

EI Summary of the main findings, policy recommendations and commentary

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Chapter 1 Overview of TALIS

What is TALIS?

The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) is the only international, large-scale survey that focuses on the working conditions of teachers and the learning environment in schools. TALIS aims to provide valid, timely and comparable information to help countries review and define policies for developing a high-quality teaching profession.

TALIS examines the ways in which teachers' work is recognised, appraised and rewarded. TALIS assesses the degree to which teachers' professional-development needs are being met. The study provides insights into the beliefs and attitudes about teaching that teachers bring to the classroom and the pedagogical practices that they adopt. TALIS also describes the role of school leaders and examines the support that they give their teachers. Finally, TALIS examines the extent to which certain factors may relate to teachers' feelings of job satisfaction and self-efficacy.

The first cycle of TALIS was conducted in 2008 and surveyed teachers and school leaders of lower secondary education in 24 countries. The initial report, *Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS*, published in 2009, provided valuable findings that are still being used today. Two thematic reports were also written using the TALIS 2008 data. They were *The Experience of New Teachers: Results from TALIS 2008* and *Teaching Practices and Pedagogical Innovation: Evidence from TALIS*.

TALIS 2013 has expanded to include additional countries. While maintaining the focus on lower secondary education, TALIS 2013 also gave countries the option of surveying teachers in their primary and upper secondary schools. Some countries chose to conduct the survey in schools that participated in the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) through an option that is referred to as the TALIS-PISA link.

TALIS 2013 Policy Themes

The themes selected for study in the second cycle of TALIS were chosen as part of a priority rating exercise by the countries participating in TALIS 2013. Countries decided to retain some topics that were covered in TALIS 2008 and added some new questions and indicators as well. The participating countries chose the following policy themes for TALIS 2013:

1. School leadership, including new indicators on distributed or team leadership.

2. Teacher training, including professional development and new indicators on initial teacher education.
3. Appraisal of and feedback to teachers.
4. Teachers' pedagogical beliefs, attitudes and teaching practices, including new indicators on the profile of student assessment practices.
5. Teachers' reported feelings of self-efficacy, their job satisfaction and the climate in the schools and classrooms in which they work.

Limitations of the interpretation of results

TALIS results are based on self-reports from teachers and school leaders and therefore represent their opinions, perceptions, beliefs and accounts of their activities. This is powerful information because it provides insight into how teachers perceive the learning environments in which they work, what motivates teachers and how policies that are put in place are carried out in practice. But, as with any self-reported data, this information is subjective and therefore differs from objectively collected data.

In addition, as a cross-sectional survey, TALIS cannot measure causality. For instance, in examining the relationship between school climate and teacher co-operation, it is not possible to establish whether a positive school climate depends on good teacher co-operation or whether good teacher co-operation depends on a positive school climate. Finally, because TALIS cannot measure teaching effectiveness directly, it looks at themes that are not only policy priorities for participating countries but have also been shown in the research literature to be associated with high-quality teaching.

Position of Education International

Education International welcomes TALIS 2013 Report as an important next step to give particular attention to the conditions under which teachers carry out the most important part of their job, namely teaching and facilitating active learning. EI has been actively consulted throughout the development of TALIS and we gave our feedback and recommendations on questionnaire development. Nevertheless, we should remain critical towards possible interpretations of TALIS results by policy makers and media who may seek simple conclusions and may not respect limitations of the interpretation of results, as clearly emphasized by OECD.

Chapter 2 Teachers and their schools

Summary of TALIS finding

-More than half of lower secondary teachers in all TALIS countries and economies except Japan are women, and in 22 countries two-thirds or more of teachers are women. Furthermore, several countries may face the prospect of significant teacher shortages as a result of large numbers of teachers reaching retirement age.

-Teachers who benefited from formal education that included content, pedagogy and practical components for the subjects they teach feel better prepared for their work than their colleagues whose formal education did not contain these elements.

-More than a third of teachers work in schools where the school principal reported a significant shortage of qualified teachers. Additionally, almost half of teachers work in schools where there is a reported need for teachers of students with special needs and a need for support personnel.

-Across most TALIS countries and economies, the majority of teachers work in environments with a positive professional climate among the teaching staff. This positive climate is characterised by a common set of beliefs, mutual respect for colleagues' ideas, a culture of sharing success, high levels of co-operation between the school and the local community and the ability to have open discussions about difficulties.

-Most teachers work in schools in which there is little to no authority at the school level for making decisions related to teacher pay. In almost all countries, however, a large proportion of teachers work in schools that enjoy a high level of autonomy for establishing student disciplinary procedures or selecting the learning materials used.

-On average, 83% of teachers across countries are employed permanently and 82% are employed full time. The worrying trend is that 12% are on fixed-term contracts of less than one school year.

-In majority of countries experienced teachers are more likely to be working in less challenging schools than in more challenging schools, regarding socio-economic background of students. Also, in most countries, teachers with higher levels of education and experience are more likely to work in areas that are more urban, as opposed to more rural. So, there is unequal distribution of teachers across education systems.

TALIS Policy Recommendations

- *Provide extra support to less experienced or more experienced teachers in the workforce, based on their specific needs*
- *Review the allocation of teachers across the system and develop policies to attract teachers to more challenging schools*
- *Ensure that schools are given more autonomy in the right areas, for the right reasons*

Education International commentary

EI generally agrees with these policy recommendations. While it is completely acceptable that more or less experienced teachers receive extra support, it should be emphasized that all teachers would deserve support based on their specific needs. Regarding school autonomy, we agree that school autonomy in general is not a panacea to all problems, it really depends what that autonomy entails for whom. Indeed, as OECD points out while TALIS data identify in which countries principals report that their school enjoys less autonomy for certain tasks, this does not necessarily indicate that more autonomy is needed in all of these areas. As data from the OECD PISA indicate, schools tend to perform better when higher levels of autonomy in certain areas are also paired with higher levels of support and accountability. The issue of how to attract teachers to more challenging schools was discussed at the 2014 International Summit on the Teaching Profession. EI made it clear that while policies for attracting teachers to more challenging schools was important, they also needed additional support and supportive, rather than punitive evaluation.

Chapter 3 the Importance of School Leadership

Summary of TALIS findings

-Principals in countries and economies taking part in the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) have a demanding and far-ranging set of responsibilities. On average, principals spend the most time (41%) managing human and material resources, planning, reporting and adhering to regulations.

-In some countries, principals who show high levels of instructional leadership are more likely to report using student performance and student evaluation results to develop the school's educational goals and programmes and to report working on a professional development plan for their school.

-Principals with higher levels of instructional leadership tend to spend more time on curriculum and teaching related tasks, and in most countries they are more likely to directly observe classroom teaching as part of the formal appraisal of teachers' work in their school.

-The gender distribution of principals differs from the distribution of teachers. Although the majority of teachers in all but one country are women, the proportion of female principals is generally lower.

-Across TALIS countries and economies, principals are well educated. The majority of principals have completed formal education at the tertiary level, which, on average, included participation in school administration or principal training programmes, teacher preparation programmes or instructional leadership training.

-On average across TALIS countries and economies, school principals have 21 years of teaching experience.

-While principals who report high levels of distributed leadership and instructional leadership also report higher job satisfaction, heavier workloads and lack of shared work and decision making have a negative relationship with principals' job satisfaction.

TALIS Policy Recommendations

- *Develop formal programmes to prepare school leaders to enter the profession*
- *Provide opportunities and remove barriers for continuing professional development for principals*
- *Encourage the use of distributed leadership among school principals*
- *Ensure that principals receive training in and have opportunities to employ instructional leadership*

Education International commentary

EI welcomes the policy recommendations, especially one on distributed leadership, when principal shares decision making within the school with teachers. On average across TALIS countries, the vast majority of principals (more than nine in ten) agree that there is a collaborative school culture in their schools (which is characterised by mutual support) or that the school provides staff with opportunities to participate in decisions. Along those same lines, only about a third of principals agree that they make important decisions on their own. This would indicate that, according to school leaders, most schools in TALIS countries enjoy some level of distributed leadership for decision making. On a critical note, there is too much emphasis on school leaders being responsible for student learning outcomes, implying constant measurement and monitoring of student test results

and holding teachers accountable. EI believes that instead much greater focus should be placed on the training of principals in how to develop and apply distributed leadership practices.

Chapter 4 Developing and Supporting Teachers

Summary of TALIS findings

-In the participating countries and economies, an average of 88% of teachers in lower secondary education report engaging in professional development in the past year. Slightly lower participation rates are found among males and especially among non-permanent teachers. Having taken part in formal induction programmes in the past appears to be an important predictor of teachers' participation in professional development in later years.

-Although school principals report that induction programmes are currently available at their schools, on average, not even half of teachers report taking part in some induction practice in their first regular employment.

-The level and intensity of participation in professional development activities are influenced by the types of support that teachers receive to undertake them. In general, teachers report higher participation rates in professional development activities in countries where they also report higher levels of financial support. However, in some cases participation rates in professional development activities is high even though monetary support is not offered. In these cases, non-monetary support for teacher development is provided through scheduled time for activities that take place during regular working hours at the school.

-Teachers report that the areas of most critical need for professional development are in teaching students with special needs and developing information and communication technology (ICT) skills for teaching. One in five lower secondary teachers identified the former to be especially important for them, which implies that teachers do not feel fully prepared to cope with this challenge.

-Across the participating countries and economies, teachers most commonly reported reasons for not participating in professional development activities are conflicts with work schedules and the absence of incentives for participation.

TALIS Policy recommendations

- ***Encourage schools to offer formal induction programmes for new teachers and urge teachers to attend***
- ***Support teachers' participation in mentoring programmes at all levels of their careers***
- ***Ensure availability of and participation in professional development for all teachers***
- ***Remove barriers to teachers' participation in professional development***

Education International commentary

EI strongly supports the policy recommendations in this chapter, especially the one on removing barriers to teachers' participation in professional development. As TALIS report finds, in many countries, a significant number of teachers also report that they simply do not have access to professional development offerings relevant to their needs. If teachers do not have the time or flexibility in their work schedule or if there are no offerings available, it will be very difficult for them

to participate. The absence of incentives for participation, such as monetary or non-monetary rewards, is equally serious. Incentives could also include recognition among colleagues or a connection to a teacher's development plan that might further motivate them to seek professional development. But most importantly, in EI's view teachers should be given enough of their paid working time for professional development.

Chapter 5 Improving Teaching Using Appraisal and Feedback

Summary of TALIS Findings

-Teachers receive feedback from multiple sources. On average across TALIS countries nearly 80% of teachers report getting feedback following classroom observation, and nearly two-thirds report receiving feedback following analysis of student test scores.

-Teachers report that the feedback they receive focuses on several aspects of their teaching. Nearly nine in ten teachers on average report that student performance, teachers' pedagogical competency in their subjects and classroom management are strongly emphasised in their feedback. Teachers less frequently reported that they considered feedback from students and parents to be moderately or highly important.

-More than six in ten teachers report that appraisals lead to positive changes in their teaching practices and more than half report that appraisals lead to positive changes in their student assessments and classroom management. However 43% of teachers report that teacher appraisal and feedback has little impact on their classroom teaching.

-Formal appraisal of teachers has little to do with giving financial recognition to high-performing teachers or advancing the careers of high performing teachers. Annual increments in teacher pay are awarded regardless of the outcome of formal teacher appraisal in all but about one fifth of teachers' schools. 44% of teachers work in schools where the school principal reports that formal teacher appraisal does not result in career advancement.

-Formal teacher appraisal appears to have a developmental focus in most schools. More than one in eight teachers work in schools where formal appraisal leads to teacher development or training plans.

-While most teachers receive various forms of feedback, comprehensive systems of teacher appraisal and feedback that are connected effectively to improving teaching practice and student learning in schools are much less common. Peer observation and mentoring is much less common.

-On average nearly half of teachers report that teacher appraisal and feedback systems are largely undertaken simply to fulfil administrative requirements.

-Teachers perceive that, overall systems of appraisal and feedback are not operating well.

TALIS Policy Recommendations

- ***Ensure that multiple avenues from different sources are in place for teachers to receive feedback from their work.***
- ***Promote the use of comprehensive sources of data for teacher appraisals, (including school leaders ensuring that regular classroom observations take place in a trusting environment).***
- ***Ensure that formal teacher appraisal feeds into professional development.***

- *Establish a comprehensive and coherent framework for teacher appraisal.*
- *View teacher appraisal as a tool for teacher learning.*

Education International Commentary

This chapter paints a remarkable picture of the realities of formal appraisal. There is little correlation between countries which are deemed to be ‘high performing’ and the incidence of comprehensive formal appraisal schemes in individual countries. While teachers welcome constructive feedback which enhances their teaching and believe that appraisal is at its most positive when it leads to high quality and relevant professional development, the finding that teachers believe overall systems of appraisal are not working well is very significant. It places a major question mark over why such schemes have been established in the first place. If teachers don’t believe appraisal is working well it won’t be effective.

While there are some comprehensive appraisal schemes that work well in terms of enhancing teacher self-efficacy the evidence that around half of the teachers surveyed thought that appraisal is there only for administrative purposes, has little impact on teaching and learning and fails to help in career advancement means that many countries’ appraisal systems should be radically reviewed. Indeed if appraisal is used for purposes such as high stakes evaluation linked to competency and performance based pay/compensation then it will simply create mistrust and be ineffective.

Nowhere in TALIS is there any evidence that performance based pay/compensation as part of appraisal for teachers improves teacher self-efficacy and motivation, or the quality of teaching and learning, or school standards. Attempts by any government to argue that TALIS supports this position would be wrong.

In this respect a number of TALIS’ recommendations are positive particularly with respect to appraisal leading to professional development and importance of trust in appraisal. However the emphasis on the need for multiple sources of evidence is a recipe for contradictory messages to teachers and increased administrative bureaucracy unless the system is shaped by the objective of supporting teachers’ learning and enhancing teachers’ self-confidence and efficacy.

The message behind the TALIS evidence is the same as the position taken by EI at the 2013 International Summit on the Teaching Profession. Any appraisal scheme must be developed in genuine partnership with teacher unions and based on trust. It also has to be a central part of an ethos of evaluation in the education system which is about enhancing the capacity and confidence of teachers and schools rather than about sanctions and punishment.

Chapter 6-‘Examining Teacher Practices and Classroom Environment’

Summary of TALIS Findings

-Teachers who have taken part in individual and collaborative research, observation visits to other schools or in a network of teachers are more likely to use teaching practices which involve small groups of pupils working together, create projects which last for more than a week for students to complete and use ICT for teaching. These practices also correspond with the two thirds of teachers who report a positive classroom climate.

-While there were wide variations in student assessment practice across all TALIS countries teachers generally report that they frequently observe student work, administer their own assessments and give immediate feedback and development.

-Teachers develop their own beliefs about teaching and learning which are not generally influenced by the school environments in which they teach.

-Overall teachers spend about 80% of their time teaching. However approximately one in four teachers in more than half the TALIS countries report losing at least 30% of their time to classroom disruption and administration that many teachers could benefit with help in managing classroom disruption.

TALIS Policy Recommendations

- *Either through professional development or initial teacher education provide further support to encourage teachers' use of active teaching practices in ICT.*
- *Promote teacher co-operation and a positive school climate through providing opportunities for teacher networking and professional development in mentoring and coaching.*
- *Provide development opportunities or feedback to improve teachers' classroom management skills with the overarching goal of maximising lesson-time learning opportunities for all students.*

Education International Commentary

This chapter eliminates the idea promoted by some that teachers are hostile to student assessment. The evidence is that teachers use it effectively to support their students' learning. Numerous other surveys have found that teachers are not opposed to student assessment but to the misuse of student results for accountability purposes.

The ability to engage in 'active teaching practices' is not only dependent on teachers having a range of pedagogic strategies to hand but on class size as well. It is much harder to organise children into small groups when overall class sizes are too high. Student behaviour problems are exacerbated by over large class sizes. The support that teachers need, including when teaching challenging children, is not only through more and effective professional development but through teacher/student ratios which enable one-to-one tuition and small group teaching. This is a resource issue. Indeed favourable student teacher ratios are essential for enabling differentiated, personalised teaching. Teachers should also be given time during the school day for teacher collaboration and networking to take place.

Chapter 7 Teacher Self-Efficacy and Job Satisfaction: Why They Matter

Summary of TALIS Findings

-Under a third of teachers believe that teaching is valued as a profession by society. In all but one TALIS country the extent to which teachers participate in decision-making is strongly correlated with the likelihood of teachers believing they are in a valued profession.

-Teachers who are provided with opportunities to take part in decision making in schools have higher levels of job satisfaction in all TALIS countries and higher feelings of self-efficacy in most countries. There is a particularly strong relationship between job satisfaction and teacher participation in all countries.

-Teachers with more than five years of work experience report higher levels of self-efficacy than their less experienced colleagues in 26 countries but lower levels of job satisfaction in 12 TALIS countries.

-Challenging classroom circumstances can affect teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction. In particular, an increase in the percentage of students with behavioural problems is associated with a strong decrease in teachers' job satisfaction in almost all countries.

-If teachers believe that appraisal and feedback helps them change their teaching practice they are likely to have high levels of job satisfaction. If they believe that appraisal and feedback is only carried out for administrative purposes there is a strong decrease in teachers' job satisfaction.

-If teachers have strong positive relationships with their colleagues including their school leaders, the detrimental effects on their job satisfaction and self-efficacy of challenging students can be negated. Relationships between teachers and students are exceptionally powerfully related to teachers' job satisfaction.

-Collaboration between teachers, whether through professional learning or collaborative practices is related to higher levels of self-efficacy and job satisfaction. In particular, teachers who report participating in collaborative professional learning five times a year or more also report significantly enhanced levels of self-efficacy in almost all countries and higher job satisfaction in two thirds of countries.

TALIS Policy recommendations

- ***Empower teachers to take part in decision making in schools.***
- ***Build teacher capacity, such as providing professional development in classroom management and additional classroom and pedagogical support, to more successfully and efficiently handle student behaviour problems.***
- ***Support the development of interpersonal relationships within schools by providing resources such as space where teachers can meet each other or time away from the classroom or administrative work in order to meet and develop relationships with students and colleagues.***
- ***Institute meaningful systems of appraisal and feedback that are connected with teachers' practice.***
- ***Encourage collaboration between teachers in professional development and classroom practices.***

Education International Commentary

This is a very important chapter. EI and Teacher Unions have consistently emphasised the importance of teachers being in control of their professional lives. EI's Unite for Quality Education campaign has highlighted how essential a strong self-confident, highly qualified teacher profession is to children's education.

The Chapter's welcome emphasis on the importance of teachers taking part in school decision making corresponds with EI's arguments that classroom teachers need to feel empowered and have the confidence to lead in their schools whether on pedagogy, the curriculum and its assessment or on school policies. In short the evidence in this Chapter points the importance of teachers' voices being heard. Collaboration rather than top down, autocratic management is the key to high quality education.

One of the most disturbing findings in TALIS is that under a third of teachers believe that teaching is valued as a profession by society. The new and immensely valuable evidence in TALIS is that if teachers feel in control of their professional lives in and outside school and if they have high levels of job satisfaction and self-efficacy then their belief that society values teaching is much stronger.

This has powerful implications for government policy. A valued profession means that people in society most committed to making a positive difference to young people's lives will want to become teachers. In short the best recruitment strategy to teaching is the self-confidence of the teaching profession itself.

Policies which undermine the self-confidence of teachers are self-defeating not only for governments but for the quality of education itself. This is probably the most important strategic message from TALIS.