

DIRECT AND INDIRECT CONTACT AS PREDICTORS OF POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD OUTGROUP

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ABSTRACT

Social changes, economic difficulties, conflicts and wars in various regions of the world are factors among those that contribute to the movement of people and ethnic groups. As a result, diversity has become a defining feature even in countries traditionally recognized as homogeneous. Furthermore, this contributes to the increasing relevance, interest, and research on intergroup relations. The Contact Theory provides mechanisms for improving intergroup relations. Direct, indirect, and imagined contact, as well as the quality of contact, are presented as important tools for reducing prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination. However, the effect of contact on positive attitudes toward the outgroup that go beyond tolerance has not been sufficiently tested by researchers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to predict positive intergroup attitudes based on direct and indirect contact with the outgroup. The study included 184 students of pedagogy, future teachers, at Cyril and Methodius University - Skopje, North Macedonia. According to ethnicity, 54.9% declared themselves as Albanians, and 45.1% as Macedonians. The data show that direct and indirect contact are significant predictors of positive intergroup attitudes. Differences in attitudes towards the outgroup according to the frequency and type of contact are also discussed.

Keywords: Direct contact, positive intergroup attitudes, majority, minority.