Parental qualification

Students were asked to indicate their parents' highest level of education against a list of nationally appropriate educational levels to ensure local relevance. Each of these levels was also mapped to International Standard Classification Levels (ISCED 2011) so that consistent comparisons across countries could be made.

As seen in Table STT1.3, 61% of students reported at least one of their parents' highest level of education was above secondary education and 45% of students had at least one parent with a university education.

Table STT1.3

Percentage of students with highest parental education level

Category	Students
Below primary education	6% (1.2)
Primary education	12% (1.4)
Secondary education	21% (1.9)
Post-secondary,non-tertiary or short cycle tertiary education	16% (0.9)
Bachelor,Master,Doctorate	45% (3.0)

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

This information was compared with student achievement in the PILNA assessments. To simplify the analysis, parents' highest level of education was grouped into two categories: below university level and university level. Table STT1.4 shows student performance in the PILNA domains by their parents' highest level of education.

Table STT1.4

Average achievement of students by parental highest education in year level

Education level	Grade 5	Grade 7
Numeracy		
Below university level	464 (9.4)	507 (9.3)
University level	474 (10.3)	534 (7.6)
Reading		
Below university level	426 (11.7)	471 (12.0)
University level	440 (14.4)	520 (9.9)
Writing		
Below university level	474 (8.5)	495 (7.3)
University level	493 (6.9)	527 (5.2)

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

Expected minimum proficiency score.

From Table STT1.3 we see that for all three domains, grade seven students who had at least one parent with a university level education had higher average performance in the PILNA assessments than did students who did not have a parent with a university level education.

For grade five students, this association was observed only for the writing domain, meaning students who had at least one parent with a university level education had higher average performance in the writing PILNA assessments than did students who did not have a parent with a university level education. No significant association is seen with grade five students for the numeracy or reading domains.

What does this mean ?

In general, students with at least one university educated parent tended to perform better than students without a university educated parent.

The regional results were broadly comparable. The equivalent of grade seven students regionally who had at least one parent with a university level education had higher average performance in all three domains of the PILNA assessments. The equivalent of grade five students regionally also saw higher average writing performance if they had at least one parent with university education. The key difference was that the equivalent of grade five students regionally also saw this positive association for the reading domain, in addition to the writing domain.

This suggests that higher levels of parental education may be associated with higher performance and that students belonging to families with less education may be at a disadvantage, particularly as they progress through their education.