PISA for Development: Enhancement of the contextual questionnaires

- PISA contextual questionnaires highlight the variation that exists among students and schools in a country and how this relates to performance. Current PISA questionnaires may not always capture the relevant variation for middle- and low-income countries – as indicated, for instance, by the fact that questions about school infrastructure and teaching and learning materials are strongly related to student performance in high-income countries, but are often unrelated to differences in performance in middle-income countries.

- PISA for Development (PISA-D) enhances the contextual questionnaires to better measure factors that are more strongly related to student performance in middle- and low-income countries while maintaining comparability with PISA on a set of core indicators.

- The PISA-D questionnaires increase the quantity of relevant information collected on students, teachers and schools in middle- and low-income contexts, emphasising inclusive environments, quality instruction, learning time and family and community support while also extending the PISA measure of students’ socioeconomic status.

In PISA, students answer a background questionnaire providing information about themselves, their learning environment, their homes and their attitudes to learning. In addition, principals and teachers included in the PISA sample complete questionnaires about their schools. The information collected from these questionnaires helps countries to explore connections between how students perform in PISA and factors such as learning opportunities in classrooms, leadership and school policies for professional development, migration, gender, and students’ economic, social and cultural status.

OECD analyses reveal that some of the educational inputs as currently measured by PISA are unrelated to differences in performance across schools in the majority of the middle-income countries that participated in PISA 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education inputs</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Countries with positive correlation with performance</th>
<th>Countries with negative correlation with performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical infrastructure</td>
<td>Index of quality of physical infrastructure</td>
<td>No country</td>
<td>Jordan, Romania, Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational resources</td>
<td>Index of quality of educational resources</td>
<td>Costa Rica, Romania</td>
<td>No country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher quality</td>
<td>Proportion of teachers with ISCED 5A</td>
<td>No country</td>
<td>Peru, Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-service training</td>
<td>Proportion of teachers having attended professional development</td>
<td>Argentina, Malaysia</td>
<td>No country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional time</td>
<td>School average of students’ learning time per week</td>
<td>Mexico, Turkey, Argentina, Kazakhstan, Malaysia</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Results from multi-level analyses, controlling for student and school demographics and socio-economic status; only statistically significant results are reported.

In addition, the measure of economic, social and cultural status currently used by PISA does not adequately capture lower levels of parental education, income and risk factors of poverty that are more frequent in low-income countries.

**PISA-D aims to measure a wider range of school contexts and home environments.**

The PISA-D questionnaires have been designed to capture the school contexts and home environments that are common in middle- and low-income countries and target factors that are known to relate strongly to student performance in these contexts. For example, the questionnaires collect more detailed data on students’ language at school and at home and their socio-economic status, as measured by home possessions and parents’ education, literacy skills and participation in the labour force. The questionnaires also identify additional indicators of educational success beyond performance on the PISA test. These indicators are measured, for example, through questions about educational attainment, health, satisfaction with life and student engagement in learning.

More specifically, the PISA-D student questionnaire collects information on five elements that are considered essential for students’ learning and well-being: i) inclusive environments, ii) quality instruction, iii) learning time, iv) material resources, and v) family and community support. The enhanced questionnaires will make it possible to assess both equality and equity issues that are related to learning outcomes: equality refers to differences between groups of children in the distribution of their educational outcomes and equity refers to differences between groups of children in their access to the resources and schooling processes that affect schooling outcomes. The distinction is visualised in the following diagram.


**References**


For more information Contact Michael.Ward@oecd.org, Catalina.Covacevich@oecd.org or Kelly.Makowiecki@oecd.org

**Visit**

[www.oecd.org/pisa/aboutpisa/pisaforddevelopment.htm](http://www.oecd.org/pisa/aboutpisa/pisaforddevelopment.htm)

**Coming next month**

Incorporating out-of-school youth into the assessment

**Photo credits:** © Curt Carnemark/World Bank © epicurean / iStockphoto

This paper is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and the arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.