Conservatism and Social Justice: Why Do Some Teachers Strive Harder for Social Justice While Others Do Not?

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Conservatism and Social Justice: Why Do Some Teachers Strive Harder for Social Justice While Others Do Not?

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Abstract

Teachers are seen as change agents in the world of social justice because it embodies the educational ideals of equality and fair treatment. The aim of this study is to examine the more conservative personal and social attitudes of teachers that may affect how their social justice beliefs play out in the classroom. The research findings reveal important results about the relationship between the attitudes of resistance to change and opposition to equality at the personal and social levels, which underlie conservatism, and social justice beliefs about teaching.

Keywords: Social justice, conservatism, resistance to change, opposition to equality

Introduction

Why do some people make stronger implicit and explicit choices for fair changes, egalitarianism, and system criticism, while others prefer tradition, hierarchical social relations, and system continuity? (Block & Block, 2006). One possible answer to this question comes from the field of political psychology. Social and political preferences can be analyzed
and explained on the basis of psychological causes (Jost, Nosek, Gosling, 2008). Individuals tend to align themselves with particular social judgments and thoughts by means of their own epistemic and existential motivations and then act accordingly (Haidt ve Graham, 2007). Thus, an evidence-based approach can be developed to make sense of individuals’ preferences on issues that are important to both that person and society in general, such as equality, justice or welfare (Jost et. al., 2007). Recent studies emphasize two psychological dimensions that are the source of different tendencies regarding political and social judgments and thoughts. The first of these is resistance to change, and the second is opposition to equality. How people tend towards these psychological dimensions affects their social and political attitudes (Sarıbay, Ökten & Yılmaz, 2017). The formation of these two psychological dimensions is also related to the basic aspects of conservatism (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski & Sullowey, 2003).

What is being done here is not the religious conceptualization of conservatism; it is a political psychological conceptualization of social and individual attitudes. In opposition to equality, interpersonal equality in social and economic matters is not desired. The hierarchical society structure is considered much more reasonable (Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Jost & Thompson, 2000). For conservatives, inequality is state of nature. It can even be said that they consider the demands for equality as a threat to this natural state (Jost, Blount, Pfeffer & Hunyady 2003; Tetlock, Mitchell, 1993; Jost, 2017). It is important to acknowledge that entrenched attitudes and beliefs are what sustain prominent institutions, and so, resistance to change and opposition to equality becomes necessary to ensure the system stays true to its current state. In essence, inequalities and injustices inherent in the existing system must be maintained in order to protect and maintain it (Jost, Kruglanski, Simon, 2013). To conservatives, change comes as unpredictability and uncertainty. An egalitarian social order without hierarchies expresses chaos (Carney, Jost, Gosling, Potter, 2008). Conservatives’ interpretation of this type of social system sees results that contradict social justice standards (Jost, 2020). According to the principles of social justice, if the current system produces that which is unequal and unjust, it is not the system that should be. Egalitarian and fair change interventions should be made.

Conservatives see the current system as legitimate and oppose change interventions. The reason for this preference is that they evaluate hierarchical (unequal) structures as more stable (Tyler & Huo, 2002; Skitka, Bauman ve Lytle, 2009). Similarly, egalitarians will want to legitimize egalitarian systems by reflecting their own values on the system (Brandt, Reyna, 2012). Conservative personality traits are reflected in all the practices in one's daily life
Opposition to equality and resistance to change, which are the determinant attitudes underlying conservatism, affect the behavior of individuals in many areas of life. The interaction of individuals with conservative tendencies in a wide social network causes these attitudes to create more important social consequences. Teachers, in particular, have relationships with students and parents which allows for them and their conservative philosophy to have quite a wide area of impact.

Teachers’ conservative beliefs and attitudes affect their practices in the classroom and their interactions with students (Good & Brophy, 1973; Garmon, 2004; Rochmes, 2013; Kraker-Pauw et. al, 2016). If education is conducted by teachers with conservative attitudes, it can produce results that are incompatible with social justice principles. Although this is not observed formally and overtly most of the time, it continues to pervade schools (Gorski, 2006). The school community is becoming more diverse every day, with people of different cultures, religions, values and worldviews entering the once-monochrome classroom. This makes the requirements for social justice all the more important (Philpott, Dagenais, 2011). And whether they realize it or not, teachers can even perpetuate the inequalities prevailing in the society in classroom practices. Achieving social justice requires that all students are shown equal value and experience no discrimination. They must also recognize the prevailing inequalities in society and challenge the existing status quo by questioning their own role (Kuar, 2012). However, conservative ideals can cause teachers to resist change, stick to the status quo, weaken their social interactions (Tam, Cheng, 2003), and reveal a more authoritarian and controlling philosophy of education (Biesta, 2012). It can be said that teachers with a conservative perspective have a belief that the differences in the classroom community will negatively affect their classroom learning practices (Elhoweris, Alsheikh, 2006; Brandes, Crowson, 2009). Teachers can help some groups or individuals overcome obstacles that result from family or other social reasons and that negatively affect their realization of their potential. In some cases, teachers may not even notice these obstacles. It is also possible that they prefer not to make remedial interventions despite noticing them, or they may reinforce all obstacles. In this respect, it is important to examine the beliefs of teachers that will affect their behavior towards minorities and socially and economically disadvantaged students (Rochmes, 2013). For example, Brandes and Crowson (2009) concluded in their study that conservative teacher candidates are more likely to have negative attitudes towards student differences in the classroom environment.
When a conservative enters an organization, the social domain in which they interact expands. Thus, while fulfilling organizational roles, individuals greatly increase their capacity to discriminate. Therefore, unfair and unequal practices that occur in institutions and organizations become one of the main factors that contribute to the emergence and maintenance of social inequalities and hierarchy (Feagin & Feagin, 1978). Similarly, when teachers bring their social and personal beliefs to the classroom, and ultimately to the school at large, they are invariably re-shaping the perception and manifestation of social justice within the entire educational environment (Katsarou, Picower ve Stovall, 2010). Working to create a fair learning environment where everyone has equal opportunity means, first of all, that educators must open their heart and mind to the perspectives and lifestyles of others (Takacs, 2016). However, among the known typical characteristics of conservative people, it can be counted that they show skeptical, anxious and even hateful tendencies towards people they find different (Wilson, 2013). Such teacher attitudes may hinder equal learning opportunities for students. For this reason, it is important to investigate the personal and social tendencies of teachers reflected in their teaching practices. This research aims to investigate the effect of teachers' personal and social attitudes underlying their conservative tendencies on their beliefs about providing social justice in teaching. In the light of the findings, inferences can be made about the role of teachers in the realization of social justice in schools. In accordance with the purpose of this study, finding answers for the following questions was the primary goal.

1. Are there relationships between teachers' personal attitudes of resistance to change and opposition to equality and their social justice beliefs?
2. Are there relationships between teachers' social attitudes of resistance to change and opposition to equality and their social justice beliefs?
3. Do teachers' personal attitudes of resistance to change and opposition to equality predict their social justice beliefs?
4. Do teachers' social attitudes of resistance to change and opposition to equality predict their social justice beliefs?

Theoretical Background

Conservatism

Wilson (1973) defines conservatism as resisting change, prioritizing security, and preferring traditional and local forms of institutions and behaviors. Conservative attitudes can also be associated with the need for order, closedness to new experiences, and intolerance to
uncertainty (Tal, Yinon, 2002; Jost, Sterlink, Stern, 2017). Conservatism conceptualizations have three main emphases:

1) the preference to oppose the change of existing institutions

2) preferring traditional institutions

3) a tendency to be prudent

When these three emphases are synthesized, it can be said that conservatives are pro-traditional and find change dangerous in terms of security. Consequently, they prefer to attach themselves to the current order. (Wilson, 2013).

The core of conservative political ideology consists of two main points: attitudes towards social stability rather than change and social hierarchy rather than equality (Mikołajczak, Becker, 2019). According to Jost et al (2003), political conservatism is an ideological belief system that consists of two main components, resistance to change and opposition to equality, that serve to reduce uncertainty and threat. Conservatives reject risk-taking and social change, ultimately attempting to eliminate all brands of uncertainty. They resist change in order to maintain the existing order. They also perpetuate inequalities because they are considered an inherent part of system (Carney, Jost, Gosling, Potter, 2008). Because of their intolerance to uncertainty, conservatives prefer hierarchical structures in which the distribution of power and rights is clearly arranged (Fay, Frese, 2000).

When evaluated in organizational contexts, conservatives are less innovative and less entrepreneurial in the workplace. They spend less effort to improve the organization (Frese, Garst, Fay, 2007). Conservatism negatively affects individuals' development of new strategies and attitudes (Mittler, 2012). According to Wilson (1993), the main reason for conservatives' tendency to avoid uncertainty is to simplify, organize and make their inner and outer worlds safer. However, these preferences hinder one’s ability to be flexible or adaptable. In addition, it can be more difficult to take initiative and responsibility for one’s duties, and intervene to ensure the development of themselves, the society and the institutions they work for. In short, the unequal distribution of rights and benefits may not bother conservatives, as they are more unlikely to notice and interfere with disruptions arising from these unequal distributions (Fay, Frese, 2000). This causes them to perpetuate inequalities and injustices (Jost, Kruglanski, Simon, 2013; Eyerman & Jamison, 1991; Jost, 1995; Jost, Kruglanski, Simon, 2013). These conservative attitudes and characteristics can best be summed up as exhibiting less tolerance
towards minorities (Wilson, 1973), obedience to authority (Oyserman, Schwarz, 2017), more narrow-minded thinking (Carney et. al., 2008), less initiative and responsibility in work environments, less innovative and development-oriented attempts, preference for existing hierarchical social structures, importance to security rather than diversity and avoidance of change (Fay, Frese, 2000; Lehmiller, Schmitt, 2006), maintenance of the existing distribution of power and status, and a tendency to underestimate those who have the potential to be discriminated against (Kossowska & Hiel, 2003).

Social Justice in Education

Social justice requires fairness and equality as a basis in the distribution of resources and rights. It is most urgently needed for individuals and groups who, for any reason, have suffered from inequality in the sharing of social welfare and resources, are neglected, or marginalized (Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi & Bryant, 2007). According to Young (1990), “Social justice refers to the elimination of institutionalized domination and oppression, and the attempt to overcome the inequality that has spread throughout the society and in many areas”. Social justice requires actors with a sense of responsibility towards social issues (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007). Teachers can also be considered social actors who play a role in the realization of social justice (Kuar, 2012). An educational process aiming to promote social justice requires teachers to be aware of social inequalities and to demonstrate actions and attitudes against these inequalities (Apple, 2004; Journell, 2017). Discerning whether or not one is capable of fulfilling the requirements of social justice demands that potential teachers examine their own beliefs and the origins of these beliefs and have the sensitivity to recognize the inequalities caused by the dominant culture. Ultimately, they need to be able to filter their practices at school through this awareness (Lárusdóttir, O’Connor, 2021). Those who will practice social justice should be aware of social inequalities, take a position against them, and act for a more just and equal society. However, it can be said that teachers' beliefs, behaviors, attitudes and perspectives are generally in the direction of perpetuating inequalities and injustices (Bakur, 2012). These beliefs of teachers cause the effects of students' social and biological origins to reflect on their academic success (Williams, 1976). Of course, teachers alone cannot completely eliminate the basic inequalities of society. However, they are able to contribute to the realization of social justice by raising awareness among their students and peers (Lalas, 2007).

Methodology
The research aims to examine the effects of teachers' personal and social attitudes underlying their conservative tendencies on their beliefs about providing social justice in teaching. In terms of being suitable for the purpose of the research, a quantitative approach with a relational design was preferred because it allows for an examination of bivariate or multivariate relationships and estimations.

Sample

The research population consisted of primary, secondary and high school teachers from the İstanbul province in the 2020-2021 academic year. To determine the study group, the random sampling method was used. In random sampling, each element of the study group has an equal and independent chance of being selected (Özen & Gül, 2007). To achieve 0.5 significance and a 95% confidence interval, 980 teachers selected in accordance with random sampling were included in the study (Yamane, 2009). Demographics of the participants are presented on Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of School</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of all the participants 58.5% (n=583) were female, and 41.5% (n=407) were male. Besides, 38% (n= 372) of the participants work in high schools, %31.9 (n=313) of the participants work in secondary schools and 30.1% (n= 295) of the participants work in primary schools.

Data Collection Tools

Personal attitudes and social attitudes scales developed by Saribay, Ökten and Yılmaz (2017) were used in the research. These scales have been developed to represent the dimensions of conservatism, opposition to equality and resistance to change, both at societal/ideological and personal/psychological levels. The Personal Attitudes Scale is a 7-point Likert-type scale consisting of 29 items. The scale consists of (a) resistance to personal change (18 items) and
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(b) opposition to personal equality (11 items) sub-dimensions. The Cronbach-alpha coefficient of the personal attitudes scale was 0.984; 0.994 resistance to personal change; 0.987 for opposition to personal equality. The Societal Attitudes Scale is a 7-point Likert-type scale consisting of 29 items. The scale consists of (a) resistance to societal change (9 items) and (b) opposition to societal equality (17 items) sub-dimensions. The Cronbach-alpha coefficient of the personal attitudes scale was 0.983; 0.977 for opposite to societal change; 0.990 for opposite to societal equality.

Finally, the Learning to Teach for Social Justice–Beliefs Scale, which was developed by Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, and Mitescu (2008) and adapted into Turkish by Gezer (2017), was used in the study. The scale was developed to determine teachers' social justice beliefs in teaching, and can be classified as a 5-point Likert-type scale consisting of 11 items. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the whole scale was .980.

Analysis of Data

The quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Windows 25.0. Numbers, averages were standard deviation were used as descriptive statistics methods in data evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale and Sub-scales</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social justice-belief</td>
<td>-1.345</td>
<td>-0.363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to personal change</td>
<td>-1.324</td>
<td>0.286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition to personal equality</td>
<td>-1.163</td>
<td>0.256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition to societal equality</td>
<td>-1.298</td>
<td>0.310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to societal change</td>
<td>-1.297</td>
<td>0.198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, Kurtosis and Skewness values were examined to determine whether the study variables were normally distributed. Kurtosis and Skewness values between +1.5 and -1.5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) or +2.0 and -2.0 (Mallery & George, 2010) are considered normal distribution. As the sampling is adequate according to the law of large numbers and the central limit theorem (N=980), the analyses were continued with the assumption that the distribution was normal (Harwiki, 2013; İnal & Günay, 1993; Johnson & Wichern, 2002). The prediction level of the independent variable to dependent variable was determined with regression analysis.
**Findings**

In the study, first of all, the results of the arithmetic mean and standard deviation correlation analysis regarding the answers given by the teachers to the scales are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean, Standard Deviations and Correlation Analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Sd</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social justice belief</td>
<td>3.435</td>
<td>1.281</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to personal change</td>
<td>3.600</td>
<td>1.881</td>
<td>-.670**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition to personal equality</td>
<td>3.539</td>
<td>1.787</td>
<td>-.647**</td>
<td>.516**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposite to societal equality</td>
<td>3.550</td>
<td>1.903</td>
<td>-.690**</td>
<td>.747**</td>
<td>.621**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to societal change</td>
<td>3.700</td>
<td>1.281</td>
<td>-.673**</td>
<td>.549**</td>
<td>.697**</td>
<td>.519**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: (1)** Values significant at 0.01 level

As shown in the Table 1, all variables identified in the study yielded high and significant means. In addition, there are positive and significant correlations between the enabling school bureaucracy, which is the dependent variable of the study, and all independent variables.

Table 2 shows the results of the regression analyses of all independent variables.

Table 2. Regression Analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice Beliefs</td>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>85.286</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>654.680</td>
<td>0.572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resistance to personal change</td>
<td>-.313</td>
<td>-18.806</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opposition to personal equality</td>
<td>-.294</td>
<td>-16.785</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>5.716</td>
<td>89.342</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opposition to societal equality</td>
<td>-.314</td>
<td>-20.010</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>769.701</td>
<td>0.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resistance to societal change</td>
<td>-.315</td>
<td>-18.461</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings provide insight into the importance of personal level conservative attitudes in social justice beliefs about teaching. Table 2 shows that teachers' social justice beliefs about teaching was significantly predicted by resistance to personal change (β=-.313), and by opposite to personal equity (β=-.294), which together accounted for 57.2% of the variance (R²=0.572, F=654.680, p<0.00). As teachers' resistance to personal change and opposite to equality attitudes increase, social justice beliefs about teaching decrease.
For conservative attitudes at the social level, which is another independent variable of social justice belief about teaching, the results revealed that both sub-dimensions were significant. Social justice beliefs about teaching was significantly predicted by resistance to societal change principal ($\beta=-.314$) and opposite to societal equity ($\beta=-.315$), which together accounted for 61.1% of the variance ($R^2=0.611$, $F=769.701$, $p<0.00$). According to the results of the regression analysis, as the teachers' against social equality and resistance to social change attitudes increase, their belief in social justice beliefs about teaching decreases.

**Discussion**

Establishing a relationship between conservatism and the common psychological and ideological causes of social injustices is important in understanding the barriers to overcoming them (Feygina, 2013). Conceptually, social justice refers to the equitable distribution of rights, benefits, and opportunities to build social solidarity, while conservatism refers to political choices, hierarchical (unequal) social systems that strengthen stability, and thus the status quo. (Stoesz, 2014). When evaluated in this regard, it can be said that the conservative attitudes of individuals, especially in daily interactions, will create obstacles or limitations in the realization of social justice. While designing practices in accordance with social justice principles, it is important to consider the pro-systemic motives of individuals who actualize these practices. If this is not taken into account, practices and policies regarding social justice in schools will be counterproductive and ineffective because of practitioners (Blasi, Jost, 2012). In order to reveal these possible effects, the relationship between teachers' conservative attitudes and their social justice beliefs regarding teaching was investigated in this study. Conservatism was discussed at social and personal levels, with dimensions covering resistance to change and opposition to equality. According to the findings of the study, there is a significant relationship between the dimensions of resistance to change and opposition to equality of personal/psychological attitudes and teachers' social justice beliefs in education. As resistance to change and opposition to equality decrease, teachers' social justice beliefs increase. The dimension of resistance to personal change is associated with maintaining old habits and having difficulty with changes. Opposition to personal equality is associated with seeking power and authority in interpersonal settings. In addition, those opposed to personal equality prefer superiority or subjugation over others to egalitarian and democratic relations (Sarıbay, Ökten, Yılmaz, 2017). Sharing power with students rather than simply actualizing a hierarchical relationship is a requirement of social justice (Ciechanowski,
In this sense, teachers are expected to create a respectful, egalitarian, collaborative and democratic classroom dialogues (Spitzman, Balconi, 2019). For this, teachers need to be for rather than against equality at the personal level, and change their traditional hierarchical classroom habits. When evaluated in this context, it is expected that anti-egalitarian teacher attitudes at the personal level will conflict with social justice beliefs. There is a significant emphasis on the role of teachers as change agents in assessments of education and social justice. The extent to which teachers can fulfill this assigned role and reflect it in their educational processes is also related to individual characteristics (Themane & Thobejane, 2018). In response to the call for change agents for social justice, teachers' potential to create change in schools is rather ambiguous. Beyond the formal or structural barriers, there are many social justice violations stemming from attitudes of teachers. This is because social justice in education is not only related to opportunity and access to justice and equality, but also to classroom practices where students are not marginalized, labeled or categorized (Pantić, Carr, 2017). For example, in Castelli and Carraro's (2010) study examining the relationships between various ideologies and attitudes, it was concluded that conservatives tend to categorize people based off of stimuli such as skin color or ethnicity and perceive themselves to have higher moral standing. For social justice in education, teachers need to understand what kind of changes are needed at the classroom and school levels in order to ensure all are treated equally and with a spirit of inclusivity (Arshad, 2012). It is important for the social and academic success of the students that their teachers create a mentality change that is in line with the principles of social justice and is freed from common social mechanisms that create inequality and injustice in the classroom. The attitudes of teachers, who are considered as change agents for the realization of social justice in teaching, are determinative in this regard. Similarly, the results of the study reveal that as teachers' attitude towards change resistance increases, their social justice beliefs decrease.

Conservatism is associated with system bias and is based on a hierarchical structure of society. Changing the system is undesirable even though some of the social processes inevitably lead to inequality. Therefore, addressing conservatism as resistance to change and anti-egalitarian attitudes provides a broad focus (Jost, 2020; Alper, Yılmaz & Sarıbay, 2021). Due to some psychological barriers, individuals may resist changing the status quo despite all its inequality and injustice. Status quo is term which is defined by that which already exists. In other words, it is the established order. It is what people know and have experience with. These can be considered by some as advantages of the status quo over alternatives which seek
change. Considering the social norms, cultural values and expectations that encourage the current order, cognitive pressures and limitations tend to prevent innovative alternatives from emerging. Beliefs that contradict the status quo may not arise for emotional and cognitive reasons, as they require greater motivation, understanding, awareness, and courage (Higgins, 1996; Eidelman & Crandall, 2009; Jost, 2021; Secchi, 2011). An attitude of social equality is related to meeting the basic human needs of all people. Resistance to social change, on the other hand, is related to attitudes such as maintaining the existing social order, traditions, and considering certain civil and minority rights as a threat to territorial integrity (Saribay, Ökten, Yılmaz, 2017). These tendencies and attitudes may cause teachers to act as gatekeepers (Allen, 2015). For this reason, in addition to the personal attitudes underlying conservatism, the relationship between social attitudes and social justice beliefs was also examined. Focusing on teachers' attitudes can be a good resource in order to analyze the possible consequences of social mechanisms, processes, norms or stereotypes on students and how these results are reflected in classroom interactions in light of social justice principles.

Dealing with teachers' social attitudes and social justice issues together is like considering the classroom as a prototype society. According to other findings of the study, as teachers' attitudes towards social change and opposition to equality increase, their beliefs about social justice in education decrease. Teachers can maintain the reflection of society in the classroom or they can be a trigger for social change (Mitchell, 2012). In his research, Allen (2015) demonstrates how teachers' suspension of common societal perceptions regarding black students in order to evaluate them on the basis of their own behavior can be beneficial in providing them with opportunities for academic success. For students who are wronged by certain social processes, teachers can create a wave of change that starts in the classroom and spreads throughout society (Dvira, Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2019). Achieving good results for each child is a targeted result when it comes to the professional role of the teacher. The role of the teacher as a change agent constitutes an important pillar of teacher professionalism. Fundamentally, teachers are expected to challenge the status quo, take a different stance on social justice from the injustices inherent in social practices, and support the learning of all students (Pantić, Florian, 2015; Pantić, Carr, 2017). One of the requirements for teachers to be change agents for social justice is to be able to analyze the unfair and unequal effects of some common opinions, stereotypes or social mechanisms on students. Teachers should be able to evaluate their own preferences, attitudes and behaviors and display a more egalitarian stance (Pantić, 2015; Styslinger et. al., 2019). In this way, they can both fulfill the requirements of social justice and trigger a social mentality change for preventing common unfair and unequal
practices from developing in the future. However, in order for teachers to be change agents, they must first realize the inequalities inherent in the society, feel uncomfortable, display a different attitude and be willing to change. The findings of the study also support these assumptions. According to the findings, there is a negative relationship between resistance to change, and opposite to equality attitudes at the societal level and social justice beliefs in teaching. As teachers' resistance to change and opposite to equality attitudes at the societal level increase, social justice beliefs in education decrease.

Inequality and injustice can be analyzed at all levels, from the individual to the social. They continue by intertwining and reinforcing each other in various dimensions, which include individual, organizational, institutional and social arenas (Adams, Zúñiga, 2016). Equitable and inclusive classroom experiences positively affect students' self-image and increase their sense of confidence and autonomy. Helping them overcome obstacles created by social prejudices or pressures is an important means of educational support provided to them in forming successful social identities (Veliz, 2021). Subjecting individuals to evaluations such as normal, good, superior, acceptable or vice versa leads to feelings of inequality. For social justice in education, it is important for teachers to discover how oppression is learned, internalized and produced in socialization processes. One example of this would be teachers' awareness of the common social-false consciousness of women's roles and how that can contribute to curbing societal pressures. According to the findings, attitudes such as individual and socially oriented inequality and resistance to remedial changes are related to the belief in social justice in teaching. It is important for students' educational rights to create changes in these attitudes of teachers in accordance with social justice standards. According to Jost (2020), some of the cases of perpetuating injustice and inequalities result from individuals' failure to grasp the true nature of social structures. Dialogue processes that analyze the nature of social systems in terms of cause and effect relationships can help change misunderstandings. Another recommendation in this regard is related to teacher education. In order to implement educational values and commitments related to social justice and equality in schools, teacher education programs must reflect a sensitivity that will disrupt power-knowledge hierarchies (Zeichner, 2018). They should also provide teachers with a set of conceptual tools that help develop a realistic understanding of the individual and society and deal with ethical dilemmas (Pantić, Carr, 2017). It is an important condition for social justice in education that teachers consider issues such as justice, equality and ethics and develop
responsibility. In this way, their attitudes and practices can be developed in line with social justice principles.

References


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