

The NIdEA Project Guide



The NIdEA Project is funded by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia under the IDENTITIES program (#1518)

Project Team

The project "Narrativization of Ethnic Identities of Adolescents from Culturally Dominant and Minority Backgrounds and the Role of the School Context" (NIdEA) is a joint endeavor by psychologists from three different universities - the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Belgrade, the State University of Novi Pazar, and the State University of New York (SUNY), Old Westbury.



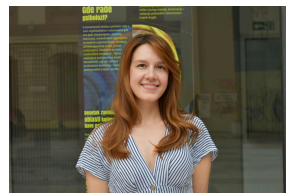
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About the Project

The NIdEA Project is funded by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia under the IDENTITIES program.

The project aims to investigate the development of ethnic identity among adolescents in Serbia, with a specific focus on identifying potential differences in how students from culturally dominant and minority groups develop their ethnic identities.

Additionally, we are exploring the influence of the school and broader social context on the development of ethnic identity and the well-being of adolescents of different ages and genders, as well as their experiences of ethnic discrimination. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the school's cultural climate and the development of adolescents' ethnic identity, we are researching and considering the perspectives of various participants: students, parents, teachers, and school psychologists.

We anticipate that the project will positively impact the well-being of everyone involved in the educational process.. Additionally, we hope that the project results will contribute to improving the school climate and intergroup relations, which should lead to a reduction in the dropout rate, higher quality education, greater equality in education, less brain drain, and better employment prospects for all.

Activities

Collaboration with Schools

- Involvement of 20 high schools from different regions of Serbia (12 vocational schools and 8 gymnasiums).

First Phase of Research (May-September 2023)

- Method: Questionnaires for students, teachers, parents, and professional collaborators.
- Sample: 2886 respondents
 - 1846 students
 - 409 teachers
 - 617 parents
 - 14 professional collaborators

Second Phase of Research (December 2023-April 2024)

- Method: Vignettes (fictional stories) with interpretation of situations.
- Sample: 380 students from 7 schools selected based on the first phase.
- Additional interviews with 25 students.


Dissemination of Results


- Participation in 6 scientific conferences; accepted papers at an additional 3.
- Publication of 2 scientific articles in various journals.
- Presentations at the Vuk's Foundation Forum and the Laboratory for Experimental Psychology Forum.


Contribution to Local Communities

- Support to schools in implementing three initiatives to improve interethnic relations among students.
- Goal: Raising awareness about the importance of multiculturalism, positive interethnic relations, and civic values.

Some of the most interesting insights (so far):

 Ethnic discrimination in schools can negatively impact the psychological well-being, peer relationships, identity development, and academic achievement of students. The most common strategy reported by students was seeking help from relevant individuals - teachers, psychologists, counselors, and also principals. This was followed by two strategies that were equally represented - resolving conflicts at the classroom or peer group level, or relying on the personal resources of the individual experiencing discrimination. Lastly, the least mentioned strategy was seeking help from parents.

 We also explored how teachers, students, and parents assess different aspects of the school climate because it can indicate aspects that need improvement to ensure a conducive learning environment. Teachers are generally satisfied with the school climate but highlight peer violence as a significant problem. Experienced and engaged teachers are more likely to notice the presence of violence. Teachers emphasize the importance of improving peer relationships and increasing student engagement - aspects of the school climate they are not entirely satisfied with. Improving peer relationships is an important step in preventing school violence. The results show that female teachers have a more positive view of certain aspects of the school climate, such as student relationships, student engagement, and school safety, which should be further investigated. Also, novice teachers rate the teacher-student relationship and the relationship among staff in the school more positively. When interpreting the obtained results, it should be noted that teachers often perceive the school climate more positively than students, especially the teacher-student relationship.

 We found that a sense of belonging to school predicts overall life satisfaction and adolescent depression. And not only that – it also predicts academic success and the frequency of unexcused absences from school! A sense of belonging to school depends on peer relationships (including the prevalence of peer bullying), how safe students feel at school, and how fair the school rules are. Although foreign studies have found that the student-teacher relationship and the socioeconomic status of students' families also influence the sense of belonging to school, this was not found in our research. We can conclude that young people care about feeling like they belong to the school they attend. If they feel like they belong, they will be happier, less prone to

depression, less likely to miss school, and will perform better. We can achieve this by encouraging collaboration in classes, working together on projects, community research, and above all by establishing behavior rules that will be equally applied to everyone and by timely reacting to peer violence!

💡 How satisfied are our teachers with various aspects of their lives?

High school teachers across Serbia answered, among other things, questions about overall life satisfaction and satisfaction with individual aspects of life. On a scale of 1-5, the average value was 4.29. They rated their satisfaction with relationships with other people highest, followed by satisfaction with achievements. On the other hand, they are least satisfied with their financial status and prospects for the future.

And how satisfied are our teachers with their job? On the same scale of 1-5, there were seven teachers who marked 1, but there were 135 who marked 5. The average value is 4.05. It seems that despite all the challenges teachers in Serbia face, they still love their job, especially direct work with children. One explanation for the difference between dissatisfaction with financial status and future prospects on one hand, and job satisfaction on the other, could be cognitive dissonance. Often, people in professions that are not valued by society (financially or otherwise) as much as one might expect, show a high level of job satisfaction. In other words, there must be a higher meaning and greater value in the work they do, which brings a sense of satisfaction.

Of course, this is just one hypothesis. For more reliable conclusions, further analyses are needed, including comparisons with teachers from other countries, potentially incorporating qualitative data, and ongoing reflection on this interesting topic.

Contact

For further details about the project, feel free to explore our social media profiles and visit the official project website, where you can also reach out to us directly.

Here is the link to the project website:

<https://nidea.f.bg.ac.rs/>

