



Executive summary


This report examines the nature and extent of support for teacher professionalism using the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2013, a survey of teachers and principals in 34 countries and economies around the world, with data collected from an additional 4 systems after the original data collection, making a total of 38. Teacher professionalism is conceptualised here as a composite of three domains: 1) a knowledge base, which includes necessary knowledge for teaching (including pre-service and in-service training); 2) autonomy, which is defined as teachers' decision making over aspects related to their work; and 3) peer networks, which provide opportunities for information exchange and support needed to maintain high standards of teaching. It then measures the extent of teacher professionalism in an education system by calculating the average number of best practices that teachers benefit from across TALIS countries and economies.

DOMAINS OF TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

Despite substantial system-level variation, there are clear areas of emphasis across the three domains of teacher professionalism. For example, the report finds that teachers have more support for pre-service education than in-service professional development. They are least likely to receive financial support for in-service professional development outside working hours.

Across all TALIS countries and economies, school-based autonomy is the domain with the least support overall. Since items related to teacher autonomy were asked only in the principal questionnaire, they represent practices as they apply to the entire school as reported by principals rather than individual teachers. According to these reported practices, teachers exercise decision making over only two areas of a possible five, on average. With respect to support for peer networks, teachers are most likely to have received feedback from peers and supervisors based on direct observations, and are less likely to participate in a network of teachers devoted to professional development or a formal induction programme.

While most of the analysis is focused on lower secondary teachers (ISCED 2), the report finds important differences across school levels. Both primary and lower secondary teachers are much more likely than upper secondary teachers to have gone through a pre-service education programme. In contrast, at the upper secondary level, teachers are likely to have higher levels of autonomy compared to primary and lower secondary.



In addition, there are important differences in how TALIS countries and economies approach teacher professionalism. Although most countries and economies have similar support systems for their teachers' knowledge base, there are larger differences across educational systems in terms of their support for peer networks, and substantial differences in terms of the amount of school-based decision making (i.e. autonomy) that teachers enjoy. In some systems teachers exercise very little autonomy as measured by TALIS 2013, whereas in others they participate in an average of four areas of decision making out of the possible five captured by this survey. As a way of identifying patterns across systems, the report proposes five models of teacher professionalism depending on the domain that is most emphasised (Chapter 2).

TEACHER SATISFACTION, STATUS, AND SELF-EFFICACY

In examining the relationship between teacher professionalism and policy-relevant teacher outcomes: perceived status, satisfaction with profession and school environment, and perceived self-efficacy, the report finds that overall levels of teacher professionalism are positively associated with all four outcomes. Both the knowledge base and peer networks scales are statistically significantly predictive of perceptions of higher status and satisfaction across all countries and economies, while the autonomy scale is generally not (with some exceptions).

The report also looks at country-specific relationships between teacher professionalism and teachers' satisfaction and perceptions of status and self-efficacy, and finds that the role of teacher professionalism matters more in some countries/economies than others. This suggests that country-specific policy environments and teaching cultures mediate the relationship between teacher professionalism and outcomes.

EQUITY CONCERNS IN TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

The report also examines professionalism support gaps, which are defined as differences in support for teacher professionalism in schools with high levels of disadvantage as compared to those with low-levels of disadvantage. High-needs schools are those schools which have a large percentage of their student body identified in one of three high-needs categories: second-language learners, students with special needs, or students that are socio-economically disadvantaged. In exploring the differences in teacher support present at high-needs and low-needs schools, the report found that the greatest variation in teacher support is often found in the autonomy domain. Although this must be interpreted with some caution, given that autonomy measures were surveyed in the principal questionnaire and therefore applied to all teachers in a school, it does suggest that, between high-needs and low-needs schools, the autonomy available to teachers, in general, differs. Across high-needs categories, the largest disparity in teacher support within countries occurs in schools at different levels of socio-economic disadvantage.

As can be expected, TALIS 2013 indicates that the way and degree to which teachers are supported can influence their satisfaction with their present employment. Important for equity concerns, the association between teacher professionalism support and teacher satisfaction is greater for teachers in high-needs schools, suggesting that one of the best investments such schools can make in increasing teacher satisfaction is providing practices that support teacher professionalism.

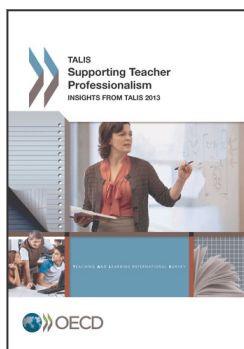
POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The report shows that overall higher levels of teacher professionalism are beneficial for teachers – however, it recognises the complexity of supporting teacher professionalism in different contexts. An important issue to consider is whether one model for teacher professionalism is preferable, or if a higher value on teacher professionalism is necessary and desirable in all educational systems.

This report does not make any assumptions about what policies will work best in any one education system, but does offer policy recommendations about how to support teacher professionalism. Specifically, this report suggests policies should consider:

- requiring teachers to participate in pre-service formal teacher education programmes that expose teachers to pedagogy and provide opportunities for practice teaching;
- expanding induction and mentoring programmes;
- supporting teachers in conducting classroom-based individual or collaborative research;
- encouraging teachers' participation in networks of other teachers for information exchange.

These policy interventions may be particularly beneficial in schools with high proportions of students who suffer from socio-economic disadvantage, and in secondary schools.



From:
Supporting Teacher Professionalism
Insights from TALIS 2013

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264248601-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2016), "Executive summary", in *Supporting Teacher Professionalism: Insights from TALIS 2013*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264248601-3-en>

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