

EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL READINESS AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL IN A SMALL SETTLEMENT IN VOJVODINA

T-8

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In Vojvodina, the New Belgrade revision of the Binet-Simon scale (Ivić et al., 1976) and the Test for Examining Champions (TIP-1; Ivić, Milinković et al., 1995) are used most often to assess cognitive functioning. Although these instruments represent a standard in school psychological practice, they also have a number of shortcomings that limit their usefulness. First of all, these tests have not undergone a new standardization process, so they still use outdated norms (Simić & Mihajlović, 1998; Tovilović & Baucal, 2007). In addition, they were constructed at a time when inclusive education was not affirmed and when it was not emphasized that one of the key roles of a good intelligence test is an unbiased assessment of the intellectual abilities of children who come from educationally deprived, poor environments or such that nurture different social and cultural values (Novović et al., 2009). Scientists noticed these shortcomings and created the School Readiness Test (Serbian abbreviation: TZŠ) a new instrument designed to assess children's readiness for school, conceived on the basis of Wechsler's understanding of intelligence (Biro et al., 2006). TZŠ evaluates various aspects of cognitive functioning – memory, attention, visuospatial coordination, practical knowledge, and social adaptation. In addition to assessing current cognitive efficiency, TZŠ is also intended to monitor children's intellectual development. The goal of the present research is to examine the connection between the TZŠ results and the subsequent academic success of children. Longitudinal research was undertaken in a small community in Vojvodina, where children from very different socio-economic statuses participated in the study (N = 116). The average age when tested was 6 years and 4 months. After the test, academic success at the end of the 4th school year was marked. The results showed that children who are in the category of 'very immature' are most often the children who have some disabilities in development, while children who are in the category of 'low readiness for school' are most often children from marginalized environments, that is, culturally and educationally deprived children. The differences between these two groups of children and the factors associated with their achievements can be addressed in future research.

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