

Measuring underlying traits about teachers

Often, when asking questions on Teacher Tapp, our direct interest lies in the precise answers you provide: the percentages selecting each response and any additional comments on the question itself. Yet, the potential of these questions extends beyond mere reporting of answers. At times, they form a vital piece of the puzzle in identifying underlying traits that are challenging to measure.

Consider, for instance, the complexities of attachment to teaching and a teacher's wellbeing. These are complex traits and cannot be sufficiently captured through a single question!

One of the strengths of Teacher Tapp is our ability to pose many questions, examining these traits from different perspectives. We can then use your responses to create a 'score' for each trait, using a technique called factor analysis.

Today, we shall provide a concise overview of some of these traits that we are uncovering, alongside a selection of intriguing preliminary findings...

Teacher Wellbeing

It is often theorised that a teacher's wellbeing plays a crucial role in their career decisions – be it pursuing a promotion, changing jobs, or even considering leaving the profession. However, as you are no doubt aware, wellbeing is influenced by a multitude of factors, including behaviour, workload, and leadership, to name just a few.

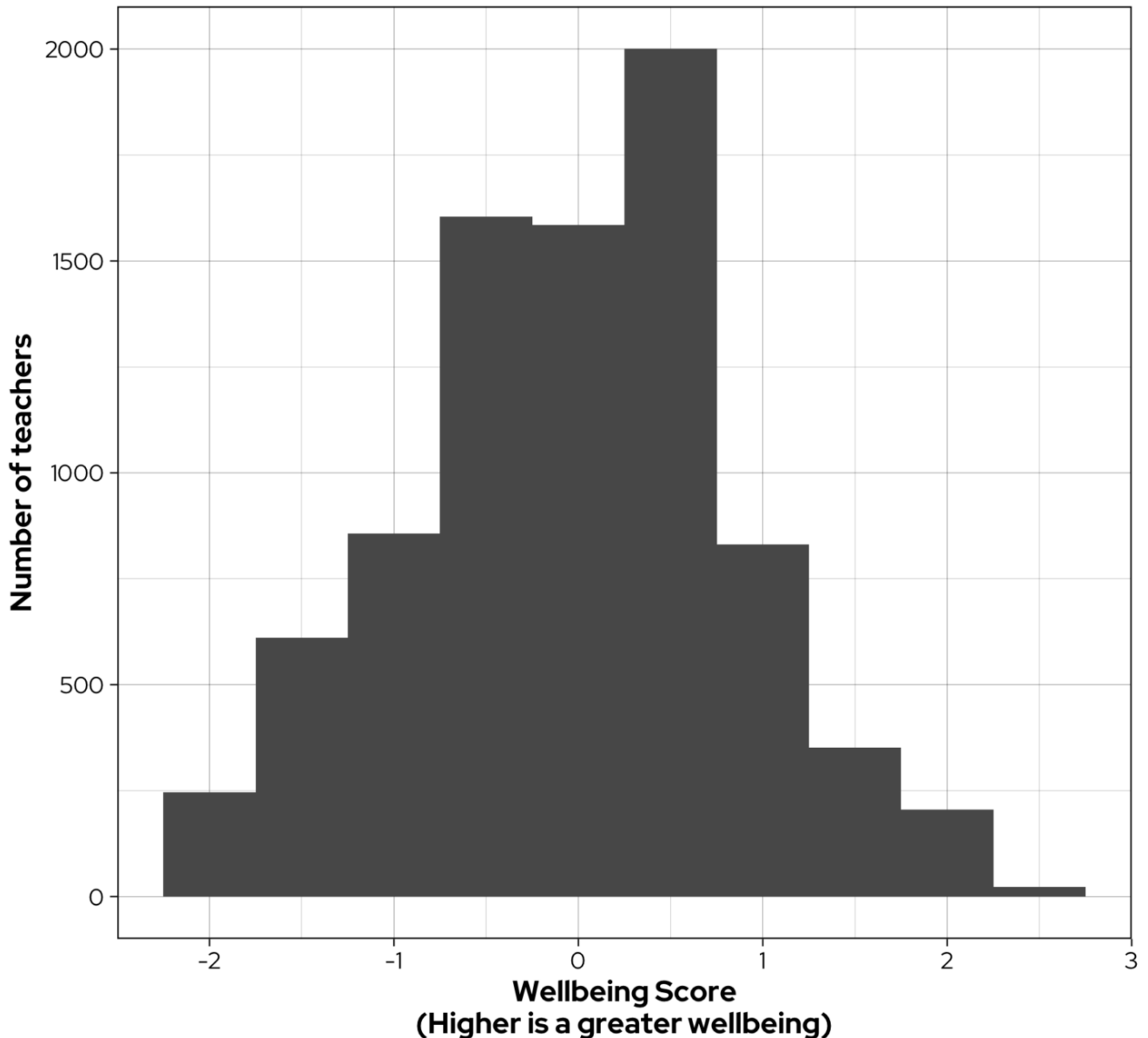
We wanted to try and create a 'wellbeing score' which could describe work-related wellbeing through three questions (after all, we ask three questions each day). We settled on the following three:

- Have you recently felt constantly under strain?
- To what extent are you suffering from burnout?
- Taking everything about life at work into consideration, I am currently...

These three questions can be combined to give a 'wellbeing score'. As with most outputs of a factor analysis, the 'score' on its own is relatively meaningless, and has an average of 0 across all teachers. By means of its construction, the distribution of these scores looks similar to a bell curve.

Wellbeing scores across all teachers

Output of a factor analysis, combining three questions about wellbeing, centre is ~0



The real power of this comes when looking between demographic groups, and over time. For example, teachers of Maths, Science and the Languages often report the highest wellbeing, as do classroom teachers without significant additional responsibilities. Male teachers also typically reported higher average wellbeing compared to female teachers.

However, even within our standard demographic groups, variation remains high.

Job Attachment

A second trait that's difficult to measure from a single question is job attachment. In this case, we are interested in the attachment to the teaching profession as a whole, rather than to an individual school. As above, we settled on three questions to capture intentions regarding the teaching profession:

- I don't seem to have as much enthusiasm now as I did when I began teacher training.
- How much do you agree with the following statement: "I would leave teaching if I could find a job that matched my salary."
- At the moment, how often does the thought of resigning from your job cross your mind?

Looking across seniorities, we see that senior leaders and headteachers report higher attachment to the profession in both primary and secondary phases. Middle leaders report the lowest attachment.

Other interesting differences include those with fewer than five years experience reporting the highest attachment to the profession. While seemingly counter-intuitive, in the context of the questions above perhaps it is not that surprising, with many having just left teacher training and in their first years of the job.

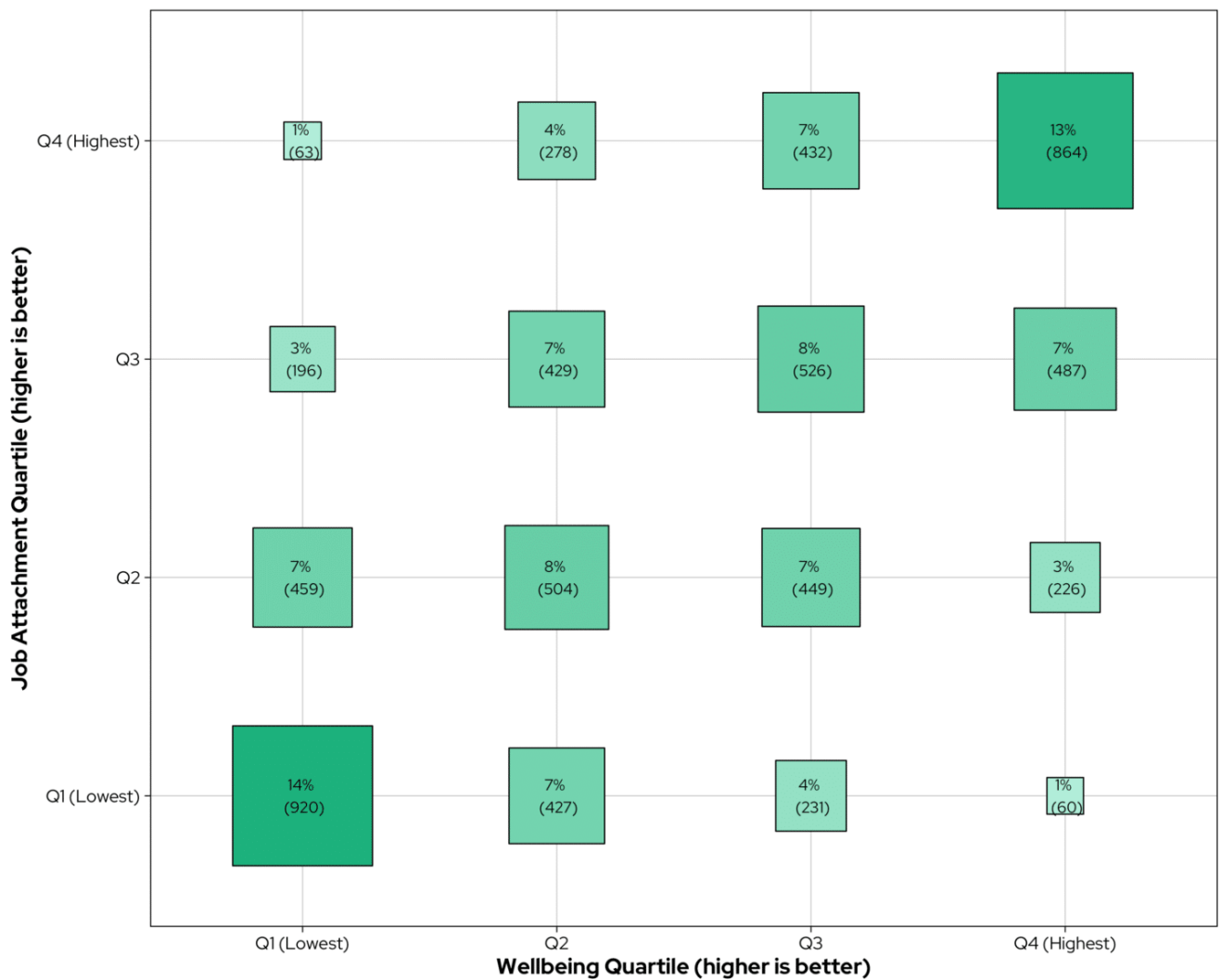
Although, as we've already mentioned there is huge variation within groups for these scores as well, so while the above shows secondary headteachers have a slightly higher job attachment compared to others, it forms a small part of the overall picture.

That's all well and good, but what about the relationship between these traits? Do those with lower wellbeing report lower job attachment?

Yes that is mostly the case! There is a strong correlation between one's wellbeing and one's attachment to the teaching profession. However, there are big groups of you who do not fit this pattern.

For example, 15% of teachers are in one of the bottom two quartiles of wellbeing (either Q1 or Q2) but one of the top two quartiles of job attachment (Q3 or Q4). So these teachers still report being very attached to the profession, despite reporting high levels of work stress at this moment in time.

Relationship between wellbeing and job attachment

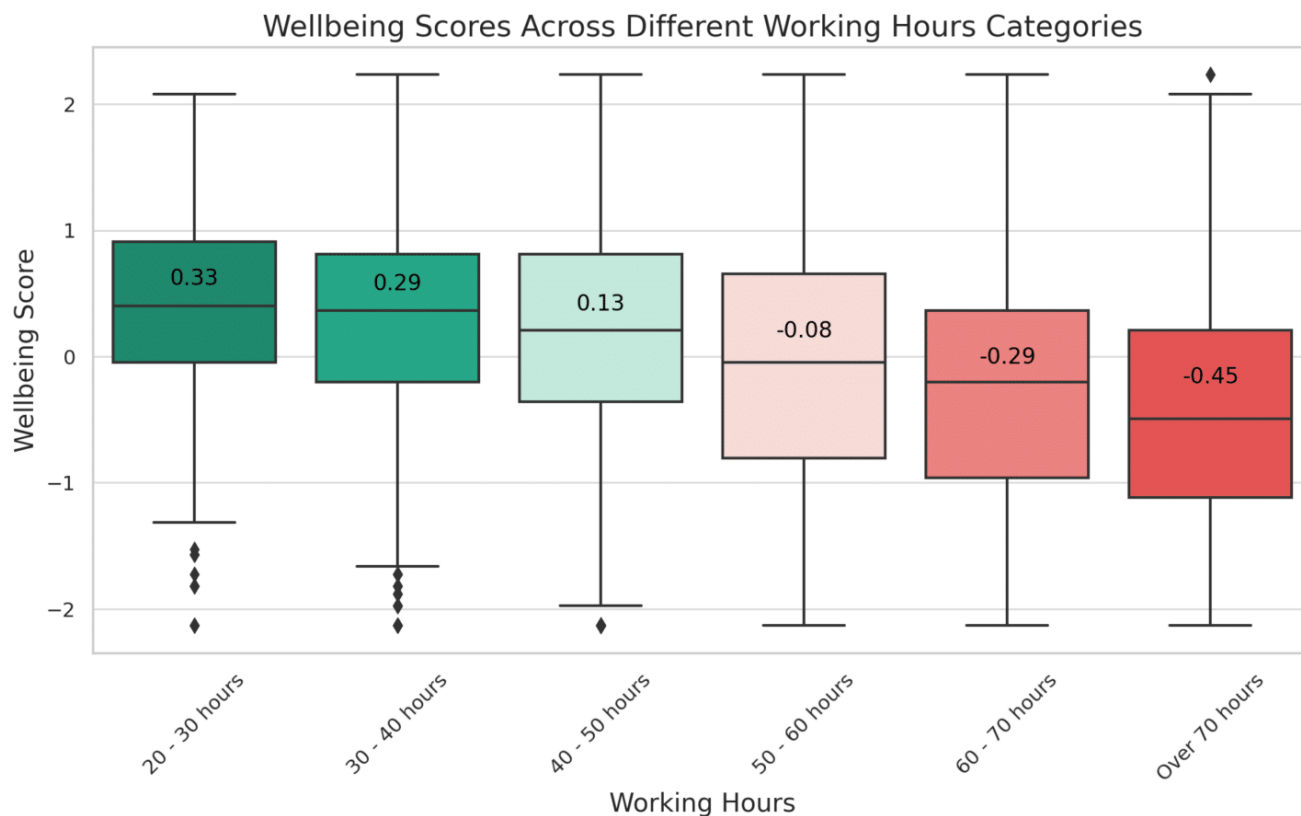


...and more!

There's lots more of these traits you can think of when you start thinking about it. Others we have considered include one's desire to improve at your job and how supported you feel in your working life. We've got lots of ideas we're excited to try out!

What's the point?

These traits are another really important tool in the arsenal when we talk about your responses. For example, just last week we included this chart looking at the impact of working hours on a person's wellbeing. As we saw above, there is a fair amount of variation, with some happier teachers working long hours!



That's not all, in our 2022 recruitment report, we included a similar kind of analysis and compared to some demographic groups. You can read about that [here](#).

And finally, as hinted at in a recent [blog post](#), there's more possible applications of these traits that we are yet to explore! As we look towards the future, we'll be sure to keep you updated of the ways we're using these traits!

Ups and downs

On the rise

■ 81% of secondary teachers saw students shoving or pushing in their school last week, up from 73% in July 2022

Heading down

■ 29% of classroom teachers said that students lacked equipment during their most recent lesson, down from 35% in 2022

Daily reads...

The most read article of the last week has been: [The National Curriculum should be restored or discarded](#)

And here are the rest for your reference:

- [Attendance: Communicating with Parents](#)
- [Practical strategies for image generation in education](#)
- [Remembering is recreating](#)
- [Solutions to chronic absenteeism](#)
- [Who wants to join a MAT?](#)

