 Teachers’ perceptions and practice of social and emotional education in Greece, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom

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The central motive for conducting this research was to investigate how Greece, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom treat social and emotional education (SEE) within pedagogical practice. The study used a sequential quantitative-qualitative analysis with a comparative design, with 750 teachers in the initial quantitative phase participating in a questionnaire, and 22 teachers in the following qualitative phase participating in semi-structured interviews. Significant cross-cultural differences were found in SEE provision, as well as in teachers’ beliefs about the purpose of SEE. Teacher education in SEE was found to be available to only a minority of teachers in all four countries. In terms of practice, SEE was more likely to be introduced in schools by teachers themselves (or a partnership between teachers and headteachers) rather than by educational policy. Furthermore, the findings show that SEE provision was more likely to be implicit (taken into consideration in existing classes but not taught as a separate subject), than explicit (having dedicated time and curriculum devoted to SEE).

Keywords: social and emotional education, teacher training, social and emotional learning, comparative education, cross-cultural research

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