

Media Reports from PIAAC#2

Report from 28. Jun 2016 to 26. August 2016

Dr. Petra Javrh, SIAE

The criteria for choosing newspapers and other media in Slovenia:

1. national and most popular TV channels
2. to cover the political spectrum
3. to include the most widely read newspaper in the national press
4. to be among those that normally would be interested in covering the event and perhaps to follow it up
5. to be accessible in electronic form in order to follow the newspaper for a while after the event

1. **What results are presented in the media (rankings, country scores, within country group differences such as age or gender)?**

- Rankings and country scores – the results were quoted everywhere
- within country group differences such as age or gender –at least half of them were limited, they were slightly interpreted or were listed only in percentages

The media was focused on testing exercises - tasks, mostly on the type of tasks, they published examples of tasks from Reader Companion and interpreted the content of tasks like suitable knowledge for daily needs, then they connected the results and the type of tasks into conclusion - the task were really from the daily life, that less than 20 % doesn't use computer or, what is "really a shame, that every fourth resident of Slovenia is functional illiterate".

All media reported about this, there were five main media highlighted (national, TV 2, two the most popular newspapers, national radio...) There was a lot of feedback on e-newspapers. For example: The report on the most popular portal on web "24-ur" had 114 comments. The headlines were shouting: "Slovenian are illiterate".

2. **What policy issues are drawn from the results**

More topics were relevant: Immigrants; terminological issues; the position of young people in country; political questions; development of business cultural in country linked with skill of solving problems

Immigrants – because of the current geopolitical situation in Macedonia, Greece and Turkey often appeared question about possibility of repeating refugee wave in Slovenia. This was connected with low results.

Terminological issues – it was highlighted the translation of key concepts and use of some, which are established in general language use. In the comments where mentioned, that the first reading of OECD research is quite confusing, you first don't know what was the aim of research, but at the thoroughly reading you can see that the aims are well defined.

The position of young people in country – most comments mentioned the position of young people in country, which was correlated with low results in all population. They also mentioned results that our young's had results, which was under average. However, in comparison with other age groups in Slovenia are much better. This comments where written in positive vibe.

Political system, school system, educational policy – Most reports mentioned educational policy in critical way. The comment that school system is too much oriented into memorising, wasn't emphasised. It was mentioned that the whole school system, educational policy is troublesome.

In comparison to the situation 15 years ago (in study IALS), some reports also mentioned positive progress, specifically in written skills.

Development of business culture in country, linked to skills with problem solving – most popular comment is of professor from Economic Faculty, which warned us that we are far behind because of low business culture.

3. Do the reports simply summarise or extract from the OECD country notes, or is there an attempt to provide richer interpretations?

Partly the reports were excerpted from well prepared reports of PIAAC Slo team. Two weeks before the results were release, there was a one hour meeting in Ministerial cabinet with journalists, where the experts exactly explained the methodology and way of showing results. There were almost all key journalists, which then reported about the results on national level. They summarized the key results from Slovenia report very exactly. There was no methodological misunderstanding in their interpretations.

Practically all reports mentioned statements of Minister and project manager, some also mentioned the statements of representative of OECD (she was also guest on press conference), professor - economist, primary headmaster....

In addition, of reports in newspapers, there was also a column of journalist, which already for many years covers the field of education, and a critical essay of a famous writer in newspaper Mladina, and very critical article in national special newspaper Finance.

4. What reference countries are mentioned (positive and negative), and is the general tone of the results positive or negative?

General content, more precisely impression of articles - were very critical, only on national TV reported more »softly«. They all said or common message was: »We had bad results, something is wrong«. Every media had its own opinion why results of PIAAS for SLO are low and what is crucial factor for that.

Reference countries - in all articles were named the best performers in PIAAC survey. Finland was always exposed, Slovenia often compares with it, because Finland is some kind of role model for Slovenia in the field of education. In the top were also mentioned Japan and Sweden.

Slovenia was always put in the group with Spain, Italy and Greece; these countries had slightly worse PIAAC results as Slovenia. Nevertheless, they are a good comparison to Slovenia, because they are also EU members. In all these countries, the economical crisis is biggest in EU.

There were an often comparison with Slovenia and former communist countries, like Czech Republic; Poland, Slovakia. They all had better results than Slovenia, though Slovenia had a much better economic situation after the fall of communism and all countries have a very similar education/school system. Here were expressed some questions about the reason of this situation in Slovenia.

All media are reporting about PIAAC. All articles are correct, only in newspaper Finance was a little bold headline. It was written; Disaster, every fourth resident of Slovenia is almost functional illiterate. In newspaper DELO was written that almost fifth of Slovenian doesn't use a computer and that were slightly better at numerical literacy than in reading literacy, but at both we are under average OECD. »That can be good or bad news. PIAAC is a research, which compares countries to each other and shows the reality in certain moment. « The minister says that the results aren't so bad, like it may seem. Especially because if we look at the result more carefully, they show that our youngs were better than youngs from other countries of OECD. They also write about the opinion of mr. Bogomir Kovač, who said that in transition times the skills and knowledge of adults were overlooked. Adults losted their skills with degradation of their work places. The ability or non-ability of solving problems is a result of two factors- school system, which is not oriented into problem solving, and of business culture, which requires a higher level of inventiveness. Both factors are deficient in our school system.

Our school system is highly directed into memorising, problem solving is an exception. Dušan Merc also said that the most responsible for bad results are grammar and high school. In curriculums are a lot of excess content, which supports a rigid school system and work places and not a knowledge. We can't expect changes because there is too much of bureaucracy and ideologists with their own ambitions. Also school system doesn't allow any changes, everyone just change everything permanently.

In newspaper Dnevnik journalist written, that research PIAAC 2016 show the half- literacy of Slovenian. It shows that we are under average in numeracy and written literacy, also at solving digital problems. However, he also said that at presentation of PIAAC results, where also some good news. Youngs in Slovenia achieved better results in written literacy than are the average results of all

young; the difference between results of young and adults are very high. Furthermore the research show that, we achieved better results in written skills than in research from 1998, the results were better for 23 points. Better comparison in both research than us, achieved just Poles.

About results of research also reported on TV Dnevnik , Odmevi and on radio RA SLO.

5. Is the survey methodology mentioned or critiqued in the reports?

There was no doubts about the quality of methodology. I think the reason is in a good advance preparation of journalists (meeting in ministerial cabinet). There were some remarks about the measurement of Terminological issues in research, because the word skills is hard to translate in Slovenian.

Also there were no doubts in measurement, from the published articles, we can read that the journalists confirmed results.

But there were some comments about:

- The problem of application of data from different researches on larger samples: Ministry doesn't want to make any statements about the results, they don't want to use it or interpreted it.
- That the he results were not clearly explained to the public.
- That the question is about the decision of school politics and are not transparent enough.

Ljubljana, 30th August 2016