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.

Highest levels of parental education

As seen in Table STT1.3, 62% of students reported at least one of their parents' highest levels of education was above secondary education and 46% of students had at least one parent with a university education.

Table STT1.3

Percentage of students with the highest parental education level

Highest parental education	Students
Below primary education	2% (0.3)
Primary education	10% (1.4)
Secondary education	26% (2.0)
Post-secondary non-tertiary or short cycle tertiary education	16% (1.4)
Bachelor,Master,Doctorate	46% (1.3)

Percentage of students with the highest parental education level, RMI, PILNA 2021

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

University-level parental education and student performance

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.

From Table STT1.4 we see that in all domains, grade seven students who have 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 on the other hand, a difference was observed only for the writing domain, but not for the numeracy and reading domains. Grade five students who had at least one parent with a university level

education had higher average performance in the PILNA writing assessments than did students who did not have a parent with a university level education.

The regional results observed the same difference in performance for grade seven students with a university educated parent; and for grade five level the regional results showed the difference for reading as well as for writing.

Table STT1.4

Average achievement of students by parental highest education in year level

Education level	Grade 5	Grade 7
Numeracy		
Below University level	467 (7.9)	500 (5.4)
University level	473 (10)	523 (7.5)
Reading		
Below University level	440 (10.6)	484 (6.8)
University level	451 (11.7)	505 (9.4)
Writing		
Below University level	490 (4.9)	506 (5.9)
University level	498 (6.4)	519 (5.4)

Average achievement of students by parental highest education and year level, Marshall Is, PILNA 2021

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

Expected minimum proficiency score.

What does this mean?

In general, grade seven students with at least one university educated parent tended to perform better than students without a university educated parent. For grade five students, this was also observed, but only in relation to writing achievement. 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 compared to their peers. Given the difference between grade five and seven observations, it could be the case that these differences only emerge in Marshall Islands as the complexity of numeracy and literacy increases for students.

Source: https://pilna.eqap.spc.int/2021/marshall-islands/get-to-know/students/life-and-environment/parental-qualification
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