The role of ethnic origin and situational information in teachers' reactions to social exclusion among students

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Abstract
The current study investigated pre- and in-service teachers' reactions to interethnic exclusion in Germany. Using hypothetical scenarios, we examined a sample of 482 teachers (84 males, 398 females; 59% pre-service teachers, 41% in-service teachers) as observers of exclusion among students. In these scenarios, we varied the ethnic origin of the excluded student (German vs. Turkish) and the background information, providing participants either with no additional background information or with information specifying that the excluded student had shown prior norm-violating behavior (insult of another student). We assessed the teachers' evaluations of the scenarios and their anticipated reactions. The aim of the study was to replicate and extend previous research on teachers' reactions to social exclusion. As expected, the analyses revealed a strong effect of the background information on teachers' evaluations and reactions. The teachers evaluated exclusion as much more acceptable and were less likely to intervene in the scenarios with negative background information compared to those without additional information. Teachers seem to view exclusion in these situations as an understandable consequence of norm-violating behavior. However, in contrast to our expectations, the ethnic origin of the excluded student in the scenarios had no impact on teachers' reactions. That is, situational information seems to be much more important for teachers' reactions to social exclusion than the ethnic origin of an excluded student.

Keywords Social exclusion · Interethnic exclusion · Teacher reactions · Teacher evaluations · Intergroup processes · Situational influences

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1 Introduction

Germany has been a country of immigration for many decades (Werning et al., 2008), and today more than one quarter of Germany's population has an immigration background (Razum & Brzoska, 2020). Against this backdrop, it is surprising that the German education system has still not succeeded in finding a satisfactory way of dealing with this diversity. There are still various educational inequalities related to students' ethnic origin (Müller & Ehmke, 2016; Weis et al., 2019). Students from ethnic minorities are often disadvantaged early in their educational careers when they are more likely to receive recommendations for lower school tracks (Glock et al., 2015). This contributes to an underrepresentation of students from ethnic minorities in academic school tracks for high achievers and an overrepresentation in lower school tracks (Baumert & Schümer, 2002; Kristen & Granato, 2007). Furthermore, students from ethnic minorities tend to reach lower levels of academic achievement (Klieme et al., 2010; Walter, 2009) and drop out of school more frequently (Rumberger, 1995). However, to date, most of the research on the disadvantages of ethnic minorities has focused on achievement-related disparities, while the social situation of ethnic minority students in the education system has not yet been in the focus as much. The current study focusses on the role of ethnic origin in teachers' reactions to social exclusion. As in everyday school life teachers do not always know the exact immigration history of their students, we focus on ethnic origin, because this is often more obvious and is a broader concept.

1.1 Social exclusion in interethnic contexts

Social exclusion can be understood as "the experience of being kept apart from others physically or emotionally" (Riva & Eck, 2016, p. ix). It designates a situation in which a person is excluded from activities or conversations by another individual or a group of individuals (Wesselmann et al., 2016). When individuals are recurrently socially excluded by their peers, it can have serious consequences on their health and well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2003; Gazelle & Druhen, 2009), their social and emotional development (Gazelle & Druhen, 2009; Murray-Close & Ostrov, 2009), and their academic achievement (Buhs et al., 2006). These negative consequences occur across different ages (Eisenberger et al., 2003; Gazelle & Druhen, 2009; Murray-Close & Ostrov, 2009; Buhs et al., 2006; Douglass and Shelton, 2014; Huynh & Fuligni, 2010). In recent years, research on the phenomenon of exclusion in the context of interethnic group processes has received broader interest. It has been recurrently shown that social exclusion is often based on group memberships such as nationality or ethnicity (Abrams & Killen, 2014; Hitti & Killen, 2015; Killen et al., 2010) and that it is a serious problem faced by many immigrants (Minority Rights Group International, 2010). In line with these findings, belonging to an ethnic minority has been identified as a risk factor for exclusion among peers, as students from ethnic minorities have been shown to be rejected more often than majority youth (Plenty & Jonsson, 2017). Moreover, minority groups often

face stereotypical thinking and behavior which can also lead to interethnic exclusion (Killen et al., 2013).

1.2 The role of teachers in interethnic exclusion

In general, teachers can have considerable impact on their students. In different ways, they directly and indirectly impact their students' attitudes and behavior (Blazar & Kraft, 2017; Duong et al., 2019). This should also hold for interethnic exclusion. With the rules that teachers introduce in class, they define which behavior is acceptable or unacceptable. In this way, they can establish norms of inclusion and appreciation of cultural diversity. Further, teachers' interactions with their students in interethnic contexts are of considerable importance because teachers are important role models for their students (Evans, 1992). With their reactions and responses to interethnic conflicts and interethnic exclusion, they transmit explicit and implicit messages about their attitudes toward the role of inclusion and diversity in schools and thus shape their students' attitudes and behavior (Cooley et al., 2016; Muntoni & Retelsdorf, 2020).

Given the important role that teachers play in their class's social system and especially their impact on positive or negative intergroup dynamics, it is surprising that there has been so little research on teachers' reactions to interethnic exclusion so far. To date, only one study has explicitly investigated teachers' evaluations of and reactions to interethnic social exclusion among students. In this study, Beißert and Bonefeld (2020) showed that pre-service teachers generally rejected exclusion and evaluated the exclusion of an ethnic minority student as even more reprehensible than the exclusion of a majority student. Further, while teachers were generally very likely to intervene in situations of social exclusion among students, male pre-service teachers were even more likely to intervene when the excluded student was from an ethnic minority. In addition, analyses of teachers' underlying considerations revealed that inclusion was particularly important for teachers as a social norm when the excluded student was from an ethnic minority. The study provided first evidence that the ethnic origin of an excluded student matters for pre-service teachers' evaluations of and reactions to social exclusion—but fortunately does not lead them to behave in an ethnically discriminatory manner.

In the experimental study by Beißert and Bonefeld (2020), situational information was very limited; that is, the study did not provide possible reasons explaining the exclusion. So, it is of great interest to find out whether information about possible reasons for the exclusion behavior would change the results. For instance, what would happen if the excluded student had transgressed a social norm shortly before the exclusion situation? Would this impact teachers' evaluations of and reactions to the exclusion behavior? And would the impact of such prior negative behavior differ depending on the ethnic origin of the excluded student? In the current study, we want to systematically investigate the role of prior negative behavior (i.e., the violation of a social norm) of excluded students in combination with his their ethnic origin.

1.3 Reactions to social exclusion

As social exclusion undermines the fulfillment of psychological needs, that is, compromises the need to belong (Williams, 2009), witnessing social exclusion typically induces feelings of empathy with the excluded person (Wesselmann et al., 2013a, b). However, Wesselmann et al., (2013a, b) found that people only sympathize with and offer compensation to a socially excluded person if there is no possible justification for the exclusion. Nevertheless, if the exclusion is justified, for instance if the socially excluded individual is a burden or does not fit in the group, the exclusion is generally accepted and an observer might even carry on excluding the person in question. Further, Rudert et al. (2020) found evidence that observers of social exclusion side with the people excluding an individual from a group, if this individual has violated social norms prior to being socially excluded.

Moreover, not only the behavior of an excluded person prior to the exclusion situation seems to be relevant for the evaluation of social exclusion, but group memberships and intergroup processes also play an important role. For instance, ingroup bias (i.e., the tendency to favor or promote ingroup members, often at the expense of other groups) appears to influence the reactions of observers of social exclusion. Forbes et al. (2020) examined the effects of group membership in the context of social exclusion in college students. They found that observers of social exclusion compensated more for exclusion—that is, they behaved more inclusively—when the excluded person belonged to an ingroup than when he or she belonged to an outgroup. If we bring this ingroup bias in social exclusion together with the finding that prior negative behavior leads to higher acceptance of social exclusion, it can be assumed that norm-violating behavior as justification for social exclusion weighs more strongly for an outgroup member.

Besides the characteristics of the excluded student and aspects of the situation, teacher characteristics could also be relevant for the teachers' reactions to (interethnic) social exclusion. Two aspects might affect teachers' evaluations of and reactions to exclusion: their gender and their own immigration background.

It has been shown in different contexts that girls and women tend to evaluate exclusion as even more reprehensible than boys and men do (Beißert & Bonefeld, 2020; Beißert et al., 2019; Horn, 2003; Killen & Stangor, 2001). One possible explanation for this could be gender-specific socialization. The socialization of girls typically has a stronger focus on harmony and the avoidance of interpersonal struggles (Cross & Madson, 1997; Zahn-Waxler, 2000). In many families, harmful consequences of aggressive behaviors play a greater role in the socialization of girls compared to that of boys, which might lead to more developed feelings of empathy in girls (Smetana, 1989). Thus, females might value inclusion more and feel a stronger need to prevent exclusion.

Further, teachers' own immigration background might affect their reactions to interethnic exclusion. It has been shown that teachers' immigration background can influence their evaluations and judgments regarding students of different ethnicities (Kleen et al., 2019). In the context of social exclusion, an own migration history in the family might increase a teacher's empathy with a socially excluded ethnic minority student.

1.4 Current study

With the current study, we want to replicate and extend prior research on teachers' evaluations of and reactions to interethnic exclusion scenarios. We focused on pre-service and in-service teachers in the role of observers of exclusion among students. To this end, we assessed teachers' evaluations of hypothetical exclusion scenarios and their anticipated reactions and interventions, that is, how likely they were to intervene in such a situation and what they would specifically do. We were interested in whether the ethnic origin of an excluded student and background information about the student's prior negative behavior were relevant for teachers' reactions to hypothetical exclusion scenarios. As norm-violating behavior, we selected a typical situation from daily school life: a student insulting another student. We focused on students with Turkish background because they represent the biggest ethnic minority group in Germany (DESTATIS, 2016).

Given the considerations in the previous chapter, we make the following assumptions. Based on feelings of empathy with the excluded person in combination with the severe consequences associated with social exclusion, we expect teachers to show a general tendency to reject exclusion (H1). However, people tend to side with excluders if the target of exclusion has violated social norms prior to being excluded. For this reason, we expect teachers to reject exclusion less in scenarios where they receive information about prior negative behavior by the excluded student (H2). Combining the finding that prior negative behavior leads to higher acceptance of exclusion with the finding that ingroup bias affects social exclusion, we expect background information about prior norm-violating behavior to have a greater impact on the evaluation of the exclusion of an outgroup member (Turkish student) than of an ingroup member (German student) (H3).[1] Finally, based on considerations related to gender-specific socialization, we assume that female teachers would reject exclusion more strongly than their male counterparts (H4).

2 Method

2.1 Participants

The study included 491 participants. One fifth of the participants had an immigration background; that is, they themselves or at least one of their parents was born in a country other than Germany. Nine participants had to be excluded from the analyses as they had a Turkish background and, thus, the outgroup manipulation regarding the Turkish student in the scenarios would not have worked for them. This left us with a final sample of 482 teachers (84 males, 398 females) from different school tracks from all over Germany. The sample included 41% in-service teachers ($n = 197$, $M_{age} = 37.61$, $SD = 10.7$, 84% female) and 59% pre-service teachers

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[1] When we speak of a "German student" and a "Turkish student", we are referring to the ethnic origin of the students. We acknowledge that students with a Turkish descent can also be German (e.g., born in Germany, feel German, have German citizenship, etc.).

($n = 285$, $M_{age} = 22.88$, $SD = 4.41$, 81% female). Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants.

2.2 Design and procedures

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the DGPs (German Psychological Society). It was realized as an online survey, and participants were recruited via different mailing lists and online groups at social media platforms (e.g., Facebook groups). Additionally, flyers were distributed in schools and libraries and at public sites of universities.

At the beginning of the survey, the participants were informed about their data protection rights. They were also told that participation in the study was anonymous and voluntary, and that there would be no negative consequences if they decided not to participate or to leave the study early without completing it. Participants had to confirm that they understood the information and were willing to participate in the study.

The survey started with a questionnaire collecting demographic information. Next, the participants were presented with a hypothetical exclusion scenario. The study took approximately 10 min per person.

2.3 Material

The hypothetical exclusion scenario consisted of a situation in which a boy was excluded from a learning group by his classmates. We varied the ethnic origin of the excluded boy. In addition, the participants were provided with further background information about the situation or not.

More specifically, to manipulate the ethnic origin of the excluded protagonist, we used either a typical German or a typical Turkish name. The names used in the scenarios had been pretested in a former study by Bonefeld and Dickhäuser (2018). Additionally, in one condition, the participants were told that the excluded student had insulted another student prior to being excluded. In the other condition no such information was provided. See Table 1 for the exact wording of the hypothetical exclusion scenarios.

We used a between-subjects design, and participants were randomly assigned to the experimental conditions.

Table 1 Exact wording of the hypothetical exclusion scenarios

Background Information	
No information	Negative information
While packing up after class (grade 7), you observe some students making an appointment to study together. Lukas/Emre would like to join the study group. The other students tell him that he can't join.	While packing up after class (grade 7), you observe some students making an appointment to study together. Lukas/Emre who has insulted another student during class would like to join the study group. The other students tell him that he can't join.

2.4 Measures

We assessed the participants' evaluations of the exclusion scenario, their likelihood to intervene in such a situation, and the specific action they would take. The evaluations of the exclusion scenario were assessed with a scale consisting of three items on a seven-point Likert-type scale. Namely, we asked the participants to specify the extent to which they evaluated the scenario as (1) not okay/okay, (2) unfair/fair, and (3) unjustifiable/justifiable. A score was created to reflect a participant's evaluation of the exclusion based on these three items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.89). High numbers indicated high acceptability of exclusion; low numbers indicated strong rejection of exclusion.

Further, we asked the participants how likely it was that they would intervene in the situation if it happened in their class. This was also assessed using a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = very unlikely to 7 = very likely). Afterwards, we asked them to justify their decision and to indicate the specific action they would have taken (open-ended questions).

2.5 Coding of open-ended questions

The coding systems for the open-ended questions were based on a study by Beißert and Bonefeld (2020) and extended by adding categories inductively developed from the surveys themselves (see Tables 1, 2 for an overview and examples). Coders were allowed to code up to three relevant justifications for each statement. Coding was completed by two independent coders. On the basis of 20% of the interviews, inter-rater reliability was high, with Cohen's kappa = 0.84 for the justifications of the likelihood of intervention and kappa = 0.97 for the specific actions. We included the categories used by more than 10% of the participants in the analyses (Tables 2, 3).

3 Results

3.1 Data analyses

Univariate ANOVAs were used to test for differences in the evaluation of exclusion and the likelihood of intervention between the different experimental conditions. In order to test for differences between the male and female participants as well as between pre- and in-service teachers, those two variables were included in these analyses.

Repeated-measures ANOVAs were conducted on the proportional use of categories to analyze the reasoning data from the open-ended questions (justification of likelihood of intervention, specific actions). ANOVA frameworks are appropriate for repeated-measures analyses of reasoning because ANOVAs are robust to the problem of empty cells, whereas other data analytic procedures require cumbersome data manipulation to adjust for empty cells (see Posada & Wainryb, 2008, for a more extensive explanation and justification of this data analytic approach). In order to

Table 2 Coding system for justifications of likelihood of intervention and frequencies for each category

Category	Example	N
Need for information/lack of context information	*Because I want to know why they excluded him., There are not enough details about the situation.*	103
Children's autonomy	*The children can decide who they want in their group., I would not intervene, it's their choice.*	136
Group functioning	*if they don't like each other, studying together won't be very effective, if he doesn't know German, the group can't study as well as without him*	9
Empathy for the victim	*I would intervene because the excluded child will be very sad, Because I feel very sorry for the excluded child.*	20
Understanding the group's perspective	*I would not intervene because I can totally understand that they didn't want him in the group., it is not surprising that they don't let him join after his offense*	51
Learning from own behavior	*I would not intervene because the student needs to learn that his unfriendly behavior has consequences*	21
Social norm of inclusion and participation/equity	*because it is generally not ok to exclude others, Because everybody should get a chance to participate*	97
Mediation/avoid escalation	*I would intervene to avoid escalation, because I would want to mediate between the child and the group to solve the issue*	19
Class-oriented perspective	*I would intervene because it is better for the atmosphere in class if you completely prevent exclusion. I would not intervene because it is better for the class climate if you let students solve their struggles on their own.*	44
Other	Meaningful, but single statements	32
Undifferentiated	Meaningless statements	20

Table 3 Coding system for specific actions and frequencies for each category

| Category	Example	N
Ask for reasons	I would ask them why they excluded the student	166
Help to find inclusion-oriented solution	I would ask the group to let him join	92
Explain norm of inclusion	I would explain to the group that it is not ok to exclude others.	38
Find alternative solution for the excluded student	I would help the student find another study group.	27
Create insight	I want to make him understand why he was excluded, "I would tell him that it is not surprising that they did not let him join and why.	50
Effect an apology	I would make him apologize for his prior behavior.	37
Mediation between students	I would mediate the students' conflict, I would moderate their discussion and support them finding a common solution together.	46
Talk to students/find solution (without further specification)	I would talk to them. I would try to find a solution.	38
Other	Meaningful, but single statements	34
Undifferentiated	Meaningless statements	11
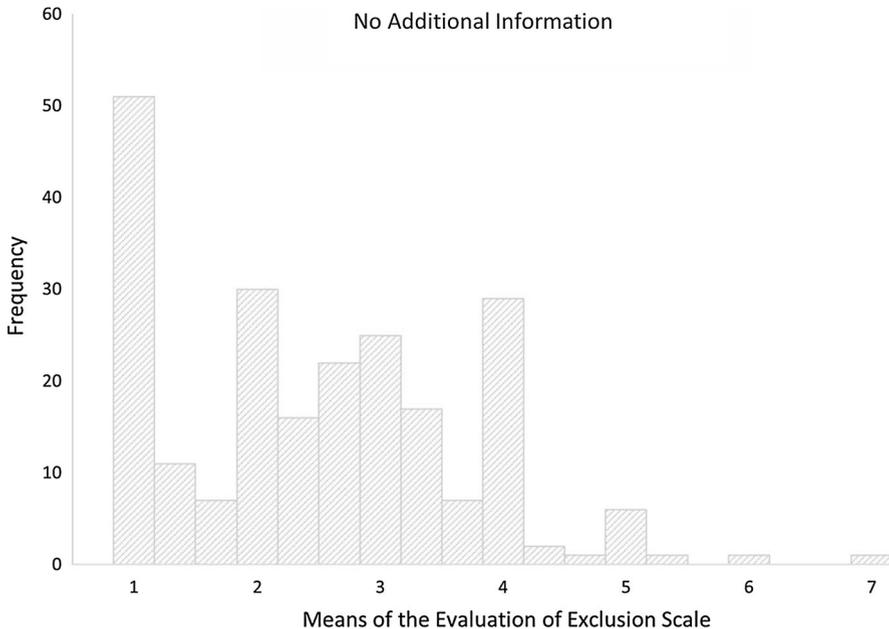
Fig. 1 Distribution of the means of the evaluation scale in the condition with no additional information

test for differences between pre- and in-service teachers, this variable was included in the analyses. As there were no effects based on the participants' gender, we excluded gender from the repeated-measures analyses and calculated reduced models for the sake of simplicity.

Additionally, the participants' immigration background (immigration background: yes vs. no) was included in all analyses as a control variable. To address alpha inflation, Bonferroni corrections were used in all analyses.

3.2 Evaluation of exclusion

In contrast to our expectations, there was no general tendency to reject exclusion across all conditions. With a skewness of 0.04 ($SE=0.11$), a mean of 3.54 ($SD=1.58$), mode = 4.00, and median = 3.67, there was no right-skewed distribution on the evaluation scale. In the scenarios without background information, there was a right-skewed distribution with a skewness of 0.5 (SE = 1.62), a mean of 2.5 (SD = 1.2), mode = 1.0, and median = 2.3, see Fig. 1 for distribution of means and With a skewness of − 0.36 (SE = 0.16), a mean of 4.50 (SD = 1.25), mode = 4.67, and median = 4.67, this distribution almost reflected a normal distribution, which is shifted slightly to the right side of the scale, see Fig. 2 for distribution of means. However, when the sample was split into those with negative background information versus those without any further information, interesting differences in the distributions emerged. In the scenarios without background information,
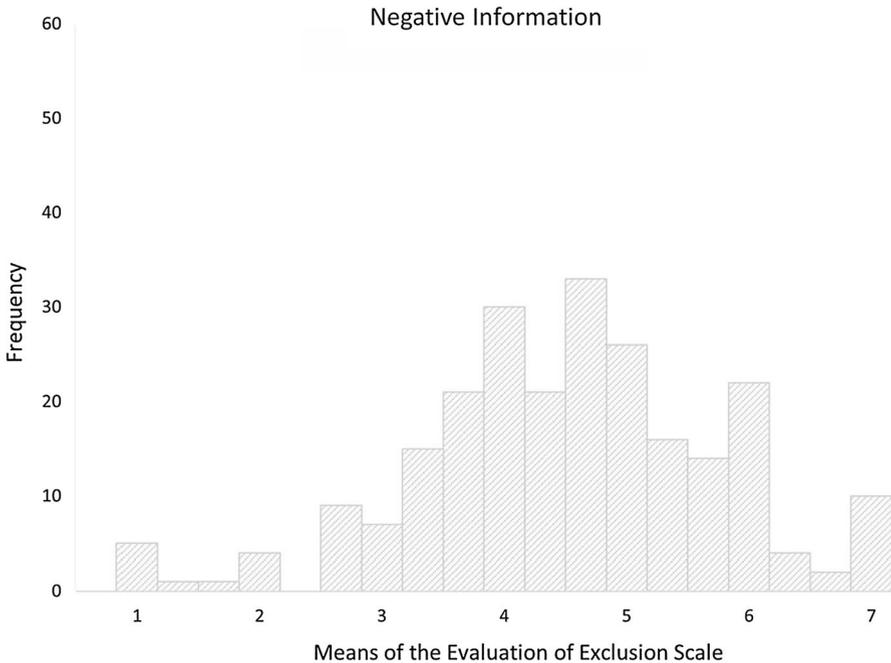
Fig.2 Distribution of the means of the evaluation scale in the condition with negative background information

there was a right-skewed distribution with a skewness of 0.5 ($SE = 1.62$), a mean of 2.5 ($SD = 1.2$), mode $= 1.0$, and median $= 2.3$. However, we found a different pattern in the scenarios containing information about prior norm-violating behavior. With a skewness of -0.36 ($SE = 0.16$), a mean of 4.50 ($SD = 1.25$), mode $= 4.67$, and median $= 4.67$, this distribution almost reflected a normal distribution, which is shifted slightly to the right side of the scale.

In order to test for differences in the evaluation of exclusion based on the ethnic origin of the excluded student and the background information, a 2 (protagonist: German, Turkish) × 2 (background information: no information, negative information) × 2 (participant gender: male, female) × 2 (professional status: pre-service teacher, in-service teacher) univariate ANCOVA was conducted with the participants' immigration background as a covariate.

As expected, there was a main effect of the participants' gender, $F (1, 451) = 4.86$, $p = 0.028$, $\eta p^2 = 0.01$, revealing that male participants rejected exclusion less ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.57$) than female participants ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.58$).

Further, there was a main effect of background information, $F (1, 451) = 141.52$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.24$. Namely, in the condition with negative information, exclusion was evaluated as much more acceptable ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 1.25$) than in the condition with no background information ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.20$). Additionally, there was an interaction effect of professional status and background information, $F (1, 451) = 7.62$, $p = 0.006$, $\eta p^2 = 0.02$, revealing that the difference between the

Table 4 Means and standard deviations of evaluation of exclusion by background information and ethnic origin of the excluded student

		Background information	
		No information	Negative information
Ethnic origin of protagonist	German	$M=2.61$ ($SD=1.16$)	$M=4.69$ ($SD=1.17$)
	Turkish	$M=2.40$ ($SD=1.23$)	$M=4.33$ ($SD=1.29$)

$M=$ mean, $SD=$ standard deviation. High numbers indicate high acceptability of exclusion; low numbers indicate strong rejection of exclusion

conditions with negative vs. no information was even bigger in the group of pre-service teachers (Table 4).

Further, there was an interaction of professional status, background information, and participant gender, $F(1, 451)=6.37$, $p=0.012$, $\eta p^2=0.01$. However, given the small number of male participants, this effect shall not be further interpreted.

The analysis revealed no main or interaction effects based on the ethnic origin of the excluded protagonist.

3.3 Likelihood of intervention

The descriptive analyses showed that 157 participants (32%) tended to intervene, 257 participants (53%) tended not to intervene, and 71 (14%) participants chose the middle of the scale, indicating that it was as likely that they would intervene as not intervene.

In order to analyze differences in the participants' likelihood to intervene in such a situation, we conducted a 2 (protagonist: German, Turkish) × 2 (background information: no information, negative information) × 2 (participant gender: male, female) × 2 (professional status: pre-service teacher, in-service teacher) univariate ANCOVA with the participants' immigration background as a covariate.

This analysis revealed a main effect of background information, $F(1, 462)=4.86$, $p=0.001$, $\eta p^2=0.03$, demonstrating that participants were less likely to intervene in scenarios with negative information ($M=4.80$, $SD=1.74$) than in scenarios with no background information ($M=4.07$, $SD=1.88$).

No main or interaction effects of the ethnic origin of the excluded student or any other variables were found (Table 5).

3.4 Justification of likelihood of intervention

To analyze the justifications of participants' likelihood to intervene in the situation, we conducted reasoning analyses on the proportional use of the five most used categories (all of which were used by at least 10% of the participants). The resulting codes were: "need for information/lack of context information", "children's autonomy", "understanding the group's perspective", "social norm of inclusion and participation/equity", and "class-oriented perspective". As we also

Table 5 Means and standard deviations of likelihood of intervention by background information and ethnic origin of the excluded student

		Background information	
		No information	Negative information
Ethnic origin of protagonist	German	$M = 4.69$ ($SD = 1.66$)	$M = 3.87$ ($SD = 1.92$)
	Turkish	$M = 4.89$ ($SD = 1.80$)	$M = 4.26$ ($SD = 1.83$)

M = mean, SD = standard deviation

wanted to explore whether the specific justifications were related to the decision to intervene or not, we created a new variable out of the seven-point scale measuring the likelihood of intervention, resulting in the three categories "tendency to intervene", "indecisive", and "tendency not to intervene".

We ran a 3 (decision: no intervention, neither/nor, intervention) × 2 (protagonist: German, Turkish) × 2 (background information: no information, negative information) × 2 (professional status: pre-service teacher, in-service teacher) × 5 (justification: need for information/lack of context information, children's autonomy, understanding the group's perspective, social norm of inclusion and participation/equity, and class-oriented perspective) ANCOVA with repeated measures on the factor "justification" and with the participants' immigration history as a covariate. The Huynh–Feldt adjustment was used to correct for violations of sphericity. Please see ESM 1 for all means and standard deviations.

The analyses revealed a main effect of justification, F (3.90, 1699.81) = 20.91, $p < 0.001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.05$, demonstrating that the most frequently used codes were need for information and children's autonomy, $ps < 0.01$.

Additionally, there was an interaction of justification and the decision to intervene or not, F (7.80, 1699.81) = 31.06 $p < 0.001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.13$. Namely, for those who stated that they would intervene, the most used codes were need for information and social norm of inclusion; they hardly referred to children's autonomy. In contrast, for the group of non-interveners, children's autonomy was by far the most used code; the social norm of inclusion was hardly used, (all $ps < 0.05$).

There was also an interaction effect of justification and background information F (3.90, 1699.81) = 8.89, $p < 0.001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.02$, revealing that the need for information was referred to much more frequently in the condition with no background information and that understanding the group's perspective was used almost exclusively in the condition with negative information, $ps < 0.001$.

Further, there was an interaction effect of justification and professional status, F (3.90, 1699.81) = 13.64, $p < 0.001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.03$, revealing that in-service teachers referred much more frequently to their need for information than pre-service teachers, whereas pre-service teachers referred much more frequently to children's autonomy and understanding the group's perspective, $ps < 0.01$.

3.5 Specific actions

Analyses of the specific actions named by the participants were conducted on the proportional use of the six most used categories (all of which were used by at least 10% of the participants who answered the question). The resulting codes were: "ask for reasons", "help to find inclusion-oriented solution", "explain norm of inclusion", "create insight", "mediation between students", and "talk to students/find solution".

In order to test for differences in participants' specific actions based on the ethnic origin of the excluded student and background information, a 2 (protagonist: German, Turkish) × 2 (background information: no information, negative information) × 2 (professional status: pre-service teacher, in-service teacher) × 6 (action: "ask for reasons", "help to find inclusion-oriented solution", "explain norm of inclusion", "create insight", "mediation between students", "talk to students/find solution") ANCOVA was run with repeated measures on the factor "action" and with the participants' immigration history as a covariate. The Huynh–Feldt adjustment was used to correct for violations of sphericity.

The analysis revealed a main effect of action, F (4.70, 1781.10) = 33.30, $p < 0.001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.08$, demonstrating that the participants would ask for reasons and help to find an inclusion-oriented solution more than any other action, ps > 0.01.

Further, there was an interaction effect of background information and action, F (4.75, 1781.10) = 55.27, $p < 0.001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.13$. More specifically, participants would ask for reasons or explain the norm of inclusion much more in the conditions without background information than in the conditions with negative information, ps > 0.01. In turn, participants would help to find an inclusion-oriented solution, create insight or mediate between students more frequently in the conditions with negative information, ps < 0.05. They stated that they would create insight almost exclusively in the conditions with negative information (Table 6).

4 Discussion

The present study investigated pre- and in-service teachers' reactions to interethnic exclusion scenarios in Germany. Focusing on pre- and in-service teachers as observers of social exclusion, we used hypothetical scenarios in which a student with either a typical German or a typical Turkish name was excluded by other children in class. Additionally, we varied the background information, providing participants either with no additional information or with information about norm-violating behavior (insult of another student) by the excluded student prior to exclusion. We assessed pre- and in-service teachers' evaluations of the exclusion behavior, the likelihood that they would intervene in the situation, and the specific actions they would take if they were to intervene. The aim of this research was to replicate and extend prior research on teachers' evaluations of and reactions to interethnic exclusion scenarios.

Table 6 Proportional use of specific actions

Category	No Information Protagonist with German name M (SD) Pre-service teacher	In-service teacher	Total	Protagonist with Turkish name M (SD) Pre-service teacher	In-service Teacher	Total	Negative Information Protagonist with German name M (SD) Pre-service teacher	In-service teacher	Total	Protagonist with Turkish name M (SD) Pre-service teacher Total	In-service teacher	Total	Total M (SD)
Ask for reasons	0.70 (0.46)	0.57 (0.50)	0.65 (0.48)	0.69 (0.47)	0.76 (0.43)	0.72 (0.45)	0.09 (0.28)	0.14 (0.36)	0.11 (0.32)	0.20 (0.41)	0.11 (0.31)	0.16 (0.37)	0.43 (0.50)
Help to find inclusion-oriented solution	0.28 (0.45)	0.16 (0.37)	0.23 (0.43)	0.20 (0.40)	0.09 (0.29)	0.15 (0.36)	0.34 (0.48)	0.23 (0.43)	0.29 (0.46)	0.27 (0.45)	0.32 (0.47)	0.29 (0.46)	0.24 (0.43)
Explain norm of inclusion	0.16 (0.37)	0.16 (0.37)	0.16 (0.37)	0.15 (0.36)	0.09 (0.29)	0.12 (0.33)	0.11 (0.31)	0.03 (0.17)	0.07 (0.26)	0.03 (0.18)	0.03 (0.16)	0.03 (0.17)	0.10 (0.30)
Create insight	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.02 (0.13)	0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.10)	0.26 (0.44)	0.31 (0.47)	0.28 (0.45)	0.32 (0.47)	0.18 (0.39)	0.27 (0.45)	0.13 (0.34)
Mediation between students	0.07 (0.25)	0.11 (0.32)	0.08 (0.28)	0.07 (0.25)	0.07 (0.25)	0.07 (0.25)	0.17 (0.38)	0.17 (0.38)	0.17 (0.38)	0.14 (0.35)	0.24 (0.43)	0.18 (0.38)	0.12 (0.33)

Table 6 (continued)

Category	No Information						Negative Information						Total
	Protagonist with German name			Protagonist with Turkish name			Protagonist with German name			Protagonist with Turkish name			
	M (SD)			M (SD)			M (SD)			M (SD)			M (SD)
	Pre-service teacher	In-service teacher	Total	Pre-service teacher	In-service Teacher	Total	Pre-service teacher	In-service teacher	Total	Pre-service teacher Total	In-service teacher	Total	
Talk to students/ Find solution (without further specification)	0.07 (0.25)	0.08 (0.28)	0.07 (0.26)	0.07 (0.25)	0.13 (0.34)	0.09 (0.29)	0.11 (0.31)	0.14 (0.36)	0.12 (0.33)	0.12 (0.33)	0.11 (0.31)	0.11 (0.32)	0.10 (0.30)

M = mean, SD = standard deviation

4.1 Evaluation of exclusion and likelihood of intervention

For both measures, the evaluation of exclusion and the likelihood of intervention, the same main pattern was found. There was no impact of the ethnic origin of the excluded student on the teachers' responses, but a strong effect of background information.

In contrast to our expectations, we did not find a general tendency to reject exclusion among the teachers across all conditions of the scenarios. Exclusion was only clearly rejected if no background information was provided. On the one hand, this replicates the findings of Beißert and Bonefeld (2020), as the conditions without background information in the current study were identical to the conditions used in their study. On the other hand, it shows the strong impact of prior norm-violating behavior on the evaluation of exclusion. In the conditions with negative background information, the teachers accepted exclusion behavior much more than in the conditions without further background information and were less likely to intervene. Obviously, teachers understand the exclusion in these situations as an understandable consequence of the norm-violating behavior. Interestingly, the impact of background information on the evaluation of exclusion was even bigger in the group of pre-service teachers.

The high effect of background information was somewhat surprising. After learning about the excluded student's prior negative behavior, the pre- and in-service teachers in our study rejected exclusion less, and many of them even evaluated the exclusion behavior as acceptable, stating that they would not intervene, but leave the situation to the students in these cases. This was unexpected. Given the severe consequences that exclusion can have, we expected teachers to generally reject exclusion among students even if they were provided with a (understandable) reason. However, obviously, they consider their students capable of sorting out such a situation on their own. They are only alerted and likely to take action if there is no obvious reason for the exclusion behavior. It is possible that teachers would assume a more systematic or discriminative motive behind the exclusion, if they do not see an obvious cause for the exclusion.

Strikingly, no differences were found in the teachers' evaluations of the exclusion scenario based on the ethnic origin of the excluded student. Thus, our study supports the finding of Beißert and Bonefeld (2020) that teachers do not seem to underlie ingroup bias when evaluating interethnic social exclusion. This might be because teacher training at most universities today fosters teachers' awareness of the disadvantaged situation of ethnic minorities, and the challenges faced by ethnic minorities are very present in societal discourse. Hence, the vulnerability of ethnic minority students might be more salient for them in social situations than with regard to other achievement-related decisions or evaluations.

Information about prior norm-violating behavior did not have a greater impact on the evaluation of the exclusion of an outgroup member (student with typical Turkish name) than an ingroup member (student with a typical German name). In other words, prior norm-violating behavior seems to increase acceptance of exclusion and decrease the perceived need for intervention, regardless of the ethnic origin of the excluded person.

In terms of teacher characteristics, we found that female participants rejected exclusion more than male participants across all scenarios. This was in line with our expectations and prior research. However, no gender differences were found for the likelihood of intervention.

4.2 Justification of likelihood of intervention

In terms of the rationale behind teachers' decisions, we found some interesting differences between pre- and in-service teachers. Across all conditions, in-service teachers used justifications referring to their need for information about the situation much more frequently than pre-service teachers, whereas pre-service teachers referred much more frequently to children's autonomy or understanding the group's perspective. Hence, in-service teachers seem to have a higher need to better understand the situation and the motives behind the exclusion, even if there is a possible reason present. They might take a more practical perspective based on their everyday work and experience or draw comparisons with situations they encounter in their daily life at school and therefore want to know more about the circumstances. Pre-service teachers, on the other hand, might tend to consider the scenario more on a theoretical level with the information they have been given and make judgments on that basis.

Further, the background information again had a strong impact on the teachers' answers—independently of the excluded protagonist's ethnic origin. When no background information was provided, the participants focused on acquiring more information about the situation and the reasons for the exclusion. However, when the participants learned about the prior norm-violating behavior, they often stated that they could understand the group and their behavior.

Additionally, the justifications differed depending on their decision to intervene or not. For instance, the need for information and the social norm of inclusion were given as justifications mainly by interveners, whereas children's autonomy was mentioned more by non-interveners.

4.3 Specific actions

With respect to the specific actions that teachers would take in such a situation, an interesting pattern was revealed. If the teachers did not have any further background information, they focused on finding out what happened und understanding the reasons for the exclusion as well as on explaining the norm of inclusion to their students. This is in line with the focus on inclusion as a social norm, which was specified by participants as a justification for intervening. In contrast, if the teachers were provided with information about negative prior behavior, they acted in a much more pragmatic and solution-oriented manner, trying to create insight or mediate between students. This highlights the importance of the reasons behind exclusion for teachers and their reactions, and shows that they want to tailor their follow-up actions to the specific situation.

4.4 Limitations and future research

One important limitation of the current study is our approach using hypothetical scenarios and self-reports, as they might be biased by social desirability. However, several researchers have demonstrated in studies for children and adolescents that self-report reasoning and evaluations of hypothetical scenarios correspond with actual behavior in real-life situations (Mulvey et al., 2018; Turiel, 2008). Nevertheless, we cannot be sure that this also holds for adults. Thus, future research should combine self-report data with behavioral observations to validate these findings. Further, future research should make use of implicit measures, as they are less affected by social desirability (Fazio & Olson, 2003).

In addition, our results are limited by the fact that teachers underlie situational restrictions in everyday school life. Because they are often very busy and under time pressure (e.g., due to very short breaks between lessons), they might not have the necessary resources to make a thorough assessment of an exclusion situation. In this study, our participants had all the time they needed to reason about the situation and to decide what they thought about it. In real-life situations, on the other hand, teachers often have to make instant decisions and react immediately to such situations. Thus, it is possible that the results of our study reflect more their "ideal", thoughtful reaction to exclusion based on thorough considerations. In real life, their reactions and decisions might be much more intuitive or based on heuristics and customs. Another important influence on teachers' reactions could be their experience with interethnic groups. As we did not consider this in our study, future research should address this issue.

Moreover, norm-violating behavior was operationalized by an everyday situation, a student insulting another student, in our study. However, norm-violating behavior can take different forms, which could have different consequences in our context. Future research should therefore focus on different forms of norm-violating behavior.

Additionally, one aspect that we did not investigate in our study is the characteristics of the group of excluders. We did not provide information about their gender, ethnic origin, status, or any other potentially relevant aspects, neither did we give information as to whether the situation reflects typical behavior of the group regarding the excluded student or whether it was just a single case. However, as the open-ended questions demonstrated, these seem to be aspects that teachers would include in their considerations. Thus, further research should try to systematically investigate the role of such aspects in order to acquire a deeper understanding of the factors that affect teachers' reactions to social exclusion.

4.5 Conclusion

All in all, our study provides interesting findings regarding teachers' reactions to and evaluations of social exclusion in interethnic contexts. Strikingly, situational information seems to be much more important for teachers' reactions to social exclusion

than the ethnic origin of the excluded student. For all measures, we found pronounced differences between the scenarios with negative background information and the scenarios without any addititonal information. When negative background information was provided, the pre- and in-service teachers in our study evaluated exclusion less negatively, were less likely to intervene, differed in their underlying considerations, and stated that they would take different actions. These findings add to the sparse body of research on teachers' reactions to social exclusion in interethnic peer encounters and emphasize the importance of situational information.

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