

Attitudes

**Ministry of Justice:
Round table
discussion**

**Attitude research
– results and
recommendations**



Project Know Equality is supported by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) programme of the European Union (2014-2020).

This information leaflet is based on a roundtable discussion organised in June 2021 on the current state and future of attitude research related to fundamental and human rights in Finland.

**E
Q
U
A
L
I
T
Y**

Why do we need attitude research?

Attitude research provides information on people's experiences, opinions, values and attitudes. This information can be utilised, for example, in equality, non-discrimination and safety work and as support in political decision-making.

Attitude research and discrimination research are closely related to each other and may be conducted as part of the same research programme. The difference between attitude and discrimination research is that the latter describes the actual and perceived prevalence of discrimination.

Ethical viewpoints to be taken into account in attitude research:

- Those participating in an attitude survey must be aware of the voluntary nature of their participation.
- The participants must be informed of the purpose of the survey and the way the results will be used.
- The sample must be sufficiently large and representative so that the results can be examined based on different socio-demographic variables while still maintaining the anonymity of the respondents.
- Research fatigue and strain caused by being continuously studied should be taken into account in the case of population groups studied a lot, such as minorities.
- In sensitive issues, in particular, it should be noted that polarising ways of formulating questions and interpreting research results may reinforce polarising notions of differences between population groups.

Attitude research in Finland

In Finland, attitude research has been overshadowed by political and commercial opinion polls. There is no national attitude survey being conducted in Finland that would cover all key topics or the most important topics from the perspective of equality, nor is there any attitude survey that would be regularly repeated. Surveys covering Finland are conducted at EU level, but they are extensive and do not give an accurate picture of the situation of individual minorities, as the national sample is often small.

**E
Q
U
A
L
I
T
Y**



Future of attitude research: challenges and trends

- The continuity of attitude research is essential, which means that regular funding and funding cooperation between different parties is required.
- The scope and reliability of data collection, the possibilities for follow-up arrangements and adequate expertise (methods and substance) must be ensured.
- The availability of different groups of respondents and the possibilities to reach them pose a challenge to attitude research. People with a weak attachment to society may be excluded from attitude research.
- In addition to survey data, it is important to collect qualitative data, for example through in-depth interviews.
- It is necessary to produce more intersectional research data on attitudes towards smaller minorities within minorities.
- Questions measuring attitudes should continue to be included in different surveys, such as the Fundamental Rights Barometer, the Youth Barometer and the Gender Equality Barometer. They provide regular and up-to-date information on the changes in people's experiences and attitudes.
- Ethnic relations are a key topic in attitude research, and it is useful to produce repeated follow-up studies on the issue.
- In addition to discrimination experienced by linguistic, cultural and ethnic minorities, it is useful to study the majority population's attitudes towards minorities, such as the Sámi people, sexual and gender minorities, people with disabilities, and sign language users.