

CAREER ASPIRATIONS OF 15-YEAR-OLDS

Education's impact on participating in labour markets, occupational mobility and the quality of life, has led policy makers and educators to focus on reducing educational differences between men and women. Significant progress has been achieved in weakening the gender gap in educational attainment, although in certain fields of study, such as mathematics and computer science, gender differences favouring men still exist.

Students' perceptions of what occupations lie ahead for them can affect their academic decisions and performance.

Definition

On the 2006 PISA assessment, 15-year-old students were asked what they expect to be doing in early adulthood, around the age of 30. Across countries many gender differences can be seen over the different career aspirations. This gender difference can be attributed to a

Overview

In almost all OECD countries, girls have more ambitious aspirations than boys. On average, girls are 11 percentage points more likely than boys to expect to work in high-status careers such as legislators, senior officials, managers and professionals. France, Germany and Japan were the only OECD countries where similar proportions of boys and girls aspired to these careers, while in Switzerland, boys generally had slightly more ambitious aspirations than girls. The gender gap in career expectations was particularly wide in Greece and Poland: in these two countries, the proportion of girls expecting to work as legislators, senior officials, managers and professionals was 20 percentage points higher than the proportion of boys expecting to work in those occupations.

In recent years, girls in many countries have caught up with or even surpassed boys in science proficiency. However, better performance in science or mathematics among girls, does not necessarily mean that girls want to pursue all types of science-related careers. In fact, careers in "engineering and computing" still attract relatively few girls. On average among OECD countries, fewer than 5% of girls, but 18% of boys, expected to be working in engineering and computing (including architects) as young adults. This fact may be due to stereotypes with the representation of these fields as "masculine" and perceived to be more suited for men, whereas care-related fields, such as education or health, may be perceived as "feminine" and therefore more appropriate for women. Indeed, almost 20% of girls expected to be working in health and services, including nurses & midwives, comparing to only 7% for boys.

number of factors. These include students' family characteristics and academic performance, but also the specific national labour market conditions and the features of national education systems that provide different options for 15 year-olds.

Comparability

The PISA target population is 15-year-old students. Operationally, these are students who were from 15 years and 3 (completed) months to 16 years and 2 (completed) months at the beginning of the testing period, and who were enrolled in an educational institution, regardless of the grade level or type of institution and of whether they participated in school full-time or part-time.

As far as occupational plans are concerned, student preferences tend to centre heavily on occupations that require at least some tertiary study. Using the nomenclature presented in the *International Standard Classification of Occupations* (ISCO), this preference by 15-year-olds boys and girls to expect high status careers refers mostly to categories 1 and 2 of the ISCO88 classification.

Sources

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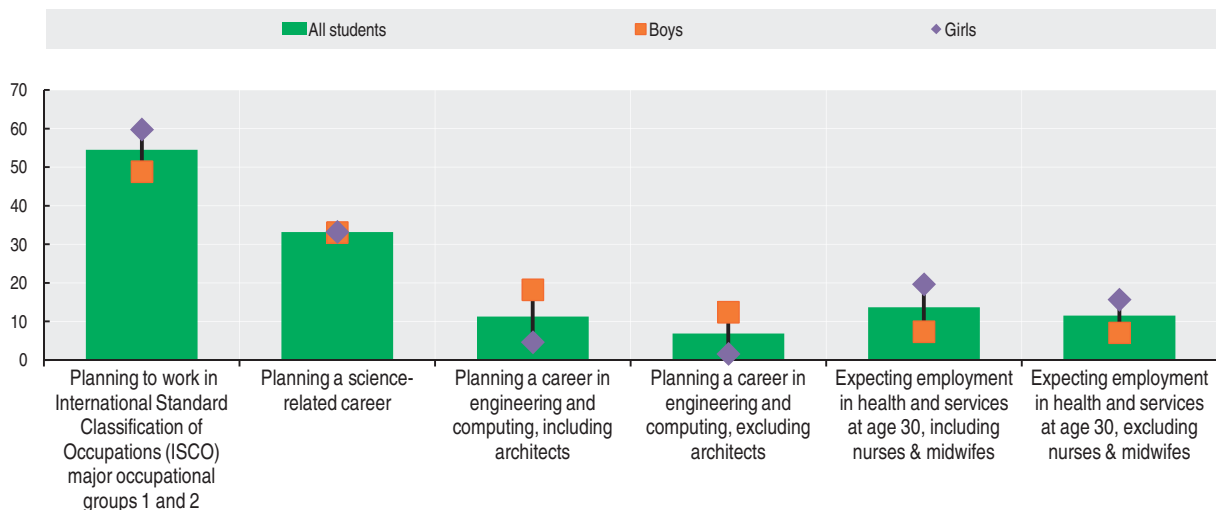
Career aspirations of 15-year-olds

	Percentage of 15-year-old students who are:									
	Planning to work in International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) major occupational groups 1 and 2				Planning a career in engineering and computing, including architects				Expecting employment in health and services, including nurses and midwives	
	Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls		Boys	Girls
	%	S.E.	%	S.E.	%	S.E.	%	S.E.	%	S.E.
Australia	49.6	1.1	59.4	0.9	16.3	0.6	2.8	0.2	8.3	0.5
Austria	30.8	2.1	41.5	2.2	15.1	1.6	3.3	0.5	4.5	0.7
Belgium	50.2	1.6	65.9	1.3	18.7	0.9	5.1	0.4	6.2	0.5
Canada	51.2	0.9	66.6	0.7	18.8	0.7	3.2	0.3	11.8	0.6
Chile	67.2	2.1	73.2	1.3	25.9	1.4	5.9	0.5	14.2	0.8
Czech Republic	40.7	1.8	50.3	1.9	20.0	1.6	4.8	1.2	2.8	0.4
Denmark	39.3	1.2	43.6	1.5	13.0	0.8	3.3	0.5	5.4	0.5
Estonia	44.8	1.4	60.5	1.4	18.5	1.0	8.8	0.7	2.2	0.3
Finland	31.6	1.3	49.6	1.3	10.5	0.7	2.1	0.4	4.7	0.6
France	42.4	1.9	43.2	1.6	18.3	1.1	3.5	0.5	9.2	0.8
Germany	33.3	1.5	33.9	1.4	14.2	1.0	3.6	0.4	4.1	0.6
Greece	48.3	1.8	70.0	1.2	19.2	1.0	7.0	0.7	7.3	0.8
Hungary	40.9	2.1	50.7	2.0	19.1	1.6	4.1	0.5	3.9	0.6
Iceland	54.4	1.4	66.8	1.2	14.1	0.9	7.5	0.7	10.1	0.8
Ireland	53.8	1.5	65.1	1.4	18.1	1.0	3.4	0.5	9.5	0.9
Israel	65.3	2.4	79.9	1.3	15.6	1.5	6.8	0.8	14.3	1.4
Italy	52.7	1.3	65.6	1.0	21.4	1.3	4.9	0.5	8.6	1.0
Japan	42.5	1.3	43.0	1.7	15.1	1.2	3.2	0.4	6.4	0.7
Korea	59.5	1.2	63.3	1.2	12.4	0.8	2.6	0.4	5.2	0.4
Luxembourg	50.0	0.9	69.1	1.1	16.4	0.9	4.8	0.5	6.6	0.6
Mexico	77.7	1.0	82.5	0.7	27.3	0.9	7.8	0.5	12.4	0.8
Netherlands	43.2	1.4	47.8	1.5	7.8	0.7	2.4	0.4	6.0	0.6
New Zealand	46.3	1.3	62.0	1.0	12.2	0.9	3.7	0.4	9.4	0.8
Norway	44.4	1.3	58.4	1.4	19.4	1.1	7.4	0.7	4.7	0.5
Poland	43.6	1.3	65.6	1.4	32.6	1.2	7.2	0.6	5.7	0.5
Portugal	53.5	1.7	66.1	1.2	24.6	1.3	6.3	0.6	10.5	0.9
Slovak Republic	52.1	1.9	64.3	1.8	23.1	1.5	3.1	0.5	3.3	0.5
Slovenia	47.9	1.1	65.1	1.1	27.7	0.9	3.6	0.6	8.3	0.7
Spain	52.3	1.4	69.6	1.1	23.8	0.9	6.1	0.5	7.4	0.7
Sweden	34.1	1.1	44.9	1.3	15.3	0.9	4.4	0.5	4.6	0.6
Switzerland	35.2	0.9	31.6	1.2	14.8	0.6	3.1	0.4	2.8	0.3
Turkey	79.0	1.4	85.8	1.3	20.9	1.4	7.0	0.8	9.5	0.9
United Kingdom	46.5	1.1	56.9	1.1	12.6	0.6	2.1	0.2	7.9	0.6
United States	56.4	1.4	70.6	1.3	16.4	0.8	2.7	0.4	12.4	0.8
EU 27	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
OECD	48.8	0.3	59.8	0.2	18.2	0.2	4.6	0.1	7.4	0.1
Brazil	49.9	1.3	71.3	1.0	17.3	0.9	6.0	0.6	13.8	1.0
China	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
India	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Indonesia	60.0	2.4	66.2	2.0	11.8	4.7	6.6	1.0	15.1	1.9
Russian Federation	54.7	2.0	73.5	1.0	20.9	1.6	5.3	0.6	3.6	0.4
South Africa

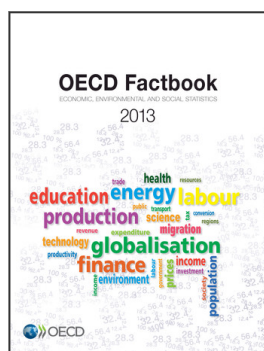
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Career aspirations of 15-year-olds

Percentage of 15-year old students



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