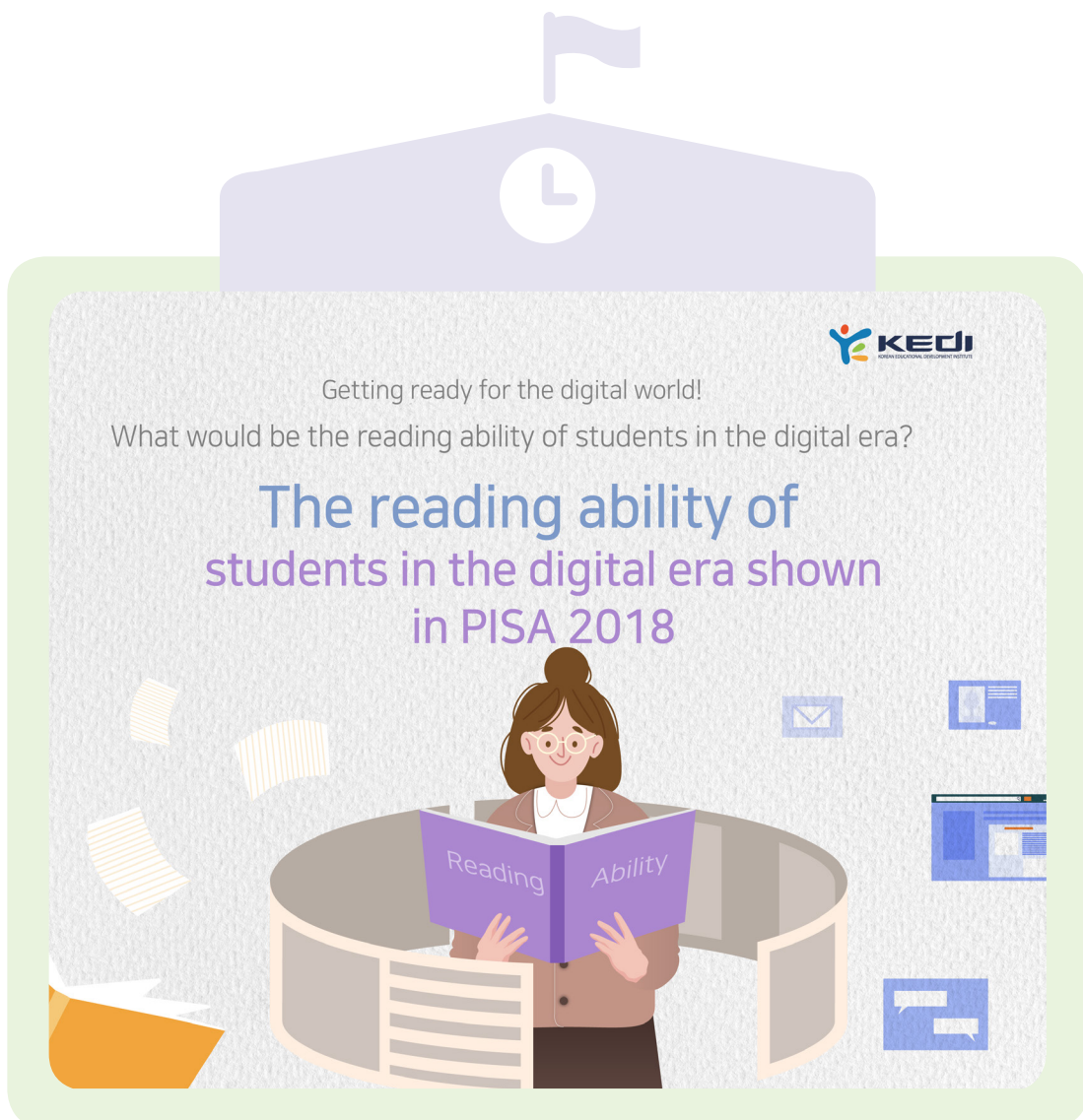


2020 February Educational Issues in Korea

PISA 2018 : Reading literacy of students in the digital age



PISA 2018 : Reading literacy of students in the digital age

 Korean Educational Development Institute Hyo-Jung Han

Andreas Schleicher (2019), Director of Education of the OECD, reorganized the main results of PISA2018 in a publication titled “Insights and Interpretations”. In the chapter “Getting Ready for the Digital World”, he focused on students’ reading literacy in the digital age and the accessibility and familiarity with digital technology. In particular, PISA2018 focus on reading literacy skills that include integrating information and distinguishing between fact and opinion, which is required for a highly digitalized society. This kind of reading literacy is one of the core elements of media literacy, ‘critical thinking’, in short. Therefore, this article tries to investigate Korean students’ reading literacy comparing with OECD countries’ results.

First of all, according to the result of PISA 2018, the percentage of students who have internet access at home is 96.5% across OECD countries. As well as other OECD countries, most of the Korean students have access to the internet at home(96.5%). Table 1 shows the time spent using the Internet outside the school. Across OECD countries, the students reported that they spend about 27-30 hours per week using the Internet while Korean students spend less at 19 hours per week. However, it is needed to consider the average time that students spent in school.

[Table 1] Time spent using the Internet outside the school

Countries	Hours per week (standard deviation)
Finland	27 (0.3)
France	28 (0.3)
Japan	20 (0.3)
United Kingdom	30 (0.3)
United States	30 (0.3)
Korea	19 (0.2)
OECD average	27 (0.0)

Source : OECD. (2019). PISA 2018.

In terms of reading literacy, Table 2 presents the proportion of students in reading proficiency levels 5 and 6 as defined by PISA. PISA 2018 defined levels 5 and 6 on reading proficiency as “ability to establish distinctions between content and purpose, and between fact and opinion as applied to complex or abstract statements”. This literacy skill is regarded as a key ability of digital society, in which all students have access to vast amounts of information and need to judge the accuracy and objectivity of each information on their own. The average proportion of students in OECD countries at reading proficiency levels 5 or 6 was only 8.7%. With this result, Schleicher (2019) pointed out that modern education has not sufficiently fostered the ability to acquire digitized information. In Korea, however, the proportion of students belonging to reading proficiency level 5 or 6 was 13.1%, which is the fifth largest after Canada (15.0%), Finland (14.2%), Estonia (13.9%), the United States (13.5%), and Sweden (13.3%).

[Table 2] Proportion of student who attained Reading proficiency Level 5 or 6

Countries	(%)
Canada	15.0
Finland	14.2
Estonia	13.9
Sweden	13.3
France	9.2
Germany	11.3
Japan	10.3
United Kingdom	11.5
United States	13.5
Korea	13.1
OECD Average	8.7

Source : OECD. (2019). PISA 2018.

PISA2018 conducted a quantitative survey of students’ reading habits, showing that students today prefer digital materials to traditional paper materials. Table 3 shows the percentage of students who use traditional media (magazines, comics, novels, nonfiction, newspapers) and online media (e-mail, chat, online news, online search, online discussion or forums) several times a month, respectively.

Across the OECD countries, the proportion of students using traditional media was ranged from 15.1% (comics) to 29.0% (novels), while those using online media ranged from 37.1% (participation in online discussions or forums) to 93.1% (online chats) This result indicates that students read more in

online formats than traditional formats. In Korea, the proportion of students who read magazines and newspapers was lower than the OECD average, but the Korean students read cartoons, novels, and nonfiction more than than the OECD countries. In the case of online media, Korean students mostly use chats and online news more than the OECD average, but other online formats were less unpopular. In other words, Korean students prefer online media to traditional formats as well as other OECD countries, but it also can be interpreted that some traditional media are still used comparing other major OECD countries.

[Table 3] Proportion of students who read traditional/Online formats more than once per month

Countries	Traditional Formats(%)					
	Magazine	Comic books	Novels	Nonfiction	Newspaper	
Canada	9.4	12.8	33.3	19.9	15.4	
Finland	15.8	20.3	16.8	16.4	38.0	
France	23.6	22.0	25.2	17.8	20.4	
Germany	18.9	10.9	26.6	17.7	28.8	
Japan	30.8	54.9	42.2	12.2	21.5	
United Kingdom	9.5	7.8	28.9	20.3	17.4	
United States	11.0	12.2	32.3	21.2	13.0	
Korea	11.5	46.1	46.4	23.6	21.8	
OECD Average	18.5	15.1	29.0	20.7	25.4	
Countries	Online formates(%)					
	E-mail	Chats	Online News	Online Searching	Online discussion or forum	Website containing practical information
Canada	68.8	88.5	73.5	87.7	42.8	82.0
Finland	77.5	97.1	83.0	90.1	30.3	85.9
France	55.8	90.0	82.8	84.4	16.9	88.6
Germany	65.0	97.8	81.9	91.8	20.3	86.6
Japan	42.0	94.6	87.8	94.7	11.0	74.8
United Kingdom	77.4	96.0	81.3	93.2	47.5	84.4
United States	72.6	83.9	72.5	91.4	49.4	85.9
Korea	43.5	93.8	80.4	87.8	23.7	84.0

Countries	Online formates(%)					
	E-mail	Chats	Online News	Online Searching	Online discussion or forum	Website containing practical information
OECD Average	65.9	93.1	79.7	90.3	37.1	84.1

Source : OECD. (2019). PISA 2018.

References

- Schleicher, A. (2019). PISA 2018: Insights and Interpretation. OECD.
- OECD. (2019). PISA 2018.