How do we know if teachers are well? Developing and evaluating the psychometric properties of a teacher well-being questionnaire using a sample of El Salvadoran Teachers

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FHI360

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El Salvador

**Teacher Profile**
National teachers working in insecure settings

**Topic**
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### DESCRIPTION OF CRISIS-SPECIFIC CHALLENGE

To inform policy and advance research in low-income and conflict-affected contexts about teacher well-being, we need measurement tools that are not only reliable, valid, comparable, and feasible, but also contextually relevant. For education systems, school districts, and school-based leadership to adequately support teachers, they first need to know if teachers are well. Several measurement tools for teacher well-being with strong psychometric properties have been developed and validated in developed and more stable contexts, but we do not know if they are adequate for collecting information about teachers’ well-being in low-income and conflict-affected contexts. Oftentimes researchers and practitioners use measurement tools developed in the United States, England, Germany, and the Netherlands with little adaptation, raising questions over whether the content of the tool still captures the construct in a different context.

In light of the current issues, FHI360 is supporting the development of a teacher well-being measurement questionnaire, which will help meet the call for research and for an increased understanding of current levels of teacher well-being in El Salvador. As a first in this process, the research team conducted a literature review, which resulted in four key teacher well-being constructs identified: emotional regulation, emotional exhaustion, stress, and classroom management self-efficacy. The team then conducted an inventory of measurement tools available and selected the following scales to comprise the questionnaire: Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (Gross and John 2003); Emotional Exhaustion Subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory—educators’ survey (Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter 1997); Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al. 1983); and self-efficacy for classroom management subscale of the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy 2001).

The questionnaire adaptation process consisted of two main phases: translation and cognitive interviews. First, the selected measures were translated from English to Spanish by one translator following the ITC Guidelines for Translating and Adapting Tests (International Test Commission 2018). Two additional translators verified the translation to ensure that items in the different scales held similar meaning as in the English language. The translation is a critical step, as items must be translated well linguistically to maintain comparison of responses across cultures (Beaton et al 2000) and to ensure they are capturing the underlying intended construct. In addition to a quality translation, items must also be adapted culturally to maintain content validity across different cultures (Beaton et al...
As part of the adaptation process, the research team conducted cognitive interviews with a sample of 25 local El Salvadoran teachers. Through cognitive interviewing it is possible to verify if “respondents are able to understand the questions being asked, that questions are understood in the same way by all respondents, and that respondents are willing and able to answer such questions” (Collings 2003, 229). Cognitive interviews provide additional evidence of content validity by assessing if respondents understand the items in the same way as intended by the original instrument. Adaptations to the questionnaire were made based on the results from cognitive interviews.

Data were collected through a self-reported paper-based questionnaire from a sample of 1,653 primary and secondary local teachers. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted separately for each of the 4 measures identified for the toolkit in order to determine if the questions linked to each of the constructs showed the expected pattern. To further investigate the psychometric properties of each construct we calculated means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and total item correlation. We also conducted a concurrent validity analysis.

**EVIDENCE AND OUTCOMES**

The psychometric assessment completed in this study suggested that the Spanish version of the different measures that comprise the well-being questionnaire have good content and construct validity. The internal reliability for the different scales is also acceptable. Thus, the teacher well-being toolkit can be used as a tool to measure teachers’ well-being in El Salvador. As a good practice, it is suggested that additional translations and validations be conducted in order to provide an enhanced tool to measure well-being across different cultures and to examine possible relationships between well-being and the implementation of additional teacher supports (both pre-service and in-service).

Descriptive statistics under this study demonstrate that teacher well-being is generally positive in El Salvador. Teachers do not experience high levels of emotional exhaustion at work or overall perceived stress and they tend to have a high level of confidence in their ability to manage disruptive behavior in the classroom. The statistics show that although teachers employ cognitive reappraisal strategies, suppression is also commonly used. This is concerning given that suppression has been associated with decreased well-being outcomes, such as depression and pessimism (Barsade and Gibson 2007; Côté and Morgan 2002).

The instrument also shows promise in aiding school administrators and practitioners in measuring teachers’ well-being in the El Salvadorian context. Administrators may find the instrument useful in determining teachers’ well-being as it relates to emotional regulation, perceived stress, emotional exhaustion, and classroom management self-efficacy. This information could be used by administrators to inform interventions, as well as measure the success of interventions. Additionally, the instrument could be used as a self-assessment tool by practitioners to highlight areas in which support, additional resources, and self-improvement can occur. Thus, future study in the utilization of the questionnaire is supported.

**LIMITATIONS, CHALLENGES, AND/OR LESSONS LEARNED**

One main limitation of this study is that it did not validate the teacher well-being measurement toolkit for program evaluation purposes. Further research is needed to determine if these tools are sensitive to program interventions of short duration and if they are able to detect change over time. Also, conducting a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is highly recommended as a next step.

**REFERENCES**


