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Students' paid and unpaid work

For the first time, PISA 2015 asked students to report whether they worked for pay and/or worked in the home (or cared for family members) before or after school during the most recent day that they attended school. This chapter reveals the extent to which 15-year-old students around the world work for pay, or work unpaid in the household, before or after school. The chapter examines which students are more likely to work for pay and which are more likely to do household work without pay. It also discusses the relationship between paid and unpaid work, and students' performance in and attitudes towards school.



One crucial factor for an individual's capability to flourish is the amount of leisure time available to him or her. Students' engagement with paid or unpaid work in addition to time spent at school and on homework is an important determinant for the available time for leisure or non-academic activities. By choosing to spend their leisure time working for pay students can gain new experience and knowledge, explore career options, and earn money, but they may also spend less time on studying and on leisure activities.

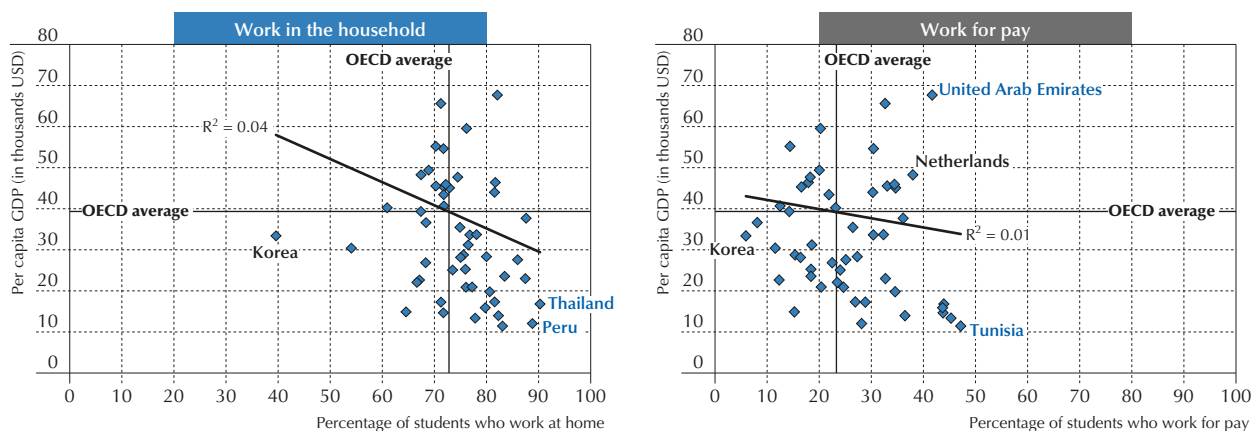
What the data tell us

- Working for pay or working in the home is common among adolescents. On average across OECD countries, around 23% of students reported that they worked for pay and 73% reported that they work in the house before or after school.
- More boys than girls work for pay, and fewer boys than girls do unpaid household chores.
- Disadvantaged students are about 6 percentage points more likely to work for pay than advantaged students, on average across OECD countries.
- Students who work for pay tend to score lower in science than those who do not work for pay.
- Students who work for pay were more likely than those who do not work for pay to report feeling like an outsider at school, having low expectations for further education, arriving late for school, and skipping school.


For the first time, PISA 2015 asked students to report whether they worked for pay and/or worked in the home (or cared for family members) before or after school during the most recent day that they attended school. Although the PISA questionnaires did not capture details on the duration, frequency and the types of work students are engaged in, the data can provide a glimpse of the work activities among 15-year-olds, and the relationship between working and well-being outcomes.

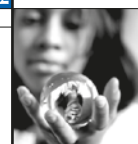
Family characteristics and socio-economic status can affect the probability of working in the household or working for pay (Gager, Cooney and Call, 1999). Having many siblings, or living with a single parent or in a multi-generational household tends to increase the demand for adolescents to work (Gager, Cooney and Call, 1999). Figure III.12.1 shows that there is no strong correlation between a country's/economy's per capita GDP and the average share of students working in the home or working for pay. In several countries, being financially independent earlier on in life is accepted as a cultural norm, and it is not unusual for teenagers to look for part-time jobs, irrespective of their family's income.

Figure III.12.1 ■ **Students who work and per capita GDP**



Source: OECD, PISA 2015 Database, Tables II.6.59 and III.12.1.

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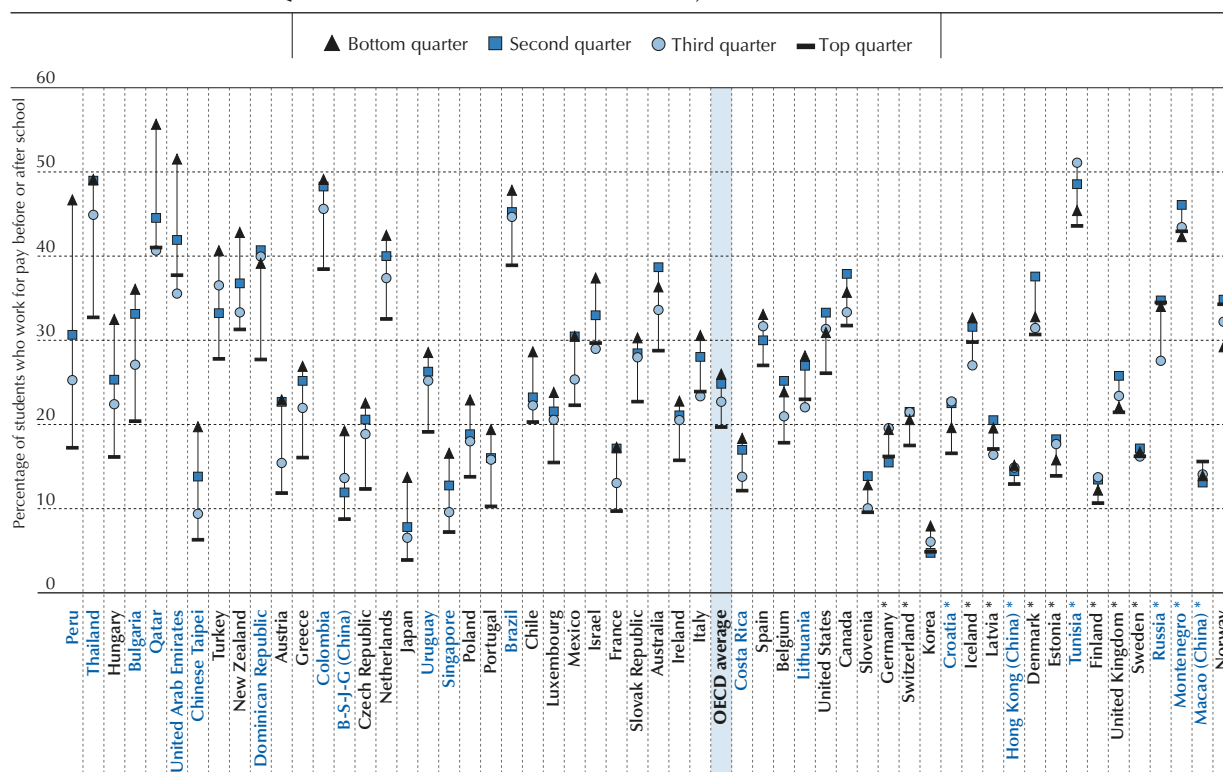


In Australia, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and the United States, for example, per capita GDP exceeds the OECD average, and yet more than 30% of students reported that they work for pay – higher than the OECD average (Tables II.6.59 and III.12.1). In these countries, at least 26% of advantaged students reported that they work for pay (Table III.12.7).

On average across OECD countries, 23% of students reported that they work for pay and 73% reported that they work in the house before or after school (Table III.12.1). In the majority of the countries, more boys than girls reported that they work for pay. The difference between the shares of boys and girls who reported that they work for pay is 11 percentage points in favour of boys, on average across OECD countries (Table III.12.7). In countries that separate students in different tracks, part of this difference is likely to be the result of the more limited opportunities of vocational education for female adolescents than for male adolescent (Karaca et al., 2016).

Disadvantaged students were also more likely than advantaged students to report that they work for pay. The difference between the shares of advantaged and disadvantaged students who reported working for pay is 6 percentage points, on average across OECD countries (Figure III.12.2). Figure III.12.2 shows the shares of students who work for pay by quarters of the PISA index of socio-economic and cultural status. In 40 countries and economies, students in the top quarter of the index are less likely to work for pay than students in the bottom quarter of the index (Table III.12.7). On average across OECD countries, 26% of disadvantaged students, but 20% of advantaged students, reported that they work for pay. The relationship between students' socio-economic status and paid employment is strongest in Peru, where advantaged students were 29 percentage points less likely to work for pay than disadvantaged students. Earnings from part-time jobs can help families economically, in that adolescents who work for pay can then purchase items for themselves that their parents would otherwise have to provide.

Figure III.12.2 ■ **Students who work for pay, by socio-economic status**
Quarters of the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status



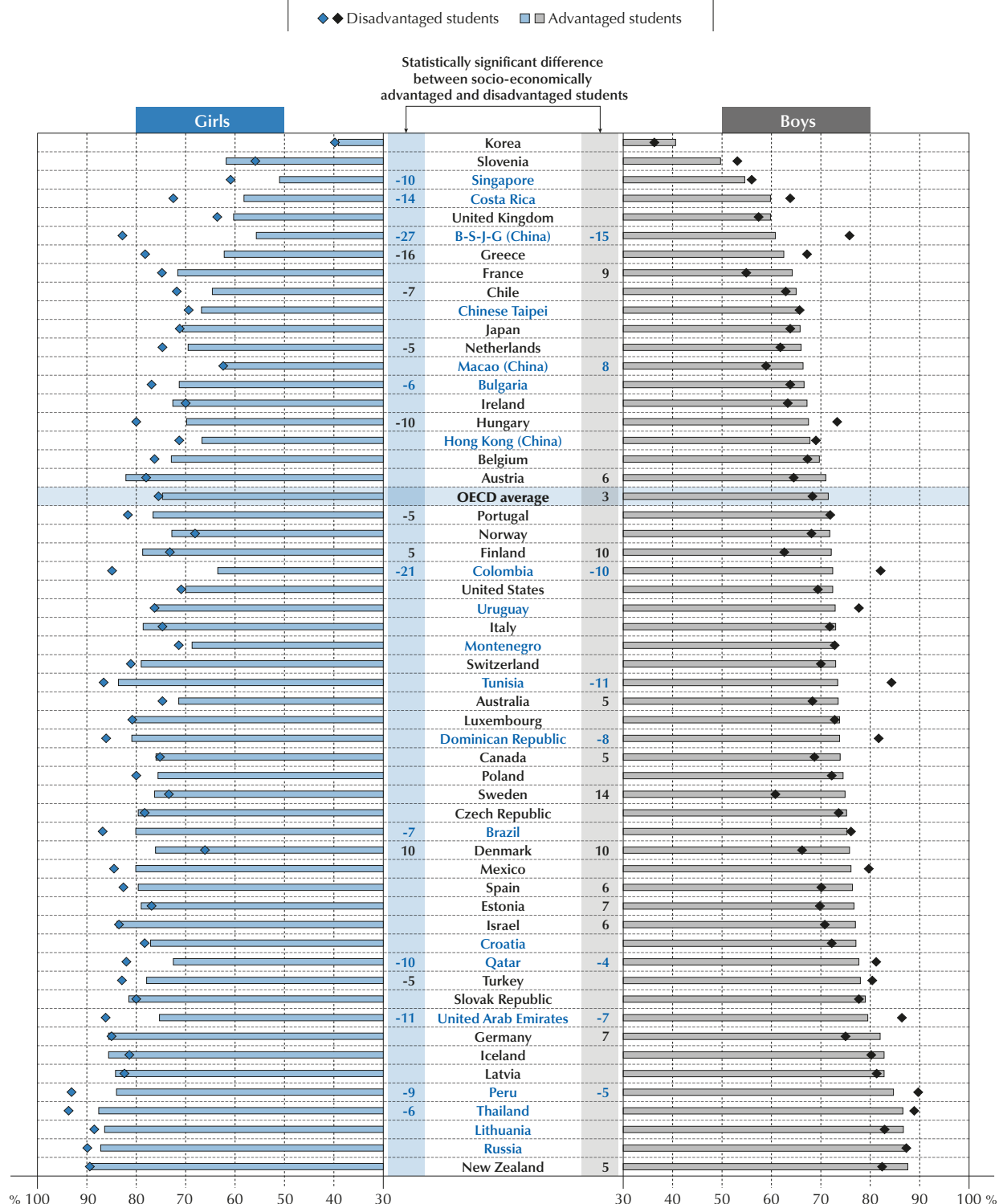
Note: Differences between the top and bottom quarters of the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status that are not statistically significant are shown with an asterisk next to the country/economy name (see Annex A3).

Countries and economies are ranked in ascending order of the difference in the percentage of students who work for pay between the top and bottom quarters of the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status.

Source: OECD, PISA 2015 Database, Table III.12.7.

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Figure III.12.3 ■ Students who work at home, by gender and socio-economic status



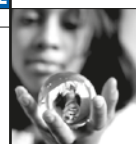
Notes: Statistically significant differences between advantaged and disadvantaged students are shown before (for girls) and after (for boys) the country/economy name (see Annex A3).

A socio-economically advantaged (disadvantaged) student is a student in the top (bottom) quarter of the distribution of the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) within his or her country/economy.

Countries and economies are ranked in ascending order of the percentage of advantaged boys who work at home.

Source: OECD, PISA 2015 Database, Table III.12.5.

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More students reported that they help out with household chores than work for pay. In the majority of countries and economies, more than one in two students reported that they help with housework or take care of family members outside of school hours (Table III.12.1). In 39 countries and economies, girls were significantly more likely than boys to report helping with housework (Table III.12.2); in Austria and France, girls were 11 percentage points more likely than boys to report doing so.

In 16 countries and economies (Greece, Hungary, Mexico, Turkey and most partner countries/economies with available data), disadvantaged students were more likely to report working in the home than advantaged students (Table III.12.5). In Beijing-Shanghai-Jiangsu-Guangdong (China) (hereafter “B-S-J-G [China]”), Colombia, Peru, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, both disadvantaged boys and disadvantaged girls were significantly more likely to report working in the house than advantaged boys and girls (Figure III.12.3 and Table III.12.5). In B-J-S-G (China), Colombia, Costa Rica, Greece, Hungary, Peru, Qatar, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates, disadvantaged girls were at least 10 percentage points more likely than advantaged girls to report doing housework. However, on average across OECD countries, and in all the Nordic countries except Iceland, advantaged students were more likely than disadvantaged students to help with household chores (Table III.12.5).

Social and cultural norms often influence the likelihood that boys or girls help out with household chores. Research on 16 developing countries in Africa and Asia finds that girls, particularly girls with brothers, are more likely to do housework than boys (Webbink, Smits and de Jong, 2012). This difference is particularly pronounced in Asian countries.

There is no consensus on the desirability of paid work for adolescents. Many parents, and young people themselves, think that employment can help students develop a wide range of competencies, such as the capacity to assume responsibility, manage time, overcome shyness with adults and authority figures, and handle money. Work experience can instil positive traits that are also useful for learning at school, including independence, responsibility and a solid work ethic. But some educators complain that working teenagers who put in too many hours on their jobs may come to school tired, and have less time to focus on their studies and to engage in extracurricular activities (Mortimer, 2010).

Working outside of school hours may affect students' academic performance. The association between work activities and academic performance mostly depends on whether working takes time away from learning activities. For example, a study based on time-use data found that American students who have a job tend to spend less time on homework (Kalenkoski and Pabilonia, 2012).

As shown in Figures III.12.4 and III.12.5, students who work for pay or work in the home tend to score lower in science than those who do not work at all. The performance difference is greater among students who work for pay. On average across OECD countries, the score-point difference in science performance between students who work in the household and those who do not is 13 points, while the difference is 55 points among students who work for pay and those who do not.

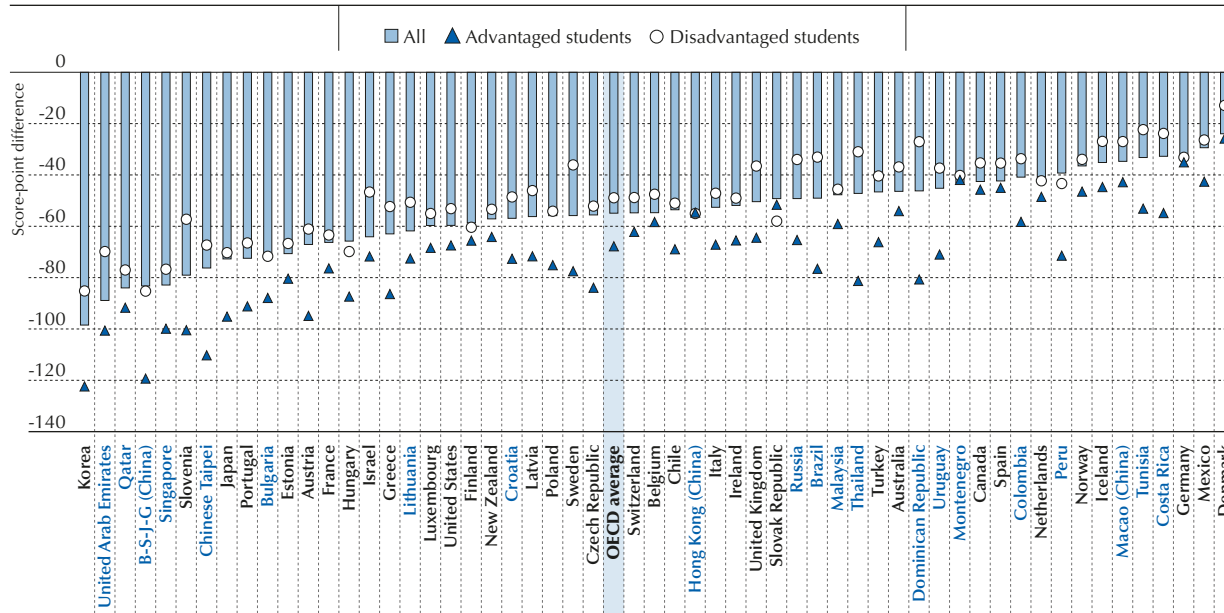
Some fraction of these academic “costs” of employment can be attributed to self-selection. Students who enter adolescence with strong academic interests and achievement goals may choose to work very little during high school, and even if they have jobs, they may limit their hours of employment so as not to jeopardise their marks. By contrast, those who choose to work long hours tend to have less of a sense of belonging at school, engage in some disruptive behaviour, and are given lower marks, even at the start of high school (Staff, Messersmith and Schulenberg, 2009). For many students who are disengaged with school, getting a job can be a precursor to dropping out of school entirely (Warren and Lee, 2003). From this perspective, employment does not directly interfere with success at school; it is an activity pursued by students who are already not inclined to strive for academic success or to complete high levels of education.

The negative relationship between students' work status and science performance is stronger among advantaged students than among disadvantaged students. On average across OECD countries, advantaged students who reported working for pay score 68 points lower in science than advantaged students who do not work for pay (Figure III.12.4). Among disadvantaged students, this difference is 49 points. Differences across countries are also large. In Denmark, the score-point difference in science performance among advantaged students who work for pay and those who do not is 26 points, while in Korea – where relatively few students have a paid job – this difference is 122 points – the largest difference among all countries. Although more data are needed to fully understand students' motivation to work and to measure the intensity of work, it is unlikely that advantaged students choose to work for pay because they are obliged to. The strong correlation between science performance and work for pay probably indicates that the advantaged students who work for pay may be disengaged from school.

Helping with housework is less strongly related to science performance than working for pay. On average across OECD countries, boys who reported that they work in the house score 14 points lower in science than those who do not, and girls who reported that they work in the house score 10 points lower in science than those who do not (Figure III.12.5). Paid work may require longer working hours and a more regular commitment than helping out at home.

Figure III.12.4 ■ **Working for pay and science performance**

Score-point difference in science performance associated with working for pay before or after school



Notes: All score-point differences are statistically significant (see Annex A3).

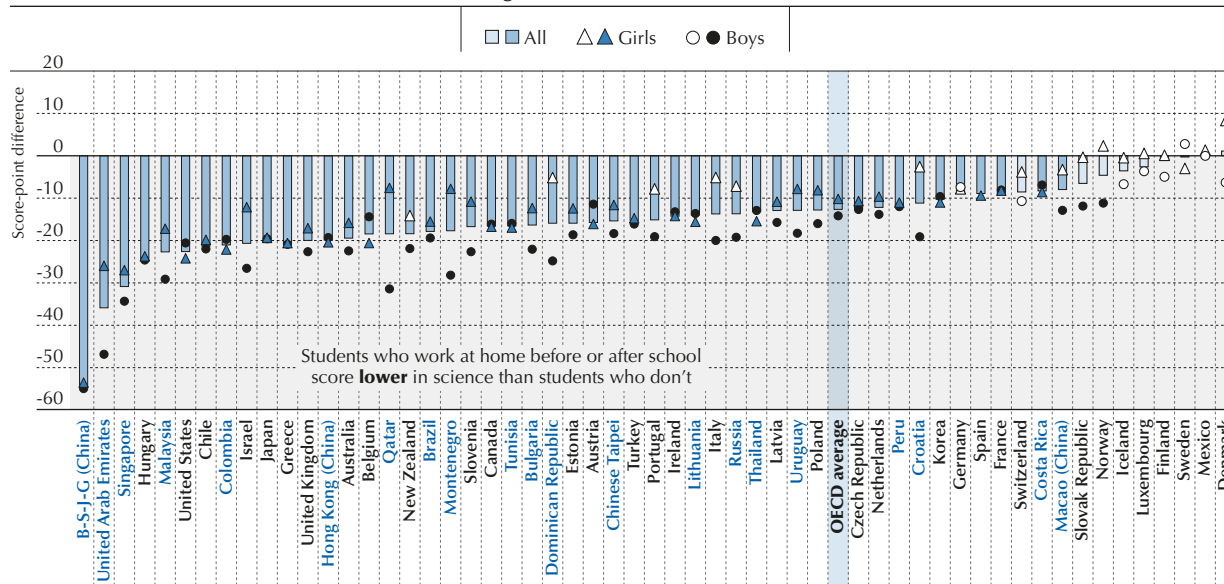
A socio-economically advantaged (disadvantaged) student is a student in the top (bottom) quarter of the distribution of the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) within his or her country/economy.

Countries and economies are ranked in ascending order of the score-point difference in science performance among all students who work for pay, after accounting for gender and socio-economic status.

Source: OECD, PISA 2015 Database, Table III.12.8.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933473029>Figure III.12.5 ■ **Working at home and science performance**

Score-point difference in science performance associated with working at home before or after school, after accounting for students' socio-economic status

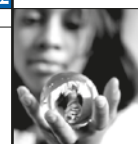


Note: Statistically significant differences are marked in a darker tone (see Annex A3).

Countries and economies are ranked in ascending order of the score-point difference in science performance among all students who work at home, after accounting for gender and socio-economic status.

Source: OECD, PISA 2015 Database, Table III.12.3.

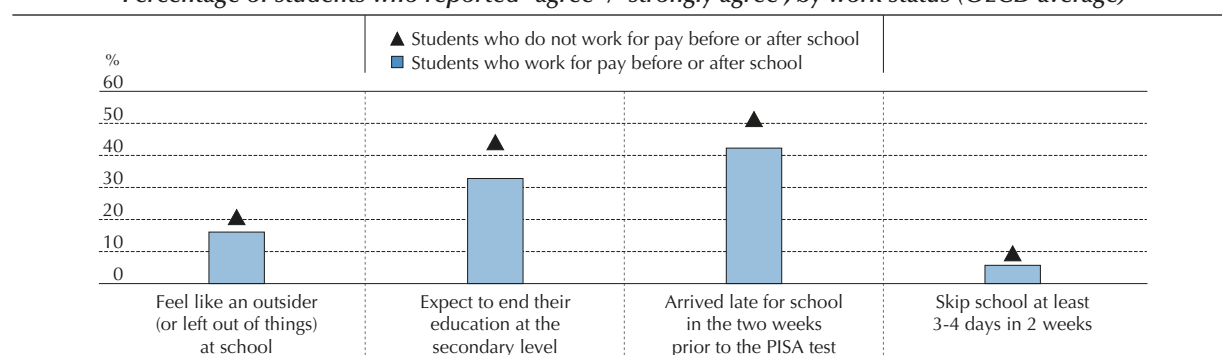
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Students' participation in the labour market or help around the house can influence other aspects of students' well-being. Some teenagers decide to work because they want to learn, explore or earn money; others may be obliged to work for financial or other extrinsic reasons. Students in the former group are more likely to derive greater satisfaction from work than those in the latter group. Other students may choose to work because they want to leave formal education and enter the job market sooner.

Students who work for pay reported a level of satisfaction with life that is similar to that of students who do not work. The difference is just 0.2 point on a scale from 0 to 10, on average across OECD countries (Table III.12.9). By contrast, students who work for pay were 5 percentage points more likely than students who do not work for pay to report that they feel like an outsider at school, on average across OECD countries, with one out of five students who works for pay reporting feeling like an outsider (Figure III.12.6). They are also 11 percentage points more likely to expect to leave formal education at the end of secondary school, 9 percentage points more likely to arrive late for school, and 4 percentage points more likely to skip school frequently, on average across OECD countries (Table III.12.10). By contrast, housework is less likely than paid work to be related to students' negative feelings about school. These findings suggest that disengagement from school is strongly correlated with students' employment status.

Figure III.12.6 ■ **Students who work for pay and well-being outcomes**
Percentage of students who reported "agree"/"strongly agree", by work status (OECD average)



Note: All percentage-point differences between students who work for pay before or after school and those who do not are statistically significant (see Annex A3).

Source: OECD, PISA 2015 Database, Table III.12.10.

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Working for pay might also have stronger implications on students' satisfaction with specific aspects of their life than on students' overall evaluation of the quality of their life. For example, a study in Turkey found that adolescents who do not work were more satisfied than working adolescents with their family relations. To fully understand the consequences of working on students' well-being, more data and research are needed on the quantity and quality of adolescents' work, and on their motivations to work (Mortimer, 2010).

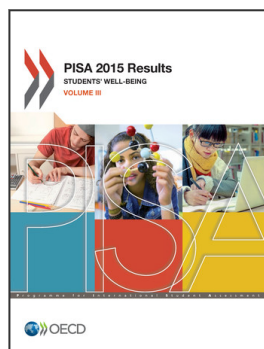
What these results imply for policy

- Many of the students who choose to work might do so because they feel disengaged from school. Working long hours can exacerbate disengagement and even result in students' dropping out of school entirely. Tackling the root causes of students' disengagement from school can help ensure that students still devote sufficient time to their learning, even if they also work after school.
- In several countries, disadvantaged students were more likely than advantaged students to report that they work in the house. Having to do intensive work in the home can sap students' energy and reduce time available for study, which could, in turn, widen inequalities in performance. Education and social policies that target disadvantaged families can help these students maintain a better balance between schoolwork and housework.
- More data on the intensity and type of jobs students do are needed to understand how working before or after school affects students' well-being.



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