Community and Youth Collaborative Institute
School Experience Surveys

Technical Report: Perceived Learning Supports

Teacher/Staff Version

Produced By:
Dawn Anderson-Butcher, Anthony J. Amorose, Aidyn Iachini, and Annahita Ball

Community and Youth Collaborative Institute
College of Social Work
The Ohio State University

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COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

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PERCEIVED LEARNING SUPPORTS

Teacher/Staff Version

I. Definition of Construct

The *Student Learning Supports* scale measures the degree to which teachers and staff perceive that there is a system in place to effectively link students to services which support their learning outside of the traditional classroom.

II. Relevance for Practice

Research has shown that by offering supports for learning beyond the traditional classroom, schools promote students' positive youth development and success in schools (Reeve & Hyungshim, 2006; Reeve et al., 2004; Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Wentzel, 1998).

III. Scale Description and Instructions

A. Items

1. Students in need of extra learning supports in my school are able to get them.
2. Teachers and staff in my school effectively refer students and families to support staff and other helping professionals.
3. There is a system in place in my school where teachers and staff can refer students and families who are in need of additional learning supports.
4. Students learning problems are identified early and acted upon in my school.
5. The learning supports and services in my school meet the needs of students.

B. Response Options

Response options for each item include the following:

1 = Almost never
2 = Sometimes
3 = Half of the time
4 = Frequently
5 = Almost always
* "Do Not Know"

C. Instructions for Respondents

We are interested in learning about your perceptions of the learning supports available for the students at your school. For each of the following statements, please fill in the ONE circle that best represents your answer.

D. Instructions for Scale Administers

Surveys can be self-administered or administered to teachers/staff in person or online. Explain that the purpose of the survey is to learn more about their perceptions about their students, school, and community. They should select one answer per request, and make a choice based on the answer that best reflects how they feel. They may submit the survey when they have completed it.

If administered in person, look through the finished surveys to make sure that teachers/staff didn't miss any items or questions. Please remember that they do not have to answer every question, but do encourage them to complete as much of the survey as possible, reminding them their answers will help the school know how to best support its students and personnel.

IV. Scoring Procedures

An average of the response scores from the 5 items should be calculated and used as an indicator of perceived learning supports, with higher scores indicating that school staff perceive that students have a higher degree of access to learning supports.

V. Psychometric Properties of the Scale

A. Description of Sample

Participants used to explore the psychometric properties of the scale included 708 school staff members from various elementary schools (52.3%), middle schools/junior high school (17.5%) and high school (30.1%) around the state of Ohio. The majority of participants indicated at least part of their duties at the school included teaching (85.2%), with the remainder reporting non-teaching duties (e.g., support staff, administration). The amount of experience working at the school ranged from 1-10 (54.2%), 11-20 (26.0%) to over 20 years (19.8%). Staff members (73.7% female) almost all identified themselves as Caucasian (94.2%). The participants varied in age with 11.0% reporting they were under 30 years of age, 40.7% indicated they were 30-44, and 48.3% were 45 years or older. Data on these staff members were collected as part of a needs assessment within each school's improvement planning process. Some data were collected using an on-line instrument, whereas others were collected via paper/pencil survey. School administrators informed teachers and school staff of the survey and distributed the surveys in a meeting or through mailboxes or provided the staff with a link to the online survey. All completed paper/pencil surveys were returned to a specified location in the building or to a person who was identified as the lead. All versions of the survey were anonymous.

B. Basic Descriptive Statistics and Relevant Group Differences

Sample	Mean	SD	Range	α
Full Sample (N = 708)	3.73	.88	1.20-5.00	.88
Gender				
Males (n = 146)	3.73	.90	1.60-5.00	.90
Females (n = 522)	3.74	.86	1.20-5.00	.87
Age				
Less than 30 years (n = 78)	3.89	.77	2.00-5.00	.84
30-44 years (n = 288)	3.69	.82	1.20-5.00	.85
45 years and above (n = 342)	3.72	.96	1.40-5.00	.90
Amount of Experience at the School				
1-10 years (n = 384)	3.76	.84	1.20-5.00	.86
11-20 years (n = 184)	3.70	.94	1.40-5.00	.90
More than 20 years (n = 140)	3.65	.92	1.60-5.00	.88
Role as Staff Member				
Teaching (n = 603)	3.71	.87	1.20-5.00	.87
Non-Teaching (e.g., support staff, administrators) (n = 105)	3.81	.94	1.40-5.00	.91
School Level				
Elementary (n = 370)	3.67	.88	1.40-5.00	.87
Middles School/Junior High (n = 124)	3.81	.98	1.20-5.00	.91
High School (n = 213)	3.78	.83	1.60-5.00	.87

Notes. Group specific data omits staff who did not indicate their status. All group comparisons were non-significant ($p<.05$).

C. Maximum Value Percentages and Classification of Scores

Percentages		Classification of Scores		
Maximum Value	½ *SD*	Excelling	Emerging	Needs Improvement
74.6%	8.8%	> 84	84 - 65	<65

Notes. The max value percentages reflect the scale mean divided by the number of response options in the scale. This value allows the subscale to be compared with other measured constructs measured in the CAYCI surveys, thereby providing relative information regarding the extent to which staffs' perceptions are favorable across constructs. The classification of scores provides ranges of values based on the maximum value percentage plus or minus ½ SD percentage. Based on these cut points, schools may determine where they stand on staffs' perceptions of the learning supports available for students at the school relative to normed data.

D. Relationships between Perceived Learning Supports Scale Score and Other Staff Perception Constructs

Construct [a]	*r* =
Student Academic Motivation	.236
Student School Connectedness	.258
Student Academic Press	.394
Student Internalizing Behaviors	.194
Student Psychological Well-Being	.289
Student Externalizing Behaviors	.159
Perceived Social Skills	.279
Perceived Student Safety	.301
Support for Students' Basic Needs	.175
Families and Caregivers' Support for of Learning	.260
Family History	.069
Family Support for Prosocial Activities	.220
Services and Supports	.364
Community Supports for Positive Youth Development	.320
Student Physical Activity and Nutrition	.251

Notes. [a] Average score on the respective subscale scores from the CAYCI surveys (Anderson-Butcher, Amorose, Iachini, & Ball, 2013). All relationship are significant (p<.01), with the exception of Family History which was non-significant (p>.05).

E. Factorial Validity

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using robust maximum likelihood estimation procedures in LISREL 8.80 (Scientific Software International, Inc., Chicago). The CFA model specified that the 5 items loaded on a single latent Perceived Learning Supports factor. The factor variance was freely estimated, as was the uniqueness for each item. No covariances between uniquenesses were modeled. The data were input using the asymptotic covariance matrix.

The overall fit of the model to the data was reasonably good based on commonly recommended cut off values for evaluating model fit (see Hu & Bentler, 1999), S-B χ^2 = 17.08, *df* = 5, *p* = .004; RMSEA = .058 (90% CI = .03-. 09), SRMR = .020; CFI = 1.00, TLI = .99. The table on the next page presents the completely standardized factor loadings and uniquenesses for each item. Squared multiple correlations averaged .59. The modification indices did not suggest any major areas of local strain.

Item	*Loading*	*Uniqueness*
Students in need of extra learning supports in my school are able to get them.	.75	.44
Teachers and staff in my school effectively refer students and families to support staff and other helping professionals.	.78	.40
There is a system in place in my school where teachers and staff can refer students and families who are in need of additional learning supports.	.78	.39
Students learning problems are identified early and acted upon in my school.	.74	.45
The learning supports and services in my school meet the needs of students.	.79	.38

VII. Past and Future Scale Development

An initial version of the Perceived Learning Supports scale included 2 additional items: "Teachers and staff in my school do not worry that asking for help from others indicates that they are not doing their job well" and "Teachers and staff work closely with school counselors, social workers, and other support staff in school". Results from preliminary analyses indicated that these items did not fit well with the other scale items. Thus, the current recommendation is to use the 5-item version of the measure as described in this report. Future scale development work should involve testing the psychometric properties of the scale with a larger sample of non-teaching staff (e.g., school administrators, support staff). Additional scale work is also needed to validate the Spanish version of this scale.

VII. Summary

Overall, the results of the psychometric testing indicate initial support for the reliability and validity of the Perceived Learning Supports scale. The use of this measure could provide valuable information about the quality of learning supports available in schools and relationship among these supports, youth development, and academic success.

VIII. References

Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A. J., Iachini, A., & Ball, A. (2013). Community and Youth Collaborative Initiative School Community Surveys. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.

Hu, L. & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling, 6,* 1-55.

IX. Recommended Citation of Scale

When using the scale for program evaluation or research purposes we recommend using the following citation:

> Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A. J., Iachini, A., & Ball, A. (2013). Community and Youth Collaborative Initiative School Community Surveys: Teacher/School Staff Perceived Learning Supports Scale. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.

If this scale is used along with additional Community and Youth Collaborative Initiative School Community Surveys then the following citation would be appropriate to cover all scales:

> Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A. J., Iachini, A., & Ball, A. (2013). Community and Youth Collaborative Initiative School Community Surveys. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.