

Teacher justice and parent support as predictors of learning motivation and visions of a just world

Chiara Berti

University G. d'Annunzio, Chieti Pescara, Italy

Consuelo Mameli, Giuseppina Speltini

University of Bologna, Italy

Luisa Molinari

University of Parma, Italy

In this study we explore teacher justice and parent support in learning motivation and visions of a just world. The study sample was 509 Italian secondary school students, 163 males and 346 females. Regression analyses investigated the impact of teacher justice, parental involvement and factors of school choice (one's interests and parental influence) on learning motivation, personal beliefs in a just world, civic engagement and a positive future orientation. Findings confirm that the feeling of being treated fairly in the classroom is an important factor for adolescent adjustment since it relates to the development of learning motivation, personal beliefs in a just world, and civic engagement. Parental academic involvement also emerges as a significant resource for adolescents, and the most important in having an effect on the development of a positive future orientation.

Introduction

In this paper we present a study conducted on a population of Italian secondary school students with a view to exploring the role played by students' school and home subjective experiences on learning motivation and visions of a just world. It is well-known that the way individuals experience and perceive their environment plays a crucial role in their psychological adjustment. In particular, we have considered the individual's perceptions concerning two interactional aspects that have received considerable attention from scholars in the field of education but that have traditionally been examined separately. One regards the perception of being treated fairly by teachers in the classroom (Chory-Assad, 2007; Donat, Umlauf, Dalbert & Kamble, 2012; Horan, Chory-Assad & Goodboy, 2010; Peter & Dalbert, 2010; Resh & Sabbagh, 2016). The other focuses on the perception of parental support and involvement in school matters (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2014; Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2007; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014).

There are a number of studies showing the importance of teacher justice and a supportive home environment for a successful navigation along the school path (Skinner, Johnson & Snyder, 2005; Wang & Cai, 2015). With regard to parental support, Grolnick and collaborators (Grolnick, Raftery-Helmer, Flamm, Marbell & Cardemil, 2014) have argued the importance of a provision of structure in the form of clear-cut expectations, rules and consistency that may help students develop competence-related beliefs and motivation.

We draw on this construct by assuming that a provision of structure on the part of both teachers and parents can be considered a factor enhancing students' motivation and

fostering a positive adaptation to school and the outer world. Our claim is that teachers and parents can play an important role in providing children a structure that can help them overcome the school challenges and develop positive views of the world. This structure is here considered in terms of teacher justice and parent support.

Teacher justice

The students' perception of being treated fairly by teachers is a crucial aspect of teacher-student interaction (Chory-Assad, Horan, Carton & Houser, 2014; Resh & Sabbagh, 2016). As argued by Resh and Sabbagh (2009, p. 649), justice "is an important component of students' school experience that have far reaching implications for their actual educational opportunities, their motivation, attitudes, affection and actual behavior". This issue has been studied extensively with reference to the construct of classroom justice, which Chory-Assad and Paulsel (2004, p. 254) defined as "perceptions of fairness regarding outcomes or processes that occur in the instructional context". Among the traditional three dimensions of justice – distributive, procedural, interactional – the last one is of particular interest for our purposes as it relates to positive outcomes, such as trust, engagement and intrinsic motivation (Kazemi, 2016). Interactional justice refers to perceptions of fairness in the interpersonal treatment received by individuals mainly as far as the communicative and relational requests that students address to their teachers are concerned. By and large, the way teachers and students interact has a great impact in shaping the learning environment and fostering adaptive student behavior (Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2005).

According to scholars in this field (Peter, Dalbert, Kloeckner & Radant, 2013; Dalbert & Stoeber, 2006), students' experience of interpersonal teacher justice can be best conceptualised in the *they-to-me approach*, where justice is considered in terms of individual students' subjective experience of their teachers' behaviour toward them personally. Personal experiences of justice or injustice are important for any student's life as they may contribute to the person's "shaping of their world views and the 'social map' they construct in their mind" (Resh, 2009, p. 317) and as such they tend to be generalised and exert an influence on other experiences in society.

Parent support

Studies in the field of educational psychology have repeatedly shown that the home environment may also affect students' learning and developmental processes. In particular, there is consensus about the importance of parent support as a protective factor for children's school trajectories (for a review, see Zaff et al., 2016). Parent support is conceptualised here according to two constructs, that is, parental involvement in academic matters and parents' role in supporting children when they have to choose a high school.

Parental academic involvement is typically defined as parents' behaviour at home and in school settings addressed to supporting their children's educational progress (El Nokali, Bachman & Votruba-Drzal, 2010; Fan & Chen, 2001; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). In line with this definition, the term includes a variety of activities, such as home-based

involvement and parent-child communication about school. Parental academic involvement has been found to foster motivational orientation (Marchant, Paulson & Rothlisberg, 2001; Wang & Cai, 2015) and positive attitudes towards school (Trusty, 1999).

Parent support is also decisive during children's decision-making tasks. In the context of decision-making, parents may express their support in two ways. First, they can foster self-determination by encouraging children's aspirations and favouring their interests (Ricard & Pelletier, 2016). The children's perception about being granted autonomy in decision-making goes along with the feeling of being in control of their own life, which results in several positive effects, such as persistence during academic tasks and better school performance (Grolnick et al., 2014). By contrast, parents can exert their influence on their children's choice, which they justify with the argument that they know what is best for their children. In this case, children are allowed little room for choice and initiative and thus are offered few opportunities to demonstrate their competence (Barber, Bean & Erickson, 2002; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010).

Provision of structure and learning motivation

Learning motivation is considered as an indicator of academic progress and of students' learning perseverance over time. This issue is especially crucial during the secondary school years, a period when there is a tendency towards decreased motivation that eventually leads to academic failure and school dropout (Wentzel & Wigfield, 2009).

The influence that subjective experiences of teacher justice have on school-related outcomes has been well studied and documented (Resh & Sabbagh, 2016; Walls & Little, 2005). In particular, results from several studies carried out in instructional settings (Berti Molinari & Speltini, 2010; Dalbert & Stoeber, 2006; Kazemi, 2016; Resh, 2009) have shown that perceptions of teacher justice exert important effects on learning motivation and academic achievement.

Other findings have added empirical information about the association between students' experiences of justice and school climate (Peter & Dalbert, 2010). Teachers considered to be just are seen as being able to establish positive class climates that in turn affect learning and motivation, while the opposite is true when teachers are perceived as being unjust.

As regards parent support, results of some studies have shown that students were more academically engaged when their parents were actively involved in their education (Cheung & Pomeranz, 2011; Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2007; Wang & Eccles, 2012). This is particularly true when parental involvement does not limit children's choices, but it rather favours opportunities to practice decision-making skills (Assor, Kaplan & Roth, 2002). By contrast, the lack of self-determination in decision-making can be one of the reasons for a drop in school interest (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010).

Provision of structure and visions of a just world

Less systematic research has been conducted to study the impact of teacher justice and parent support on beliefs in a just world, civic engagement and future orientations. Though apparently unrelated, in our view these three constructs express a coherent vision of the world as a meaningful and just place that deserves the engagement of all citizens projected toward a positive future orientation. We shall describe each of these constructs in more detail.

People need to believe that the world is a fair place, in which they get what they deserve and deserve what they get (Hafer & Sutton, 2016; Sutton & Winnard, 2007). By and large, strong *beliefs that the world is a just place* are assumed to provide individuals with personal and relational resources in everyday life. Adolescents are particularly sensitive to the “justice motive”, which helps them to cope with developmental tasks at school and to increase their commitment to personal goals.

Due to the lack in longitudinal or experimental studies, a debate is ongoing in the literature about the causal ordering of justice experiences and the development of just world beliefs. For this reason, we cannot draw convincing conclusions about the causal relations between these variables. However, we find interesting for our purposes the results of a line of research claiming that the development of personal beliefs in a just world must be seen as partly stemming from experience (Maes & Schmitt, 2004). Following this reasoning, we assume that personal beliefs in a just world are stronger in students who perceive that their teachers are just when interacting in classrooms. With few exceptions (Dalbert & Radant, 2004), the literature provides less evidence about the association between experience of parent support and personal beliefs in a just world.

In a just and meaningful world, societies should be allowed to ask their younger citizens to demonstrate a high level of engagement. The issue of *civic engagement* is central in adolescents and is strongly related to positive youth development (Sherrod, Torney-Purtra & Flanagan, 2010). It includes “attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, and competencies related to an interest in improving the local community and the wider society” (Lenzi et al. 2014, p. 251). As school represents the institution with the most explicit mandate for educating youth towards assuming their civic role, teachers are called to promote students’ commitment (Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill & Gallay, 2007). Recent studies (Di Battista, Pivetti & Berti, 2014; Molinari, Speltini & Passini, 2013) have confirmed the role that perceptions of teacher interpersonal justice may play in increasing students’ engagement and participation in one’s own group or community.

In the literature, there are some studies on parental behaviour and youth civic engagement (Bebiroglu, Geldhof, Pinderhughes, Phelps & Lerner, 2013), which highlight the role of conducts such as emphasising civic values (Flanagan & Tucker, 1999) or having political discussions (McIntosh, Hart & Youniss, 2007), as well as the importance of the social value attributed by communities to civic engagement (Pavlova, Silbereisen, Ranta & Salmela-Aro, 2016). Apart from these studies, the association between academic parental involvement and civic engagement remains, as far as we know, unexplored.

Although there is general agreement that justice experiences should encourage individuals to invest in their future and to place trust in a *positive future orientation*, only a few studies have systematically explored this issue. Among these, Sutton and Winnard (2007) found an association between justice experiences and confidence that personal goals would be attained. They showed that individuals who perceive they are treated justly would feel less threatened by the future, seen as a time when their efforts will be rewarded. Literature on time perspective (Boyd & Zimbardo, 2005) has also pointed out that future-oriented individuals share a goal-orientated view that makes them better able to engage in healthy behaviours and to be involved in positive activities (Mello & Worrell, 2015; Zaleski, Cycon & Kurc, 2001). Beyond the consensus on the importance that a goal-directed view of the future plays in adolescence, no studies have investigated the predictive role that teacher justice and parent support may exert in fostering such a view.

The present study

The framework of the current study is to provide a better understanding of the links between teacher justice and parent support on adolescents' learning motivation and visions of a just world. As reported above, previous literature has already shown the strength of some associations. For example, there is consensus about the link between perceptions of teacher justice and the development of personal beliefs in a just world (Chory Assad, 2007; Maes & Schmitt, 2004). Furthermore, the impact of teacher justice on learning motivation has also been shown elsewhere (Berti et al, 2010; Kazemi, 2016; Resh, 2009; Walls & Little, 2005), and the same is true for the role of parental academic involvement on motivation and achievement (Assor et al., 2002; Cheung & Pomeranz, 2011; Wang & Eccles, 2012). However, a systematic work on the combined effects of teacher and parent provision of support on learning motivation and visions of a just world has never been conducted.

The aim of the current study is to ascertain whether teacher interpersonal justice, parental academic involvement, and autonomy in school choice predict learning motivation, personal beliefs in a just world, civic engagement and a positive future orientation, which we consider as a bundle indicating positive adjustment. We advance the following hypotheses.

1. *Teacher justice*
In line with Dalbert and Stoeber (2006), we anticipate that the feeling of being treated justly by teachers will predict students' learning motivation, personal beliefs in a just world, civic engagement and a positive future orientation.
2. *Parental academic involvement*
This variable will predict learning motivation, personal beliefs in a just world, civic engagement and a positive future orientation.
3. *Autonomy or dependence in school choice*
The students' perceptions of having autonomously chosen high school on the basis

of their personal interests will be positively associated with learning motivation and personal beliefs in a just world, while the opposite will be true if students perceive that their parents took this decision on their behalf.

Method

Participants and procedures

The study was held in the spring of 2015 on a sample of 509 Italian secondary school students (163 males and 346 females). Participants, mostly from middle class families, were enrolled in three secondary schools located in Northern and Central Italy. The average age of the participants was 15.81 (SD = .99, range 14-19) years. They were almost equally divided into students attending the first two years (aged 14-16, N=228, 44.8%) and the last three years of school (aged 17-19, N=281, 55.2%).

Participation in the study was preceded by an informed-consent procedure that required active consent from both students and their parents. The percentage of families who did not allow their children to participate was very low (2.7%). The questionnaire was administered in the classrooms during school hours in the presence of a researcher (the teacher left the classroom) who explained the procedure and guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. It took approximately 20 to 25 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

The Ethics Commission of the institutions where the authors work approved this survey, which was conducted in agreement with the ethical norms set by the Italian National Psychological Association.

Measures

The questionnaire was in Italian. In the Appendix, we report the English version of all items (for all original English scales, a back-translation procedure was adopted). Participants were asked to answer the following measures.

Teacher justice

We used the *Teacher Justice Scale* (Dalbert & Stoeber, 2006) to measure the extent to which students perceived that the treatment they received from their teachers was just. This 10-item scale (range from 1=completely disagree to 5=completely agree) was specifically designed to capture student experience about the fairness of teacher behavior toward them personally. Cronbach *alpha* in this study was .85.

Parental academic involvement

An ad-hoc 4-item scale (range from 1=very little to 4=very much), centered on the students' perceptions of parental interest and support in their school life, measured this variable. The scale was designed to capture home-based involvement, comprising parent-child communication and support on school matters. Cronbach *alpha* in this study was .68.

School choice based on personal interests

A single item (range from 1=very little to 4=very much) measured the extent to which adolescents perceived that they chose their secondary school on the grounds of their own interests.

School choice influenced by parents

A single item (range from 1=very little to 4=very much) measured the extent to which adolescents perceived that their parents had influenced the school choice.

Learning motivation

This variable was measured with a 5-item scale (Molinari et al., 2013) that assessed pleasure in learning, interest in academic subjects and motivation to master them (range from 1=completely disagree to 5=completely agree). Cronbach *alpha* in this study was .73.

Personal beliefs in a just world

This 7-item scale (Dalbert, 1999) measured the extent to which students personally agreed that the world is just in their regards (range from 1=completely disagree to 5=completely agree). The scale was designed to capture the intuitive conviction that events in one's life are deserved. Cronbach *alpha* in this study was .75.

Civic engagement

This variable was assessed on a 10-item scale (range from 1=completely disagree to 5=completely agree) inspired by the *Youth Social Responsibility Scale* (Pancer, Pratt, Hunsberger & Alisat, 2007). Cronbach *alpha* in this study was .75.

Positive future orientation

For this measure we used the 5-item *Future Positive* scale (range from 1=completely disagree to 5=completely agree) developed by Mello and Worrell (2010) for the *Adolescent Time Inventory*. Cronbach *alpha* in this study was .80.

Results

All descriptive statistics, i.e. means, standard deviations and Pearson correlation coefficients among all the study variables, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that the associations among the variables of learning motivation, personal beliefs in a just world, civic engagement and positive future orientation were weaker than we assumed. In particular, positive correlations were found between personal beliefs in a just world and, respectively, learning motivation, civic engagement and positive future orientation. A relation between learning motivation and civic engagement was also found.

Given the unsolved debate on the causal ordering of the variables, we conducted a preliminary path analysis with personal beliefs in a just world as a mediation variable between independent (teacher justice and parent support) and dependent (motivation, not

Table 1: Means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlation coefficients among all the study variables

Measures	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Teacher justice (1-5)	3.53	.67							
2. Parental academic involvement (1-4)	3.28	.53	.05						
3. School choice based on interests (1-4)	3.44	.73	.16**	.22**					
4. School choice made by parents (1-4)	2.33	.80	-.05	.08	-.08				
5. Learning motivation (1-5)	3.37	.63	.38**	.20**	.35**	.08			
6. Personal beliefs in a just world (1-5)	3.29	.58	.43**	.17**	.17**	-.11	.28**		
7. Civic engagement (1-5)	4.11	.48	.18**	.05	.20**	.08	.36**	.07	
8. Positive future orientation (1-5)	3.10	.78	.01	.12**	.07	.02	.22	.17**	.04

* $p < .01$; ** $p < .001$

engagement and future orientation) variables. As the results of this analysis were significant, we then opted for a series of regression analyses with learning motivation, personal beliefs in a just world, civic engagement and positive future orientation as dependent variables, and teacher justice, parental academic involvement, school choice based on interests or influenced by parents as independent variables. All predictors were entered into each regression analysis in a single step (Table 2).

Table 2: Regression analyses summary

Independent variables	Dependent variables			
	Learning motivation	Personal beliefs in a just world	Civic engagement	Positive future orientation
Teacher justice	.33***	.42***	.16***	-.01
Parental academic involvement	.11**	.12**	-.01	.09*
School choice based on interests	.28***	.10*	.15***	.05
School choice made by parents	.10**	-.09*	.08	.01
<i>F</i>	39.01***	35.04***	7.27***	1.47
<i>Df</i>	4.472	4.468	4.473	4.476
<i>R</i> ²	.25	.23	.06	.02

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

The regression models revealed different patterns of associations. Here we report only standardised *beta* weights that were significant. In line with our hypotheses, learning motivation was predicted by teacher justice ($\beta = .33$), parental academic involvement ($\beta = .11$) and school choice based on personal interests ($\beta = .28$). Unexpectedly, it was also positively predicted by the school choice influenced by parents ($\beta = .10$). In addition, personal beliefs in a just world were positively predicted by teacher justice ($\beta = .42$), parental academic involvement ($\beta = .12$) and school choice based on personal interests ($\beta = .10$), and were negatively predicted ($\beta = -.09$) by school choice influenced by parents.

Civic engagement was predicted, as we had hypothesised, by teacher justice ($\beta = .16$), while the association with parental academic involvement was not observed. Civic engagement was also predicted by school choice based on personal interests ($\beta = .15$). Finally, positive future orientation was only slightly predicted by parental academic involvement ($\beta = .09$), while we did not find the hypothesised association between this measure and teacher justice.

Discussion

The current study examined the importance that a provision of structure on the part of teachers and parents might play in adolescent adjustment. Our aim was to examine whether and to what extent teacher justice, parental academic involvement and school choice made on the basis of personal interests or influenced by the parents could predict learning motivation, personal belief in a just world, civic engagement and a positive future orientation.

The four dependent variables, assumed as indicators of adolescents' adjustments, were actually not completely related. In particular, civic engagement and positive future orientation were only weakly predicted by the other variables. This finding raises questions on the progressively growing distance between the individual and the societal interests and on the youngsters' distrust of the future. Psychological research is needed in order to contribute to the identification of factors able to prevent from bleak visions of the future and to promote a view of the world as a place where adolescents and young people can be actively engaged.

Another finding is that many, but not all, of the predicted associations between the considered variables were confirmed by our analyses. Specifically, the feeling of being treated in a just manner by one's teachers emerged as an important factor for adolescents' positive adjustment, as it significantly predicted learning motivation, the development of personal beliefs in a just world and civic engagement. While the first two associations were already known in the literature, the relationship between experiencing justice and a sense of civic engagement is an innovative finding which leads us to consider the importance that positive teacher-student relationships might play in the development of a sense of reciprocity and obligation for the community or local group (Flanagan et al., 2007). This result, which certainly needs to be confirmed by further studies, adds to the debate in social psychology research about the feasible nature of the association between perceived fairness and civic engagement (Montada, Kals & Becker, 2007; Watts, Williams & Jagers, 2003). In line with Lenzi and colleagues (Lenzi et al., 2014), we suggest that in educational settings teachers may promote youth engagement in their community by implementing justice principles and thus representing a simplified and concrete microcosm of the workings of civic society (Flanagan et al., 2007).

With reference to our predictions, what was missing was the association between the subjective feeling of teachers' interpersonal justice and a positive future orientation. In our results, experiences of teacher justice do not appear to be 'strong enough' to predict the

development of a goal-oriented view of the future, which instead is considered elsewhere as being associated with the personal and social experiences (Carstensen, Isaacowitz & Charles, 1999). Also, the findings of Sutton and Winnard (2007) are inconsistent with our results, as the association between justice experiences and orientation towards the attainment of personal goals, found in their research on an adult population, do not seem to apply to adolescence.

Notwithstanding previous research suggesting that the importance of parental academic involvement supposedly declines after elementary school (Eccles & Harold, 1996), our findings provide evidence that parents continue to play an important role in their children's education during adolescence (Ricard & Pelletier, 2016). In the current study, parental academic involvement was associated with learning motivation and belief in a just world. These results are in line with those found in literature, and in particular with the studies by Trusty (1999), which revealed a positive association between parental interest in schoolwork and improved motivation, and by Maes and Kals (2002), showing that the parent's interest and supportive behavior favoured the development of beliefs that the world is a just place. The role of parental support in academic matters is also confirmed as an important resource in adolescence as it predicts confidence in the possibility of realising personal goals in the future. This is an innovative result of the current study that certainly warrants further exploration. On the contrary, no links were found between parental academic involvement and civic engagement. This finding supports the claim that "good parenting is probably not enough to raise good citizens" (Pavlova et al., 2016, p. 18).

In this study we have taken a step beyond earlier research and considered the role of having experienced a decision-making task. The measures that we used actually referred to how far participants perceived that school choice was made on the grounds of their own interests or was influenced by parents. The regression analyses confirmed that the feeling of self-determination in choosing the secondary school path had a positive although moderate impact on students' learning motivation and on the idea that the world is a just place, in which they can play a role as autonomous individuals. The effect of this variable was even wider than we had expected, as it also predicted civic engagement. This finding contributes to the limited evidence on multidimensional parenting practices in relation to student engagement (Simons-Morton & Chen, 2009). It is actually in this period of their life that individuals start to build their personal engagement in the community in which they live. Teachers and parents should not underestimate the fact that the feeling of self-determination may play an important role in fostering mature and responsible behavior, which is linked to a general sense of belongingness that should lie at the heart of youth services and policies. Parental capacity to support their children without constraining their choices, which is expressed not only but also by the possibility to autonomously choose the school path on the basis of personal interests, is thus a variable that presumably fosters adjustment both in and outside school. The message to parents is that they may facilitate adolescents' success through secondary school if they enforce parental involvement with a view to conveying a general interest in the adolescents' life and respecting adolescents' growing need for autonomy (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2014; Fan & Chen, 2001).

Results were less clear-cut when the school choice was perceived as influenced by a parental decision. This variable negatively although weakly predicted, as hypothesised, personal beliefs in a just world, and this finding confirms that adolescents perceive the injustice of a parental behavior aimed at substituting them in important decisions concerning their own lives. However, and contrary to our expectations, parental influence in school choice had a positive impact on learning motivation. This result is in contrast with previous studies showing that an imposition of structure may undermine children's confidence in their abilities (Pomeranz & Eaton, 2000). Nonetheless, as others have suggested (Ryan & Connell, 1989), various factors can account for children's achievement and motivation. We argue that the parents' support in decision-making, even though intrusive, is linked to learning motivation as it probably expresses worries and concerns about the children's educational success. This line of reasoning is partly supported by research indicating that parents' limit-setting behaviour can avert school problems (Gregory & Weinstein, 2004). However, given the partly contradictory results, further research in this direction is definitely needed. In summary, our findings extend current research by emphasising the combined role of a provision of structure from both teachers and parents and by examining its relations not only with school motivation but also with a general view of the world and the future. Our results thus support the conclusion that in adolescence this structure is a good point of intervention aimed at addressing the waning level of motivation and a negative world outlook. The question as to how to promote a positive view of the future remains an open one, as our findings do not allow us to make strong claims on this issue.

Limitations and future research

Although this study provides interesting results on experiences of justice and support as resources for adolescents, it does have some limitations and leaves some questions unanswered. First of all, some of the scales and single items were purpose-built for this study. We are aware that ad-hoc built scales and especially single items often have psychometric inconveniences. Nevertheless, "many studies have documented that even single items can show sound psychometric properties comparable to those of longer scales and can therefore provide an acceptable balance between practical needs and psychometric concerns in various areas" (Gogol et al., 2014, p. 191). Second, a limit of any research of this kind is the lack of a lie scale in the test making it impossible to judge the accuracy of participants' responses. Participants in our study were encouraged to give answers that were honest and congruent with behaviour in everyday life. However, it is possible that they 'faked-good' and indicated answers that they may have felt were preferable. Third, as Duplaga and Astani (2010) have pointed out, although fairness is a critical issue in educational settings, it is important to specify precisely which classroom policies and practices students find fair or unfair, in order to help teachers in their work. In future research, the inclusion of additional data sources, such as open-ended questions or interviews with students, teachers or parents, might significantly improve the work of researchers. Last but not least, we should acknowledge that, as our study is based on cross-sectional correlations, the causal relationships between all the considered variables were not definitely supported by our data analysis. As discussed above, for instance, we

assumed that teacher justice played a role on the development of personal beliefs in a just world, but we are aware that the reverse prediction could also be plausible. In the light of these considerations, our empirical study opens interesting questions that can be dealt with in future works.

In conclusion, the results of our study uphold, although not definitively confirm, the significant role of teacher justice and parent support in fostering adolescents' positive adjustment and in building visions of a just world that young people can help to improve thanks to their own engagement. Justice and support experiences can thus be considered as positive psychosocial resources in adolescence. In this sense, the results of this study may be relevant not only to parents, teachers and practitioners but may also serve to inform schools and policymakers.

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Appendix: The questionnaire

Teacher justice scale	1.	My teachers generally treat me fairly
	2.	My grades are often based on my behavior rather than on my achievements*
	3.	I generally deserve the grades I get
	4.	I am often treated unfairly by my teachers*
	5.	The important decisions my teachers make about me are usually just
	6.	My teachers frequently grade me unfairly*
	7.	My teachers often behave unfairly toward me*
	8.	My grades often depend on how much my teachers like me*
	9.	Sometimes my teachers try to catch me out in exams*
	10.	My teachers are often unjust to me*
Parental academic involvement	1.	Your parents ask how you are doing in school
	2.	You can count on your parents' support in your school track
	3.	Your parents participate in events and meetings at school
	4.	Your parents keep informed about your school experience
School choice based on personal interests	1.	How much did your personal interests influence your high school choice?
School choice influenced by parents	1.	How much did your parents influence your high school choice?
Learning motivation	1.	During class, I feel motivated to learn
	2.	I am satisfied when I have mastered what I am required to learn
	3.	When I do not understand, I struggle until I get the topic
	4.	I like what I am learning during class
	5.	I like the subject taught by my teacher
Personal beliefs in a just world	1.	I believe that, by and large, I deserve what happens to me
	2.	I am usually treated fairly
	3.	I believe that I usually get what I deserve.
	4.	Overall, events in my life are just
	5.	In my life injustice is the exception rather than the rule
	6.	I believe that most of the things that happen in my life are fair
	7.	I think that important decisions that are made concerning me are usually just
Civic engagement	1.	As I am minor and cannot vote, I have no interests in politics and governments*
	2.	I want to engage in volunteer activities of use to my community
	3.	Even if I am adolescent, it is important that I keep informed about the world happenings
	4.	If my parents help others, they are a good example to me
	5.	As I am adolescent, I can enjoy without caring for problems like poverty or environment*

	6.	My teachers should not talk about moral and social issues*
	7.	When I help others, I do not seek to be rewarded
	8.	Helping others fosters good feelings in myself
	9.	As a young person, I am responsible for making the world a better living place
	10.	It is important for me to know what is happening in society
Positive future orientation	1.	I look forward to my future
	2.	Thinking about my future makes me happy
	3.	Thinking about my future makes me smile
	4.	Thinking about my future makes me sad*
	5.	I am excited about my future

*reversed items

Chiara Berti is Professor of Social Psychology in the Department of Psychological Sciences, Health and Territory at University G. d'Annunzio of Chieti-Pescara, Italy. Her most recent research fields include social representation, social psychology of justice and community psychology.

Email: chiara.berti@unich.it

Consuelo Mameli *PbD* (corresponding author) is Research Fellow in the Department of Education Studies at the University of Bologna, Italy. Among her current themes of research are teacher-student interactions, classroom discourse, student engagement and teacher burnout.

Email: consuelo.mameli@unibo.it

Giuseppina Speltini *PbD* is Full Professor of Social Psychology in the Department of Education Studies, University of Bologna, Italy. She is teaching adolescent and social psychology and has published several books and articles on classroom justice, adolescent responsibilities and adolescent school life.

Email: giuseppina.speltini@unibo.it

Luisa Molinari *PbD* is Full Professor of Developmental and Educational Psychology in the Department of Literacy, Arts, History and Society, University of Parma, Italy. She is teaching school psychology and has published several books and articles on teacher-student interactions, classroom justice and quality of educational process.

Email: luisa.molinari@unipr.it

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