



The disparity in selected occupational psychology measures between local teachers and native English-speaking teachers in South Korean public schools*

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Moodie, Ian and Sun-Young Kim. 2024. The disparity in selected occupational psychology measures between local teachers and native English-speaking teachers in South Korean public schools. *Linguistic Research* 41(Special Edition): 51-74. The purpose of the study was to compare native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) with local teachers in Korean public schools on a variety of occupational psychology measures. The NEST group consisted of 127 respondents (81 female, 42 male, 4 non-binary/not stated), while the Korean teacher group had 86 respondents (58 female, 28 male). The results indicated that, as hypothesized, the NEST group was lower than the Korean group in occupational well-being, self-efficacy in teaching, continuance commitment to the profession, normative commitment to the profession and workplace, and affective commitment to the workplace, but was higher on turnover intentions to the profession and turnover intentions to the workplace. The study also confirmed a well-being gap between female and male NESTs, whereas no such gap was found with the Korean teacher group. The implications for the study indicate the need to understand and address the well-being gap between female and male NESTs. Also, in order to lessen the gap between NESTs and Korean teachers in well-being, self-efficacy, commitment, and turnover intentions, policy makers could consider recruiting and incentivizing more professionally minded NESTs with relevant qualifications for longer-term positions in Korean public schools in order to meet the aims of co-teaching programs for improving the quality and methods of public English education. (Mokpo National University)

Keywords native English-speaking teachers (NESTs), co-teaching, occupational well-being, occupational commitment, turnover intentions

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1. Introduction

As a response to globalization, and in order to increase the efficacy of local English education, East Asian countries such as Korea, Japan, and Taiwan have developed co-teaching programs where native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) are paired with local English teachers (LETs) for public school English classes (Jeon 2009). Since their wide-spread implementation in the 1990s, these programs have garnered significant attention from researchers. Foremost, perhaps, has been the issues raised with programs, such as with the lack of defined roles between NESTs and LETs, the lack of collaboration between co-teachers, ineffective training, differing professional identities between LETs and NESTs, and the latent native-speakerism influencing policy (Jeon 2009, 2020; Copland et al. 2016, 2020; Yim and Ahn 2018; Yim and Hwang 2019; Kim and Moodie 2023; Lee and Jang 2023). These studies, mostly qualitative, have done much to explain the experiences and contextual challenges of NESTs within these programs.

Despite these advances in understanding, to date there has been a lack of quantitative research comparing important occupational psychology factors such as occupational well-being and occupational commitment between NESTs and Korean teachers, a fact providing impetus for the present study. Occupational psychology focuses on the attitudes, emotions, motivations, and stressors of employees in their workplaces. Such research has potential to uncover and address key aspects of employee mindsets in workplaces in order to increase the efficacy and well-being of individuals and organizations alike.

Concerning the present study, the research design examines group differences between NESTs and Korean teachers on a variety of validated measures adapted from occupational psychology research, including occupational well-being, self-efficacy in teaching, occupational commitment, and turnover intentions. These factors were chosen for their established correlations with important workplace and educational outcomes (see Sections 1.1 to 1.4 below). For instance, prior research has indicated the strong relationship between turnover intentions and occupational well-being (Moodie 2024) and occupational commitment (McInerney et al. 2015b) among teachers. Thus, group differences in well-being and commitment will have implications regarding potential teacher retention and teacher turnover, which are well-acknowledged issues for education and language education globally (Mason 2017;

Sulis et al. 2022). Thus, it is hoped that results from this study will help to inform policy and administrative practices concerning English-language co-teaching programs in addition to providing a baseline for future comparisons with occupational psychology research concerning NESTs and local teachers.

1.1 Occupational well-being

Occupational well-being, most generally, refers to one's feelings of satisfaction and fulfillment in their workplace. As people's working lives were disrupted, the COVID-19 pandemic brought increased attention to well-being research in many areas, especially in education and language education. Prior to this time, as MacIntyre et al. (2019) expressed, "Given that language teachers' perceptions of stress and sense of wellbeing are central to their ability to teach well, it is surprising that this topic has received so little attention" (p. 26). Since then, well-being has been a point of focus in language teaching research, with Mercer (2021) even going so far as to argue that it should be a priority for researchers and practitioners. As she wrote, "Increasingly, policy-makers and scholars are recognizing the importance of well-being in education more broadly, and evidence shows that when teachers experience positive well-being, they teach more creatively and their learners achieve more" (p. 14).

Such correlations between well-being and positive outcomes for education underscore its importance. In a review of 98 teacher well-being studies across two decades, Hascher and Waber (2021) were able to present a number of conclusions. For instance, this body of research showed how teacher well-being correlates with teaching efficacy, student outcomes, and contributions to educational governance. Furthermore, well-being is positively correlated with teachers' motivation, commitment, and resilience and negatively correlated with burnout and stress. Similarly, MacIntyre et al.'s (2019) study found that well-being correlated with individual personality characteristics and stress.

As for measurements of well-being, it is often operationalized through collecting multi-factorial survey data, such as with Seligman's (2011) PERMA+ model (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment, and physical health) or the Warwirc-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS), which measures affect, satisfaction, competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Stewart-Brown et al. 2009).

One result of particular interest for the current study used a version of this scale to investigate the relationship of demographic factors to the occupational well-being of NESTs in Asia, finding that female NESTs were rating their well-being about half a standard deviation (Cohen's $d = -0.48$) lower than their male counterparts (Moodie 2022). As indicated in meta-analyses of occupational well-being research, such gender differences are generally not expected in occupational well-being research unless there is systemic discrimination negatively influencing female well-being (Haring et al. 1984; Sojo et al. 2016). Thus, the current study will take the opportunity to also examine gender differences in well-being in addition to group differences in well-being between NESTs and Korean teachers.

Despite the increased attention on well-being in education research, to date there have not been any comparative studies examining group differences between NESTs and local public school teachers in Korea, or between local female and male teachers, which underscores the rationale for examining well-being in the current study.

1.2 Self-efficacy in teaching

Self-efficacy in teaching, referring to a teacher's belief in their ability to effectively teach and plan, is "a simple idea with significant implications" (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2001: 783). Similar to teacher well-being, teaching self-efficacy has been found to correlate with student achievement, resilience, effort, goal setting, and job satisfaction (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2001; Caprara et al. 2006; Zee and Koomen 2016). As for measures of self-efficacy in teaching, the most widely adapted one is from Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), which is used by the OECD on their Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) (OECD 2019).

Zee and Koomen (2016) reviewed 165 studies about teacher self-efficacy. Their review concluded that self-efficacy in teaching positively influences the quality of classroom practices, students' academic performance, and the well-being of teachers. Similarly, Hoang (2018) reviewed 27 prior studies on teaching self-efficacy with English language teachers in EFL settings, finding that self-efficacy was positively correlated with instructional practices, reflective practice, and emotional intelligence. One additional result specifically relevant for ELT was the positive association of non-NESTs' English proficiency with self-efficacy in teaching. In contrast, self-efficacy

was negatively correlated with teacher burnout, a factor well-correlated with turnover intentions. However, due to the fact that most of the research in this area had been done with pre-service teachers, Hoang reiterated the need for further research among in-service teachers, providing the rationale for including a measure of self-efficacy in teaching in the present study.

1.3 Occupational and organizational commitment

Occupational commitment refers to the commitment mindsets one has towards their career, whereas organizational commitment refers to the commitment mindsets one has towards their workplace (Meyer et al. 2012). Research has revealed three distinct mindsets most relevant to this type of research—*affective*, *continuance*, and *normative*:

Affective commitment has the mindset of desire and involves identification (e.g. one likes a job). *Continuance* commitment has the mindset of perceived costs and involves calculation of the loss of investment or the lack of alternatives (e.g. one thinks it is better to take the only available job than have no job). *Normative* commitment has the mindset of obligation and involves internalized socialization into norms for reciprocity (e.g. one values and therefore feels obliged to follow parental advice about a job). (Moodie and Feryok 2015: 453)

These mindsets comprise a multi-dimensional model of commitment, with research indicating the relevance of each (Meyer et al. 2012). For instance, a large-scale project with teachers in Hong Kong showed how different profiles of commitment mindsets suggested different implications for outcomes in the workplace. Morin et al.'s (2015) study showed that having high affective and normative commitment with lower levels of continuance commitment were linked with lower turnover intentions and higher occupational well-being. Similarly, McInerney et al. (2015b) showed that affective commitment was inversely related to turnover intentions to both workplaces and professions.

Although commitment has received significant attention in the field of education,

there has been much less in language teaching research (Moodie and Feryok 2015). One recent contribution, however, came from Moodie (2023a), who applied McInerney et al.'s (2015b) instruments with a faculty of expat ELT professionals (N = 82) at a university in Korea, finding that this cohort had relatively lower commitment levels to their organization than to the field, which implies that although they were relatively committed to the profession of ELT, many would be looking for work at other institutions. Given the relevance of occupational commitment mindsets to positive outcomes, and the relative lack of research with language teachers, this study presents an opportunity to contribute to an understanding of the differences in occupational and organizational commitment between NESTs and local teachers in Korea.

1.4 Turnover intentions

The psychologically opposite construct of occupational commitment, in a sense, is turnover intentions, which has two aspects: intentions to quit a workplace and intentions to quit a profession. Teacher turnover is a well-established issue in education. As Sulis et al. (2022) claimed, turnover is “damaging for individual teachers, the schools, the profession more generally, and the national economies” (p. 2). For individuals, turnover intentions are associated with stress, burnout, and lower levels of occupational well-being. When teachers leave schools, the schools and students lose that expertise, which taken on a wider scale, harms the profession and by extension national economies, as it takes a significant investment in time and money to train efficacious teachers.

Regarding language teaching, one troubling finding was that Mason (2017) showed that turnover tends to be higher among language teachers than homeroom teachers or teachers of other subjects. Specifically in Korea, Moodie (2019, 2023b) discussed the problem of turnover embedded in the teacher assignment and rotation system. Although it has the positive aspect of spreading expertise among less desirable schools, the downside is that it institutionalizes turnover within schools. Moreover, regarding primary school English education, the systemic turnover involved as some homeroom teachers switch between homeroom teaching and teaching English full-time has led to a lack of sustained commitment to ELT and ELT expertise in Korean primary school English education. For these reasons, turnover is an especially relevant construct

for research to consider in Korea, which is why it is given consideration in the present study.

1.5 The research questions and hypotheses

This study will compare two groups, NESTs working in Korean public schools and local public school teachers, across various occupational psychology measures, namely, occupational well-being, self-efficacy in teaching, occupational commitment, organizational commitment, turnover intentions towards a school, and turnover intentions towards the profession. Given the design of the study, the primary research question (RQ) is:

- RQ1. Are there group differences between NESTs and Korean teachers regarding occupational well-being, self-efficacy in teaching, occupational commitment, organizational commitment, turnover intentions?

With that question in mind, the study will investigate the following hypotheses:

- H1. NESTs will have lower levels of occupational well-being, self-efficacy in teaching, occupational commitment, and organizational commitment than Korean teachers.
- H2. NESTs will have higher levels of turnover intentions to their schools and to the profession than Korean teachers.

The rationale for these hypotheses is similar. Given that Korean teachers are trained as education professionals, need to pass an extremely competitive entrance exam, and enter a relatively high status profession with high job security until retirement age (Kim 2009), it is expected that they will have higher levels of the first set of measures but lower levels of turnover intentions than their NEST colleagues who have yearly contracts, much lower barriers to enter the field, and require much lower qualification standards than Korean teachers.

Additional research questions will examine if there are differences in occupational well-being between female and male NESTs and Korean teachers:

- RQ2. Is there a difference in occupational well-being between female and male NEST teachers in Korean public schools?
- RQ3. Is there a difference in occupational well-being between female and male Korean teachers?

The reason that we are examining gender differences in well-being is that an earlier study, which included most of the NEST participants of the present study, indicated that female NESTs in Asia had about half a standard deviation lower level of well-being than males (Cohen's $d = -0.48$) (Moodie 2022). This is unusual in that prior research suggests that gender differences in well-being are not expected unless there is systemic discrimination occurring (Sojo et al. 2016). Thus, the current study will see if this holds true for the sub-population of NEST co-teachers in Korean public schools. Answering RQ3 will test if similar results are found with local public school teachers. We did not find similar empirical justifications for examining gender differences among our other factors (e.g., commitment and turnover intentions), which is why we will only specifically examine female and male differences in well-being below.

2. Methods

2.1 Participants

The main inclusion criterion for the study was that participants needed to be full-time teachers in Korean public schools. For the NEST group, this entailed having a full-time contract and being involved in a public school co-teaching program, such as the English Program in Korea (EPIK) or similar provincial or municipal programs. For the Korean teacher group, this entailed being a full-time, tenured teacher in either a primary or secondary school. Full-time instructors were not included in the Korean teacher group.

Recruitment was done through snowball sampling in which a researcher asks an initial group of selected participants to invite other potential respondents. This sampling method is considered to be appropriate in hard-to-reach populations, such as with NESTs in Korea. First, we sent invitations to relevant professional contacts, inviting them to participate and/or forward the invitation to potential participants.

Second, we posted invitations on relevant Facebook groups and other web forums.

Initially, we sought only full-time English teachers for the Korean teacher group; however, we opened up the recruitment criteria to include homeroom teachers (in primary schools) and teachers of other subjects (in secondary schools) due to challenges recruiting sufficient Korean English teacher participants. For the purposes of this study, which is investigating general organizational psychology measures, it is reasonable to assume that the population of Korean teachers is somewhat homogenous, given that all teachers need similar qualification levels and must pass the teacher qualification exam.

The intended sample size was to have 400 participants (200 per group), which would give enough statistical power for multiple linear regression of over 90%. However, due to diminishing returns with our sampling measures, we ended the recruitment process with 213 participants, comprising 127 NESTs and 86 Korean teachers. Nevertheless, this number of participants is sufficient for between-groups analysis as done in the present study.

The NEST group ($n = 127$) comprised 81 females (63.7%) and 42 males (33.1%), with 4 other or preferring not to state gender (3.1%). Their average age was 30.0 ($SD = 6.5$) and their average years of teaching experience was 4.6 ($SD = 4.1$), with 2.5 years ($SD = 1.9$) at their current school.

The Korean teacher group ($n = 86$) comprised 58 females (67.4%) and 28 males (32.6%), with an average age of 42.4 ($SD = 10.3$). Their average total teaching experience was 16.1 years ($SD = 10.7$), with 3.1 years ($SD = 2.9$) at their current school.

2.2 Instrumentation

In order to enhance the validity and reliability of the study, well-established instruments were used. All measures included seven-point Likert-type items (ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree). Seven-point items were chosen as opposed to five-point items in order to increase the range and accuracy of responses. The item means, standard deviation, and scale reliability for the measures appear in Table 1 below. As can be seen, the reliability for each scale ranged from acceptable ($\alpha > .70$) to good ($\alpha > .80$). A full-item list of these measures appears in the Appendix.

Table 1. Item means, standard deviations, and scale reliability

Measure (Abbreviation)	Number of Items	Item M	Item SD	α
1. Occupational Well-being (WB)	7	4.81	1.15	.84
2. Self-efficacy in Teaching (SE)	7	5.26	1.04	.88
3. Affective Commitment to Profession (AC_P)	3	6.00	1.11	.79
4. Continuance Commitment to Profession (CC_P)	3	4.01	1.77	.81
5. Normative Commitment to Profession (NC_P)	3	3.96	1.76	.87
6. Affective Commitment to Workplace (AC_W)	3	4.05	1.91	.82
7. Continuance Commitment to Workplace (CC_W)	3	3.75	1.67	.80
8. Normative Commitment to Workplace (NC_W)	3	4.08	1.65	.73
9. Turnover Intentions to Profession (TI_P)	4	3.17	1.65	.83
10. Turnover Intentions to Profession (TI_W)	4	3.65	1.68	.83

Occupational well-being (WB) refers to one's feeling of well-being in the workplace (e.g., "I've been feeling optimistic about the future at work."). For measuring occupational well-being, we used the Short WEMWBS (Ng Fat et al. 2017), adapted for the workplace (see Moodie 2022, 2024). This scale comprises seven items across five factors (affect, satisfaction, competence, relatedness, and autonomy).

Self-efficacy (SE) in teaching measures the extent to which teachers believe in their capacity to teach (e.g., "I am able to provide an alternative explanation, for example, when students are confused."). For measuring self-efficacy in teaching, we used seven items from TALIS (OECD 2019), which originate from Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (2001) study.

Affective commitment refers to how much one identifies with and has affect for their profession (AC_P) and organization (AC_O) (e.g., "I am proud to be in the ELT profession."). Continuance commitment refers to the perceived need to stay in a profession (CC_P) or organization (CC_O) and involves weighing the costs and benefits of staying or leaving (e.g., "Changing professions now would be difficult for me to do"). Normative commitment refers to how much one feels a moral obligation or a sense of giving back to their profession (NC_P) or organization (NC_O) (e.g., "I am in the ELT profession because of a sense of loyalty to it"). For each of the commitment measures, we adapted items from McInerney et al. (2015b).

Turnover intentions refer to one's intention to quit the profession (TI_P) or their organization (TI_O) (e.g., "I often think about quitting teaching English."). For both turnover intention measures, we adapted items from McInerney et al. (2015b).

The NESTs were given English versions of the survey, and the Korean teachers were given a Korean version. This version was translated from English to Korean by a bilingual researcher, translated back to English in Chat GPT3.5, and then checked in order to assess the accuracy of the translation before data collection.

2.3 Analysis

Given the intention of the study, that is, to see if there are group differences between NESTs and Korean teachers on each of the measures above (and between male and female Korean teachers' well-being ratings), the study uses a series of independent samples t-tests. According to the hypotheses, the t-tests will assume that the NEST group will be lower on the measures of well-being, self-efficacy, and commitment, but higher on the two measures of turnover intentions than the Korean teacher group.

Prior to analysis, the data were explored and diagnosed that they met the assumptions for t-tests (i.e., continuous data, random samples, normal distributions, and homogeneity of variance). Given that there are ten measures included, the study will use the Bonferroni correction (α / number of measures), which helps to address the family-wise error rate, setting the alpha level of the study at $\alpha = .005$. Cohen's d is provided as a measure of effect size. In line with Plonsky and Oswald's (2014) recommendation to use field-specific effect size interpretations for L2 research, 0.4 will be considered a small effect, 0.8 a medium effect, and 1.0 a large effect.

3. Results

Before answering the research questions, Table 2 below displays the descriptive results for each measure and group. For reference, the values represent the item averages for all the scales, where the maximum value is 7.

Table 2. Descriptive results

Measure	Group	n	M	Mdn	SD	SE
1. WB	0	127	4.48	4.43	1.10	0.098
	1	86	5.30	5.57	1.04	0.112
2. SE	0	127	5.01	5.14	1.06	0.094
	1	86	5.63	5.71	0.90	0.097
3. AC_P	0	127	5.28	6.00	1.66	0.147
	1	86	5.71	6.33	1.63	0.176
4. CC_P	0	127	3.74	3.33	1.89	0.167
	1	86	4.41	4.33	1.50	0.161
5. NC_P	0	127	3.28	3.00	1.56	0.138
	1	86	4.97	5.17	1.56	0.168
6. AC_O	0	127	3.00	2.67	1.66	0.148
	1	86	4.46	4.83	1.89	0.204
7. CC_O	0	127	3.84	4.00	1.72	0.153
	1	86	3.61	3.67	1.60	0.172
8. NC_O	0	127	3.84	3.67	1.81	0.161
	1	86	4.43	4.33	1.31	0.142
9. TI_P	0	127	3.82	3.75	1.61	0.143
	1	86	2.22	2.00	1.19	0.129
10. TI_O	0	127	4.04	4.25	1.74	0.154
	1	86	2.84	2.75	1.31	0.140

Notes: Group 0 is the NEST group and Group 1 is the Korean teacher group.

Table 3 below displays the key results of the study. In response to the first hypothesis (H1) of the first research question (RQ1), independent samples t-tests indicated that, as expected, NESTs in Korea reported lower levels of occupational well-being, self-efficacy in teaching, continuance commitment to the profession, normative commitment to the profession, affective commitment to the workplace, and normative commitment to the workplace than the Korean public school teachers. However, although the NESTs had lower levels of affective commitment to their profession than Korean teachers, given the adjusted alpha level for the study and small effect size, the difference was not statistically significant. In addition, unexpectedly, NESTs were not lower on reported levels of continuance commitment to the workplace. In response to the second hypothesis (H2) of the first research question (RQ1), independent samples t-tests indicated that, as expected, NESTs in Korea reported higher levels of intentions to quit the profession and intentions to quit the workplace than Korean teachers.

In regards to effect sizes, those with a large effect included turnover intentions to the profession, ($d = 1.10$) and normative commitment to the profession ($d = -1.09$). The measures with a medium effect size comprised affective commitment to the workplace ($d = -0.83$), occupational well-being ($d = -0.77$), and turnover intentions to the workplace ($d = 0.76$). The measures with a small effect size included continuance commitment to the profession ($d = -0.39$) and normative commitment to the workplace ($d = -0.36$).

Table 3. Results of t-tests comparing NESTs to Korean teachers

Measure	t	df	p	M diff.	SE diff.	95% CI (Lower, Upper)	Effect Size (d)
1. WB	-5.50	211	<.001	-0.83	0.150	(-Inf, -0.58)	-0.77
2. SE	-4.44	211	<.001	-0.62	0.140	(-Inf, -0.39)	-0.62
3. AC_P	-1.86	211	.032*	-0.43	0.230	(-Inf, -0.05)	-0.26
4. CC_P	-2.79	211	0.003	-0.68	0.243	(-Inf, -0.28)	-0.39
5. NC_P	-7.80	211	<.001	-1.70	0.218	(-Inf, -1.34)	-1.09
6. AC_W	-5.94	211	<.001	-1.46	0.245	(-Inf, -1.05)	-0.83
7. CC_W	0.98	211	.84*	0.23	0.233	(-Inf, 0.61)	0.14
8. NC_W	-2.58	211	.005	-0.59	0.228	(-Inf, -0.21)	-0.36
9. TI_P	7.85	211	<.001	1.60	0.204	(1.26, Inf)	1.10
10. TI_W	5.46	211	<.001	1.20	0.221	(0.84, Inf)	0.76

Notes. For Measures 1-8, $H_a \mu_0 < \mu_1$, whereas for 9 & 10, $H_a \mu_0 > \mu_1$. * = non-significant (below the adjusted α of .005).

Lastly, the results consider differences in well-being by gender between the two groups in the study. In response to RQ2, an independent samples t-test indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between female ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.13$) and male ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 0.91$) NESTs in Korean public schools, $t = -3.01(121)$, $p = .003$, $d = -0.57$. However, in response to RQ3, an independent samples t-test indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference between female ($M = 5.39$, $SD = 1.05$) and male ($M = 5.14$, $SD = 1.02$) Korean public school teachers, $t = 1.00(84)$, $p = .32$, $d = 0.23$. A discussion follows.

4. Discussion

The novel aspect of this study comes from comparing NESTs and Korean teachers on a variety of occupational psychology measures in addition to seeing if there were gender differences in occupational well-being among the NEST and Korean teacher samples. Answering RQ1 showed that, as expected, NESTs were lower than the Korean public school teachers in reported levels of occupational well-being, self-efficacy in teaching, and four of six measures of occupational and organizational commitment. Conversely, as expected, NESTs reported higher levels of intentions to quit the profession and intentions to quit the workplace than Korean teachers. In addition, answering RQ2 and RQ3 showed that while differences by gender were confirmed within the NEST group, with female NESTs rating their occupational well-being significantly lower than their male counterparts, no such differences were found regarding female and male Korean teachers. The significance for and implications of these findings can be expressed in comparison to and in the context of prior research from the fields of industrial-organizational psychology, education, and ELT.

First, prior studies have emphasized the importance of occupational well-being because of its link to psychological and physical health for individuals (Steptoe et al. 2015; Sulis et al. 2022) and positive outcomes for workplaces and professions (Cotton and Hart 2003; Morin et al. 2017; Sulis et al. 2022). The group differences found in this study, although expected, are troubling. Research indicates that well-being correlates positively to job satisfaction and commitment (McInerney et al. 2015a; Morin et al. 2015) and is negatively correlated with turnover intentions (McInerney et al. 2015b) and job stress (MacIntyre et al. 2019). Thus, the lower levels of well-being reported by NESTs implies that they likely also have lower levels of occupational commitment (which the current study also confirms) and higher levels of turnover intentions (which is also confirmed by the current study).

Moreover, the fact that the study confirmed that female NEST teachers in Korean public schools have lower levels of occupational well-being than male NEST teachers is problematic. For one, in comparison to the effect size from a sample of NESTs in Asia and across private institutes, public schools, and universities ($d = -0.48$) (Moodie 2022), the effect size in the present study is slightly higher ($d = -0.57$), indicating that the gender differences are slightly more problematic for female NESTs in Korean public schools than the average for all female NESTs in Asia. Given that

no such differences were found regarding female and male Korean teachers, this result should be of priority to stakeholders. To demonstrate why, a meta-analysis of occupational well-being research reiterated that gender differences are generally only apparent if there are particular stressors or harmful workplace experiences affecting women (e.g., harassment, unwanted sexual attention, or a sexist organizational climate) (Sojo et al. 2016). The implications for these results first point to the need to qualitatively investigate why female NESTs have lower well-being than their male counterparts. Additionally, the well-being gap between NESTs and local teachers needs to be recognized and efforts need to be made to reduce it.

Second, the fact that this study showed that the reported levels of self-efficacy in teaching with NESTs were lower than for Korean teachers was unsurprising. As prior research indicates, self-efficacy tends to be higher among more experienced teachers (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2007), and the Korean teachers in this study had over 12 more years of teaching experience on average than the NEST group. Moreover, the Korean teachers have extensive training in the context, needing to pass a rigorous qualification exam and partake in one of the highest levels of in-service teacher training in the OECD (Kim 2009). Experience and education relate to a factor described as mastery experiences in the research literature, which Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) found to be the largest factor associated with self-efficacy in teaching among novice and experienced teachers. As with well-being, self-efficacy correlates with student achievement, resilience, and job satisfaction (Caprara et al. 2006; Zee and Koomen 2016). Because of this, and because of the gap found in this study between NESTs and Korean teachers, an implication is that policy makers should look for ways to lessen this gap, such as by changing job requirements and benefits to attract NESTs with higher self-efficacy in teaching.

Third, regarding commitment, we found that there were not statistically significant differences regarding affective commitment to the profession between NESTs and local teachers. Although this was unexpected according to our hypothesis, it is encouraging because both groups had relatively high levels of affective commitment to the profession, indicating that both groups tend to identify with their profession and are in it because of interest and desire (Meyer et al. 2012). As prior research showed, affective commitment is positively correlated with occupational well-being (Morin et al. 2015) and inversely related to turnover intentions (McInerney et al. 2015b). The troubling results in this regard are the relatively lower levels of affective commitment

to their organizations for both groups (see Table 2) and the large gap between the NESTs and local teachers (see Table 3). The low levels of affective commitment among NESTs implies that they are not identified with and do not feel a sense of belonging in their schools. This lower affective commitment may also be affected by the lack of job security for the NEST group. Similar to a prior study (Moodie 2023a), although this group has relatively high levels of affective commitment to the profession but low levels of affective commitment to their schools, this gap implies that although they identify and like being in the profession of ELT, they are less identified with their schools and thus likely to be looking for positions elsewhere—a speculation corroborated by the higher levels of intentions to quit the organization among the NEST group. The fact that Korean teachers had lower levels of affective commitment to their schools than to the profession as a whole is also not surprising, given that the teacher assignment and rotation system moves teachers from school to school within a district every four to five years in most cases (Kim 2009). This institutionalized turnover likely explains a large part of why Korean teachers feel less emotionally attached to their schools.

Regarding continuance commitment, we found that, as expected, the NESTs had lower levels of continuance commitment to the profession. A reasonable interpretation follows. First, continuance commitment involves the mindset of investment and weighing the costs and benefits of choosing a new career or workplace (Meyer et al. 2012). Given the relatively lower barriers for NESTs to enter the field and the relatively high investment in time and effort that it takes to become a public school teacher in Korea and the relatively low job mobility, it is unsurprising that the Korean teachers would have a higher sense of continuance commitment to the profession than NESTs.

As for normative commitment, we found a large gap in normative commitment to the profession between Korean teachers and NESTs and a smaller gap in normative commitment to the workplace. The fact that normative commitment was lower with the NEST group on both measures is unsurprising. For one, the education backgrounds between the two groups differ—whereas all the Korean teachers were fully qualified teachers, only 20 (15.7%) of the NESTs had teacher qualifications from their home countries. Normative commitment, in essence, involves moral obligation or a sense of wanting to give back to the community (Meyer et al. 2012). Research on motivations for teaching indicates that normative mindsets are often involved in drawing

candidates to the field of education and in recruitment policy for education departments (Moodie 2019). These aspects likely explain some of the differences found in the study. Additionally, culture has been found to have a small influence on normative commitment, with East Asian participants tending to have slightly higher levels of it than Western participants in commitment research (Meyer et al. 2012).

Lastly, as expected, turnover intentions were found to be higher among NESTs than Korean teachers to both the profession and workplaces. The surprising and troubling aspect, however, was the magnitude of the difference. NESTs were more than one standard deviation higher in turnover intentions to the profession ($d = 1.10$) than Korean teachers and nearly a standard deviation higher ($d = 0.76$) in turnover intentions to the workplace. It is reasonable to assume that the administrative context would explain part of these results. Given that NESTs are hired on yearly contracts and have almost no chance of upward mobility within their schools and the education system, it is unsurprising that their intentions to quit would be higher than local teachers. That said, the main contribution of this study is documenting the magnitude of the difference.

These results quantify what many already know or suspect: that English co-teaching programs, such as EPIK, are not recruiting long-term, professionally minded NESTs. The biggest implication in consideration of turnover intentions and the gap between NESTs and local teachers in other measures found in this study is that if policy makers and administrators are serious about the core goals of co-teaching programs for improving the quality and methods of public school English education, they will need to do more to recruit and retain long-term, well-qualified, and professionally minded NESTs.

Despite the contributions of the study, it faces limitations. Foremost, perhaps, are the sampling methods and limited sampling size. While we feel that through our sampling methods, we were able to recruit a relatively random sample of NESTs, there is likely sampling bias in the Korean teacher sample as most of the respondents were either directly contacted by the researchers or one person removed. Specifically, it could be reasonably speculated that this would bias the sample towards more committed Korean teachers. Due to privacy concerns, requests to send invitations to larger lists of participants were refused by local education offices. Because of this, the sample size for the Korean group was also lower than we had desired. That said, it was still large enough for the t-tests used in this study.

Based on the results above, we have a few recommendations for future research. First, given the lower levels of well-being among NESTs and local teachers and the lower levels of well-being between female and male NESTs confirmed in this study, a qualitative inquiry is clearly warranted to explore the causes for these gaps. As occupational well-being suggests, gender differences are often due to systemic discrimination or harmful experiences negatively affecting women (Sojo et al. 2016). Thus, it is urgent that this problem is better explored and understood so that it can be addressed. Second, qualitative research would also be warranted to consider turnover intentions among NESTs. The rationale would be twofold: first, to understand it better so that it can be mitigated, and second, to find participants with lower levels of turnover intentions who are also professionally minded in order to understand their mindsets. Third, given the prior correlations of well-being and commitment to turnover intentions in other fields (McInerney et al. 2015b; Morin 2015), a future study could contribute to the literature by exploring these relations among language teachers to get a better understanding of the correlations of well-being, commitment, and turnover intentions.

5. Conclusion

This study compared NESTs and local teachers in Korean public schools on a variety of occupational psychology measures. As hypothesized, the NEST group had lower levels of well-being, self-efficacy in teaching, continuance commitment to the profession, normative commitment to the profession, affective commitment to the workplace, and normative commitment to the workplace than Korean teachers. However, no statistically significant differences were found concerning affective commitment to the profession and continuance commitment to the workplace. Additionally, as hypothesized, the NEST group had higher levels of intentions to quit the profession and their workplaces than Korean teachers. Lastly, gender differences in well-being were also considered. The results showed that females in the NEST group had significantly lower levels of occupational well-being than males; however, no such differences were found among the Korean teacher group. The implications for the study point towards the need to understand and address the well-being gap between female and male NESTs. Also, in order to lessen the gap between NESTs

and Korean teachers in well-being, self-efficacy, commitment, and turnover intentions, it would be instructive to consider incentivizing and recruiting more professionally minded NESTs with relevant qualifications for careers in ELT.

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Appendix

Survey Items and Scales

WB	Occupational Well-being (adapted from Ng Fat et al. 2017)
WB1affect1	I've been feeling optimistic about the future at work.
WB2affect2	I've been feeling relaxed at work.
WB3satisfaction	I've been feeling useful at work.
WB4competence1	I've been dealing with problems at work well.
WB5competence2	I've been thinking clearly at work.
WB6relatedness	I've been feeling close to other people at work.
WB7autonomy	I've been able to make up my own mind about things at work.
SE	Self-efficacy in Teaching (adapted from OECD, 2019)
	To what extent can you...?
SE1instruct1	Craft good activities for students
SE2instruct2	Use a variety of assessment strategies
SE3instruct3	Provide an alternative explanation, for example when students are confused
SE4instruct4	Vary instructional strategies in my classroom
SE5engage1	Get students to believe they can do well in course work
SE6engage2	Help students value learning
SE7engage3	Motivate students who show low interest in course work
AC_P	Affective Commitment to the Profession (adapted from McInerney et al. 2015b)
PAC1®	I regret having entered the teaching profession. ®
PAC2®	I dislike being a teacher. ®
PAC3	I am enthusiastic about teaching.

CC_P	Continuance Commitment to the Profession (adapted from McInerney et al. 2015b)
PCC1	Changing professions now would be difficult for me to do.
PCC2	Too much of my life would be disrupted if I were to change my profession.
PCC3	Changing professions now would require considerable personal sacrifice.
NC_P	Normative Commitment to the Profession (adapted from McInerney et al. 2015b)
PNC1	I feel a responsibility to the teaching profession to continue in it.
PNC2	Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel that it would be right to leave the teaching profession now.
PNC3	I am in the teaching profession because of a sense of loyalty to it.
AC_O	Affective Commitment to the Organization (adapted from McInerney et al. 2015b)
OAC1	I would be happy to spend the rest of my career with this school.
OAC2®	I do not feel emotionally attached to this school. ®
OAC3®	I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my school. ®
CC_O	Continuance Commitment to the Organization (adapted from McInerney et al. 2015b)
OCC1	It would be very hard for me to leave my school right now, even if I wanted to.
OCC2	Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my school now.
OCC3	One of the negative consequences of leaving this school would be the scarcity of available alternatives.
NC_O	Normative Commitment to the Organization (adapted from McInerney et al. 2015b)
ONC1	I would feel guilty if I left my school now.
ONC2	This school deserves my loyalty.
ONC3	I would not leave my school right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.
TI_P	Turnover Intention to the Profession (adapted from McInerney et al. 2015b)
TIP1	It is likely I will actively look for a new kind of job in the next year
TIP2	I often think about quitting teaching English
TIP3	It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave the field of English teaching.
TIP4	There's not too much to be gained by sticking with English teaching indefinitely.
TI_O	Turnover Intention to the Organization (adapted from McInerney et al. 2015b)
TIO1	It is likely I will actively look for a new place to teach in the next year.

TIO2	I often think about leaving my current workplace.
TIO3	It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave my current workplace.
TIO4	There's not too much to be gained by sticking with my current workplace indefinitely.

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