

Committing to Social Justice: The Behavioral Intention of Elementary Teachers to Advocate for LGBT-Related Education in Taiwan

Te-Sheng Chang¹

Alexander Haynes¹, Tsai-Wei Wang¹ and Cheng-Wen Chen²

¹ National Dong Hwa University, Taiwan

² Zhenbai Elementary School, Kaohsiung, Taiwan

The purpose of this study was to investigate how perceptions and understanding of social justice traits effect Taiwanese Elementary teachers' behavioral intentions to advocate for LGBT-related education. The sample consisted of 348 (96 males and 252 females) elementary teachers. The two research instruments used in this study were: The Perceptions of Social Justice Scale (PSJ) and the Behavioral Intention to Teach LGBT-related Education Scale (BITLE). The PSJ scale has 20 six-point-Likert items divided into five dimensions: "understanding of meaning", "accepting of ideas", "reflecting in practice", "taking initial action, and "taking advanced action". The BITLE has 24 six-point-Likert items divided into five dimensions: "respecting civil rights", "willing to teach and support", "worrying stigma", "passively cooperating", and "expressively opposing". Factor loadings for the PSJ and BITLE designed to measure each dimension were .45 - .87 and .65 - .95, respectively. The factors accounted for 72.87%, and 83.31% of the total variance for the PSJ and BITLE scales. The alpha coefficients were .95 and .84 for the PSJ and the BITLE, respectively.

Results are as follow: Social justice perceptions of the elementary teachers are moderately positively correlated with their attitude toward teaching LGBT-related education. Teachers' degree, religious beliefs, years in teaching, training in gender education, and experience of contact with gays have impacts on their perceptions of social justice and attitude toward teaching LGBT-related education. The percentages of variances of teachers' background variables and perceptions of social justice on the five dimensions of their attitude toward teaching LGBT-related education are between 8% and 45%. Taking advanced action, however, does not make a significant additional contribution to the variance in attitude toward teaching LGBT-related education. According to the conclusion of this research, some suggestions are given for the educational administrative agency, elementary schools, and teachers. Pragmatic social justice action should be made a point of discussion and training for teachers, specifically to encourage teachers to create a more supportive classroom. In training there should be a direct connection drawn between beliefs in justice and intention to act on that training and belief in the classroom. Only upon acting on such training can education be made more supportive and inclusive.