

HAPPINESS IN TEACHER EDUCATION: A CROSS CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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Teacher training is a unique professional pairing of studies in an academic institute with supervision of school experience teaching. There are ample studies among teachers and students on the negative side to wellbeing which focus on stress and burnout but studies on the positive side to well-being among student teachers are almost non-existent. Student teachers' wellbeing can influence their future professional development, and the ways in which student teachers cope with their difficulties can provide insight for future teacher educators.

This preliminary study focuses on the prevalence and predictors of positive emotions among student teachers during each of the four years of their studies.

Aim: To study the happiness factors, as well as personal strengths and weaknesses as a teacher among student teachers and to compare happiness factors in teacher education contexts in Israel, Finland, Portugal and Scotland.

Sample: 386 student teachers: from Israel (n=128), Finland (n=84), Portugal (n=84) and Scotland (n=93).

Tools:

Two questionnaires were each participant. Questionnaire A comprised a closed questionnaire using the Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (Huebner, 2001 version); A measure of subjective happiness (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999); PANAS - Positive Affect Negative Affect Scale (Watson Clark & Tellegen, 1988); and Personal and Professional Wellbeing in Teacher Education Questionnaire (developed de novo for this study). Questionnaire B comprised open-ended questions that focused on participants' perceived personal happiness and failures, desire to be a teacher, and perceived teacher success in the future, was devised specifically for this study.

Results

Differences between countries were noticed on Life Satisfaction, Self-efficacy, and Motivation for teaching. Finnish students showed highest wellbeing on Life Satisfaction. Israeli students showed highest Self-efficacy and subjective Happiness. Motivation for teaching was highest in Scottish students. Portuguese students scored lowest on the wellbeing scales.

Country-wise analysis on the effect of various components of teacher education on wellbeing indicated that the predictors varied by country.

Analyses into the relationships between strengths and weaknesses and wellbeing in the Israeli and Finnish data indicated that strengths were related to Self-efficacy in both countries and also to Life satisfaction in the Finnish data. Weaknesses were disassociated with wellbeing in Israeli data.

In Finnish data, they predicted low Self-efficacy. Familiarity with strengths is not enough for creating motivation and satisfaction.

Cross-cultural differences in Self-efficacy, Life Satisfaction and Wellbeing are discussed.

References

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