



What helps teachers feel valued and satisfied with their jobs?

- Less than one in three teachers across countries participating in the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2013 believes that the teaching profession is valued by society.
- Nevertheless, the great majority of teachers in all surveyed countries are happy with their jobs.
- Challenging classrooms with large proportions of students with behavioural problems and the perception that appraisals and feedback are done simply as administrative tasks are among factors that tend to lower job satisfaction.
- Collaboration between teachers and positive teacher-student relationships, on the other hand, are among factors that can boost teacher job satisfaction.

What is TALIS?

TALIS is the first international survey examining teaching and learning environments in schools. It asks teachers and school principals about their work, their schools and their classrooms. This cross-country analysis helps countries identify others facing similar challenges and learn about their policies.

TALIS 2013 focused on lower secondary education teachers and their principals. It sampled 200 schools in more than 30 countries and 20 teachers in each school.

More information available at www.oecd.org/talis.

TALIS

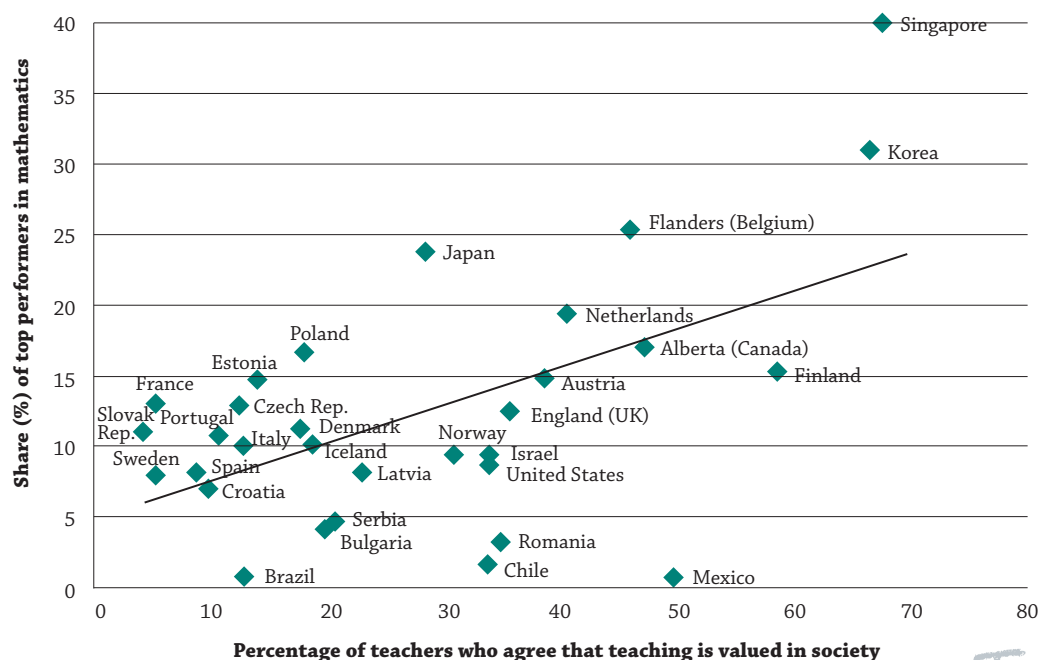
Few teachers feel that their profession is valued by society...

On average, more than two in three teachers across TALIS countries do not believe that teaching is a valued profession in society. This is an important finding because such perception can affect the number and quality of the candidates wishing to enter teaching, as well as the retention of teachers already on the job. There are big differences between countries in teachers' perceptions on that matter (see Figure 1).

Moreover, top performing systems are more likely to have teachers report that their profession is valued by society. Namely, there is a positive relationship between teachers' perceptions of being valued by society and a country's share of PISA mathematics top performers (Pearson $r = 0.49$), see Figure 1. TALIS also shows that empowering teachers can have a positive effect on their perceptions about their profession: participation in decision making increases teachers' perception of the profession being valued in society.



Figure 1 • **Relationship between teachers' perceptions of the value of their profession and the share of top performers in mathematics**



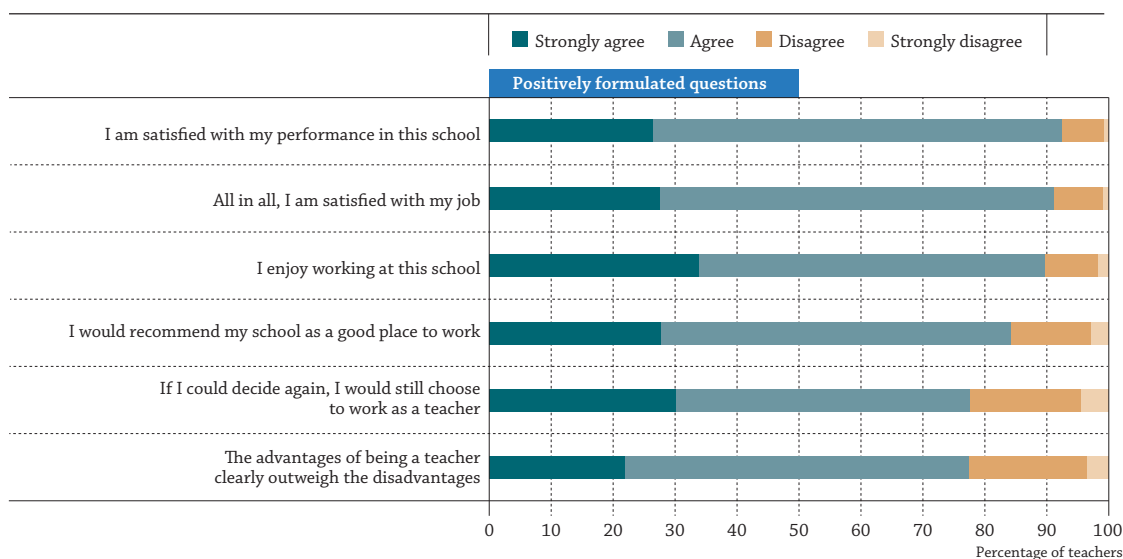
Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 and PISA 2012 Databases.

TALIS

... but most are satisfied with their jobs

Most teachers across TALIS countries are happy with their profession (see Figure 2). On average, 91% of teachers across countries report overall satisfaction with their job, 93% of all teachers report being satisfied with their performance in their current school, 84% would recommend their school as a good place to work and 90% say they enjoy working at their current school. Most teachers also report that the advantages of being a teacher clearly outweigh the disadvantages (77%) and that if they could decide again they would still work as teachers (78%).

Figure 2 • **Teacher job satisfaction**



Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database.



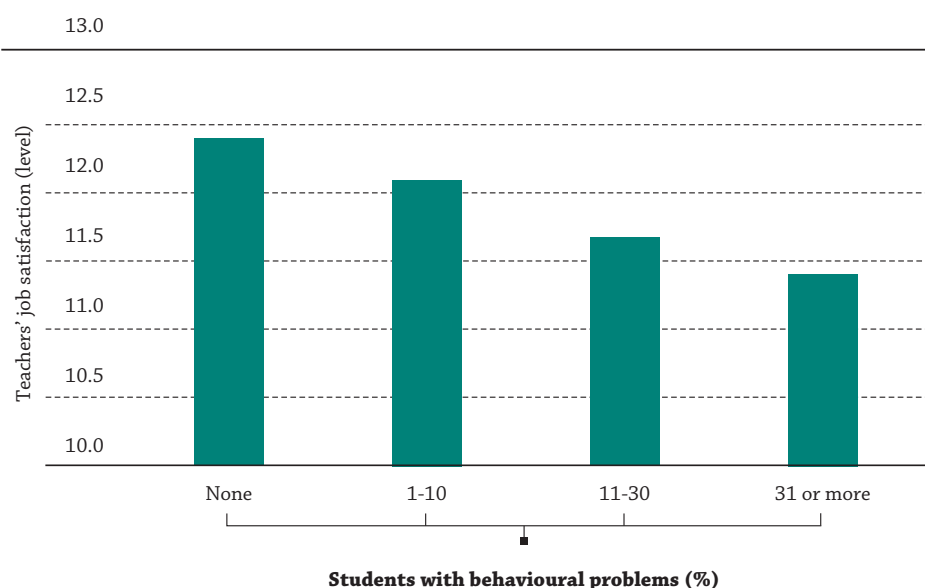
What this means in practice

The more satisfied teachers are with their profession and their working conditions, the more likely they are to stay in their jobs. Teacher satisfaction can also affect student outcomes, as more satisfied teachers are likely to be more motivated to improve and deliver good teaching. Most teachers are happy with their jobs but perceive the teaching profession as undervalued by the society. However, ensuring that teachers play an active role in school decisions can improve this view. This sends an important message for systems concerned with attracting good candidates and keeping teachers engaged.

Challenging classrooms, ineffective appraisal systems are among the work aspects that are linked to lower teacher job satisfaction...

Class size is not among the factors that are negatively associated with job satisfaction. Rather, TALIS findings suggest that class composition matters more. Results show that, in 29 countries, teaching in classrooms with more than 10% of students with behavioural problems is associated with lower job satisfaction (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 • Teachers' job satisfaction and class composition



Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database.

TALIS also suggests that it is not only important to offer appraisal and feedback to teachers, but also to do so in a meaningful way. Teacher feedback is generally associated with increases in job satisfaction in at least 17 TALIS countries, depending on the type of feedback. However, teachers who believe that appraisal and feedback are performed only as an administrative task display lower job satisfaction in all TALIS countries.

... while involvement in decision making, teacher collaboration and positive teacher-student relationships are associated with higher job satisfaction.

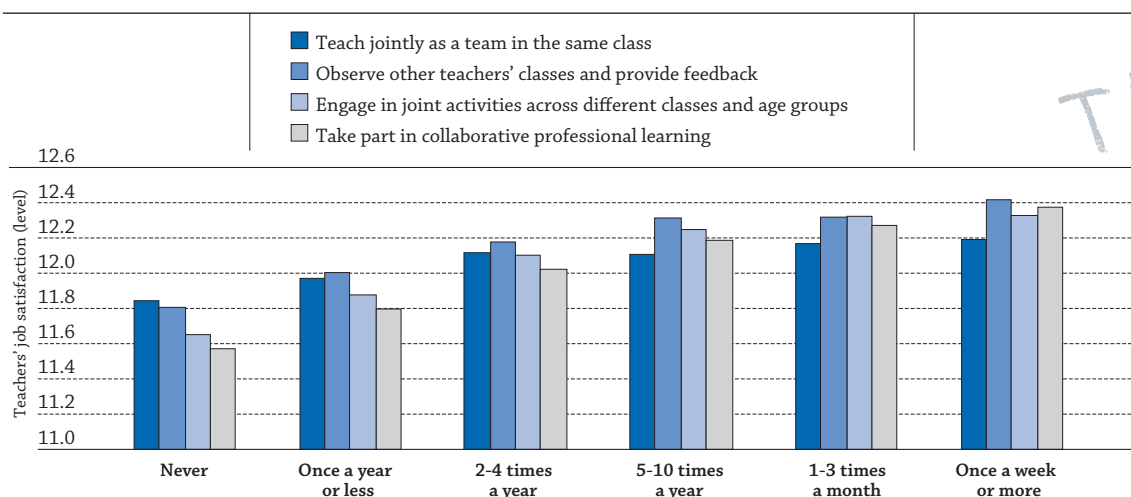
Teaching does not happen in a social vacuum, of course, and most of positive teacher experiences also depend on their relationships with their colleagues. Indeed, TALIS shows that professional collaboration among teachers is positively associated with job satisfaction (see Figure 4).

Positive teacher-student relationships also matter. The extent to which students and teachers get on well, teachers support students in need, care about student well-being and about what students say are all strongly and positively associated with teachers' job satisfaction. Moreover, the positive relationships that teachers develop in their schools



can buffer the negative impact of challenging classroom composition. In nearly all countries where teaching classrooms with behavioural problems is associated with lower levels of job satisfaction, having positive in-school relationships decreases the magnitude of this negative association. Finally, teachers who report that they have opportunities to participate in decision making have higher levels of job satisfaction in all TALIS countries.

Figure 4 • **Teachers' job satisfaction and professional collaboration**



Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database.

What this means in practice

As might be expected, working in challenging classrooms can lead to lower levels of job satisfaction and negatively affect the learning environment, but positive relationships in the schools and building a collaborative work environment are an important way to support teachers facing challenging circumstances. Teachers who have a say in how their schools are managed and who receive meaningful appraisals are more likely to be happy with their jobs.

The bottom line TALIS shows that there is a number of mechanisms which can enhance teacher job satisfaction. For instance, meaningful teacher appraisal can help teachers improve and be professionally satisfied. In addition, TALIS findings emphasise the need to empower teachers to be part of decision-making processes, as well as underscore the social nature of teaching: the importance of positive relationships with students and collaboration among teachers.

References

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To learn more

OECD (2013), *TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris.
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