Beyond Autonomy? Moral Socialization Goals of German and Indonesian Preschool Teachers

Melanie Schwarz1, Sri Indah Pujiastuti1, and Manfred Holodynski1

Abstract

The moral socialization of preschool children has so far mostly been investigated in the informal context of family, but with an increasing institutionalization of early childhood education worldwide, preschool teachers now play a prominent role as moral socialization agents. Accordingly, we investigated the institutional moral socialization of the three ethics of Autonomy, Community, and Divinity in two different cultural contexts. Preschool teachers (PTs) from urban German (n = 73) and Indonesian (n = 135) contexts completed a paper–pencil survey assessing their moral socialization goals for preschool children concerning the three ethics via the Ethical Values Assessment (EVA_S). Confirmatory factor analyses were carried out separately for the German and Indonesian samples and confirmed the proposed three-factor structure. Measurement invariance tests for the EVA_S indicated metric, but not scalar invariance. Thus, subsequent intra- and cross-cultural analyses were conducted with centered values. The results indicate that German PTs emphasized the ethic of Autonomy for moral socialization, while Indonesian PTs promoted the ethic of Divinity. Across cultures, Autonomy and Divinity socialization goals correlated with the PTs’ preference of the ethics in their moral reasoning. Furthermore, Divinity socialization goals were related to the PTs’ religiosity and their preschools having a religious affiliation in both cultural contexts. These findings contribute to our understanding of institutional moral socialization and cultural as well as subcultural contextual influences.

Keywords

morality, education, socialization goals, preschool, and cross-cultural

The socialization of moral values is a universal phenomenon primarily throughout childhood (Albert et al., 2005; Haidt, 2008a). While the predominant context of informal early moral socialization is the family (M. Keller, 2005), little is known about the institutional socialization of morality by professional educators. However, with an increasing number of children worldwide attending child-care facilities and preschools, especially in urban contexts, preschool teachers (PTs) become important socialization agents during early childhood, fostering their preschoolers’

1University of Münster, Germany

Corresponding Author:
Melanie Schwarz, Institute of Psychology in Education & Training, University of Münster, Fliednerstraße 21, 48149 Münster, Germany.
Email: melanie.schwarz@wwu.de
moral values in line with their socialization goals (Ahnert & Lamb, 2003; Heikamp, 2014; Hsueh & Barton, 2005; Maccoby & Lewis, 2003). Socialization goals are about how and when children should develop certain behaviors and skills. Regarding morality, socialization goals reflect the values a child should internalize and would therefore be promoted by socialization agents (Gernhardt et al., 2014).

Raising children to become morally sensitized members of society is one of the key tasks of preschools. However, whether this task and the associated moral socialization goals are explicitly specified in a curriculum or only guide the preschool agenda implicitly depends on the cultural context and prescriptions from the national government or the organization running the preschool. Thus, to investigate the institutional moral socialization, we selected two Javanese cities in Indonesia as prototypical urban Southeast Asian contexts, with governmental prescriptions for early childhood character education, and contrasted them with two cities in Northern Germany as prototypical urban Western European contexts with diverse, loose frameworks for early moral education. Previous research showed that Javanese and German contexts differed significantly in their contextual demands and the transgenerational transmission of values in the family context (Albert et al., 2005, 2009). Therefore, the present study set out to investigate how and whether cross-cultural differences between moral socialization goals permeate the context of preschool education.

Adhering to the definition from Keller and colleagues, we define culture as a dynamic, multi-dimensional system shared within a community and encompassing specific beliefs and practices (H. Keller, 2013; H. Keller et al., 2010). The successful internalization of values, norms and attitudes into a cultural model (defined as a “specific and adaptive mind-set,” H. Keller & Kärtner, 2013, p. 73) enables members of a culture to be competent and successful in their social interactions and in their moral reasoning. Prior research in different cultures has shown that parental socialization goals are strongly related to their cultural model (Kärtner et al., 2007; H. Keller et al., 2006; Mone et al., 2014).

The Big Three of Morality

The understanding of morality as a monolithic structure has often been criticized by cultural psychologists. Shweder and colleagues (1997) thus proposed a multiple construct of morality, based on various ontological presuppositions. In an ethnographic study in India and the United States, Shweder et al. (1987) identified three ethical discourses: Autonomy, Community, and Divinity (Shweder, 1990). Each ethic is associated with a specific set of key values which can furthermore be translated into virtues comprising explicit commands and interdictions.

**Ethic of Autonomy**

The self is conceptualized as an autonomous individual preference structure, “in which people are free to have the things they want” (Haidt & Kesebir, 2010; Shweder, 1999, p. 70). The world is seen as a collection of individuals, and the self as the only source of moral authority. Key values are equality of rights, independence, self-expression, freedom to pursue needs and desires, and personal well-being. The purpose of moral regulation is to increase the autonomy, choice and control of individuals and to protect them from harm committed by others (Haidt et al., 1993; Jensen et al., 2004).

**Ethic of Community**

The self is perceived as an “office holder” within a larger interdependent group or hierarchical structure. The world is a collection of families, institutions, and other social groups, and the self
adopts different social roles and duties that are part of one’s identity (Haidt & Kesebir, 2010; Shweder, 1999). Key values are self-control, respect, loyalty, interpersonal responsibilities, and fulfilling the duties inherent in the self’s social role, such that moral regulation aims to protect the integrity of this social role (Shweder, 2003; Shweder et al., 1997).

Ethic of Divinity

The inherent ontological presupposition of this ethic is that a spiritual (divine) or natural order exists. The self is conceptualized as a transcendent entity created by (a) God and the world is seen as a place where sacred souls housed in bodies relate to “something beyond” (Guerra & Giner-Sorolla, 2010; Jensen, 2011; Padilla-Walker & Jensen, 2016; Shweder, 1999, p. 70). Key values are physical and mental purity and self-control. The purpose of moral regulation is to protect the soul from degradation, sin and spiritual pollution by avoiding certain practices linked to sexuality, food or religious law. Commandments are often set by religious authorities or scriptures and connected to divine reward or punishment (Arnett et al., 2001; Haidt et al., 1993; Haidt & Kesebir, 2010; Jensen, 1995; Shweder, 1999).

The Big Three in Different Cultural Contexts

These ethics can coexist within a cultural context, although the emphasis of these three aspects of the self and the degree of their formal institutionalization may vary (Shweder, 1999). In several studies, the ethics have been found useful in describing cross-cultural as well as subcultural variations (Haidt & Kesebir, 2010; Rozin et al., 1999). For instance, participants from the United States used more Autonomy arguments in their moral reasoning, while Brazilians presented arguments based on both Autonomy and Community (Haidt et al., 1993). Contrary to the almost exclusive reliance on Autonomy in the United States, Filipinos referred relatively equally to all three ethics in their moral reasoning and Chinese students endorsed Community and Divinity as significantly more important than the U.S. students (Vasquez et al., 2001; Zhang, 2011; Zhang & Li, 2015). Shweder (2003) argued that, in contrast to Western cultures, the emphasis on Autonomy declines compared to Community and Divinity in the Hindu culture. Graham and colleagues (2011) further pointed out the significance of Divinity in Asian countries, but at the same time raised the question of whether subcultural differences might be even more important than east–west distinctions. Autonomy was found to be more prominent in urban non-Western contexts compared to rural non-Western areas (Guerra & Giner-Sorolla, 2010). The ethic of Divinity is strongly linked to religion (Shweder, 2003), and previous research suggests that in subcultures with an ever-present, conservative religious belief, Divinity is more prominent (Jensen, 2011). In sum, especially Autonomy and Divinity seem to vary not only by culture, but also by personal religiosity (Arnett et al., 2001; Haidt, 2008b; Shweder et al., 1997).

Few cross-cultural studies have investigated the moral socialization goals of PTs, and none to date have used the three ethics from Shweder et al. (1997). Killen et al. (2000) found that PTs from Colombia, El Salvador and Taiwan valued freedom of choice and initiative (values of Autonomy) less than their colleagues from the United States, but emphasized obedience toward PTs or submission to the group (values of Community). Dutch PTs, on the other hand, valued obedience significantly less than caregivers from Caribbean or Mediterranean cultures (Huijbregts et al., 2009). Italian PTs favored socialization goals in accordance with the Autonomy ethic, but also moral values of the Community ethic like social integration and respect for social rules (Lavelli et al., 2016). Estonian PTs stressed the importance of respect for others, but at the same time underlined the value of independence (Tulviste & Kikas, 2010). Taken together, moral socialization goals that can be assigned to Autonomy seemed most prominent in PTs from Western cultures, Divinity goals were valued highly by PTs in non-Western cultures, and
Community goals were valued by PTs in non-Western cultures as well as (but to a lesser extent) in Western cultures, especially the value of respect.

### Contextual Characteristics of Moral Socialization in German and Indonesian Preschools

To investigate the moral socialization goals of PTs, we selected two cities in northern Germany as prototypical urban Western contexts, and two cities on Java in Indonesia as prototypical urban Southeast Asian contexts. In the following, the differences between these two cultural contexts in early childhood education, the educational frameworks, and influences of religiosity on the institutional moral socialization goals are described in more detail.

**Germany**

The preschool context plays an important role in moral development throughout Germany, as more than 93% of German children between 3 and 5 years attended preschool during the past 5 years (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018). Based on the principle of subsidiarity, municipalities and church organizations provide child care facilities and preschools, and are supplemented by numerous not-for-profit and private organizations (Weegmann & Ostendorf-Servissoglou, 2018). Educational plans from the federal states serve merely as general guidelines, based on which preschools create their individual concepts of educational work. According to a common framework agreed upon across all federal states, PTs should foster the children’s self-reliance, well-being, and self-esteem (Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz, 2004). In the educational plan for North-Rhine Westphalia, PTs are further encouraged to ensure that children are given the opportunity to represent their own rights and interests from an early age, to be actively involved in their immediate area of life, and to communicate with peers and teachers to find peaceful solutions to problems. Religious education is mostly limited to the transmission of Christian traditions, the value of tolerance for different faiths, and of responsibility toward the environment (Ministerium für Familie, Kinder, Jugend, Kultur und Sport des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2016). Mission statements of religious preschools again reflect Christian beliefs and traditions.

**Indonesia**

Indonesia consists of many different cultures. On the island of Java, the most prevalent culture is Javanese. Compared to other cultures like Sundanese, it comprises the most formal and hierarchically organized social structure (Darroch et al., 1981). With growing mobility and a change in educational landscape, the traditional Javanese way of life, consisting of mutual social control, authority and hierarchy, is slowly making room for a more autonomous morality (Albert et al., 2005; Mulder, 1992). In contrast to Germany, preschool attendance is not mandatory in Indonesia (Von Suchodoletz et al., 2014). Besides the formal education provided for children aged 4 to 6, there are informal playgroups and child-care facilities offered for children from 2 or 3 years up to the school age. Access to and the quality of preschool education is highly variable. Chang et al. (2006) found that due to limited public financing, more than 98% of preschools are run by a fee-based private organization and the majority of preschools are concentrated in urban wealthy areas. In Yogyakarta, child-care facilities and preschools are provided for more than 68.6% of the preschool children (Republic of Indonesia, Pusat Data dan Teknologi Informasi, 2020).

Morality in Indonesia is inspired by the official state philosophy of *Pancasila*, which was first articulated by the Indonesian nationalist leader Sukarno after World War II, as an ideological framework on which the future Indonesian state should be built. Nowadays, Pancasila is believed...
to reflect Indonesian (political) values and to guide the way of life for all Indonesian people (Maulana & Suroso, 2012). Consequently, Pancasila is also anchored in the national standards for early childhood education, and thus constitutes a mandatory element of every preschool curriculum in the country (Republic of Indonesia, 2014). Pancasila is based on five principles: Belief in the One and Only God, a just and civilized Humanity, the Unity of Indonesia, Democracy, and Social Justice for all people of Indonesia (Rianty et al., 2016; Solehuddin & Adriany, 2017). These five principles comprise Shweder’s three ethics, as Humanity and Social Justice can be “mapped on” the ethic of Autonomy, Unity and Democracy on Community, and the Belief in the One and Only God corresponds to Divinity (Maulana & Suroso, 2012). Values like faithfulness, independence, and social care are further emphasized in governmental guidelines for character education (Kusumandari, 2013). Islam is the widespread religion on Java, although spiritual beliefs based on mythology still have a strong influence on Javanese values.

**Correlates of Moral Socialization Goals of German and Indonesian Preschools**

In line with the German frameworks, Gernhardt and colleagues (2014) found that PTs emphasized socialization goals linked to the ethic of Autonomy, such that children should develop independently and of their own free will. Dippelhofer-Stiem (2002) distinguished between modern and conventional values, with the former corresponding with the ethic of Autonomy (e.g., assertiveness, self-reliance) and the latter with the ethics of Community (obedience, good manners) and Divinity (cleanliness, religiosity). She found that German PTs prioritized Autonomy socialization goals the most, while obedience and religiosity were the least important. Furthermore, PTs in religious preschools promoted more conventional (Community and Divinity) values than those in preschools with no religious affiliation, while there were no differences between religious and non-religious schools with respect to the promotion of modern (Autonomy) values.

In Indonesia, Solehuddin and Adriany (2017) interviewed PTs about social justice and found strong references to the Pancasila. Furthermore, the study of Kohut et al. (2007) revealed that 98% of their Indonesian participants stated that faith is necessary to become a morally valuable person, whereas only one third of their German participants shared this opinion. The equal emphasis on all three ethics can be found not only in the Pancasila, but also in the Islamic scriptures, with Community and Divinity being promoted the most (Haidt & Kesebir, 2007).

**Present Study**

In the present study, we examined culture-specific differences in moral socialization goals on the part of PTs in urban preschools of Indonesia and Germany. Various kindergartens, playgroups, and day-care centers were selected, which are subsumed under the term “preschools.” Based on the abovementioned research, we hypothesized that German PTs predominantly value moral socialization in line with the ethic of Autonomy, while Indonesian PTs were expected to emphasize Community and Divinity socialization goals, but rate the importance of all three ethics as more equal than German PTs. Across both cultures, the emphasis of the three ethics in the PTs’ cultural model, expressed in their moral reasoning, was hypothesized to correlate with the PTs’ moral socialization goals. Since the personal religiosity and religious affiliation of a preschool might play an important role (e.g., Jensen & McKenzie, 2016), this influence will be examined at an intracultural level. Regarding moral socialization goals in line with the ethic of Divinity, we predicted that in both cultural contexts, PTs from religious preschools and with stronger personal religiosity would value the ethic to a greater extent.
Methods

Subjects

PTs were recruited from 13 urban Indonesian (Yogyakarta and Sleman) and 20 urban German preschools (Münster and Bielefeld) to participate in a paper–pencil survey. All PTs participated voluntarily after informed consent was given, and received a customary financial compensation for their time (in Germany 25€ and in Indonesia 100.000IDR). After a listwise exclusion of three Indonesian PTs with more than 25% missing values in the questionnaire, we included 135 Indonesian PTs in our sample (53 from religious preschools, 82 from non-religious preschools, and 97.0% women). 73 German PTs (44 PTs from religious preschools, 29 from non-religious preschools, and 83.6% women) completed the survey. Age was balanced across the samples, German PTs were on average 39.8 years old ($SD = 12.8$), Indonesian PTs were 37.7 years old ($SD = 10.5$). Culturally representative, there were significantly more women in the Indonesian sample, 97.0%, $\chi^2(1) = 12.1, p < .001$, and the most frequent level of education of Indonesian PTs was a University degree (88.1%), compared to the vocational training in Germany (58.9%), $\chi^2(2) = 89.96, p < .001$. PTs did not differ in their years of professional experience (Indonesian PTs $M = 12.1, SD = 10.0$, German PTs $M = 14.0, SD = 11.5$), but Indonesian PTs ($M = 4.84, SD = 0.42$) indicated significantly stronger personal religiosity compared to German PTs ($M = 2.85, SD = 1.17$), $t(79.99) = 13.94, p < .001$ (Table 1).

Measures

Moral socialization goals. Padilla-Walker and Jensen (2016) constructed and validated the EVA_S based on Shweder’s three ethics of Autonomy, Community and Divinity. The short version of the questionnaire (EVA_S) contains 12 positively poled items, four items on each scale (Table 2). We changed the recommended alternative prompt “What moral values do you want to pass on to the next generation?” into “What moral values do you want to pass on to the children?,” as we aimed to refer to the PTs’ preschool children group. We changed the original formulation of the items, which were directed to the self, to a more general prompt, to emphasize the universal value character of the items (e.g., “to be cooperative” compared to the original item “I should be cooperative”). Answers were given on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (“not at all important”) to 5 (“extremely important”). At the end of the questionnaire, participants could further indicate the three most important moral socialization goals on the item list. Internal consistencies of the original questionnaire subscales were Cronbach’s $\alpha \geq .74$, and confirmatory factor analysis examining a three-factor-model of the EVA_S with Autonomy, Community, and Divinity as latent factors showed an excellent fit for the United States sample with CFI = .98, TLI = .98, and RMSEA = .05. The test for measurement invariance across age groups resulted in metric equivalence of the full model, as well as all subscales (Padilla-Walker & Jensen, 2016). The reformulated EVA_S was translated and back-translated from English to German and Bahasa Indonesia by professional bilingual translators, together with research assistants working in Psychology and Education, whose mother tongue was either German or Bahasa Indonesia. The item and Likert-type-scale wording of the translation and back-translation matched both in content and grammar.

Moral reasoning. The PTs’ personal preferences for the three ethics in moral reasoning were assessed as a cultural variable by means of the short version of the Community, Autonomy, and Divinity Scale ([CADSS] Guerra, 2015; Guerra & Giner-Sorolla, 2010). PTs were asked to respond to 13 positively formulated statements (“An action/behavior is right, if”) and 17 negatively formulated ones (“An action/behavior is wrong, if”). Items like “it expresses personal
choice and liberty” (Autonomy), “it is socially approved” (Community), or “it is against God’s will” (Divinity) were rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 (never) to 7 (always). Internal consistencies of the original questionnaire subscales were Cronbach’s $\alpha \geq .77$. Confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the proposed factor structure (with the three ethics as three second-order factors, each loading on two subfactors) for the United Kingdom sample with $\text{CFI} = .90$, $\text{TLI} = .78$, and $\text{RMSEA} = .05$ (Guerra, 2015; Guerra & Giner-Sorolla, 2010). The questionnaire was translated and back-translated from English into German and Bahasa Indonesia (same procedure as described with the EVA_S), internal consistency of the translated CADSS was satisfactory with Cronbach’s $\alpha \geq .83$ for all subscales in both Germany and Indonesia.

Preschools with religious or non-religious affiliation. Preschools run by a Christian Church (Germany) or attached to a Mosque (Indonesia) were subsumed as religious preschools, while preschools run by municipalities, governmental, public or private organizations, or parent initiatives were subsumed as non-religious preschools.

Personal religiosity of PTs. Among other demographic questions, PTs responded to the question “How important is religious belief for you?” on a scale from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (extremely important).
Table 2. Descriptive Data and Psychometric Properties of the EVA_S Items for the German and Indonesian PTs (Absolute Values After Ipsative Mean Imputation.).

| EVA_S                                                                 | Germany                          | Indonesia                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|                                                                       | M (SD)                           | Minimum | Maximum | r_{it} | M (SD)     | Minimum | Maximum | r_{it} |
| What moral values do you want to pass on to the children?              |                                  |         |         |        |            |         |         |        |
|                                                                        |                                   |         |         |        |            |         |         |        |
| Autonomy                                                              |                                   |         |         |        |            |         |         |        |
| to take responsibility for him/herself                                | 4.46 (0.58)                       | 3.00    | 5.00    | .31    | 4.79 (0.43)| 3.00    | 5.00    | .53    |
| to try to achieve his/her personal goals                              | 4.07 (0.67)                       | 3.00    | 5.00    | .30    | 4.33 (0.68)| 3.00    | 5.00    | .43    |
| to be fair to other individuals                                      | 4.56 (0.55)                       | 3.00    | 5.00    | .44    | 4.43 (0.64)| 3.00    | 5.00    | .60    |
| to respect other individuals’ rights                                  | 4.67 (0.50)                       | 3.00    | 5.00    | .44    | 4.46 (0.62)| 2.00    | 5.00    | .57    |
| Community                                                             |                                   |         |         |        |            |         |         |        |
| to take care of his/her family                                       | 3.58 (0.90)                       | 1.00    | 5.00    | .16    | 4.48 (0.67)| 2.00    | 5.00    | .37    |
| to be cooperative                                                    | 4.07 (0.71)                       | 2.00    | 5.00    | .20    | 4.47 (0.61)| 3.00    | 5.00    | .59    |
| to know his/her place or role in a group                             | 3.63 (0.86)                       | 1.00    | 5.00    | .39    | 4.13 (0.64)| 3.00    | 5.00    | .66    |
| to strive for social harmony                                         | 3.49 (0.93)                       | 1.00    | 5.00    | .32    | 4.16 (0.66)| 2.00    | 5.00    | .66    |
| Divinity                                                              |                                   |         |         |        |            |         |         |        |
| to aim for spiritual salvation                                       | 1.75 (0.99)                       | 1.00    | 5.00    | .72    | 4.60 (0.61)| 3.00    | 5.00    | .61    |
| to strive for spiritual purity                                       | 1.81 (1.00)                       | 1.00    | 5.00    | .77    | 4.44 (0.67)| 3.00    | 5.00    | .65    |
| to aim to live a holy life                                           | 1.84 (1.03)                       | 1.00    | 5.00    | .81    | 4.77 (0.52)| 3.00    | 5.00    | .78    |
| to follow God’s law                                                   | 2.03 (1.23)                       | 1.00    | 5.00    | .67    | 4.79 (0.52)| 3.00    | 5.00    | .77    |

Note. EVA_S = Ethical values assessment; r_{it} = corrected item-total correlation.
Procedure

Except for balancing the number of religious and non-religious preschools, we randomly selected preschools based on the internet lists of these schools in the selected cities, or contacts obtained from researchers and preschool principals. In Germany, 35 of the 55 contacted preschools declined participation due to time constraints and high workloads. In Indonesia, by contrast, the government actively recommends preschools to engage in research projects and facilitates governmental accreditation. Consequently, only 10 of the 23 contacted Indonesian preschools declined participation, and PTs were encouraged by their principals to participate. This resulted in a high number of Indonesian participants compared to the low number of German participants. The a priori intended sample size was \( n = 105 \) in both samples, so as to ensure a medium effect size (calculated with G*Power 3.1.9.2). With an actual allocation of .54 (73 subjects in the German sample and 135 subjects in the Indonesian sample), a medium effect size of \( d = .53 \) could still be statistically secured. PTs were contacted indirectly via their principals and received a questionnaire package including the abovementioned questionnaires and measures. The respondents were asked to complete the questionnaires individually to reduce socially desired responses, which has been demonstrated as a common response bias in self-reports about morality (Bou Malham & Saucier, 2016).

Preliminary Data Analysis of the EVA_S

Ipsative mean imputation. The overall percentage of missing values in the EVA_S was 0.44% in both samples, and the pattern of missing values was non-monotonous and unsystematic. The missing values were imputed with ipsative mean imputation for each subscale of the EVA_S, separately for Germany and Indonesia (general procedure described in more detail by Schafer & Graham, 2002).

Item analysis. The EVA_S subscales yielded a questionable internal consistency for two of the three subscales in Germany, and acceptable to good internal consistencies for all subscales in Indonesia: Autonomy: Cronbach’s \( \alpha = .58 \) resp .73, Community: Cronbach’s \( \alpha = .46 \) resp .76, and Divinity: Cronbach’s \( \alpha = .88 \) resp .85. Two EVA_S items in the German sample showed a corrected item-total correlation less than .3 (Table 2).

Confirmatory factor analysis, model fit, and measurement invariance. We created a baseline model for the EVA_S, comprising the proposed three-factor structure with Autonomy, Community, and Divinity as latent factors (Padilla-Walker & Jensen, 2016), and performed Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) separately for Germany and Indonesia, with the imputed data set using IBM SPSS AMOS Graphics 25 to test the validity of the questionnaire in both cultural contexts. The model fit was evaluated by \( \chi^2 \)-tests and the following indices and cut-offs (Little, 2013): Comparative Fit Index (CFI; acceptable > .90), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI; acceptable > .90), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA; acceptable < .08).

The baseline model with three factors provided a good fit for the Indonesian data with \( \chi^2 = 96.96, df = 52, CFI = .938, TLI = .921, \) and RMSEA = .080, but a non-acceptable fit for the German data with \( \chi^2 = 101.61, df = 52, CFI = .813, TLI = .763, \) and RMSEA = .115. All factor loadings were above .3 and there were no exceptionally large standardized residual covariances (>2.58) for both samples. For Germany, Modification Indices indicated a correlation between the Divinity items “to follow God’s law” and “to aim to live a holy life,” covarying the error terms of these items led to a substantial increase in fit with \( \chi^2 = 63.08, df = 51, CFI = .955, TLI = .941, \) and RMSEA = .057.
Due to this modification, measurement invariance was tested with two slightly different three-factor models: the original one for the Indonesian sample and the fitted one with one additional error covariance for the German sample (whole procedure is described in Byrne, 2004). A non-significant $\chi^2$ difference ($\Delta \chi^2$) and a decrease in CFI less than .01 (Little, 2013) was considered to indicate a significantly worse fit of the invariance level, compared to the unconstrained model. Metric invariance, defined as similar factor loadings across both cultural groups, was acceptable for the three-structure-model $\chi^2 = 167.67, p < .001, df = 110, CFI = .941, TLI = .930$, and RMSEA = .050. A significant $\chi^2$-difference-test and a substantial CFI difference indicated no scalar invariance ($\Delta \chi^2 = 246.85, p < .001, \Delta df = 21$, and $\Delta CFI = .229$), meaning no similar factor loadings and intercepts across groups. Partial scalar invariance was tested for the full model as well as separately for the Autonomy, Community, and Divinity scale, and would be met with at least one intercept being equal across groups (except for the marker item with fixed factor loadings, see Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998), but could not be obtained by partly constraining intercepts.

**Scale use correction.** The failed scalar measurement invariance across both cultures resulted in a non-comparability of the Autonomy, Community, and Divinity scale means (Padilla-Walker & Jensen, 2016). Furthermore, we assumed individuals and cultural groups often to differ in their response style on the Likert-type scale in terms of how they distribute their individual importance ratings (Schwartz, 1992; He, van de Vijver, et al., 2017). Culture-specific variations were found for both Western and Eastern contexts, for example, in acquiescent response and socially desired response styles, but also mediating factors such as contextual demands and domain specificity of the survey were found to be influential (Cabooter et al., 2017; He, van de Vliert, & van de Vijver, 2017; Lalwani et al., 2009). According to Schwartz, scale-use differences could lead to a methodological bias, as “shifts in scale use would reduce correlations among values located at a distance from each other because they would be likely to be rated on different subjective scales” (Schwartz, 1992, p. 16). Response style correction was found to improve the external validity of cross-cultural comparisons (He, van de Vijver, et al., 2017). We thus centered absolute ethic scores and captured the participants’ relative perceived importance of the three ethics as socialization goals (similar to the procedure for the PVQ by Schwartz, 1992).

**Results**

**Moral Socialization Goals**

The analyses were conducted with IBM SPSS Statistics 24 with centered scale means to reduce the methodological bias of culture-specific response behavior. We ran a mixed ANOVA with culture (Germany and Indonesia) as the between-factor, and ethics (Autonomy, Community, and Divinity) as the within-factor, taking the rated importance of the three ethics as socialization goals as the dependent variable. There was a significant interaction effect between ethics and culture, $F(1.547, 318.72) = 573.89, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .736$, indicating that the importance of the ethics differed between Indonesia and Germany. $T$-tests revealed that German PTs ($M = 1.12, SD = 0.42$) rated *Autonomy socialization goals* as more important than did Indonesian PTs ($M = 0.01, SD = 0.23$), $t(96.54) = 20.92, p < .001$, and $d = 3.87$. Surprisingly, the Indonesian sample also valued *Community socialization goals* less ($M = -0.18, SD = 0.21$) than those of the German sample ($M = 0.37, SD = 0.36$), $t(101.05) = -11.90, p < .001$, and $d = 2.02$, but rated *Divinity socialization goals* as more important ($M = 0.16, SD = 0.28$) than those of the German PTs ($M = -1.48, SD = 0.60$), $t(88.50) = 21.99, p < .001$, and $d = 3.90$. As expected, German PTs indicated Autonomy as a significantly more important moral socialization goal than Community, $t(72) = 13.19, p < .001, d = 1.92$, and Divinity, $t(72) = 22.75$,
In line with our prediction, Indonesian PTs valued Divinity as more important than Autonomy, $t(134) = 3.73, p < .001, d = 0.59$ and Community, $t(134) = 9.01, p < .001, d = 1.37$, but unexpectedly, Community less than Autonomy, $t(134) = -6.31, p < .001, d = 0.86$ (Figure 1).

We thus analyzed whether Indonesian PTs rated the perceived importance of the three ethics more equally than German PTs. The maximum difference between the three ethics for the Indonesian sample (the participants highest perceived difference in the importance of ethics) was smaller than the maximum difference between the three ethics for the German sample, $t(83.05) = -20.77, p < .001$, and $d = 3.82$. Furthermore, the indication of the three most important socialization goals of the EVA_S items were analyzed. Compared to the Indonesian PTs, German PTs indicated Autonomy goals, $t(111.07) = 2.74, p = .007$, and $d = 0.43$, significantly more often as one of the three most important goals. Indonesian PTs indicated Divinity goals, $t(145.59) = 11.59, p < .001$, and $d = 1.26$ and Community goals, $t(202.24) = 2.64, p = .009$, and $d = 0.33$, more often as being most important for socialization, compared to German PTs.

**Correlation Between Moral Socialization Goals and Moral Reasoning**

In the German sample, moderate positive correlations between the use of Autonomy ($r = .524, p < .001$) and Divinity ($r = .471, p < .001$) in moral reasoning and their respective importance as a socialization goal were found. Within the Indonesian sample, only small correlations occurred between Autonomy ($r = .176, p = .041$) and Divinity ($r = .205, p = .017$) in moral reasoning and their importance as moral socialization goals (Table 3). Contrary to our predictions that positive correlations between moral reasoning and socialization goals exist for all three ethics, Community correlations were non-significant in both samples.

To determine whether the correlations between moral reasoning and socialization goals were significantly higher in one of the cultures, Fisher’s r-to-z transformation was conducted for each ethic, taking the differing sample sizes into account (Eid et al., 2011, p. 547; Meng et al., 1992). Unexpectedly, the correlations between reasoning and socialization goals were significantly higher for German than for Indonesian PTs for Autonomy ($z = 2.73, p = .003$) and Divinity ethic ($z = 2.05, p = .020$).
Divinity Socialization Goals and Religion

The relative influence of whether the preschool is religiously affiliated and the PTs’ personal religiosity with respect to the PTs’ Divinity socialization goals was further examined in a hierarchical regression analysis. Building on previous results, we first entered culture, Divinity moral reasoning, and the interaction term culture \times Divinity moral reasoning as predictors in Step 1. Personal religiosity and the interaction term culture \times personal religiosity were added in Step 2, and the religious affiliation of the preschool and the interaction term culture \times religious affiliation of the preschool in Step 3. To prevent multicollinearity due to the interaction terms, we z-standardized the predictors culture, personal religiosity, and religious affiliation of the preschool.

Table 3. Correlations (r) of the centered values of moral socialization goals (EVA_S) with the centered values of moral reasoning (CADSS), distinguished for German and Indonesian preschool teachers (PTs).

| Moral socialization goals (EVA_S) | Moral reasoning (CADSS) | German PTs | Indonesian PTs |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|------------|---------------|
|                                  |                        | Autonomy  | Community     | Divinity      | Autonomy  | Community | Divinity |
| German PTs                       |                        | .524      | −.060         | −.420         | .176      | .087      | −.283    |
| Autonomy                         |                        | .041      | .210          | −.302         |           |           |          |
| Community                        | −.387**                |           | −.086         | .471***       | −.080     | −.117     | .205*    |
| Divinity                         |                        |           |               |               |           |           |          |
| Indonesian PTs                   |                        |           |               |               |           |           |          |
| Autonomy                         | .176*                  | .087      | −.283**       |               |           |           |          |
| Community                        | −.087                  | .056      | .042          |               |           |           |          |
| Divinity                         | −.080                  | −.117     | .205*         |               |           |           |          |

Note. CADSS = short version of the Community, Autonomy, Divinity Scale, EVA_S = short version of the Ethical values assessment, PTs = preschool teachers; * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001; bold numbers indicate the hypothesized correlations.

The relative influence of whether the preschool is religiously affiliated and the PTs’ personal religiosity with respect to the PTs’ Divinity socialization goals was further examined in a hierarchical regression analysis. Building on previous results, we first entered culture, Divinity moral reasoning, and the interaction term culture \times Divinity moral reasoning as predictors in Step 1. Personal religiosity and the interaction term culture \times personal religiosity were added in Step 2, and the religious affiliation of the preschool and the interaction term culture \times religious affiliation of the preschool in Step 3. To prevent multicollinearity due to the interaction terms, we z-standardized the predictors culture, personal religiosity, and religious affiliation of the preschool.

Culture and Divinity moral reasoning significantly predicted Divinity socialization goals, $R^2 = .813$, $F(3, 200) = 288.96$, $p < .001$. The importance of Divinity socialization goals were not only higher for Indonesian than German PTs, $\beta = .689$, 95% CI [.537, .688], $t = 15.99$, $p < .001$, but also higher with a greater use of Divinity moral reasoning, $\beta = .191$, 95% CI [.163, .494] $t = 3.92$, $p < .001$. We also found the interaction between the two predictors to be significant, $\beta = -.104$, 95% CI [−.319, −.034], $t = 2.44$, $p = .016$. Personal religiosity added significantly to the prediction of Divinity socialization goals, $\Delta R^2 = .037$, $\Delta F(2, 198) = 24.27$, $p < 1$. The stronger the PTs’ personal religiosity, the higher the PTs’ emphasis of Divinity socialization goals, $\beta = .340$, 95% CI [.182, .421], $t = 4.98$, $p < .001$. The main effects of the previous predictors’ culture and Divinity moral reasoning remained significant. However, their interaction reported in Step 1 became insignificant when adding personal religiosity as a predictor. The interaction between personal religiosity and culture was not significant. In Step 3, the religious affiliation of the preschool further added significantly to the prediction of PTs’ Divinity socialization goals, $\Delta R^2 = .011$, $\Delta F(2, 196) = 7.83$, $p = .001$. In non-religious preschools, Divinity socialization goals were emphasized less by PTs than in religious preschools, $\beta = -.094$, 95% CI [−.132, −.034], $t = -3.33$, $p = .001$. The interaction between the predictors culture and religious affiliation of the preschool was significant, $\beta = .061$, 95% CI [.005, .105], $t = 2.19$, $p = .030$. Simple slope analyses showed that in Germany, the religious affiliation of the preschools predicted the emphasis of PTs’ Divinity socialization goals, with PTs from non-religious preschools valuing Divinity socialization goals significantly less than PTs from religious
preschools, \( b = -0.507, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.692, -0.323], t = -5.41, p < .001 \). In Indonesia, the same, but a less strong relationship was observable, \( b = -0.143, t = -2.08, p = .039, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.280, -0.007] \). The main effects reported in Step 2 remained significant when the religious affiliation of the preschools was added as a predictor. Taken together, the importance of Divinity socialization goals can be predicted by culture, Divinity moral reasoning, personal religiosity, and religious affiliation of the preschool.

**Discussion**

The object of the present study was to investigate cross-cultural and intra-cultural differences with respect to moral socialization in preschools. In accordance with our predictions, we found that German PTs favored Autonomy ethics over Community and Divinity ethics as moral socialization goals. Even though Indonesian PTs preferred Divinity socialization goals for their preschool children, they placed the socialization of Autonomy above Community. Across both cultures, Autonomy and Divinity socialization goals correlated positively with the PT’s use of Autonomy and Divinity in moral reasoning, and the greater importance of Divinity socialization goals could be further explained by higher personal religiosity and the organization of the preschool being religious in orientation.

**Moral Supremacy in Religious Cultures? The Ethic of Divinity**

Religious precepts, Muslim practices, and the Pancasila were found to be followed and taught explicitly by most Indonesian PTs, regardless of whether the preschool was religiously affiliated or not. In the Western, more secular and pluralistic context of Germany, on the other hand, frameworks for German PTs rather emphasize a critical analysis of religions, while fostering values like tolerance for peers with different faiths and responsibility toward the environment (Ministerium für Familie, Kinder, Jugend, Kultur und Sport des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2016). The low importance of Divinity socialization goals for German PTs thus coincides with the low importance of religion in the preschool context and the low personal religiosity. Our results revealed that even though religiousness plays different roles in the investigated cultural contexts concerning the preschool organization, cross-cultural differences were not found concerning the highly significant influence of personal religiosity on Divinity socialization goals. Numerous studies conducted in the United States (within different Christian belief groups), and also in China (with Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism being practiced) and Turkey (with an Islamic majority) showed that personal religiosity has an influence on the importance of Divinity in moral reasoning (e.g. Haidt et al., 1993; Jensen & McKenzie, 2016; Tepe et al., 2016; Vasquez et al., 2001; Zhang & Li, 2015). DiBianca Fasoli (2018) concluded that, although Divinity may be found in religious as well as non-religious groups, “religiously conservative groups may uniquely regard Divinity as a generalizable obligation” for their life (p. 1659). Islam has an important influence on everyday life in Indonesia and even in the Pancasila, the principle “Belief in the One and Only God” is at the heart of all five rules, which could be interpreted as an overarching moral obligation (Baidhawy, 2007; Weatherbee, 1985). Therefore, personal religiosity seems to be an important factor explaining the emphasis of Divinity socialization goals in both Western and traditional contexts.

**More Than Western Morality? The Ethics of Autonomy and Community**

Corresponding to our prediction that morality in Western contexts might be significantly dominated by the ethic of Autonomy, in comparison to traditional contexts, our results suggest that
German PTs strongly prioritized moral socialization goals expressing independence, self-expression, and the protection from interpersonal harm, while also pursuing values linked to the ethic of Community, but to a lesser extent. Previous studies in Central Europe have shown that, while Autonomy values are favored by PTs for moral socialization, Community values like cooperation, social integration, respect for others, and social rules are also valued by PTs as socialization goals (Dippelhofer-Stiem, 2002; Lavelli et al., 2016; Tulviste & Kikas, 2010). Common frameworks for German preschools primarily promote not only self-reliance and the pursuit of personal needs without explicit guidance, but also link those moral values to the socialization of cooperation and responsibility toward others (Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz, 2004; Ministerium für Familie, Kinder, Jugend, Kultur und Sport des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2016).

Indonesian PTs seemed to de-emphasize the ethic of Community in favor of the education of Autonomy. This result was surprising for the non-Western context, where the promotion of Community over Autonomy was expected not only in moral reasoning, but also in the promotion of socialization goals. However, with the PTs working in urban preschools, this outcome might be linked to the findings from Guerra and Giner-Sorolla (2015), who argue that Autonomy might be more dominant in urban than rural contexts of traditional cultures. Furthermore “Western” beliefs and structures nowadays find their way into preschool curricula in Indonesia. As Herrera (2004) pointed out, especially schools run by Western-oriented individuals or organizations, “in Muslim-majority societies embody the fusions, tensions, aspirations, and negotiations inherent in processes of institutional and cultural adaptation” (p. 320). Therefore, the ethic of Autonomy seems not to be limited to Western cultures but plays a predominant role also in moral socialization in traditional urban contexts.

Positive correlations between Autonomy and Divinity ethics in the PTs’ own moral reasoning and their moral socialization goals suggested that across both cultures, PTs educate the values inherent in their own cultural model to the next generation (e.g., their preschool children). This relationship was investigated before in the informal context of the family and could now be shown to extend to the context of institutional care (Kärtner et al., 2007; H. Keller et al., 2006; Mone et al., 2014).

Limitations, Implications, and Future Research

The quantitative measurement of the Big Three with the EVA has so far been used mainly in Christian contexts, but was now extended to investigate moral socialization goals in a predominantly Muslim context. The items assessing the ethic of Divinity address not only religious beliefs but encompass, for instance, notions about spiritual salvation. However, several German PTs reported a lack of understanding of the Divinity items. A methodological bias underlying the disregard of Divinity in the German sample, rather than the actual insignificance of the ethic in this cultural context might be possible, as participants might implicitly use and value Divinity, but express the concept in different words or rely more on environmental and natural rather than religious concepts inherent in Divinity. Thus, future research could address whether the item wording of the EVA appropriately represents the construct of Divinity in similar cultural contexts.

Indonesian PTs seemed more familiar with the concept of Divinity, as it could be more salient due to the omnipresence of the Pancasila and Muslim precepts. On the other hand, impression management could have prevented the participants from criticizing the quantitative instruments. Impression management is associated with the maintenance of face and conformity (Lalwani et al., 2009) values that prevail in Southeast Asian cultures like Indonesia. Furthermore, in a diverse cultural context like that of Indonesia, where Islam and mythology coexist, it is
difficult to encompass both the religious and mystic moralities in the Divinity scale. Thus, more research in Muslim contexts and cultures with naturalistic beliefs is needed to investigate the interplay between different aspects of religious and mystical beliefs and how they are captured by the scale.

Indonesian PTs might have further felt the need to answer acquiescently or socially desirable, not only in terms of impression management, but also in line with the national standards for early childhood education from the government and the state philosophy of Pancasila. Even though PTs were asked to answer the questionnaires individually, some Indonesian PTs might have filled them out together or discussed their answers with other staff members. The results may thus represent the “collective self” of Indonesian PTs compared to the “private self” revealed by German PTs (Lalwani et al., 2009, p. 871). Some German PTs explicitly stated that they answered out of personal conviction and contrary to the mission statement of the preschool. This could explain the wider response range of German PTs compared to the notably low variance of Indonesian PTs’ responses. Bou Malham and Saucier (2016) argued that socially desired response behavior may relate in part to cultural normativity, as knowledge of culturally accepted moral norms is required to answer in accordance with them. The fixed moral norms and standards in the structured Indonesian preschool curriculum, compared to the lack of explicit moral norms in German preschools, could further explain the different response ranges. While Indonesian PTs seem to express a more uniform and culturally shaped view on the socialization of morality, German PTs’ emphasize values as moral socialization goals that are personally important and thus reflect the diversity of values more in the plural society in an urban German context, more than the mission of a preschool or governmental framework. Considering that the significance of preschools and PTs as socialization agents in both cultural contexts differ substantially, with preschool attendance being mandatory in Germany but not in Indonesia, the more mixed picture of German moral education could be further scrutinized. Future research might also specify whether German PTs equivalently achieve their moral socialization goals in different ways and whether these different approaches are desired by educational frameworks. To exclude the possibility of acquiescent response styles, future research should also include negatively keyed items like “to disregard the holy scriptures” for the Divinity scale.

Graham and colleagues (2011) cautioned attributing cultural differences and similarities merely to the East–West boundaries, and advised also taking subcultural groups into account. Haidt and Kesebir (2007) even stated that within a social context, there might be more variability than across different contexts. We therefore tried to capture the diversity of the investigated cultural contexts by collecting data from different preschools with different orientations. Even so, our results are primarily representative of the abovementioned urban contexts. Further research should therefore be conducted to obtain a more accurate picture of the institutional moral socialization in different cultural and religious contexts.

In summary, with our present study, we contributed to our understanding of moral socialization of Autonomy, Community, and Divinity in a prototypical Western and Southeast Asian urban context. We showed that moral socialization goals of professional educators are related to their own cultural model expressed in moral reasoning, which has been reported previously mainly in the informal context of families, and that Divinity goals are not only influenced by the cultural context, but also by religiosity (at personal and institutional level). Furthermore, we contributed to the growing body of research investigating morality with quantitative instruments based on the three ethics, and found that our results were in line with previous studies investigating moral socialization goals with qualitative measures. Finally, we focused our study on preschool teachers, being significant socialization agents in early development and fostering children’s values, so that they become morally sensitized members of a culture.
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ORCID iD
Melanie Schwarz https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2850-4262

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