

TEACHER'S WELLBEING AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCIES – THE ROLE OF SCHOOL ETHNIC DIVERSITY¹²

Hana Sejfović¹, Milena Belić¹ & Nataša Simić²

¹State University of Novi Pazar, Serbia

²University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of Psychology, Serbia

Abstract. In the past decades there have been many studies that explored the effects of culturally homogeneous vs. heterogeneous school environments on students' achievement and wellbeing. However, effects of such environments on teachers have less often been explored. Therefore, our aim was to examine the teacher's wellbeing and their intercultural competences in relation to the ethnic diversity of the classes they work with. Research sample consisted of 294 teachers from 14 secondary schools. The sample included schools from different parts of Serbia with different proportions of students belonging to the majority or minority ethnic group (Bosniak, Hungarian and Roma). To examine teachers' wellbeing, one item regarding global assessment of wellbeing of the *Personal Wellbeing Index scale* was used. Five subscales of the *Teacher Intercultural Competence Scale* were applied. Teachers also noted whether they work in ethnically homogeneous or heterogeneous classes. Results show that teachers' overall wellbeing ranged from moderate to very high ($M = 8.15$, $SD = 1.57$, on a scale 0-10). Teachers assessed their intercultural competencies as high, with *Commitment to social justice* being the most pronounced ($M = 3.72$, $SD = .4$, on a scale 1-4). Teachers working in ethnically heterogeneous classes assessed their intercultural competences as higher than those working in homogeneous classes (*Self-efficacy*: $t = -2.536$, $p = .012$; *Intrinsic motivation*: $t = -3.072$, $p = .002$; *Social justice*: $t = -3.123$, $p = .002$; *Appreciating diversity*: $t = -2.485$, $p = .014$ and *Intercultural goals*: $t = -2.757$, $p = .006$), but no differences in overall wellbeing were found. While teachers' wellbeing is more dependent upon many factors unrelated to their work environment, teachers' intercultural competences seem to improve in the diverse setting, which is in line with previous studies showing that despite many challenges teachers face, a school's cultural diversity can have a positive impact on teachers' competencies and attitudes.

Keywords: intercultural competences, wellbeing, teachers, ethnic diversity, school

¹² Acknowledgement. This paper was created within the project Narrativization of ethnic identities of adolescents from culturally dominant and minority groups and roles in the school context (NIDEA, #1518), supported by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia.