

**An investigation of teachers' perception of well-being under the conditions  
of COVID-19 in private (independent) high schools in the Cape Town  
Metro – a survey analysis.**

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Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the degree Masters in Education  
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## Abstract

Teachers, playing a pivotal role in education, are increasingly facing complex challenges, including addressing students' social and emotional needs, managing classrooms, integrating technology, and navigating evolving educational policies. These challenges, along with limited resources and societal expectations, can significantly impact teachers' well-being. This study investigated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the well-being of private high school teachers in Cape Town, South Africa. Grounded in Carol Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being, the research explores the multifaceted dimensions of teachers' psychological well-being in the context of unprecedented changes brought about by the global pandemic.

A mixed methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods for a comprehensive understanding of well-being was used through a survey that targeted the selected private high schools in Cape Town. Purposive sampling was used to select six private high schools based on specific criteria. The sample (N) included 76 participants who fully completed the questionnaire and were therefore analysed. Data collection involved a survey with both closed-ended (quantitative: Likert scale) and open-ended (qualitative) questions, employing Ryff's psychological well-being model. The central aspects of Ryff's model refer to well-being along the categories of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, self-acceptance, and purpose in life. Where scores are high, along these dimensions, well-being is high. Findings in relation to this sample indicate that autonomy reveals a contradiction between high quantitative scores and qualitative struggles, particularly regarding curriculum constraints. While teachers indicate in the survey Likert scale quantitative data that they have high autonomy, in the open-ended questions they indicated a contradictory finding in relation to the curriculum, over which they felt little autonomy. Environmental Mastery, with the lowest average score, reflects challenges in managing uncertainties, especially during the pandemic. Personal growth scored the highest in this survey, indicating widespread positive perceptions of development despite challenges. Qualitatively the participants indicate that their ability to deal with the technological challenges they faced under COVID made them grow personally. Purpose in life sees a positive shift due to the pandemic, fostering personal growth and re-evaluation of life direction. Positive relations scores lower, emphasising the complexity of interpersonal connections during challenges like online teaching, where face to face meetings are not possible. Finally, Self-acceptance scored

positively, indicating teachers' positive attitudes toward continuous learning and self-discovery. Again, this can be attributed to teachers' perceptions that they met the technological challenges of online teaching during the pandemic. Overall, scores of well-being were high indicating that teachers in private schools were able to navigate the pandemic relatively well.

**Keywords:**

Well-being

Autonomy

Environmental mastery

Personal growth

Purpose in life

Positive Relations

Self-Acceptance

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

Teachers play a vital role in the field of education, therefore it is crucial to prioritise the well-being of teachers, as it directly influences the quality of education they provide and consequently, the welfare of their learners. In recent times, the teaching profession has undergone significant transformations. Teachers now shoulder increased responsibilities, facing ever more complex challenges. Modern teachers must not only excel in their academic duties but are facing ever more complex challenges, including addressing their learners' social and emotional needs, managing classrooms effectively, integrating technology into their teaching methods, and navigating continuously changing educational policies (Travers & Cooper, 1996; Eacute & Esteve, 2000; Datnow, 2020). These challenges can take a toll on teachers' well-being, worsened by limited resources and society's high expectations (Xie et al., 2022; Bakker et al., 2005; Siddiqui & Ahamed, 2020). The importance of this study extends far beyond the confines of the classroom. The well-being of teachers affects not only the students they teach but also the entire educational system. The significance of this study extends beyond the confines of the classroom.

The purpose of this study is to critically examine how Covid-19 has affected the well-being of teachers who work in private schools in the Cape Town area. This study will be theoretically grounded by Carol Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being which specifically focuses on measuring multiple facets of psychological well-being. This chapter introduces the research questions and explains the rationale of the study showing the motivation of the study and how it will contribute to the education system and society as a whole. Finally, a summary of the chapters is included for the rest of this study.

## 1.2 Rationale and Context

Teachers' overall well-being is crucial in achieving educational success, not only in the classroom but in the whole education system (Soini et al., 2010). Teachers are the frontline in our education system, and even in favourable conditions, it is a stressful profession. In late 2019, the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) began to change the world we live in. With the

rapid rate of transmission, the virus quickly became a global pandemic with the impact being experienced worldwide (Horesh & Brown, 2020). The Education Sector was not excluded, and COVID-19 caused instability and fear among everyone involved in the sector, approximately 63 million teachers were affected worldwide by school closures (UNESCO, 2020). South Africa's education system is already vulnerable, leading to many unprecedented challenges for schools, teachers, learners, and their families (Kaden, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic brought about a great deal of change and highlighted how unprepared the education sector was in a time of crisis.

Unlike public schools, private schools were expected to lead the way without missing a beat on the current curriculum, due to their material and human resources. Private schools used a mix of in-person, hybrid online, and digital teaching methods. To stay in touch with students and share information, private schools relied on various messaging apps and digital communication platforms. Some of the tools we used included WhatsApp, Google Hangouts, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, YouTube, and Blackboard (Maree, 2022; Soudien, Reddy & Harvey, 2022). This led to a rapid transition to online learning or modes of instruction, with little to no training on processes nor how long this will last. This transition drastically changed the working environment and the work that teachers were required to do, converting lessons to online learning (Herman et al., 2021). While some teachers struggled to find their way through these challenges, others adapted and found new innovative ways to continue to grow and progress. These changes have come with long-lasting effects and with this study, I plan to investigate an overlooked topic in literature, the well-being of private high school teachers. While there is ample evidence of teachers being negatively impacted by COVID 19 in the government sector of schooling, there is a dearth of published material on the impact of the pandemic on teachers in private schools.

As a high school teacher in a private school, I have both a personal and academic connection to this investigation. Personally, I have felt the pressure of the transition to online learning, then a hybrid means of instruction, and back to in-person lessons, all while the world was trying to adapt to the effects of the pandemic. As I was searching through the literature available, I realised that finding research on under-resourced schools in South Africa, or even globally is relatively easy as many researchers look at all the negative aspects or possible ways to improve these under-resourced schools, while on the contrary there isn't much research on private schools or independent schools, especially in the South African context. If wealth predicts

wealth, we should be more focused on learning as much as we can from the schools producing this wealth, it is possible that what works well for them, can be adapted to work well for everyone.

In private schools, parents pay high fees and expect high results in return. Households of the majority of learners attending private schools have a higher socioeconomic status (SES) as well, and there is a higher level of parent education, indicating that these learners are able to be supported more educationally (Dubow et al., 2009; Guryan et al., 2008). Learners in private schools are privileged in the sense that the majority have more than one device (cell phone, iPad, laptop, TV, etc.) and access to resources. All things considered, these learners have the best chance of success (Barrett et al., 2019). Under all conditions, private schools should be the ‘optimal’ objective. This same expectation was expected during the lockdown, and teachers were thrown into the deep end with online learning and later a hybrid system in order to make this possible. It is important to note that the majority of teachers working in private schools do not fall in the same social economic status or demographic as the learners they are teaching. High demands were made, and teachers had to take the burden of changing to online lessons in minimal time. If private schools are the ‘optimal’ for learners, can we say the same for the teachers working there?

Teachers' well-being directly influences their behaviour and the environment of the classroom or even the school and ultimately the learners’ achievement. COVID-19 only amplified the already high levels of stress reported by teachers previously (Herman et al., 2021). Teachers no longer passively transfer knowledge to learners; teachers need to be active participants that guide learners to understand the content, teaching has become a dynamic process. Therefore, it is essential that the well-being of teachers is taken care of to enable teachers to perform their duties efficiently.

### 1.3 Research questions and objectives

The objective of this study is to analysis the well-being of high school teachers by looking at more than one dimension of positive functioning. Due to the nature of the study, many questions will be asked around well-being – particular in the six different aspects related to the

theoretical framework. We need to understand what teachers went through during the COVID-19 lockdown period to understand how this may have impacted their well-being.

The primary research question that will guide this study is as follows:

1. What were high school teachers' perceptions of well-being under the conditions of COVID-19?

While addressing the primary research question, the following secondary research questions were looked at:

- a) Is there a correlation between the change in high school teachers' work-related demands and their well-being, after the COVID-19 pandemic?
- b) What is the impact of autonomy and environmental mastery on teachers' well-being?
- c) Did relationships with colleagues improve during or after the COVID-19 pandemic?

#### 1.4 Study Outline

This section provides an overview of what each chapter in this research study covers. Its purpose is to give the reader guidelines of the content within each chapter. This study is divided into five chapters:

- Chapter 1: Introduction In this chapter, the research provides a brief insight into the importance of teacher well-being, outlining the rationale behind conducting the study and introducing the central research question.
- Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework This chapter, conducts an in-depth review of existing literature in the field of education, with a specific focus on well-being. This review serves to position the study within the broader academic discourse. Furthermore, it discusses the theoretical framework employed in the research, namely, Carol Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being.
- Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology This chapter presents an overview of the research methodology utilised in the study. It outlines the specific research methods and approaches employed in data collection and analysis.

- Chapter 4: Critical Analysis and Findings Chapter 4 critically examines the resources collected and discusses the findings in detail. The research organises the data into six distinct themes and uses them to present the study's findings.
- Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations In the final chapter, the research revisits the research topic, summarising the conclusions drawn for each theme discussed. Subsequently, it offers a concise summary of the research findings and presents recommendations based on the study's outcomes. This chapter serves as a comprehensive conclusion and provides valuable insights for future considerations.

## 1.5 Conclusion

This chapter emphasises the vital role of teachers in education and highlights the increasing challenges and responsibilities they face, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study's primary objective is to investigate how COVID-19 has affected the well-being of private school teachers in Cape Town, utilising Carol Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being as a theoretical framework. The next chapter focuses on the literature review, specifically well-being, in order to provide a deeper understanding, as well as the theoretical framework used in this study.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the existing literature on teachers and well-being as well as existing the studies that have been conducted related to the study that has been conduct. This approach helps establish the context for this study within the broader educational literature. This review is structured around four areas:

- Well-being and the psychological well-being of Ryff's model
- COVID-19 and the impact on teachers' well-being, particularly in high schools
- Independent (private) schools versus public schools
- High school teachers versus primary school teachers – different challenges

This is followed by a review of current literature, theories, models, and common references, in both a global and South African context. The last section critically engages with literature to develop a theoretical framework grounded by Carol Ryff's psychological well-being (Ryff 1989, 2014; Ryff & Keyes, 1995), This will, in turn, aid in the analysis of the research findings.

### 2.2 What is well-being and the psychological well-being of Ryff's model?

Before I can go forward it is imperative to define the term “well-being”, this term is used often in everyday speech yet in literature the definition is sometimes vague or inadequately defined. Literature divides the term into two different perspectives: the hedonic perspective and the eudaimonic perspective. In the hedonic perspective, well-being is considered subjective happiness – based on subjective experiences and finding satisfaction in various aspects of life (Weiss et al., 2016; Oprea et al., 2018). Due to this happiness being subjective, it is influenced by individual feelings and moods – positive affect (Sirgy, 2012; Henn et al., 2016). On the contrary, the eudaimonic perspective does not focus on happiness but rather on meaning and self-realisation through individual growth over time (Ryan and Deci, 2001). Indicating that the eudaimonic perspective looks further than just happiness, but how well an individual is doing when they are functioning at their true potential. One step further would indicate that the eudaimonic perspective looks at the quality of life.

The term ‘well-being’ cannot be put in a neatly wrapped box, there are many dimensions that all impact an individual’s well-being. Although the general meaning of the term is established, in the field of teacher well-being it is not so clearly defined. I looked at the literature on various framework scales that look at teacher well-being, for example, “The Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES)” was developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), yet efficacy does not necessarily mean well-being. Another study was on ‘The teacher well-being scale (EBED)’ theorised by Rebolo (2005, 2012a, 2012b, 2014) and its finality is to measure the teachers’ degree of satisfaction concerning the objective dimension factors of labour, taking note that this scale takes into consideration Ryff’s theory. Although there are various scales out there focusing on different aspects of well-being, the literature on the well-being of South Africans, more specifically teachers in South Africa is a challenge to find.

Coming back to the different perspectives of well-being, happiness is a feeling that fluctuates from moment to moment, and although it cannot be ignored, the eudaimonic view goes deeper into the quality and growth of an individual. Carol Ryff’s theory on psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989, 2018, 2019) agrees with the eudaimonic perspective of her theory based on positive human functioning – which will become the theoretical framework of this study. This theory focuses on how individuals control their behaviour and build positive relationships with others while accepting that they have limitations. It emphasises not allowing these limitations to change their attitude and highlights the importance of creating meaning in their own lives. Autonomy is one of the aspects in Ryff’s theory and research has indicated that autonomy can lead to a better understanding of the development process and how an individual takes responsibility for their own life, and ultimately their own well-being (Davies et al., 2015; Li and Hein, 2019). Well-being is more than just the absence of illness but indicates the healthy and successful functioning of individuals.

### 2.3 COVID-19 and the impact on teachers’ well-being, particularly in high schools

In 2020, the world went into a panic over the COVID-19 pandemic, which hit unexpectedly leaving many ill-prepared for the changing environment. The World Health Organisation (WHO), defines the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as “an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.” This pandemic caused a nationwide lockdown in South Africa, bringing about many changes in the education system and consequently to the teachers in the schools,

as schools were forced to close. During the lockdown period, from mid-March to the end of May 2020, there was great uncertainty in the education section, including how schools would operate and the impact on teachers delivering the content. Limited attention has been placed on the well-being of teachers, despite the many challenges that they have had to face since the start of the pandemic (Chan et al. 2021). The job characteristics of teachers are changing, from face-to-face to online, and back again.

Teachers are facing more challenges in the work environment, without the correct support, many are unable to cope with these challenges and reach optimal functioning. It is well-known in the literature that teaching is a demanding profession, which is characterised by stress, burnout, and high numbers leaving the profession (Benevene et al., 2020). Teachers need to be able to find a balance between the resources they are provided with and the demands they are required to meet. Furthermore, teachers needed to educate others while their loved ones were getting sick, their children were home from school, and most social interaction was restricted.

Research has gone into understanding the impact COVID-19 has had on the well-being of individuals (Fancourt et al., 2021; Pierce et al., 2020; Hardman et al., 2022) demonstrating the effect that the pandemic has had. Unfortunately, little consideration has been given to teachers and how they were affected by this abnormal time. When schools closed, schools with resources moved to online learning without much planning (Pöysä et al., 2021, p.3). Teachers were expected to make the shift to online learning, without much support while the demands for teaching changed significantly (UNESCO, 2021). The literature suggests that the levels of stress that teachers faced during school closures were three times more than usual (Li et al, 2020). The focus during school closures was on learners not falling behind, and not all on the well-being of teachers providing those lessons.

The pandemic will continue to present challenges to teachers and the quality of education. There is no indication of how long the effects of COVID-19 will last and whether or not, this is the new 'norm' for teachers. Therefore, the well-being of teachers must be a high priority as without teachers the education system will fail.

## 2.4 Independent (private) schools versus public schools

When looking at the education system from a South African context, it must be seen as a system that is redressing the impact of Apartheid. During Apartheid, it was legal for schools to deny access to certain learners based on their racial background (Nzuza, 2015). Nearly 27 years' post-apartheid, the education system continues to try to rectify this injustice.

In South Africa, there are two categories of schools, namely: Independent and public schools. According to statistics realised by the Department of Basic Education in 2021, there are almost 23 000 public schools, compared to the 2100 private schools, indicating a small percentage (4.5%) of the learners in South Africa are educated through private schooling. Unlike public schools, private schools are allowed to limit the admission of learners that pay fees and meet their requirements (Franklin, 2020). Parents and guardians are willing to pay high fees in order to benefit from the resources in private schools, private schools are characterised (Franklin, 2020):

- low learner-teacher ratios
- small classroom sizes
- broad curriculum choice, taught by highly credentialed teachers
- a history of high learner achievement
- extracurricular opportunities not available at public schools
- state-of-the-art facilities and learning and teaching materials.

The growth of the private school sector in South Africa was significantly driven by two main factors: excess demand due to middle-class population growth in certain areas and differentiated demand for better quality and faith-based education. In the post-apartheid era, independent schools emerged to meet the demand for quality education, especially from the growing black middle class. This led to significant growth in the sector, where these schools became essential for the fast-growing population (Hofmeyr, 2015). Private schools identified a gap between the supply of public schools and the expanding population in suburban areas and new suburbs. The private sector thrived in environments where the government failed or lacked the capacity to provide adequate public services, such as education (Archer, 2013).

Private schools in South Africa cause a potential unequal balance of education, which goes against the social transformation that was envisioned by the South African Constitution (Agbofa, 2023; Azimi et al., 2023). Quality education for all was at the core of redressing the South African education system. Yet, private schools do form part of the education system and should not be left out of research because they are more resourced, as they still face challenges. According to Brady & Wilson (2021), independent and public schools identified different key stressors. Independent schools said that parents were their biggest stressor whereas public schools identified workload as their biggest stressor. This indicates that because private schools have more resources than public schools it does not mean that their demands are any less, they are just different.

It is to be noted that there is more literature on public schools than on private schools as researchers try to tackle the problems in under-resourced schools, rather than focus on areas that could be adapted from private schools. Furthermore, literature is on the learners more than the teachers. Further supporting the need for a study into the well-being of private school teachers. Although private school teachers work in environments that have resources, they face similar (and different) challenges to those working at public schools.

## 2.5 High school teachers versus primary school teachers – different challenges

High schools have a different dynamic than primary schools as they are exposed to completely different challenges for teachers. There are few studies that specifically focused on the differences, or even the similarities between primary and high school teachers, although there are many studies on them individually. According to Aelterman et al. (2007), a comparative study in Flanders indicated that high school teachers rely more on the support of their colleagues than that of primary school teachers. Primary school teachers also scored higher in self-efficiency. Primary school teachers look for support from the principal whereas the top of the list for high school teachers was resources and materials.

High school teachers have multiple classes, with multiple learners compared to primary school teachers that are more likely to have one class for the year. Increasing the demand on the teacher, who needs to not only know the name of more learners but their unique way of learning and receiving content, to maximise potential. Another key area to acknowledge is the age of

the learners being taught. In high school learners average between the age of 13-18 years and go through a lot of changes that impact a teacher's ability to effectively teach them, whereas primary schools are aged from 5-12 years which is a completely different developmental dynamic. High school children, who are adolescents are navigating the challenges of puberty as well as a need to become autonomous, something not faced by primary school children (Hardman, 2012). Lastly, high school teachers' performance is strongly evaluated on how a learner performs in their subject and not necessarily their emotional and social well-being – which is not always a reasonable indication of their ability to teach (OECD, 2018). These are a few aspects that increase the demands or workload of a high school teacher, excluding many other factors that also impact the demands made on high school teachers, like the curriculum.

## 2.6 What literature is currently available?

It is essential to look at all the current literature available on the topic of teacher well-being. Therefore, a thorough search of the literature was conducted focussing on the issue of teachers' well-being. The literature was limited in the aspect that much research has looked at the comparison of remuneration and workload, or job demands and the available resources for teachers and their well-being. Few studies have looked at the overall well-being of teachers. One conclusion that can be made is that more research is needed that focuses more broadly on high school teachers' well-being – going more in-depth than the financial compensation and resources, but rather analysing their autonomy, growth, and overall well-being. A database search was conducted to search for literature related to Ryff's psychological well-being model and its use on teachers, both high school and primary school included. No South African studies were found in the initial search. Consequently, I will review some of the studies that made use of similar methods, theoretical frameworks, or research questions.

With regards to the instrument (survey) used, van Horn et al. (2004), did a study of Dutch teachers, by comparing the fit of several factor models for the investigation of occupational well-being. 1308 teachers were surveyed from both primary and high schools in the Netherlands. The study concluded that well-being cannot be attributed to a one-factor (or dimension) model, as it is too restricting, and found the data to be limiting. In their conclusion, well-being needs to be attributed to a multiple-factor model but under the condition that all the factors were interconnected. Well-being is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, therefore

requires a multi-factor model. This study supports that the use of a set of scales to measure the well-being of teachers is essential. The study was limited in the aspect that it could identify aspects of well-being it did not provide or follow up on measures that could improve the teachers' well-being. It is noted, this study was done before the COVID-19 pandemic, consequently not looking at the well-being of teachers under those conditions but the comparison between the models is still relevant and supported by other studies that all use more than the one-factor model.

Another study by Peters and Pearce (2011), based on Australian teachers, emphasised the importance of positive relationships and communication between the school's management and teachers to improve teachers' well-being. The study interviewed 59 teachers from both high school and primary school, although the main focus of the study was on new teachers, the results are still useful as the changes that COVID-19 conveyed led to experienced teachers feeling inexperienced in the new environment as they were 'thrown' into the unknown (Soncini et al., 2021). As previously mentioned, when comparing high school teachers and primary school teachers, high school teachers seek more resources and relationships with colleagues over a relationship with management. Although this aspect cannot be ignored, it is still an aspect that impacts well-being. Management has the ability to alter well-being by taking an interest in the welfare of teachers as well as their professional development, other aspects that have an impact, includes whether management is seen as being trustworthy and cooperative. Furthermore, it needs to be noted that literature indicates that well-being is closely related to a teacher's performance and their work environment (Borrelli et al., 2014), the better a teacher perceives their performance and the environment they are working in, the higher their well-being. The JD-R model allows for a reliable framework that explores the relationship between the work environment and an employee's well-being (Yin et al., 2016; Borrelli et al., 2014). These studies concluded that a teacher's well-being decreased when meeting with disruptive learners and when the deadline did not match the work required, as well as the negative impact of an environment that does not support teaching. Therefore, keeping this in mind teachers in private schools should have the best work environment, regarding resources and materials available, class size, and ability to perform their duties. Additionally, this supports the research of why well-being decreased during COVID-19 for most occupations, not only teachers, as the environment changed, in most cases an unfavourable change (Schifano et al., 2021).

A study was done in Missouri on ‘teacher stress, coping, and wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic (Herman et al, 2021). This study included both primary school and high school teachers and include 639 participants across 31 schools. This survey made use of a ten-point scale measuring single items, later COVID-19 questions were added to adjust for the changes being implemented in schools. The survey examined changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic with regard to the well-being of teachers and how instruction was delivered (online, face-to-face, etc.). The results of this study focused on how teachers have adapted after the COVID-19 adjustment, where results indicated that teachers reported lower levels of stress and higher levels of coping since the beginning of the pandemic. Yet, a study conducted in British Columbia by Gadermann et al. (2021), indicated a decrease in the mental health of teachers eleven months after the start of the pandemic. This was due to an increase in workload and fewer opportunities to meet with learners and colleagues. This sample included 1206 teachers, which included both primary and high school teachers. The study contained personal responses to enhance the message being conveyed, that teachers are struggling, for example, “Myself and my colleagues all feel the weight of the pandemic and are exhausted – Elementary school teacher with over 25 years of experience” (Gadermann et al.,2021, p. 10). Challenges included increased workload and difficulty implementing social distancing as a measure to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Although, feeling supported by the school and government system contributed to an increase in well-being.

Another paper conducted in a Welsh Secondary school (Smith & James, 2021), this study looked at the well-being of staff before and after a COVID-19 lockdown, more especially the changes in the well-being related to the experience of COVID-19. The study was conducted through an online survey with 67 participants. Participants were required to take part in both the ‘Well-being Process Questionnaire’, as well as the ‘Smith COVID-19 Questionnaire’ which consisted of a ten-point scale. Well-being Process Questionnaire was developed from the Demands-Resource-Individual Effects (DRIVE) model, which looked at “negative outcomes by considering predictor variables” school (Smith & James, 2021, p.2). Furthermore, positive outcomes and work-related outcomes were added to conclude the development of the Well-being Process Questionnaire which was used to analyse teachers’ well-being before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The Smith COVID-19 Questionnaire analysed current and long-term stress and risk of infection. Again, this study was in agreement that there have been many studies on teachers’ stress and mental health but few that actually look at the well-being of teachers. The overall results show that the well-being process model is valid and establish to

be used on teachers. It needs to be noted that this was the first of the study and the sample was relatively small, but it was concluded that some modifications were needed in Smith's COVID-19 questionnaire to accommodate for teachers, examples of problematic internet use, or strengths and weaknesses of distance learning.

A Romanian study was conducted on teachers' life satisfaction and well-being (Colomeischi, 2020), this study also used more than one scale model which included Ryff's model, Emotional Intelligence scale, Satisfaction with Life scale, Utrecht Work Engagement Scale and Maslach Burnout Inventory Surveys. The sample size of this study was 385 participants chosen randomly. This study found that emotional intelligence was the underlying factor in how teachers perceived well-being. Kamboj and Garg (2021) did a similar study that indicated that the most important mediator for well-being is perseverance, yet emotional intelligence played a significant role. The findings also concluded that female teachers showed a high emotional intelligence than their male colleagues. Further studies (Cabello, 2017; Di Fabio and Kenny, 2016; Fernández-Berrocal & Extremera, 2016), show that emotional intelligence can improve well-being. Since emotional intelligence could be improved in an individual, teachers would then be able to improve their overall well-being. These results are consistent with Parker and Martin (2009) study, which made use of more than one measuring tool (model), including Ryff's model, that the higher the emotional intelligence the higher the well-being. Therefore, the impact of emotional intelligence forms a significant role that cannot be ignored and will form part of my study.

## 2.7 What literature is currently available – The South African context?

To find studies done in South Africa on the well-being of teachers required a more intense, deeper search. There are studies that indirectly look at the well-being of teachers, for example, a study done by Kruger (2019) analysed how the education department's role in caring for the well-being of teachers. However, the study revealed that this was more of a transactional relationship as the department was supporting teachers, in return for a commitment to education. Even though the teachers benefit from the support of the education department, the support is only given 'conditional' and not with the intention of only benefiting the teachers' well-being.

Daniels and Strauss (2010) conducted a study that involved six teachers from two former model C schools and two former coloured schools in the Helderberg area, where research was conducted on their emotional well-being. This study concluded that all six teachers' emotional well-being was impacted by how they interacted with the learners, parents, school management, and even the education department. Again, this links to the working environment that the teacher finds themselves in, the more positive the environment is perceived to be, the more positive the impact on the teachers' well-being.

The researcher has not come across any existing literature that specifically discusses the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the well-being of private high school teachers in South Africa (though this doesn't necessarily imply that none exists, but in the published work searched, this is not evident). This is the precise point where this research identifies an opportunity to delve into and examine these experiences from a South African standpoint.

From the literature reviewed, it is evident that there is a gap in the literature of a study based in South Africa that looks at the overall well-being of teachers from a eudaimonic perspective and looks at more than a one-factor model. There is a constant need for research to be done into the well-being of teachers, and the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has on it, as the dynamics of education have changed yet demands on continuously increasing. It is necessary for people to become aware of the need for teachers, in order to better nurture and support them, for without teachers the education system falls apart.

## 2. 8 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks hold a crucial role in research as they offer the researcher essential guidelines, providing conceptual tools that aid in comprehending the research findings. In this section, we will the theoretical frameworks that have relevance in analysing the findings in the context of well-being.

### 2.8.1 Carol Ryff's psychological well-being

This study will be based on the theory of Carol Ryff's psychological well-being (Ryff 1989, 2014; Ryff & Keyes, 1995), Ryff's model differs from other models as it sees well-being as multi-dimensional and does not regard the happiness a person is currently experiencing the positive emotions. It looks beyond stress, depression, and burnt as the only contributors to well-being, or the lack thereof. This theoretical framework outlines the six key dimensions proposed by Ryff and their interconnectedness within the context of psychological well-being and positive functioning for the development of an individual.

#### *Dimension 1: Autonomy*

Autonomy reflects an individual's sense of independence and self-determination. Those with high autonomy feel that they have control over their own lives and can make choices that align with their values and preferences. They are less likely to feel controlled or dominated by external forces, and they can make decisions that reflect their true selves.

#### *Dimension 2: Environmental Mastery*

Environmental mastery refers to an individual's ability to effectively manage and adapt to their surroundings. It involves problem-solving skills, a sense of competence, and the capacity to shape one's environment to meet their needs. People with high environmental mastery are skilled at managing the challenges life presents, whether in work, personal life, or other contexts.

#### *Dimension 3: Personal Growth*

Personal growth involves the pursuit of self-improvement and the realisation of one's potential. Individuals who prioritise personal growth are open to new experiences, learning, and personal development. They seek opportunities to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities. This dimension reflects a proactive approach to self-improvement.

#### *Dimension 4: Purpose in Life*

Purpose in life relates to having a clear sense of meaning and direction. Those with a strong sense of purpose believe that their life has significance and that their actions are contributing

to something greater than themselves. This dimension is closely tied to having goals, aspirations, and a sense of fulfilment from working toward those objectives.

#### Dimension 5: Positive Relations with Others

This dimension emphasises the quality of an individual's interpersonal relationships. It involves having satisfying and fulfilling connections with others, such as friends, family members, and colleagues. People with strong positive relations with others tend to be empathetic, compassionate, and able to build and maintain supportive social networks. They experience a sense of belonging and warmth in their relationships.

#### Dimension 6: Self-Acceptance

Self-acceptance refers to an individual's ability to embrace and accept themselves, including their strengths and weaknesses, without harsh self-criticism. People with high self-acceptance have a positive self-image and self-esteem. They are comfortable with who they are and have a realistic view of themselves. They are less likely to be overly self-critical or judgmental.

Ryff's model acknowledges the interconnectedness of these dimensions. A deficiency in one dimension can impact others, highlighting the holistic nature of psychological well-being. For instance, low self-acceptance may hinder the development of positive relations with others, while a strong sense of purpose can boost self-acceptance. This theoretical framework serves as a valuable tool for researchers, psychologists, and practitioners in assessing, understanding, and promoting psychological well-being. It enables the measurement of well-being beyond traditional mental health assessments and guides interventions tailored to specific dimensions or the overall enhancement of well-being.

These six dimensions collectively capture the various aspects of psychological well-being. Importantly, they highlight that well-being is not solely about happiness or the absence of negative emotions; rather, it involves a sense of self-acceptance, positive relationships, personal autonomy, competence in managing one's environment, a sense of purpose, and a commitment to personal growth and development. Understanding and assessing these dimensions can provide valuable insights into an individual's overall well-being and can guide interventions and strategies to enhance psychological well-being in various life contexts.

Researchers and practitioners often use these dimensions to measure and promote well-being beyond traditional mental health assessments.

Ryff's theory puts a great deal of emphasis on environmental mastery, which refers to the ability to adapt or mediate an environment, which is appropriate when looking at the change in school environments during the pandemic. The impact of online and hybrid systems on a teacher's well-being. Autonomy was another factor that individuals rated as being an indicator of well-being. Self-acceptance covers the emotional intelligence aspect mentioned in the literature review. Ryff's model acknowledges a wide variety of aspects of well-being, this will help me get a creating understanding of the well-being of teachers in the study.

## 2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of the existing body of research in the field. It has explored key themes, trends, and gaps in the literature, shedding light on the current state of knowledge in the well-being of teachers. Throughout this review, it has become evident that there is a wealth of valuable research that informs our understanding, however, it is equally clear that there remain unanswered questions and opportunities for further research. With this foundation, the study can move forward with confidence, guided by the insights and findings shared in this chapter.

## **Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the study outlined its research plan. It explained the methodology used to analyse data related to teachers' well-being. Firstly, the chapter discussed the selected samples and the reasons behind their choice. Secondly, it introduced an analytical framework derived from the theoretical analysis outlined in the previous chapter. Lastly, the chapter addressed aspects of the study's validity, reliability, limitations, and ethical considerations.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This research was conducted using a mixed methods design, more specifically a convergent parallel research design, which combined a quantitative and qualitative design. George (2023) explained that in a convergent parallel research design, researchers gathered both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously but analyzed them independently. Once both sets of analyses were finished, the results were compared to formulate comprehensive conclusions. This study used both quantitative and qualitative research design based on identifying the perception of well-being in private high school teachers. The quantitative data was numbers-based or could be 'adapted' into number form without losing the meaning of the data to explain the well-being of teachers.

This research adopted a mixed methods design, which meant it combined both quantitative and qualitative research approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. In this case, the topic was the well-being of private high school teachers. Within the mixed methods design, the study specifically used a convergent parallel research design. This design involved collecting both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously but keeping them separate during the analysis phase. The independent analyses allowed researchers to gain insights from each data type individually. Later, the results from both analyses were compared to draw more comprehensive conclusions (George, 2023). The primary focus of this study was to understand the perception of well-being among private high school teachers. To achieve this understanding, the researchers employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Punch (2005), explained the difference:

- Quantitative data were numerical in nature and were often used to quantify or measure aspects of a phenomenon. In this study, quantitative data were used to gather numerical information related to teachers' well-being.
- Qualitative data, were non-numerical and provided more in-depth insights into the experiences, perceptions, and feelings of individuals, allowing teachers to express their thoughts and feelings in their own words.

During the research process, the quantitative data and qualitative data were analysed separately. This meant that quantitative data underwent statistical analysis to uncover trends, relationships, or patterns, while qualitative data were subject to thematic analysis to identify themes, categories, and nuances in teachers' perceptions. After both sets of data had been separately analysed, the study then compared the results. By doing this, patterns or discrepancies between the quantitative and qualitative findings could be identified. This comparative analysis contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the well-being of private high school teachers.

A survey served as the primary data collection method, encompassing both quantitative data obtained through a Likert Scale and qualitative data acquired via open-ended questions. The next chapter of the research paper presented the quantitative findings using diagrams and numerical charts. Additionally, qualitative data was presented through narrative accounts, allowing for a comparison with the quantitative results.

### 3.3 Population and Sampling:

According to Banerjee & Chaudhury (2010), a population referred to the entire group of individuals, items, or data points that shared a common characteristic or belonged to a particular category. It represented the entirety of what we were interested in. Whereas a sample was a smaller representative group selected from a larger population. A sample was used because it was not always practical to study the entire population.

As of 2022, South Africa had roughly 24,900, of which 2,282 were independent educational institutions (Cowling, 2023). Therefore, it was not feasible for every independent school to

partake in the research study. Hence, participants were chosen via sampling. In order for a school and/or teachers to participate in this study, certain criteria needed to be met:

- The school needed to be based in Cape Town
- The school needed to be classified as private/independent educational institution.
- The school needed to be a high school
- The teacher needed to be employed by the institution, and teaching at least one of the following grades: Grade 7,8,9,10,11 or 12
- There is no age or gender limit for the participants.

If a school or teacher did not meet these criteria, they were not eligible to participate in this study.

The sample method for this study was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was defined as a collection of non-probability sampling strategies where participants were chosen because they fit the criteria needed for the sample. In other words, in purposive sampling, participants were chosen "on purpose" (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In order to find my participants, the South African private school database was used, which was a public database (SA Private Schools 2023). Filters were applied to ensure the criteria for high school and based in Cape Town were met.

### 3.4 Data Collection

For this study, a survey analysis was used in order to collect the data needed. In order for the research question to be answered, the following methods will be used: A survey with both quantitative and qualitative questions based on the Ryff's psychological well-being model (Appendix D).

The survey consisted of 18 closed-ended questions (quantitative) and 6 open-ended questions (qualitative), highlighting the six aspects of positive functioning. The survey was divided into 3 parts:

- Part A - Attended to the demographic aspect.
- Part B - Assessed the teachers' well-being through closed questions measured on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) strongly agree to (7) strongly disagree, to measure the perceived well-being of educators.

- Part C - Assessed the teachers' well-being through open questions (one question per dimension in the model), allowing participants to elaborate on their well-being.

A total of six private high schools, with a total of 208 teaching staff, agreed to participate in the study. All teachers teaching at least one high school class were emailed the survey and asked to participate, participation is completely voluntarily. According to general statistics, the response rate for surveys is 15% - 30%. With 76 correctly completed forms the response rate was 36.5%. The survey was completed by participants online, in one sitting at the teacher's own pace. The data responses were only being collected once the participant clicked 'submit' at the end of the survey, this allowed for participants who choose to no longer participate and withdraw at any time before any data is received. The research questionnaire sent to the teachers included a consent form and a study explanation. Prior to proceeding with the survey questionnaire, participants were required to indicate their consent or refusal to participate. You can find the consent form in Appendix C and the study explanation in Appendix D.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

To examine and analyse the research data for this study, the quantitative data and the qualitative data were analysed separately before comparing the results.

Firstly, the quantitative research design was used to quantify the data and to make generalisations about the findings. Quantitative research focused on numbers and found conclusions with trends and patterns. The data from the surveys were exported to Microsoft Excel where all the data was sorted and categorized for a more logical analysis. The data was then converted by using tools such as tables, graphs, and charts to identify and form patterns and trends in the data. Finally, the data were associated with Ryff's theoretical framework to draw conclusions and report findings.

Secondly, for the qualitative data analysis, the following process was followed to analyse the data (Creswell, 2014; Babbie & Mouton, 2001): Initially, the researcher conducted a review of the entire dataset to gain a comprehensive understanding of the data, specifically focusing on the responses provided by participants in the open-ended questions. Followed by the grouping of similar topics, a table was created to document the emergent topics that surfaced during the

data analysis process. Additionally, during this phase, the researcher also identified categories and subcategories, aligning them with the research themes. Subsequently, following the creation of the table, the researcher revisited the data to ensure that no new categories or subcategories had been inadvertently overlooked in the previous step. Finally, the data was organised based on these categories and conducted into an initial analysis.

### 3.6 Validity

Ensuring the validity of the research is crucial. In this study, to counter any potential research bias, especially given the personal connection of the researcher to the study, the researcher will establish explicit criteria and guidelines for interpreting the data. Adhering to these criteria helped accurately gauge the participants' perspectives, free from any researcher bias. It was of utmost importance that the survey questions effectively measure the intended variables.

### 3.7 Ethics

An ethical approval request was submitted to the University of Cape Town, Department of Humanities, ethics committee, and the application was approved on 24th March 2023, see Appendix A. As this study was based on teachers, who are all be over the age of 18 years and are working in private schools, ethical clearance from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) was not required. All participants were informed about the nature of the research and that participation is voluntary. Lastly, limiting the risk of harm was a high priority in this study, as it has been noted that self-reflection through the administration of the survey may be uncomfortable for certain participants.

### 3.8 Confidentiality

Confidentiality was provided through anonymous surveys, as well as not making the data collected accessible to the public (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Furthermore, all the data that was collected was stored on a password protected computer and the identity of the schools and participants remained anonymous in the study, including the findings.

### 3.9 Limitations of this study

This study serves as a mini dissertation for a Master's degree, with a limited timeframe of one year allocated for its completion. Given this constraint, it is important to acknowledge that it is impossible to generalise using the results in this study.

### 3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher discussed how the research was conducted, including how the sample participants were chosen; and the tools used to gather information. Lastly, the chapter explained the validity, limitations as well as ethical considerations of the study.

## Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the research design and methodologies used to answer the research question: What were high school teachers' perceptions of well-being under the conditions of COVID-19? In this chapter, the data that was collected through the questionnaire were analysed to identify themes that emerged. This chapter is divided into three sections: demographics, quantitative and qualitative analyses.

### 4.2 Results and Analysis

#### 4.2.1 Demographics

The target population were high school teachers who currently work in private (independent) schools in Cape Town, Western Province. A total of six private schools with a total of 208 teaching staff were approached. Questionnaires were sent via email to all high school teaching staff at each private school. Respondents were chosen via a purposeful sample; therefore, this thesis is not intended to generalise to a broader population, but rather to highlight trends that could be explored in more detail in future research. The sample (N) included 76 participants who fully completed the questionnaire and were therefore analysed. Table 1 below provides an overview of the demographic data of the participants in this study:

*Table 1: Demographic Details*

Category	Number of participants (out of 76)	Valid percentage (100%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	26	34,2%
Female	44	57,9%
Non-binary	3	3,9%
Prefer not to say	3	3,9%
<b>Age</b>		
22-25	2	2,6%
26-30	16	21,1%
31-35	15	19,7%
36-40	14	18,4%
41-45	5	6,6%

46-50	7	9,2%
51+	17	22,4%
<b>Highest level of education</b>		
Higher certificate	5	6,6%
Diploma	2	2,6%
Bachelor's Degree (including PGCE)	39	51,3%
Honour's Degree	20	26,3%
Master's Degree	7	9,2%
PhD Degree	3	3,9%
<b>Years employed as a teacher</b>		
Less than a year	3	3,9%
1-2	2	2,6%
3-4	9	11,8%
5-6	7	9,2%
7-8	6	7,9%
9-10	8	10,5%
11-15	13	17,1%
16-20	6	7,9%
21+	22	28,9%

Table 1 indicates that most of the respondents were female (57,9%). There were considerably more females working in the six schools, so it was expected to have more female participants. Considering that the minimum requirement to be a professional teacher, according to the Department of Basic Education, is a “four-year Bachelor of Education degree (B.Ed.) or a three-or four-year Bachelor’s degree, followed by a one-year Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)” (Department of Basic Education, 2021), it is no surprise that 90,7% of participants have a bachelor’s degree or higher, with the majority having a bachelor’s degree, including a PGCE (51,3%) as their highest level of education. The age range varied amongst respondents with 51 years and older being represented the most with 22,4%, followed closely by 26-30 year-olds with 21,1%, with just under 30% having more than 21 years of teaching experience. The demographics of the 76 participant’s respondents can be regarded as diverse.

The questionnaire was divided into both quantitative and qualitative questions. An analysis will be completed separately and then the two will be combined in the next chapter during the discussion. An analysis of quantitative will be first.

#### 4.2.2 Quantitative

As previously stated in Chapter 3, quantitative data are numerical in nature and are often used to quantify or measure aspects of a phenomenon. In this study, quantitative data was used to gather numerical information related to teachers' well-being (Punch, 2005). Participants were given 18 questions to answer using a Likert scale (see appendix D). It was decided to recode the seven-point Likert scale into "agree," "neutral," and "disagree" in order to make the interpretation clearer. The original scale had the following options: highly agree, slightly agree, a little agree; neither agree nor disagree; a little disagree; considerably disagree, and strongly disagree. The nuance of these 7 choices was felt superfluous and hence, the scale was narrowed to 3 points.

Table 2 and Figure 2, represent the overall data from the 18 close-ended questions, answered on a Likert scale. The 18 questions represented the 6 different categories outlined by Ryff (1995), to get an overall perception of the teachers' well-being. These questions did not directly relate to Covid-19 or the pandemic but rather aimed at getting an overall understanding of how the teachers viewed their well-being.

*Table 2: Summary of agreement with questionnaire questions*

Questions:	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I like most parts of my personality.	90,8%	6,6%	2,6%
When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far.	88,2%	3,9%	7,9%
Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.	82,9%	9,2%	7,9%
The demands of everyday life often get me down.	35,5%	14,5%	50,0%
In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life.	13,2%	11,8%	75,0%
Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.	22,4%	11,8%	65,8%
I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.	17,1%	10,5%	72,4%
In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live	75,0%	9,2%	15,8%
I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life.	89,5%	2,6%	7,9%
I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.	9,2%	13,2%	77,6%
For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth.	94,7%	2,6%	2,6%
I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world.	96,1%	0,0%	3,9%
People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others.	92,1%	6,6%	1,3%
I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago.	9,2%	5,3%	85,5%
I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.	14,5%	18,4%	67,1%
I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others.	13,2%	10,5%	76,3%
I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from the way most other people think.	90,8%	3,9%	5,3%
I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important.	85,5%	9,2%	5,3%

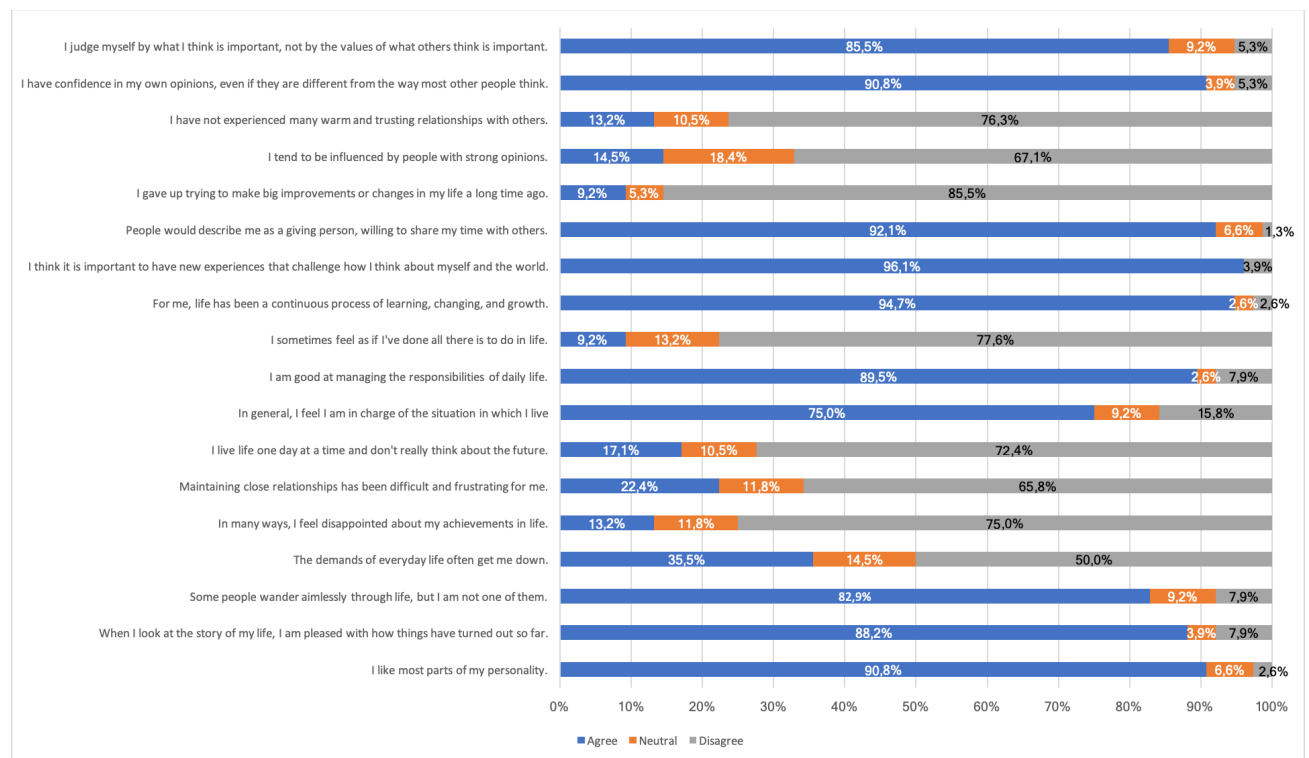
Each participant's Likert scale results were added together for each category to determine their subscale scores. The higher scores correspond to higher psychological well-being levels. Some questions were reversed-scored meaning that the question was posed in the opposite direction of what the scale was measuring.

The following formula was used for the reversed scored questions:

$$((\text{Number of scale points}) + 1) - (\text{Respondent's answer})$$

As an example, if a participant answered 3 on a reverse-scored question, their answer would be re-coded as:  $(7 + 1) - 3 = 5$ .

Figure 1: Summary of agreement with questionnaire questions



The next three figures show the average score of the six aspects of well-being, per dimension, gender and age. Figure 2, represents the average scores per category, personal growth achieved the highest average score, among participants, with 88,1%, whereas environmental mastery achieved the lowest average score with 74,6%.

Figure 3, compares the average scores of the six categories by the different gender groupings, 'non-binary' and 'prefer not to say' were grouped together under the title 'other'. It is evident that males have scored a higher average than females and other, in every category except positive relations with others where females scored a 5% higher score on average. And 'other' has the lowest scores in all six categories, indicating less well-being felt among this group.

Figure 2: Average score for the six aspects of well-being

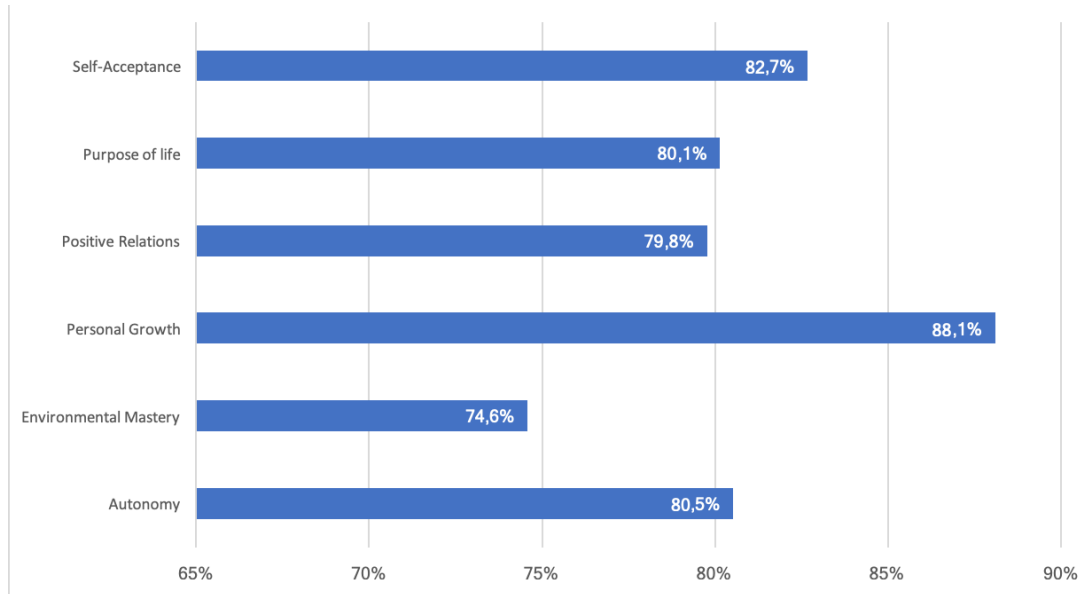


Figure 3: Average score for the six aspects of Well-being (by gender)

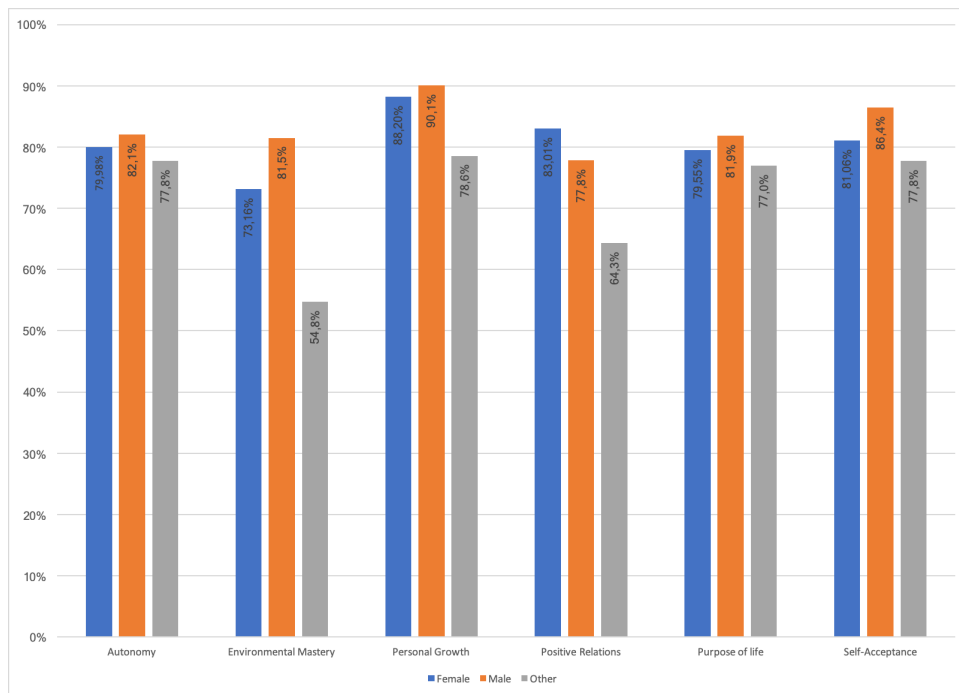
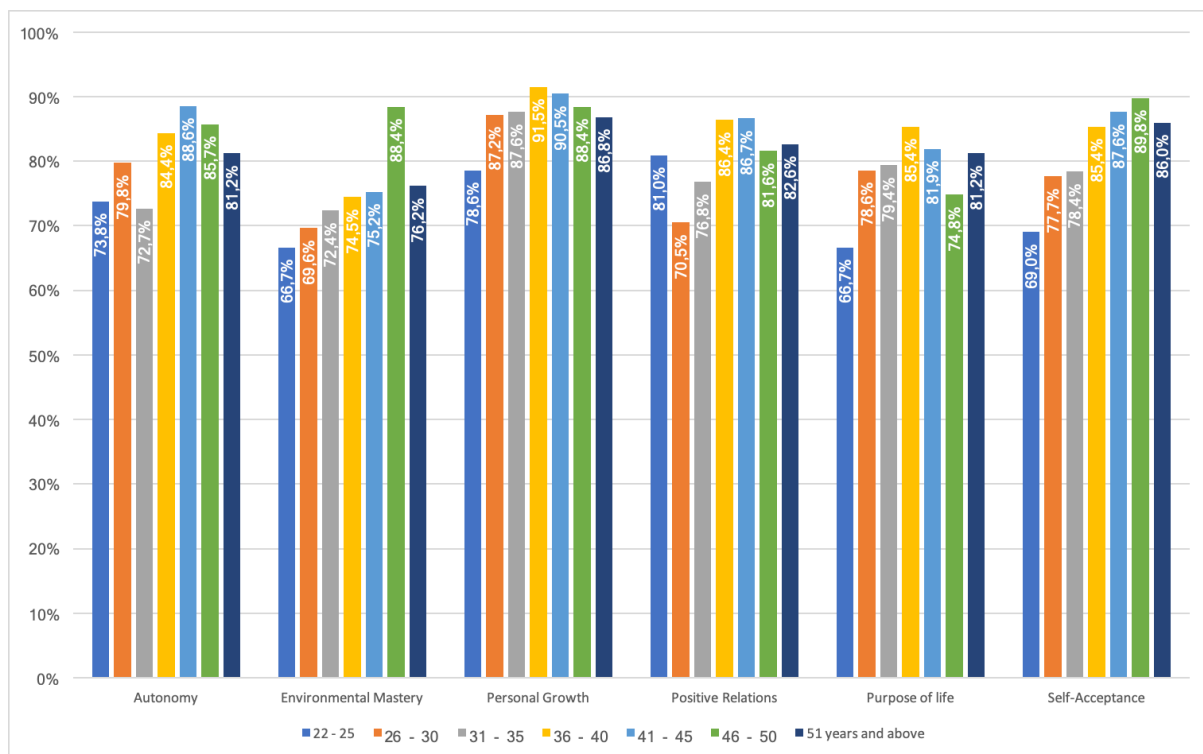


Figure 4 compares the average scores of the six categories by the different age groupings. You will see that no single age group dominated in every category but rather that different ages seemed to excel in different categories. For instance, the age category 46-50 years achieved the highest score in the ‘environmental mastery’ category but got the second lowest in the ‘purpose in life’ category. On average the age group 22-25 years old, scored the lowest scores in the various categories.

Figure 4: Average score for the six aspects of Well-being (by age)



### Breakdown per category of well-being

The 18 questions consisted of three questions per ‘dimension’ of Carol Ryff’s theory of psychological well-being. In order to get a clearer picture of the results from the questions, the data was sorted per dimension into three figures: the agreement, by gender and by age group.

#### Autonomy

To identify the level of autonomy teachers experienced in their lives, three questions were asked regarding how they judged themselves based on what they deemed important, their confidence in their own opinions, and if they were influenced by others. Take note that the third question is asked in the opposite direction to the first two questions, making the results show up in a reversed order.

Figure 5 shows the responses as agree, neutral or disagree. Although 85% judged themselves based on what they deemed important and 90% on their confidence in their own opinions, we see a decline to 67% ‘not being influenced by others’, which leaves 33% of participants being influenced by those with strong opinions, impacting the overall autonomy experienced.

Figure 5: Agreement per Autonomy questions

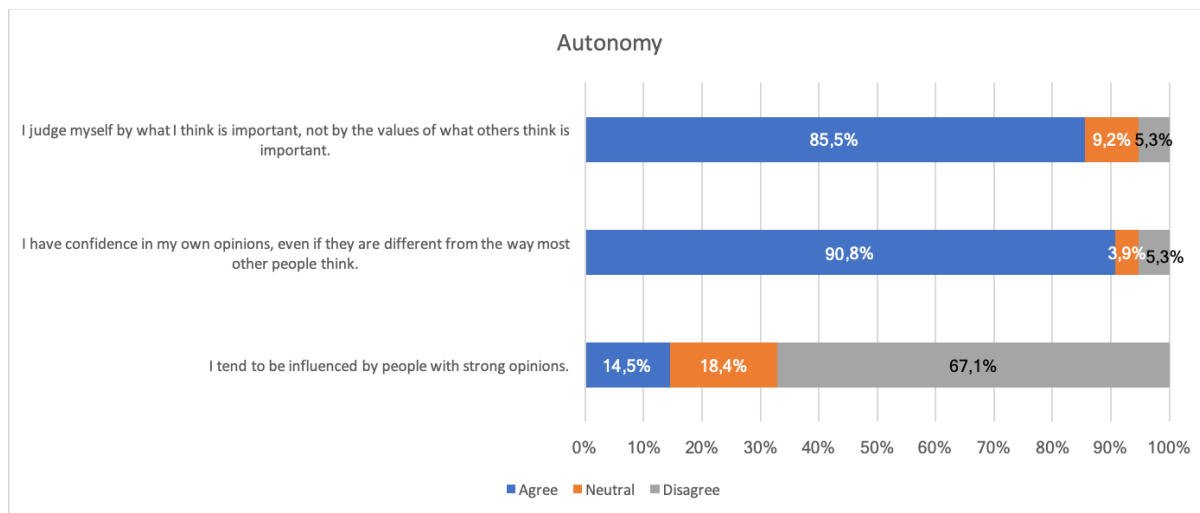


Figure 6 showed that autonomy between male and female were closely linked, although males showed more autonomy, with ‘other’ scoring the lowest for all three questions.

Figure 6: Autonomy by gender

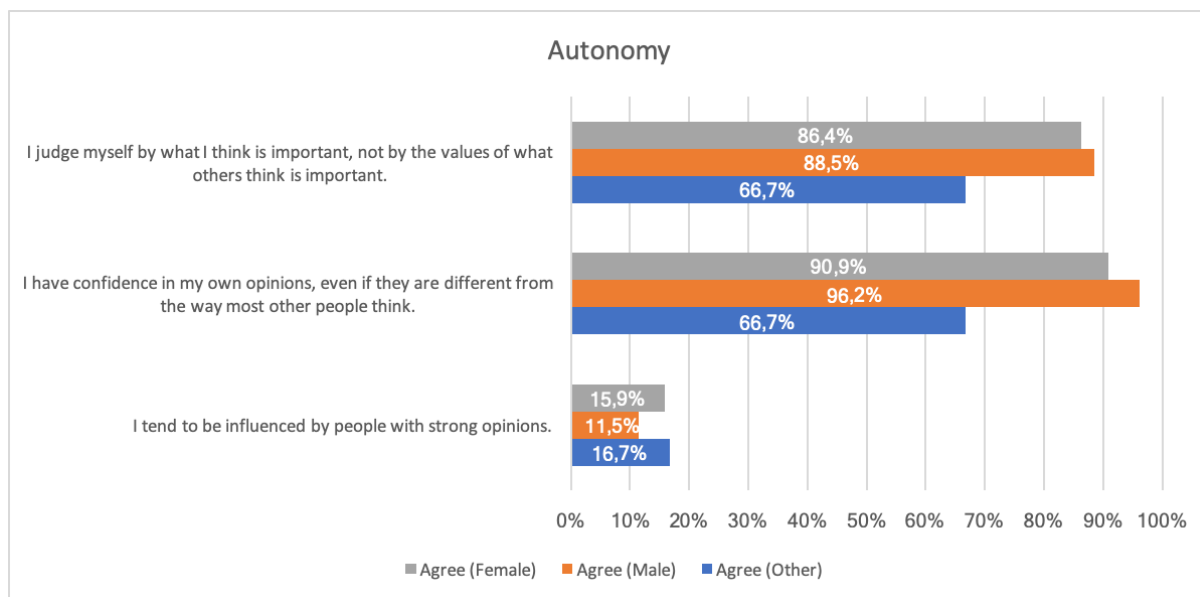
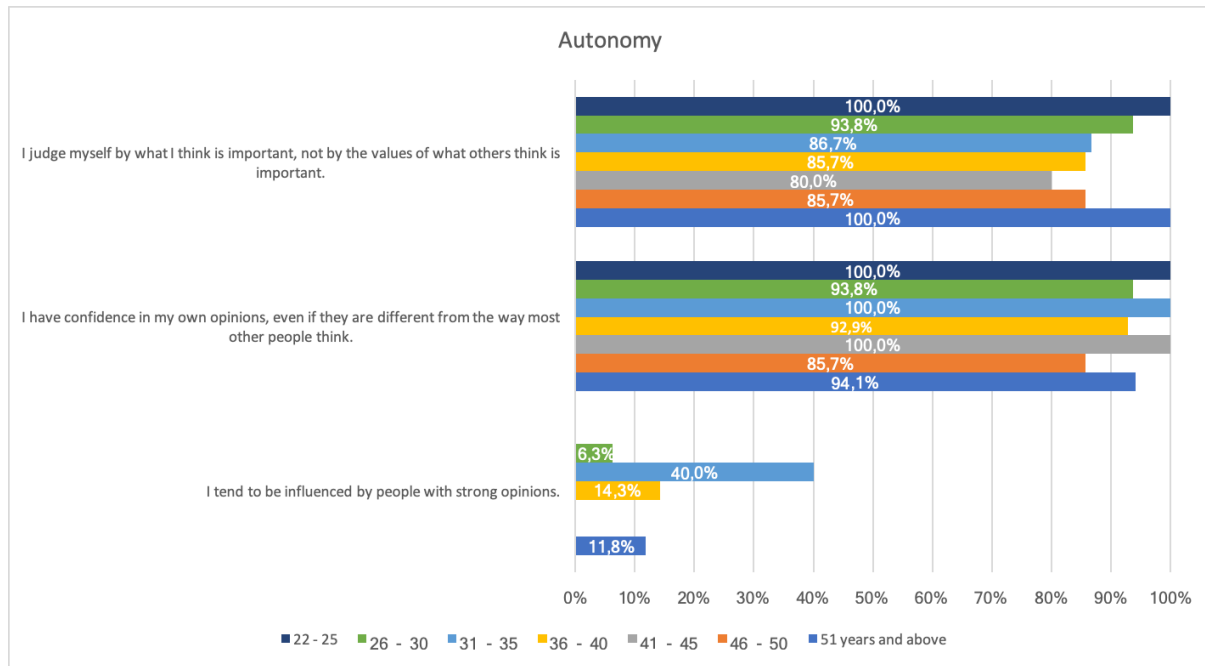


Figure 7 showed autonomy for the different age groups. Age groups, 22-25 years and 26-30 years were consistent in their level of autonomy across the three questions, whereas age group 31-35 years showed the most variations amongst the three questions and with a much higher rate than the other age groups (40%) being influenced by people with strong opinions.

Figure 7: Autonomy by age group



### Environmental Mastery

To identify the level of environmental mastery teachers experienced in their lives, three questions were asked based on how they managed their daily tasks, whether they felt in charge of their lives and the demands of every day. Take note that the third question is asked in the opposite direction to the first two questions, making the results show up in a reversed order.

Figure 8 shows the responses as agree, neutral or disagree. Almost 90% believed they were good at managing their responsibilities, while 75% felt in charge of the situation they lived in. For the last question, 35.5% of participants agree that the demands of life often get them down, 14.5% are neutral and only 50% disagree with this statement. This indicates that the everyday responsibilities, pressures, and stresses of daily existence are causing many participants to feel overwhelmed, stressed, or emotionally low, taking a toll on their well-being.

Figure 8: Agreement per Environmental Mastery questions

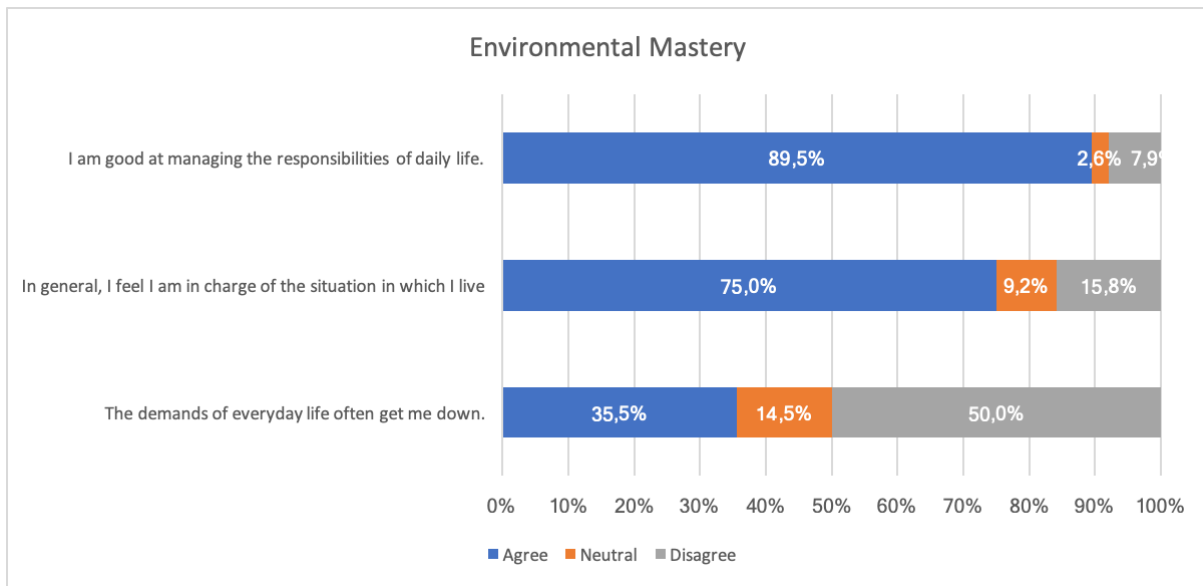


Figure 9 indicates that male participants have a better environmental mastery than female and other participants. There is more than a 15% difference between male and female and 55% between males and others for question two, about feeling in charge of a situation. Females and others also responded with more agreement to question three, about the demands of life getting them down.

Figure 9: Environmental Mastery by gender

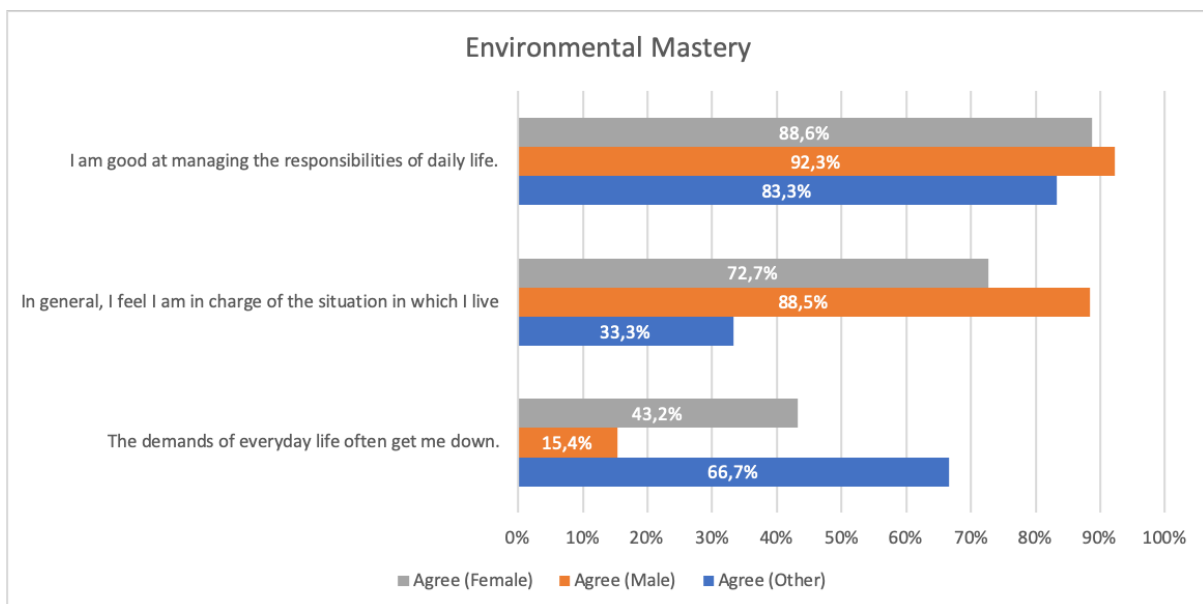
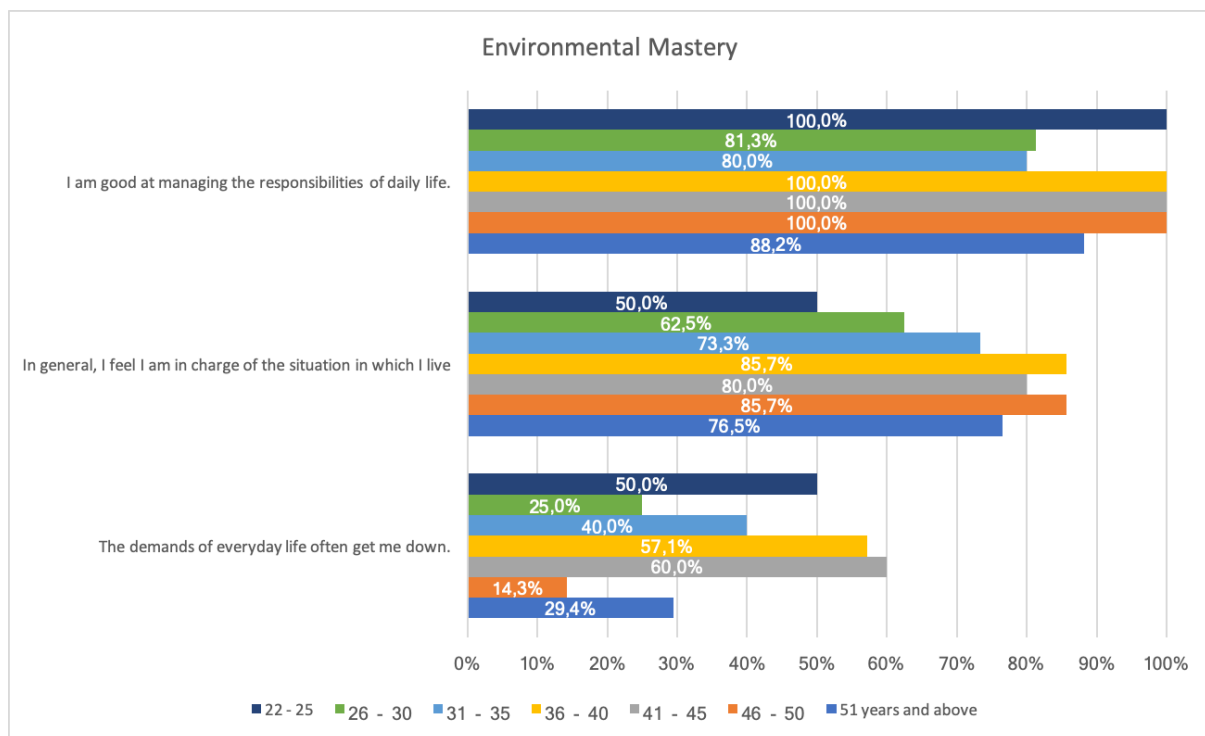


Figure 10, shows the breakdown of environmental mastery per age group. None of the age categories showed a constant response to all three questions. The first question showed everyone achieving 80% or more, with 4 age groups getting 100%. The second question showed a decrease in environmental mastery, with the age group of 22-25 years old, only achieving 50%. Finally, the last question had the biggest variation between the age groups, with age groups 41-45 years and 46-50 years having a 45.7% difference.

Figure 10: Environmental Mastery by age group



### Personal Growth

To identify the level of personal growth that teachers experienced in their lives, three questions were asked based on whether they have given up trying to make improvements, the importance of new experiences that challenge them, and whether life is a continuous learning process. Take note that the first question is asked in the opposite direction to the last two questions, making the results show up in a reversed order.

Figure 11 shows the responses as they agree, neutral or disagree. Question one shows that 85.5% of participants have not given up on making big improvements or changes in their lives. 96.1% of participants think it is important to have new experiences that challenge them and

94.7% believe life is a continuous learning process. Overall, personal growth scored high in all three questions.

Figure 11: Agreement per Personal Growth questions

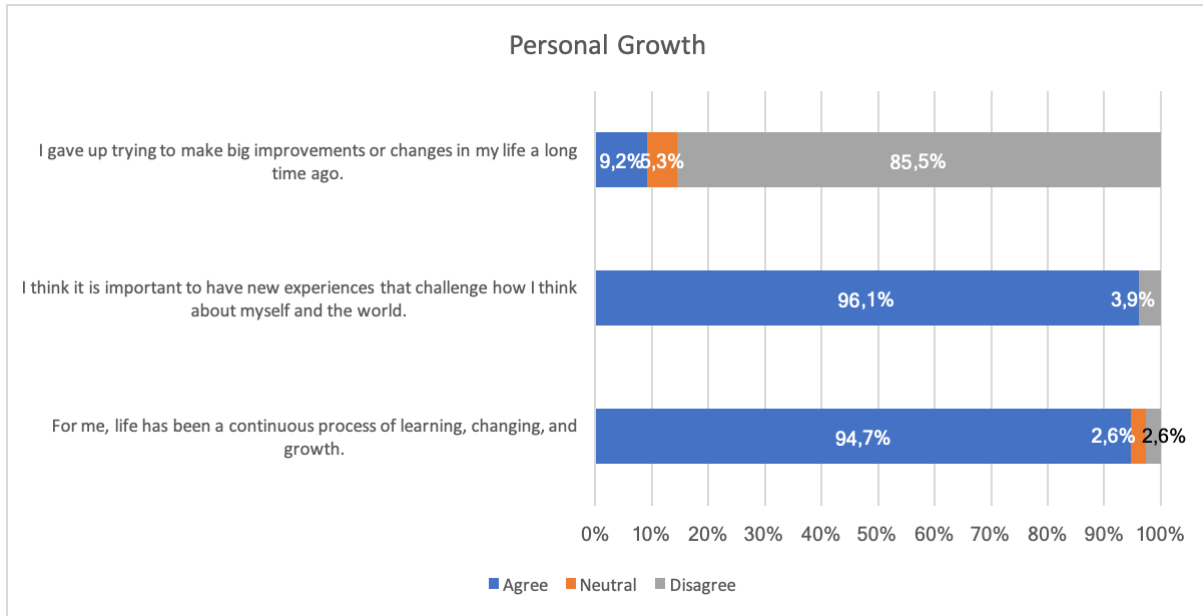


Figure 12 shows that both males and females had a similar personal growth score for all three questions. ‘Other’ showed differences per question, with the biggest difference shown in the first question with 33.3% agreeing that they have given up trying to make big improvements in life.

Figure 12: Personal Growth by Gender

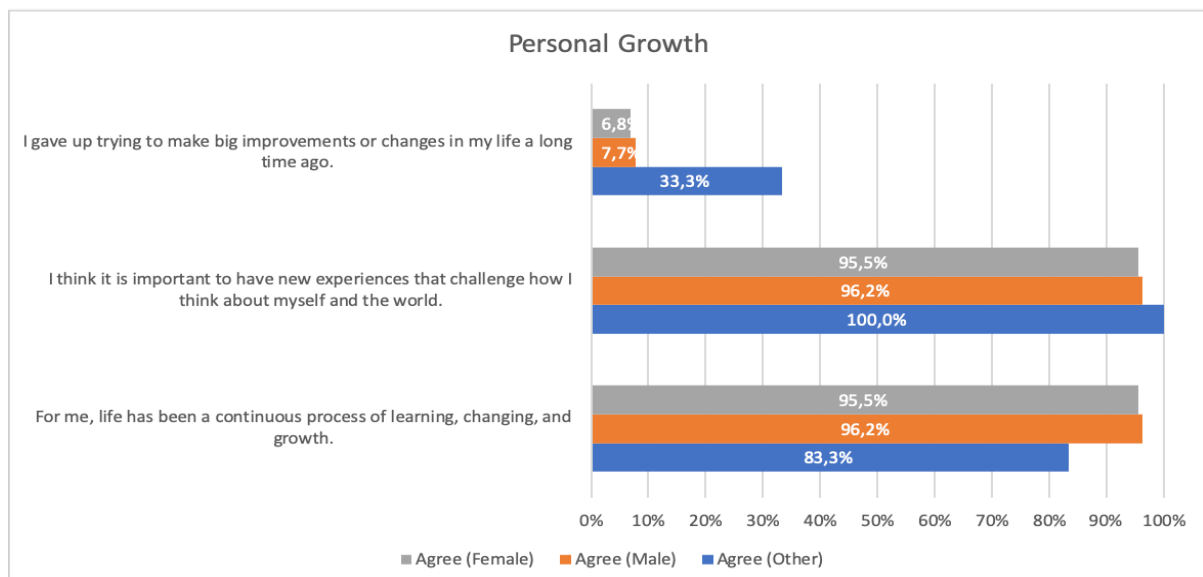
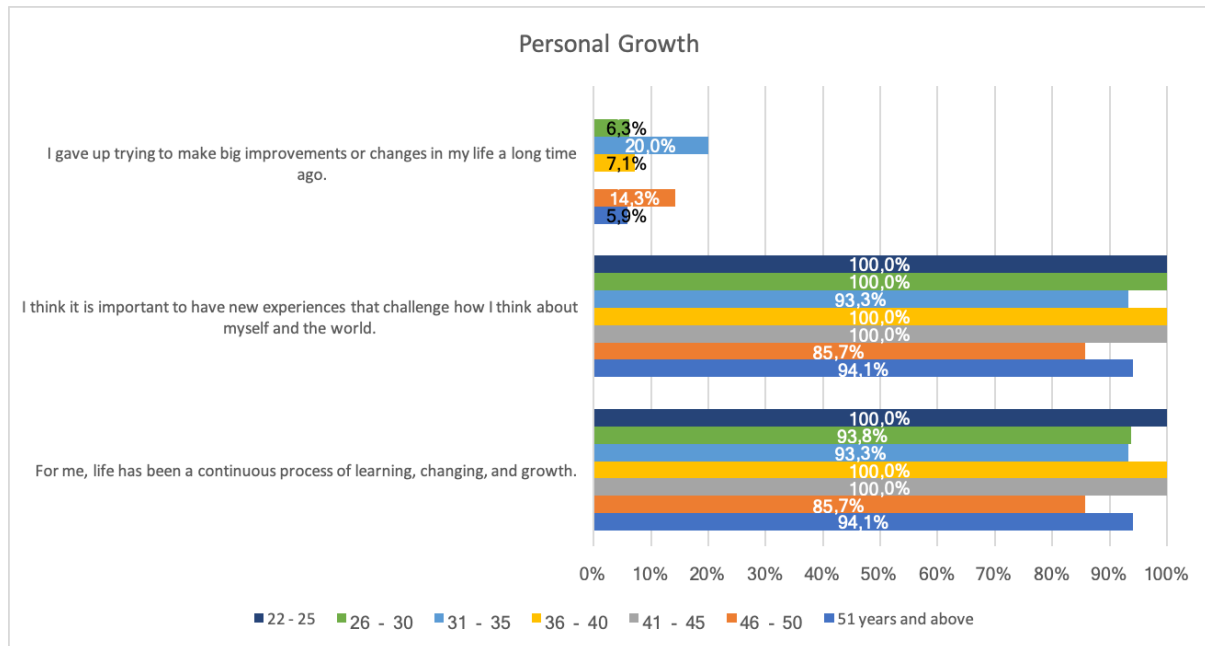


Figure 13 showed that for questions two and three, the responses were all above 85%, 46-50 years old received the lower score, although 85% is still a relatively high score. For question one, age 31-35% agreed the most to giving up on big improvements, followed by 46-50 year-olds.

Figure 13: Personal Growth by age group

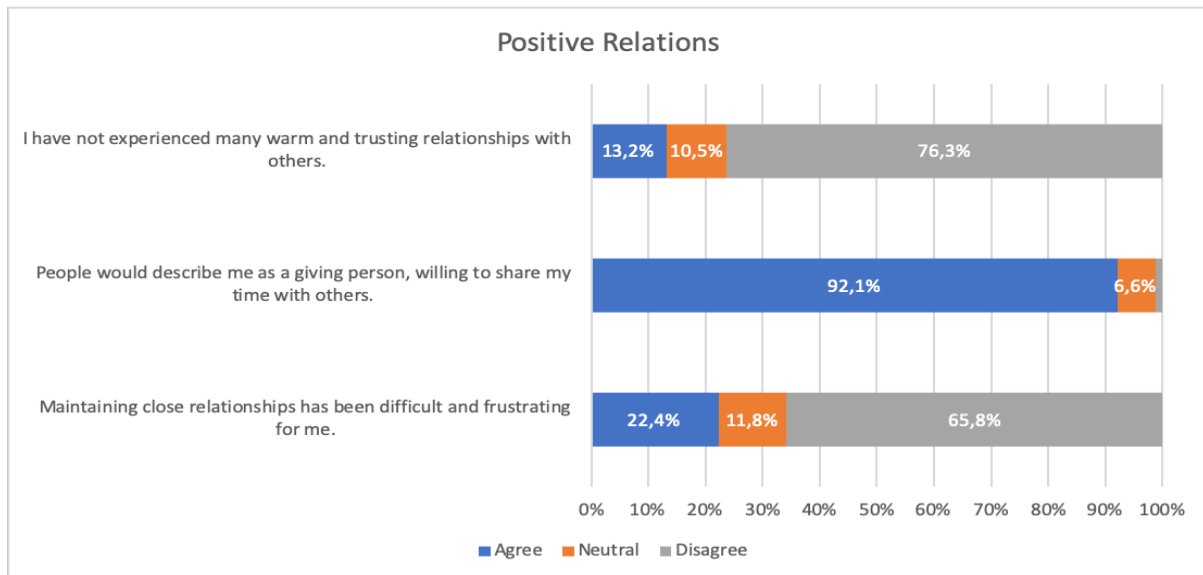


*Positive relations with others*

In order to identify the level of positive relations with others that teachers experienced in their lives, three questions were asked based on experience with warm and trusting relationships, willingness to share time with others, and ability to maintain close relationships. Take note that the second question is asked in the opposite direction to the other two questions, making the results show up in a reversed order.

Figure 14 shows the responses as their agree, neutral or disagree. 92.1% of participants believe that people would describe them as a giving person, willing to share time with others but this decreases to 65.8% of participants who see maintaining close relationships as easy. Additionally, 76.3% of participants have experienced warm and trusting relationships.

Figure 14: Agreement per Positive Relations questions



Figure, 15 shows that there are differences between the genders in how relations with others have been experienced. According to this figure, females have the higher score for positive relations with others, this can be seen in all three questions, especially with only 13.6% of female participants agreeing that maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating. ‘Other’ has the lowest score for positive relations with others, this can be seen in all three questions, especially with 50% not experiencing warm and trusting relationships and 50% agreeing that maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating.

Figure 15: Positive relations by gender

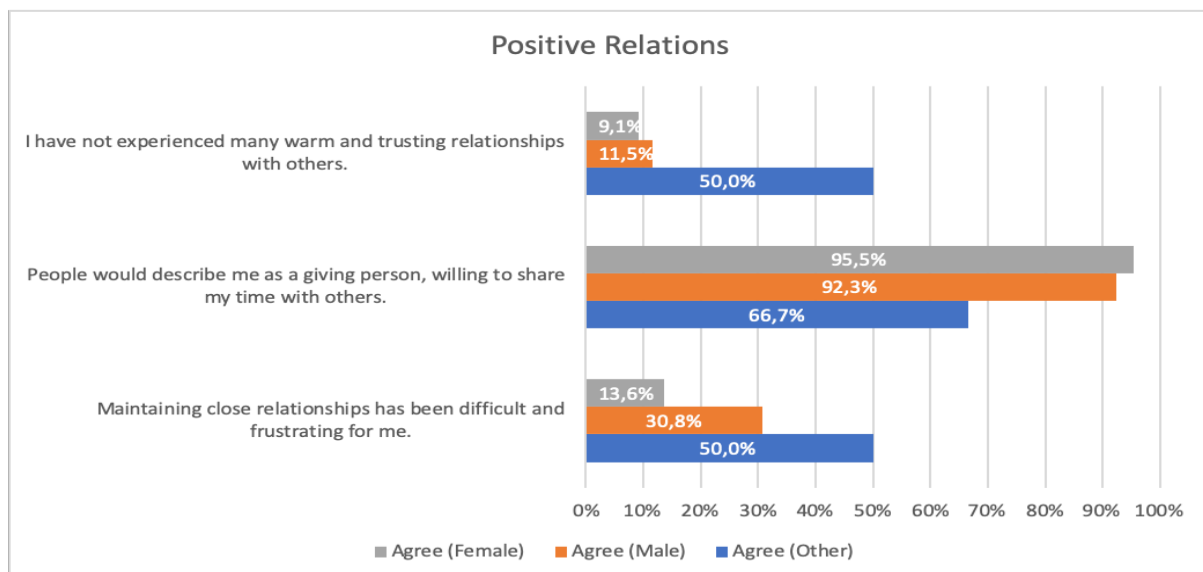
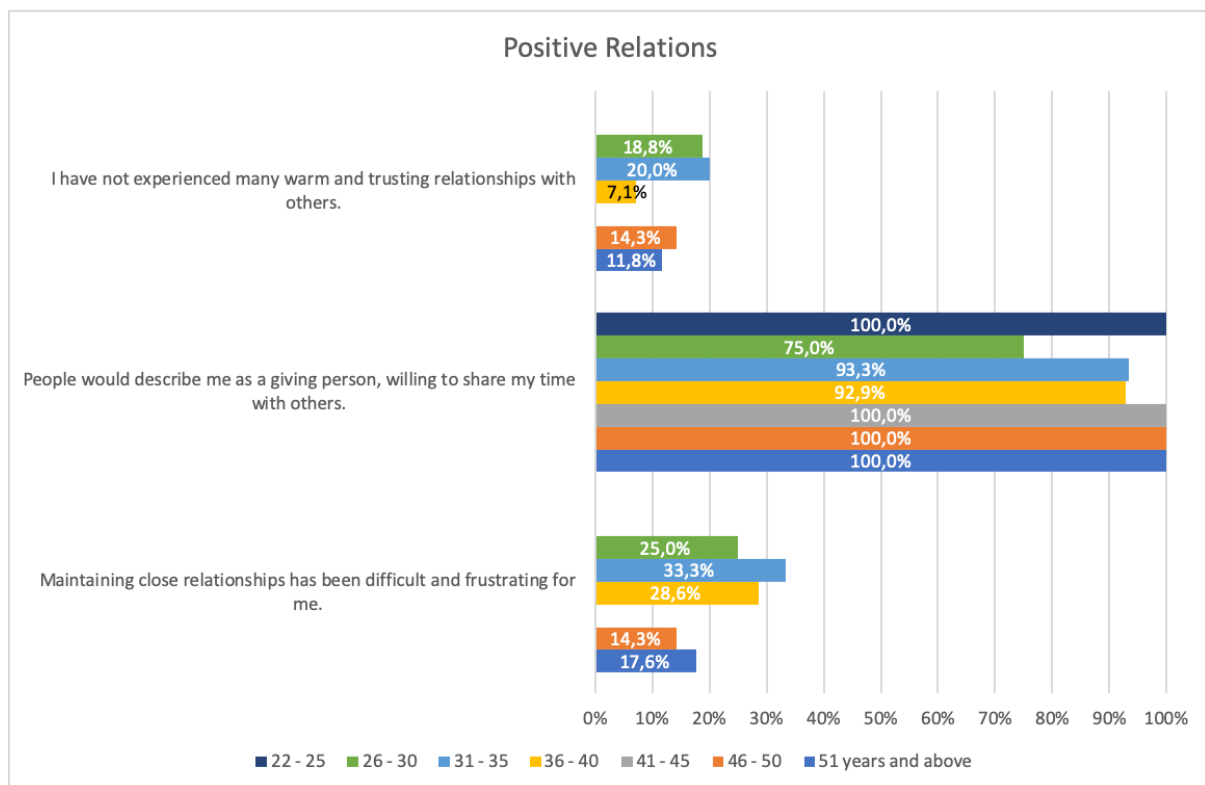


Figure 16 shows that different age groups have distinct experiences in their relations with others. The age group of 26-30 years old had a significantly lower score in sharing their time with others. In contrast, individuals aged 31-35 years reported the highest percentage (20%) of participants not experiencing warm and trusting relationships, with 33.3% finding it difficult to maintain close relationships. Conversely, age groups 22-25 years and 41-45 years scored the highest, achieving full scores for all questions.

Figure 16: Positive relations by age group



### Purpose in life

In order to identify the level of purpose in life that teachers experienced in their lives, three questions were asked based on whether they thought they had done everything in life, lived day to day or focused on the future and if they wondered aimlessly in life. Take note that the third question is asked in the opposite direction to the first two questions, making the results show up in a reversed order.

Figure 17 shows the responses as their agree, neutral or disagree. 77.6% of participants feel that they haven't done all there is to do in life, which links with the 72.4% of participants that don't live one day at a time but rather think about the future. Lastly, 82.9% of participants

agree that they do not wander aimlessly through life. The responses to all three questions show that the majority of participants' purpose in life is high, improving their well-being.

Figure 17: Agreement per Purpose in Life Questions

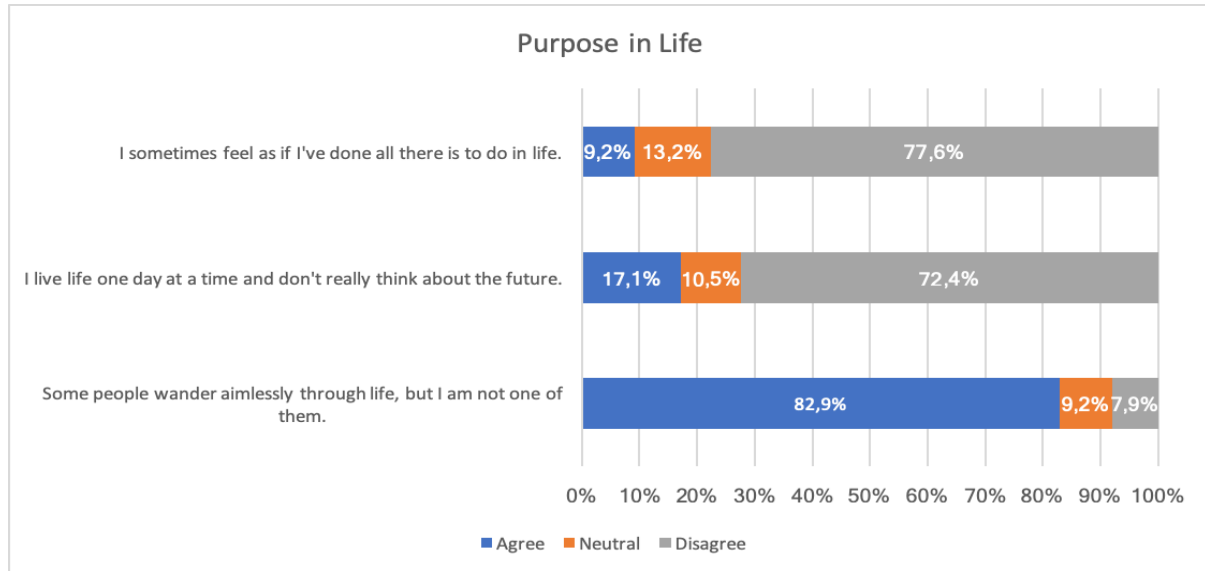


Figure 18 shows a variety in score per question for the different genders. Females scored the highest in the first question with 95.5% feeling that they have not done all there is to do in life, whereas 'other' scored 100% for the second question, indicating that they think about the future. Males scored the highest (88.5%) in the last question, regarding not wandering through life aimlessly.

Figure 18: Purpose in life by gender

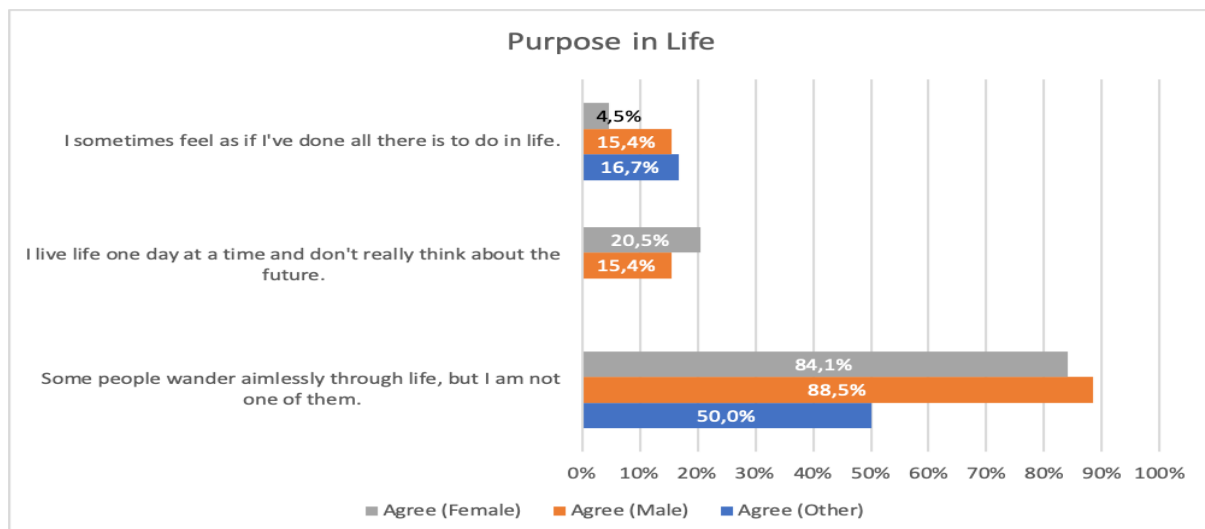
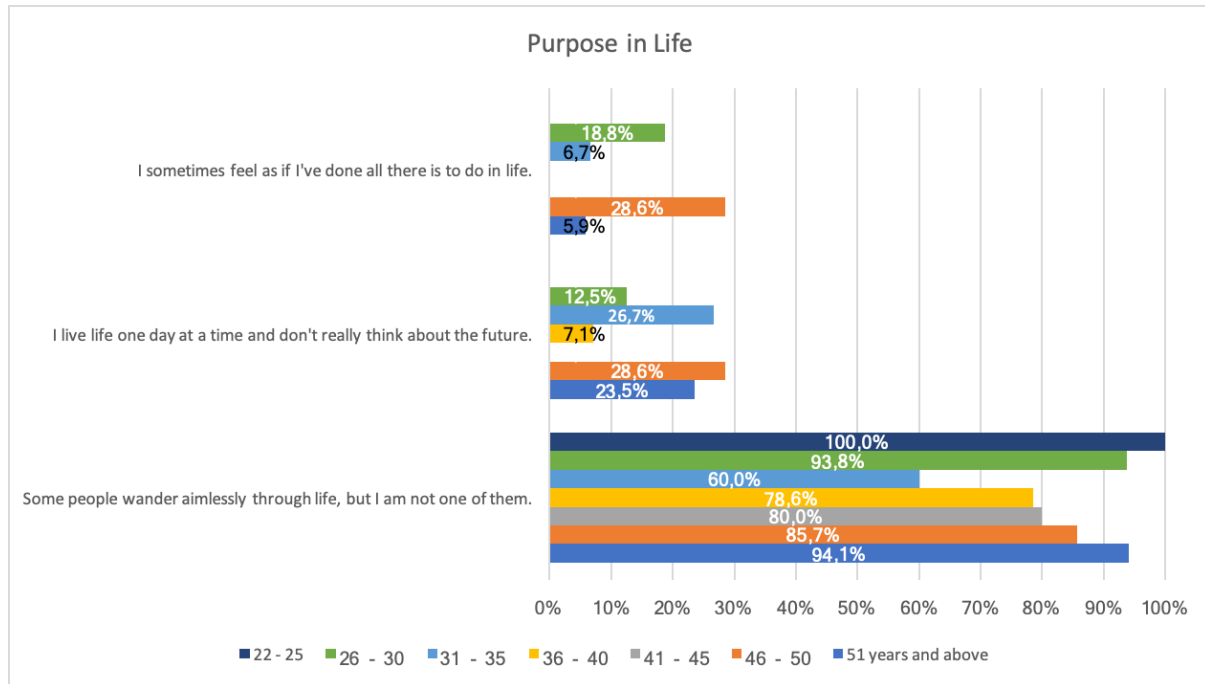


Figure 19 shows that the age group 22-25 years old, scored the highest in purpose in life, whereas 31-35 years old and 46-50 years scored the lowest. Overall, the different age groups gave a diverse response to the three questions posed.

Figure 19: Purpose in life by age group



### Self-acceptance

In order to identify the level of self-acceptance that teachers experienced in their lives, three questions were asked based on disappointment felt in their achievements, whether they are pleased with the way their life has turned out, and if they like their personality. Take note that the first question is asked in the opposite direction to the last two questions, making the results show up in a reversed order.

Figure 20 shows the responses as they agree, neutral or disagree. The majority (90.8%) of participants like their personality, 88.2% are pleased with how their lives have turned out, and 75% do not feel disappointed by their achievements in life. On the other hand, 13.2% do feel disappointed with their life achievements and a further 11.8% are neutral on how they feel, which affects their overall well-being.

Figure 20: Agreement per Self-acceptance questions

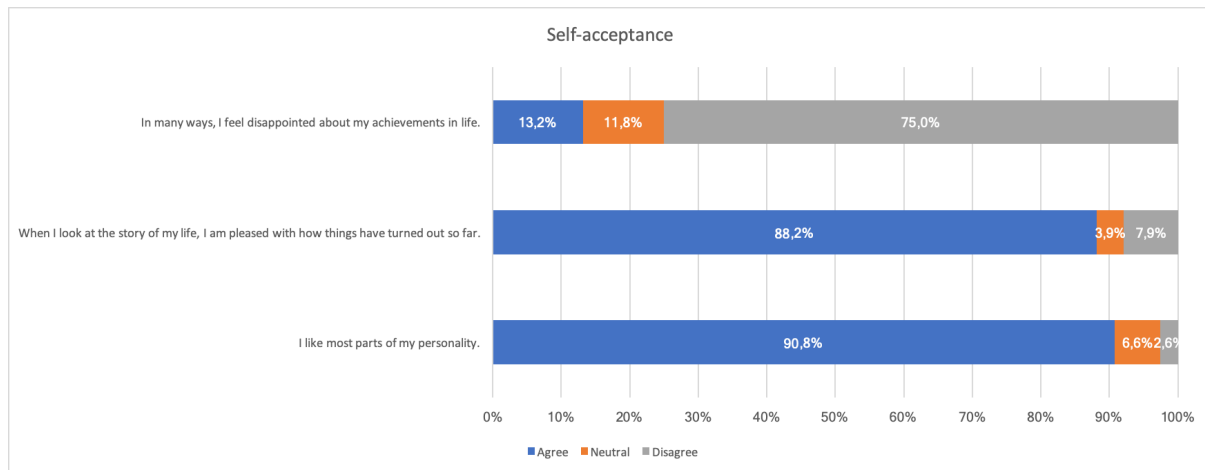


Figure 21 male participants scored 92.3% for all three questions, indicating consistency in self-acceptance. Females also showed consistency with a range of 86-88%, whereas ‘other’ scored the highest for liking their personality but the lowest for the other two questions, with 33.3% feeling disappointed about their achievements in life.

Figure 21: Self-acceptance by gender

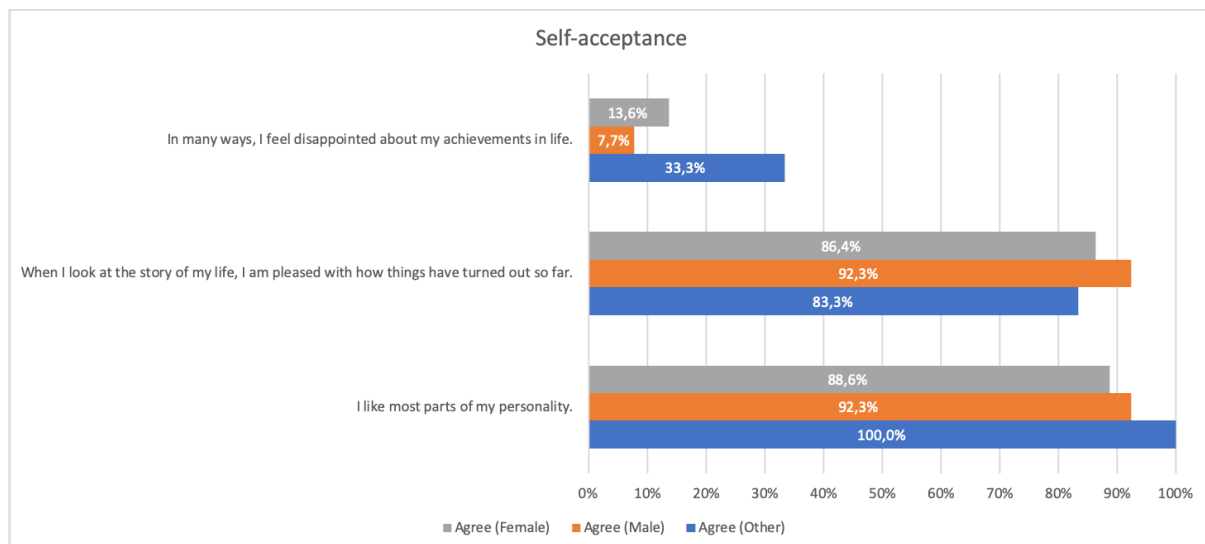
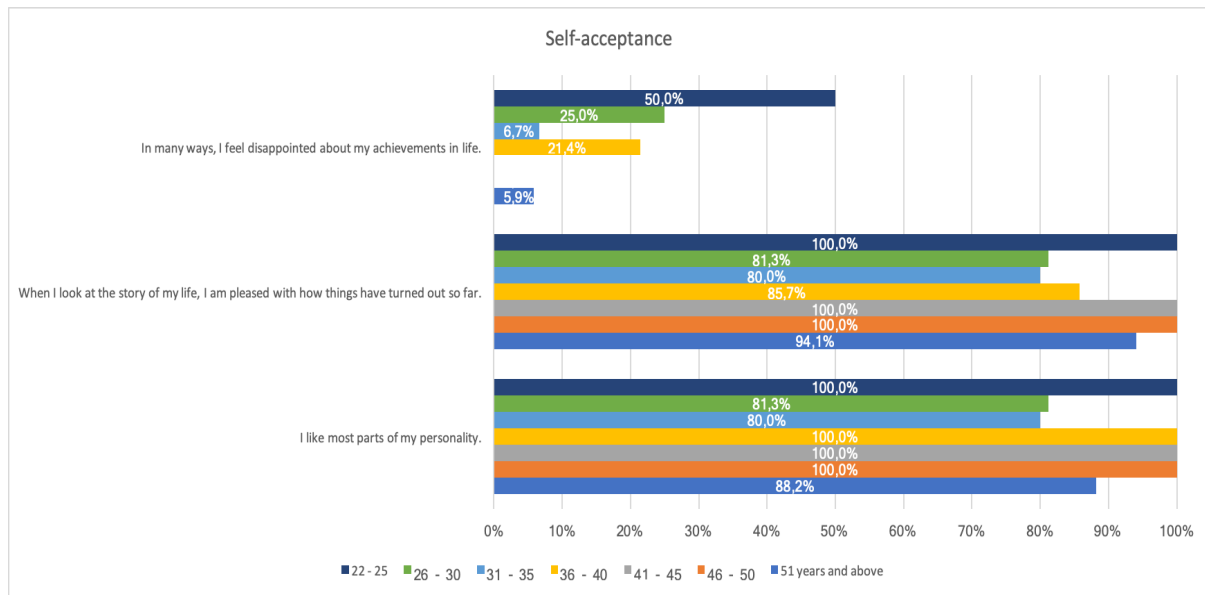


Figure 22 showed that the age group 22-25 years old were the most disappointed about their achievements in life (50%) yet all of them responded that they were pleased with how their lives turned out. Overall, the score for self-acceptance for each age group was relatively high with 41-45 and 46-50-year-olds scored the highest in all three questions.

Figure 22: Purpose of life by age group



#### 4.2.3 Qualitative

As previously stated in Chapter 3, qualitative data are non-numerical and provide more in-depth insights into the experiences, perceptions, and feelings of individuals, allowing teachers to express their thoughts and feelings in their own words (Punch, 2005). The questionnaire comprised of six qualitative questions, each relating to one of the ‘Dimensions’ based on the theory of Carol Ryff’s psychological well-being. From the data various themes appeared, see Table 3, for an overview of the themes that emerged from the data. The emerging themes will be discussed and substantiated by responses from the participants’ open-ended questions.

Table 3: Themes per Dimension

<b>Dimension (Carol Ryff)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
<i>Dimension 1: Autonomy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Limited freedom due to curriculum constraints</li> <li>● Independence in planning</li> <li>● Subject-specific constraints</li> </ul>
<i>Dimension 2: Environmental Mastery</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Adapting to a continuously changing teaching environment:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Online, hybrid, face-to-face</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Adoption and support                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Technology</li> <li>○ Personal</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><i>Dimension 3:</i> Personal Growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptation and resilience</li> <li>• Shift in priorities</li> <li>• Technological proficiency</li> <li>• Empathy and understanding</li> <li>• Collaboration and community</li> </ul>
<p><i>Dimension 4:</i> Purpose in Life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shift in perspective on life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Family and personal time</li> <li>○ Empathy and compassion</li> <li>○ Adaptability and resilience</li> <li>○ Challenging times and inequality</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><i>Dimension 5:</i> Positive Relations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supportive colleagues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Close relationships with a few colleagues</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Isolation and non-existent relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pressure and stress</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Professional development and learning together</li> </ul>
<p><i>Dimension 6:</i> Self-Acceptance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptability and resilience</li> <li>• Self-reflection and self-discovery</li> <li>• Importance of boundaries</li> <li>• Value of human interaction</li> <li>• Desire for change or improvement</li> </ul>

*Dimension 1: Autonomy*

Autonomy in the context of well-being refers to the sense of self-determination and the ability to make choices and decisions that align with one's values and desires (Ryff, 1995). The question posed to teachers in the questionnaire was: *Elaborate on your perspective level of independence in your school environment (for example: how much freedom do you have to teach the content of your subject)*. From the data, three themes emerged and have been analysed through the lens of autonomy within Ryff's framework:

- Theme 1: Limited freedom due to curriculum constraints

*"A fair amount of freedom; however, I have to first cover all the content covered in CAPS, which doesn't leave much time for freedom." (Participant 40: Female, 26-30years)*

*"Not that much freedom. The curriculum is dense, and it feels as if there is no time to deviate." (Participant 28: Female, 22-25 years)*

This theme indicates a tension between the desire for autonomy and the need to adhere to curriculum guidelines. The presence of constraints within the curriculum limits the freedom of teachers to deviate from the prescribed content. This theme highlights that curriculum constraints significantly restrict the freedom of teachers. The constraints may include specific content that must be covered or the method in which assessments need to be delivered.

Autonomy is negatively affected in this situation, as teachers may have limited flexibility to pursue their own educational goals or teaching methods. The constraints can limit teachers' ability to make choices and decisions that align with their personal values and teaching styles. This lack of autonomy may lead to feelings of constraint and reduced well-being. While teachers may have some autonomy in making teaching decisions, they are still constrained by curriculum guidelines, which can limit their freedom to make entirely independent choices. The compromise between autonomy and conformity can be a source of stress or frustration.

- Theme 2: Independence in planning and teaching methods

*"The way we teach the content is completely up to me as the teacher, but it needs to convey the work in a way that the learners can understand and learn from what I am presenting them." (Participant 64: Female. 26-30 years)*

*"I have quite a bit of free reign, especially when being able to present the content in new and interesting ways." (Participant 34: Male, 26-30 years)*

*"Content is largely focused on the curriculum. However, how I present it in the class is my choice, and I, therefore, have the freedom to deliver content in a manner I want to; a style with which I feel comfortable." (Participant 36: Female, 41-46 years)*

This theme implies that there may be opportunities for teachers in these private schools to exercise autonomy in the planning process and the teaching method, suggesting that they have some control over how they approach their educational or teaching tasks, allowing for some degree of independence.

Autonomy may be positively affected in this aspect, as it allows teachers to have some independence in decision-making related to planning and teaching methods. When teachers have the autonomy to plan their lessons or learning experiences, they can tailor them to their preferences and strengths. This can lead to a sense of self-determination and increased well-being.

- Theme 3: Subject-Specific Constraints

*"I believe that there is a lack of freedom in teaching an art subject, as all the projects have restrictions towards them, and the students are unable to express themselves freely in their art as they have to follow the restrictions to get good marks." (Participant 60: Female, 26-30 years)*

*"Not a lot of freedom, mathematics is universal but the content is always overloaded. You have to follow the curriculum very closely." (Participant 68: Female, 26-30 years)*

This theme implies that the level of autonomy experienced may vary depending on the subject being taught. Different subjects may have different requirements or constraints.

Autonomy might be influenced differently across subjects, with some subjects offering more freedom than others. Some subjects may have more flexibility and allow for greater autonomy, while others may have more rigid constraints. Teachers may feel more or less self-determined based on the specific subject matter, affecting their overall well-being.

#### *Dimension 2: Environmental Mastery*

Environmental Mastery in the context of well-being refers individual's ability to effectively manage their environment, adapt to changing circumstances, and create situations that suit their personal needs and values (Ryff, 1995). The question posed to teachers in the questionnaire:

*Explain how you adapted through the rapid change of online learning, hybrid learning, and back to face-to-face learning.* From the data, two themes emerged and have been analysed through the lens of environmental mastery within Ryff's framework:

- Theme 1: Sink or swim – No other choice but to adapt

*"It seemed effortless in the process but I think I am only feeling the effects of the transitioning now. While everything was moving you were forced to adapt, made use of the resources available." (Participant 56: Female, 26-30 years)*

*"...Being back to face to face learning was difficult at first as the students struggled to focus every day as it was something 'new' to them, so at the beginning I gave a small amount of work to not overload them and get them used to it once more." (Participant 60: Female, 26-30 years)*

*"It was extremely difficult and traumatic. I think I coped because I knew that I had to, but I was really hanging by an emotional thread. I was always depressed, angry, and tearful." (Participant 26: Female, 31-35 years)*

This theme highlights the dynamic nature of the teaching environment, which can shift between online, hybrid, and face-to-face settings. Teachers are required to navigate and adjust to these varying circumstances, which may involve different teaching methods, technologies, and classroom dynamics. Teachers were not given a choice of whether to adapt or not, it was expected. There were challenges in going online, and then returning back to face-to-face. Some teachers adapted much quicker than others, some were continuously trying to adapt so that the effects were only felt afterwards.

Environmental mastery is directly related to the ability to adapt to changes and manage one's environment effectively. Teachers who can adapt well to various teaching environments demonstrate a strong environmental mastery. They are capable of adjusting their teaching methods and strategies to suit each situation, which can positively impact their well-being.

- Theme 2: Adoption with support (personal and technological)

*"It is overwhelming and was a lot of extra work, however I could adapt being very fortunate to be surrounded by technology." (Participant 40: Female, 26-30 years)*

*"Not great, but managed, with my husband's help, to master online teaching to individuals and classes. Would not have managed on my own." (Participant 41: Female, 51 years and above)*

*"I embraced the challenge and felt that it was vital to keep the connection with my pupils as effective and authentic as possible. The students were always the priority for me and I did not find adapting to ensure they were still growing a problem." (Participant 17: Female, 51 years and above)*

This theme covers two important sub-themes: technology adoption and personal support. The changing teaching environment required teachers to adopt new technologies and seek personal support from friends, family, or colleagues in order to succeed. The ability to adapt and utilise technology effectively in the various teaching methods improved environmental mastery. Teachers who can seamlessly integrate technology into their teaching demonstrated a mastery over their teaching environment, as they can create an environment that aligns with current with educational trends. Personal support, whether from family, friends, or a supportive network, can significantly impact a teacher's environmental mastery. Having a support system can help teachers cope with the challenges of adapting to new teaching environments and enhance their ability to manage these changes. When teachers feel supported, they are better equipped to navigate the complexities of their roles, contributing to their overall well-being.

### *Dimension 3: Personal Growth*

Personal growth in the context of well-being encompasses the pursuit of personal development, the realisation of one's potential, and the ability to grow as an individual. (Ryff, 1995). The question posed to teachers in the questionnaire: *In your opinion, did you grow/develop as an individual through the experience of teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic? Motivate your answer.* From the data, three themes emerged and have been analysed through the lens of personal growth within Ryff's framework:

- Theme 1: Adaptation and Resilience

*“Yes, I have. Because of challenges I have to learn how to adapt & look after them from different point of views other than my own, it’s forced me to try harder and do better, not only for myself but for the benefit of the children.” (Participant 70: Female, 22-25 years)*

*“I would say I grew. I learned how to adapt and work under strenuous conditions.” (Participant 47: Female, 26-30 years)*

*“Absolutely, teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic has been a transformative experience that has allowed me to grow and develop as an individual in several ways”. (Participant 67: Non-binary, 31-35 years)*

*“Yes I have. I have learnt that I am more resilient than I thought I was.” (Participant 1: Male, 31-35 years)*

This theme shows that teachers have encountered challenges or changes in their lives, in this case, the Covid-19 pandemic. They have not only adapted to these situations but also displayed resilience by bouncing back from adversity. Personal growth involves the capacity to learn from difficult experiences and grow stronger as a result. When individuals adopt and demonstrate resilience in the face of life's challenges, they are actively engaged in personal growth. Such experiences can lead to a deeper sense of self-knowledge, inner strength, and well-being. The ability to adapt and persevere enhances one's overall life satisfaction and personal development.

- Theme 2: Shift in Priorities

*“Yes. I think it showed me what is more important in life. I don't want to work my life away anymore. I want to work in order to live better outside of work.” (Participant 56: Female, 26-30 years)*

*“Yes, I believe it helped me grow and understand my students more because they were more able to understand the work.”(Participant 61: Male, 26-30 years)*

*“Yes, I learnt the importance of face-to-face teaching and I grew in prioritizing my family as at the end of the day they are what matters most when all the noise is gone.” (Participant 37: Female, 36-40 years)*

This theme suggests that individuals have re-evaluated their values, goals, and life choices, potentially due to changing circumstances, personal growth, or shifts in perspective. Personal growth often involves self-awareness and the willingness to evolve. When individuals re-examine their priorities, it reflects an ongoing journey of personal growth and self-discovery. This process can lead to a greater sense of purpose, alignment with one's values, and overall well-being.

- Theme 3: Empathy and Understanding

*“Absolutely!! I realised how important it is to have a balanced life; to be healthy as well as spend time with friends, family, and with myself. I came to the realisation that work should be a place of growth and service and a place where people need to feel valued. It gave me the empathy needed to make people feel valued in the workplace as well as making my family feel worthy. Being more mindful of a rest and work balance.” (Participant 36: Female, 41-45 years)*

*“Yes - I become more aware of people's humanity, that everyone is fighting some kind of hard battle, whether that be at home, with their extended families or at work, but it made people see others as if we were all fighting something together - a common goal.” (Participant 13: Female, 31-35 years)*

This shows a significant acknowledgement of empathy and understanding in interpersonal relationships and interactions, and how these aspects grew for them during this challenging time. Personal growth isn't confined to individual development but extends to emotional and social growth. Cultivating empathy and understanding for others signifies a heightened awareness of human emotions and experiences. Such personal growth fosters more meaningful relationships, increased emotional intelligence, and overall well-being.

#### *Dimension 4: Purpose in Life*

Purpose in life in the context of well-being relates to having a clear sense of meaning and direction, contributing to something greater than oneself. (Ryff, 1995). The question posed to teachers in the questionnaire: *Did this experience change your perspective of how you view life and your purpose in it? Explain.* From the data, one theme with four sub-themes emerged and has been analysed through the lens of purpose in life within Ryff's framework:

- Theme 1: Shift in Perspective on Life

This theme suggests that teachers have undergone a significant transformation in the way they view and approach life. This transformation could involve changes in their values, priorities, and overall outlook. A shift in perspective often reflects a quest for a more meaningful and purposeful life. When individuals re-evaluate and adjust their perspectives on life, they are actively engaged in the process of seeking a clearer sense of purpose. This journey of self-discovery and transformation can contribute significantly to their overall well-being.

- Sub Theme 1: Family and Personal Time

*"I don't want to work my life away anymore; I want to work to live better outside of work." (Participant 56: Female, 26-30 years)*

*"I am also more aware of demarcating time for work and play. At some point in the day (usually around 18:00) I close my computer and spend time with my family, regardless of how urgently the work needs to be done" (Participant 50: Male, 51 years and above)*

A shift towards valuing family and personal time signifies a conscious choice to prioritise relationships and personal fulfilment. This shift in perspective can enhance an individual's sense of purpose by recognising the significance of meaningful connections and self-care in their life's purpose.

- Sub Theme 2: Empathy and Compassion

*"...I developed more empathy and improved my emotional intelligence..." (Participant 68: Female, 26-30 years)*

*"I became more empathetic to the needs of my students." (Participant 35: Male, 46-50 years)*

A shift towards greater empathy and compassion implies a growing desire to understand and support others. It can lead to a deeper sense of purpose by fostering the intention to positively impact the lives of others and contribute to the well-being of society.

- Sub Theme 3: Adaptability and Resilience

*“The pandemic also reinforced the importance of adaptability and embracing change. It challenged me to think creatively, explore new approaches, and remain open to continuous growth and learning. This mindset has extended beyond the classroom and influenced how I approach life in general. I now embrace uncertainty with a greater sense of resilience, understanding that it is through navigating challenges that personal growth and transformation can occur.”*  
(Participant 67: Non-binary, 31-35 years)

A shift towards adaptability and resilience suggests a recognition of the importance of overcoming challenges and adversity. This shift can contribute to one's sense of purpose by embracing the idea that personal growth and resilience are key elements of a meaningful life.

- Sub Theme 4: Challenging Times and Inequality

*“...It highlighted the inequality of education and resources...”*  
(Participant 21: Female, 31-35 years)

A shift in perspective that acknowledges challenging times and societal inequality implies a commitment to address these issues and make a positive impact. This shift can inspire a deeper sense of purpose by aligning with the desire to create positive change in the world and work towards a more just and equitable society.

#### *Dimension 5: Positive Relations with others*

Positive Relations with others in the context of well-being focuses on the quality of an individual's relationships, including supportive and fulfilling social connections. (Ryff, 1995). The question posed to teachers in the questionnaire: *Explain the relationships with your colleagues during this time (for example: were they supportive, did it put more pressure on you, etc)*. From the data, three themes emerged and have been analysed through the lens of positive relations with others within Ryff's framework:

- Theme 1: Supportive Colleagues

*“My colleagues were supportive, we supported one another and we were there for one another when the need arises for us to be there for one another.”* (Participant 47: Female, 26-30 years)

*"Supportive. We were all thrown into the same deep end. I found my colleagues that were willing to help me swim. It's important to surround yourself with the right people." (Participant 56: Female, 26-30 years)*

This theme indicates the presence of colleagues who offer support, understanding, and encouragement in the workplace. Close relationships with a few colleagues suggest deeper connections within the professional environment. Positive relations with supportive colleagues play a pivotal role in an individual's well-being. These relationships provide emotional and professional support, create a sense of belonging, and contribute to a positive work environment. Close relationships with a select few colleagues can be particularly valuable, offering a trusted support system that positively affects an individual's emotional and psychological well-being.

- Theme 2: Isolation and Non-Existent Relationships

*"It was non-existent as we only had online interactions." (Participant 44: Male, 46-50 years)*

*"...The relationships with colleagues had started off very well; however, this declined rapidly the longer the pandemic went on..." (Participant 5: Male, 31-35 years)*

This theme suggests a situation where individuals may experience isolation and a lack of meaningful social connections, which can result in feelings of pressure and stress. The absence of positive relations and social isolation can have a negative impact on well-being. When individuals lack social connections and experience isolation, they may feel lonely, stressed, and unsupported. The absence of positive relations can lead to a sense of disconnection and contribute to reduced overall well-being.

- Theme 3: Professional Development and Learning Together

*"...Moreover, professional development opportunities provided by the school or district allowed us to learn from experts in the field and expand our skills together." (Participant 67: Non-binary, 31-35 years)*

*"Everyone navigated the changes together, so it made things easier. There was grace coming back to classroom lesson." (Participant 74: Prefer not to say, 26-30 years)*

This theme implies that teachers are actively engaged in professional development activities and collaborative learning experiences with others, such as colleagues or peers. Engaging in professional development and learning together fosters positive relations with others. These activities provide opportunities for individuals to form connections, share knowledge, and collaborate with like-minded individuals. Such positive relations contribute to well-being by promoting personal and professional growth, fostering a sense of belonging, and sharing enthusiasm for learning and development.

#### *Dimension 6: Self-Acceptance*

Self-acceptance in the context of well-being pertains to an individual's ability to acknowledge and embrace themselves, including their strengths and weaknesses (Ryff, 1995). The question posed to teachers in the questionnaire: *What did you learn about yourself (good and bad) and would you change any of it?* From the data, four themes emerged and have been analysed through the lens of self-acceptance within Ryff's framework:

- Theme 1: Adaptability and Resilience

*"I learned that I can overcome obstacles like online teaching..." (Participant 11: Female, 51 years and above)*

*"I am adaptable!" (Participant 8: Female, 51 years and above)*

*"...I discovered that I am capable of adapting to change quickly and can be resilient in the face of challenges..." (Participant 2: Male, 31-35 years)*

This theme suggests that individuals have developed the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and demonstrate resilience when facing challenges. Self-acceptance often entails recognising one's own limitations and imperfections while maintaining self-worth. The capacity to adapt and exhibit resilience reflects self-awareness and an acceptance of one's own strengths and weaknesses. Individuals who accept themselves are more likely to approach adversity with a growth-oriented perspective, which contributes to their overall well-being.

- Theme 2: Self-Reflection and Self-Discovery

*"I actually have more patience than I thought..." (Participant 4: Female, 36-40 years)*

*"I learned that there are still skills I can improve upon..." (Participant 7: Female, 46-50 years)*

*"I have anxiety and need to feel in control most of the time..." (Participant 13: Female, 31-35 years)*

This theme implies that individuals engage in introspection and self-exploration to gain a deeper understanding of their values, goals, and inner selves. Self-reflection and self-discovery are crucial elements of self-acceptance. When individuals invest time in exploring their inner selves, they become more attuned to their strengths, weaknesses, and values. This process fosters self-awareness and a greater sense of self-acceptance, leading to enhanced well-being.

- Theme 3: Importance of Boundaries

*"...I learned how to set boundaries for myself..." (Participant 13: Female, 31-35 years)*

*"I realized I needed to learn to cut off from work after a certain time or on weekends/holidays..." (Participant 19: Female, 31-35 years)*

*"That life goes by fast. It is needed to pause and reflect." (Participant 9: Male, 36-40 years)*

This theme highlights the significance of establishing and respecting personal boundaries, whether in relationships, work, or self-care. Setting and maintaining boundaries is essential for self-acceptance. It involves recognising one's own needs and self-worth and, in turn, setting limits that protect one's well-being. The ability to set boundaries reflects a sense of self-respect and self-acceptance. It signifies a healthy relationship with oneself, leading to an improved self-image and overall well-being.

- Theme 4: Value of Human Interaction

*"...I missed human interaction and the practical component of my subject." (Participant 14: Female, 36-40 years)*

*"...I need more social contact to bounce off ideas." (Participant 40: Female, 26-30 years)*

*“...I find that I am quick to not accept social invites because I have found so much comfort in being home. I need to work on that.”  
(Participant 12: Female, 36-40 years)*

This theme suggests that individuals understand the importance of meaningful human connections and social interactions in their lives. Self-acceptance is often intertwined with one's ability to form positive and meaningful relationships. Acknowledging the value of human interaction indicates an awareness of the significance of connection and social support. Positive relationships can reinforce self-acceptance as they provide affirmation and acceptance from others, contributing to overall well-being.

### 4.3 Conclusion

In summary, the themes within Carol Ryff's well-being framework highlight the interplay of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, and self-acceptance. Autonomy is influenced by the balance between independence and curriculum guidelines, affecting the well-being of teachers and learners. Environmental mastery is demonstrated through teachers' adaptability and technology use, significantly impacting their overall well-being. Personal growth is fostered through adaptability, resilience, skill acquisition, empathy, and community engagement, enhancing fulfilment. A shift in perspective can lead to a more purposeful existence through re-evaluating values and embracing adaptability. Positive relations, such as supportive colleagues and professional relationships, enhance well-being, while isolation can lead to stress. Self-acceptance, recognising strengths and values, contributes to a positive self-relationship and enhances overall well-being.

In the next chapter, these findings will be discussed further.

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

### 5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5, the focus shifts from the data analysis in Chapter 4 to a discussion of the findings in order to answer the research question – integrating both qualitative and quantitative findings. The quantitative analysis revealed patterns and relationships within the data, offering a broader perspective of the various factors affecting teacher well-being. Whereas the qualitative explored the lived experiences and perceptions of teachers, capturing the essence of their well-being. Furthermore, this chapter presents conclusions derived from the primary research, in order to answer the overarching research question. In addition, the key findings and conclusions are drawn, and recommendations are made from the key research findings.

In order to structure the chapter, I begin with a restatement of the questions guiding this thesis.

The primary research question:

2. What were high school teachers in a private school perceptions of well-being under the conditions of COVID-19?

While addressing the primary research question, the following secondary research questions were looked at:

- d) Is there a correlation between the change in high school teachers' work-related demands and their well-being, after the COVID-19 pandemic?
- e) What is the impact of autonomy and environmental mastery on teachers' well-being?
- f) Did relationships with colleagues improve during or after the COVID-19 pandemic?

### 5.2 Discussion

In this section, each dimension will be discussed to find the similarities and differences between the quantitative, based on numerical measurements and qualitative data, based on non-numerical measurements that have been analysed in the previous chapter.

## Autonomy

To reiterate in the context of teachers: Autonomy refers to the degree of independence and self-governance that teachers perceive they have in their professional work environment.

The quantitative and qualitative data do not show the same results for autonomy. The quantitative data showed that amongst the participating teachers, the autonomy was high scoring an average of 80.5%. However, the qualitative results showed that participating teachers struggled with the lack of autonomy in their environment. This apparent contradiction between the two data sets can be explained by the different perspectives they capture. The quantitative questions and data measure a broader sense of autonomy that does not necessarily link to the professional work environment but an overall sense of autonomy in one's life, including aspects of personal life and general decision-making. The qualitative questions and data were specifically focused on their professional work environment as a teacher. Therefore, this indicates that teachers do not struggle with overall autonomy but rather in one area, in the workplace environment. This can be further narrowed down as many of the participants indicated that the curriculum was the biggest contributor to their feelings of low autonomy. Even though there is some freedom in how to prepare and teach lessons, constraints such as time limitations and prescribed content were identified as factors that lowered their sense of autonomy.

This shows the intricate nature of autonomy in the teaching profession, suggesting that seemingly elevated autonomy scores on the whole, captured by the quantitative data, may obscure particular challenges within the work environment, specifically those related to curriculum constraints.

How do we improve this? It is impossible to single-handedly improve the curriculum and reduce the pressure it adds to teachers, but some strategies could help improve autonomy for teachers, fostering a positive and effective work environment:

- ***Collaborative decision-making:*** Involve teachers in the decision-making process. This could include participation in committees, task forces, or workshops where teachers

can contribute their ideas and perspectives on policies, curriculum development, and school initiatives.

- ***Time management support:*** Address time constraints by providing resources, support staff, or technology tools that can help teachers manage administrative tasks more efficiently. Reducing unnecessary paperwork and administrative demands can free up time for instructional planning and creative teaching approaches.
- ***Clear communication channels:*** Establish transparent communication channels between management, administration and teachers. This includes providing clear expectations, sharing information about decision-making processes, and actively listening to teachers' concerns.

By implementing strategies to improve autonomy, schools can create an environment that values and supports teacher autonomy, ultimately contributing to improved job satisfaction and effectiveness in the classroom.

#### Environmental Mastery

To reiterate in the context of teachers: Environmental mastery refers to a teacher's perceived ability to manage and control their surroundings effectively.

This dimension in Ryff's framework received the lowest average score of 74.6% in response to the quantitative questions. The quantitative questions assessed a broader sense of environmental mastery and represented an overall environmental mastery not limited to the workplace. In a world that is constantly changing, feeling in control of your environment can pose a challenge. The rapid pace of change is leaving people feeling uncertain and anxious making it difficult for them to feel in control. Besides the uncertainty, as people, we find ourselves in many different environments within a day and this constant shift can contribute to feelings of instability. In the qualitative data, there is evidence that the COVID-19 pandemic added even more uncertainty to the work environment. The pandemic introduced additional layers of uncertainty as teachers had to adapt to changes in teaching models, shifting from online to face-to-face, and sometimes navigating a hybrid system. The pandemic highlights the specific challenges faced by teachers, emphasising the impact of external events on their work

environment. The transitions between different teaching modes and the altered work environment likely contributed to the lower scores in the environmental mastery dimension.

How do we improve this? It is not possible to prevent change in the world, or even in the work environment but improving environmental mastery for teachers involves empowering them to effectively manage and adapt to their professional and personal surroundings. Suggestions of strategies that could be implemented to improve environmental mastery:

- **Professional development on adaptability:** Provide training and workshops focused on developing adaptability skills. Equip teachers with strategies for navigating change, handling uncertainty, and adjusting to new teaching modalities.
- **Clear communication channels:** Establish transparent communication channels to keep teachers informed about changes, expectations, and decisions. Clear communication helps reduce uncertainty and allows teachers to feel more in control of their professional environment.
- **Mental health and well-being support:** Implement programs that focus on teachers' mental health and well-being. Providing resources such as counselling services, stress management workshops, and mindfulness activities can help teachers cope with challenges and maintain a sense of control.

By implementing strategies to improve autonomy, schools can create an environment that supports teachers in developing and maintaining environmental mastery. This, in turn, can contribute to their overall job satisfaction and effectiveness in the field of education.

## Personal Growth

To reiterate in the context of teachers: Personal growth involves how teachers perceive and develop in response to challenges.

The quantitative data revealed that personal growth achieved the highest average score of 88.1% in response to the survey questions. Additionally, the qualitative responses were positive, indicating that teachers perceived personal growth despite the challenges posed by

the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuous changes in the education system. The quantitative data suggests that, according to participating teachers, personal growth is a notable and strong aspect of their psychological well-being, indicating a widespread positive perception of personal development among the participants.

COVID-19 brought and constant change in the education system, participants believed that it all contributed to personal growth. Despite the numerous challenges brought about by the pandemic and the ongoing shifts in the education system, teachers perceived these difficulties as opportunities for personal growth. Some teachers recognised their adaptability and resilience, emphasising how they were able to navigate and overcome obstacles during a period of significant change. Another aspect of personal growth mentioned is the shift in priorities for some teachers. The challenges and uncertainties prompted individuals to reassess their values and priorities, leading to a re-evaluation of what matters most to them. This shift in focus to matters outside of work suggests a broader perspective on personal well-being beyond professional aspects. This highlights the capacity for individuals to find opportunities for growth and positive development even in the face of adversity.

Purpose in life

To reiterate in the context of teachers: Purpose in life refers to teachers' perceived sense of direction, meaning, and fulfilment in their personal and professional pursuits.

Most of the participants believed that their purpose in life had not yet been fulfilled, which is a positive thing as it encourages you to continue to grow, explore and create meaning in the life that you live. The quantitative data, represented by an average score of 80.1%, further supports this inclination. Meanwhile, the qualitative responses revealed that the participants' views on their life's purpose transformed due to the impact of COVID-19. This shift in perspective is characterised as a positive influence on well-being, suggesting that the challenges and changes brought about by the pandemic prompted a reevaluation of personal purpose, potentially leading to a more enriched and fulfilling sense of life direction.

Building, encouraging, and improving a teacher's sense of purpose in life involves fostering a supportive environment that acknowledges their contributions and values personal and professional growth. Here are some strategies:

- ***Recognition and appreciation:*** Regularly acknowledge and appreciate teachers for their dedication, hard work, and positive impact on students. Feeling valued and recognised contributes to a sense of purpose.
- ***Support work-life balance:*** Recognise the importance of work-life balance. Provide resources and policies that support teachers in maintaining a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives.
- ***Celebrate milestones and achievements:*** Celebrate individual and collective milestones and achievements. Recognising accomplishments, whether big or small, reinforces a sense of purpose and pride in one's work.

By implementing these strategies to improve purpose in life, schools can contribute to the development and enhancement of a teacher's sense of purpose in both their personal and professional lives.

#### Positive Relations

To reiterate in the context of teachers: Positive relations refer to the quality and depth of interpersonal connections.

Positive relations scored the second lowest average (79.8%) in response to quantitative questions. This suggests that, according to the survey responses, participants perceived a somewhat lower level of well-being in the domain of positive relations when compared to other aspects measured. The quantitative data is characterised by mixed responses. While the majority of participants perceive themselves as individuals willing to share their time with others, the willingness to maintain close relationships receives a lower level of backing. This indicates a distinction in perspective on the depth and continuity of interpersonal connections among the participating teachers. The responses to the qualitative question also showed mixed responses. Some participants could lean on colleagues during difficult times, COVID-19 being one of them, this suggests that positive relations, in terms of seeking support, were present for some teachers during times of crisis. On the other hand, the qualitative responses also highlighted mixed experiences related to the shift to online teaching. While some participants continued to lean on colleagues for support, others felt a sense of isolation, and some reported

that their relationships with colleagues declined during the transition to online teaching. This variation in experiences suggests that not all participants had the same level of positive relations or support during the challenging period of transitioning to online teaching. The mixed responses in both quantitative and qualitative data may have implications for overall well-being. Positive relations, a key aspect of psychological well-being, can contribute significantly to an individual's sense of support and connectedness. The varied experiences reported by participants highlight the complexity and variability in how positive relations impact their lives, especially in the context of challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic.

How do we improve this? It is not possible to guarantee positive relations in the world that we live in, and different people require different levels of relations or interaction with people but improving positive relations for teachers involves fostering a supportive and collaborative environment that enhances interpersonal connections. Here are some strategies:

- ***Provide opportunities for collaboration:*** Create opportunities for teachers to collaborate on projects, lesson planning, or professional development. Collaborative efforts can strengthen positive relations and create a sense of shared purpose.
- ***Encourage open communication:*** Foster open and transparent communication channels. Encourage teachers to share ideas, concerns, and feedback openly, creating an environment of trust and mutual understanding.
- ***Address conflict promptly:*** Address conflicts or issues promptly and constructively. Providing mechanisms for conflict resolution can prevent the escalation of issues and maintain positive relationships.
- ***Encourage inclusivity and diversity:*** Promote an inclusive and diverse environment. Recognise and celebrate the diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives among teachers, fostering a culture of understanding and respect.

By implementing these strategies to improve positive relations, schools can contribute to building and enhancing positive relations among teachers, creating a collaborative and supportive environment beneficial to professional and personal well-being.

## Self-Acceptance

To reiterate in the context of teachers: Self-acceptance refers to teachers' positive and embracing attitudes towards their personalities, accomplishments, and an ongoing journey of self-discovery.

Self-acceptance scored the second highest average with 82.7%, after personal growth. According to the quantitative data, participants generally have a positive perception of themselves. One aspect that people acknowledged was that they learnt new things about themselves that they didn't realise before. This suggests a process of self-discovery and personal insight, contributing to a deeper understanding and acceptance of oneself. According to the quantitative questions, the majority of the participants liked their personality and were proud of their achievements in life. This positive self-perception indicates a strong foundation for self-acceptance and a positive self-image. The COVID-19 pandemic showed participants that they were capable of more, revealing that they could overcome unforeseen obstacles. Participants were more resilient and adaptable, they had not learnt everything but were on a journey to learn how to improve on skills, this mindset of continuous learning and personal development contributes to a sense of self-acceptance and growth. Acknowledge flaws or weaknesses that they were able to seek help for. This mindset of continuous learning and personal development contributes to a sense of self-acceptance and growth. Learning that it is not possible to do everything and that setting boundaries is important. This realisation reflects a mature understanding of one's limitations and the importance of maintaining a balance for overall well-being.

### 5.3 Limitations for future studies

One limitation of this study was the exclusivity of private schools, which are not representative of schooling in South Africa due to their high fee paying structure. Moreover, private schools often prefer internal data collection methods, creating challenges in obtaining a diverse and unbiased dataset. The reluctance of private schools to share information externally may hinder the study's ability to encompass a comprehensive perspective on teacher wellbeing across different contexts. This limitation could potentially introduce a selection bias, as the collected data may not accurately reflect the experiences of all teachers within private schools, especially

those who may be reluctant to disclose sensitive information within their institutional settings. Consequently, the study's findings may be limited in providing a thorough understanding of teacher well-being in private schools due to these obstacles in accessing data.

## 5.4 Conclusion

This chapter did a comprehensive discussion on the findings, drawing insights from both quantitative and qualitative data to address the research question regarding high school teachers' perceptions of well-being amidst the challenges posed by COVID-19. This analysis covers the different aspects of well-being revealing the following:

**Autonomy:** Teachers seem to have high autonomy according to quantitative data, but qualitative findings highlight struggles, especially with curriculum constraints. Strategies to improve autonomy include involving teachers in decision-making, providing time management support, and ensuring clear communication. **Environmental Mastery:** Teachers face challenges in managing their surroundings, amplified by the uncertainties of the pandemic. Strategies for improvement involve offering professional development on adaptability, clear communication, and mental health support. **Personal Growth:** Both quantitative and qualitative data show that teachers perceive personal growth despite challenges. Recommendations include acknowledging achievements, supporting work-life balance, and celebrating milestones. **Purpose in Life:** Teachers express a positive inclination toward continuous growth and exploration. Strategies to enhance purpose involve recognising and appreciating teachers, supporting work-life balance, and celebrating achievements. **Positive Relations:** Mixed responses in both quantitative and qualitative data highlight the complexity of interpersonal connections, especially during challenges like the shift to online teaching. Improvement strategies include fostering collaboration, open communication, addressing conflicts promptly, and promoting inclusivity. **Self-Acceptance:** Teachers generally have a positive attitude towards themselves, acknowledging continuous learning and growth. Lessons learned emphasise the ongoing journey of growth, recognising the impossibility of expecting teachers to manage everything seamlessly.

From the insights shared, it becomes evident that the observations highlight the widespread idea that each of us is consistently evolving. It is not realistic nor healthy to expect teachers to

seamlessly handle every aspect of their professional and personal lives. Recognising that teachers, even with ample resources at work, have lives outside of their professional roles emphasises the importance of supporting the establishment of clear boundaries. It is crucial to acknowledge that weekends and nights are not meant for work, and striking a balance is imperative for a healthier outlook in this profession. The realisation that it may not be possible to accomplish everything immediately highlights the significance of starting somewhere and fostering an appreciation for the efforts and contributions of teachers in their multifaceted roles. The thesis posed a question about private school teachers' perceptions of well-being during the COVID lockdown. Findings indicate a general positive trend in well-being among the participating teachers. Challenges, however, related to changing from face to face to online teaching were evident, although these changes did not seem to impact the participating teachers' sense of well-being in a major way.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Ethical Clearance



### SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

**Dr. Joanne Hardman**  
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**EDNREC20230305**

24 March 2023

Candrine Atkins

### **Re Ethical clearance**

I am pleased to inform you that ethical clearance has been granted by the School of Education Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Humanities for your academic project: A survey analysis of the well-being of educators in Private Schools after Covid-19. We wish you all the best with your research

Regards

Signed by candidate

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ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR JOANNE HARDMAN

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“Our Mission is to be an outstanding teaching and research university, educating for life and addressing the challenges facing our society.”

## Appendix B: Information Letter to the Principals

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (principal of the school)

*A survey analysis of the well-being of educators in Private Schools after Covid-19*

I, Candrine Atkins, am a Master's student in the School of Education at the University of Cape Town. I would like to ask your permission to carry out research on the well-being of the educators in your school. My study aims to explore the perception of the well-being of educators after the conditions of Covid-19 across multiple private schools.

Teachers' overall well-being is crucial in achieving educational success, not only in the classroom but in the whole education system. Teachers are the frontline in our education system, and even in favourable conditions, it is a stressful profession. The COVID-19 pandemic brought about a great deal of change and highlighted how unprepared the education sector was in a time of crisis. Unlike public schools, private schools continued with the full curriculum, converting to new teaching methods such as online learning. While some teachers struggled to find their way through these challenges, others adapted and found new innovative ways to continue to grow and progress. These changes have long-lasting effects and with this study, I plan to investigate an overlooked topic in literature, the well-being of private high school teachers.

Data collection will be in the form of an online questionnaire. If you agree that your school can take part, I will send the questionnaires to you or designated person to distribute them via email to all the educators in the school. All educators will be given the opportunity to participate.

Participation is voluntary and the confidentiality of your school and the educators is guaranteed. The questionnaire will be completed by participants online, and to be completed in one sitting at the teacher's own pace. The data responses will only be collected once the participant clicks 'submit' at the end of the survey, this will also allow for participants who choose to no longer participate to withdraw at any time before any data is received.

I would be most grateful if educators at your school could take part in my research. If you agree, could you please fill in the form to indicate your consent for the research. You are welcome to ask any questions regarding this research by telephone or email me at 0795571728 or [atkins.candrine@gmail.com](mailto:atkins.candrine@gmail.com)

Yours sincerely,  
Candrine Atkins

## Appendix C: Consent Form

Please fill in the reply slip below to confirm you agree to research, in the form of a questionnaire, to be completed by the educators at your school. I will use the information from the questionnaire for my study.

*Research: A survey analysis of the well-being of educators in Private Schools after Covid-19*

Name and Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree/give permission for research to be conducted at my school, involving the distribution of anonymised questionnaires to all educators.	Yes	No
I know that I can withdraw my consent at anytime	Yes	No
I know the information from the questionnaire will remain confidential and will be stored safely	Yes	No
I know the information from this questionnaire will be used for this project only	Yes	No

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Many thanks,  
Candrine Atkins

## Appendix D: Online Questionnaire (Google Form)

### Teachers' perception of well-being after the impact of COVID-19 across private (independent) high schools.

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. My study aims to explore the perception of the well-being of educators after the impact of Covid-19 across multiple private schools. Unlike public schools, private schools were expected to lead the way without missing a beat on the current curriculum. While some teachers struggled to find their way through these challenges, others adapted and found new innovative ways to continue to grow and progress. These changes have long-lasting effects and with this study, I plan to investigate an overlooked topic in literature, the well-being of private high school teachers.

This questionnaire comprises three sections and will take approximately 15-22 minutes to complete. Please answer as truthfully as possible.

\* Indicates required question

1. Email \*

\_\_\_\_\_

2. I have read and understand the information on the research that is being conducted on the "An investigation of teachers' perception of well-being after the impact of COVID-19 across private (independent) high schools". I understand that my participation is voluntary and that confidentiality will be maintained. I can withdraw my participation at any time. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

I give my consent to participate in this research study.

#### Demographics

3. Please specify your age (years) \*

*Mark only one oval.*

18 - 21

22 - 25

26 - 30

31 - 35

36 - 40

41 - 45

46 - 50

51 years and above

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please indicate your sex. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Male

Female

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

5. Please indicate the highest level of education you have obtained. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Higher Certificate
- Diploma
- Bachelor's Degree
- Honour's Degree
- Master's Degree
- PhD Degree
- Post-Doctoral Degree
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. How many years have you been employed as an educator? \*

Mark only one oval.

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5-6 years
- 7-8 years
- 9-10 years
- 11 -15 years
- 16 - 20 years
- 21 years or more
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Indicate the curriculum used in your school. \*

Mark only one oval.

- Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)
- Independent Examinations Board (IEB)
- Cambridge
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Which grade(s) do you currently teach? \*

Check all that apply.

- Grade 8/Form I
- Grade 9/Form II
- Grade 10/Form III
- Grade 11/Form IV
- Grade 12/Form IV
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

9. What subject(s) do you currently teach? \*

\_\_\_\_\_

10. On average, how many classes do you teach per week? \*

\_\_\_\_\_

**Ryff's psychological well-being model**

1 = strongly agree; 2 = somewhat agree; 3 = a little agree; 4 = neither agree or disagree; 5 = a little disagree; 6 = somewhat disagree; 7 = strongly disagree.

11. I like most parts of my personality. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Stro        Strongly disagree

12. When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Stro        Strongly disagree

13. Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Stro        Strongly disagree

14. The demands of everyday life often get me down. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Stro        Strongly disagree

15. In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
Stro        Strongly disagree

16. Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
Stro        Strongly disagree

17. I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
Stro        Strongly disagree

18. In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
Stro        Strongly disagree

19. I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
Stro        Strongly disagree

20. I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
Stro        Strongly disagree

21. For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
Stro        Strongly disagree

22. I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
Stro        Strongly disagree

23. People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Stro  :  :  :  :  :  :  Strongly disagree

24. I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Stro  :  :  :  :  :  :  Strongly disagree

25. I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Stro  :  :  :  :  :  :  Strongly disagree

26. I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Stro  :  :  :  :  :  :  Strongly disagree

27. I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from the way most other people think. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Stro        Strongly disagree

---

28. I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Stro        Strongly disagree

---

**Open-ended questions on each aspect of Ryff's model**

29. Elaborate on your perspective level of independence in your school environment (for example: how much freedom do you have to teach the content of your subject). \*

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30. Explain how you adapted through the rapid change of online learning, hybrid learning, and back to face to face learning. \*

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31. In your opinion, did you grow/develop as an individual through the experience of teaching during the covid-19 pandemic? Motivate your answer. \*

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32. Did this experience change your perspective of how you view life and your purpose in it? Explain. \*

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33. Explain the relationships with your colleagues during this time (for example: were they supportive, did it put more pressure on you, etc). \*

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34. What did you learn about yourself (good and bad) and would you change any of \* it?

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**Thank you for your time!**

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