

Kindergarten Teachers' Understanding on Social Justice: Stories From Indonesia

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Abstract

The notion of social justice has often been overlooked in the field of early childhood education because many teachers think that it is too early to introduce the concept to young children. Using multicultural theories, this article attempts to explore kindergarten teachers' perceptions on the issue of social justice. The method adopted in this research is case study. Thirteen kindergarten teachers from five different schools in three different cities in West Java, Indonesia, are selected as participants. Data are collected through semistructured interviews and analyzed using a grounded approach. Findings of this study highlight the extent to which kindergarten teachers understand issues of social justice in terms of equality of treatment. The findings also illuminate complexities faced by the teachers in negotiating social justice in their teaching. The findings also indicate the need to reform curriculum for teacher training programs to include matters like social justice.

Keywords

social justice, early childhood education, teachers, feminist, multicultural

Introduction

Issues of social justice are often overlooked within an early childhood education (ECE) setting. Many academics and practitioners of ECE often believe that social justice is not something to be introduced to young children. This understanding seems to be predicated on an assumption that children's cognitive development is insufficient to understand complex issues such as social justice (MacNaughton, Hughes, & Smith, 2007; Mallory & New, 1994).

At the same time, practices of ECE have been long dominated by developmentalism. On one hand, it is considered progressive because it sees young children in more democratic and humanistic ways. Yet, on the other hand, the approach also emphasizes on individualism over collectivism (Adriany, 2013; Burman, 2008a, 2008b; Walkerdine, 1998). Such paradigm unintentionally makes the issue of social justice deliberately forgotten within ECE.

However, over the past 20 years, an awareness to teach social justice to young children has been increasing. Many academics and researchers, such as Christman (2010), Schoorman (2011), and Adriany (2015), argue that teaching social justice to young children is, indeed, very fundamental. Other researchers, such as Walkerdine (1998); MacNaughton (2000); Burman (2008a); Edwards, Blaise, and Hammer (2009); MacNaughton (2000); and Walkerdine (1998), even though they do not specifically mention the words social justice, all believe that children have capacity to understand complex social issues such as racism and gender. Adriany (2015) believes that marginalizing issues of social justice is

another form of politicizing young children. Children are purposely silenced so that the status quo can be preserved.

Despite an awareness of bringing social justice to ECE having emerged, research that explores social justice within an ECE setting remains limited. Most of the research on social justice is conducted in Global North countries (Cannella, 1997; Christman, 2010; Enns & Sinacore, 2005; Gewirtz, 1998; Sapon-Shevin, 2003; Smith, 2012). Such studies are quite scarce in the Global South countries. In the Indonesian context, there has not been any research that directly addresses the matter. Issues of social justice are marginalized in Indonesia because of the growing pressure from parents and society regarding the cognitive development of young children. Many parents and teachers in Indonesia often demand ECE to teach academic aspects, such as reading, writing, and counting. Parents' emphasis on academic success in their children leads to issues of social justice being perceived as less important to be taught to young children.

Therefore, this research attempts to fill the gap in existing research and literatures by exploring topics on social justice in ECE in Indonesia. Specifically, this research tries to unpack ECE teachers' perception and understanding of social justice and the extent to which they negotiate the subjects in ECE curriculum.

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Theorizing Social Justice in ECE

The notion of social justice in education is rooted to Paolo Freire's classic work on critical pedagogy (Freire, 1996). Critical pedagogy itself can be defined as teaching methods that "question and challenge existing knowledge base and power relations" (Ng, 1995, p. 130). Within critical pedagogy, teachers are expected to shake and disrupt "the regime of truth" in the society. As Foucault (1980) argues, almost in every society, people will accept existing power relation as a taken-for-granted truth rather than something that is socially constructed. Critical pedagogy will then deconstruct the truth and demonstrate the extent to which the truth is situated within specific interest and norms. As Brockington, Mangieri, Morgan, and Wiedenhoef (2011) argue, we need to unpack power relations in the society to address the inequities and inequalities around us and analyze the impact on our daily lives. Furthermore, Gewirtz (1998) argues that the aims of education should make the students aware of the existence of oppression and how oppression affects their life.

Critical pedagogy has developed over time. It is rooted in Marx's approach to conflict. Nowadays, critical pedagogy encompasses theories such as "feminist poststructuralism, critical race theory, queer theory, postcolonial theory, critical whiteness theory, and critical disability theory" (MacNaughton, 2009, p. 107). Recent development of critical pedagogy also encompasses multicultural theory (Enns & Sinacore, 2005). All these theories under the umbrella of critical pedagogies share commitment toward social justice. They pay attention to all marginalized groups in the society. They work within inclusive principle that attempts to include everyone and make everyone within the society visible regardless of their sexual, religion, and ethnic background (Sapon-Shevin, 2003). It gives particular attention to systematic oppression done through existing power relations in educational institutions. These theories are concerned with issues such as,

building classroom communities of dialogue across and with difference, critical multicultural and antibias education, culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive and competent teachers, antiracist teaching, equity pedagogy, anti-oppressive teacher education, disability rights, ableism, and access to academics for students with disabilities. (Agarwal, Epstein, Oppenheim, Oyler, & Sonu, 2010, p. 237)

In this article, we are informed by multicultural approaches to social justice. Using Enns and Sinacore's (2005) approach, we use multicultural theories because we believe they encourage teachers and educators to challenge oppression and to seek for social justice. Multicultural theories are concerned with questions of power and privileged. They both pay attention to questions such as, who is visible and who is

invisible? Who is being included and who is being excluded? On what basis, the inclusion and exclusion is made? They undoubtedly become powerful tools to combat any form of inequality and oppression, whether it is the result of one's gender, sexuality, or ethnicity.

The use of multicultural theories also leads us to distinguish the difference between equity and equality. Within education setting, teachers often believe that they have treated them equally. However, as Banks and Banks (1995) define, equity pedagogy is a

teaching strategies and classroom environments that help students from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups attain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively within, and help create and perpetuate, a just, humane, and democratic society. (p. 152)

In other words, within multicultural approaches to social justice, equity is preferred because it allows teachers to respect students' differences instead of silence the differences.

One could, then, take a devil's advocate position and ask, "but why do we need to bring social justice into research to ECE?" As we have argued in the introduction, many people, sometimes among the educators themselves often assume that issues of social justice are yet to be introduced to young children. They often justify these by using developmentalism. Within developmentalist paradigm, children are incapable of understanding complex issues such as social justice. As a result, social justice issues are often not discussed in ECE.

Even though the issues have been marginalized, it does not mean issues of social justice are not relevant in ECE. Young (1990) believes that there are five types of oppression that take place in education setting including ECE, namely, exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. It is evident that, unfortunately, our current educational system in Indonesia still experiences these five types of oppression. Even though we may think that we have been freed from being exploited, the work of Bourdieu (1998) on symbolic violence reminds us that violence takes many different forms. The most frequent one in education is a type of symbolic violence experienced by students due to their economic background. Education continuously benefits upper-middle-class students and marginalizes lower-class students (Francis & Mills, 2012). In the age of neo-liberal policy, the increasing cost of kindergarten that is only affordable to the rich is evident. Only families who have sufficient economic capital can enroll their children to ECE. These situations certainly benefit upper-middle-class children and leave lower-class children powerless and invisible and, thus, they become the victims of violation in the whole system. As Hearn and Parkin (2001) claim, the meaning of violation can be understood as,

a broad, socially contextualized understanding of violence as violation. Accordingly, we define violence as those structures, actions, events, and experiences that violate or cause violation or are considered as violating . . . Violence can thus be seen as much more than physical violence, harassment, and bullying. It can also include intimidation, interrogation, surveillance, persecution, subjugation, discrimination, and exclusion that lead to experiences of violation. (p. 17)

The work of feminist research also reveals that gender-based violence continues to take place in ECE (Francis & Mills, 2012; MacNaughton, 2000; Paechter, 1998). ECE is still dominated by females and excludes males from entering the profession (Brownhill, 2014; Hellman, Heikkilä, & Sundhall, 2014; Warin, 2006). Research by Browne (2004), Blaise (2005, 2013), Paechter (2007), Adriany (2013), Adriany and Warin (2014), Blaise (2005, 2013), Browne (2004), Paechter (2007), and Warin and Adriany (2017) also illuminate the extent to which ECE has been very much gendered. Some spaces in the kindergarten are dominated by boys, leaving girls with no access to them (Paechter, 2007). Francis and Mills (2012) have even claimed that it is undoubted that school has become a site for violence which perpetuates social inequalities, such as racism and gender inequality, psychological injury and exclusion of pupils, institutional disciplines and surveillance and how these affect teachers' experiences in the school. It is supported by Henry (1996) in which he points out how schooling can make teachers in ECE feel peripheral in their own teaching practices.

Cultural imperialism also persists in ECE. It is the work of postcolonial thinkers like Spivak and Mohanti who reiterate that colonialization did not end with the Second World War (Mohanty, 2006; Spivak, 2000). It is, in fact, now transforming into more subtle ways, controlling the language, mind, and thinking of students and academics (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2002). The key element in the postcolonial condition refers to a situation wherein colonial discourse affects the mind of the colonized people (Childs & Williams, 1997). Colonialization in ECE can be seen in several aspects. For years, ECE academics and researcher in countries like Indonesia have been mostly relying on the literature produced by Western academics. As a result, Western thinking on children and childhood as well as ECE has become the norm (Penn, 2002). At the same time, Western discourse on ECE travels through developmentalism. The philosophy is becoming very pervasive in ECE throughout the world, including in a country like Indonesia. It becomes the regime of truth, the only way to understand young children (Edwards et al., 2009). As the result, local and indigenous knowledge about children is often perceived to be less true and valid.

Another indication of the legacy of postcolonialism in ECE can be seen in the growing of franchised international kindergartens. In Indonesia, for example, in almost every big city, there exists an international kindergarten that follows the Western model. This phenomenon is labeled by Dýrfjörð

(2012) as the McDonaldization of ECE. ECE becomes nothing more than a brand that can be purchased, licensed, and franchised from one country to another. Although the growth of ECE can be seen as an expansion of ECE service, many also argue that it perpetuates the class differences in the society (Gupta, 2006).

Research Context

Indonesia is a very large country with a population of more than 250 million people. It consists of people from various ethnic and religious backgrounds. Islam is the biggest religion, made up by almost 87% of the whole population and Javanese is the biggest ethnic group who consist of 40% of the whole population. Indonesia has enjoyed peaceful situation in the past, though being majority, Islamic and Javanese norms are often used in the society, something that is actually quite problematic from the multicultural perspectives.

During the New-Order government (1965-1998), education in Indonesia became a space to disseminate state ideology, *Pancasila*. *Pancasila* consists of five principles as follows: belief in the one and only God, a just and civilized humanity, the unity of Indonesia, democracy, and social justice for all people of Indonesia. One can clearly see how social justice is actually a value promoted in Indonesia. *Pancasila* is often perceived a national guard to ensure that every citizen in Indonesia regardless of their background will be treated equally. Values of *Pancasila* are then translated into national official motto, *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, literally means Unity in Diversity.

With the downfall of the New-Order government, values of *Pancasila* were questioned and contested (Amirrachman, 2012). Many perceive that despite all the values attached to *Pancasila*, *Pancasila* can become a form of control. On the contrary, the contest to *Pancasila* has contributed to rise of conflicts between different groups in Indonesia, whether it is an ethnic-based conflict or a religion-motivated conflict (Bubandt, 2014).

Indonesia is also one of the countries that have experienced rapid economic development. The numbers of middle class in Indonesia are increasing, yet, at the same time, the discrepancy between the rich and the poor becomes more visible. Inequality seems to be very pervasive in Indonesia (Yusuf, Sumber, & Rum, 2014). In the ECE setting, for example, the number of expensive kindergartens is rising, while in small villages, many children still have problems in accessing good quality kindergartens (Adriany & Saefullah, 2015).

Gender-based violence is also still a problem in Indonesia. Despite the fact that Indonesia had its first female president in 2000, discrimination against women continues to take place within many settings, including the educational field (Blackburn, 2004; Robinson & Bessell, 2002). Research done by Adriany and Warin (2014) illuminates the gendered nature of ECE in Indonesia and how kindergarten becomes a space where traditional gender norms are perpetuated.

With all the problems mentioned above, it is sufficient to say that there is a need to have more awareness on the issues of social justice. It is unfortunate, as we have elaborated earlier, that these issues are often overlooked, especially in the ECE setting.

Method

This article adopts qualitative research. Specifically, it employs case study approach. Case study is selected because it allows researchers to explore in great detail teachers' perceptions and understandings of social justice (Gable, 1994). At the same time, by doing case study, researchers are allowed to compare different units of cases. In this research, the researchers treat each subject as a different unit of analysis.

This research is conducted in West Java. West Java is a unique province, because even though it is situated in Java island, the people are not considered Javanese. The people in the West Java are mostly known as Sundanese, the second most populous ethnics in Indonesia after Javanese. In West Java, Sundanese language is often spoken as a mother tongue in addition to Indonesian, which is the national language of Indonesia.

Participants are the teachers from different kindergartens in three different cities in West Java, Indonesia. The cities are chosen after consultation with an expert in geography to ensure that they represented different regions in West Java. One city is situated in mountainous area, another city is located near the sea, and the final city is a metropolis city. From each city, a gatekeeper is contacted. Using snowball sampling, the gatekeeper would then introduce the researchers to other participants (Creswell, 2013). From the first city (City A), five subjects participate; from the second city (City B), four subjects join; and from the final city (City C), four subjects take part. In total, 13 kindergarten teachers participate in this research. To protect the subjects' privacy and confidentiality, each teacher is given a fictional name. The names of each city are also not mentioned, so that no information on the participants could be traced.

Data and information are collected using nonformal interview. The interview is conducted in the Indonesian language. Each interview lasted for 1 to 2 hr. In the final stage of data collection, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is held as a means to check and recheck subjects' understanding on social justice.

Data are then transcribed and translated into English. The transcripts are returned to the participant to ensure its authenticity. The participants are also given a chance to alter or delete any statement from the transcript. Then, the data are analyzed using constructivist grounded theory. The coding takes place in two main stages: line-by-line coding and accidental coding (Charmaz, 2006). In the first stage of data analysis, we code the transcripts and, in the second stage of the analysis, we compare each code and

merge similar codes. We then identify three themes which emerge from this process. These are *Equity Versus Equality*, *Developmentalism*, and *Teachers' Paperwork as a Challenge to Teach Social Justice*.

Findings and Discussion

Equity Versus Equality

Findings of this study demonstrate the extent to which the teachers agree that social justice is an important issue to be introduced to young children in ECE. All the teachers in the research use *Pancasila* as their source of understanding of social justice. When questioned "what social justice means?" they will reply, "it is one of the pillars of *Pancasila*." The teachers believe that social justice means treating each child equally in the school. However, the teachers seem to be perplexed as to what social justice actually aims and to what extent it can be taught to young children. One of the factors that contribute to the teachers' confusion is based on the teachers' inability to distinguish between the notion of equity and equality. Almost all teachers in this research define social justice as equal treatment given to all children, as the following quote illustrates:

Ehmmm . . . we treat children equally here, regardless of their religion, culture, parents' background. Once they are in this school, they will receive equal treatment. (Ina, a teacher from a kindergarten in City A)

In spite of the fact that the teachers think that they have treated children in the school equally, the teachers do not understand that treating all children similarly can, in fact, contradict with the principle of justice itself. In one of the interviews, one teacher explains that the school requires all children to bring an identical snack-lunch to the school. By asking all children to bring the same food, the school ignores the fact that there are students from different economic backgrounds that might perceive this rule as overwhelming.

The schools' preferences over the notion of equality have unintentionally perpetuated injustice and difference among various groups of children in the school. Within the notion of equality, children's background is not taken into account. Everyone, regardless of his or her background, will be treated equally. It is like as in one of the memes circulated on the Internet, school is expecting every animal to climb a tree, when, in fact, there are animals that will not be able to climb a tree. In everyday life, the schools' desire for equality will benefit only some children and further marginalize other children. Hence, ironically, the notion of equality is, in fact, sustaining inequality between different groups of children in the school.

The schools' approach to equality is often predicated on the "sameness" principle. All children are expected to be similar and also identical, as is obvious from the following interview:

There is pupil from Ambon. She speaks in a peculiar accent. The children often laugh about it. I try to explain to them that she is from different region. At the same time, I am also teaching her to change her accent and start learning Sundanese. (Ucu, a teacher from City B)

As we have explained in the “Method” section, this research is conducted in West Java, where most of the inhabitants are Sundanese. Thus, Sundanese values and norms are often used as a norm. In Bandung, the capital city of West Java for example, every Wednesday the government has “*Rebo Nyunda*” (literally translated as Sundanese Wednesday), where all schools from preschool until high school have to display Sundanese attributes. All pupils, including their teachers would wear Sundanese dress and the use of Sundanese language is encouraged on that day. From one side, this may be seen as an attempt to protect indigenous language, but from another perspective, as the occupants of Bandung is not only Sundanese, this may be perceived as reinforcing the norms of majority to the minority. What happens in the above example is a situation where the Sundanese language, customs, and practices are used as norms against the minority, that even a girl who comes from Ambon and speaks a different mother tongue and accent is forced to change her accent. The interview above illuminates how the teachers push everyone to be the same by following the norm of the majority. Browne (2004) argues that the notion of sameness is, in fact, creating “the other.” Through a school’s desire to maintain sameness, it may potentially push children to be similar without taking into account their differences. The term “the other” here refers to a group of individuals who have been not only treated differently but also excluded due to their differences with the majority group who become a norm in the school.

The situation also yields the extent to which the teachers are imposing their power to the children. Central within multicultural pedagogy is the idea that teachers must be reflexive with their power. What happens in this interview clearly indicates the opposite where the teachers are not aware of their power and hence, they end up using their power to perpetuate the creation of “the other” in the school.

Developmentalism

Findings of this research also prove the pervasiveness of the developmentalism discourse. It was evident in the findings of this article that developmentalism tends to see children in ECE as unable to understand complex issues in society (MacNaughton, 2005), including issues such as social justice.

Of course, we have to teach children what’s going on (social justice). Yet, at the same time we have to make sure that what we teach is developmentally appropriate. (Minda, teacher in City B)

The above quote clearly demonstrates how the teachers in this research use developmentalism as a reason to not explore

further issues of social justice in ECE. They believe that the issues are developmentally inappropriate. This is also mentioned further by another teacher in this research:

I don’t want to scare the pupils. They don’t need to know everything. We can teach them social justice by telling them to share things with their friends, to be just, to be kind with everyone. (Ina, teacher in City C)

The strong influence of developmentalism in ECE in Indonesia has unintentionally caused the teachers to lose an opportunity to explore issues of social justice in their classroom. Within developmentalism, children are seen as innocent and naive individuals who are yet to understand social issues. In fact, according to the teachers in this school, children need to be protected from being involved in social issues. The teachers are not aware that, by marginalizing the children from learning about social justice, they are, in fact, engaged in a process of silencing young children. It suffices to state that, apparently, developmentalism has become one of the factors that prevent teachers from bringing social justice issues into ECE.

Teachers’ Paperwork as a Challenge to Teach Social Justice in ECE

Another obstacle for ECE teachers to teach social justice is predicated on the government’s policy that does not provide space for teachers to do this. Since 2006, all teachers from preschool to higher education are subjected to Law No. 14 2015. Under this law, it is compulsory for all teachers to have at least a bachelor degree program and undergo a certification process. Once they have passed this process, they will be certified as a professional teacher and, subsequently, get professional incentive money in addition to their regular salary. The teachers’ professionalization will continually be evaluated on a regular basis. To maintain their professional status, teachers need to make sure that they are updating their knowledge by following seminars, conferences, and workshops on ECE. The process, although it involves some training and knowledge transfer, also emphasizes paperwork.

Based on the interviews, it is also revealed even the teachers have to be responsible in making sure the schools get sufficient pupils. If the ratio of teachers–students is not fulfilled, the teachers will not receive their certification money. Hence, besides having to teach and be involved in paperwork, they are now in charge of finding the students for their school.

The whole process of certification has, on one hand, particularly increased people’s motivation to become a teacher, because being a teacher now is associated with decent salary. Yet, at the same time, because many of the process do not directly involve teaching and caring of young children in ECE, teachers are often trapped in paper and administrative work. As a result, under what Osgood (2006) labels as the “regulatory gaze” of professionalism, ECE teachers are

confined to the system of certification and, hence, they do not possess autonomy to expand the meaning of professionalism. As we mentioned earlier, almost all our participants believe that teaching social justice to young children is, indeed, very important, but, given all the pressure they are under in regard to maintaining their status as professional teachers, they are not able to do that. As one of our participants argues,

We really want to teach social justice, but, you see, our time is occupied by doing administrative work. We need so many paperworks to do, research to do . . . (laugh). It's funny, later on we will have teachers who know how to do research, to write an article, but know nothing about teaching (laugh again). (Leni, a teacher in a kindergarten in City B)

Leni's argument is supported by another teacher named Lia. Lia also claims that most of her time as a teacher is occupied by so much paperwork that the things she should introduce in her teaching are becoming overlooked.

Our time (to teach) is really taken away. Now, with the new law, even we need to find students to fulfil the ratio. Otherwise, our certification money will not be transferred. At the same time, we have to teach everything. It's hard . . . very very hard. (Lia, a teacher in City C)

The above quotes demonstrate how teachers often feel like they are being ensnared in educational policy that is influenced by neo-liberal policy. Neo-liberal policy, rooted in economic policy, can be defined as an economic reform that believes that social provision is not a government's responsibility but lies within individuals (Bockman, 2013; Harvey, 2007a, 2007b). As Harvey (2007a, 2007b) argues, within neo-liberal policy, a country's development can only be measured by numbers, such as economic performance. If we translate this concept into education, professionalism within neo-liberalism will only define teachers' professionalism in items that can also be measured (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007). As Codd (2008) states, neo-liberal in education setting often preoccupies with performativity that can be gauged. To evaluate a teacher's performance, paper-based works are required, because they can be calculated. Yet, teachers miss the opportunity to expand their teaching. As a result, whatever they teach in the classroom is limited to whatever is required by the professionalization process. The findings of this study suggest that neo-liberal policy does not only marginalize aspects such as caring, but also, more importantly, it prevents teachers from expanding and exploring subject matters to be introduced into ECE, including subjects such as social justice.

Conclusion

The findings of this research demonstrate the messiness of the teachers' understanding to the notion of social justice. Even though in general, all teachers in the study understand

and agree with the importance of introducing social justice in ECE, it appears that they are still struggling to grasp the concept. Despite the teachers' commitment to make education inclusive, the teachers themselves often dispute this idea. The teachers still desire to work on the sameness, and as a result, the norm of the majority is used, the majority is always privileged. As it is evident in the findings, the teachers compel a girl who comes from minority ethnic background to use the same accent like people from the majority ethnic background. It is quite frustrating to see that the teachers seem not to be aware that what they are doing is actually violating the principle of social justice. As we have explained in the findings, the teachers seem to emphasize the notion of equality over equity. By focusing on equal treatment, the teachers try to make sure everyone is treated in the same way without necessarily taking into account their differences. This perhaps is not something new, as schools do not have a tradition to tolerate differences but rather create a homogeneous society (Trifonas, 2003). As Francis and Mills (2012) argue, schools always maintain sameness while they consistently create distinction. What the teachers need to do is in fact appreciate the differences, make sure that each of a child's differences is celebrated, and that all pupils do not need to change themselves to be included in the schools. Social justice is after all a principle that aims to respect "the otherness" (Browne, 2004).

The findings also suggest that one of the factors that prevent the teachers to explore and introduce social justice to young children are lied in ECE's curriculum. As it was discussed in the findings, current curriculum in ECE is very much influenced by developmentalism. Within developmentalism, issues such as social justice are perceived to be inappropriate to be taught to young children because of its complexity (Burman, 2008a; Walkerdine, 1998). Developmentalism also merely focuses on the stages of child development, and the fundamental question that aims to challenge power relations in the society is never addressed. There is a sense of doubt among the teachers as to what extent they can bring social justice issues into their teaching practices. As Warin and Adriany (2017) argue, current practices in teacher training institutes in Indonesia are very much influenced by developmentalism, and hence, this situation should be seen as an invitation for teacher training institutes to expand their curriculum to go beyond developmentalism by including critical pedagogy in their curriculum. Only when the teachers receive critical pedagogy during their training, they will later on be able to transfer this knowledge to the children.

The findings also yield that another factor that becomes an obstacle to the teachers to bring social justice in their teaching is the amount of paperwork they need to do. Everywhere, teachers "face pressures of mandated curricula, inflexible daily schedules, and imposed test preparation" (Agarwal et al., 2010, p. 244). Hence, professionalism framework needs to be redefined. It should give more space

for teachers to improve their teaching rather than focusing on paperwork. Providing more space for teachers to teach will enable them to explore various topics, and, perhaps, this can bring them to understand more about social justice and the extent to which they can introduce the idea to young children.

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