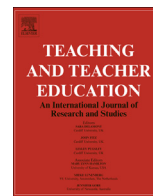




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Should teachers be colorblind? How multicultural and egalitarian beliefs differentially relate to aspects of teachers' professional competence for teaching in diverse classrooms



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HIGHLIGHTS

- We investigated how cultural beliefs relate to aspects of professional competence.
- The cultural beliefs studied were multiculturalism (MC) and colorblindness (CB).
- Paths analyses with 433 beginning teachers showed differential results.
- Only MC was positively related to motivational orientations and positive values.
- CB was negatively related to willingness to adapt teaching to diversity.

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ABSTRACT

This study uses the framework of professional competence to investigate the relationship between two cultural beliefs, multiculturalism and colorblindness, and different aspects of professional competence for teaching immigrant students. Results from path model analyses with 433 beginning teachers showed that participants with multicultural beliefs reported higher motivational orientations (self-efficacy and enthusiasm for teaching, and more integrative career motives), more positive values (lower agreement with negative stereotypes), and more reported willingness to adapt their teaching. Colorblind beliefs showed no relationships to the former constructs and were negatively related to reported willingness to adapt teaching to culturally diverse students.

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1. Should teachers be colorblind? How multicultural and colorblind beliefs differentially relate to aspects of teachers' professional competence for teaching in diverse classrooms

Due to as steady increase of migration, the number of students who find themselves to be an ethnic and cultural minority in their classrooms is on the rise worldwide (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2013). However, immigrant students and minority students in general are likely to show lower academic performance compared to non-immigrant majority students in most countries around the globe (for example large-scale international assessments like PISA, see OECD, 2004; Stanat & Christensen, 2006, also for few exceptions). Although most teachers are truly dedicated to their work and their students, the profession has been held responsible for failing to support

immigrant and ethnic-minority students adequately and for contributing to the achievement gap in various different ways (e.g., Ferguson, 2003; Jussim & Harber, 2005 for critical discussions on this issue). Although the exact mechanisms through which teachers' behaviors might affect immigrant students' learning and achievement are not yet clear, the claim has been made that teachers need to be better prepared to teach in culturally diverse classrooms (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Vedder, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Nickmans, 2006). Students spend much of their time in school interacting with their teachers, and teachers largely determine how and what children learn (Ferguson, 2003). This observation puts teachers' behaviors and their preparation at the center of attention. Against this background there has been a lively discussion in both the scientific community and the public about how to best accommodate the growing cultural diversity that schools around the globe are facing. On the one hand, scholars, especially in the USA, have investigated and laid out important pillars of multicultural education (e.g., Banks, 2004; Gay, 2002). These scholars stress that "multicultural" education cannot be seen as curriculum reform alone but always needs to aim at changing attitudes and beliefs of all actors involved in the educational process (e.g., Banks, 2004). Other scholars have argued that the predominant approach in educational settings is a "colorblind" one that prescribes ignoring or downplaying differences between ethnic and cultural groups. The colorblind approach is supposed to lead to greater equality and inclusion (Apfelbaum, Pauker, Sommers, & Ambady, 2010). That is, contrary to a call for reforming education to be "multicultural", most teachers seem to believe that the best approach to diversity is to treat everyone the same in the spirit of fairness, and thus not to change teaching practices to accommodate cultural diversity. This discussion suggests that teachers' beliefs about how to approach cultural diversity might play a central role for teaching immigrant students (Barry & Lechner, 1995; Bryan & Atwater, 2002; Easter, Shultz, Neyhart, & Reck, 1999; Hachfeld et al., 2011; Harrington & Hathaway, 1995; Middleton, 2002; Pohan & Aguilar, 2001; Stanley, 1996). In our paper, we approach the question of whether teachers should be colorblind by investigating the relationship of teachers' multicultural and colorblind beliefs on other aspects of their professional competence for teaching culturally diverse students. That is, we used a scale that assessed specifically whether teachers believed that immigrant students needed to be treated differently in the spirit of showing respect to cultural diversity (multicultural beliefs), or whether one should emphasize treating all students the same regardless of their background in the spirit of fairness (colorblind beliefs). For this purpose, we conducted a study assessing cultural beliefs about diversity of beginning secondary school teachers in Germany. Before we continue to define more precisely the specific diversity beliefs we decided to investigate, we briefly introduce the German context in which we investigated these questions.

1.1. Immigration to the Federal Republic of Germany

Although not traditionally an immigrant country like the United States, Canada, or Australia, the Federal Republic of Germany (BRD – *Bundesrepublik Deutschland*) is today one of the most migrated-to countries in the world (OECD-UNDESA, 2013). The following is a brief, although admittedly incomplete, sketch of the current situation.

Modern immigration to Germany started with the invitation of so-called guest workers from Turkey and Southern Europe in the 1960s, followed by descendants of ethnic Germans displaced after WWII from Eastern Europe and Eastern Russia, asylum seekers

from former Yugoslavia during the Balkan wars, as well as Central Eastern Europeans from EU member countries. Although the guest worker programs were halted a long time ago, immigration from these countries continues until today, and the descendants of these immigrants have children of their own who often maintain some of their parents' traditions. Today people from all over the world continue to immigrate to Germany. The integration of immigrants in general, and of Moslem immigrants specifically, is in the center of constant debates, especially amongst the more conservative parts of German society (e.g., Sarrazin, 2012).

In Germany, either foreign citizenship or whether a person and/or his or her parents are born on or outside of German territory are used to define "immigrant background" in official statistics. Using the latter definition, about one third of people under the age of 15 currently living in Germany have immigrant backgrounds (*Bundesministerium des Innern; Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge [Federal Ministry of the Interior, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees]*, 2012).

This specific situation makes Germany an important place for studying issues of cultural diversity in the classroom. Most importantly, the number of immigrant students in Germany is constantly growing, while disadvantages in knowledge and skills compared to non-immigrant students persist at high levels in international comparison (OECD, 2012). Additionally, questions about the integration of immigrants in Germany are at the center of constant societal debates, but those discussions have started relatively recently. The question of how to accommodate increasing cultural diversity in a setting as formative as school is thus extremely pressing in this context.

At the same time, Germany's specific situation might of course differ from the situation in other countries. To be able to nevertheless generalize from our findings, we tried to conduct our research in a way that it would be applicable to other contexts. First, we drew upon international, mostly North-American, social-psychological literature to be able to draw parallels to other contexts and reach broader conclusions. Second, all of our items refer to cultural diversity and immigrants in general. That is, we avoided asking about specific immigrant groups or languages. In this way we hope to both validate whether existing North-American social-psychological research applies to a German context, and to reach conclusions that can inform research in other contexts as well. We return to this issue in the General Discussion.⁵

1.2. Teachers' beliefs about cultural diversity

Teachers' beliefs influence their perceptions, judgment and their behaviors in the classroom (Pajares, 1992). Previous research shows that teachers' theories of knowledge and of how students acquire knowledge may be fundamental components of their instructional planning and delivery (Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996). The importance of teachers' beliefs about cultural diversity for teaching immigrant students has been stressed by many researchers (Barry & Lechner, 1995; Bryan & Atwater, 2002; Easter et al., 1999; Hachfeld et al., 2011; Harrington & Hathaway, 1995; Middleton, 2002; Pohan & Aguilar, 2001; Stanley, 1996). In the context of multicultural education, teachers' beliefs might shape and be reflected in their instructional practices (Cabello & Burstein, 1995; Gay, 2010; Harrington & Hathaway, 1995; Milner, 2010) and

⁵ Note also that due to the specific situation in Germany described above, ethnic minority students in Germany currently almost always have "immigrant backgrounds". We thus use the terms "minority students" and "immigrant students" interchangeably when describing our findings, although we do acknowledge that the situation may be different in other contexts.

thus possibly influence children's opportunities to learn (Milner, 2010). Hence, one might assume that positive teacher beliefs towards diversity will generally have beneficial consequences for teaching minority students.

However, a question that remains open is whether *different* positive beliefs about cultural diversity differentially affect teachers' behaviors in culturally diverse classrooms. The present article therefore focuses on two beliefs that reflect generally positive attitudes towards immigrant students and that have been at the center of many discussions on multicultural education and diversity in general: multicultural and colorblind beliefs. Our question is whether one of the two sets of beliefs will show stronger associations with other positive outcomes related to good teaching over and above their shared positive intentions.

1.2.1. Theoretical background

Following a model of interethnic ideology, both multiculturalism and colorblindness share positive attitudes towards diversity, but vary in terms of how much emphasis is put on group differences (Hachfeld et al., 2011; Hahn, Judd, & Park, 2010; Hahn, Nunes, Park, & Judd, 2014). *Multicultural beliefs* entail the idea that group differences and cultural background should be acknowledged and viewed as enriching (Hachfeld et al., 2011; Hahn et al., 2010; Park & Judd, 2005; Plaut, 2010; Wolsko, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2000). Thus, applied to a teaching context this set of beliefs implies treating immigrant students differently from non-immigrant students and specifically accommodating their differing cultural backgrounds in one's teaching practices.

Another popular and dominant approach to diversity is based on the U.S. concept of "colorblindness". Resulting from the American civil rights movement's fight for equal rights for Black Americans, *colorblindness* implies that people should see beyond "color" when interacting with people from different backgrounds and cultures (for a historic discussion see Plaut, 2010).⁶ However, using the term as a metaphor, the concept and its ideas can be applied to any situation with high levels of cultural and ethnic diversity. Specifically, *colorblindness*, as we define it, emphasizes the importance of treating all people equally, regardless of their background. Applied to a teaching context, colorblind beliefs, in contrast to multicultural beliefs, imply downplaying cultural differences in order to focus on finding similarities and common ground between students of different cultural backgrounds (Hachfeld et al., 2011; Hahn et al., 2010; Markus, Steele, & Steele, 2002; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004).⁷

⁶ The concept has also been applied to other minority groups present in the United States (Plaut, 2010), and this has led many researchers to use the term colorblindness to also refer to an assimilationist ideology. That is, critics of "colorblindness" see it as a means of White majority Americans to exert dominance over minority groups by demanding assimilation to majority norms, thus stripping the term of its initial positive connotation (e.g. Plaut, Thomas, & Goren, 2009; see Hahn et al., 2010, 2014). In the current study, we focus on the egalitarian component of colorblindness and thus on its original positive idea (Hachfeld et al., 2011; Hahn et al., 2010, 2014).

⁷ One might see it as questionable whether people from different backgrounds can be described as people of different "colors". Specifically, as described earlier, debates about diversity in Germany rarely revolve around "color", and thus the term might seem inappropriate for the current research. In fact, we previously referred to our scale as measuring "egalitarianism" in an attempt of adapting it to a European context (Hachfeld et al., 2011). It is important to note in this respect that most researchers use the term in a strict metaphorical sense. To emphasize the connection between our construct and the North-American social-psychological literature it is based on, and to avoid going back and forth between different terms when citing other research or presenting our own, we refer to our construct as colorblindness as a metaphor in this paper. The term is not meant to apply to "color" in a literal sense.

1.2.2. Empirical evidence

Evidence on the effects of multicultural and colorblind beliefs comes mainly from social-psychological research. Findings from several studies suggest that an emphasis on treating everyone equally might not always be the best solution for minority group members (Park & Judd, 2005; Vorauer, Gagnon, & Sasaki, 2009; Wolsko et al., 2000). In the educational context, it has been argued that teachers with colorblind beliefs might be hesitant to adapt their teaching materials and their teaching practices to the diversity in their classroom (Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004). The usefulness of a colorblind approach for instruction has also been criticized by Milner (2007) who claims that colorblind teachers may lack the necessary cultural knowledge to teach in diverse settings. But teachers' beliefs do not only influence their own perceptions and behaviors, they also influence those of the students. Apfelbaum et al. (2010) primed 11-year old students with either a multicultural or a colorblind message.⁸ Following the primes, the authors confronted the students with scenarios that varied in their evidence of racial bias from weak to strong. Coding of students' narrative responses showed that students in the colorblind condition were significantly less likely to report instances of racial discrimination, even if they were unambiguously present, than students in the multicultural condition. Moreover, students in the colorblind condition described the strong racial bias scenario in a manner that did not evoke teachers' attention to intervene. The authors argue that, instead of promoting equality, a colorblind approach in school might in fact do the opposite by blinding all actors to overt discrimination and thus allowing it to increase. In the Apfelbaum et al. (2010) study, the multicultural and colorblind beliefs were induced via two messages that functioned as primes. In real life settings, the beliefs of students are likely to be influenced by the beliefs of the teachers who convey them, consciously or unconsciously, in everyday school practice. Moreover, teachers' cultural beliefs can manifest themselves in the way they deal with professional situations. In a German study, Wagner, van Dick, Petzel, Auernheimer, and Sommer (2000) showed that teachers with multicultural beliefs displayed more pedagogically useful problem-solving strategies (e.g. discussion in class) than less adequate strategies (e.g. punishment).

When asked about their agreement with multicultural or colorblind beliefs, most non-minority White teachers report higher agreement with colorblind beliefs (e.g. Johnson, 2002; Lewis, 2001; Sleeter, 2001). For instance, in a study with 12 Dutch teachers – all of whom were successfully teaching in culturally diverse classes according to their principals – van Tartwijk and colleagues report that the participants deliberately decided to adopt a colorblind stance (van Tartwijk, den Brok, Veldman, & Wubbels, 2009). In line with the criticism voiced about the usefulness of a colorblind approach in school, these teachers also reported struggles and uncertainty whether and how to attend to different cultural backgrounds, and were aware of the challenges of intercultural communication.

Together, these findings led us to the hypothesis that multicultural beliefs will show more positive associations with positive teaching-related outcomes than colorblind beliefs. That is, perhaps counter-intuitively to some, we predicted that teachers who want to treat immigrant students differently and pay special attention to differences (=high agreement with multicultural beliefs) will show

⁸ In social-psychological research, so-called conceptual "primes" are used to temporarily induce a certain mindset, and experimentally investigate its causal effects on subsequent cognitions and behavior. That is, another control group usually receives a different prime that does not induce the same mindset, such as a multicultural prime in this example, so that the direct effects can be compared (e.g. Bargh & Chartrand, 2000).

more effectiveness on other measures than teachers who aim at treating all students equally, regardless of their background (=high agreement with colorblind beliefs).

1.3. Teachers' professional competence

In the current paper, we focus on one aspect of teaching effectiveness: teachers' professional competence. Specifically, we draw upon a model (see Fig. 1) that conceptualizes teachers' competence as an interplay between content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, generic pedagogical knowledge, and teachers' beliefs, values, motivational orientations, and self-regulatory abilities (Kunter, Baumert, et al., 2013; Kunter, Klusmann, et al., 2013; Kunter et al., 2007).

In recent years, research has consistently demonstrated the importance of teachers' professional knowledge and their beliefs in the provision of high quality instruction (Calderhead, 1996; Woolfolk Hoy, Davis, & Pape, 2006). Much research has focused on teachers' domain-specific knowledge, such as content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, their beliefs about their subject and how it should be taught (e.g. Ball, Lubienski, & Mewborn, 2001; Baumert et al., 2010; Staub & Stern, 2002). But beginning and experienced teachers bring prior knowledge to the classroom that is not bound to their subject but is instead social and specific (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Our aim was to focus on those aspects of professional competence that can be assessed specifically for cultural diversity and that are transferable across subjects.

Besides knowledge and beliefs, teachers' motivational orientations, such as their self-efficacy or intrinsic orientations are considered important for successful teaching (e.g., Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). We assessed all variables specifically with regard to teaching immigrant students. Independent

variables were beginning teachers' cultural beliefs. Two aspects of professional competence were the *outcome variables*: motivational orientations and values. As part of motivational orientations, we assessed beginning teachers' self-efficacy and enthusiasm for teaching immigrant students and whether fostering integration of students from different backgrounds had been an explicit motivation for them when choosing their profession (=integrative career motives). As part of values, we assessed agreement with negative stereotypes about immigrant students. As one additional outcome variable, that is not part of the professional model of competencies, we assessed participants' reported willingness to adapt their teaching to a culturally diverse student body. In the following we discuss each of these constructs in turn.

1.3.1. Motivational orientations

1.3.1.1. Self-efficacy. Teaching self-efficacy is defined as “the teachers' belief in her or his capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context” (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998, p. 233). Teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs have been shown to plan and prepare their instruction more carefully, to be more open to new teaching methods, and to support their students better (for an overview see Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). At the same time, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs have been linked to higher student motivation and higher student self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), although a causal relationship cannot be implied.

Similarly to general self-efficacy beliefs, teachers' specific self-efficacy beliefs regarding teaching in a multicultural context have previously been associated with culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002; Siwatu, 2007, 2008, 2011) and confidence in resolving and handling cultural conflicts (Siwatu & Starker, 2010). Based on these

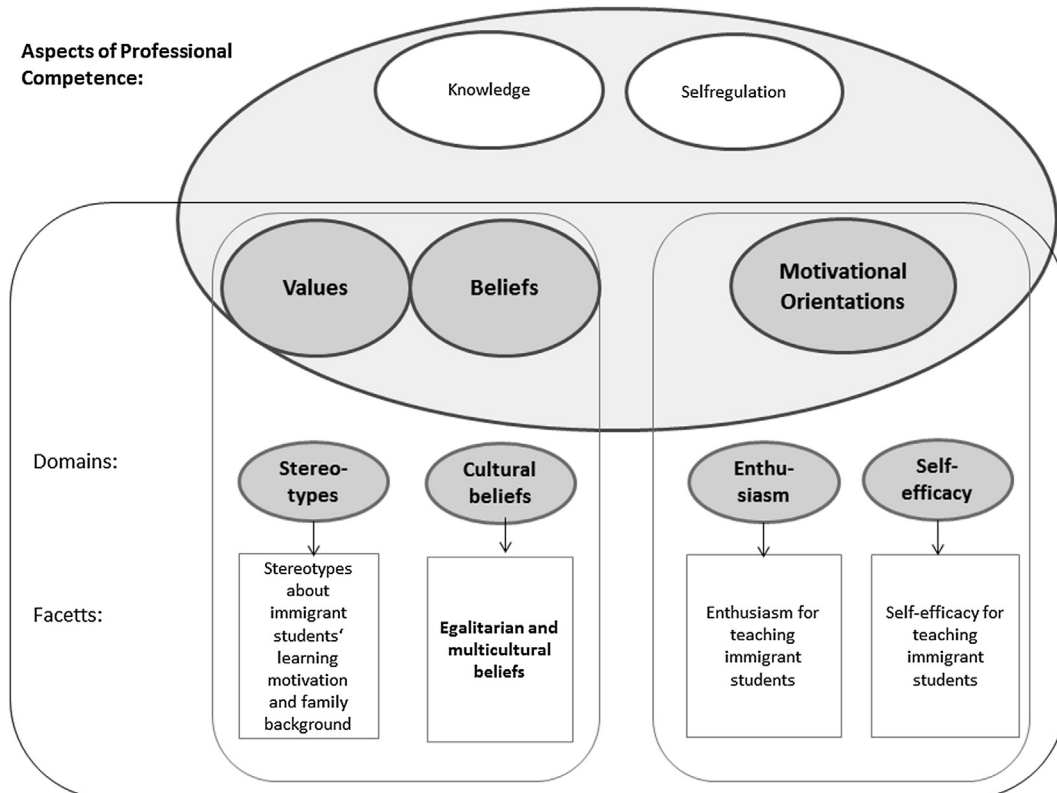


Fig. 1. Model of professional competence, specified for teaching in multicultural settings (Hachfeld, Schroeder, Anders, Hahn, & Kunter, 2012). Note. Aspects highlighted in grey are investigated in the present study.

findings, we predicted that multicultural beliefs would be positively related to specific self-efficacy for teaching immigrant students.

1.3.1.2. Enthusiasm. Decades of research on motivation have shown that enthusiasm guides peoples' behaviors in different situations (McClelland, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Focusing on teachers, one part of their motivation is their enthusiasm for teaching. Author and colleagues define teachers' enthusiasm as a "relatively stable affective disposition that may be seen as an integral part of teachers' motivation" (Kunter et al., 2008, p. 468). Enthusiastic teachers are more genuine about their teaching, and find ways to reach out and motivate their students (Moè, Pazzaglia, & Ronconi, 2010). Different aspects of teachers' enthusiasm have been linked to higher quality instructional behavior, students' intrinsic motivation (e.g. Patrick, Hisley, Kempler, & Colledge, 2000), and, in some studies, students' learning outcomes (see Kunter, Frenzel, Nagy, Baumert, & Pekrun, 2011, for an overview). Regarding enthusiasm for teaching immigrant students, Dee and Henkin (2002) found that beginning teachers' interest in cultural diversity was positively related to their attitudes toward implementation of diversity initiatives. For the purpose of this study, we hypothesized a positive relationship of enthusiasm with multicultural beliefs, but not with colorblind beliefs.

1.3.1.3. Career motives. Although career motives are subject to change over the career of a teacher (Schutz, Crowder, & White, 2001), the decisive reasons why beginning teachers opted for the teaching profession show high social and political relevance. Many authors have pointed out the "political" or "moral" obligation of teachers (Apple, 2011; Cochran-Smith, 1995). When teaching in culturally diverse classrooms, the notion of teaching as political act entails a willingness to engage with and integrate students from all (cultural) backgrounds. Yet, not all beginning teachers share this notion, and research shows that beginning teachers prefer "urban, but not too urban" schools (Watson, 2011). Referring to the increased cultural diversity in more urban settings, this attitude reflects that many teacher candidates find this diversity potentially enriching, but only in moderate amounts. As far as we know, there are no studies investigating how teachers' career motives relate to their cultural beliefs. In a German study with immigrant teachers, Georgi, Ackermann, and Karakaş (2011) found that this selected group explicitly opted for a teaching career in order to support academic achievement of immigrant students. In our study, we explicitly asked participants whether they had chosen the teaching profession as a means to integrate and support immigrant students.

1.3.2. Values

The framework of professional competence of teachers explicitly incorporates teachers' values based on the assumption that values affect teachers' perception of and behavior towards students (Voss, Kleickmann, Kunter, & Hachfeld, 2013). Two important aspects of teacher values about cultural diversity are stereotypes and prejudice the teacher may harbor towards immigrant students (Hachfeld et al., 2011). An abundance of literature has looked at the interaction between teacher expectations and students' ethnic background (for a meta-analysis see Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007), pointing out that low expectations are related to low student achievement (Schofield, 2006). It can be assumed that stereotypes about students' educational engagement and motivation affect teachers' expectations and, hence, have similar detrimental effects. In Germany, there is little evidence concerning negative stereotypes or prejudice of German teachers towards immigrant students (Schofield, 2006). In another study, the authors showed that colorblindness was not related to a general measure of prejudice (Hachfeld et al., 2011, items taken from the German General Social Survey) whereas the relationship with multiculturalism was negative. In the present study, however, we

focused on negative stereotypes specifically about immigrant students. We assessed beginning teachers' agreement with stereotypes about immigrant students' motivation to actively engage in schoolwork, as well as their agreement with stereotypes about the academic support immigrant students receive from their families.⁹ Results from the large-scale assessment PISA have shown that in Germany, as in most participating countries, immigrant students' motivation is higher on average than motivation of their non-immigrant peers (Stanat & Christensen, 2006). At the same time, immigrant students in Germany often come from less educated and lower socio-economic backgrounds (e.g. Kristen & Granato, 2007), and it can be argued that immigrant parents often have more difficulties with supporting their children academically, perhaps in part for language reasons. Hence, although both of the specific stereotypical beliefs we assessed were negative, one could argue that – on average – one tends to be accurate (lower academic support in immigrant families), whereas the other tends to be an inaccurate prejudicial perception (alleged low motivation of immigrant students).

1.3.3. Reported willingness to adapt teaching to a culturally diverse student body

Unlike the aforementioned variables, the reported willingness to adapt teaching to a culturally diverse student body is not theoretically grounded in the model of professional competence. However, following the model of interethnic ideology (Hahn et al., 2010, 2014) multicultural and colorblind beliefs should manifest themselves differentially in the willingness to acknowledge and adapt to cultural diversity. That is, given its emphasis on seeing beyond differences, colorblindness should be negatively associated with willingness to do anything different in the classroom when more immigrant students are present. Multicultural beliefs, on the other hand, should be positively associated with an approach of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) that stresses the importance of incorporating cultural differences into one's instructional practices (Gay, 2002), such as the specific characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students. Such CRP practices should, in turn, be positively related to higher levels of student achievement among culturally diverse students (Dee & Henkin, 2002). For example, a study by Diaz and colleagues (1992, cited in Ambe, 2006) showed that minority students' writing skills improved when the topics and issues were related to their communities. In this study we did not collect behavioral data, but used a scale instead as approximation to how much beginning teachers thought teaching needs to be adapted and how willing they were to do so.

1.4. Research questions

In sum, in this paper we investigate whether multicultural or colorblind beliefs are differentially related to aspects of professional competence. Most importantly, we predict that multicultural beliefs will be positively related to a willingness to change one's teaching practices in the face of diversity, whereas colorblindness should be uniquely negatively related to this variable. In line with the generally beneficial findings of multicultural beliefs as opposed to colorblind beliefs in North American research, we further predicted that multicultural beliefs should be more strongly related to other positive diversity-related teaching outcomes such as self-

⁹ Note that, in line with the social-psychological literature we define stereotypes as generalized perceptions about groups, independent of their alleged "truth". That is, stereotypes can be positive or negative, and they can be more or less accurate (e.g., Judd & Park, 1993, 2005). As such, however, teachers' negative stereotypes can have negative consequences for students, regardless of their truth value.

efficacy and enthusiasm for teaching immigrant students, and career motives of fostering integration of immigrants in Germany. We also predicted a negative relationship between multiculturalism and stereotypes about immigrant students.

2. Method

2.1. Participants and procedure

Participants ($N = 433$) were beginning teachers taking part in the COACTIV-R study, which was conducted to assess professional competence and development during the induction phase (for more details see Löwen, Baumert, Kunter, Krauss, & Brunner, 2013). Teacher education in Germany is divided into two phases: an initial university-based phase and a second induction phase, in which beginning teachers are gradually prepared for classroom teaching (see Jones, 2000). All COACTIV-R participants were in this induction phase, and were placed in schools. During this 2-year phase, beginning teachers start working and teaching in their school under supervision of a mentor.

The study was cross-sectional; data were collected between 2007 and 2009. The items relevant for the present study were administered as part of a larger questionnaire tapping beginning teachers' knowledge, beliefs, socio-demographic data, and information on the teacher training program. Participants were asked to answer the questionnaires at home and bring them with them to a testing session in which mathematical knowledge was assessed. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. The researchers neither taught nor evaluated the beginning teachers or their work. The mentors were uninvolved in the research project. Participation did not affect beginning teachers' grades during the induction phase in any way. The response rate to administered items was very high (non-response rate <2%). Taking part in the study was time-consuming, and participants received 100 Euro as compensation. Considering the fact that the teaching placement phase is often a time with very high work load, giving out no compensation might have led to an unintentional selection bias in the sample.

Participants (65.3% women, $n = 277$) were on average 28.2 years old ($SD = 4.75$; range: 23–57 years). Of these, 14.2% ($n = 60$) had an immigrant background. In our study we defined "immigrant background" as being born outside of Germany or having at least one foreign-born parent (definition used by OECD, 2004). In our sample, 23 participants were foreign-born (5.5%), 12 (2.8%) had two foreign-born parents and 25 (5.9%) reported having one foreign-born parent. The two largest groups were participants with Polish (2.1%) and Turkish (1.8%) backgrounds (the remaining participants with immigrant backgrounds reported backgrounds from 26 different countries). Forty-four of all participants (10.4%) reported growing up bilingually, and 39 (9.2%) still spoke at least two languages at home at the time of assessment. Due to the small sample size of the participants with immigrant backgrounds, we were not able to perform separate analyses.

Participants were distributed across different schools reporting between 0 and 100 percent of immigrant students ($M = 21\%$, $SD = 21\%$). In schools with immigrant students the national backgrounds were diverse; implying that most of the beginning teachers interacted with many different ethnic groups.

2.2. Instruments

2.2.1. Multicultural and colorblind beliefs

Following Bandura's claim that beliefs should always be assessed "context-specific" (Bandura, 1986, cited in Pajares, 1992, p. 315), we operationalized multicultural and colorblind beliefs in a way that is specifically applied to the teaching context (see Pajares,

1992, for a discussion on the context-specific nature of beliefs). The Teacher Cultural Beliefs Scale (TCBS, Hachfeld et al., 2011) was used to assess participants' endorsement of multicultural and colorblind beliefs, with response options ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Items for the two scales are listed in Table 1. We developed the two subscales to be conceptually independent but not mutually exclusive (Hahn et al., 2010; Plaut, 2010). The latent correlation between the two constructs was $r_{latent}(378) = .62$, $p < .001$, reflecting that both subscales tap positive intentions toward teaching immigrant students. Confirmatory factor analyses and tests of measurement invariances across different subsamples confirmed the two-factor model of the scale (see Hachfeld et al., 2011, for statistical tests and the scale itself).

2.2.2. Motivational orientations

This time using a 4-point response format (agree-disagree), we assessed specific self-efficacy (four items, e.g. "I am confident that I can both challenge and support immigrant students appropriately" Cronbach's $\alpha = .81$, $M = 3.11$, $SD = .49$), and enthusiasm (two items, e.g. "I enjoy teaching students with an immigrant background", Cronbach's $\alpha = .90$, $M = 3.10$, $SD = .62$) for teaching immigrant students. Additionally, six items assessed whether or not participants had chosen the teaching profession for reasons of social justice and engagement regarding immigrant students (integrative career motives; e.g. "I have chosen a teaching career to help further the integration of immigrant students", Cronbach's $\alpha = .92$, $M = 2.38$, $SD = 0.73$).

2.2.3. Values

Using the same 6-point response format as we used for the [beliefs] scale, five items measured participants' agreement with negative stereotypes about immigrant students' motivation to actively engage in schoolwork (e.g.: "Immigrant students are less interested in school-related topics", Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$, $M = 2.03$, $SD = 0.84$). Three items measured agreement with negative stereotypes about the educational background of immigrant students' families (e.g.: "Immigrant students often come from families that communicate little school-related knowledge", Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$, $M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.13$).

Table 1

Items for the assessment of multicultural and colorblind beliefs.

Teacher Cultural Beliefs Scale	
<i>Factor 1: Multicultural Beliefs</i> (Cronbach's $\alpha = .75$, $M = 4.71$, $SD = 0.59$)	
1.	In the classroom, it is important to be responsive to differences between cultures.
2.	It is important for children to learn that people from other cultures can have different values.
3.	Respecting other cultures is something that children should learn as early as possible.
4.	In counseling parents who have a different cultural background than I do, I try to be considerate of cultural particularities.
5.	When meeting with parents of different cultural backgrounds, I spend more time trying to understand and empathize with their perspective.
6.	Dealing with cultural diversity should be taught in teacher training courses.
<i>Factor 2: Colorblind Beliefs</i> (Cronbach's $\alpha = .75$, $M = 4.71$, $SD = 0.59$)	
1.	Schools should aim to foster and support the similarities between students from different cultural backgrounds.
2.	In the classroom, it is important that students of different origins recognize the similarities that exist between them.
3.	When there are conflicts between students of different origins, they should be encouraged to resolve the argument by finding common ground.
4.	Children should learn that people of different cultural origins often have a lot in common.

Note: All items were administered in German and the table represents a translation of the original items.

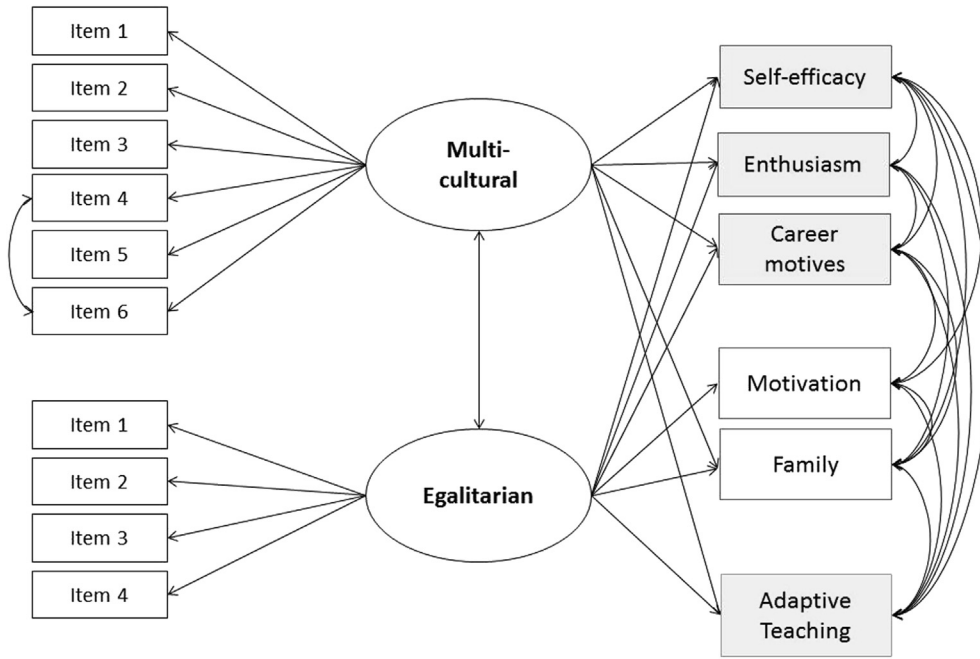


Fig. 2. Fully identified path model with multiculturalism and Colorblindness as latent variables, and the different (manifest) outcome variables. *Note.* We accounted for the nested data structure (participants were nested in seminars) by estimating adjusted standard errors (in Mplus: Type = Complex; Cluster = Seminar). The single-headed arrows reflect unique contributions of the two constructs to explaining variance in the outcome measures, over and above each other. The double-headed arrows next to Items 4 and 6 reflect that these two items were more similar to each other than the other items and thus share more method variance. The arrows indicate that this methodological aspect is accounted for in the model.

2.2.4. Reported willingness to adapt teaching to a culturally diverse student body

Again using the same 6-point disagree-agree response format, a five-item scale assessed whether the beginning teachers reported being willing to adapt their teaching to a culturally diverse student body (e.g: “When I teach classes with many minority students, I pay increased attention to whether all students are able to follow the lesson.”, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .61$, $M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.84$).

3. Analyses and results

We estimated a fully identified path model using Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2006) with the two subscales of the [scale name] as predictors and the aspects of professional competence as outcome variables (see Fig. 2). We chose a path model to be able to control for the effects of the respective other subscale and to analyze the relationship between the two subscales and the outcomes simultaneously. That is, in an SEM analysis, one-sided arrows reflect unique contributions of one variable controlling for the influences of the other predictors akin to a simultaneous regression (double-sided arrows reflect simple relationships, akin to zero-order correlations). As shown in Fig. 2 we thus predicted all outcome variables by colorblind and multicultural beliefs simultaneously. For the full model specification of the multicultural and colorblind subscales, see Hachfeld et al. (2011). The model fit was evaluated according to criteria suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999). The results are presented in Table 2.¹⁰

¹⁰ Due to the small sample size of the group of participants with immigrant background we were not able to apply multiple group mean structure comparisons to test whether results hold across groups. For the same reasons we could not test for measurement invariance either. We did, however, test our model excluding participants with immigrant backgrounds. The results do not differ from the results reported above.

The descriptive fit indices of the path model indicated a satisfactory fit, $\chi^2(81) = 158.934$, CFI = .942, TLI = .914, RMSEA = .048, SRMR = .047. As described in detail in Hachfeld et al. (2011), all model tests confirmed the superiority of a two-factor as opposed to a one-factor structure, despite the high correlation between the two subscales ($r = .62$, see Method section). We will first present results for multiculturalism and for colorblindness separately and then compare their effects.

3.1. Results for multiculturalism

Table 2 shows the results for all relationships between the scales and our outcome constructs: The standardized path coefficients under the heading “Multiculturalism” show that multicultural beliefs were positively and significantly related to participants’ self-

Table 2
Standardized path coefficients of multiculturalism and colorblindness on aspects of professional competences.

	R^2	Multiculturalism			Colorblindness			Comparison $\Delta\chi^2(1)$
		β	SE	t	β	SE	t	
Motivational orientations								
Self-efficacy ^{a1}	8.5%	.315	.087	3.61*	-.039	.077	-0.51	5.03*
Enthusiasm ^{a1}	28.2%	.542	.082	6.63*	-.018	.081	-0.23	15.18*
Career motives	17.8%	.351	.074	4.74*	.101	.081	1.25	3.23
Agreement with stereotypes								
Family background ^b	2.4%	-.179	.086	-2.08*	.048	.088	0.55	2.03
Motivation ^b	13.4%	-.308	.076	-4.06*	-.084	.069	-1.23	2.84
Instructional practices								
Adaptive teaching ^a	10.6%	.412	.076	5.43*	-.211	.078	-2.70*	16.67*

Note: ^afor teaching immigrant students; ^bof immigrant students; ¹Response format ranged from 1 to 4; all other response formats ranged from 1 to 6. $N = 421$, * $p < .05$ (two-tailed); $\Delta\chi^2$: result of the chi-square difference test between the restricted (equality constrained) and the unrestricted model.

efficacy and enthusiasm for teaching immigrant students, participants' integrative career motives, and their reported willingness to adapt their teaching. Multiculturalism was negatively and significantly related to agreement with stereotypes about both family background and motivation of immigrant students. That is, participants who agreed with multicultural beliefs agreed less with items assessing both more and less accurate negative stereotypes toward immigrant students, although the relationship with the inaccurate stereotypes (i.e., immigrant students' alleged lower level of motivation) was somewhat stronger.

3.2. Results for colorblindness

Results under the heading "Colorblindness" show that, in contrast to multiculturalism, and as expected, there was no significant unique relationship between colorblind beliefs and participants' self-efficacy and enthusiasm for teaching immigrant students, whether they had career motives of fostering integration of immigrants, and their stereotypes about family background and motivation of immigrant students. Colorblindness was significantly related only to participants' reported willingness to adapt their teaching to a culturally diverse student body. Importantly, and as expected, this relationship was negative; the more strongly participants endorsed colorblind beliefs the less they reported being willing to adapt their teaching to the specific needs of immigrant students and culturally diverse classes. The next section compares the effects of multiculturalism and colorblindness.

3.3. Comparing effects of multiculturalism and colorblindness

In a second step, we tested whether differences in standardized paths coefficients for multiculturalism and colorblindness were also statistically significant. Results are presented in the right-most column of [Table 2](#) under "Comparison". To test for differential effects, we set the coefficients of multiculturalism and colorblindness to be equal for each dependent variable (equality constraints) and tested whether the model fit would decrease significantly compared to the model fit of the unrestricted model (χ^2 -difference test). We found statistically significant differences for self-efficacy, enthusiasm, and participants' willingness to adapt their teaching to a culturally diverse student body; imposing equality constraints on the effects of multiculturalism and colorblindness on these three outcome variables decreased the model fit significantly. To the contrary, there was no significant decrease in the fit of the model when the coefficients for integrative career motives, as well as agreement with stereotypes about family background and motivation of immigrant students were set to be equal. In other words, these constructs showed strong and significant relationships with multicultural beliefs, but weak non-significant relationships with colorblind beliefs. However, the weak relationships with colorblindness were not unambiguously weaker than the relationships with multiculturalism; their error margins still overlapped with the error margins of the multicultural relationships. This might indicate that colorblindness might show a (weak) association both with career motives, and negatively with negative stereotypes that could show up in other studies.

4. Summary and discussion

In the title, we posed the question whether teachers should be colorblind. Using a large independent sample of German beginning teachers, we investigated whether a teacher's multicultural and colorblind beliefs differentially relate to other aspects of

professional competence for teaching in culturally diverse settings. In answering our initial question, colorblind beliefs were unrelated to any of the positive teaching-related outcomes when controlling for equally positive multicultural beliefs; and importantly, colorblindness showed a significant negative relationship with willingness to adapt teaching to a culturally diverse student body.

This last point reflects what we believe to be a major problem with the colorblind ideal; the goal to treat all students equally, though noble in its intent, can result in a lack of willingness to prepare one's lessons adequately for the challenges of a diverse classroom. Our findings also support the claim made elsewhere that colorblind teachers may not be able to meet the challenge of adapting their teaching to diversity (OECD, 2010). If teachers are not willing to consider the cultural diversity in their class, they are less likely to provide adequate support for immigrant students, or to assess and evaluate immigrant students' performance accurately, all of which can lead to systematic discrimination (Hachfeld, Anders, Schroeder, Stanat, & Kunter, 2010). In contrast with these findings, participants with high agreement with multicultural beliefs reported more willingness to consider the cultural background of their students; for example, they reported choosing their learning materials.

Compared to the other outcomes, our results showed that multicultural beliefs were also related to the other outcomes we assessed in this study; they were related to higher self-efficacy and higher enthusiasm for teaching immigrant students, to less agreement with negative stereotypes about immigrant students' motivation and backgrounds, and to having chosen the teaching profession specifically as a means to foster integration of immigrants in Germany. Colorblind beliefs, on the other hand, were not related to these constructs. We believe that these findings also support the notion that multicultural beliefs might be more beneficial for teaching than colorblind beliefs.

Specifically, previous research has already shown that teachers' enthusiasm is an important aspect of professional competence and can influence students' motivation (Kunter, 2013). Against this background, our findings highlight multiculturalism as a more beneficial teaching strategy in diverse settings as compared to colorblindness. Teachers who are more enthusiastic about teaching diverse students might not only motivate their students more, but might also be more motivated to establish caring relationships with culturally diverse students. For non-White students, having a caring relationship with the teacher has been related to higher student motivation and achievement (McAllister & Irvine, 2002). In a similar vein, teachers' enthusiasm might also be related to empathetic dispositions, which have been shown to lead to more positive interactions with students, supportive classroom climates, and student-centered pedagogy (McAllister & Irvine, 2002).

Multiculturalism was also highly and differentially related to participants' self-efficacy for teaching immigrant students. Similarly to enthusiasm, previous research on self-efficacy has shown that higher self-efficacy is related to higher instructional quality (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). However, self-efficacy is always context-specific. We assessed beginning teachers' self-efficacy for teaching immigrant students and our results suggest that multicultural beliefs are related to higher self-efficacy in the context of cultural diversity compared to colorblind beliefs. Multicultural beliefs were also positively and significantly related to having chosen the teaching profession specifically to foster integration of immigrants (career motives), and negatively and significantly related to agreement with negative stereotypes about immigrant students.

In sum, all these findings suggest that multicultural beliefs are more beneficial for teaching in culturally diverse settings than colorblind beliefs. Considering the growing cultural and ethnic

diversity in today's schools, teachers must not only be prepared, but also confident and willing, to teach students with cultural backgrounds that differ from their own. However, research shows that most teachers prefer teaching in suburban settings or schools with lower rates of minority students (AACTE, 1990; Watson, 2011) and that attrition rates remain a concern of educational administrators (Siwatu, 2011). Teachers with high self-efficacy for teaching immigrant students are likely to be more willing to work in culturally diverse schools and confident about implementing multicultural education (Lewis, 2001). Against this background, teacher preparation should encourage their teacher candidates to reflect on their cultural beliefs and consider multicultural perspectives instead of trying to be color- and culture-blind.

4.1. Study strengths and limitations

In this study, we drew from research on both the professional competence of teachers, as well as social-psychological research on diversity. We applied diversity theories, which are thoroughly grounded in American history (Plaut, 2010), to a German context and investigated whether colorblind or multicultural beliefs would be related differentially to different aspects of teaching immigrant students in Germany. At the same time, we formulated our questions such that they would apply to teaching students with diverse backgrounds in other contexts as well. This is important, as how majority and minority groups relate to each other in all likelihood depends on a variety of factors that are different in different contexts. One might hypothesize, for instance, that countries with a long history of racial and ethnic diversity show very different patterns of interaction compared with countries where diversity has very recently increased. Similarly, one might expect that beliefs about diversity might play out differently in an educational context compared to the kinds of interactions that social psychologists study. On the one hand one might thus assume that diversity research needs to be conducted specifically for specific contexts. On the other hand, it would be beneficial if patterns of results could be found that translate across contexts. By applying American concepts studied in American social-psychological laboratory situations to a German educational context and finding largely convergent results, we believe to have made an important contribution to more cross-national and generally cross-contextual validation of diversity research. Thus, our design expands and complements previous research on multiculturalism and colorblindness by applying it to a new national context, and by providing a framework which can be used to compare the two beliefs and their relationships with different aspects of professional competence for teaching minority students. Nevertheless the situation might be different again in yet other contexts. Future research is needed to clearly delineate the contextual variables that determine whether different diversity beliefs will be beneficial in different contexts. As it stands our study confirms that the American social-psychological concepts of multiculturalism and colorblindness show similar patterns of results in a German educational setting. Future research will have to show if our findings will replicate elsewhere (for the Turkish context see Kalemoglu Varol, Erbas, & Unlu, 2014).

Two major strengths of the study are the large sample of beginning teachers and the collection of data in a real-life setting. We followed a quantitative approach and assessed beginning teachers' beliefs, motivational orientations, and values with standardized questionnaires and context-specifically for teaching immigrant students.

Of course, this approach also limits the generalizability of our findings. Another limitation of our findings is the reliance on self-reported questionnaire data. Self-report data always carries the

risks of socially desirable responding. At the same time, some researchers argue that social desirability has little influence on the assessment of multicultural beliefs (van de Vijver, Breugelmans, & Schalk-Soekar, 2008). We tried to limit social pressure by letting participants fill out the questionnaires at home and by stressing the study's anonymity. Participants were assured that the questions do not have right or wrong answers, and were guaranteed that no personal information or response would be passed on to supervisors or colleagues. Results were only communicated on an aggregated level. Nevertheless, future studies should incorporate other measures, such as behavioral measures, observations, or qualitative interviews. Our quantitative approach only allows for the assessment of a priori formulated hypotheses. In qualitative interviews one could investigate whether teachers who agree with multicultural beliefs actually do make efforts to adapt their teaching or how specifically they plan to treat immigrant students differently and appreciate their different backgrounds in a more exploratory fashion. Further, behavioral and observational data could assess whether they do indeed follow up on those intentions, and how successful they are at doing so. Recall that all of our participants were beginning students with little experience. Whether or not their multicultural intentions will play out in the classroom and whether experience will change intentions is something our data cannot determine. As it stands, our study only shows that general agreement with beliefs of treating immigrant students differently seems to be a more beneficial mindset than agreement with beliefs of treating all students the same. Further research is clearly needed.

A third limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the data. Such a design does not allow for causal interpretations. Findings from a qualitative study by Bender-Szymanski (2000) provide evidence for a causal interpretation of the relationship between cultural beliefs and self-efficacy. During a 1-year period, participating beginning teachers with anti-multicultural ("ethno-oriented") beliefs experienced a decrease in their self-efficacy, whereas participants with multicultural beliefs did not. These findings could be further corroborated with quantitative longitudinal studies investigating how teachers' cultural beliefs influence the development of motivational orientations and values for teaching immigrant students.

The restriction to beginning teachers early in their career is both a limitation and strength of our study. On one hand, the restriction limits the generalizability of our results. On the other hand, targeting this group offers the advantage of controlling for past experience – participants reported having similar amounts of teaching experiences and results looked similar whether or not we included or excluded teachers with immigrant backgrounds. It can be assumed that beginning teachers' beliefs might reflect dominant beliefs in society (Castro, 2010; Clarke & Drudy, 2006), rather than adoption of prevalent teaching practices (Silvermann, 2010). Due to less experience, beginning teachers might also be more accessible for multicultural education courses (Pohan & Aguilar, 2001). However, future studies should also investigate how cultural beliefs develop depending on teachers' experiences, and their personal characteristics.

Lastly, our study design does not allow any inferences about how multicultural and colorblind beliefs are related to students' outcomes or teacher–student interactions. Since we did not have access to student data, we neither know if teachers' beliefs affected students' achievement, nor if, for example, teachers' reported motivation to teach immigrant students was really acknowledged as such by the (immigrant) students. However, as mentioned in the beginning, our study's focus was on variables influencing teacher engagement, and we thought it important to validate this first aspect of student teaching independently. In sum, we did not investigate how multicultural education can be implemented but instead focused on one – we believe – necessary but not sufficient

precondition on the part of the teachers, namely their beliefs about cultural diversity.

Nonetheless, it will be important to show whether these cultural beliefs have effects on student variables as well. Future studies should incorporate lesson observations, students' evaluations of their teachers, and students' achievements in order to assess the effects of teachers' cultural beliefs on (immigrant) students' engagement, their learning progress and ultimately school performance.

In sum, our results need to be corroborated with different samples and methods, in different contexts, assessed longitudinally, and correlated with student outcomes. We believe our study represents good evidence that the constructs we investigated and the tools we created might be useful for such endeavors.

4.2. Relevance for teacher education

Our findings also contribute to the discussion on the education and preparation of teachers for cultural diversity (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; OECD, 2010), and have practical implications. We argue that, instead of focusing on treating all students equally and ignoring cultural differences, teacher education programs should actively encourage teacher candidates to be open to the cultural backgrounds of their students. Such encouragement can raise awareness of “contextual specificity” (Burns & Shadoian-Gersing, 2010, p. 292), that is awareness that culture and language matter in all subjects – not only in history and language courses. The latter approach seems especially warranted because universal strategies for teaching in culturally diverse classrooms do not exist (Burns & Shadoian-Gersing, 2010). Instead, teaching strategies that successfully integrate students of all cultural backgrounds may include adaptive curriculum changes reflecting students' backgrounds, a great variety of different teaching methods, team work and small groups, and high expectations for all students (Humphrey et al., 2006; Parker-Jenkins, Hewitt, Brownhill, & Sanders, 2004; Walter, 2001). These strategies, however, cannot be taught in a single course. A necessary prerequisite for using these strategies is the ability and the willingness of a teacher to critically reflect on his/her teaching strategies on the one hand and the learning context on the other.

Our findings might be especially relevant for the German context, in which teachers have traditionally been told to concentrate on the “Mittelköpfe” (the “middle heads”, that is, the average – majority – student) in their teaching (Sliwka, 2010; for a discussion in English). But evidence suggests that our findings are also relevant for teaching contexts outside of Germany. Previous research from international contexts has shown that beginning teachers enter their career with a colorblind ideology (Milner, 2006). However, our results add to the growing empirical evidence supporting multiculturalism as the more beneficial strategy for teaching minority students, as compared to colorblindness.

Some researchers have argued that teacher education will only be successful for preparing teachers for diverse classrooms if the programs choose the right candidates (Haberman & Post, 1998). Although previous research has shown that minority group members often display more multicultural beliefs than their majority counterparts (Castro, 2010; Verkuyten, 2005), we do not agree that only choosing candidates with immigrant or minority backgrounds is a realistic strategy. That is, it might not be possible in the near future to recruit teachers who are as diverse as would be necessary to reflect student composition in most countries. However, we have shown elsewhere that multicultural beliefs mediate the relationship between immigrant or minority background and professional competence for teaching immigrant students (Hachfeld et al., 2012). Additionally, contrary to personal characteristics, which

cannot be changed, the beliefs of teacher candidates can be. Social psychological studies have shown positive (at least short term) effects of interventions and trainings on participants' beliefs, which were in turn reflected in their behaviors in interethnic interactions (Vorauer et al., 2009; Wolsko et al., 2000). Castro (2010) cites three studies which explicitly sought to investigate the effects of multicultural seminars on participants' cultural beliefs. One important finding that all studies shared was that the methods which were used in the seminars were more important than the actual content. More precisely, the most important feature of such seminars was to offer a space in which to critically reflect on one's own beliefs (Castro, 2010). Against this background and our own findings, we argue that focusing on raising beginning teachers' awareness about diversity and their multicultural beliefs early during teacher training might be more important for their later teaching than their own personal immigrant or minority background. Questionnaires, such as the one used in our study, could be used in seminars as a starting point for reflection. However, we would strongly advise against using them for the purpose of selection of teacher candidates. Instead, focusing on changing teachers' beliefs about diversity and encouraging reflection appears to us to be a more beneficial strategy.

In conclusion, the current study showed that, in Germany, beginning teachers' beliefs of multiculturalism and colorblindness are differentially related to teachers' motivational orientations, their agreement with stereotypes, and their adaptive teaching behaviors for teaching immigrant students. Results support the growing literature in favor of multiculturalism. How teachers address cultural differences ultimately influences students' learning (Davis Lenski, Crawford, Crumpler, & Stallworth, 2005). Hence, engaging teacher candidates in an active discourse on multiculturalism remains both an important and a challenging task for future teacher education programs.

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