

The Responsibility of the State and Institutions for the Education of Foreign-Language Students in Greece

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INTRODUCTION

- This paper examines the responsibility of the state and its institutions toward immigrants, refugees, and, in particular, non-Greek-speaking students in Greek schools.
- It emphasizes that integration into schools is a time-consuming and precarious process, which, if not adequately supported, can lead to serious forms of exclusion.
- Institutional shortcomings are highlighted: limited recruitment of qualified teachers, a lack of school psychologists and interpreters, and inadequate management of hostile attitudes in the school environment.
- At the same time, the role of the host society and the need for cooperation among the state, schools, and citizens for meaningful intercultural integration are discussed.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study focuses on capturing how participants perceive the responsibilities of educational institutions toward non-native-language students and the shortcomings of the educational system.

Key research questions:

- What is the extent of the shortcomings in schools regarding the education of foreign students, and how significant are they considered to be?
- How much responsibility is attributed to institutions (the state, schools, society, the EU) toward students who speak a different language?
- How important is teacher training considered to be for the education of students who speak a different language?
- Which institution is considered to bear the greatest responsibility for educational and integration conditions?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a quantitative approach using a structured questionnaire.

The questionnaire consists of 26 questions (24 closed-ended and 2 open-ended), is self-administered.

The sampling targets individuals with a direct connection to schools and interculturalism, in order to capture informed assessments of institutional shortcomings and support needs.

RESULT

- The findings indicate that a significant proportion of participants report having limited knowledge of the experiences of refugees and immigrants, despite their high level of education and professional involvement in education.
- The majority acknowledges serious shortcomings in schools, which are considered crucial for the academic performance and psychosocial development of students who speak a different language.
- Attitudes toward classmates' behavior toward students who speak a different language are often characterized as neutral or negative.
- Responsibility for these shortcomings is attributed primarily to the state, followed by the European Union, while schools are considered to bear a lesser but not negligible responsibility.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that, despite the existence of legally enshrined rights and frameworks for intercultural education, in practice many immigrants and refugees experience widespread violations and inadequate protection.

Institutional shortcomings in supporting students who speak other languages act as barriers to achieving equitable education and smooth integration.

The results show that training teachers in language, culture, and anti-racist pedagogy is an essential prerequisite for creating safe and inclusive school environments.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- There is a clear need to strengthen intercultural education by adapting curricula, implementing differentiated instruction, and providing systematic remedial instruction in Greek as a second/foreign language.
- It is recommended that school psychologists and interpreters be permanently assigned to support both students who speak other languages and teachers in their daily school activities.
- Teacher training on issues of interculturalism, human rights, and anti-racism education is considered critical for preventing stereotypes and fostering a culture of school inclusion.
- At the same time, social awareness initiatives (e.g., information programs, anti-xenophobia campaigns) are proposed that involve parents, students, and the broader community, with the aim of combating racism and promoting peaceful coexistence.