

Student attitudes

Attitudes to school and to certain subjects can shape students' interactions as they progress through their education. For this reason, it was important to collect information about students' attitudes to learning. The PILNA programme took an approach that incorporated students' opinions to school overall and to each of the three cognitive domains covered by PILNA: reading, writing and numeracy.

Students were provided with a list of statements (such as "I enjoy going to school") and asked to rate how much they agreed with each statement. Students could respond with 'Agree a lot', 'Agree', 'Disagree', or 'Disagree a lot'. The statements covered:

- whether students enjoyed the activity;
- whether students did the activity in their own time;
- whether students thought it was important to be good at the activity;
- whether students found the activity easy; and
- whether students thought they did well in the activity.

Additionally, students were asked whether they thought it was important to go to school, if they felt safe at school, and if they felt like they belonged at school.

Student attitudes to subjects and school

Most students in the region, both year four and year six, reported agreement with all the attitude statements ('Agree a lot' or 'Agree') about the cognitive domains and school. This shows overall positive attitudes to reading, writing, mathematics and school.

On average, more than 90% of students in Tuvalu reported that they enjoyed going to school (year four, 92%; year six, 96%) and felt that it was important to do so (year four, 91%; year six, 94%). A similar proportion of students also reported that they felt safe at school (year four, 90%; year six, 92%) and safe travelling to school (year four, 89%; year six, 92%). Most year four and year six students in Tuvalu enjoy schooling, value schooling, and feel safe at school and travelling to school.

When it came to literacy, about nine out of ten students reported that they enjoyed reading (year four, 88%; year six, 94%) and writing (year four, 86%; year six, 94%). More than four out of five students reported that they found reading easy (year four, 80%; year six, 89%) and found writing easy (year four, 83%; year six, 89%).

For mathematics, most students reported enjoying mathematics (year four, 87%; year six, 90%), finding mathematics easy (year four, 82%; year six, 83%), and reporting that they did well in mathematics (year four, 81%; year six, 84%).

The full breakdown of these results can be seen in Table STT1.7

Table STT1.7

Percentage of students agreeing with statements reading, writing, mathematics and school

Statement	Year 4	Year 6
Reading		
Enjoy reading	 88% (1.2)	 94% (1.1)
Read in my own time	 87% (4.4)	 91% (1.6)
Think it is important to be a good reader	 90% (1.1)	 95% (1.3)
Find reading easy	 80% (5.8)	 89% (1.3)
Do well in reading	 82% (6.0)	 88% (1.9)
Writing		
Enjoy writing	 86% (1.1)	 94% (0.4)
Do writing in my own time	 74% (8.7)	 89% (2.9)
Think it is important to be a good writer	 92% (2.2)	 95% (1.5)
Find writing easy	 83% (8.0)	 89% (1.9)
Do well in writing	 80% (6.4)	 91% (2.6)
Mathematics		
Enjoy doing mathematics	 87% (3.8)	 90% (1.1)
Do mathematics in my own time	 86% (3.3)	 85% (2.1)
Think it is important to be good at mathematics	 86% (3.0)	 89% (2.0)
Find mathematics easy	 82% (5.1)	 83% (2.6)
Do well in mathematics	 81% (6.2)	 84% (1.2)
School		
Enjoy going to school	 92% (1.4)	 96% (0.9)
Think it is important to go to school	 91% (2.3)	 94% (1.0)
Think it is important to do well in school	 90% (2.6)	 95% (1.4)
Find school easy	 87% (4.4)	 89% (1.8)
Feel like I belong at this school	 89% (2.8)	 90% (2.1)
Feel safe at the school	 90% (4.9)	 92% (2.1)
Feel safe travelling to school	 89% (5.2)	 92% (1.2)

Percentage of students agreeing with statements about reading, writing, mathematics, and school, Tuvalu, PILNA 2021

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

Student attitudes and student performance

Using the results above, regional scales for student attitudes on school, reading, writing and numeracy were established. Higher scores on the scales indicated more positive attitudes to these areas. The scales were then compared to student performance in reading and numeracy. It should be noted that comparisons were not made to writing performance because the proficiency scale for writing performance has not yet been established.

The PILNA scales for attitudes to school, reading, writing, and numeracy all have an average of 200 and a standard deviation of 40. Most scores on these scales are expected to be within 40 points of 200 (160–240). The attitudes to reading, writing, and numeracy scales were all formed from the five questions students were asked in each area. The attitude to school scale was formed from the answers to seven questions students were asked in this area.

Comparisons to student performance were made between the average attitudes of students who were at or above expected levels of performance and students who were below these levels of performance.

Year four and year six students who performed at or above the expected level in numeracy had higher attitude scores on average (year four, 215; year six, 208) than students in the same year groups who did not meet expected numeracy performance (year four, 203; year six, 196). These results are presented in Figure STF1.3

Figure STF1.3: PILNA Scale: Student attitudes to numeracy

Average scores of students on attitude towards mathematics scale by year level and proficiency

The PILNA scale for students attitudes to numeracy has an average of 200 and a standard deviation of 40. Most scores are expected to be within 40 points of 200 (160-240). It was formed from the five questions that students were asked in each area.

Numeracy

Year 4

203 (5.4)

215 (8.8)

Year 6

196 (4.5)

208 (4.3)

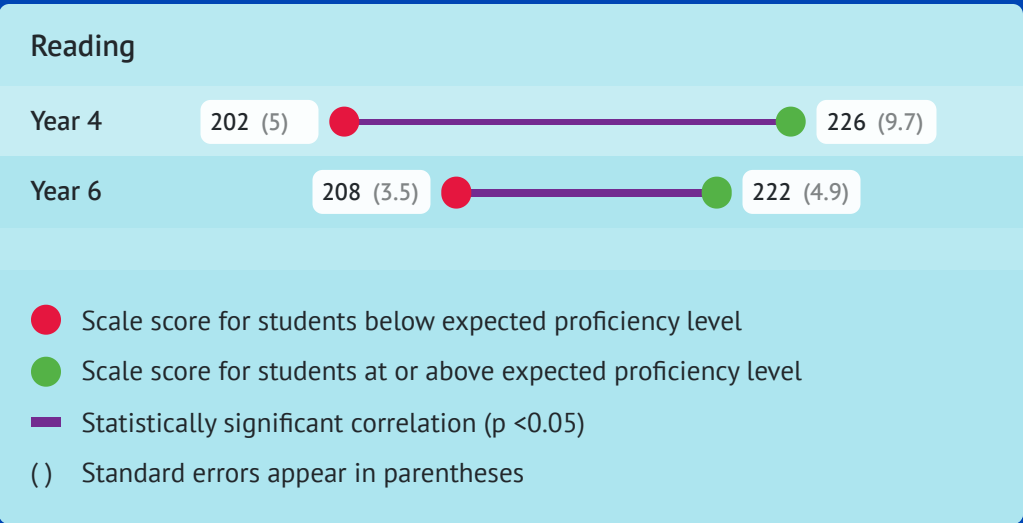
- Scale score for students below expected proficiency level
- Scale score for students at or above expected proficiency level
- Statistically significant correlation ($p < 0.05$)
- () Standard errors appear in parentheses

The differences in attitudes were greater between the performance levels for reading than for numeracy. Year four and year six students who performed at or above the expected level in reading had higher attitude scores on average (year four, 226; year six, 222) than students in the same year groups who did not meet expected reading performance (year four, 202; year six, 208). These comparisons are shown in Figure STF1.4.

Figure STF1.4: PILNA Scale: Student attitudes to reading

Average scores of students on attitude towards reading scale by year level and proficiency

The PILNA scale for student attitudes to reading has an average of 200 and a standard deviation of 40. Most scores are expected to be within 40 points of 200 (160-240). It was formed from the five questions that students were asked in each area.

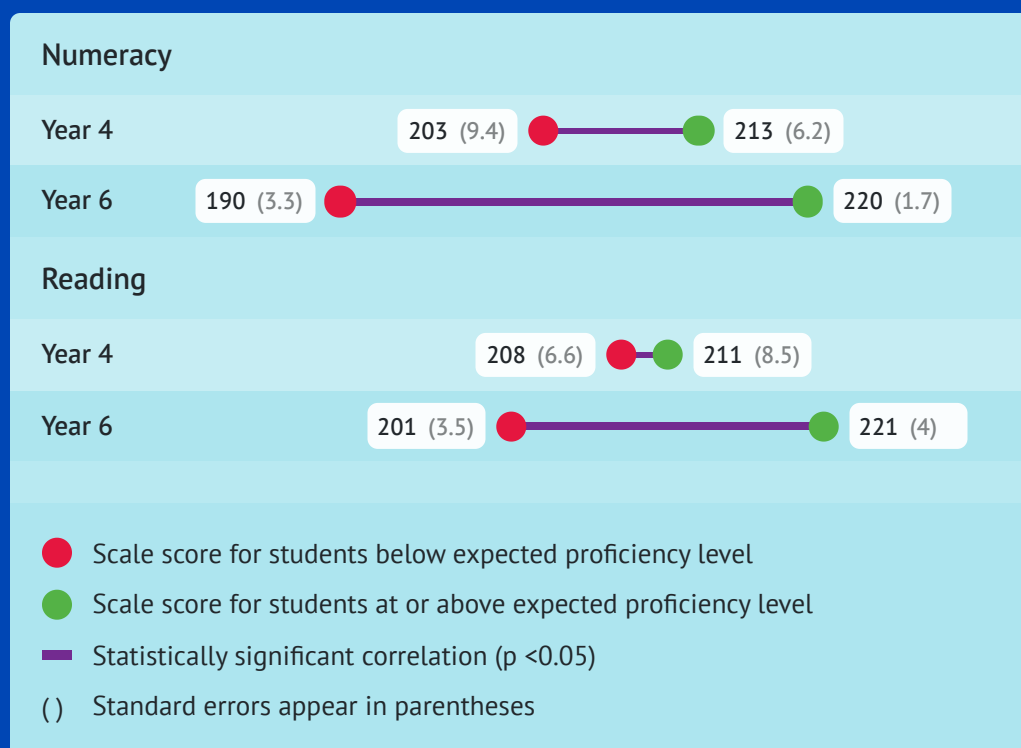


Comparisons were also made between student performance and attitudes to school in general. Year six students who scored at or above the expected proficiency levels in reading and numeracy had higher scores on the attitude towards school scale than year six students who did not meet these proficiency levels. No differences in attitude to school scores were found between year four students who met the expected levels of performance in reading and numeracy and those who did not. Figure STF1.5 shows these comparisons.

Figure STF1.5: PILNA Scale: Student attitudes to schooling

Average scores of students on attitude towards schooling scale by year level and proficiency

The PILNA scale for student attitudes to schooling has an average of 200 and a standard deviation of 40. Most scores are expected to be within 40 points of 200 (160-240). It was formed from the seven questions students were asked in this area.



What does this mean?

The findings from this PILNA cycle show that a high proportion of students in Tuvalu in both year levels are enjoying reading, writing, and mathematics and identify them as being important.

The comparisons of performance and attitudes showed that, across both year levels, students who performed at or above the expected proficiency level in reading and numeracy scored higher on the attitude scales for reading and mathematics. This means that they tended to have more positive attitudes to reading and mathematics.

The year six students who scored at or above the expected proficiency levels in reading and numeracy also had higher scores on the attitude to school scale, indicating more positive attitudes to school. Year four students who met the expected levels of performance in reading and numeracy had similar attitudes to school as those who met these levels in performance.