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A PISA-Aligned Evaluation of English Proficiency and Performance Among Grade 7 Learners

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Abstract

This descriptive-correlational study explored English Proficiency and Academic Performance among 126 Grade 7 learners at Wesleyan University Philippines Junior High School. It described the selected profiles of the learners, including their achievement in the **PISA-Aligned English Test** and their class academic performance using the average grade of their first and second grading periods. Additionally, the study digs deeper into the relationship that exists between the profile of the learners and their achievement in PISA and their academic performance. The study revealed that the Grade 7 students at Wesleyan University Philippines are largely similar in age and gender, mostly come from supportive, middle-class backgrounds, show particular interest in Science and English, and have stable daily allowances, all of which can guide teachers in tailoring lessons and activities to their needs and motivations. The Grade 7 learners generally demonstrate

satisfactory English proficiency on the PISA-aligned test. Furthermore, they show very satisfactory overall academic performance with a mean grade of 86.5, though 13 students performed below satisfactory, indicating a need for aimed support to strengthen their skills.

Sex, school graduated from, and favorite subject are found to have significant influence on the academic performance of the learners, but fewer variables influence the PISA-aligned English language proficiency measures, which include females achieving significantly high grades, even though sex does not significantly influence PISA-aligned achievement. In contrast, graduating from a private school and favorite subject, which is English, influences academic and PISA-aligned English performance, which speaks to the development of higher-order language skills in the real world.

Keywords: PISA-Aligned English Test, Grade 7 Students, Wesleyan University Philippines

Introduction

The fluency and competency of people in the language are very vital in their day-to-day activities due to its significant importance and utility as a channel of effective communication across various facets of society, education, and professionalism, which enables individuals to open doors and reach a wide array of opportunities through globalized communications. The fluency of people in English is very vital and instrumental, not only for the betterment of their day-to-day activities, self-confidence, and employability, but also for career enhancement and education because this language has become a lingua franca for global business, research, and virtual communications (Kirbayeva, 2025 ^[9]; Ilie, 2019 ^[8]; Pearson, 2024).

Success in school also depends on one's mastery of the English language, and for Grade 7 students, moving into more challenging assignments. Junior High School teachers at Wesleyan University Philippines have conducted this survey to give them a better idea of their students' competence in the use of the English language and how best to assist. The research was conducted via a test as prescribed in the PISA, or Program for International Student Assessment, which can measure the students' ability to use what they learn in life instead of memorizing knowledge. This kind of testing will yield a more realistic picture of the student's actual understanding and usage of the English language.

This educational research, as presented in the PISA report about teaching and learning in schools (Hopfenbeck, 2016) ^[7], also aims to look into how the background of students can affect their performance in English. Some of these aspects include the gender of the students, the type of school the students graduated from (a public school or a private school), the allowance of the students on a daily basis, and the educational attainment of the parents of the students. This way, the teachers would be able

to know which students would be in need of further assistance in the future and ensure that every student would have the chance to succeed in English.

Specifically, this study will evaluate the English proficiency of the Grade 7 of WUP using the PISA-aligned test and their English grades. Specifically, it will answer the following questions: (1) How may the profile of the respondents be described in terms of sex, age, school graduated from, daily allowance, favorite subject, and occupation of parents? (2) How may the achievement of the learners be described in terms of their PISA Test rating? (3) How may the English performance of the learners be described in terms of their average grade in English? and (4) Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and their achievement in PISA and their academic performance in English?

Methodology

This research utilized a descriptive correlational research

design using the PISA-aligned test as the main instrument. According to Patten (2002) ^[11], as cited by Subia, Salangsang and Medrano, (2018) ^[13] “Correlational research is employed to test the degree of relationship between two variables”. Additional data, such as the average academic performance of the learners in their first and second grading periods, was analyzed. The respondents were chosen using the complete enumeration sampling. All WUP Grade 7 students were the respondents of this study. “Complete enumeration, also known as census or exhaustive enumeration, involves collecting data from every individual or element within the population of interest. This approach aims to include every member of the population without excluding any, providing a comprehensive and accurate representation of the entire population (Encyclohub, 2024). The data gathering lasted for two weeks.

Results and Discussion

1. Profile of the Learners

Table 1: Profile of the Grade 7 Students

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	64	50.8
Female	62	49.2
Total	126	100.0
Age (in years)	Frequency	Percent
11.00	12	9.5
12.00	89	70.6
13.00	25	19.8
Total	126	100.0
School Graduated From	Frequency	Percent
Private	89	70.6
Public	37	29.4
Total	126	100.0
Favorite Subject	Frequency	Percent
English	23	18.3
Non-English Subjects such as Science, Math, MAPEH, Filipino, etc.	103	81.7
Total	126	100.0
Daily Allowance	Frequency	Percent
Less than P100	8	6.35
P100 to less than P300	103	81.75
P300 to less than P600	11	8.73
P600 and above	4	3.17
Total	126	100.00
Mean Allowance	P192	
Occupation of Parent	Frequency	Percent
White Collar	85	67.5
Blue Collar	41	32.5
Total	126	100.0

Table 1 presents the profile of the Grade 7 learners of Wesleyan University Philippines. It can be observed on the table that the number of students is almost identical, with 64 (50.8%) for males and 62 (49.2%) for females. In terms of their age, 70.6% are 12 years old. The majority of them (89 students) graduated from private schools. Their top 2 favorite subjects are Science (28.6%) and English (18.3%). Their average allowance is P192 per day, and their parents' occupation is white-collar or mostly office work.

The results imply that the Grade 7 learners of Wesleyan University Philippines are generally similar in age and

evenly distributed by sex, which supports fair and balanced classroom interaction. Most students came from private schools and have parents with white-collar jobs, suggesting that they likely have adequate academic support and access to learning resources. Their interest in Science and English shows subjects where students may be more motivated, which teachers can use to enhance learning. The average daily allowance also reflects a stable background that may positively affect students' school participation. These findings can help teachers plan lessons and activities that match the learners' needs and interests.

2. Achievement of the Learners in their PISA Test

Table 2: Achievement of the Grade 7 Students in their PISA-Aligned English Test Scores

PISA-Aligned English Test Scores	Verbal Description	Frequency	Percent
60 to 70	Outstanding	22	17.46
50 to 59	Very Satisfactory	43	34.13
40 to 49	Satisfactory	46	36.51
30 to 39	Fairly Satisfactory	11	8.73
20 to 29	Poor	4	3.17
0 to 19	Did Not Meet Expectations/ Very Poor	0	0.00
Total		126	100.00
Mean Score	49	Satisfactory	

Table 2 shows the scores of the learners in their PISA-aligned English test. It can be observed on the table that the average score for the students is 49 out of 70 items, which is rated as satisfactory. Twenty-two (22) students were outstanding in their test, while four (4) obtained poor performance.

The results indicate that the Grade 7 students generally show a satisfactory level of proficiency in English based on the test, as indicated by the mean score of 49. Most of the students show fairly satisfactory to very satisfactory levels of proficiency, allowing the students to have a fairly good command of the essential skills necessary to help them understand the English language used within the school setup (Ding & Tasara, 2024) [5]. It is imperative to note that the fact that some of the students show fairly satisfactory to poor results suggests the need to ensure that such students receive some support to improve their academic standards. Likewise, the number of students who show outstanding results indicates that some students could be helped to develop their skills to much greater heights. By showcasing the fairly satisfactory to poor results of most of the students, the results underscore the need to differentiate teaching approaches to ensure that the students meet the differing levels of proficiency among the learners (Azarcon & Zabala, 2022; Alshehri, Abdulhaleem & Khan, A., 2024) [2, 1].

3. Academic Performance of the Learners

Table 3

Academic Performance	Verbal Description	Frequency	Percent
90 to 100	Outstanding	38	30.16
85 to 89	Very Satisfactory	45	35.71
80 to 84	Satisfactory	30	23.81
75 to 79	Fairly Satisfactory	13	10.32
Below 75	Poor	0	0.00
Total		126	100.00
Mean Grade	86.5	Very Satisfactory	

Table 3 presents the mean grade of the learners in their Academic performance. It can be noted on the table that the overall performance is 86.5, which is verbally described as very satisfactory. Thirty-eight (38) students have outstanding performance, while there are 13 who performed below a satisfactory level, which is related to or similar to the findings of the study of Villaran (2023) [15].

Based on the study findings, it is evident that the learners' overall academic performance is satisfactory, as depicted by an average of 86.5. Most of the learners have produced outstanding and fairly satisfactory academic performances,

as portrayed by 83 students, who were 65.87% of the population, while 13 learners, which is 10.32%, were able to attain fairly satisfactory academic performance, thus pointing to the need to support students in an attempt to build PISA skills such as thinking, problem-solving, and applying what they have learned in real-life situations. This can be achieved through academic interventions, learning directions, and student centers, which can assist students in raising their level of performance and overcoming academic higher-level expectations (Diabat & Bellibaş, 2025) [4].

4. A significant relationship between the profile of the learners and their achievement in PISA and their academic performance in English

	Scores in the PISA Aligned-English Exam		Academic Performance	
	r- value	p-value	r- value	p-value
Sex	-.157	.080	-.271**	.002
Age	.073	.415	.009	.923
School Graduated From	-.178*	.047	-.189*	.034
Favorite Subject	-.200*	.025	-.202*	.023
Daily Allowance	-.009	.919	.018	.840
Occupation of Parents	-.122	.173	-.087	.331

**correlation is significant @ 0.01 level, *correlation is significant @ 0.05 level

The findings indicate that sex, school graduation year, and favorite subject have a significant relationship with learners' academic performance, but there is a lesser number of variables related to PISA-aligned English achievement. Learners' sex is significantly related to learners' academic performance in English. This implies that, on average, females (coded as 2) outperform males (coded as 1) in learners' academic performance in English, as indicated by a correlation coefficient of $r = -.271$, $p = 0.002$. However, learners' sex is not significantly related to PISA-aligned English achievement, as indicated by a correlation coefficient of 0.080. This implies that while females may achieve high marks in class, empirical English tests that require real-life applications, as in PISA tests, do not show significant differences in terms of learners' sex. Age, daily allowance, and parents' occupation do not have a significant relationship with either PISA-aligned English achievement (Liu *et al.*, 2024) [10] or learners' academic performance, which suggests that these factors do not influence learners' English achievement in a significant manner as far as the selected sample is concerned (baş, 2025).

On the other hand, school graduated from and favorite subject are significantly correlated with both PISA English ability and academic performance in English. This is evident from the negative correlations obtained from the analysis, whereby the PISA English ability was found to have $r = -0.178$, $p = .047$, while academic performance in English had $r = -0.189$, $p = 0.034$. The correlation values indicate that students from private schools (coded 1) tend to perform better in English than those from public schools (coded 2). Similarly, the analysis found a significant negative correlation between favorite subject and both PISA English ability, $r = -0.200$, $p = 0.025$, as well as academic performance in English, $r = -0.202$, $p = 0.023$, suggesting that students tend to perform better in English if they like

the subject (coded 1) than those students who do not like English (coded 2). The implications of the analysis are clear: the educational history in the form of school type and student interest is crucial in the development of skills such as the ability to read, read to mean, think, critique, and apply what is being read from the real world (Preksha and Kanwalpreet, 2024) ^[12].

Conclusions

The following conclusions are derived based on the findings of the study:

1. The Grade 7 learners of Wesleyan University Philippines are almost equally distributed by sex, mostly 12 years old, predominantly from private schools, favor Science and English, and generally come from families with white-collar occupations.
2. The learners' performance in the PISA-aligned English test is generally satisfactory, with most students achieving average to high scores and only a few demonstrating poor performance.
3. The overall academic performance of the learners is very satisfactory, with a considerable number achieving outstanding grades and only a small portion performing below the satisfactory level.
4. Sex, school graduation year, and favorite subject significantly influence learners' academic performance, while most profile variables show little to no significant relationship with PISA-aligned English achievement.

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