

## How to Become a Health Promotion Practitioner?

# A Longitudinal Study on Professional Identity Formation and Study Success

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### Background

- One's profession is becoming increasingly important, a central identity-forming factor in life (Skorikov & Vondracek, 2011)
- Professional identity (PI) is a complex construct of meaningfulness in which the person unites their motivation and competencies
- PI is considered to be an indicator of various positive outcomes at the professional level and beyond (e.g. strengthened social support, mental health, life satisfaction, and wellbeing (Dick & Haslam, 2012; Kroger, 2007))
- A new undergraduate program in health promotion and prevention (HP) was established in Switzerland (2016) and is subject of this study

### Research question

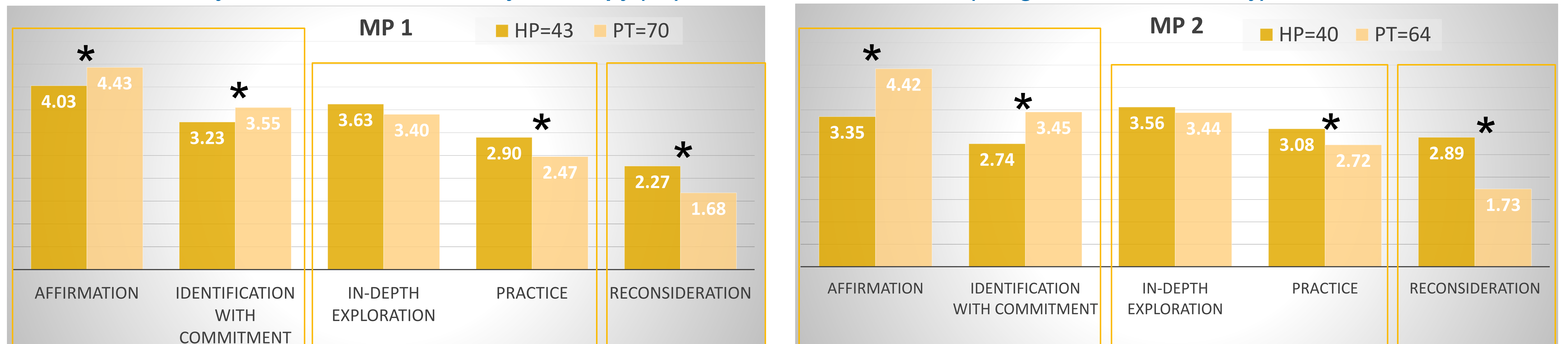
How do the students of the new undergraduate program HP develop their PI during the course of their studies and which motivational and socio-cognitive factors influence this development?

### Methods

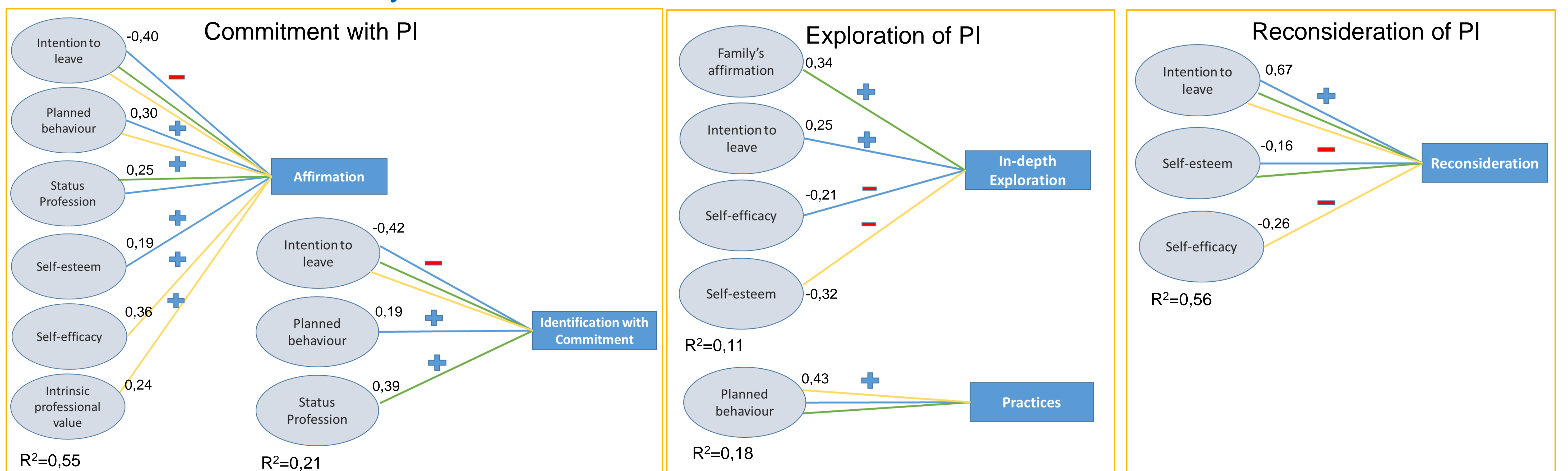
- Online PI questionnaire based on Marcia's identity status model (PISQ - 5d Mancini et al., 2015) with dimensions: Affirmation, identification with commitment, in-depth exploration, practices and reconsideration of commitment
- Longitudinal design: Measurement Point 1 (MP1) in 2016, MP2 in 2018
- 113 participants (see graphs) with a mean age 22.6 ( $SD=3.7$ ), Dropout between MP1 und MP2: 8%

### Results

#### Professional Identity Dimensions in HP and Physiotherapy (PT) Students at MP1 and MP2 (Range: 1 not at all – 5 fully)



### Influences on Professional Identity Dimension



Linear regressions: MP 1 Total N, HP, PT; Standardized Beta-Coefficients and corrected  $R^2$

### Discussion and Outlook

- HP students seem to struggle more with their PI at the beginning and even more in the middle of the program, compared to PT
- Influences on PI dimensions between HP and PT students:
  - Planned behaviour and intention to leave strong influence PI dimensions
  - Status of profession influences PI more for HP compared to PT students
  - Self-efficacy influences PI more for PT compared to HP students
- Potential explanation: Whereas 2 of 3 PT students (63%) mentioned PT as first study choice, only 1 of 3 HP students (37%) did so with HP
- Within HP cohorts: Professional Identity of Health Promotion students is expected to increase after field work in year 3 (MP3 in 2019);
- Between HP cohorts: Over the years PI is expected to increase as the program becomes established