



# That is why I believe I can do it... Prediction of self-efficacy towards inclusive education in Austrian and German prospective teachers

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# Introduction

- School systems in European countries are moving towards inclusion (Bürli 2009; Meijer 2010)
  - UN-Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Austria and Germany hardly differ from each other in terms of their policies, decisions and recommendations regarding the implementation of inclusive education in schools (Feyerer, 2009; Klemm, 2015)
  - Austria has been promoting, introducing and implementing the inclusion of students with SEN more systematically and nationwide (Klemm, 2013; Statistik Austria, 2014)
    - Austria: diploma = bachelor degree
    - Germany: diploma = master's degree



# Introduction

- teachers' attitudes towards inclusion are highly relevant factors for the implementation of inclusive education (see e.g. de Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011)
  - related to
    - gender (de Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011; Sharma, et al., 2008)
    - self-efficacy beliefs within inclusive education (Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel, & Pekka-Malinen, 2011; Sharma, Loreman, & Forlin, 2012; Soodak, Podell, & Lehman, 1998; Vaz, Wilson, Falkmer et al., 2015; Weisel & Dror, 2006).



# Introduction

- Bandura (1986) defines self-efficacy as ‘people’s judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance’ (p. 391).
- Previous research had identified a variety of factors that influence teacher self-efficacy
  - influence of personal variables (e.g. gender)
  - experience with children with SEN (e.g. Leyser, et al., 2011)
  - followed training modules concerning special educational needs (Sharma, Shaukat, & Furlonger, 2015; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Oswald & Swart, 2011)
  - Motivation (Hellich & Görel, 2014)



# Aim of the study

- Cross-sectional study
- Aimed to investigate teacher education students' self-efficacy when implementing inclusive education in Austria and Germany, under the presumption of the scales' measurement invariance
- Focus: demographic variables (sex, age, knowledge,...) & dispositional factors



# Method

- 519 teacher education students in Austria
- 765 teacher education students in Germany
- Only students who studied to become a primary education teacher
- Mean age: 22.22 years ( $SD=4.45$  years)
- 61.7% of the students indicated that they already attended seminars or courses on inclusive education



# Procedure

- All data were collected during the summer semester 2014 and the winter semester 2014/15
- Paper questionnaires
- Tried to reach universities in a large part of each of the countries
- No administration protocol



# Measueres

- demographic information
- Contact with persons with SEN/disabilities: single-item (no vs. yes)
- Previous experience with inclusive education in internships: 11-items (e.g. 'I have already taught students with SEN during an internship in school')
- *Study interest*: 11-itmes (e.g. 'If I have to be honest, my studies are sometimes very indifferent to me.')
- Motivation to deal with issues in inclusive education during their study: 5 items (e.g. 'I am very keen to deal with inclusion-specific teaching methods or materials.')



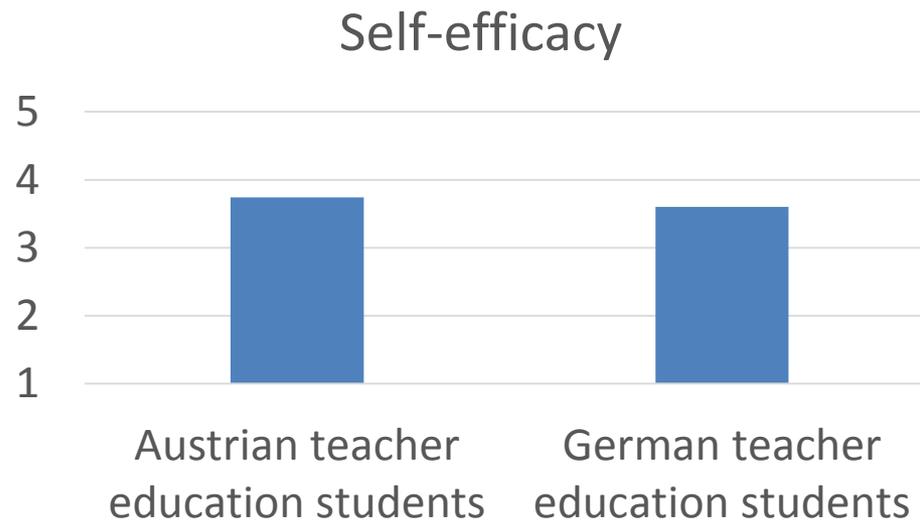
# Measurers

- Self-efficacy for inclusive education: Self-efficacy for inclusive education was assessed with the teacher inclusive education self-efficacy scale (TIESES)
  - I am sure that I can organize inclusive education in such a way that high performing children can benefit from low performing children and vice versa.
  - Whatever happens in inclusive education, I will succeed.
  - When a problem arises in inclusive education, I will certainly have several ideas on how to solve it.
  - I am sure that, even with larger performance differences, I will be able to provide adequate learning opportunities for each individual child in my inclusive class.



# Results: Group differences between Austrians & Germans

- Higher self-efficacy within inclusive education in Austrian teacher education students ( $M= 3.74, SD=0.58$ ) compared with teacher education students from Germany ( $M=3.60, SD=0.56, t(1251)=4.21, p<.01$ )
- Effect size indicates only a small effect ( $d=0.24$ )



## Results: Predictors of self-efficacy within inclusive education

- Sex, age and knowledge are not significantly related to teacher education students' self-efficacy
- BUT all other variables (country, number of semesters of study, contact with persons with disabilities, previous experience in internships,...) were correlated to self-efficacy for inclusion.



## Higher self-efficacy contributes with:

- higher motivation to deal with inclusive education during study time ( $R^2=0.153$ )
- a higher study interest ( $R^2=0.19$ )
- more experience with inclusion in internships ( $R^2=0.23$ )
- a lower number of semesters in the teaching education program ( $R^2=0.251$ )
- studying teacher education in Austria (compared to Germany) ( $R^2=0.276$ )
- being male (compared to female) ( $R^2=0.28$ )



# Differences between Austria & Germany

- Identify measurement invariance before interpreting similarity or dissimilarity between populations
- possible reasons for group differences:
  - Austria has been promoting inclusion more systematically and for a longer time
  - Austria has introduced and implemented inclusive education countrywide → leads to increased contact with students with SEN



# Discussion

- More than half of the explained variance in self-efficacy (15.3% out of 28%) was explained by a personal factor
- Teacher trainers should reflect on how to foster the students' motivation, as well as the students' perceived need to deal with inclusive education during their study time



# Discussion

- All other significant predictors explained only a small amount of variance (between 4% and 0.4%)
- Number of semesters in the teaching education = **negative predictor** → the longer the students studied the less self-efficacy they reported
- **Possible explanation:** advanced students have stronger concerns related to inclusive education



# Discussion

- Knowledge about inclusive education itself and also contact with persons with SEN/disabilities were not significant predictors
- Chacon (2005) and De Neve (2015) showed, effective and positive teaching behaviors are associated with higher self-efficacy



Thank you for  
**your attention!**

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