

# Teaching and Learning International Survey

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## Origins and context

The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) gathers data about school teaching environments from teachers and school leaders, in close to 50 countries in its most recent cycle. TALIS stemmed from an OECD report, *Teachers Matter* (2005), which emphasised the importance of attracting, developing and retaining quality teachers in successful education systems (Ainley & Carstens, 2018). TALIS is a tool to assist educational reformers to improve the quality of teaching.

TALIS is the largest survey of its kind. It first collected data in 2008, from teachers and school leaders of lower secondary education across 24 countries. This was then followed by the second cycle in 2013, which included 38 countries and economies, and most recently, the 2018 cycle, with 48 countries and economies (OECD, 2020a)<sup>1</sup>. A fourth cycle of TALIS will be undertaken in 2024. As an OECD study, most of the participants in TALIS are members of that organisation, however, over a dozen non-OECD countries have also participated in TALIS, some of which have significantly lower levels of economic development than the OECD average.

Although led by the OECD, the development of TALIS involved collaboration with participating countries and economies, Education International (representing teacher unions) and the European Commission (OECD, 2021b). At the international level, TALIS 2018 was implemented by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), on behalf of the OECD, in partnership with Statistics Canada and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) (OECD, 2019).

## Purpose

The purpose of TALIS is to assist education systems to develop policies to improve the quality of teaching, through the provision of comparative data based on the perspective of educators (OECD, 2014). Furthermore, TALIS can be used as one source of evidence to inform the refinement of school leadership and teaching practices (OECD, 2020a).

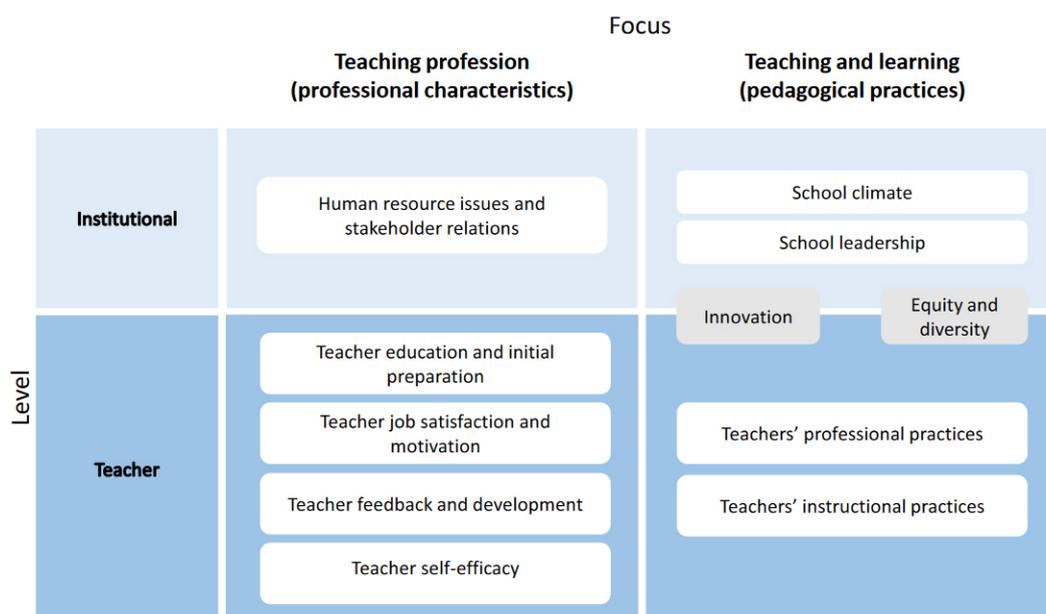
TALIS can also be used to inform and measure progress towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, the topics covered by TALIS relate closely to Target 4c: “By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states,” (UNESCO, 2015). TALIS questions that are relevant to this target include those related to teacher certification and the highest level of education that teachers have achieved (OECD, 2020a).

## Measurement objectives

TALIS data is based on the opinions, perceptions, beliefs and accounts of teachers and school leaders, as reported by them in a self-completion questionnaire (OECD, 2020a). The conceptual framework of previous cycles was refined for TALIS 2018.

The measurement constructs of TALIS are organised according to themes. These themes relate to multiple dimensions, but are arranged according to two key dimensions: focus and level. Themes can either be focussed on the teaching profession or teaching and learning, where the former concentrates on professional characteristics and the latter on pedagogical practices. Themes are also arranged according to the level it

<sup>1</sup> Alberta (Canada), Australia, Austria, Belgium (the Flemish Community of Belgium also participated as a sub-national entity of Belgium), Chile, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, England (United Kingdom), Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United States. Non-OECD member countries who participated in TALIS 2018 are – Brazil, Bulgaria, Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (Argentina), Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Malta, Romania, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Shanghai (China), Singapore, South Africa, Chinese Taipei, the United Arab Emirates and Viet Nam.



This figure has come from Ainley & Carstens (2018, p. 29).

**Figure 1: TALIS 2018 conceptual framework**

most relates to: teacher or institutional. The teacher level relates to themes directly associated with teachers' experiences and activities. The institutional level relates to school or system-wide practices, processes and policies (Ainley & Carstens, 2018). See Figure 1 for a visual depiction of the conceptual framework used in TALIS 2018, with each theme summarised above.<sup>2</sup>

### **Human resource issues and stakeholder relations**

This theme addresses teachers' working time, how to attract appropriate students into the teaching profession and the evaluation of teachers, along with the recognition and reward that stems from such evaluation (Ainley & Carstens, 2018).

### **School leadership**

Five dimensions of school leadership are conceptualised in TALIS: who principals are, what principals do, how leadership is distributed (such as amongst senior teachers), job satisfaction of principals, and system or network leadership (Ainley & Carstens, 2018).

### **School climate**

The multifaceted theme of school climate has been reduced to four dimensions: academic, community, safety and institutional. Together, these four dimensions enable comparison of school climate across countries, as well as the identification of relationships between school climate with other results from the survey (Ainley & Carstens, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that in the process of analysis, researchers are at liberty to derive themes from the data and to structure results according to labels that they judge as appropriate. Thus, there can be variation between the scales included in the reporting of results and scales discussed in the conceptual framework report."

### ***Teacher education and initial preparation***

This theme covers indicators that relate to years of experience as a teacher, professional development and teachers' education in specific content areas, as well as education in pedagogy. Furthermore, data is collected that enables the construction of initial education profiles (Ainley & Carstens, 2018).

### ***Teacher job satisfaction and motivation***

Teacher job satisfaction refers to the sense of gratification and fulfilment teachers experience (Locke, 1969). Teacher motivation relates to the reasons why people choose to become, and remain, teachers (Ainley & Carstens, 2018; Watt et al., 2012).

### ***Teacher feedback and development***

Teacher development includes initial teacher education, induction processes and experiences, and in-service professional development. Teachers receiving feedback on their practices and appraisal of their performance is an important element of teacher professional development (Ainley & Carstens, 2018).

### ***Teacher self-efficacy***

This concept refers to teachers' beliefs about their abilities to enact teaching practices that impact student learning (Klassen et al., 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Three aspects are included: classroom management, instruction, and student engagement (Ainley & Carstens, 2018).

### ***Teachers' instructional practices***

This theme is multifaceted and encompasses many teaching practices. Practices that TALIS concentrates on include classroom management, teacher support, clarity of instruction and cognitive activation (Ainley & Carstens, 2018).

### ***Teachers' professional practices***

This theme includes various professional activities that teachers engage in that can enhance their teaching efficacy. These activities include collaboration and participation in school decision-making (Ainley & Carstens, 2018).

### ***Innovation***

This theme cuts across dimensions. It includes the extent that teachers are open to, and apply innovative practices, and the extent that schools foster those practices (Ainley & Carstens, 2018).

### ***Equity and diversity***

This theme also cuts across dimensions. It relates to school policies and practices, responding to student socio-economic, as well as cultural and gender differences (Ainley & Carstens, 2018).

## **Background information**

TALIS collects a range of background information. This includes data about teachers' and principals' backgrounds, including gender, age, language, employment status, work experience and education. Additionally, teacher questionnaires elicit information about classroom contexts, including the class composition relating to student achievement, language, socioeconomic status, special needs, migrant background and refugee status. Similarly, the principal questionnaire elicits information about the school relating to location, school size, school type, funding model and student demographic composition (Ainley & Carstens, 2018).

This background data can be used to provide the context in which other results (such as teacher and principal perceptions) can be interpreted. Furthermore, background factors can be associated with other factors to inform education reforms (Ainley & Carstens, 2018).

## Target population and sampling methodology

The core target population of TALIS is teachers and principals who teach or lead schools at the lower secondary education level (ISCED 2). In addition, there are two international options in which participating education systems can choose to survey teachers and school leaders at primary school (ISCED level 1) and/or upper secondary level (ISCED level 3).

Participating countries and economies may also choose to participate in TALIS via the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which is known as the TALIS-PISA link. As PISA surveys students aged 15 years old (ISCED 2), the TALIS-PISA link allows countries to survey teachers and leaders of schools that enrol students of that age (OECD, 2020a). TALIS 2024 will be broadened to incorporate a wider range of educators, particularly those working in early childhood education and care centres. Furthermore, a module assessing teachers' general pedagogical knowledge will also be administered (OECD, 2021b).

In each education system that participates in TALIS, 200 schools are sampled, with 20 teachers and one school leader in each school surveyed. Both schools and teachers are randomly selected for participation. However, some types of schools are excluded from the sample, such as institutions focussed on special needs and adult education (OECD, 2021b).

## Assessment administration

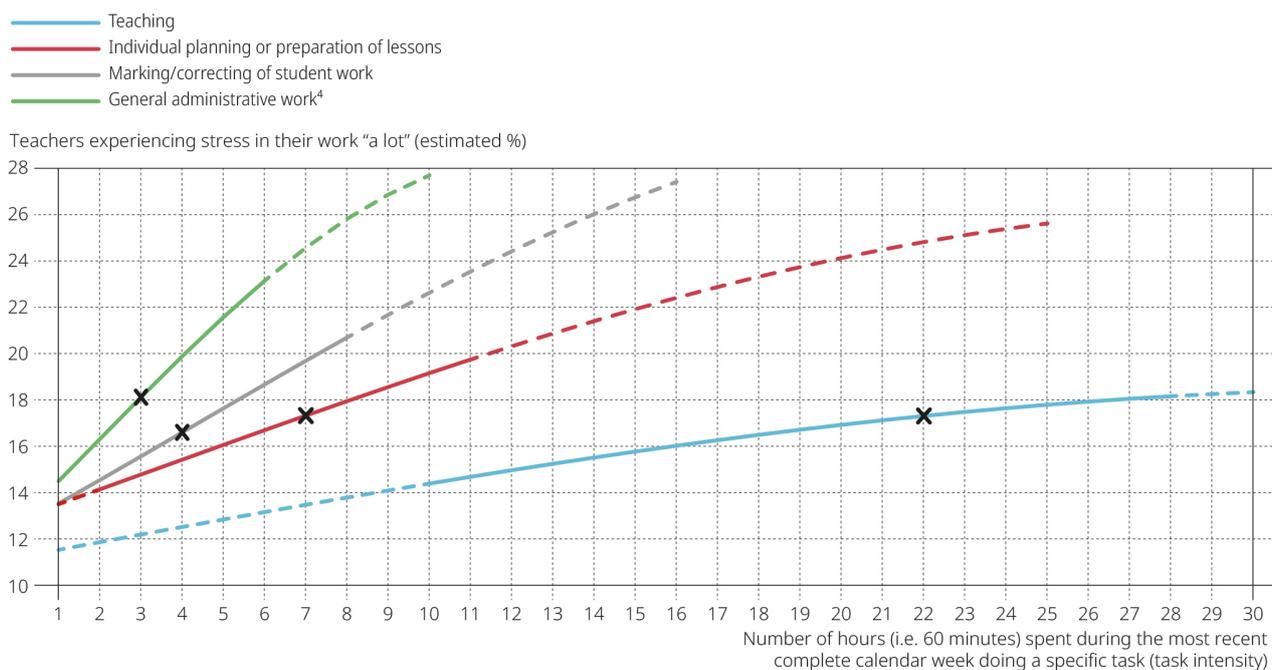
The selected teachers and school principals are asked to respond to a questionnaire, which takes between 45 and 60 minutes. The default survey administration is online, although in 2018 a few countries exclusively used paper and almost a dozen combined online and paper administration.

At a national level, the survey is prepared and coordinated by a national centre, led by a national project manager who is responsible for ensuring guidelines are adhered to. It is also recommended that each national centre employ a data manager to administer technical and data-related aspects of the survey administration. A sampling manager, who focuses on designing the national sample is also employed. To maintain quality control, independent observers are employed to monitor the administration of the survey in a subsample of the participating schools (OECD, 2019). Furthermore, the international survey centre regularly communicates with the national centres, offering advice and support.

## Reporting and dissemination

The results of TALIS in 2018 were reported in two volumes, with each chapter focusing on an aspect of the work of teachers and principals (OECD, 2020a). There is a focus on professionalism in teaching, with five pillars identified and explored:

- knowledge and skills required to teach;
- perceived prestige of the profession;
- career opportunities;
- collaborative culture among teachers; and
- the level of professional responsibility and autonomy of teachers and school leaders.



This figure is from OECD (2020b, p. 97).

**Figure 2: Example of TALIS chart**

The report makes international comparisons to enable benchmarking. The data is not (nor can it be) used to appraise individual teachers, school leaders or schools. Additionally, in 2018, trends were depicted across the three cycles of TALIS, with this being extended in future cycles (OECD, 2020a).

Much of the data is presented as the percentage of respondents from each country/economy who indicate a position. Relationships between certain variables are explored, such as between teachers' experiences of stress at work and task intensity. These relationships are depicted in Figure 2.

Countries may use the data to produce their own country reports, as Australia did with the 2018 cycle (Thomson & Hillman, 2019a, 2019b). The OECD also makes key findings easily accessible via its websites using a suite of communication materials including videos, podcasts, country notes, brochures and charts (OECD, 2021a).

## Influence

TALIS is designed to help education systems provide better learning environments, with a particular focus on supporting teachers and school leaders. The reports provide policy recommendations to support educational reform. Government departments have recognised the value of its recommendations and the information TALIS provides, and use the data provided to inform policies. For example, the UK Government used data from TALIS 2018 to better understand teacher working conditions, turnover and attrition (Sims & Jerrim, 2020).

Similarly, the Australian Government Minister for Education stated that it will use the results of TALIS, "as an evidence-base that will help focus and drive reform," (Gillard, 2009). TALIS results have been particularly noted by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, which is tasked with improving teacher expertise (AITSL, 2017).

Teachers' unions and associations pay close attention to the results of TALIS and use it to advocate for better conditions and support. This enables and supports job satisfaction and improved workforce retention (AEU, 2019; AFT, 2014; NEU, 2020).

Data from TALIS has also been widely used by academic and research institutes to develop effective teaching and leadership strategies, which can then be adopted and adapted by policymakers and practitioners (Scheerens, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Watt et al., 2012).

With teacher and school leadership efficacy being given attention by policymakers, TALIS provides the richest international comparative dataset to monitor teaching and school leadership practices.

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