Exploring Sociocultural Experiences and Expectations of Refugee Youth Studying in South Australia


Background

- The successful resettlement of refugee youth as fully participating Australian citizens is desirable for the individuals concerned, their families, communities, and society at large.
- Although some refugee youth overcome substantial difficulties, to contribute to the enrichment of Australian society, evidence suggests that recently arrived refugee youth face a unique set of challenges not experienced by youth in the general population.

Major Aims

To investigate:

- Education and employment outcomes among refugee youth aged 15-24 years
- Enablers, facilitators and challenges encountered by refugee youth transitioning from school to further education, training and employment
- Support systems available to youth facing difficulties
- To influence: education, training and employment policies and practices

Method

Phase 1: Survey

- Participants: 630 youth aged 15-24 years
- From Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia
- Studying at Secondary School, TAFE or University
- Between 12 months and 15 years in Australia

Measures

Survey captured information relating to:

1. Sociodemographic details
2. Acculturation and adaptation
3. Emotional health and well-being
4. Family functioning
5. Educational experiences
6. Help seeking behaviours
7. Employment and workplace experiences

Procedure

- Questionnaires administered face-to-face to youth participants by trained Bilingual Youth Workers of same or similar cultural backgrounds as participants

Phase 2: Individual Interviews

- 180 semi-structured interviews with youth (60), their parents/ caregivers (60), and their teachers (60) — currently being conducted

Preliminary Findings

- **Integration**: Youth ‘integration’ was positively related to ‘Self Esteem’ (.38**), ‘Life Satisfaction (.33**)’ and ‘Resilience (.31**)’; and negatively related to ‘Perceived Discrimination’ (.25**), and ‘Psychological Distress’ (-.16**).

Note: ‘Broadly, according to Berry (2006), ‘integration’ is the preference for biculturism.

- **Length of Australian Residency**:
  - Youth who had resided longer in Australia reported perceiving more discrimination (.19**) but experiencing less psychological distress (.09*) than others.

- **Resilience (CD-RISC)**:
  - Youth reporting higher levels of resilience were integrating more into Australian society (.31**) and perceiving less discrimination (.12*) than others.

- **Psychological Distress’ (K10)**:
  - Youth experiencing greater psychological distress were also perceiving greater discriminatory (.22*) and integrating less into Australian society (.16**) than others.

Correlations

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<td>1. Integration</td>
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<td>2. Self Esteem</td>
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<td>3. Life Satisfaction</td>
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<td>.80</td>
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<td>4. Resilience (CD-RISC)</td>
<td>7.31</td>
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<td>591</td>
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<td>5. Perceived Discrimination</td>
<td>2.15</td>
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<td>6. Psychological distress (K10)</td>
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References


This is a 3-year Project, funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) and conducted in partnership between University of South Australia, University of Adelaide, and industry partners, MYSA & AMRC.