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

Prof. Dr. Susanne Schwab¹, ²
¹University of Wuppertal, Germany
²North-West University, South Africa

Prof. Dr. Frank Hellmich³
Gamze Görel³
³University of Paderborn
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).
• 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
• 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-items (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.’)
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.
Results: Predictors of self-efficacy within inclusive education

**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!

schwab@uni-wuppertal.de

References


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