

Student well-being

The PILNA student questionnaire collected information about children's physical health, mental health, relationships, and material circumstances. The intention was to collect a holistic picture of the well-being of the students who participated in PILNA.

Students were given a list of circumstances, as set out in Table 7.11, and were asked to indicate how often they experienced them. They could respond with 'Never', 'Sometimes', 'Most of the time', or 'Always'. For reporting the results, 'Most of the time' and 'Always' were combined, as they were considered to be materially similar in terms of student experience.

Well-being experiences

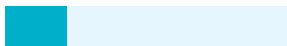
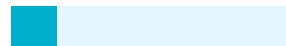
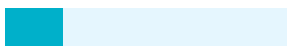
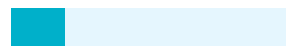
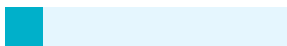
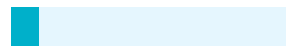
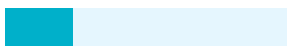
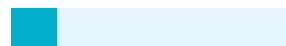
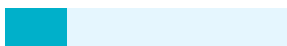
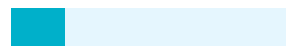
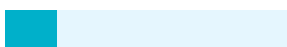
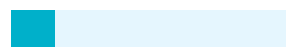
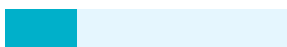
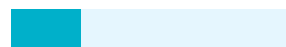
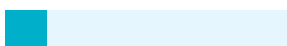
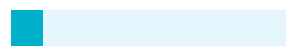
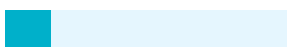
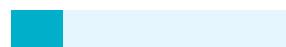








Table STT1.8 shows the proportions of year four and year six students who reported experiencing the associated condition at least most of the time.

In Tonga, 56% of year four students and 57% of year six students reported that they had a good day 'Most of the time' or 'Always', and 53% of year four students and 54% of year six students reported they looked forward to the next day 'Most of the time' or 'Always'.

Across both year levels, about one out of five students reported feeling hungry, tired, upset, sad/unhappy, not having enough friends, or not having enough pocket money "Most of the time" or "Always".

Table STT1.8

Percentage of students that frequently experience issues related to well-being

Issue	Year 4	Year 6
Negative experiences		
Hungry	 22% (1.7)	 16% (1.9)
Tired	 20% (1.2)	 19% (1.5)
Sick	 13% (1.0)	 10% (0.9)
Don't have enough clean clothes/shoes	 24% (1.2)	 16% (1.6)
Don't get enough pocket money	 22% (1.5)	 19% (1.6)
Could not sleep because worried	 18% (1.2)	 15% (1.2)
Don't have enough friends	 25% (1.6)	 24% (2.1)
Could not eat because worried	 15% (1.1)	 11% (1.1)
Upset, sad/unhappy	 16% (1.2)	 18% (1.4)
Positive experiences		
Had a good day	 56% (1.7)	 57% (2.4)
Cheerful	 60% (1.7)	 51% (2.1)
Calm and relaxed	 51% (2.0)	 47% (2.5)
Looking forward to the next day	 53% (2.5)	 54% (2.6)

Percentage of students who frequently experienced issues related to well-being, Tonga, PILNA 2021

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

These findings can be compared to the findings from a similar set of items that teachers responded to (Student difficulties reported by the teacher). Not all the same items were given to teachers but there are interesting comparisons that can be made for the items about hunger and tiredness.

Well-being and student performance

A regional scale for student well-being was established, based on the first nine items from Table STT1.8. These items are related to negative well-being experiences, rather than positive well-being experiences. Higher scores on this scale indicate higher, more positive, levels of well-being.

The PILNA scale for student wellbeing 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 the answers to nine out of thirteen questions about students' well-being related experiences.

These well-being scale scores were compared with student performance in numeracy and reading. Student performance was grouped into two categories: students who performed at or above the expected level of performance and students who performed below the expected level of performance. There were no comparisons with the writing domain, as the writing proficiency scale is yet to be developed. Figure STF1.6 shows the average well-being scale scores by year level and student performance. Figure STF1.6 shows the average well-being scale scores by year level and student performance.

Figure STF1.6: PILNA Wellbeing Scale

Average scores of students on well-being scale by year level and proficiency, Tonga, PILNA 2021

The PILNA scale for student wellbeing 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 the answers to nine out of thirteen questions about students' well-being related experiences.

Numeracy

Year 4 199 (2.3) ● ——— ● 205 (3.1)

Year 6 198 (2.7) ● ——— ● 202 (2.2)

Reading

Year 4 200 (2.2) ● ——— ● 200 (2.6)

Year 6 201 (2.7) ● ——— ● 202 (2.1)

- Scale score for students below expected proficiency level
- Scale score for students at or above expected proficiency level
- Statistically significant correlation ($p < 0.05$)
- () Standard errors appear in parentheses

In numeracy, both year four and year six students who performed at or above the expected level of performance had higher well-being scores on average than students who did not meet the expected levels of performance. This means that students



who met the expected levels of performance in numeracy had greater levels of well-being, based on this PILNA student well-being scale.

There were no associations between reading performance and well-being scale scores.

What does this mean?

Only half the students in Tonga, at least most of the time, are cheerful, have good days, and look forward to the next day. Many students in Tonga are regularly experiencing positive well-being but a substantial proportion are not. Also, about one out of five students across the region are frequently experiencing challenges to well-being, such as feeling hungry, tired, upset, sad/unhappy, not having enough friends, or not having enough pocket money.

Students who met the expected levels of performance in numeracy had greater levels of well-being than students who did not. Regardless of whether well-being is associated with student performance in any way, the identified well-being challenges need to be addressed by stakeholders.