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INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENT SYSTEM PISA

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Abstract: The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a critical tool for evaluating educational systems globally. Administered every three years by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), reading, mathematics, and science. Unlike traditional assessments, PISA emphasizes real-world application of knowledge, offering insights into how well students are prepared to meet the challenges of today's societies. The data collected PISA informs policymakers and educators, guiding reforms and strategies aimed at improving educational outcomes. This article delves into the methodology, scope, and influence of PISA on global education policy, discussing its strengths, challenges, and implications for future educational practices.

Key words: PISA, OECD, international education assessment, student competencies, educational policy, global education, reading literacy, educational reform.

Introduction. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) was launched by the OECD in 2000 with the objective of providing comparable data to assist countries in improving their education systems. PISA tests the abilities of 15-year-old students across various countries, focusing on three main domains: reading, mathematics, and science. The assessment aims to evaluate not just whether students can reproduce knowledge, but whether they can extrapolate from what they have learned and apply it in unfamiliar settings, both in and out of school.

Objectives of PISA. PISA's primary goal is to provide data that will assist governments in creating policies to enhance their educational systems. It seeks to:

1. Measure the ability of student to apply their knowledge in practical, real-world situations.
2. Offer a comparison across different countries to see how well students in one country perform relative to their peers worldwide.
3. Identify best practices and policies that contribute to high-performing educational systems.

Methodology. PISA is unique in its approach to assessing students' skills. Every three years, students from participating countries undergo a two-hour test, which includes multiple-choice questions as well as open-ended tasks that require creative and critical thinking. The assessment does not focus solely on the curriculum taught in schools but on real-life applications of knowledge. The test results are reported in several proficiency levels, indicating not just whether students got the right answers, but also the complexity of the questions they were able to solve. In addition to the core domains (reading, mathematics, and science), each PISA cycle has a specific focus

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area. For example, reading literacy was the focus in 2018, while mathematical literacy was the primary focus in 2022.

Global Reach and Impact. PISA includes participation from over 80 countries, making it one of the most extensive and influential educational assessments in the world. The results are closely monitored and used by policymakers to shape educational reforms. Countries like Finland, Singapore, and South Korea, which consistently perform well in PISA, often become models for educational strategies globally. The findings from PISA highlight not only academic achievement but also equity in education. The data reveals disparities between different socio-economic groups within countries and provides evidence on how these gaps can be bridged.

Criticisms and Challenges. While PISA is widely respected, it is not without its critics. Some argue that the test's focus on 15-year-olds does not capture the full picture of an education system's effectiveness, particularly concerning younger students and lifelong learning. Others point out that the cultural biases inherent in the test can disadvantage students from non-Western countries. Additionally, the pressure to perform well in PISA can lead some countries to narrow their curricula to focus only on the tested subjects, potentially neglecting other important areas of education.

Pisa Methodology. PISA's methodology is highly sophisticated and designed to assess not only what students know but also their ability to use that knowledge in real-world contexts. Every PISA cycle tests students from over 80 countries, with approximately 600,000 students participating globally. Each cycle focuses on one of the three core subjects (reading, mathematics, and science) while still including questions from the other two domains.

Test Design. The assessment consists of a two-hour test that includes multiple-choices, short answer, and essay-style questions. The tasks are often scenario-based and designed to gauge the student's ability to think critically, reason logically, and solve problems, all of which are essential skills for navigating real-life challenges. This format emphasizes deeper learning and application, unlike traditional tests that prioritize memorization. Each cycle also includes a focus on cross-curricular competencies. For instance, the 2018 PISA cycle introduced a measure of global competence, which assesses students' ability to engage with global issues and diverse cultures. The introduction of this new metric reflects the OECD's evolving focus on skills that are relevant in today's globalized world.

Finland as a Model. Finland, for instance, has garnered considerable attention for its consistently high PISA performance. The country's approach to education, which includes a heavy focus on equity, minimal standardized testing, and the professional autonomy of teachers, has been studied extensively by educators worldwide. Finnish schools emphasize a holistic, student-centered approach that promotes critical thinking and creativity, aligning closely with the competencies measured by PISA.

Singapore and East Asian Countries. Singapore and several other East Asian countries have also gained recognition for their strong performance in mathematics and science. These countries emphasize rigorous academic standards, intensive teacher preparation, and strong performance in mathematics and science. These countries emphasize rigorous academic standards, intensive teacher preparation, and a strong

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cultural focus on education. While some critics argue that such system place excessive pressure on students, their success in PISA underscores the benefits of high expectations and well-structured curricula.

The Future of PISA. As education system evolve, so too must PISA. The future of PISA is likely to focus more heavily on digital skills, collaborative problem-solving, and global competence. Given the growing importance of technology in education and the workplace, PISA will likely increase its emphasis on how well students can navigate digital environments. Furthermore, with global challenges like climate change and political instability on the rise, PISA may expand its assessment of students' ability to engage with global issues and collaborate across.

Conclusion. PISA plays a crucial role in understanding and improving global education systems. Its emphasis on real-world applications of knowledge helps countries recognize not just the academic abilities of their students, but also their readiness to face the challenges of modern society. While it faces some criticisms, the impact of PISA on educational policy and reform is undeniable. As the world continues to evolve, PISA will likely remain a key tool in shaping the future of education, driving countries towards better and more equitable outcomes for all students.

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