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## Validation of a social justice questionnaire

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### **Abstract**

*In this empirical study we designed a questionnaire that seeks to analyse the representation that Spanish students and teachers have about Social Justice. The questionnaire includes a set of different dilemmas about social justice issues, both in education and in social life and family. The dilemmas equitably represent three fundamental dimensions in social justice: representation, redistribution and recognition. The questionnaire has been validated with the participation of a group of experts in the field of social justice and tested in three groups of secondary students and with training teachers, from Madrid, Spain.*

**Keywords:** *Social Justice, education, dilemmas, Redistribution, Recognition, Representation, secondary students, teachers.*

### **Introduction**

Social Justice is a dynamic concept. It is very political and volatile. Moreover, it reflects our view of society, our wishes for a better world. For this reason, we could consider Social Justice to be a dynamic project, never finished or reached.

In this study, our theoretical framework is based on the social justice concepts proposed by Sen (2010) concerning redistribution and the ideas of Fraser (2003, 2008) with respect to recognition and participation.

In essence, the following three related concepts are in the base of social justice:

- *Redistribution* of material and cultural resources and of primary goods. In education, this concept makes reference to the distribution of resources and support that gives greater opportunity of development to disadvantaged students.
- *Recognition* and cultural respect of all people. In education, this concept makes reference to recognition and valuation of diversity.
- *Representation* or active participation of people in important decisions that concern their lives. In education, this concept makes reference to the participation and representation of traditionally excluded students, bearing in mind their needs of learning and life.

Probably the most important mission of education is the production of social justice, (Bolivar, 2012) provided that all educational systems of democratic countries are conceived to reduce inequality of opportunities. Nevertheless, schools and teachers may sometimes lack power, knowledge or ability to solve problems and daily difficulties. However, empirical research and school experiences have demonstrated that the school is the basic unit in education. Therefore, education for Social Justice happens necessarily in schools that work in and for Social Justice (Cochran-Smith et al, 2009). In addition, more research is needed in order to explore the representations that specific actors in schools, as students and teachers, have about Social Justice, and how this inter-relates with policy and how this may affect actions (or inaction) in school.

### **Objectives**

This study has the following objectives:

1. To elaborate an instrument to obtain information of the representations about Social Justice, basically with respect educational decisions.
2. To know and to analyze the ideas and representations that students and teachers have about Social Justice.
3. To explore the representations that the students and teachers have on the educational practices that promote social Justice inside the schools.
4. To compare and to connect the representations of students and teachers.

### **Elaboration**

A Social Justice Questionnaire has been elaborated for different experts in the fields of education, psychology, history, linguistics, pedagogy and anthropology.

The questionnaire includes a set of different dilemmas about hypothetical situations or problems relating to social justice dimensions. These dilemmas are about different current issues, especially in educational context.

Each dilemma has three alternatives or possible responses. One alternative is highly promoting of social justice, other alternative is against social justice and a third response that is more neutral or less promoting of social justice.

In the social justice questionnaire there are an equal number of dilemmas related to the three dimensions (Redistribution, Recognition and Representation).

### **Examples of dilemmas**

Some examples are the following dilemmas:

In the first place, with respect to Redistribution an example is:

Three people are hired to do a job. One of these has a slight disability, and is therefore slower than the others. How do you think the wages should be distributed?

- A) All three persons should earn the same wage as they hold the same post.
- B) Each person should earn a wage proportional to his or her performance.
- C) All three persons should earn the same wage and the state must give economic compensation to the company.

In this case, the third alternative highly promotes social justice, the second alternative is neutral or less promoting of social justice and the first alternative is against social justice.

With respect the Recognition's dimension an example is the following question:

In our society, men and women who do the same job do not usually earn the same amount. Why do you think this happens?

- A) Women earn less because they are discriminated against.
- B) Women earn less because they usually have other family obligations.
- C) Men earn more because they are usually more committed to their job.

In this case, the first alternative is highly promoting of social justice, the second alternative is neutral or less promoting of social justice and the third alternative is against social justice.

Finally as example of Representation:

Anna wants to be the class representative, but her tutor thinks that another student with much better grades should represent the class. Who do you think should be the representative?

- A) The students most highly valued by the tutor
- B) Only students with good grades should be class representatives.
- C) Any student who wishes to be class representative should be allowed to, even if their grades are not good.

In this case, the C alternative is highly promoting of social justice; the B alternative is neutral or less promoting of social justice and A is against social justice.

### **Validation of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire has been subjected to double validation:

*Validation of experts:* they have validated each of the three alternatives in a Likert scale of social justice from 1 to 9.

**Example:**

**In the general elections of any country the following should have the right to vote:**

A) Only those citizens who were born in the country.

less SJ 

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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 More SJ

B) All nationals of that country regardless of whether they were born there or not.

less SJ 

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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 More SJ

C) All the citizens who live in that country.

less SJ 

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 More SJ

*Pilot study:* it is an experimental application of the questionnaire to training teachers and primary and secondary' students.

### **Types of questionnaire**

We have elaborated three types of questionnaires:

1. *Social justice questionnaire for primary students:* this questionnaire has 21 questions or problems about social justice. We will apply this questionnaire to students of sixth of primary education with 11 years old.
2. *Social justice questionnaire for secondary students:* this questionnaire has 30 questions or problems. It includes the 21 questions of the primary education questionnaire and we have added 9 news. We will apply this questionnaire to student of second and fourth of secondary education and first of Baccalaureate with 13, 15 and 17 years old.
3. *Social justice questionnaire for teachers:* this questionnaire has 39 questions or problems about social justice. It includes 30 questions of the secondary's questionnaire and we have add 9 dilemmas.

You can see that there is a set of common dilemmas in the three questionnaires that allows making a comparison with answer of students and teachers.

### **Analysis of results**

The results of questionnaire could be analyzed using:

1. Descriptive analyses and reliability analysis, to have an approximation of the concept of Social Justice, as well as the characteristics of the sample.
2. Exploratory factorial analysis of the answers to the dilemmas.
3. Confirmatory factorial analysis of the dimensions of Social Justice.

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