett, 2006; Lent i sur., 1994). Ona tako odražavaju način na koji pojedinci vrednuju svoje sposobnosti točne samoprocjene, prikupljanja informacija važnih za profesionalni razvoj, odabira budućih ciljeva, planiranja za budućnost i rješavanja problema (Taylor i Betz, 1983). Dakle, što su učenikova uvjerenja o tome posjeduje li određene osobine koje su potrebne za uspjeh u školi pozitivnija, i njegova procjena vlastite učinkovitosti u donošenju odluka o karijeri bit će veća. To je u skladu s dosadašnjim istraživanjima koja upućuju na povezanost akademske i profesionalne domene (Lent i sur., 1994, 1986), kao i rezultate koji su pokazali povezanost percepcije kompetencija vezanih uz karijeru s općenitijim oblicima samoevaluacije (Betz i Klein, 1996).

Nadalje, s obzirom na njihovu bolju obaviještenost, kao i općenito veću svijest o važnosti buduće karijere, ne čudi da učenici s višom razinom samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri, kao i percipirane akademske kontrole, imaju pozitivnija očekivanja od srednje škole. Naime, rezultati provedenog istraživanja pokazali su kako učenici koji smatraju da imaju sposobnosti i vještine potrebne za uspješno učenje i odlučivanje o karijeri u većoj mjeri vjeruju da će se moći prilagoditi zahtjevima novih, budućih sredina. To je u skladu s prethodnim rezultatima koji pokazuju važnost samoučinkovitosti u odlučivanju o karijeri za profesionalne prosudbe i ponašanja koja, dakako, uključuju i postavljanje očekivanja vezanih uz buduće školovanje (Betz, 2007; Nasta, 2007). Naime, samoučinkovitost u odlučivanju o karijeri može se usporediti i povezati s ostalim vrstama uvjerenja o vlastitim sposobnostima na kojima se temelje očekivanja ishoda naših ponašanja (Betz i Klein, 1996). Na taj način različiti oblici samoučinkovitosti predstavljaju važne medijatore naših ponašanja te utječu na odabir ili izbjegavanje određenih situacija (Bandura, 1989, 1993; Bandura, Adams, i Beyer, 1977). U skladu s tim, očekivanja koja učenici postavljaju od srednjih škola jako su važna, jer će ona poslije utjecati na njihova ponašanja, a u određenim slučajevima mogu postati i proročanstva koja sama sebe ostvaruju (Dieckmann, Slovic, i Peters, 2009). Stoga je važno prilikom odabira buduće karijere učenicima pomoći da dobro upoznaju sebe i točno procijene relevantne okolne činitelje kako bi primjerene škole i postaviti realistična očekivanja vezana uz njih. Kao što je i prije navedeno, za postizanje tih ciljeva važno je da učenici razviju vještine donošenja odluka te se pravodobno informiraju o mogućnostima budućeg školovanja (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou i sur., 2013). Iako učenici te ciljeve i sami najčešće mogu postići, važno je i korisno pomoći im u tom procesu pružanjem potrebnih informacija i smjernica putem profesionalnog usmjeravanja (Hartung i sur., 2005; Wonacott, 2002).

Ukupno, rezultati provedenog istraživanja pokazali su da među osnovnoškolcima postoje izražene individualne razlike u pristupu i učinkovitosti u odabiru srednje škole. Prilikom njihove interpretacije treba imati u vidu da je provedeno istraživanje korelacijskog tipa, što znači da ne možemo zaključivati o uzročno-posljedičnim

vezama između ispitivanih akademskih i varijabli vezanih uz karijeru. Također, treba voditi računa i o odabiru uzroka, odnosno činjenici da je istraživanje provedeno među djecom iz pet osnovnih škola te u budućim istraživanjima treba provjeriti mogućnost generalizacije rezultata na druge skupine učenika. Unatoč navedenim ograničenjima dobiveni rezultati su ipak vrijedni te nude važne implikacije za obrazovni sustav. Naime, brojni dionici obrazovnog sustava trebaju prepoznati važnost profesionalnog razvoja učenika unutar tog sustava te biti svjesni izazova koje taj proces nudi. Pritom je izrazito važno učenike podržati u svim fazama tog procesa, a osobito tijekom prijelaza iz osnovne u srednju školu, što je ključno za njihov profesionalni identitet i ovisno o uspješnosti postizanja razvojnih zadataka vezanih uz karijeru tijekom osnovne škole (Hartung i sur., 2005; Havighurst, 1972; Lacković-Grgin, 2006; Schultheiss i Stead, 2004).

## **Zaključci**

Provedenim istraživanjem ispitani su planovi i očekivanja učenika osnovnih škola koji se odnose na upis srednje škole te je detaljnije istražena povezanost njihova akademskog i profesionalnog samopoimanja. Dobiveni rezultati pokazali su da, iako većina učenika pola godine prije završetka osnovnoškolskog obrazovanja zna koju srednju školu želi upisati, velik broj učenika tu odluku ipak nije donio i pritom nisu bili sigurni u svoju temeljnu motivaciju. Učenički doživljaj vlastite učinkovitosti u donošenju odluka o budućem profesionalnom životu povezan je s njihovom akademskom slikom o sebi, kao i očekivanjima koja imaju od srednje škole. Rezultati upućuju na važnost razvoja učeničkih akademskih i profesionalnih kompetencija i na osnaživanje njihova vrednovanja vlastitih sposobnosti, kako bi pozitivnija očekivanja i aktivniji pristup srednjoj školi dugoročno rezultirali njihovom boljom prilagodbom novom okolišu, boljim uspjehom i većim zadovoljstvom novom školom.