

Conclusions for teachers

- A high proportion of students in the region have a teacher who is confident in teaching numeracy and literacy.
- A very high proportion of students in the region have a teacher who is satisfied with and proud of their job.
- Teachers are experiencing high rates of well-being challenges.
- Teachers reported that a substantial minority of their students experience behavioural and psychological challenges.
- Two possible issues emerged regarding teacher resources: limited availability of textbooks and teachers having insufficient time for slower learners.

Teachers from PILNA 2021 provided a wide range of data about their circumstances, their teaching experiences, and their students. The data most relevant to regional stakeholders are included in the current PILNA 2021. These include teachers' confidence in teaching numeracy and literacy, their job satisfaction, and their well-being, as well as their perceptions of the availability of resources and their students' learning difficulties.

The analyses presented below are presented through the student focus, i.e. the potential impact of teachers' circumstances, beliefs, and attitudes on student performance and attitudes to numeracy and literacy.

A high proportion of students in the region have a teacher who is confident in teaching numeracy (77–94%) and literacy (70–88%). A slightly higher proportion of students had teachers who were confident in teaching numeracy. Larger proportions of students had teachers who were confident in all aspects of numeracy and literacy compared with PILNA 2018. A smaller proportion of students had teachers who were confident in teaching unstructured literacy subjects (such as quality of ideas in writing) as opposed to structured literacy subjects (such as spelling and vocabulary).

A very high proportion of students in the region had a teacher who was satisfied with and proud of their job (about 95%). The data show that most students had teachers who were generally content with their profession, found their work meaningful, were enthusiastic about their job, were inspired by their work, and were proud of what they do. A similar proportion of students had a teacher who frequently felt that they would continue teaching for as long as possible, a strong indicator of engagement. A smaller proportion of students, however, had a teacher who was generally content with their salary (75%).

Despite teachers reporting confidence and general satisfaction with their work, they were experiencing high rates of challenges to their well-being. A high proportion of students had teachers who frequently experienced stress (80%) and feelings of being overwhelmed by their job (65%). In addition, a high proportion of students had teachers who reported sometimes not having enough time for meeting their basic well-being needs because of their job (about 50%). Finally, a

significant proportion of students had teachers who believed their job was having an adverse effect on their physical (36%) and mental health (37%).

The teacher demographic data were explored (including gender, age, teaching experience, and the teacher's highest qualification) against teachers' responses to the well-being questions. Statistically significant differences were found in two of these comparisons. Teachers who were over the age of 35 reported worse well-being than those under 35, and teachers with more than ten years of teaching experience had worse well-being than those with less than ten years of teaching experience.

Teachers reported that a significant minority of their students experienced behavioural and psychological challenges. About one in every three students across the region was described as having either behavioural issues, difficulty focusing attention and concentrating, or a lack of basic knowledge and skills.

Teachers' reports of student difficulties were compared to students' reports of these difficulties, where appropriate. Students identified physiological difficulties (hunger, tiredness) as being more common than teachers reported them, but teachers observed behavioural issues (concentrating, controlling behaviour) more frequently than students reported them. This suggests that these issues are quite common in the student body, and that teachers' assessments of physiological issues are aligned with those of students.

Teachers gave insights into learning resources, their teaching environments, and their available time. Overall, most teachers feel they have enough space in their classrooms for their students (about 80%) and in their schools to do their work (about 90%). Most teachers also feel they have enough time to complete lessons in numeracy, reading and writing (about 80%).

Two areas, however, emerged as possible challenges: textbook access and the time available for slow learners. Only about one in three students have access to their own textbook and one in three teachers feel they do not have enough time to work with students who are slow learners.

Textbook access varied across the region and many students shared textbooks; very few students had no access to a textbook. The potential effects of textbook access are unknown but teachers having insufficient time to spend with slow learners is a critical challenge. One third of students in the region are at risk of falling behind in their learning if they are slow to acquire new concepts.

The results from the teacher questionnaire paint the teaching profession in a positive light. Teachers have a great sense of pride in their occupation, are aware of some of the challenges facing students from reaching their full potential, and are confident in what they do. While most appear to have the resources they need, there are issues with teachers' well-being (particularly among our older and more experienced teachers).

Finding ways to support teachers to have a more positive mindset and to not be overwhelmed by the demands of the job can only be a positive for improving teaching and learning outcomes.