Socio-cultural factors and school engagement: A study among Turkish, Moroccan, Assyrian and native Dutch youth in the Netherlands.

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Abstract:

In contrast with the present social-political climate in the Netherlands, which focuses mostly on the negative aspects of immigration and integration, data on school achievement show educational progress of minority groups over the recent years. Academic results of Turks and Moroccans, which traditionally lagged seriously behind, have improved on most indicators of school achievement over the past 10 years. Their relative position compared to native Dutch students has however not improved, as Dutch students have also increased their own academic performances (Herweijer, 2003). Less data are available on refugee students, due to a lack of targeted national policies. However, monitoring the educational results of refugee students seems warranted, as demographic figures suggest that their numerical presence in classrooms will increase in the near future (Dagevos, Gijsberts & Praag, 2003). Research on school achievement of ethnic minority children has focused on four types of factors to explain their academic achievements: structural factors, social factors, cultural factors, institutional factors. Structural factors refer to conditions through which individuals and groups obtain positions within the social structure of a society (Sackmann, 2003; Vermeulen, 2000). More specifically, we refer to family resources, such as the socio-economic status of minority families and migrants’ social capital. Social factors refer to the degree and quality of social interaction between minorities and natives (van Tubergen, 2004).

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