Cultural Attitudes of Romanian Youth

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Purpose

In this study, Ives, Obenchain and Oikonomidoy examined the cultural attitudes of Romanian youth about minorities in Romania.

The Article

Social distance measures how comfortable one feels at various levels of closeness with individuals of different groups such as race and/or ethnic groups, disability groups or those with mental illness. Despite increased governmental attention on violence towards the Rroma, negative public attitudes toward the Rroma are quite strong. Abuse of Rroma students in schools takes place at multiple levels from segregationist policies, to abuse by the teachers, and neglect by classmates and even parents of the majority group. The goal of this study was to shed light on the perceived social distance from the members of the majority to members of the minorities. Ninety-five native Romanian students who were planning careers in the field of education completed a questionnaire to assess social distance relative to various ethnic, national and cultural groups based on the Romanian Cultural Distance Scale. The study yielded evidence that Romanian pre-service educators report the least distance with respect to Romanians, and the most social distance with respect to Rroma. Further, Romanian pre-service educators reported a wider range of social distance across groups that are well represented within their country than they do for other groups that are not well represented within Romania, indicating that different kinds of contact may lead to either increases or decreases in social distance. Additionally, results confirmed that Rroma people suffer from great discrimination.

What This Means for the Field

Additional research needs to be conducted on understanding the complexity of cultural attitudes and the role of education and teacher education in addressing negative attitudes. Teacher education programs may want to explore ways to incorporate prejudice reduction as a component of multicultural education.

Citation


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