RESUMEN
Este artículo presenta la construcción y validación preliminar de una escala diseñada para profesores rurales, cuyo objetivo es medir las creencias que éstos sustentan acerca del proceso educativo. El proceso incluyó su aplicación a 300 profesores rurales de la Región de la Araucanía, Chile. El instrumento muestra adecuados niveles de confiabilidad y evidencia un constructo multidimensional, compuesto por cuatro dimensiones de creencias respecto del proceso educativo. Los resultados sugieren, un perfil de profesor rural con una fuerte convicción en la importancia del logro de aprendizajes significativos, de relaciones más horizontales con sus alumnos y de ser proactivos frente a los desafíos que la educación rural presenta. El instrumento se plantea como una herramienta para el estudio de creencias en el ámbito de la educación rural, aportando con la investigación de una de las variables que mayor impacto presenta en el proceso educativo y la calidad de los aprendizajes.

Palabras clave: Creencias, educación rural, rol del profesor.

ABSTRACT
This article presents the construction and preliminary validation of a scale designed for rural teachers, whose objective is to measure these underlying beliefs about the educational process. The process included its application to 300 rural teachers in the Región de la Araucanía, Chile. The instrument shows adequate levels of reliability, and evidences a multidimensional construct, composed by four dimensions of beliefs, about the educational process. The results suggest a profile of rural teacher, with a strong beliefs in: the importance of achieving significant learning, of horizontal relationships with their students, and being proactive in addressing the challenges that rural education presents. The instrument is intended as a tool for the study of beliefs in the field of rural education, contributing to the investigation of one of the variables that has the greatest impact in the educational process, and the quality of learning.

Key words: Beliefs, Rural Education, Teacher’s Role
Introduction

Since the 1990s, Chile defined the rural school as one of its priorities, assuming it as an institution for the promotion of equal opportunities for all the children of rural families, and of contribution to the integration of the rural world towards future society. The challenge has been and will remain, to leave the diagnosis of inequality and low quality of education in rural education, ensuring equal opportunities on the basis of the results of their studies to their school (San Miguel, 2000, 2005; Villarroel, 2003).

In this context, the role attributed to rural teachers is essential. There are different expectations regarding the role of rural teachers and their teaching performance and, while there is not a prototype of Professor, it is legitimate to think that the role of the rural teacher in local development, is being a facilitator of the learning process and a creator of spaces for a genuine participation-friendly community (Boix, 1995, 2003; Feu, 2003). The role of the rural teacher, therefore, is not limited only to the teacher-student relationship, because its work is conceived as a service to the Community (Villarroel, 2003; Thomas, 2005). For this reason, it is possible to expect from the rural educator open, creative work that as far as possible responds to requirements of their environment and does not stick, exclusively, to meet the requirements of a program of general education (De Andraca & Gajardo, 1992).

This multiplicity of roles that the rural teaching (Thomas, 2005) demands, requires the consideration of personal variables of the professor that impact on the educational process. An example of this are what the beliefs that teachers support, which are central, since they embody in the pedagogical relationship, focusing on the vision that the professor has of his students and the performance of these (De Andraca & Gajardo, 1992; Villarroel, 2003). Indeed, the theoretical evidence indicates the relationship between what the professor believes about his students and academic achievement that these have, as long as the activities carried out by the teachers and the way they do is dyed by their beliefs (Meckes, 2007).

What are the beliefs of the teacher?

The study about the thinking of teachers, including beliefs, has aroused growing interest today (Prieto, 2008). A large number of studies have identified and described the beliefs of teachers alluding to understandings, assumptions, images or propositions felt as true and from which subjects orient their actions support their judgments and decisions, according to what they believe «it should be» (Kaplan, 2004; Bryan, 2003; Jackson, 2002; Duran, 2001; Pajares, 1992).

In the case of rural teachers, the study on beliefs has been neglected or ignored; however to have substantive implications and critical effects (Prieto, 2008; Vera, Osses & Schiefelbein, 2011). Therefore it is necessary to position as of first importance in the practice of these teachers, given that they represent the point of convergence between the complex universe of objective knowledge and assumptions attributed to the reality experienced by them in school and which in turn, guide and determine his pedagogical work (Stiggins, 2006; Bryan, 2003).

Unlike more general ideological beliefs that may be abstract and out of context, teacher beliefs are related to specific situations, action-oriented and include the beliefs that teachers have about their work (objectives, concepts of students, content, etc.) (Hashweh, 2005; Rodrigo, Rodriguez & Marrero, 1993; Solar & Diaz, 2009a, 2009b).

Beliefs represent, for many teachers, a basis to develop their professional practices, which have taken root in such a way that it is difficult for them to recognize the existence of other ways to make them relevant and, therefore, flock to them as valid answers, especially when they are confronted with unfamiliar or confusing situations (Prieto, 2008; Prieto & Contreras, 2008; Solar & Diaz, 2009a, 2009b).

Teachers build their beliefs in an unconscious way, as a result of a variety of articulating experiences, which include both the personal and the school. The latter, sometimes result from the construction of expectations and prejudice difficult to remove, so remain generally unchanged and accompany teachers on an ongoing basis during their teaching practices (Duran, 2001; Prieto, 2008). Thus the results of several studies that show, that many teachers give low ratings to schoolchildren of the vulnerable sectors, as a result of their beliefs and prejudices regarding the origin of these children and not necessarily the validity of its buildings (Ministry of education, 2003; Myers, 2000; Prieto, 2008).
Another example of this is the issues raised by Myers (2000), who notes the characterizations made by teachers of students are correlated with the achievements of these. Studies show that the expectations of teachers on students performance, affect the ratings of students who are expected to actually perform better, while the expectation often has no basis (Dutchasky, 1999). Therefore, the theoretical evidence supports the assumption that what the Professor believes students affects the performance of these, because their behaviors are determined by their beliefs (Arancibia, Herrera & Strasser, 2000). This point is particularly sensitive in rural areas, in where there are high levels of vulnerability and where boys and girls with low qualifications might come to think that success in school is a privilege of some, feeling excluded from it, which could lead them to finally, school failure and, eventually, desertion (Prieto & Contreras, 2008).

The above mentioned shows, therefore, that the results achieved by the students, would not only be a reflection of their capabilities, but also shown the concepts supported by teachers about the educational process, from which he derived his pedagogical work (Fang, 1996; Litwin, 2005).

Considering the above, is indispensable to know the beliefs that sustain rural teachers and understand the influence that hold these beliefs in the perceptions and judgments that they make, further, if one takes into account that they can exert an important influence on the academic performance of learners, over all of those who come from the most vulnerable sectors (Vera et al. 2011).

For this reason, having an instrument enabling to explain the beliefs that rural teachers sustain, allows to view and understand their pedagogical practices with all the elements they involve providing information and allowing feedback to these teachers, for his leading role in the improvement of learning in rural education (Allen, 2004; Prieto, 2008).

**Method**

From the quantitative methodology, this research seeks to provide evidence on the construction of a valid and reliable instrument. For these purposes, an investigation based on a design from a descriptive transactional has been developed (Hernandez, Fernandez and Baptista, 2010).

Subjects

Two samples were used for this research. A sample consisting of eight teachers who work in rural areas of the Region IX, balanced by sex and years of professional practice, with the aim of conducting an interview focused to determine the thematic areas in the field of education in rural areas, which would make the instrument reagents in a contextual manner; and a sample of research, balanced according to sex and province of work performance, composed by 300 teachers of basic general education in the rural area of the IX Region of the Araucanía, Chile.

Sampling

The sampling was carried out in a not intentionally probabilistic manner (Hernandez et al., 2010), depending on the accessibility to the sample, the authorization of the Regional Ministerial Secretariat of education and voluntary acceptance of teachers to participate anonymously in research. The selection of the sample for the implementation of the focused interview was conducted in four communes of the Region of la Araucania, while the selection of the sample of research was conducted in 13 communities in the same Region.

Instrument description

The CAPE-R is a Likert-type scale of ad-hoc construction, which aims to assess the degree of consensus that the respondent presents in relation to a set of assertions representing beliefs regarding various aspects of the educational process in rural areas. The CAPE-R consists of four dimensions with a total of 55 items. Your score and response options are the following: disagree strongly (1 point); disagree (2 points); in agreement (3 points); very much in agreement (4 points). The total score for each dimension corresponds to the average score of the items that make it up. In this way the total score for the dimension ranges between 1 and 4 points. A higher score, greater allegiance to the beliefs represented by the corresponding dimension.

Procedure

The first phase of construction of the instrument consisted of the definition of variables and wording of items based on qualitative studies previously conducted by the
researchers. To this the theoretical and review of other instruments related to the themes of beliefs about the educational process was joined. This first version was submitted to the judgment of 8 experts who offered a few suggestions that led to reformulate the wording of four items of the scale.

This preliminary version had 80 items and, with the aim of studying the initial behavior of scale, was its application to a sample of 30 rural teachers, after which the wording of some items has been modified again.

The scale was applied to teachers in their schools. The procedure of item selection was carried out in the following manner:

1. With the final sample data, it was determined the standard deviation of the scale items, from which 11 items were eliminated by presenting a deviation under 0.6; the scale was made up of 69 items.

2. With these 69 items, a factorial analysis was performed.

3. The correlation matrix was analyzed by the method of principal axes, of how to extract a maximum amount of variance as each factor was estimated. This procedure was used, in addition, with the Varimax rotation. The analysis with Varimax rotation showed five factors with a cut-off point, for the selection of items from 0.3; These factors explain a 29.83% of total variance. Of the five factors the fifth was eliminated by low reliability, eliminating seven items by this procedure. Form a total of 62 seven items more were removed by presenting a correlation less than 0.3 of which one of them had, in addition, a lower item-scale reliability to $\alpha = 0.1$; thus, the definitive scale for analysis, consisted of 55 items.

4. To estimate the reliability the rate of internal consistency was calculated, using the alpha coefficient of Cronbach. On the other hand, it was considered the evaluation of expert judges as a strategy for validation of content and a strategy of validation-related criteria was used, through the evaluation of a group of rural teachers in exercise.

5. With the aim of characterizing the behavior of the scale in its final version some descriptive analysis was performed: analysis of frequencies, averages and comparisons of means, which were considered the following variables: sex, age, and years of practice and province of employment.

6. Finally, the application of the scale in its final version was made to 300 rural teachers, who formed the research sample. The mode of application of the scale was single.

Results

Psychometric characteristics of the instrument

The 55 Items which were kept for the final version have a good discriminating ability, with correlations item-test $> 0.3$

The reliability of the instrument was estimated as total, obtaining a 0.86 Cronbach alpha index, for its application to the sample of 300 subjects. For its part, to study the construct validity of the instrument, an exploratory factor analysis of major components was realized, opting for the Varimax rotation, which facilitates theoretical interpretation of the data. According to the results after rotation, the full scale can be characterized by a structure of four factors: Factor 1 $\alpha = 0.81$ (17 items); Factor 2 $\alpha = 0.76$ (14 items); Factor 3 $\alpha = 0.75$ (10 items); Factor 4 $\alpha = 0.73$ (14 items).

Designation and definition of dimensions

From the analysis of content of the items of each factor, the dimensions of the scale were called and defined in the following way:

a) Dimension 1 «Organization of the teaching process»:
Reflects the belief that the best way to teaching is that which is made according to conventional parameters, which means less flexibility, more vertical relations, emphasizing the authoritarian control and search for homogeneity in learners.

b) Dimension 2 «Meaningful learning»:
Reflects the belief that for the achievement of significant learning, teachers must have personal commitment, a high degree of interest among students, good relations and cooperation between them; teachers and learners must share interests and expectations, and learning activities must consider the characteristics of the students, be creative, stimulating and achieve both these as their parents and the community to engage in learning.
c) **Dimension 3 «the importance of the practice and experience of teachers»**: Reflects the belief that vocation, experience, flexibility and the practice of the teachers are more relevant than the theory aspects, the improvement and training, for the achievement of the student learning.

d) **Dimension 4 «Factors affecting the process of teaching and learning»**: reflects the belief that the education is hindered by factors of the environment that do not depend on the teacher, such as the cooperation of parents, the conditions of work of teachers (economic, infrastructure, administrative, etc.), lack of contextualization of the trainings and also by the student factors affecting their level of learning, such as the socio-economic level, the capacity and intellectual speed, and the habits of discipline.

**Results obtained by the research sample**

To describe beliefs supported by rural teachers in the sample, first thing that was done was to generate a profile of beliefs that considered as variable each of the dimensions. From the score obtained by subjects in each dimension, the overall average of the sample is calculated for each one of them.

Profile shows that average ratings are higher for the «Meaningful learning» dimension (\(\bar{x} = 3.35\)); which means that teachers believe that the achievement of this is necessary his personal commitment, a high degree of interest from the students, the presence of shared interests and creative and stimulating learning activities. Dimensions «the importance of the practice and experience of teachers» (\(\bar{x} = 2.73\)), and «Factors affecting the process of teaching and learning» (\(\bar{x} = 2.64\)), have lower average rating; what it means is that teachers believe that the training and development are relevant aspects for the achievement of the students learning, and teaching it is not hampered by environmental factors. The dimension «Organization of the teaching process» (\(\bar{x} = 2.10\)) presents one even lower average assessment; which means that teachers believe that the ideal way to teach is one that involves greater flexibility, more horizontal relations, and respect for the heterogeneity of learners.

On the other hand, the present investigation sought to establish possible relations between the dimensions of the above beliefs and the socio-demographic variables: sex, age, province of work, performance and years of professional practice of rural teachers. These results are detailed below.

In the first place, and considering the geographical delimitation of the sample, the profiles of teachers in the two provinces of the region de la Araucanía (Malleco and Cautín) were compared, through the analysis of variance of a pathway for each dimension. The results of these analyses allowed to point out that there are statistically significant differences in dimensions «Organization of the teaching process» and «the importance of practice and the experience of teachers». In both cases, both dimensions tend to have greater average rating in the province of Malleco, comparing it with the province of Cautín. These results are presented in table 1 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Mallecon n = 150</th>
<th>Cautín n = 150</th>
<th>Analysis of variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization of education</td>
<td>2.18 0.32</td>
<td>2.03 0.36</td>
<td>9.33 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful learning</td>
<td>3.36 0.28</td>
<td>3.34 0.33</td>
<td>0.16 0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of practice and experience</td>
<td>2.81 0.37</td>
<td>2.66 0.41</td>
<td>7.26 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors affecting the teaching</td>
<td>2.66 0.33</td>
<td>2.62 0.38</td>
<td>0.49 0.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The differences presented in table 1 allow us to affirm that the two dimensions of the above belief are dependent on the province of work performance of teachers, reason for which there is evidence that it is not possible to analyze the beliefs of teachers in rural schools as beliefs shared at regional or national level.

On the other hand, to contrast if the profile of beliefs varied depending on the age of the teachers, three sections of age profiles were compared through analysis of the variance of a pathway for each dimension (segment 1 corresponds to the ages between 20 and 35 years, section 2 corresponds to the ages of 36-51, and section 3, which corresponds to the ages between 52 and 67 years of age).

The results allow us to point out that there is a statistically significant difference in the dimensions «Organization of the teaching process», «The importance of practice and the experience of teachers» and «Factors affecting the teaching and learning process». The «Organization of the teaching process» dimension differs from segment 1 ($\bar{x} = 1.82$), section 2 ($\bar{x} = 2.00$) and section 3 ($\bar{x} = 2.26$). At the same time, the dimension «The importance of practice and the experience of teachers» shows differences between segment 1 ($\bar{x} = 2.42$), section 2 ($\bar{x} = 2.67$) and section 3 ($\bar{x} = 2.86$). Finally, the «Factors affecting the process of teaching and learning» dimension differs both in segment 1 ($\bar{x} = 2.44$), as in section 3 ($\bar{x} = 2.70$). These results are presented in greater detail in table 2.

Table 2
Beliefs about the educational process according to age of the teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>T1 (20-35 years)</th>
<th>T2 (36-51 years)</th>
<th>T3 (52-67 years)</th>
<th>Analysis of variance ANOVA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>DT</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>DT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of education</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful learning</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of practice and experience</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors affecting the teaching</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The differences presented in table 2 allow us to affirm that the dimensions of the previously mentioned above beliefs, are dependent on the age of the teachers.

On the other hand, it was also sought to contrast if the profile varied depending on the years of being a professional teacher. For this purpose profiles of five stretches of years of professional practice through an analysis of variance of one way for each dimension were compared (the segment 1 is between 1 and 10 years of professional practice, section 2 between 11 and 20, section 3 between 21 and 30, section 4 between 31 and 40; and section 5 between 41 and more years of professional practice).

The results allow us to affirm statistically significant differences in dimensions «Organization of the teaching process» and «The importance of practice and the experience of teachers». «Organization of the teaching process» dimension differs from segment 1 ($\bar{x} = 1.96$), section 2 ($\bar{x} = 1.96$), and section 3 ($\bar{x} = 2.11$), with section 4 ($\bar{x} = 2.28$). Dimension «The importance of practice and the experience of teachers» differs from the segment 1 ($\bar{x} = 2.51$), with section 3 ($\bar{x} = 2.76$) and section 4 ($\bar{x} = 2.91$), while section 2 ($\bar{x} = 2.63$) differs with section 4 ($\bar{x} = 2.91$). These results are presented in table 3 below:
Table 3
Beliefs about the educational process according to years of professional practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>T1 (1-10 years)</th>
<th>T2 (11-20 years)</th>
<th>T3 (21-30 years)</th>
<th>T4 (23-40 years)</th>
<th>T5 (41-more years)</th>
<th>Analysis of variance ANOVA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>DT</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>DT</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>DT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of education</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful learning</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of practice and experience</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors affecting the teaching</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The differences noted above, allow us to affirm that the dimensions of the above beliefs, vary according to the years of professional teachers.

Finally, it was considered necessary to verify if the profile of beliefs varied according to the sex of the teachers. This compared the profiles of men and women through an analysis of the variance of a pathway for each dimension. The results of table 4, allow us to note that there are not statistically significant differences observed in the dimensions of beliefs, which makes it possible to affirm that these are independent of the socio-demographic variable teacher sex.

Table 4
Beliefs about the educational process according to gender of the teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Men n = 150</th>
<th>Women n = 150</th>
<th>Analysis of variance ANOVA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>DT</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of education</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful learning</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of practice and experience</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors affecting the teaching</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Synthesis and conclusions

Considering that the beliefs constitute an internal representation that is formed in the course of the life of individuals, and that they act as filters in the way how subjects perceive the environment that surrounds them, (Goodson & Numan, 2002; Hashweh, 2005; Myers, 2000; Rodrigo, Rodriguez & Marrero, 1993), it is important to know them so that, from them, we can understand and predict current and future behavior. In the case of teachers, the beliefs they have on the teaching-learning process and students, determine the pedagogical decisions they can take in the classroom, and that will influence the quality of learning outcomes obtained by these (Alonqueo, 2001; Fang, 1996; Duran, 2001; Pajares, 1992; Prieto, 2008; Prieto & Contreras, 2008; Solar & Diaz, 2009a, 2009b). For this reason, to examine the beliefs of rural teachers is a fundamental requirement (Vera et al., 2011).

In the case of the present investigation, reviewing the profile of the sample, it was possible to demonstrate that the dimension of beliefs which evidenced the highest rating...
is the so-called «meaningful learning». The valuation given to this dimension, acquires special significance if it considers that the current Chilean educational vision, intended to affect gradual and global forms of teaching and learning, which involves learning rather than teaching, contextualized knowledge, learning to learn, skills rather than accumulation of data, prepare for life before that for College and train for a life of work, rather than train for a job (Ministry of education 1998, 2003). This high rating indicates that teachers believe in the conceptual proposal which is the basis of meaningful learning and the need to ensure certain minimum conditions to make this possible. Adherence to this dimension shows a teacher committed to the approaches of current educational policies (Cox, 2003; Ministry of education, 2003).

On the other hand, the average rating was shared by the dimensions relating to the «factors affecting the process of teaching and learning» and «The importance of practice» and the experience of the teachers.

The assessment given to the «Factors affecting the process of teaching and learning» dimension, shows that teachers believe that there would be rural factors that would affect the teaching and learning of children, but they do not determine the achievement of the objectives of the educational process. According to this assessment, there is evidence of the presence of a different profile of being a professor, since in the case of rural teachers, despite constantly living with adverse factors to the educational process (illiteracy of parents, unfavorable socio-economic conditions, geographical remoteness, etc.), they try to innovate, produce changes and modify the conditions in which they work. This shows an optimistic view as soon as they admit the possibility of intervention, taking into account the need to consider the socio-cultural context, the historical and natural heritage of the population served, as a benefit rather than as an obstacle. This means recognizing and incorporating all stakeholders in the formal and informal educational process as a way to enrich the contents and learning styles for the achievement of educational goals.

This view is contrasted with the results shown in the research by Gonzalez (1999) in which is reflected the belief of urban teachers that education is hindered by factors that do not depend on them, such as the cooperation of parents, conditions of work and also by the student factors which affect their level of learning such as the socio-economic level, ability and intellectual quickness and the habits of discipline. Without a doubt, these elements reflect a clear difference between the profiles of the teacher that plays in the rural environment and which plays in the urban environment, as for the latter, these aspects can give an account of the importance which has to hold beliefs that put the responsibility for the educational process as external to the professor. Adherence to these beliefs would allow them to reduce the impact of the inefficiency of the education system on their self-esteem as teachers (Gonzalez, 1989). Ultimately, this vision reaffirms that teachers, who work in rural areas, believe in the possibility of a quality education, rescuing facilitating elements of their environment, despite the various difficulties they are facing in their daily teaching work.

Furthermore, the rating given to the dimension «The importance of practice and the experience of teachers», evidence that rural teachers believe that even though the vocation, the experience, flexibility and practice are relevant aspects, they charge major theory, development, and training, for the achievement of the learning. In this sense, teaching development contributes to the construction of knowledge that the rural teacher performs on his own practice, providing a space for reflective action with respect to his actions in the classroom (Ministry of education, 2003).

Shown on the previous dimensions, beliefs are reinforced by the low rating given for teachers who work in rural areas to the «Organization of the teaching process» dimension. This low valuation evidences an adequate provision, by the rural teacher, to innovate in teaching methodologies, which would be in direct relation with beliefs about the importance of the achievement of meaningful learning.

In sum, the preceding analysis leads to the conclusion that teachers believe in meaningful learning which is consistent with their lack of adherence to the traditional teaching, without exclusively conditioning educational achievements to the influence of external factors to the professor.
In addition to the above, and given that research conducted by Agne (1994), have analyzed the effect of the gender, years of professional practice and the level they teach, in deeply-rooted beliefs of the teacher, it is important also, to discuss the relationship of results with socio-demographic variables.

In this respect, differences between the profiles of beliefs of teachers who work in work in the province of Malleco and those who perform labor in Cautín province. Therefore, it is possible to note that highlighted profile is not generalizable to teachers who work in municipal schools of the rural sector in the Araucanía Region, since they differ significantly from one geographic area to another. This situation may relate to the existence of different realities (economic, social, access and geographical location, etc.) between both provinces in which the Professor plays, channeled perhaps by guidelines and educational policies of each Provincial Directorate of education, which is oriented to respond to needs and focus of characteristics of each of the provinces of the Araucanía region. The lack of information allowing us to affirm the above raises the need for targeted studies to know if there are specific variables from which the aforementioned differences occur.

In relation to the variable age of teachers, there were apparent differences between the dimensions of beliefs «Organization of the teaching process», «The importance of practice and the experience of teachers» and «Factors affecting the process of teaching and learning» in the three sections of age selected, being the largest age bracket which presented higher valuations. This shows that, even when the three age sections do not agree with the beliefs that reflect these dimensions, younger teachers tend to reject these beliefs in a more radical way.

With respect to the variable years of professional practice, the differences were settled similarly to the variable age of the professor. In this case there were apparent differences between the dimensions «Organization of the teaching process» and «The importance of practice and the experience of teachers» and the five stretches of years of professional practice, being the section of greater amount of years of experience which presented higher valuations. This shows that rural teachers with fewer years of professional practice tend to reject more radically the beliefs related to these dimensions.

The differences shown in the variable age and years of professional practice may be linked by Pajares (1992) relating to that while early incorporation of a deep-rooted belief lies in the structure of it, being more difficult to alter. In this sense, beliefs underpinning the teachers with younger age are related to more consistent parameters with current pedagogical innovations, which at the same time are newer to older teachers, who have entrenched earliest beliefs relating to more conventional and less flexible parameters to make their teaching practice. Despite this, teachers who have served for a long time in the rural areas are in accordance with the need to implement new educational models. However, to adopt these models could mean one greater effort, in so far as they are opposed to their firmly rooted beliefs on the traditional model of learning (Duran, 2001; Fang, 1996; Marcelo, 2002; Pajares, 1992). From the above, it is necessary to conduct a constant review of teacher training programs to focus them in different ways depending on the age group and the number of years of professional exercise of the teacher, as a way to facilitate the acquisition of new practices and models of teaching and learning in line with the objectives set by the current educational model.

With respect to the variable sex of the teacher, the analysis of the profile of beliefs clearly shows the lack of significant differences between teachers, despite the proposed by Ross (1994) with respect to sex as one of the variables that greater influences exerts on beliefs. In this sense, it is possible to point out that, in the case of rural teachers, beliefs about the educational process are shared by men and women, and can be generalized to all of them, since they do not depend on this variable. This finding is confirmed in the issues raised by Alonqueo (2001) who notes that homogenous beliefs about the educational process between men and women exist, which indicates that in the pedagogical practices, stemming from these beliefs, there is no different behavior between the sexes.

Finally, it is necessary to note, that the main contribution of this research fits within few developed investigations, both nationally and internationally, on the subject of the beliefs of rural teachers. In addition, it provides an approach to the profile of the rural teacher, showing a strong belief in the need for change in education, the importance of the achievement of significant learning, more horizontal relationships with students and be proactive in the search.
for solutions to the adverse factors to which they see themselves confronted product of the reality in which this type of education takes place mainly in the Araucania Region. This profile gives an account of a professor who internalizes the culture of the place where he works, for significant high-value activities that make students feel like learning and possibly to reduce poor performance and dropout rates.

On the other hand, the study of beliefs from a quantitative perspective displays those dimensions that may be relevant at the time of innovations in the field of teaching practice, where it is necessary to take into consideration the personal variables of the teacher as one of the major axes involved in the development of the teaching-learning process. Above, it involves considering the impact of the beliefs of rural teachers in the improvement of the quality of education, mainly when the rural education has been one of the most questioned in this area (Vera et al., 2011). Having this information will allow to focus even more plans and programs currently being developed at the national level, incorporating the rural education as a relevant and little studied area.

Consider what’s exposed here contributes and promotes one of the main objectives of quality education: responding to the cultural, social and ethnic heterogeneity of its actors (Ministry of education, 2003; Vera et al., 2011).

References


Ross, J. (1994). Beliefs that make a difference. The origins and impacts of teacher efficacy. Documento presentado en la reunión de la Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies, Alberta, Canadá.


* Universidad Austral de Chile, Académica Escuela de Psicología; Magíster en Educación; Dra. en Ciencias de la Educación, Facultad de Educación y Humanidades, Universidad de La Frontera, Temuco - Chile.

** Psicóloga Educacional, Magíster en Psicología, Universidad de La Frontera, Temuco - Chile.