

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

- Beliefs are supposed to serve as filters, frames, and guides (Fives & Buehl, 2012)
- Models of teacher professionalization stress the importance of teachers' beliefs (Kunter, Kleickmann, Klusmann, & Richter, 2013)
- Big Five personality traits are assumed to be connected with beliefs (McCrae & Costa, 1996)
- Research gap regarding the importance of personality traits for the valence of beliefs

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study investigates relations between Big Five personality traits and beliefs about the education of preschool children held by prospective early childhood pedagogues.

## METHOD

### SAMPLE

- Part of the study "Transition of academically and vocationally qualified educational professionals into the labor market"
- $N = 1,137$  prospective childhood pedagogues attending 111 professional schools of social pedagogy and 33 universities
- Online- and paper-pencil survey

### MEASURES

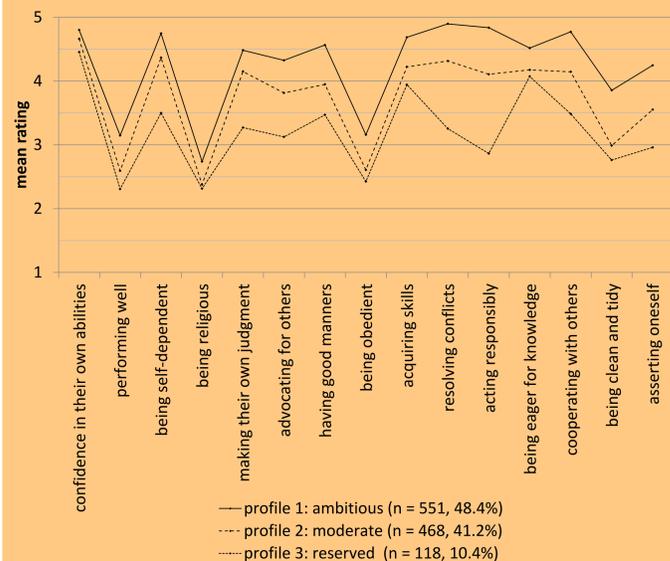
- Beliefs: 15 items on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not important at all*) to 5 (*very important*)
- Big Five (Gerlitz & Schupp, 2005): 15-items on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*)
- Control variables that have been shown to be predictive in previous studies

### STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

- Latent Profile Analysis
- Statistical fit criteria: Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC), Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), sample-size-adjusted BIC (SSABIC), and Entropy
- Multinomial Logistic Regressions

## RESULTS

### CHARACTERISTICS OF LATENT PROFILES



- **Ambitious** profile: pedagogues with comparatively high endorsements on all educational beliefs
- **Moderate** profile: pedagogues with medium endorsements on all educational beliefs
- **Reserved** profile: pedagogues with comparatively low endorsements on all educational beliefs

### PREDICTION OF LATENT PROFILE MEMBERSHIP

	Ambitious (ref. moderate)			Ambitious (ref. reserved)			Moderate (ref. reserved)		
	B	rob. SE	Odds ratio	B	rob. SE	Odds ratio	B	rob. SE	Odds ratio
Extraversion	0.11	0.07	1.12	0.05	0.10	1.05	-0.06	0.10	0.94
Agreeableness	0.25**	0.10	1.28	0.13	0.15	1.14	-0.12	0.16	0.89
Conscientiousness	0.32**	0.12	1.38	0.45***	0.12	1.57	0.13	0.09	1.14
Neuroticism	0.21*	0.09	1.23	0.07	0.09	1.07	-0.14	0.11	0.87
Openness	0.20*	0.08	1.22	0.54***	0.11	1.71	0.34**	0.12	1.41

Note.  $N = 1,137$ . ref. = reference category, controlled for the following variables: gender, immigration background, qualification for university entrance, denomination, parenthood, SES, completion of an educational training, preschool education as a field of work of particular interest, type and auspice of educational institution  
 \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

- Pedagogues with higher agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, and neuroticism were more likely to be members of the ambitious profile relative to the moderate profile
- Pedagogues with higher conscientiousness and openness were more likely to be members to the ambitious profile relative to the reserved profile
- Pedagogues with higher openness were more likely to be members of the moderate profile relative to the reserved profile

## DISCUSSION

- Big Five are related to beliefs about the education of preschool children: Explanation relies on theoretical work of McCrae and Costa who presume congruence between beliefs and personality traits
- Higher neuroticism is associated with membership to the ambitious profile: Risk of overload with regard to problems in realizing the amplitude of desirable educational goals for preschool children (Dippelhofer-Stiem, 2002)
- Respondents who do not have any particular interest in preschool education as a field of work are more likely to be members of the reserved profile: Members with divergent occupational interests tend to have a specific personality structure which is incongruent with the beliefs about education of preschool children

- Personality traits should be part of the curriculum in educational institutions for pedagogues
- Staff coaching that considers practical guidelines that focus on the personality requirements of the labor force (Howard & Howard, 2001) could be another way to assist them in finding a good balance between desirable and realizable educational goals for preschool children

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