

Predictors of Self-Concept in Elementary School Pupils

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Abstract

Research consistently shows the connection between self-concept in children and young people and their social relations, which is also reflected in pupils' attitudes towards education. This paper analyses how family relations, peer relations and attitudes towards education contribute to the global self-concept of male and female pupils of 8 to 14 years of age. The research was conducted by using an extended version of the Questionnaire for Planning Social-pedagogic Interventions. The research sample consisted of 3,335 pupils from 43 Croatian elementary schools. This study examines the hypothesis on differences in self-concept predictors between male and female elementary school pupils, suggesting that in comparison with male pupils, the self-concept of female pupils is more dependent on social relations and the level of engagement in education. It was established that self-concept is relatively stable for boys of 8-14 years of age while it becomes weaker among girls of 8 -14 years of age. Statistically, for both male and female pupils, self-concept significantly depends on the assessment of the quality of family relations, peer relations, and the attitude of pupils towards education. The most important self-concept predictor among male pupils is their relationship with their peers, and among female pupils it is family relations. In addition, relationships with significant others and attitudes towards education contribute more strongly to the self-concept of female pupils than it does with their male peers.

Keywords: *attitude towards education; family relations; peer relations; significant others in school age*

Introduction

“Literature on research concerning self-concept and self-esteem over the past decades abounds in studies that examine strategies and mechanisms that protect, increase or decrease self-esteem. One should say that self-esteem can be viewed as an evaluative

aspect of the self, while self-concept is a cognitive scheme that organises a large amount of information about the self. Self-esteem can be viewed as the central or key aspect of self-concept with the role of confronting the self with external information” (Tucak et al., 2007, p. 516). Self-concept encompasses the totality of one’s experience about oneself and one’s identity, the way one perceives oneself, and how one sees oneself. It is formed through personal experiences with and interpretations of one’s environment, and it is strongly affected by significant persons in that environment (Shavelson et al., 1976, according to Marsh and Martin, 2011). In other words, self-esteem is the central aspect of self-concept.

Researchers identify various domains of self-esteem (academic, social, emotional, physical), but they also accept the concept of self-esteem as a general sense of one’s worth. “Self-esteem is our personal assessment of the self” (Vizek Vidović et al., 2014, p. 90) or “the result of the formed awareness of the self” (Jelić, 2012, p. 444). If it is high, the person appreciates and accepts himself or herself in the way he or she is (Ryan & Shim, 2012), which contributes to the clarity of the individual’s understanding of the self as an important factor in psychological well-being (Usborne & Taylor, 2010). High self-esteem is the foundation of mental health, while low self-esteem can play a key role in the development of a number of disorders, such as depression, anorexia, bulimia, anxiety, aggression, and the abuse of intoxicants (Mirjanić & Milas, 2011). Interactions between individuals and the environment, and with “significant others” in particular, constitute a source of self-concept and self-esteem. Thus, an individual’s self-concept is the reflection of how he or she is perceived and evaluated by persons from the closest environment (Lachowicz-Tabaczek & Śniecińska, 2011). The term “significant other” was coined by sociologist George Herbert Mead (1863-1931, according to Berk, 2008) who claimed that a child’s concept of the self is dependent on the attitude of others towards himself or herself.

Assessment of oneself becomes more comprehensive and differentiated during childhood and adolescence (Sebastian et al., 2008), and in each subsequent phase of development self-concept is qualitatively different from what it was at a lower stage of development (Delač Horvatinčić & Kozarić Ciković, 2010). Growing up, children build ever more complex constructs of self-concept and apply them in different social contexts. In late childhood, when children become more capable of consistent self-assessment, their sensitivity to differences in self-concept and to the information they receive from significant adult others intensifies, while adolescents are able to integrate several possible interpretations of the self simultaneously (Di Blas & Cepollaro, 2017).

Given that self-concept is one of the “focal concepts in psychological research” (Matić & Marušić, 2016, p. 284), there is plenty of evidence about its key role in the subjective well-being and success of a person in various fields of life. In a meta-analysis of 246 research papers, Sen Chu et al. (2010) conclude that social support is strongly correlated with self-concept in children and adolescents. This is in line with sociometric theory (Leary & Baumeister, 2000), which sees the function of self-esteem in the observation of one’s social status and selection of behaviours that promote acceptance by others.

Parents and their behaviour are key factors in the development of self-esteem in their children (Ručević & Duvnjak, 2010). Merkaš (2014) showed that adolescents' self-esteem decreases depending on the number of disruptive family events that have a cumulatively negative effect on the sense of one's own worth in adolescents. On the other hand, a sound emotional relationship between parents and children affects the child's motivation (Mata et al., 2018), just as the child's convictions about his or her social and academic abilities affect academic achievements and social integration, that is, "connections that the child makes with other pupils in class" (Bubic & Goreta, 2015, p. 475). Matic and Marušić (2016) confirmed that, compared with pupils with poorer results, pupils with more success have better self-esteem, and it is known that better educational achievements also contribute to the quality of the relationship between pupils and teachers (Roorda et al., 2011; Powers et al., 2015).

It has been confirmed generally that good relationships with parents, other family members, relatives, friends and teachers, that is, "significant others", contribute significantly to the well-being of children and adolescents, while disruptions and disturbances in such relationships can be the cause of numerous problems in growing up (Domagała-Zyśk, 2006; Pianta et al., 2012; Maurović, 2015; Marsa-Sambola et al., 2017). Berndt and Murphy (2002) emphasise the connection between the quality of family relations and the quality of peer, friendly relations, as they state that the foundation for good social relations is laid down in the family and that it later extends to other social relations. In early adolescence, the importance of belonging to peer groups grows because this has an effect on socialisation processes and self-concept in adolescents by enabling them to explore their individual interests, at the same time providing a sense of belonging (Nekić et al., 2016). Many studies confirm that children with higher self-esteem also hold a higher status in their peer group, and vice versa. More popular children feel that they are recognised, valued and are unique, which boosts their self-esteem (Velki et al., 2015). On the other hand, Split et al. (2014) found in their research that peer rejection contributes to lower self-esteem, resulting in the development of internalised behavioural problems. Further, individual teacher support can mitigate internalised behavioural problems, thus contributing to the child's higher self-esteem. Other studies confirm the contribution of high-quality teacher-pupil relations to the pupil's self-concept. When teachers are emotionally accessible and supportive, pupils internalise these aspects of the relationship and develop positive self-esteem, while discouraging, dismissive, punitive or inattentive teacher behaviours are more likely to result in pupils who perceive themselves as incapable and unworthy of love and attention (McFarland et al., 2016). It is believed that children who experience adequate teacher support, even when it is only perceived, show a better connection with the school, they are more prone to academic achievement, and they build better-quality relations with peers (Hughes, 2011, according to Bilić, 2013; Newland et al., 2019; Šimić Šašić, 2017).

Every relationship that the child has with "significant others" contributes to his or her self-concept and self-esteem in a unique way, although such relationships are mutually

highly correlated. Verschueren et al. (2012) showed in their study that relationships with teachers yield the highest contribution to the academic aspect of self-concept in children, relationships with peers to the social aspect, and that relationships with parents (mothers and fathers) are highly correlated with general self-esteem. Gorrese and Ruggieri (2012) also confirmed the correlation between attachment to one's parents and attachment to one's peers. Brajša-Žganec et al. (2000) have shown that perceived social support by one's peers contributes to a more positive self-concept within the dimensions tested (general self-esteem, achievements in school and sports, social acceptance, physical appearance and behaviour). Parental support has been shown to be a significant predictor of greater general self-esteem, while the support of teachers significantly contributes to a better image of one's own behaviour. Studies also show that the support of adults (parents and teachers) is more important for the development of self-concept in girls than in boys. Therefore, beliefs, which are a reflection of the child's true abilities and the internalisation of feedback received from significant others, become the determinants of the way in which the child organises information about himself or herself, complemented with the choice of behaviours in various social settings (family, school, peer), motivation to participate in various activities, and, finally, the child's satisfaction with himself or herself, his or her relationships, and his or her own achievements.

The studies mentioned, as well as many others, indicate that there is an indisputable link between self-concept in children and adolescents and their social relationships, which is also reflected in their academic achievements. However, relatively little is known about the mutual connection between self-concept and social relationships in the transitional period from childhood to adolescence. Vizek Vidović et al. (2014) define childhood as the period until 6 years of age, middle childhood is the period from 6 to 12 years of age, and adolescence is the period from 13 to 22 years of age. However, there are extensive cultural and individual differences in maturation (Tamm et al., 2018), so that all children do not enter puberty, which is regarded as the beginning of adolescence, at the same time. For example, Berk (2008) states that adolescence, as a transition into adulthood, begins at 11 years of age and that girls enter puberty two years before boys. The significance of the influence that one's relationships with others has on self-concept and self-esteem changes in different phases of development. In early childhood, the most important relationships are with family members and relatives. The influence of relationships with peers grows with time, while in middle childhood the role of relationships with teachers becomes more prominent (Vizek Vidović et al., 2014). The period of adolescence brings a whole set of changes. It has been shown that the period of early adolescence can be characterised by a fall in academic engagement and educational achievements (Eccles, 2004, according to Ryan & Shim, 2012) and it is generally known that the significance of peer relations for the pupil's self-concept grows in this period (Split et al., 2014). Further, self-esteem in early adolescence tends

to decrease, which is correlated in literature with changes in conditions related to education, participation in new social relationships, changes in relations with family members, more complex social roles, and other circumstances (Masselink et al., 2017). Existing research suggests that the transition from childhood to adolescence leads to destabilisation in most areas relevant for self-concept, which contributes to the poorer self-esteem of adolescents compared with children (Cole et al., 2001).

However, authors do not agree on gender differences in self-concept, especially in late childhood and early adolescence. There are studies that indicate male subjects have more self-confidence (e.g., Brajša-Žganec et al., 2000; Kurtović & Marčinko, 2011; Velki et al., 2015; Kalebić Jakupčević & Reić Ercigovac, 2016), while others emphasise that there are no differences in self-concept between the two genders (Marsh & Ayotte, 2003; Marčić & Kobal Grum, 2011).

This paper analyses the significance of various predictors of self-concept amongst pupils from 8 to 14 years of age based on their gender in order to verify the stability of self-concept amongst male and female pupils and its predictors. This study examines the hypothesis that there are differences in the predictors of self-concept amongst male and female elementary school pupils and that the self-concept of female pupils in relation to male pupils depends more heavily on social relations and their engagement in education.

Methods

Participants

The study is based on data collected in 43 Croatian elementary schools in 13 counties, whose headteachers accepted the invitation of the Education and Teacher Training Agency to participate in the research. The invitation was sent to all schools that have social pedagogues, since the primary purpose of collecting data was to verify the model of socio-pedagogic interventions in work with elementary school pupils who have behavioural problems. Therefore, this was deliberative sampling encompassing 5% of all elementary schools in the Republic of Croatia. The research included third, fifth and seventh grade elementary school pupils after their parents had provided informed written consent to have their children included in the data collection procedure. Parents were informed about the purpose, content, and the method of research at teacher-parent meetings, while schools received information about the study at professional meetings organised by the Education and Teacher Training Agency.

The data collection procedure included 3,457 pupils; for the purposes of this study, pupils who live with both parents were excluded ($n = 3,335$). Of 3,335 pupils, 50.7% were male and 49.3% were female. Their distribution by age is shown in Figure 1. It follows from the data that in the sample most pupils were 9, 11 and 13 years of age, which is in line with the fact that they mostly attend the third, fifth and seventh grade of elementary school.

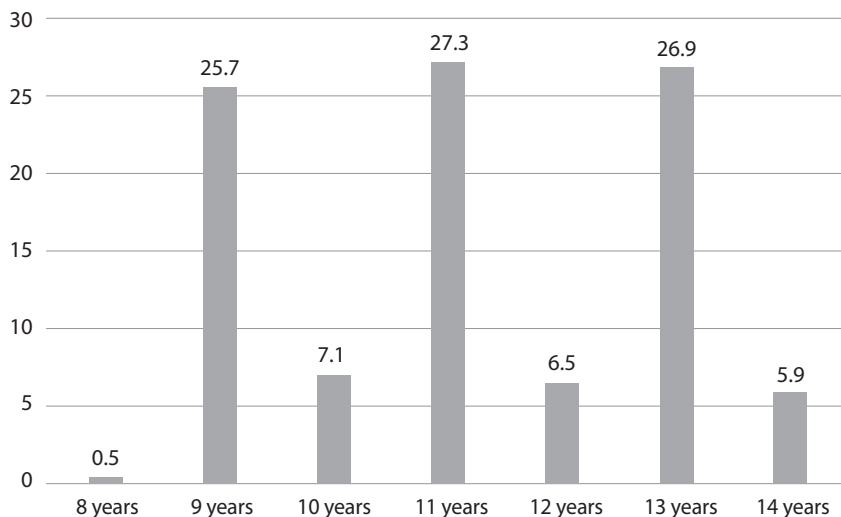


Figure 1. Structure of the research sample by age of pupils (%)

Instrument

In the study, the authors used an expanded version of the *Questionnaire for Planning Social-pedagogic Interventions*, which was developed in the project *Development of a Model of Social-Pedagogic Interventions in Elementary Schools* supported by the Education and Teacher Training Agency (Bouillet, 2016; Bouillet, et al., 2018). The questionnaire consists of a number of statements about various life areas and pupils had to rate the extent of their agreement with the statements (1 = not true at all; 2 = mostly not true; 3 = I cannot decide; 4 = mostly true, and 5 = completely true). For the purposes of this study, the authors used statements that describe the engagement of the pupil in education, peer relations, family relations, relations of pupils with teachers, and pupils' self-concept. The study included 25 statements from the questionnaire in total. One of the statements relates to the general experience of the self (*I am sure of myself and my actions*), and in this study it was treated as an indicator of self-concept (criterion variable). Other statements were grouped into factors based on the principal component method with Varimax rotation and they have the status of predictor variables. Their suitability for factorisation was verified using the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin coefficient, which is 0.821, and the Bartlett's test for sphericity ($\chi^2=17992,547$; $df=253$; $p < .001$). The factor analysis extracted 6 factors that together account for 53.95% of the common variance ($\alpha = 0.849$). The second step, based on the scree plot analysis, included a factor analysis with a predetermined number of factors (three). The results of this factor analysis are shown in Table 1. The extracted factors include family relations, peer relations, and the attitude of pupils towards education (Table 1).

Table 1

Matrix of the factor structure of the measurement instrument after Varimax rotation, percentage of explained variance and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient

	F1	F2	F3
Family relations scale			
My mother understands and accepts me even when I do something unacceptable.	.90	.06	.05
My father understands and accepts me even when I do something unacceptable.	.88	.08	.07
I can talk to my father openly about anything.	.79	.14	.08
Whenever I can't solve a problem on my own, I ask my father for help.	.73	.07	.10
I can talk to my mother openly about anything.	.68	.10	.09
I have no secrets from my mother.	.67	.11	.23
I have no secrets from my father.	.64	.11	.20
Whenever I can't solve a problem on my own, I ask my mother for help.	.65	.05	.15
Peer relations scale			
I think that most pupils have a good opinion of me.	.20	.72	.06
Other pupils are considerate towards me.	.14	.67	.21
Friends listen to me when I have a problem.	.05	.64	.23
I trust my friends.	.01	.61	.22
Other pupils like to spend time with me.	.13	.57	-.11
During breaks, I spend time with many pupils.	.07	.56	-.10
I spend time with my friends from class even after school.	.05	.52	-.11
It is important to me that my peers have a good opinion of me.	.03	.37	.07
Attitude towards the education scale			
I study and do homework regularly at home.	.13	.21	.76
I can easily ask our class teacher questions during class.	.11	.16	.74
I think my success in school is a good reflection of my effort and work.	.19	.10	.74
I can express my opinion even when it is different from the class teacher's.	.09	-.04	.72
I organise my study-time successfully.	.14	.24	.66
I often raise my hand to answer the teachers' questions in class.	.07	-.06	.56
I can talk to our class teacher whenever I feel it is necessary.	.21	.10	.52
% explained variation	24.42	13.23	16.30
Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α)	.77	.71	.71

The data collection process was conducted in the school year 2015/2016 and was carried out by social pedagogues employed as expert associates in the schools included in the study. They received further training at two professional meetings organised by the Education and Teacher Training Agency. Each pupil was duly informed about the purpose of the data collection and they were guided through the process of completing the questionnaire which lasted 45 minutes.

The data collected were subject to descriptive and hierarchical regression analyses.

Results

Table 2 shows the descriptive data for the criterion variable (self-concept) and the predictor variables (factors formed for family relations, peer relations, and pupils' attitudes towards education). It follows that the distribution is positively skewed and with a longer tail, but within the acceptable values because they are within the interval +/-3, and the absolute value for the normality of distribution in studies conducted on large samples is 2 for skewness and 7 for kurtosis (Kim, 2013). The criterion variable and the predictors are statistically significantly and positively correlated, which means that higher values for one variable indicate higher values for the other variables.

In general, pupils assess more highly peer relations, followed by family relations, and then self-concept.

Table 2

Descriptive statistical indicators and Pearson's correlation coefficients of criteria and predictor variables

	Self-concept	Family relations	Peer relations	Attitude towards education
<i>M</i>	3.97	3.99	4.14	3.94
<i>SD</i>	1.038	.721	.608	.674
Skewness	-.94	-.83	-1.12	-.68
Kurtosis	.36	-.53	1.73	.320
Correlations: Self-concept	1	.25**	.30 **	.35**
Correlations: Family relations		1	.32**	.49**
Correlations: Peer relations			1	.42**
Correlations: Attitude towards education				1

M = arithmetic mean; *SD* = standard deviation; ** $p < .01$

The data shown in Figure 2 suggest that girls under 10 years of age have the highest level of self-concept and that their self-concept decreases significantly as they mature (F ratio = 6.220; $p = 0.002$). It was also found that self-concept in male pupils fluctuates only slightly and that it is somewhat greater at 11 and 12 years of age. The differences, however, are not statistically significant (F ratio = 0.522; $p = 0.593$).

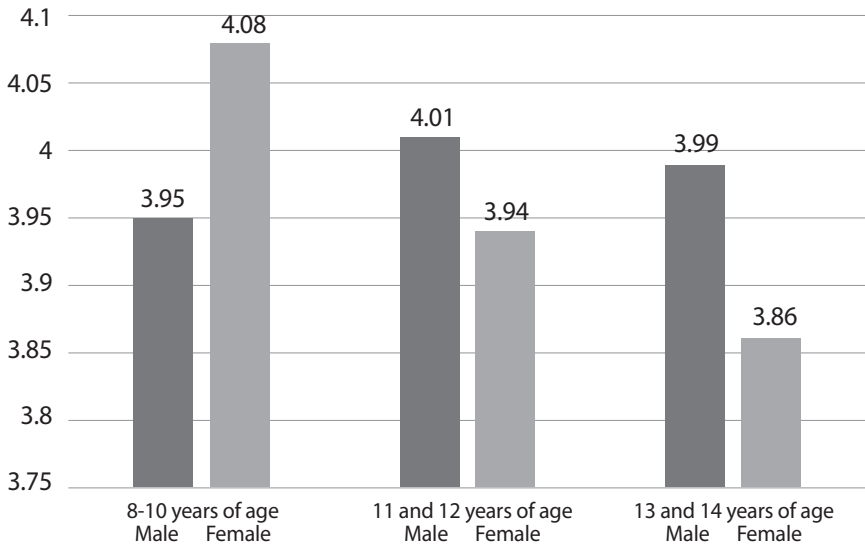


Figure 2. Differences in pupils' self-concept depending on their gender and age (mean values)

The text below shows the results of a hierarchical regression analysis of the predictive values of age, family relations, peer relations, and the attitude of pupils towards education for male pupils (Table 3).

Table 3

Results of the hierarchical regression analysis for male pupils ($n = 1693$)

	Age	Family relations	Peer relations	Attitude towards education
β (1 st step)	.00			
β (2 nd step)	.04	.21**		
β (3 rd step)	.03	.13**	.26**	
β (4 th step)	.07**	.05	.19**	.24**
R^2	.00	.04	.10	.14
Change R^2	.00	.04	.06	.04
F	.01	35.75**	59.78**	65.13**
Change F	.01	71.49**	103.21**	72.10**
Partial correlations (1 st model)		.21**	.29**	.33**
Partial correlations (2 nd model)			.25**	.27**
Partial correlations (3 rd model)				.69**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; β = standardised regression coefficients

The data shown in Table 3 suggest that in the sample of elementary school pupils age is not a statistically significant predictor of self-concept in elementary school pupils, but that it has a certain influence when the model includes the pupil's attitude towards education. All other aspects analysed contribute significantly to the explanation

of self-concept in pupils, but the predictive value of family relations weakens when the model includes peer relations and the attitude of pupils towards education. The predictors analysed account for 14.2% of the variance of the pupil's self-concept, where peer relations contribute most. However, it follows from the statistical significance of correlations that the assessments of the quality of family and peer relations and the attitude of pupils towards education are significantly positively correlated, which means that they are mutually intertwined and complementary.

The analysis of the predictive values of age, family relations, peer relations, and the attitude towards education of female elementary school pupils showed that almost all such aspects contribute in a statistically significant manner to the explanation of self-concept in female pupils. Together they account for 18.2% of the variance of self-concept in female pupils, and family relations make the most pronounced contribution. The statistical significance of the contribution of age to the explanation of self-concept in female pupils disappears in the second step, which shows the greater predictive value of family relations, peer relations, and the attitude of female pupils towards education compared with age. The predictors that were analysed are statistically significantly correlated, which indicates their mutual interdependence and intertwining.

Table 4

Results of the hierarchical regression analysis for female pupils ($n = 1642$)

	Age	Family relations	Peer relations	Attitude towards education
β (1 st step)	-.09**			
β (2 nd step)	-.03	.30 **		
β (3 rd step)	-.04	.22**	.23**	
β (4 th step)	-.02	.12**	.16**	.25**
R^2	.01	.09	.14	.18
Change R^2	.01	.08	.05	.04
F	13.79**	79.84**	85.61**	86.58**
Change F	13.79**	144.62**	88.24**	77.01**
Partial correlations (1 st model)		.29**	.31**	.37**
Partial correlations (2 nd model)			.23**	.28**
Partial correlations (3 rd model)				.22**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; β = standardised regression coefficients

The results of the regression analyses of the predictor of self-concept in female and male elementary school pupils show that in both groups it is statistically significantly dependent on the assessments of the quality of family relations, peer relations, and the attitude of pupils towards education. However, the most significant predictor of self-confidence in male pupils is their relationship with peers, while in female pupils it is family relations. Further, the values of the F-ratio show that relations with others and education contribute more to self-concept in female pupils than is the case with their male peers.

Discussion

The aim of the study was to verify the stability of self-concept in female and male elementary school pupils and their predictors (age, family relations, peer relations, attitude towards education). First of all, it was confirmed that from 8 to 10 years of age female pupils have much higher self-concept than boys, but at the age of 13 and 14 male pupils show greater self-concept, which is consistent with the results of studies that show the existence of gender differences in self-concept in girls and boys (Brajša-Žganec et al., 2000; Kurtović & Marčinko, 2011; Velki et al., 2015; Kalebić et al., 2016). It was also confirmed that there are differences in the predictors of self-concept in male and female elementary school pupils. Self-concept in female pupils compared with male pupils is dependent to a greater extent on social relations and their engagement in education. For example, Brajša-Žganec et al. (2000) showed that girls receive more support from their parents and friends than boys and that the support of parents and teachers is more important for the development of self-concept in girls. It is generally believed that girls are more inclined to develop close relations with others, and the support of “significant others” is more important to them than is the case for boys (Darling et al., 2006, McFarland et al., 2016).

The connection and the quality of relations with “significant others” (Wilkinson, 2004; Split et al., 2014) and different development trajectories (DiBlas & Cepollaro, 2017; Newland et al., 2019) contribute significantly to self-concept in children and adolescents, regardless of their gender, which was confirmed in this study.

However, based on the results of this study, the contribution of family relations to self-concept differs in the subsample of male pupils compared with female pupils. It has been shown that the contribution of quality in family relations in the subsample of male pupils weakens when the analysis includes peer relations and the pupil’s attitude towards education. On the other hand, in the subsample of female pupils, family relations have the greatest contribution compared with other analysed predictors of self-concept. In this regard, Raboteg-Šarić (2014) states that in adolescence relations with parents change and that adolescents establish increasingly more equal relations with their parents and become increasingly more independent and that, in comparison with family members, they spend more time with their peers. This is a transition to which Piaget refers to as the formal operational stage (Berk, 2008), marked by a higher level of criticism and inclination towards analysis, which are some of the preconditions for more complex thought operations and critical assessments of one’s relationship with parents. In this regard, Van Dijk et al. (2013) emphasise that as adolescents strive to become more autonomous, communication between parents and adolescents can become more challenging. However, if there is open communication between parents and children, adolescents will integrate their need for the development of autonomous self-esteem with the need to maintain a close relationship with parents. This view is also confirmed by the results of this study, since the assessments of the quality of the relationship with the mother and father remain important predictors of self-concept in pupils.

Assessments of the quality of peer relations also contribute significantly to self-concept in pupils, regardless of their gender. Still, in the subsample of male pupils it is significantly more pronounced than is the case with the subsample of female pupils. This is in line with numerous studies that show the importance of connections with one's peers for self-concept in children and adolescents (Laible et al., 2004; Ryan & Shim, 2012; Gorrese & Ruggieri, 2012; Klarin et al., 2014 and many others). There is also agreement in literature that the influence of peers on self-concept in children and adolescents does not lessen the significance of the quality of relations with parents and their support (Wilkinson, 2004; Klarin et al. 2014, Blažević, 2016).

The attitude of pupils towards education, including relations with teachers, is a statistically significant predictor of self-concept in male and female elementary school pupils. This result is an indirect indication of the importance of academic self-concept, that is, the assessment by pupils of their academic abilities and successes, for self-concept, which is confirmed in other studies (Ryan & Shim, 2012; Green et al., 2012). For example, Veiga et al. (2015) showed in their study conducted on a sample of pupils from 11 to 17 years of age that self-esteem and the attitude towards education are the two main predictors of pupils' engagement with school, although the pattern of pupils' behaviour changes with age and the contribution of their engagement with school at the level of self-esteem declines.

It is generally believed that self-esteem in pupils is encouraged by the teacher's supportive relationship with the pupil, while non-accepting relations (which, for example, are characterised by discouragement, punishment, etc.) provoke distrust on the part of the pupil in his or her own abilities, as well as poor self-esteem (Hintsanen et al., 2010; McFarland et al., 2016). A good relationship between pupils and teachers facilitates emotional regulation of the pupil. A good teacher, apart from supporting the pupil, also provides positive feedback and emotional guidance (Bilić, 2013; Šimić Šašić, 2017; Housman et al., 2018; Newland et al., 2019). In terms of the predictor value of the relationship with teachers for self-concept in children and adolescents, the findings are not unequivocal. Sen Chu et al. (2010) found that relations with teachers (compared with other social relations) have a stronger influence on the well-being of children and adolescents, while this study indicates a different conclusion. In relation to other predictors, the attitude towards education (which includes the pupil-teacher relationship) has a lower impact on the explanation of self-concept in pupils.

In conclusion, the results of this study show that self-concept in children and adolescents depends on many factors (developmental, relational, and educational). Age has the lowest predictive value, while the most stable predictors of self-concept in both groups of pupils are their attitude towards education and peer relations. The contribution of peer relations is the most significant one in the sample of male pupils, while family relations are the most significant in the sample of female pupils.

This study does not include reasons for the described trends. Since findings from literature on parenting and family relations "indicate precisely a two-way relationship

of effects between the behaviours of parents and the behaviours of children, especially during adolescence” (Batinić et al., 2018, p. 258), the results should be examined in that context and it would be unjustified to generalise them. Further, the study describes self-concept with only one item, so a more detailed analysis of the link between the individual aspects of self-concept in male and female pupils and their social relations and education requires further research.

This is a cross-sectional and correlational study, so it would not be justified to draw conclusions on cause and effect. The study included pupils from 43 schools that are most certainly very different from each other and some of the differences could affect the results of this study (e.g., the quality of the school culture, mutual relations, etc.). This study probably also has other weaknesses and limitations. However, it was conducted on a large sample of elementary school pupils, it relates to an analysis of the various predictors of self-concept in pupils from 8 to 14 years of age, and it provides insight into the way pupils perceive themselves, their relations with “significant others”, and towards education, so to some extent it contributes to understanding the importance of various predictors of self-concept in boys and girls.

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Prediktori samopoimanja učenika osnovne škole

Sažetak

Istraživanja dosljedno pokazuju neospornu povezanost samopoimanja djece i mladih s njihovim socijalnim odnosima, što se odražava i na odnos učenika prema obrazovanju. U ovom se radu analiziraju načini na koje obiteljski odnosi, odnos s vršnjacima i odnos učenika prema obrazovanju doprinose globalnom samopoimanju učenika i učenica u dobi od 8 do 14 godina. U istraživanju je korištena proširena verzija Upitnika za planiranje socijalnopedagoških intervencija. U istraživanju je sudjelovalo 3335 učenika iz 43 hrvatske osnovne škole. Provjerava se hipoteza da postoje razlike u prediktorima samopoimanja učenika i učenica osnovne škole, pri čemu je samopoimanje učenica u odnosu na učenike u većoj mjeri ovisno o socijalnim odnosima i angažiranosti u obrazovanju. Utvrđeno je da je samopoimanje dječaka u dobi od 8 do 14 godina stabilno, dok samopoimanje djevojčica od 8. do 14. godine života slabi. Pokazalo se da su obiteljski odnosi, vršnjački odnosi i odnos učenika prema obrazovanju značajni prediktori samopoimanja dječaka i djevojčica. Međutim, među učenicama je najznačajniji prediktor samopoimanja odnos s vršnjacima, dok među učenicama taj status imaju obiteljski odnosi. Uz to, odnosi sa „značajnim drugima” i odnos prema obrazovanju snažnije pridonose samopoimanju učenica no što je to slučaj s njihovim muškim vršnjacima.

Ključne riječi: obiteljski odnosi; odnosi s vršnjacima; odnos prema obrazovanju; „značajni drugi“ u školsko doba

Uvod

„Posljednjih desetljeća literatura o istraživanjima samopoimanja i samopoštovanja obiluje radovima u kojima se ispituju strategije i mehanizmi koji štite, povećavaju ili smanjuju samopoštovanje. Valja kazati da samopoštovanje može biti promatrano kao evaluativni aspekt sebe, dok samopoimanje predstavlja kognitivnu shemu unutar koje se organizira mnogo informacija o sebi. Pri tome samopoštovanje može biti promatrano kao središnji ili ključni aspekt samopoimanja, s ulogom suočavanja sebe s vanjskim informacijama“ (Tucak i sur., 2007, str. 516). Samopoimanje (eng. *self-concept*) obuhvaća sveukupnost doživljaja koje pojedinac ima o sebi i svojem identitetu, način na koji sebe vidi i kakvim se vidi. Oblikuje se kroz osobna iskustva pojedinca u interakciji

s okolinom i kroz interpretaciju tih iskustava, a pod snažnim je utjecajem značajnih osoba iz okoline (Shavelson i sur., 1976, prema Marsh i Martin, 2011). Drugim riječima, samopoštovanje je središnji aspekt samopoimanja.

Istraživači razlikuju pojedine domene samopoštovanja (akademska, socijalna, emocionalna, tjelesna), ali prihvaćaju i koncept samopoštovanja kao opći osjećaja vlastite vrijednosti. „Samopoštovanje je naša osobna procjena sebe“ (Vizek Vidović, Rijavec, Vlahović-Štetić i Miljković, 2014, str. 90), ili „rezultat formiranoga pojma o sebi“ (Jelić, 2012, str. 444). Ako je visoko, osoba cijeni i prihvaća sebe takvom kakva jest (Ryan i Shim, 2012), što pridonosi jasnoći uvjerenja osobe o samoj sebi kao važnom činitelju psihološke dobrobiti (Usborne i Taylor, 2010). Visoko samopoštovanje osnova je mentalnoga zdravlja dok nisko samopoštovanje može imati ključnu ulogu u razvoju niza poremećaja, poput depresije, anoreksije, bulimije, anksioznosti, agresivnosti i zloporabe opojnih sredstava (Mirjanić i Milas, 2011). Interakcije između pojedinaca i okoline, posebno sa „značajnim drugima“, izvor su samopoimanja i samopoštovanja, pa je individualni koncept samopoimanja odraz načina na koji pojedinca doživljavaju i ocjenjuju osobe iz njegove najbliže okoline (Lachowicz-Tabaczek i Śniecińska, 2011).

Samopoimanje postaje sveobuhvatnije i diferenciranje tijekom djetinjstva i adolescencije (Sebastian, Burnett i Blakemore, 2008) pa se u svakoj sljedećoj razvojnoj fazi samopoimanje kvalitativno razlikuje od onoga na nižem stupnju razvoja (Delač Horvatinčić i Kozarić Ciković, 2010). Odrastajući, djeca grade sve složenije konstrukte samopoimanja i primjenjuju ih u različitim socijalnim kontekstima. U kasnom djetinjstvu, kada djeca postaju sposobnija za konzistentnu samoprocjenu, jača njihova osjetljivost na razlike u samopoimanju i informacijama koje primaju od značajnih odraslih osoba, dok adolescenti uspijevaju istovremeno integrirati nekoliko mogućih interpretacija sebe (Di Blas i Cepollaro, 2017).

Budući da je samopoimanje jedno od „žarišnih koncepata u psihologijskim istraživanjima“ (Matić i Marušić, 2016, str. 284), postoje brojni dokazi o njegovoj ključnoj ulozi u subjektivnoj dobrobiti i uspjehu osobe u različitim životnim područjima. Temeljem metaanalize 246 istraživanja Sen Chu, Saucier i Hafner (2010) zaključuju da je socijalna potpora snažno povezana sa samopoimanjem djece i adolescenata. Navedeno je u skladu sa sociometrijskom teorijom (Leary i Baumeister, 2000) koja funkciju samopoštovanja vidi u promatranju vlastitoga socijalnog statusa i izborima ponašanja koja potiču prihvaćenost od strane drugih.

Roditelji i njihovo ponašanje ključni su čimbenici u razvoju samopoštovanja vlastite djece (Ručević i Duvnjak, 2010). Merkaš (2014) je svojim istraživanjem pokazala da se samopoštovanje adolescenata smanjuje u ovisnosti o broju ometajućih obiteljskih događaja koji kumulativno negativno utječu na osjećaj vlastite vrijednosti adolescenata. S druge strane, emocionalna kvaliteta odnosa roditelj-dijete utječe na motivaciju djeteta (Mata, Pedro i Peixoto, 2018), kao što uvjerenja djeteta o vlastitim socijalnim i akademskim sposobnostima utječu na školsko postignuće i socijalnu integriranost, odnosno „veze koje dijete uspostavlja s drugim učenicima u razredu“ (Bubic i Goreta, 2015, str. 475). Matić i Marušić (2016) svojim su istraživanjem potvrdile da, u usporedbi

s učenicima lošijega uspjeha, učenici boljega uspjeha imaju više samopoštovanje, a poznato je da boljim obrazovnim postignućima pridonose i kvalitetni odnosi između učenika i učitelja (Roorda i sur., 2011; Powers i sur., 2015).

Općenito je potvrđeno da dobri odnosi s roditeljima, drugim članovima obitelji, rodbinom, prijateljima i učiteljima, odnosno „značajnim drugima“, znatno pridonose dobrobiti djece i adolescenata, dok prekidi i smetnje u tim odnosima mogu biti uzrok brojnih problema u odrastanju (Domagała-Zyśk, 2006; Pianta, Hamre i Allen, 2012; Maurović, 2015; Marsa-Sambola i sur., 2017). Pojam „značajni drugi“ potječe od sociologa Georga Herberta Meada (1863.-1931., prema Berk, 2008) koji je tvrdio da djetetov pojam o sebi ovisi o tome kakvi su stavovi drugih prema njemu. Povezanost kvalitete obiteljskih odnosa i kvalitete vršnjačkih, prijateljskih odnosa ističu Berndt i Murphy (2002), tumačeći da se temelj za dobre socijalne odnose stječe u obitelji što se kasnije proširuje na ostale socijalne odnose. U ranoj adolescenciji raste važnost pripadnosti vršnjačkim grupama jer one utječu na socijalizacijske procese i na samopoimanje adolescenata tako što im omogućuju istraživanje individualnih interesa, a istovremeno im daju osjećaj pripadnosti (Nekić, Uzelac i Jurkin, 2016). Mnoga istraživanja potvrđuju da djeca višeg samopoštovanja ujedno imaju i bolji socijalni status u grupi vršnjaka i obratno. Popularnija djeca osjećaju se uvažanima, vrijednima i jedinstvenima, što povoljno utječe na njihovo samopoštovanje (Velki, Cakić i Oblačić, 2015). S druge strane, Split i sur. (2014) svojim su istraživanjem utvrdili da odbijanje djeteta od strane vršnjaka doprinosi nižem samopoštovanju, na što se nadovezuje razvoj internaliziranih problema u ponašanju. Uz to, individualna potpora učitelja internalizirane probleme u ponašanju može ublažiti, čime se postiže više djetetovo samopoštovanje. Doprinos kvalitete odnosa učitelja i učenika samopoimanju učenika potvrdila su i druga istraživanja. Kada su učitelji učenicima emocionalno dostupni i podržavajući, učenici internaliziraju te aspekte odnosa i razvijaju pozitivne samoprocjene, dok obeshrabrujuća, odbacujuća, kažnjavajuća ili zanemarujuća ponašanja učitelja vode većoj vjerojatnosti da učenici sebe dožive kao nesposobne osobe nedostojne pažnje i ljubavi drugih (McFarland, Murray i Phillipson, 2016). Smatra se da djeca koja doživljavaju primjerenu potporu učitelja, čak i ako je u pitanju samo percepcija takve potpore, iskazuju bolju povezanost sa školom, privrženiji su akademskim postignućima i grade kvalitetnije odnose s vršnjacima (Hughes, 2011, prema Bilić, 2013; Newland i sur., 2019; Šimić Šašić, 2017).

Svaki odnos djeteta sa „značajnim drugima“ na jedinstven način pridonosi njegovom samopoimanju i samopoštovanju, iako su ti odnosi međusobno visoko korelirani. Verschueren, Doumen i Buyse (2012) svojim su istraživanjem pokazali da odnosi s učiteljima najviše pridonose akademskom aspektu samopoimanja djece, odnosi s vršnjacima socijalnom aspektu, dok su odnosi s roditeljima (majkama i očevima) visoko povezani s općim samopoštovanjem. Istovremeno, potvrđena je povezanost između privrženosti roditeljima i privrženosti vršnjacima (Gorrese i Ruggieri, 2012). Brajša-Žganec, Raboteg-Šarić i Franc (2000) utvrdile su da percipirana socijalna potpora od vršnjaka pridonosi pozitivnijem samopoimanju u ispitivanim dimenzijama (opće samopoštovanje, školske i sportske sposobnosti, socijalna prihvaćenost, tjelesni izgled

i ponašanje). Roditeljska potpora pokazala se značajnim prediktorom većega općeg samopoštovanja, dok potpora učitelja značajno pridonosi pozitivnijoj slici o vlastitu ponašanju. Istraživanje je također pokazalo da je potpora odraslih (roditelja i učitelja) važnija za razvoj samopoimanja djevojčica u odnosu na dječake. Prema tome, uvjerenja, koja su odraz stvarnih sposobnosti djeteta i internalizacije dobivenih povratnih informacija od „značajnih drugih“, postaju odrednice organiziranja informacija o sebi, na što se nadovezuje odabir ponašanja u različitim socijalnim okruženjima (obiteljskom, školskom i vršnjačkom), motivacija za sudjelovanjem u različitim aktivnostima i, na kraju, zadovoljstvo sobom, odnosima i vlastitim postignućima.

Navedena i brojna druga istraživanja upućuju na neospornu povezanost samopoimanja djece i adolescenata s njihovim socijalnim odnosima, što se povoljno odražava na akademska postignuća učenika. Međutim, razmjerno se malo zna o međusobnoj povezanosti samopoimanja i socijalnih odnosa u prijelaznom razdoblju iz djetinjstva u adolescenciju. Vizek Vidović i sur. (2014) rano djetinjstvo vežu uz razdoblje do 6. godine, srednje djetinjstvo uz razdoblje od 6 do 12 godina, a adolescenciju od 13 do 22 godine. Međutim, postoje velike kulturalne i individualne razlike u odrastanju (Tamm i sur., 2018) pa sva djeca ne ulaze u pubertet, koji se smatra početkom adolescencije, u isto vrijeme. Primjerice, Berk (2008) navodi da adolescencija, prijelaz u odraslu dob, počinje s 11 godina, pri čemu djevojčice ulaze u pubertet dvije godine prije nego dječaci. U različitim razvojnim fazama mijenja se važnost utjecaja odnosa s drugima na samopoimanje i samopoštovanje. U ranom djetinjstvu najvažniji su odnosi s članovima obitelji i rodbinom, s vremenom raste utjecaj vršnjačkih odnosa, u srednjem djetinjstvu raste uloga odnosa s učiteljima (Vizek Vidović i sur., 2014), dok razdoblje adolescencije donosi cijeli niz promjena. Pokazalo se da razdoblje rane adolescencije može biti povezano s padom akademskoga angažmana i obrazovnih postignuća (Eccles, 2004, prema Ryan i Shim, 2012), a opće je poznato da u to vrijeme sve više raste važnost vršnjačkih odnosa za samopoimanje učenika (Split i sur., 2014). Uz to, razine samopoštovanja u ranoj adolescenciji imaju tendenciju smanjenja, što se u literaturi povezuje s promjenama u uvjetima obrazovanja, sudjelovanjem u novim socijalnim odnosima, promjenama u odnosima s članovima obitelji, usložavanjem socijalnih uloga i drugim okolnostima (Masselink, Roekel i Oldehinkel, 2017). Postojeća istraživanja upućuju na zaključak da prijelaz iz djetinjstva u adolescenciju dovodi do destabilizacije u većini područja relevantnih za samopoimanje, što pridonosi lošijem samopoštovanju adolescenata u odnosu na djecu (Cole i sur., 2001).

Među autorima, međutim, ne postoji slaganje o spolnim razlikama u samopoimanju, osobito kada je riječ o kasnom djetinjstvu i ranoj adolescenciji. Neka istraživanja upućuju na više samopouzdanje muških ispitanika (npr. Brajša-Žganec i sur., 2000; Kurtović i Marčinko, 2011; Velki, Cakić i Oblačić, 2015; Kalebić Jakupčević i Reić Ercigovac, 2016), dok druga naglašavaju da u samopoimanju dvaju spolova ne postoje razlike (Marsh i Ayotte, 2003; Marčić i Kobal Grum, 2011).

U ovom se radu analizira važnost različitih prediktora samopoimanja učenika u dobi od 8 do 14 godina, s obzirom na njihov spol, s ciljem provjere stabilnosti samopoimanja

učenika i učenica i njegovih prediktora. Ovim se istraživanjem provjerava hipoteza da postoje razlike u prediktorima samopoimanja učenika i učenica osnovne škole, pri čemu je samopoimanje učenica u odnosu na učenike u većoj mjeri ovisno o socijalnim odnosima i angažiranosti u obrazovanju.

Metoda

Sudionici

Istraživanje se temelji na podacima prikupljenima u 43 hrvatske osnovne škole iz 13 županija, čiji su se ravnatelji odazvali na poziv Agencije za odgoj i obrazovanje za sudjelovanje u istraživanju. Poziv je bio upućen svim školama u kojima su zaposleni socijalni pedagozi jer se primarna svrha prikupljanja podataka odnosila na provjeru modela socijalnopedagoških intervencija u radu s učenicima s problemima u ponašanju u osnovnim školama. Prema tome, radi se o namjernom uzorku koji obuhvaća 5 % svih osnovnih škola u Republici Hrvatskoj. U istraživanju su sudjelovali učenici trećih, petih i sedmih razreda osnovne škole, nakon što su njihovi roditelji dali informirani pisani pristanak za uključivanje njihove djece u postupak prikupljanja podataka. Primijenjena je procedura aktivnoga pristanka roditelja na sudjelovanje u istraživanju, što znači da su prikupljeni pisani pristanci roditelja koji su pristali na sudjelovanje. Roditelji su o svrsi, sadržaju i načinu istraživanja informirani na roditeljskim sastancima, a škole su informacije o istraživanju dobile na stručnim skupovima u organizaciji Agencije za odgoj i obrazovanje.

U postupku prikupljanja podataka ukupno je sudjelovalo 3457 učenika, a u ovom su istraživanju izdvojeni učenici koji žive s oba roditelja ($n = 3335$). U uzorku od 3335 učenika je 50,7 % učenika i 49,3 % učenica. Njihova distribucija prema dobi prikazana je u Grafikonu 1. Iz prikazanih podataka proizlazi da u uzorku prevladavaju učenici u dobi od 9, 11 i 13 godina, što je sukladno okolnosti da su oni pretežno polaznici trećih, petih i sedmih razreda osnovne škole.

Grafikon 1.

Instrument

U istraživanju je korištena proširena verzija *Upitnika za planiranje socijalnopedagoških intervencija* koji je razvijen u sklopu projekta *Razvoj modela socijalnopedagoških intervencija u osnovnoj školi*, uz podršku Agencije za odgoj i obrazovanje (Autor, 2016; Autor i sur., 2018). Upitnik se sastoji od niza tvrdnji o različitim životnim područjima, pri čemu su učenici izražavali svoj stupanj slaganja s tvrdnjama (1 = uopće nije točno; 2 = uglavnom nije točno; 3 = ne mogu se odlučiti; 4 = uglavnom je točno i 5 = potpuno je točno). Za potrebe ovoga rada izdvojene su tvrdnje koje opisuju posvećenost učenika obrazovanju, vršnjačke odnose, obiteljske odnose, odnose učenika s učiteljima i samopoimanje učenika. Istraživanjem je ukupno obuhvaćeno 25 tvrdnji iz upitnika. Jedna tvrdnja odnosi se na opći doživljaj sebe (*Siguran/na sam u sebe i svoje postupke*) i u ovom je istraživanju tretirana kao indikator samopoimanja (kriterijska varijabla). Ostale tvrdnje grupirane su u faktore metodom glavnih komponenata uz Varimax

rotaciju, a u istraživanju imaju status prediktorskih varijabli. Njihova prikladnost za faktorizaciju provjerena je Kaiser-Meyer Olkinovom koeficijentom, koji iznosi 0,821 te Bartlettovim testom sfericiteta ($\chi^2 = 17992,547$; $df = 253$; $p < .001$). Faktorska je analiza ekstrahirala 6 faktora koji zajedno objašnjavaju 53,95 % zajedničke varijance ($\alpha = 0,849$). U drugom koraku, temeljem analize *scree plot*a, provedena je faktorska analiza s unaprijed zadanim brojem faktora (tri). Rezultati te faktorske analize prikazani su u Tablici 1. Ekstrahirani faktori obuhvaćaju obiteljske odnose, vršnjačke odnose i odnos učenika prema obrazovanju (Tablica 1).

Tablica 1.

Proces prikupljanja podataka provodio se u školskoj godini 2015./2016., a vodili su ga socijalni pedagozi zaposleni na radnom mjestu stručnoga suradnika u školama uključenima u istraživanje. Oni su u tu svrhu bili dodatno educirani na dva stručna skupa koje je organizirala Agencija za odgoj i obrazovanje. Svaki je učenik primjereno informiran o svrsi prikupljanja podataka i bili su vođeni kroz proces popunjavanja upitnika koji je trajao 45 minuta.

Prikupljeni podatci podvrgnuti su deskriptivnim i hijerarhijskim regresijskim analizama.

Rezultati

U Tablici 2 prikazani su deskriptivni podatci za kriterijsku varijablu (samopoimanje) i prediktorske varijable (formirani faktori obiteljskih odnosa, vršnjačkih odnosa i odnosa učenika prema obrazovanju). Iz nje proizlazi da je distribucija pozitivno asimetrična i izduženo zaobljena, ali unutar prihvatljivih vrijednosti jer se kreću u intervalu $+/-3$, a granična vrijednost normalnosti distribucije u istraživanjima provedenima na velikim uzorcima je za asimetričnost 2 i 7 za zaobljenost (Kim, 2013). Kriterijska varijabla i prediktori međusobno su statistički značajno i pozitivno povezani, što znači da više vrijednosti na jednoj varijabli upućuju na više vrijednosti na drugim varijablama.

Općenito, učenici najpovoljnije procjenjuju svoje vršnjačke odnose, zatim obiteljske odnose te samopoimanje.

Tablica 2.

Razlike u samopoimanju s obzirom na dob i spol učenika prikazane su u Grafikonu 2.

Grafikon 2.

Podatci prikazani u Grafikonu 2 upućuju na zaključak da najvišu razinu samopoimanja imaju djevojčice u dobi do 10 godina te da s odrastanjem njihovo samopoimanje znatno pada (F omjer = 6,220; $p = 0,002$). Uz to, utvrđeno je da samopoimanje učenika s vremenom tek neznatno oscilira, a nešto je veće u dobi od 11 i 12 godina. Te razlike, međutim, nisu statistički značajne (F omjer = 0,522; $p = 0,593$).

U nastavku su prikazani rezultati hijerarhijskih regresijskih analiza predikcijske vrijednosti dobi, obiteljskih odnosa, vršnjačkih odnosa i odnosa učenika prema obrazovanju za učenike (Tablica 3).

Tablica 3.

Podatci prikazani u Tablici 3 upućuju na zaključak da u uzorku učenika osnovne škole dob nije statistički značajan prediktor samopoimanja učenika osnovne škole, ali ima određen utjecaj kada se u model uključuje odnos učenika prema obrazovanju. Svi ostali analizirani aspekti značajno doprinose objašnjenju samopoimanja učenika, ali prediktorska vrijednost obiteljskih odnosa slabi, kada se u model uključuju vršnjački odnosi i odnos učenika prema obrazovanju. Analizirani prediktori objašnjavaju 14,2 % varijance samopoimanja učenika, a najveći doprinos imaju vršnjački odnosi. Međutim, iz statističke značajnosti korelacija proizlazi da su procjene kvalitete obiteljskih i vršnjačkih odnosa te odnosa učenika prema obrazovanju znatno pozitivno korelirane, što znači da su međusobno isprepletene i nadovezuju su jedni na druge.

Analiza prediktorske vrijednosti dobi, obiteljskih odnosa, vršnjačkih odnosa i odnosa prema obrazovanju učenika osnovne škole pokazala je da svi ti aspekti statistički značajno doprinose objašnjenju samopoimanja učenika. Oni zajedno objašnjavaju 18,2 % varijance samopoimanja učenika, a najizraženiji je doprinos obiteljskih odnosa. Statistička značajnost doprinosa dobi objašnjenju samopoimanja učenika gubi se već u drugom koraku, što ukazuje na veću prediktorsku vrijednost obiteljskih odnosa, vršnjačkih odnosa i odnosa učenika prema obrazovanju u odnosu na dob učenika. Analizirani prediktori međusobno su statistički značajno povezani, što upućuje na njihovu međuovisnost i isprepletenost.

Tablica 4.

Rezultati regresijskih analiza prediktora samopoimanja učenika i učenika osnovne škole pokazuju da u obje grupe učenika ono statistički značajno ovisi o procjenama kvalitete obiteljskih odnosa, vršnjačkih odnosa i odnosa učenika prema obrazovanju. Međutim, među učenicima je najznačajniji prediktor samopouzdanja odnos s vršnjacima, dok među učenicama taj status imaju obiteljski odnosi. Uz to, vrijednosti F-omjera pokazuju da odnosi s drugima i obrazovanje više pridonose samopoimanju učenika, no što je to slučaj s njihovim muškim vršnjacima.

Rasprava

Cilj provedenoga istraživanja odnosio se na provjeru stabilnosti samopoimanja učenika i učenica osnovne škole i njegovih prediktora (dob, obiteljski odnosi, vršnjački odnosi, odnos prema obrazovanju). Ponajprije, utvrđeno je da u dobi od 8 do 10 godina učenice imaju znatno više samopoimanje u odnosu na dječake, dok u dobi od 13 i 14 godina više samopoimanje iskazuju učenici, što je podudarno s rezultatima istraživanja koji ukazuju na postojanje spolnih razlika u samopoimanju djevojčica i dječaka (Brajša-Žganec i sur., 2000; Kurtović i Marčinko, 2011; Velki, Cakić i Oblačić, 2015; Kalebić Jakupčević i Reić Ercigovac, 2016). Također je potvrđeno da postoje razlike u prediktorima samopoimanja učenika i učenica osnovne škole. Samopoimanje učenica u odnosu na učenike u većoj je mjeri ovisno o socijalnim odnosima i angažiranosti u obrazovanju. Primjerice, Brajša-Žganec i sur. (2000) utvrdili su da djevojčice dobivaju

više podrške od roditelja i prijatelja nego dječaci te da je za razvoj samopoimanja djevojčica važnija podrška roditelja i učitelja. Općenito se smatra da su djevojčice sklonije razvijanju bliskih odnosa s drugima, a podrška „značajnih drugih“ važnija im je no što je to slučaj s dječacima (Darling i sur., 2006, McFarland i sur., 2016).

Povezanost i kvaliteta odnosa sa „značajnim drugima“ (Wilkinson, 2004; Split i sur., 2014) te različiti razvojni ishodi (Di Blas, Cepollaro, 2017; Newland i sur., 2019) znatno pridonose samopoimanju djece i adolescenata, neovisno o njihovom spolu, što je potvrdilo i ovo istraživanje.

Međutim, sudeći prema rezultatima ovoga istraživanja, doprinos obiteljskih odnosa samopoimanju razlikuje se u poduzorku učenika u odnosu na učenice. Pokazalo se da doprinos kvalitete obiteljskih odnosa u poduzorku učenika slabi kada se u analizu uključuju vršnjački odnosi i odnos učenika prema obrazovanju. S druge strane, u poduzorku učenica obiteljski odnosi imaju najveći doprinos u odnosu na druge analizirane prediktore samopoimanja. S time u vezi, Raboteg-Šarić (2014) navodi da se u adolescenciji odnosi s roditeljima mijenjaju, pri čemu adolescenti uspostavljaju sve ravnopravnije odnose s roditeljima te istovremeno postaju sve samostalniji, a u usporedbi s članovima obitelji, više vremena provode s vršnjacima. Prijelaz je to u fazu koju Piaget naziva stupnjem formalnih operacija (Berk, 2008), koju obilježava viša razina kritičnosti i sklonost analizama, što su neki od preduvjeta složenijih misaonih operacija i kritičnijih procjena odnosa s roditeljima. S time u vezi, Van Dijk i sur. (2013) naglašavaju da s nastojanjima adolescenata da postanu autonomniji, komunikacija između roditelja i adolescenata može postati sve izazovnija. Međutim, ako u odnosima roditelja i djece prevladava otvorena komunikacija, adolescenti integriraju svoju potrebu za razvojem autonomnoga samopoštovanja i potrebu za održavanje privrženih odnosa s roditeljima. Navedeno stajalište potvrđuju i rezultati ovoga istraživanja jer procjene kvalitete odnosa s majkom i ocem kontinuirano ostaju važni prediktori samopoimanja učenika.

Procjena kvalitete vršnjačkih odnosa također znatno pridonosi samopoimanju učenika, neovisno o njihovom spolu. Ipak, u poduzorku učenika ona je znatno izraženija no što je slučaj sa poduzorkom učenica. U skladu je to s brojnim istraživanjima koja ukazuju na važnost povezanosti s vršnjacima za samopoimanje djece i adolescenata (Laible, Carlo i Roesch, 2004; Ryan i Shim, 2012; Gorrese i Ruggieri, 2012; Klarin i sur., 2014 i mnogi drugi). U literaturi također postoji slaganje u ocjeni da utjecaj vršnjaka na samopoimanje djece i adolescenata ne umanjuje značaj kvalitete odnosa s roditeljima i njihove podrške (Wilkinson, 2004; Klarin i sur. 2014, Blažević, 2016).

I odnos učenika prema obrazovanju, uključujući odnose s učiteljima, statistički je značajan prediktor samopoimanja učenika i učenica osnovne škole. Takav rezultat posredno ukazuje na važnost akademskoga samopoimanja, odnosno procjene učenika o njihovim akademskim sposobnostima i uspjesima, za samopoimanje, na što ukazuju i druga istraživanja (Ryan i Shim, 2012; Green i sur., 2012). Primjerice, Veiga i sur. (2015) svojim su istraživanjem provedenim na uzorku učenika u dobi od 11 do 17 godina utvrdili da su samopoštovanje i odnos prema obrazovanju dva glavna prediktora

zaokupljenosti učenika školom, pri čemu se s dobi mijenja obrazac ponašanja učenika i smanjuje se doprinos zaokupljenosti školom razini samopoštovanja učenika.

Općenito se smatra da podržavajući odnos učitelja s učenikom potiče samopoštovanje učenika, dok neprihvaćajući odnosi (koje, primjerice, karakteriziraju obeshrabrivanje, kažnjavanje i dr.) u učenika izaziva nepovjerenje prema vlastitim sposobnostima i loše samopoštovanje (Hintsanen i sur., 2010; McFarland i sur., 2016). Dobar odnos između učenika i učitelja olakšava emocionalnu regulaciju učenika. Dobar učitelj, osim što poučava učenika, pruža pozitivne povratne odgovore i emocionalno vođenje (Bilić, 2013; Šimić Šašić, 2017; Housman, Denham i Cabral, 2018; Newland i sur., 2019). U pogledu prediktorske vrijednosti odnosa s učiteljima samopoimanju djece i adolescenata, nalazi nisu jednoznačni. Sen Chu, Saucier i Hafner (2010) utvrdili su da odnosi s učiteljima (u usporedbi s drugim socijalnim odnosima) imaju jači utjecaj na dobrobit djece i adolescenata, dok ovo istraživanje upućuje na drugačiji zaključak. U odnosu na druge prediktore, odnos prema obrazovanju (koji obuhvaća i odnos učenika s učiteljem) ima manji učinak na objašnjenje samopoimanja učenika.

Zaključno, rezultati ovoga istraživanja pokazuju da je samopoimanje djece i adolescenata ovisno o mnogim čimbenicima (razvojnim, odnosnim i obrazovnim). Najmanju prediktorsku vrijednost ima dob učenika, a kao najstabilniji prediktori samopoimanja u obje skupine učenika pokazali su se odnos prema obrazovanju i vršnjački odnosi. U uzorku učenika najznačajniji je doprinos vršnjačkih odnosa, a u uzorku učenica obiteljskih odnosa.

Ovo istraživanje ne obuhvaća iznalaženje razloga opisanih tendencija. Budući da spoznaje iz literature o roditeljstvu i obiteljskim odnosima „upućuju upravo na dvosmjernan odnos učinaka između ponašanja roditelja i ponašanja djeteta, posebice u razdoblju adolescencije“ (Batinić, Bošnjaković i Merkaš, 2018, str. 258), rezultate treba sagledati u tom kontekstu i ne bi ih bilo opravdano poopćavati. Uz to, u istraživanju je samopoimanje opisano samo jednom česticom, pa detaljnija analiza povezanosti pojedinih aspekata samopoimanja učenika i učenica s njihovim socijalnim odnosima i obrazovanjem iziskuje dodatna istraživanja.

Istraživanje je transverzalnoga i korelacijskoga tipa, pa donošenje zaključaka o uzročno-posljedičnim vezama ne bi bilo opravdano. U istraživanju su sudjelovali učenici 43 škole koje se zasigurno međusobno po mnogo čemu razlikuju, a neke od tih razlika mogle bi utjecati na rezultate ovoga istraživanja (npr. kvaliteta školske kulture, međusobnih odnosa i dr.). Vjerojatno ovo istraživanje ima i druge slabosti i ograničenja. Ipak, realizirano je na velikom uzorku učenika osnovne škole, odnosi se na analizu različitih prediktora samopoimanja učenika u dobi od 8 do 14 godina i daje uvid u način na koji učenici doživljavaju sebe, svoje odnose sa „značajnim drugima“ i prema obrazovanju, pa u određenoj mjeri doprinosi razumijevanju važnosti različitih prediktora samopoimanja dječaka i djevojčica.