

Does School Matter for Students' Attitudes Towards Immigrants? Evidence from the ICCS 2022 Study in Slovenia

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Abstract

The paper uses data from the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS 2022) for Slovenia to examine the relationship between diversity-related practices in schools and the attitudes of 14-year-old students towards immigrants. The study integrates students' individual background characteristics, teacher- and classroom-level variables, and principal-reported school initiatives into a three-stage linear regression model. The outcome variable is a standardised ICCS scale that measures students' positive attitudes towards immigrants. The results show that civic knowledge, being female, having an immigrant background, and speaking a language at home other than the language of the test (Slovenian) are all significantly associated with more positive attitudes. At the classroom level, students' perceptions of open classroom discussions emerge as a strong and consistent predictor. Additionally, teaching about migration topics, as reported by teachers, shows a small but statistically significant positive association. In contrast, most school-level diversity-related practices reported by school leaders, such as multicultural activities and teacher professional development, demonstrate no significant association with student attitudes. These findings suggest that student-reported classroom experiences, particularly those involving deliberative open discussions and targeted civic content, may play a more meaningful role in shaping inclusive attitudes than formal school-level diversity initiatives. The paper contributes to the ongoing conversation about how schools can effectively support democratic and intercultural values among adolescents in increasingly diverse societies.

Keywords: adolescents; civic and citizenship education; deliberative pedagogy; intercultural education; teaching practice