

Teacher well-being

Teachers were asked to indicate how frequently they experienced specific challenges regarding their own well-being in their role. They could respond with 'Never', 'Rarely', 'Sometimes', or 'Often'.

The responses in the sections below are from teachers who reported experiencing the listed challenges either 'Sometimes' or 'Often'.

Students with teachers experiencing well-being challenges

The results in Table TT2.11 show the percentage of students who have a teacher who is either 'Sometimes' or 'Often' experiencing well-being challenges in their role.

In Marshall Islands, on average, 73% of students had teachers who 'Often' or 'Sometimes' experienced stress in their role, while 45% had teachers who 'Often' or 'Sometimes' felt overwhelmed by their role. Across the PILNA countries, the proportions of students with teachers who 'Often' or 'Sometimes' experienced stress ranged from between 52% to 100%. Most teachers in Marshall Islands are experiencing work-related stress and a substantial minority have feelings of being overwhelmed due to their role and that these feelings are relatively frequent.

Approximately four out of ten students have a teacher who believes their job is having an adverse effect on their mental health (40%), and their physical health (38%).

Beyond these key findings, an average of about half the students in Marshall Islands have a teacher who has difficulty sleeping because they think about work-related issues (48%). Approximately four out of ten students have teachers who reported they do not have time for their personal life (41%), to eat healthily (38%), or to exercise (42%) because of their job.

Table TT2.11

Percentage of students whose teachers frequently experience issues related to well-being

Issues	Students	
I experience stress in my work		73 % (6.3)
My job negatively impacts my mental health		40 % (5.1)
My job negatively impacts my physical health		38 % (4.0)
I have difficulty sleeping because I think about work-related issues		48 % (6.6)
I don't have time for my personal life because of my job		41 % (6.2)
I don't have time to eat healthily because of my job		38 % (4.2)
I don't have time to exercise because of my job		42 % (5.9)
I feel overwhelmed by my job		45 % (4.7)

Percentage of students whose teachers frequently experienced issues related to well-being, RMI, PILNA 2021

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

Teacher well-being and teacher characteristics

From the responses to the eight sentences about challenges to teacher well-being, a regional scale was formed. The more teachers agree with the statements that form the scale, the higher their scale scores, and the lower their levels of well-being.

The PILNA scale for teacher well-being has an average of 200 and a standard deviation of 40. Most scores are expected to be within 40 points of 200 (160–240). The scale was formed from statistical analysis of all eight answers to questions about teachers' well-being.

Each teacher's scores on this scale were compared with several demographic factors and other qualities to see if any differences existed. These factors were gender (male or female), age group (either 20–35 or over 35 years old), teaching experience (either less than 10 years' experience or more than 10 years' experience), and their highest qualification (either below degree level or degree level and higher).

There were no well-being score differences between teachers who had degree level or higher qualifications and teachers with qualifications below the level of a degree. There were also no well-being score differences between teachers who had more or fewer than 10 years of teaching experience.

There were, however, differences found in the gender and teaching experience comparisons. Teachers over 35 years of age had lower well-being scores (better wellbeing) than teachers below 35 years of age. Male teachers also had lower well-being scores (better wellbeing) than female teachers.

What does this mean?

The results are worrying for teacher well-being. A high proportion of students in Marshall Islands have teachers who are experiencing stress in their job. About four out of ten students have teachers who reported not having enough time for managing their well-being through their personal life – eating healthily and exercising – due to their job, and who believe their job is having an adverse effect on their physical and mental health. High proportions of students in Marshall Islands are being taught by teachers who are experiencing well-being challenges in their job. It is important that the reasons for this are understood and that the appropriate support mechanisms are put in place to increase teacher well-being.

Some demographic factors may also be associated with teacher well-being. More experienced and male teachers tended to have better well-being than less experienced and female teachers. The reasons for this are unclear but it suggests that older teachers may have higher levels of resilience in coping with the stresses of the occupation. Male teachers may also be more resilient or could be less willing to report when they are experiencing well-being challenges.