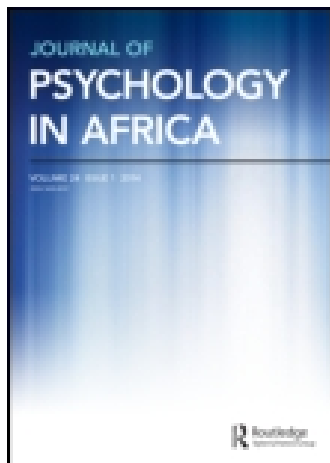


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Publisher: Routledge

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Journal of Psychology in Africa

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rpia20>

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Published online: 01 May 2014.

To cite this article: Werner de Klerk, Q. Michael Temane & Alida W. Nienaber (2013) The Prevalence of Well-Being on Teachers in Afri Twin Schools as Well as Non Afri Twin Schools, *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 23:3, 419-424

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14330237.2013.10820646>

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The Prevalence of Well-Being on Teachers in Afri Twin Schools as Well as Non Afri Twin Schools

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This study explored the prevalence of well-being in Afri Twin and non Afri Twin teachers. The Afri Twin project allows schools of comparable type and size in Britain and South Africa to be 'twinning' with each other, with a possible 'twinning' with a third school in a rural or township area in South Africa. A quantitative survey design was implemented and the sample consisted of 97 Afri Twin teachers (20 male and 77 female) and 297 non Afri Twin teachers (52 male and 245 female) from 40 South African schools (13 Afri Twin and 27 non Afri Twin). The Mental Health Continuum - Short Form (MHC-SF), the Core Self-Evaluations Scale (CSES) and Coping Self-Efficacy Scale (CSE) were used to determine the well-being of teachers. Comparable moderate to high level of teacher well-being were observed across the two school systems.

Keywords: Afri Twin, well-being, mental health, coping self-efficacy, core self-evaluations, positive organisational behaviour, school social environment

The importance of the well-being of teachers is increasingly recognized (Fernet, Guay, Senécal, & Austin, 2012; Jackson & Rothmann, 2006; Montgomery, Mostert, & Jackson, 2005; Ross, Romer, & Horner, 2012; Saleem & Shah, 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Willers, 2009). For example, South African teachers experienced their work environments uncondusive to teaching and learning (Vos, Van der Westhuizen, Mentz, & Ellis, 2012). Ross et al. (2012) reported South African teachers to experience a lack of emotional support. From an organisational perspective, teachers' work is becoming more complicated and trying (Jackson & Rothmann, 2006). South African teachers have higher numbers of learners/students per class that they need to cope with, the growing scope of the syllabi, inadequate classroom climate, little support from colleagues, low salaries, lack of material aid to accomplish task effectiveness, and increased specialisation (Jackson & Rothmann, 2006; Montgomery et al., 2005).

Work characteristics (job demands and job resources) are related to well-being (Williams, Wissing, Rothmann, & Temane, 2010). Availability of resources supports well-being (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Yonezawa, Jones, & Singer, 2011) and this may reduce turnover intentions and bolster work-related resilience (Bakker, Hakenen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007).

Cultural exchange programs contribute to the internationalization of the education experience for school systems. Learning about and from others in similar work environments internationally may well enhance a sense of well-being. There are few if any studies on the prevalence of well-being of educators in schools and this especially so in a unique situation where a cultural exchange is occurring as a form of socio-cultural support such as the Afri Twin Schools' project. This study compares the prevalence of well-being in schools of educators who have experienced the Afri Twin and those who have not.

Positive Organisational Behaviour

Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB) is associated with work-related well-being (Luthans, 2002). According to Luthans (2002, p. 659), POB is about worker oriented or "human resource strengths and psychological capacities" for well-being and organizational productivity. It is characterized by positive communication and expressions of support among team members or staff (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). Bakker, Demerouti, and Euwema (2005) found that job demands were manageable with supportive job resources (feedback regarding their work performance, social support, and independence). POB is correlated with work-related happiness (Fisher, 2010).

Qualities of the School Work Environment

According to Saleem and Shah (2011), stress among teachers is a worldwide concern. Various contextual factors can influence the functioning of a school and the well-being of teachers. Educators (teachers and school principals) experience directly the unfavourable effects of these school environments (climate) that can cause high levels of stress which can bring on negative well-being such as burnout (Ruiz-Mock, 2007). Factors such as poverty (Donald, Lazarus, & Lokwana, 2002; Mbatha, 2005), school set up and domestic circumstances (Olivier, 2006), insufficient financial support (Ndimande, 2006), and material conditions (Masitsa, 2004) influence the functioning of schools. Prospectively, if a school receives some social support through collaboration with a well resourced school, some benefit to their well-being could be experienced. The Afri Twin project is regarded as a possible socio-cultural interaction to support a variety of processes in the school (De Klerk, 2013).

Afri-Twin Project

The Afri Twin Project was initiated by Ms Jayne Martin (South African native) in Great Britain in 2001 (De Klerk, 2013).

Afri Twin works as follows: Schools of comparable type and size in Britain and South Africa are selected and then “twinning” with each other, with a possible “twinning” with a third school in a rural or township area in South Africa (De Klerk & Nienaber, 2011). The intention of The Afri Twin project is to create friendships over time between school principals, teachers and learners. As the relationships between the different schools develop, opportunities will follow, allowing the schools to visit one another, to exchange teaching ideas and experiences, and to gain first-hand experience of the different conditions in which the individual schools are operating (De Klerk & Nienaber, 2011).

Psychological Well-Being

This results from a variety of self-evaluations and experiences. For instance, Keyes conceptualises mental health as “a syndrome of subjective well-being consisting of symptoms of hedonic (emotional well-being) and eudaimonia (social- and psychological well-being)” (2005, p. 88), and not only the absence of mental illness.

Core self-evaluations are also considered very important regarding positive psychological functioning. According to Tsaousis, Nikolaou, Serdaris and Judge (2007), the concept of core self-evaluations is a construct within the domain of the personality which can serve as a potential moderator of the relationship between health functioning and subjective well-being.

Coping self-efficacy is a related self-evaluation. Coping self-efficacy predict both psychological well-being (negative affect, positive affect and life satisfaction) and engagement such as vigour and dedication (Williams et al., 2010). Lack of self-efficacy remains one of the most significant stressors for teachers (Saleem & Shah, 2011).

Goals of the Study

In this study teachers at two types of schools (description of schools is given in the methods section) are asked specifically how they experience the climate of their school and if they have an intention to look for other employment. The study objective was to:

- Determine the prevalence of well-being (mental health, core self-evaluations and coping self-efficacy characteristics) of teachers at Afri Twin and non Afri Twin schools. The study was guided by the following question: What is the prevalence of well-being on teachers at Afri Twin and non Afri Twin schools?
- To gain a broad perspective on the objective of the study, the working conditions of teachers were examined on the basis of four variables namely: experience regarding amount of work; salary increase in the last three years; amount of administrative work outside of their normal teaching responsibilities; and how they experience their school.

Method

Research Design and Study Context

A quantitative survey design was implemented to answer the study question. The quantitative aspect of the design focussed on the measures of mental health, core self evaluations and coping self-efficacy, comparing two types of schools where one school experienced a ‘twinning’ with a British school.

Participants

The sample consists of 97 Afri Twin teachers (20 male and 77 female) and 297 non Afri Twin teachers (52 male and 245 fe-

male). There were a total of 40 schools (13 Afri Twin and 27 non Afri Twin) from South Africa. Convenience sampling method was used in this study (Maree & Pietersen, 2009). See table 1 for the characteristics of the participants.

Instruments

Three measuring instruments were used to determine the prevalence of well-being in Afri Twin and non Afri Twin teachers. Demographic information such as gender, age and turnover intention were sourced using a demographic questionnaire compiled by the first author.

The *Mental Health Continuum – Short Form* (MHC-SF: Keyes et al., 2008; Keyes, 2005; Keyes, 2007) consists of 14 items. The degree of emotional well-being (EWB) is measured by items one to three. Emotional well-being is defined in terms of positive affect (PA) divided by life satisfaction. The degree of social well-being (SWB) is measured by items four to eight, one item on each of the aspects of social acceptance, social actualization, social contribution, social coherence, and social integration. Finally, the degree of psychological well-being (PWB) is measured by items nine to 14 in terms of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. In a South African study by Keyes et al. (2008), factors analyses revealed that the MHC-SF replicated the three-factor structure of emotional, psychological and social well-being found in US samples. The internal reliability of the overall MHC-SF Scale was 0.74 (Keyes et al., 2008). The Cronbach's alpha of the MHC-SF Scale for this study is 0.89.

The *Core Self-Evaluation Scale* (CSES: Gardner & Pierce, 2009; Tsaousis et al., 2007) is a 12-item unidimensional scale developed by Judge et al. (2003, as cited in Gardner & Pierce, 2009). Sample items included “I am confident I get the success I deserve in Life” and “when I try, I generally succeed,” each of which is assessed by a 5-point Likert-type scale. The main advantage of this questionnaire is that it has been designed to measure the underlying concept itself rather than the particular indicators of the concept (Tsaousis et al., 2007). According to Tsaousis et al. (2007), despite the salience of the traits that compose this construct (self-esteem, generalised self-efficacy, locus of control, and neuroticism), it has been relatively uncommon for researchers to study these traits together. In the study of Tsaousis et al. (2007) the alpha coefficient score for CSES was 0.80 and in a South African study by Dodd and Snelgar (n.d.) the reliability was 0.61. The Cronbach's alpha of the CSES for this study is 0.83.

The *Coping Self-Efficacy Scale* (CSE: Chesney, Folkman, & Chambers, 1996; Wei, 2009) was originally a 26-item scale that measured the individual's self-efficacy to cope with life stressors (Chesney et al., 1996). Responses to the self-efficacy scale are based on an 11-point likert scale, ranging from 0 (cannot do at all) to 10 (certainly can do). The coping self-efficacy scale consist of three sub scales, problem focused coping (PFC), stop unpleasant emotions and thoughts (SUE), and support from friends and family (SFF). A coping self-efficacy score can be created by summing the item ratings; higher scores indicate higher self-efficacy. The alpha coefficient (α) for Chesney et al. (1996) study was 0.95 and in a South African study by Wissing, Wissing, Du Toit and Temane (2008) the total alpha coefficient was 0.87. The Cronbach's alpha of the CSE in this study is 0.94.

Table 1
Characteristics of Participants

Variable		Afri Twin		Non Afri Twin	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	20	20.6	52	17.5
	Female	77	79.4	245	82.5
Categories of Age	21-34	33	34	78	26.3
	35-49	39	40.2	117	39.4
	50-65	20	20.6	93	31.3
	66 and above			15	5.1
Nature of employment	Permanent	65	67	233	78.5
	Temporarily	7	7.2	16	5.4
	GB appointed	23	23.7	48	16.2
Teaching qualifications	Diploma	69	71.1	196	66.0
	Bachelors (B.Ed.)	22	22.7	93	31.3
Highest academic qualifications	Diploma	32	33	134	45.1
	Bachelors	47	48.6	115	38.7
	Honours	14	14.4	36	12.1
	Masters	2	2.1	7	2.4
	PhD			1	0.3

Note. GB appointed = Governing body appointed.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus: NWU-0072-08-S1). The essential purpose of research ethics is to protect the welfare of research participants (Wassenaar, 2006). Therefore, ethical considerations were taken into account by respecting the rights, needs, values, and desires of the participants (Creswell, 1994). Consent was obtained from the school principals of each school as well as all the participants to participate voluntarily in the study. The different participants were requested to sign consent forms. Informed and voluntary participation was ensured in this way. The participants were informed that their identity would be protected and that they could withdraw from the research project at any time.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 summarises the frequencies of the study variables: experience regarding amount of work; salary increase in the last three years; amount of administrative work outside of their normal teaching responsibilities; and how they experience their school.

Job Demands and Turnover Intention

A turnover intention question was also asked, namely, "In the last 6 months, have you searched for other forms of employment?" and predominantly teachers indicated that they had not sought other employment (79.4 % of Afri Twin and 84.2 % of non Afri Twin). A majority of the teachers (75.3 % of Afri Twin and 78.5 % of non Afri Twin) are satisfied with the amount of work they do. A preponderance (majority) of teachers (80.4 % of Afri Twin and 95 % of non Afri Twin) have had a salary increase in the last three years. In terms of the place of work, 91.8 % of

Afri Twin teachers and 90.9 % of non Afri Twin teachers are satisfied with the school where they teach.

Work Experiences and Well-Being

Table 5 summarises a stepwise linear regression of social well-being as a dependent variable and the following as predictors: experience regarding amount of work, how do you experience your school, and turnover intention. In step 1 the experience of amount of work was included and this independent variable predicted 5 % of the variance in social well-being ($\beta = -0.21$). The inclusion of an additional independent variable in step 2 (how do you experience your school) yielded a 14 % explanation of the variance in social well-being. Step 3 included 3 independent variables with turnover intention as the third variable and predicted 15 % of the change in social well-being. All models were significant based on the t-test indicating a difference in the comparison of the 2 groups of schools in one model.

The table also shows that the change in the coefficient of determination (R^2) improved by 9 % from step 1 to step 2. This may suggest the importance of the experience of school environment. The path coefficient of 'experience of school' in step 2 was -0.36.

The 2 types of schools (Afri Twin and non Afri Twin) were split for the final analyses. Two separate regression analyses were performed with social well-being as dependent variable. The inclusion of the 3 independent variables as above yielded the following coefficient of determination for Afri Twin schools ($R^2_1 = 0.05$, $R^2_2 = 0.27$, $R^2_3 = 0.28$) and the non Afri Twin schools ($R^2_1 = 0.05$, $R^2_2 = 0.12$, $R^2_3 = 0.13$). The path coefficient of the 'experience of the school' was higher for Afri Twin schools ($\beta = -0.54$) compared to the non Afri twin schools ($\beta = -0.31$).

Table 2

Afri Twin and non Afri Twin Teachers' Experiences of their Working Conditions

Variable	Response	Afri Twin		Non Afri Twin	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Experience regarding amount of Work	Totally satisfied	19	19.6	73	24.6
	Satisfied	54	55.7	160	53.9
	Unsure	14	14.4	25	8.4
	Unsatisfied	7	7.2	34	11.5
	Totally unsatisfied	3	3.1	5	1.7
Salary increase in last 3 years	Yes	78	80.4	282	95.0
	No	17	17.5	11	3.7
Administrative work outside of your teaching responsibilities	A lot	73	75.3	217	73.1
	Not too much	15	15.5	51	17.2
	Varies	7	7.2	18	6.1
How do you experience your school	Totally satisfied	28	28.9	89	30.0
	Satisfied	61	62.9	181	60.9
	Unsure	4	4.1	17	5.7
	Unsatisfied	4	4.1	9	3.0
Turnover Intention	Yes	18	18.6	46	15.4
	No	77	79.4	250	84.2

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Measures

Variables	Factors	Mean	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MHC-SF	EWB	11.51	2.48	0.89	1.00						
	SWB	15.24	4.84		.53**	1.00					
	PWB	23.46	4.20		.64**	.54**	1.00				
CSE	PFC	85.30	16.01	0.94	.52**	.45**	.60**	1.00			
	SUE	63.74	13.17		.51**	.42**	.59**	.84**	1.00		
	SFF	34.25	7.97		.43**	.41**	.58**	.62**	.67**	1.00	
CSSES		43.61	6.64	0.83	.58**	.39**	.61**	.59**	.58**	.46**	1.00

Note. **Correlation is significant at 1% level. SD = Standard Deviation, α = Cronbach alpha coefficient, MHC-SF = Mental Health Continuum-Short Form, EWB = Emotional Well-being, SWB = Social Well-being, PWB = Psychological Well-being, CSE = Coping Self-Efficacy Scale, PFC = Problem focused coping, SUE = Stop unpleasant emotions and thoughts, SFF = Support from friends and family, CSSES = Core Self-Evaluations Scale.

Table 4

Prevalence of Well-being in Afri Twin and non Afri Twin Teachers

Variable	Afri Twin			Non Afri Twin			<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Low	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate	High		
EWB	2	15	78	8	48	238	-1.4	0.16
SWB	16	76	2	79	211	1	-2.7	0.07
PWB	2	19	75	4	75	218	-1.25	0.21
PFC	8	82	3	29	255	10	-1.29	0.20
SUE	1	27	66	8	108	176	-1.64	0.10
SFF	1	42	51	15	115	164	-1.12	0.26
CSE	2	49	43	17	172	100	-1.22	0.23
CSSES	1	31	57	7	133	151	-2.78	0.06

Note. EWB = Emotional Well-being, SWB = Social Well-being, PWB = Psychological Well-being, PFC = Problem focused coping, SUE = Stop unpleasant emotions and thoughts, SFF = Support from friends and family, CSE = Coping Self-Efficacy Scale, CSSES = Core Self-Evaluations Scale.

Table 5
Linear Regression with Social Well-being as a Dependent Variable

Model	R ²	ΔR ²	F	p
1	0.05	0.05	17.94	0.01
2	0.14	0.09	32.03	0.01
3	0.15	0.01	22.56	0.01

Note. 1 = Experience of amount of work, 2 = Experience of amount of work, how do you experience your school, 3 = Experience of amount of work, how do you experience your school, turnover intention, R² = R-Squared (coefficient of determination of a linear regression), ΔR² = Delta R-Squared, F = F-distribution, p = p-value

Discussion

The results of the study show that well-being in the 2 types of schools tended to be moderate to high. There was an almost significant finding for differences on social well-being and core self-evaluations. If this finding had held, it could be hypothesised that 'twinning' influence the social context of the school. Research has indicated that support (from colleagues) in the early years of teaching do influence efficacy (Woolfolk Hoy, 2000). According to Bandura (1993), and Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004) the shared beliefs of teachers influence the social environment (climate) of the school.

According to Bandura (1993, p. 141) "the belief systems of staff create school cultures that can have vitalizing or demoralizing effects on how well schools function as a social system". Therefore, the 'twinning' of the Afri Twin project could help to create a positive belief system among staff influencing the school culture/climate in a positive manner contributing to the social well-being of the teachers/staff as well as the social environment of the school. Based on the findings of core self-evaluation which indicated that there is almost a significant difference between the Afri Twin and non Afri Twin teachers, it can be concluded that the psychological functioning of the Afri Twin teachers in this study regarding their core self-evaluations is more positive than would be expected than the non Afri Twin teachers.

Teachers were also satisfied with the experience of their schools. However, it was indicated that administrative work outside of their teaching responsibilities was high or 'a lot'. This was the same for teachers in the Afri Twin and non Afri Twin schools. The turnover intention (no) was higher in non Afri Twin schools than in Afri Twin schools. The findings are consistent with observations made by Jackson and Rothmann (2006) that teachers experience work as more 'demanding'. The nature of teaching in South African schools show that job-related stress was a growing factor facing educators (Jackson & Rothmann, 2005), and that there is a considerable increase in workload (Swanepoel, 2009).

Limitations and Recommendations

The present study was a survey. Surveys are known to focus on experiences at a specific point in time and this was similar to the present study. However, the present study makes a contribution by highlighting on important aspects in the functioning of teachers. Future studies could implement a longitudinal study and focus on equivalence of constructs such as well-being in the school context.

Conclusion

The objective of this study was to determine the prevalence of well-being (mental health, core self-evaluations and coping self-efficacy characteristics) of teachers at Afri Twin and non Afri Twin schools. The results indicated a moderate to high level of well-being in both Afri Twin and non Afri Twin teachers. The twinned schools had comparable levels of teacher well-being.

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