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# PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS AS PREDICTORS OF SCHOOL SUCCESS IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL

**Abstract:** The factors of school success are numerous: individual student characteristics, family factors, characteristics of the student's social environment, school, teachers and the teaching process. Among the individual student factors, the most often distinguished ones are abilities, motivation and personality traits. This study investigated the possibility of predicting students' school success by measures of intelligence, achievement motive, locus of control, and personality traits. The research included 103 eighth grade elementary school students and 104 fourth year grammar school students, so the model of predicting school success with these traits was tested both on the sample as a whole and on each sub-sample (elementary school students and grammar school students) with the desire to test whether the same factors affect school success at different levels of schooling. The following instruments were applied: D 48 Intelligence Test, MOP 2002 Achievement Motive Scale, Rotter Control Locus Scale, and VP + 2 Personality Inventory. The tested model of predicting school success is statistically significant on the sample as a whole ($R^2 = .299$, $p = .000$), and on the sample of elementary school students ($R^2 = .651$, $p = .000$), while on the sample of secondary school students it has not reached statistical significance ($R^2 = .244$, $p = .120$). Intelligence stands out as the most significant individual predictor of student academic success, (across the sample and among elementary school students), and on the sample as a whole, personality traits such as *openness to the experience* and the dimension of achievement motive *planning*, have a significant individual contribution to predicting school success. The results indicate that the student's individual characteristics are significant factors for the school performance of elementary school pupils, while some other factors probably play a bigger role in determining the school performance of grammar school students. One possible reason for this finding is that grammar school students are a selected part of the student population which do not differ significantly from each other according to the tested characteristics.

**Keywords:** school success, intelligence, motive of achievement, locus of control, personality traits

# PSIHOLOŠKE KARAKTERISTIKE UČENIKA KAO PREDIKTORI ŠKOLSKOG USPEHA U OSNOVNOJ I SREDNJOJ ŠKOLI

**Apstrakt:** Faktori školskog uspeha su brojni: individualne karakteristike učenika, karakteristike porodice, socijalnog okruženja, škole, nastavnika i nastavnog procesa. Među individualnim karakteristikama učenika se najčešće izdvajaju sposobnosti, motivacija i osobine ličnosti. U ovom istraživanju ispitivana je mogućnost predviđanja školskog uspeha učenika merama inteligencije, motiva postignuća, lokusa kontrole i osobina ličnosti. U istraživanje je uključeno 103 učenika osmog razreda osnovne škole i 104 učenika četvrtog razreda gimnazije, pa je model predviđanja školskog uspeha ovim osobinama ispitan i na uzorku u celini i na svakom poduzorku (učenika osnovne škole i učenika gimnazije) sa željom da se proveri da li isti faktori deluju na školski uspeh na različitim nivoima školovanja. Primenjeni su instrumenti: test inteligencije D 48, Skala motiva postignuća MOP 2002, Rotterova skala lokusa kontrole i inventar ličnosti VP+2. Testirani model predviđanja školskog uspeha je statistički značajan na uzorku u celini ($R^2$ = .299, $p$ = .000) i na uzorku učenika osnovne škole ($R^2$ = .651, $p$ = .000), dok na uzorku učenika srednje škole ovaj model nije dostigao statističku značajnost ($R^2$ = .244, $p$ = .120). Kao najznačajniji pojedinačni prediktor školskog uspeha učenika izdvaja se inteligencija (na celom uzorku i kod učenika osnovne škole), a na uzorku u celini značajan pojedinačni doprinos predviđanju školskog uspeha imaju i osobina ličnosti *otvorenost za iskustvo* i dimenzija motiva postignuća *planiranje*. Rezultati ukazuju da ispitivane individualne karakteristike učenika predstavljaju značajne faktore školskog uspeha učenika osnovne škole, dok kod gimnazijalaca verovatno neki drugi faktori preuzimaju ulogu u determinisanju školskog uspeha. Jedan mogući razlog za ovakav nalaz je i to što su učenici gimnazije selekcionisani deo populacije učenika i međusobno se manje razlikuju po ispitivanim karakteristikama.

**Ključne reči**: školski uspeh, inteligencija, motiv postignuća, lokus kontrole, osobine ličnosti