

Schools and their leaders in Small Island States

The school environments of PILNA 2021 students and the attitudes and perceptions of their leaders.

One of the four contextual questionnaires administered in PILNA 2021 was a school leader questionnaire. This was given to the principals or head teachers of schools participating in the PILNA assessment.

School leaders are expected to have an overview of school operations and to be in a position to provide key insights into any or all operational and strategic challenges affecting their schools and students. PILNA collected information from school leaders using the school leader questionnaire in order to better understand these challenges.

Questions in the school leader questionnaire relate to:

- the school leaders' education, experiences, workload, well-being, and demographic information;
- the nature of their school's infrastructure and facilities, language, teacher supports, resources, purposes of assessment, and student demographics;
- the community environment, including early childcare access and community engagement with the school; and
- barriers to good quality teaching at the school and mitigations for these, including school closures and continuity of learning measures.

The initial findings fall into two broad categories. The first is about barriers to good quality education in their schools and the second is about the attitudes and perceptions of school leaders and their role. Further analysis is planned to explore the data in more depth.

Where appropriate, findings reported in the following sections have a student focus; any challenges and experiences are presented from a student perspective. What this means is that statistics are based on the proportion of PILNA 2021 students who are in schools, or have school leaders, with certain characteristics or experiences. For example, instead of saying 'X% of school leaders reported Y', the findings will state 'X% of students had a school leader who reported Y'. This is possible because all student PILNA results are linked with both their teacher's PILNA questionnaire, and their school leader's PILNA questionnaire. This allows readers to connect more easily with the findings, specifically, information about how students in Pacific schools are performing and what they are experiencing, the latter being relevant to these sections.